

Choosing a Hero: Heidegger's Conception of Authentic Life in Relation to Early Christianity

By Dermot Moran, University College Dublin

In Andrzej Wiercinski and Sean McGrath, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Elementa. Schriften zur Philosophie und ihrer Problemgeschichte, vol. 80 (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 349-75.

The Ur-phenomenon of Life

On the 21st of January, 1919 Martin Heidegger officially became a paid assistant to Edmund Husserl, who had held the Chair in Freiburg since 1916.¹ On January 25th, the “War Emergency Semester” (*Kriegnotsemester*) commenced and Heidegger embarked on his first lecture course, ‘The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview’, in which he explored his own understanding of the true method of philosophy and its relation to phenomenology (GA56/57). In subsequent Freiburg lecture courses from 1919 to 1923, Heidegger made strenuous attempts to come to terms with, and gain a critical perspective on the current philosophical scene: neo-Kantian philosophy (specifically Rickert, Natorp, Windelband, and Lask), phenomenology (Husserl, Scheler), hermeneutics and life-philosophy (Dilthey, Simmel). It is noteworthy that no matter what was the announced course title, Heidegger always used the occasion to think deeply about the nature of philosophy and more specifically to interrogate the meaning and value of phenomenology as a mode of approach to the issues (and, in passing, treated issues such as the nature of philosophy as a science, the meaning of ‘worldview’, the ‘externalities’ of current study of philosophy in the university, and so on).

Heidegger was frustrated by the fact that academic philosophy was not doing justice to concrete, individual life in the world, to individual life as it is spread out in history. Academic philosophy offered no cure to the anxieties of life. In a 1923 lecture course, for instance, Heidegger refers to Van Gogh, who “drew the pictures in his paintings from the depths of his heart and soul, and went mad in the course of this intense confrontation with his own Dasein”, and who claimed he would

rather face his own death naturally than have academic philosophy prepare him for it (GA63: 32). How could philosophy address the vital, living situation of such individuals, given that the available philosophical analyses of life were too contaminated by the metaphysical tradition of modern philosophy to offer any assistance?²

A new way of access to the primordial phenomenon of what Heidegger called “factual life” or “facticity” was needed. In his 1920 lecture course, ‘Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression’, Heidegger presents one of the chief tasks of philosophy as the attempt to awaken and strengthen the sense of facticity: “Philosophy has the task of preserving the facticity of life and strengthening the facticity of existence (*Die Philosophie hat die Aufgabe, die Faktizität des Lebens zu erhalten und die Faktizität des Daseins zu stärken*)” (GA59: 174).

As he exclaims in his notes for the 1920 course: life is the primary phenomenon (GA59: 176)! Similarly, in his 1921-22 lecture course, ‘Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle’, he writes: “‘Factual life’: ‘life’ expresses a basic phenomenological category; it signifies a basic phenomenon (*Grundphänomen*)” (GA61: 80). The key to life is its ‘facticity’: “This facticity is something life is, and whereby it is, in its highest authenticity” (GA61: 87). Facticity is the basic sense of the being of life.

The Plan for a Phenomenology of Religious Life

Edmund Husserl, who liked to assign different regions of study to his disciples, was planning for Heidegger to become a phenomenologist of the religious life.³ There were good reasons underlying Husserl’s expectations for his new assistant. Heidegger had begun his studies as a Catholic seminarian and theology student and, in his post-doctoral years at Freiburg, had been presenting himself as someone interested in the neo-Scholastic revival of medieval philosophy (hence his Habilitation thesis on a text supposedly by Duns Scotus, but in fact written by Thomas of Erfurt). At first Husserl saw Heidegger as a “confessionally bound” Catholic, but came to appreciate the seriousness with which Heidegger had embraced Protestantism and to regard him as something of an expert on Martin Luther. For, in early January 1919, just prior to taking up his post as Husserl’s assistant, Heidegger himself, in a letter to his former confessor Fr. Krebs, had signalled his departure from “the system of Catholicism” and was speaking of his own “phenomenological

studies in religion”.⁴ Similarly, he wrote to his friend Elizabeth Blochmann in May 1919 that he was making preparations towards a “phenomenology of religious consciousness”.⁵

Moreover, Heidegger expressed interest in the phenomenology of religion in his own research plans. Sometimes this is articulated as an interest in Christian mystical writings where religious experience was described, as in his abandoned lecture course of 1918-19 on ‘The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism’, where he states that his focus is on the phenomenology of religion (GA60: 303). While Husserl himself had written little on religion, a number of his students had religious conversion experiences (including both Adolf Reinach and Edith Stein) and, before his death on the Front in 1917, Reinach had written a sketch for an essay on “the Absolute” on which Heidegger himself draws in his 1918 to 1921 notes to his ‘Phenomenology of Religious Life’ lectures.⁶ To both Husserl and Heidegger, then, it seemed clear that phenomenology provided the best mode of access to religious experience.

Destruction as the Way to Reveal Originary Experience

Heidegger felt the need to break open the sedimented and encrusted conceptual frameworks of religion to return to something more original, primary (*ursprünglich, originär*): life as it is lived where its outlook and categories are grasped not conceptually but by being enacted, carried through, and historically lived (GA60: 245-246). It is a crucial feature of Heidegger’s engagement with these existential categories that he believes that somehow we have them in advance, in a *Vorhabe* or *Vorgriff* that needs to be carefully unpacked by a hermeneutic phenomenology such as he will outline in his 1919 *Kriegnotsemester* lectures.

It is also a noteworthy feature of this period of Heidegger’s intellectual formation that the activity of removing the metaphysical edifice encrusted on religious experience is referred to as “destruction” (GA60: 311).⁷ Interestingly, the model appears to be the manner in which Luther approached Paul. In his 1920 lecture course Heidegger articulates the notion of “phenomenological Destruktion” (GA59: 35) or “phenomenological-critical destruction” (GA59: 30), which should be thought of as not so much “demolition” (*Zertrümmern*) but rather as “de-structuring”, *Abbau* (GA59: 35). In his ‘Phenomenology of Religious Life’ lectures, he speaks of the need to subject modern history of religion

to a “phenomenological destruction” to allow the evidence of its “foreconception” to manifest itself (GA60: 78).⁸ By 1923 he is emphasising hermeneutics, not as some kind of interpretative method, but as Dasein’s own “wakefulness” (*Wachsein*) with regard to its own existence; hermeneutics is concretely understood as the self-interpretation of facticity (GA63: 15).

The Meaning of Primitive Christian ‘Religiosity’ – The Historical

Remarks scattered through his early writings attest that Heidegger was deeply interested in this idea of the phenomenological description of religious life experience and had been making serious efforts to come to grips with selected writings of the Christian tradition, including the writings of Paul, Augustine, Eckhart and Luther, as well as the works of Kierkegaard. Even in his more formal academic exercises he was indicating the need to study life. Thus, already in his Habilitation (1915), Heidegger had claimed that philosophy had to concern itself with “the value of life (*Lebenswert*)”. Furthermore, he maintained that the formal study of Scholastic thought needed to be balanced by a phenomenological exploration of religious experience:

I hold the philosophical, more exactly, the phenomenological handling of the mystical, moral-theological, and ascetic writings of medieval scholasticism to be especially crucial in its decisive insight into this fundamental characteristic of scholastic psychology (GA1: 205).

Heidegger wanted to penetrate into the living heart of scholasticism through reading the mystics as well as the dogmatic treatises: “In the medieval world-view Scholasticism and mysticism essentially belong together. The two antithetical pairs: rationalism and irrationalism, Scholasticism and mysticism, do not coincide” (GA1: 410). Later in his career, he would read Greek philosophy beside the works of the Greek tragedians. Indeed the thinking (*Denken*) of philosophy itself will be balanced with the poetic activity (*Dichtung*) of the poets. The academic and the conceptual is never enough; it conceals a deep distortion of life-experience.

Heidegger’s abandonment of the system of Catholicism meant that he was no longer interested in dogmatic religion but rather in what he terms “religiosity” (*Religiosität*) and the “religious attitude” (*die*

religiöse Einstellung) and its peculiar relationship to its world (GA60: 129). He was interested in the whole interconnecting nexus (*Zusammenhang*, a term used frequently by both Husserl and Dilthey), that is a religiously-lived life.⁹ The problem of “access” and the right starting point for interpreting the phenomenon of religious life (*christliche Religiosität – christliches Leben – christliche Religion*) in an authentic sense underpins much of Heidegger’s ruminations on method.¹⁰ He was concerned that pseudo-conceptualisations and “pseudo-philosophy” (*Scheinphilosophie*) – into which category he now put the system of Catholicism itself – were obscuring the genuine phenomena of religious life (GA60: 313).

In these early Freiburg lectures Heidegger constantly emphasises that religion (as a way of life) has its own “wholly originary intentionality” (*ganz originäre Intentionalität*), its own structural categories (GA60: 322) – described in his 1920-21 lecture course as “existentialia” (*Existenzialien*) (GA60: 232), its own “worldliness” (*Welthaftigkeit*) and “valuableness” (*Werthaftigkeit*) (GA60: 322), and its own basic conceptions on which philosophy must not try to impose its own conceptual schemes from without:

Real philosophy arises not from preconceived concepts of philosophy and religion. Rather the possibility of its philosophical understanding arises out of a certain religiosity (*Religiosität*) – for us the Christian religiosity [...] The task is to gain a real and original relationship to history, which is to be explicated from out of our own historical situation and facticity (GA60: 124-125).

Heidegger claims that no real religion “allows itself to be captured philosophically” (GA60: 323).¹¹ As he writes in 1923:

A concept is not a schema but rather a possibility of being, of how matters look in the moment [*Augenblick*], i.e., is constitutive of the moment – a meaning drawn out of something – points to a forehaving [*Vorhabe*], i.e., transports us into a fundamental experience – points to a foreconception [*Vorgriff*], i.e., calls for a how of addressing and interrogating – i.e., transports us into the being-there of our Dasein in accord with its tendency to interpretation and its worry [*Bekümmern*] (GA63: 16).

Religious life already experiences and lives out its dynamic existentialia. For Heidegger it is important to read the religious from within, using its own existential categories (in the case of Paul: notions such as *kairos*,

parousia, pistis, sarx [flesh], *aner pneumatikos*, and so on), although not necessarily solely from the standpoint of the believer.¹² He is reluctant to call these existential categories *concepts* in that this would be to overconceptualise what are essentially lived differentiations, and indeed he opposes the kind of theological interpretation that wants to set up these notions as concepts. He wants rather to see them as “complexes of meaning” (*Sinnzusammenhängen*) (GA60: 134). Furthermore, in analysing religion (as earlier in his discussion of Scholasticism), Heidegger wants to avoid any suggestion of a distinction between ‘rationalism’ and ‘irrationalism’ (presumably in opposition to those who wanted to assign religious phenomena to the domain of the irrational). Religion has its own kind of meaning, its own way of laying out its life-apprehension.

Although Heidegger is aware of Rudolf Otto’s analysis of religion as centred on the idea of the “holy” or the “numinous”, in fact, for Heidegger, the key to an understanding of religion in general and the Christian religion in particular is not so much the numinous as what he calls “the historical” (*das Historische*) (GA60: 323). The “core phenomeon” (*Kernphänomen*) (GA60: 31) or “founding sense-element” (GA60: 323) of religion is “the historical” (GA60: 31)¹³: “Factual life emerges out of a genesis and becomes in an entirely special way historical (enacted)” (GA60: 141). The religious way of being in the world is as a kind of historical consciousness. Unfortunately, in his 1920-21 *Phenomenology of Religious Life* course, Heidegger is not particularly forthcoming about what precisely he means by “the historical”. For Heidegger, history is not something that can simply be made an object of study. Rather, we are cast in history, we live it: “History hits us, and we are history itself” (*Die Geschichte trifft uns, und wir sind sie selbst*) (GA60: 173). Factual life and the experience of the historical add up to being the same thing; the manner human beings are concerned, worried or preoccupied by time and by the temporal aspects of their lives. In later lecture courses Heidegger will be more explicit about the manner that *Dasein* occupies history and is highly critical of inauthentic ways of understanding the process of history.

Heidegger is deeply aware that philosophy does not relate to its history in the manner in which other disciplines do; and he is similarly aware that the experience of the historical in religion is completely different from the history of the evolution of dogmatic concepts. Central to the Christian experience is eschatology and eschatology cannot be

construed simply in terms of ordinary experiences of history and temporality. Similarly, Heidegger wants to separate the existential experiences of religion from the recognition of dogma:

The dogma as detached content of doctrine in an objective, epistemological emphasis could never have been guiding for Christian religiosity. On the contrary the genesis of dogma can only be understood from out of the enactment (*Vollzug*) of Christian life experience (GA60:112).

The history of religion is not a history of dogma. Rather religion makes the historical itself a puzzle (and Heidegger recognises how both Origen and Augustine recognised and attempted to address the “problem of the historical” within religion) (GA60: 112). In one of his strongest statements on the link between religion and history, Heidegger writes: “History in its most authentic sense is the highest object of religion, religion begins and ends with it” (GA60: 322).

In analysing the historicity of religion Heidegger goes on to proclaim that religion, and specifically Christianity, offers a specific way of experiencing (or “living”) time: “Christian experience lives times itself” (GA60: 82). Here, Heidegger emphasises that the term “lives” (*lebt*) is being employed as a transitive verb, taking an object.¹⁴

Heidegger maintains that what is lived in primitive Christianity is temporality itself (*Zeitlichkeit als solch*) (GA60: 80); it endures time, suffers through it. Moreover, presumably each religion has its own way of relating to time (Mircea Eliade’s work in comparative religion here might be invoked¹⁵), and Heidegger claims that Christian life has its own specific form of experience, that differs in kind from anything else. Christianity offers, to use the Wittgensteinian phrase, a different “form of life”. Heidegger needs therefore to specify the manner in which authentic Christian life was lived – how its existential structures were shaped, how time, space, death etc., were experienced. How is this to be done?

Heidegger’s “Christianness” or “Christian religiosity” has to be traced back to its historical origins, its “primal foundation” (*Urstiftung*), to employ the Husserlian terminology. Inspired by the hermeneutic tradition and by his own conversion to Protestantism, Heidegger was also being drawn to the uncovering of the life of primitive Christianity, the Christianity of the earliest texts. Christianity in its original form has a unique relation to time and history, one that has been covered up and

overlayed by Greek concept-formation (GA60: 104). Just as he would later be drawn to studying the *Urstiftung* of Greek philosophy in the writings of Anaximander, so also he tried to understand the form of primitive Christian life as revealed in the earliest extant Christian documents, St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, written in 53 AD, among other Pauline letters (GA60: 87). For Paul and for primitive Christianity: "The meaning of temporality determines itself out of the fundamental relation of God – however, in such a way that only those who live temporality in the manner of enactment understand eternity" (GA60: 117).

Unfortunately, here, in this 1920-21 course, as in the Freiburg lecture courses generally, Heidegger is somewhat vague and promissory in his approach to the kind of temporality enjoyed by Christian life and how it orients itself to the eternal. His confidence in describing temporality grows over the years such that, in his 1924 lecture to the Marburg Theological Society, Heidegger is much more detailed in terms of explaining the relation between Dasein and temporality. Here he laments that previous Christian thinkers (paradigmatically Augustine) have always taken their orientation from the eternity enjoyed by God (*aei*) and measured time in some respect as offset against eternity (of course the pattern for this way of thinking was laid down by Plato in his *Timaeus*), whereas he wants to clear the foreground by analysing how time is lived in its everyday sense.¹⁶ Heidegger does recognise that the distinctive claim of Christianity is that time is in some sense "fulfilled" (e.g., St. Paul, Gal. 4: 4), but his own account concentrates on the manner the self loses itself in the everyday and flees from facing futurity.

Although Heidegger also begins to incorporate descriptions of historical living in the life-world from Aristotle, especially his *Nicomachean Ethics*, and seems to be moving towards a structural analysis of human existence as a whole, nevertheless, he continues to maintain his interest in interpreting the nature of the specifically Christian experience of the world right up through the 1920s. In his 1928 Marburg address 'Phenomenology and Theology' for instance, he continues to emphasise that "Christianness" and the life of faith consists of a certain stance towards historical existence and a historical existence that has been recreated through the historical acceptance of the Crucified: "faith is an appropriation of revelation that co-constitutes the Christian occurrence, that is, the mode of existence that specifies a factual Dasein's Christianness as a particular form of destiny" (GA9: 45).

Indeed, one might argue that Heidegger never loses his fascination with the Christian experience of the world. After all, his later spiritual interlocutors – Nietzsche and Hölderlin – also were focussed on the meaning of Christian revelation and its impact on Western culture. Heidegger is always deeply concerned about the implications of Nietzsche’s remark that two thousand years had passed without the emergence of a new god. Similarly he was fascinated by Hölderlin’s poetic efforts to insert Jesus into the pantheon of the Greek gods (see his poem ‘Bread and Wine’ for instance). Both the Greek and the Christian worlds were times when the gods walked the earth, whereas now they have withdrawn leaving the world in darkness. Right up to his last days, as witnessed by his *Der Spiegel* interview (published posthumously in 1976), Heidegger is concerned with contemporary human existence as a kind of state of preparedness or readiness for the anticipated arrival of or absence of “a god”.¹⁷

Heidegger makes living a certain kind of life to be the essence of Christianity rather than the acceptance of a dogma (e.g., the Resurrection). While he does follow Augustine (and Kierkegaard) in emphasising the historical reality of the Crucifixion as the central axis of Christian belief, he wants to portray Christianity more generally as a kind of existential taking up of time and history (an expectation of salvation). Having peeled away what he took to be the metaphysical and theological falsifications and distortions of the phenomenon of religion, he recognises the core phenomenon to be a certain way of experiencing life (*Leben*) or existence (*Dasein*). Moreover, he tends to read the religious ‘situation’ in strongly existential terms: Paul is in anguish; Augustine struggles with his “unsettled heart” (*inquietum cor nostrum*). Christian life is an experience of life in its essential “insecurity” (*Unsicherheit*) (GA60: 105). Indeed, even in the 1930s when, under the spell of Ernst Jünger, Heidegger began to reject Christianity more vehemently, he still sees the essential nature of the life experience that religion responds to (inauthentically) as “the great noble awareness of the insecurity of ‘existence’”.¹⁸ In this sense, in his 1924 lecture to the Marburg Theology society, Heidegger emphasises that theology is not about God (who is unknown), but rather about human existence (*menschliches Dasein*) as “being before God” (*Sein vor Gott*) (CT: 1).¹⁹ Religious life is about a certain commitment to living under a particular decision (in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ he will characterise it as a humanism since everything is thought to depend on the salvation of humanity) (BW: 201).

The Existential Structures of Life: Everydayness and Fallenness

Heidegger uses his analyses of religious life as a springboard for a more general analysis of human existence as such. In his early Freiburg lectures, he begins to identify the existential structures that will receive full scale thematisation in *Being and Time* (1927). It is in this early period of reflection on the existential structures of Christian living that Heidegger develops his particular conceptions of “everydayness” (*Alltäglichkeit*), where time is experienced primarily as the present, and “fallenness” (*Verfallen*), the manner in which human life finds itself captivated by the world.²⁰ When Heidegger writes that “Christian experience lives time itself” (GA60: 82), he suggests that Christianity has a certain stance towards life in its temporal unfolding, one which puts emphasis on a future which has already arrived, the *parousia*. *Parousia* in traditional Greek means “arrival” (GA60: 102), and was used in the Old Testament to include the arrival of the Lord on the day of Judgement or in Jewish texts to refer to the arrival of the Messiah. Heidegger claims that in Christianity *parousia* means the arriving again of the already appeared Messiah, and hence its entire conceptual structure has changed.

Parousia is not characterised by “waiting” or “hope”, rather the issue is a question about how one relates to one’s life, the “enactment of life” (*Vollzug des Lebens*) (GA60: 104). It constitutes a different sense of temporality, a different relation to the temporal structures of the “now”. Similarly faith (*pistis*) is not interpreted as a kind of believing, a “taking to be true” (*Fürwahrhalten*) (GA60: 108) but rather as a “complex of enactment” (*Vollzugszusammenhang*) of sense, a way of experiencing capable of “increase” or greater intensity and hence testifying to something like authenticity. Christian hope, as Heidegger interprets it, is not about some future event to come but rather about enduring, coping and resilience in life (GA60: 151).

Central to Heidegger’s interpretation of Christianity is that Christian life involves “enactment” (*Vollzug*): Christian facticity is enactment (GA60: 121). The challenge for Christian factual life is to remain “awake and sober” in relation to the challenge of life. Gradually, hermeneutics itself takes over the role of being a kind of wakefulness of factual Dasein. Heidegger is transferring the conditions for authentic Christian life to human existence as such; this is not so much a secularisation of the religious framework as a universalisation or formalisation, recognising that what the religious attitude identifies can

also be approached through hermeneutical-phenomenological readings of everyday life and its accompanying anxieties. By 1924, Dasein has become identified with time. Not just Christians live time; Dasein as such lives time. Moreover, the authentic way to approach time is to be oriented towards the future and to see the past as a possibility, as Heidegger elaborates in his 1924 lecture to the Marburg theologians: “In being futural in running ahead, the Dasein, that on average is, becomes itself; in running ahead it becomes visible as this one singular uniqueness of its singular fate in the possibility of its singular past” (CT: 21).

In all his discussions of this topic right through to *Being and Time*, Heidegger is critical of the relatively superficial way contemporary life-philosophies and indeed contemporary theologies have dealt with the “primordial phenomenon” of life (GA59: 176).²¹ Heidegger is even critical of Dilthey (the “highpoint” in the philosophy of life) (GA9: 12), as well as Simmel, Scheler,²² Nietzsche and Bergson (GA61: 80-81). He includes in his general criticism Heinrich Rickert, who himself had published a virulent critique of life-philosophy on the grounds that life had to be conceptualised.²³

For Heidegger the term ‘life’ is too vague and ambiguous (GA61: 81). Already in 1920 Heidegger had commented on the irreducible polysemy of the word *Leben* (GA59: 18), a comment repeated in his review of Karl Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews* (GA9: 13). However, at least in the early twenties, he felt he had no alternative but to play with the word, or as he says, to let the word play with him (GA9: 13). Heidegger is reminding us of the link between experience (*Erlebnis*) and living (*Leben*). Husserl too had written that living is in a certain sense experiencing (*Leben ist Erleben*). Overall, in describing the experience of concrete life, Heidegger is unhappy with the term *Erlebnis* so beloved of Husserl and Dilthey; in 1919 he speaks of this term as being so faded as to be useless (GA56/57: 66).

Heidegger speaks of the need for philosophy to avoid worn concepts and return to the “original-historical” (GA60: 63), the “sense origin” (*Sinnursprung*) (GA60: 232). Christianity has a sensitivity to factual life and offers a response to it. Heidegger had noticed that a key concept in early Christian texts is *zoé*, life, and he remarks on the centrality of this concept in his 1922 Aristotle text: “one must in principle keep in view the fact that the term *zoé*, *vita*, means a basic phenomenon, upon which the Greek, the Old Testament, the New Testament-Christian, and the Greek-Christian interpretations of human Dasein are centred”.²⁴

In this 1922 text, Heidegger goes on to state that the “basic sense of the movement of factual life is caring (*curare*)” (Heidegger 1992: 361). What is central to individual lived life is that the liver cares about it, is involved with it in a concerned way.

As part of his effort to gain the proper description of life, Heidegger read Karl Jaspers, whom he believed to be at least trying to describe life in living, dynamic terms. In his 1919-1921 review of Jaspers’s *Psychology of World Views* (which he had personally sent to Jaspers in 1921), Heidegger sees himself as trying to “free up the real tendencies of Jaspers’s work” (GA9: 2). Jaspers too is rightly critical of contemporary philosophy of life; he too aims at a clarification of ‘life’ (GA9: 7). But Heidegger points out that Jaspers cannot avoid certain presuppositions, prejudgements and foreconceptions in his approach to life. This does not indicate a bare contradiction in Jaspers, rather it forces us to reflect on ‘method’ which also arises out of presuppositions and prejudgements: “We cannot but give ourselves an initial understanding of method along with our preconceptions about the subject matter” (GA9: 8). Heidegger is already struggling to articulate the hermeneutic sense of life as always already lived from within a certain ‘fore-having’.

The centre of Jaspers’s approach is *Existenz*, the phenomenon of the ‘I am’. Heidegger wants to free up the genuine sense of this phenomenon avoiding the kind of false particular conceptions of existence in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. “Limit situations (*Grenzsituationen*) shed light on our vital Dasein”, Heidegger writes (GA9: 10). Humans have a sense of themselves as wholes and unities and because of this they experience antinomies (death, grief, etc.). Heidegger’s main critique of Jaspers is that he has a basic presupposition about life as a whole but tells us little about what this “seeing in the whole” means.

Writing to Karl Jaspers on December 16th 1925 Heidegger says that

Hegel from the beginning failed categorially to grasp life – existence – process and the like. That is, he didn’t see that the traditional stock of categories from the logic of things and the world is fundamentally insufficient, and that we must question more radically, not only about becoming and motion, happening and history – but about being itself.²⁵

Of course, Dilthey represented for Heidegger the chief proponent of the

notion that the peculiar logic of life or ‘ontology of life’ (SZ: 249, n. vi) could be identified, but Heidegger’s own reflections on the structures of religious life force him to radically alter his mode of approach. Ironically given his disdain for academic philosophy, he came to see the power of phenomenology for uncovering life in its factual sense.

Reforming the Phenomenological Approach Through Formal Indication

During his lecturing career at Freiburg, and while he was struggling with the legacy of neo-Kantianism and his own interest in life-philosophy, Heidegger always maintained that phenomenology (in some radical version) represented the only possible mode of approach that could let the phenomena appear. However he was also becoming more and more concerned that Husserl’s phenomenological approach was too intellectualistic, and struggled to articulate his own radicalised vision of phenomenology as a kind of self-reflexive enacting of life itself. In his Freiburg lectures, his assessment of the then current state of phenomenology was often quite negative and his tone scathing. In fact, it is only after Heidegger went to Marburg that his tone calmed down and became more appreciative of Husserl’s contribution (e.g., in his 1925 Marburg course on ‘History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena’ [GA20]).

In 1923 in his ‘Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity’ (GA63) lecture course, for instance, Heidegger complains of the dismal state of phenomenology as it had been practised in Göttingen (presumably he was drawing on gossip as he never attended Husserl’s seminars in Göttingen): “Göttingen 1913: For a whole semester Husserl’s students argued about how a mailbox looks. Using this kind of treatment, one moves on to talk about religious experiences as well. If that is philosophy, then I too am all for dialectic” (GA63: 110). Similarly, he accuses phenomenology of having becoming too soft and trendy:

Phenomenological research, which was supposed to provide a basis for scientific work, has sunk to the level of wishy-washyness, thoughtlessness, and summariness, to the level of the philosophical noise of the day, to the level of a public scandal of philosophy [...] The George circle, Keyserling, anthroposophy, Steiner, etc. – everything absorbs phenomenology. How far it has gone is shown by a recent book, *Phenomenology of Mysticism*, which appeared with an authorized publisher and with the most official sponsorship

(GA63: 73-74).

The book to which Heidegger is referring is Gerda Walther's *Zur Phänomenologie der Mystik* (Walther, 1923).²⁶ Perhaps we can hear in this deprecation of the phenomenology of mysticism a certain anxiety in Heidegger's voice. He himself had been the one chosen by Husserl to write in this field, yet in 1923 he still had published nothing, whereas Walther had a book out on the subject. Heidegger's own approach to mysticism is to be found in his lectures on the 'Phenomenology of Religious Life' where he discusses St. Paul. For him mysticism has nothing to do with "absorption" or "special exertion" but is primarily about facing up to the weakness of life (GA60: 100). For Heidegger, medieval mysticism takes its orientation from St. Augustine.²⁷ But his own view of mysticism was that it involved a certain committed way of enduring the vicissitudes of life, rather than any transcendence of it.

In his Freiburg lectures, Heidegger characterises phenomenology in terms of seeking the "formal indication" (*formale Anzeige*). Commentators such as Theodore Kisiel have seen this as the key to Heidegger's original and unique understanding of phenomenology (Kisiel 1993: 164-170). Amusingly, Heidegger's meditations on this topic in his 'Phenomenology of Religious Life' lectures seemingly led to complaints from the philosophy students, who clearly had signed up for lectures about religious life rather than obscure methodological excursions in phenomenology (GA60: 65). Unfortunately, I cannot here enter into a detailed discussion of Heidegger's somewhat obscure notion of formal indication. Suffice to say that he had been working on the concept already in his 1919 *Kriegnotsemester* lectures, suggesting that Husserl's distinction between generalisation and formalisation (primarily in *Ideas*

I § 13) contains an important clue for how phenomenology might be carried out. For Heidegger, as for Husserl, generalisation was tied to materiality and meant moving through a hierarchy of levels of materiality from lower level species to higher genera, from this patch of seen blue, to 'blue', to 'colour', to 'sensuous quality', and so on (GA60: 58).²⁸

Formalisation, however, cuts right across this hierarchical ascent by immediately grasping anything whatsoever as a 'something' or 'essence', for instance: "the stone is a thing". Formalisation thus involves taking a different stance (*Einstellung*) towards something in a manner that is not affected by the material content of the phenomenon. Formalisation relies on an attitude taken towards a thing and hence is "relational" as

Heidegger calls it. Somehow, as Heidegger envisages it in these years, formal indication stands apart from both generalisation and formalisation (which both operate from the standpoint of the universal or general) and allows for direct access to the phenomenon without empty generalising it, i.e., applying universal categories which would precisely deny what is individual in this life (Kisiel 1993: 170). For Heidegger, the formal indication does not belong within a theoretical attitude at all and acts to counteract the “falling” tendency in our interpretation. The “indication” of formal indication is a warning to signal that the relational character of the phenomenon must not be elided. In other words, Heidegger is trying to specify what belongs essentially to life as temporal and historical without falling back into generalities. One does not live in generalities but enacts a specific involvement which phenomenology can describe. Heidegger writes:

This formally indicated determination of the sense of the historical is neither to be regarded as one which determines the objective historical world in its historical structural character, nor as one which describes the most general sense of the historical itself (GA60: 64-65).

With the methodology of formal indication, Heidegger is trying to transform Husserlian phenomenology and make it more suitable for his explicitly hermeneutical task of interpreting life. Despite his general criticisms of phenomenology, Heidegger is vigorous in defending it against contemporary criticism, primarily coming from the neo-Kantian tradition, specifically Natorp and Rickert. In his 1919 lecture-course ‘The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview’, he takes issue with Natorp’s criticism that phenomenology’s claim to be founded in immediate intuition is bankrupt as all immediacy has to be mediated by concepts. For Natorp, at best original experience can be “reconstructed” by tracing back the original “construction” process whereby experiences were subsumed under generalising concepts (GA56/57: 103). Heidegger defends phenomenological viewing by arguing that the conceptual description is in fact founded in an original experience that is not theoretical in character (GA56/57: 111). Furthermore, it is a mistake to consider phenomenological “signification” to be itself another kind of standpoint; it is in fact the attempt to free thinking from standpoints. The “original sin” of phenomenology, as Heidegger puts it in the same lecture course, is to assume that the phenomenological stance is merely another

standpoint (GA56/57: 110). For Heidegger, the phenomenological signification goes along with the life process itself and grasps the essential “worldliness” of experience in a non-falsifying way. Phenomenology essentially operates with what Heidegger calls “hermeneutical intuition” (GA56/57: 117). In later lecture courses, Heidegger will make a similar defence of phenomenology against his former teacher Rickert’s criticisms.

Heidegger wants to reconceive phenomenology as a kind of individual living-along with the trajectory of historical factual life itself; going backwards and forwards in the way in which our own lives project the future from the taking up of and repetition of elements in the past. Heidegger even manages to read Husserl’s fundamental phenomenological principle, his “principle of principles”, as articulated in *Ideas I*, in support of his own understanding of phenomenology as a kind of lived relationship with life. In *Ideas I* Section 24 Husserl writes:

Enough now of absurd theories. No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source [*Rechtsquelle*] 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, 1976: 43).

Husserl’s principle of principles was designed to in fact be presuppositionless, to exclude all theorising and to explore our conceptuality ‘from below’. In his 1919 lecture course, Heidegger glosses Husserl’s principles of principles in the following way:

If by a principle one were to understand a theoretical proposition, this designation would not be fitting. However, that Husserl speaks of a principle of principles, of something that precedes all principles, in regard to which no theory can lead us astray, already shows (although Husserl does not explicitly say so) that it does not have a theoretical character (GA56/57: 110).

Heidegger goes on to say that the real meaning of this principle of principles is “the primal intention of genuine life, the primordial of life-experience and life as such, the absolute sympathy with life (*Lebenssympathie*) that is identical with life-experience” (GA56/57: 111). Heidegger has the intuition that we cannot do philosophy ‘from above’; there is no position above human life, so all questioning comes

from within the historicity and temporal dispersal of actual concrete living. There really are no abstract general frameworks in philosophy; philosophy, like life itself, for Heidegger, as he puts it in his ‘Phenomenology of Religious Life’ lectures, is “comportment” (*Verhalten*) (GA60: 8).

Here we have a classic instance of the complex tension in Heidegger’s relationship to Husserl. On the one hand, Husserl lacks the instinct for pulsating life. Heidegger however denies that we are given over to feeling; rather the challenge is to let things speak for themselves. For Heidegger, as he discusses at the end of this lecture course, phenomenology must somehow find a way of becoming attuned to non-theoretical authentic life. The challenge is to find the right mode of access to this historical, factual life-experience and overcome the “predominance of the theoretical” that shapes philosophy from Aristotle to Husserl.²⁹ Heidegger recognises that eidetic insight is somewhat biased towards the theoretical, the problem then is to find a way to capture the essential meaningfulness of the lived in its individuality. As he puts it in his ‘Phenomenology of Religious Life’ notes: “Problem: The intuitive eidetic is, as hermeneutical, never neutral-theoretic; rather it itself has only ‘eidetically’ the oscillation (*die Schwingung*) of the genuine life-world” (GA60: 336).

In his more detailed discussion of phenomenology in these early courses, Heidegger is critical of Husserl’s somewhat naïve view of the object as revealed in perception. This involves criticising Husserl’s overly theoretical sense of perception. Speaking of looking at a lectern, Heidegger asks the question of what precisely one sees. Both critical realism (Locke, etc.) and transcendental idealism (neo-Kantianism) assumed that what we really have to build on are ‘sensations’. “I see the lectern” means I am having certain visual sensations. Heidegger here follows Husserl – naïve experience does not see sensations but rather the lectern (GA56/57: 92). Yet, there is a major difference of interpretation between them as to what exactly is seen. One might say one sees the lectern, but what if the person seeing it had no familiarity with lecterns, say someone from a pre-technological tribe in the Amazonian jungle? Would they say they see a ‘something’?

Heidegger himself introduces the notion of the non-scientific Senegal Negro “suddenly transplanted from his hut” (*ein Senegalneger als plötzlich aus seiner Hütte*) who has no familiarity with college-style furniture, lecterns and so on. He would see a lectern not just as a “bare

something”, a material object, but as “something which he does not know what to make of”. He goes on to insist that something is given to us from out of an environment (*Umwelt*), and this worldly character somehow invests our seeing of an object. The environment is what is given immediately.

Heidegger is here questioning and probing one of Husserl’s most basic assumptions, namely, that knowledge takes its justification from the *Urdoxa* of perception, where seeing is understood as a kind of stripped down or naked perceiving but always already has a certain significance (GA56/57: 85). If one’s individual perception cannot be universalised (precisely because what one sees is not the same as what someone else, e.g., the Senegal negro, sees) then the possibility of phenomenology becoming a science is foreclosed from the start. Heidegger concludes: “The meaningful character of ‘instrumental strangeness (*zeugliches Fremdsein*)’, and the meaningful character of the ‘lectern’, are in their essence absolutely identical” (GA56/57: 85).

Humans live in a horizon of significance. The thing somehow manifests out of its world: “it worlds” (*es weltet*) (GA56/57: 94)! Somehow phenomenology has the task of catching this ‘worldliness’ (*Welthaftigkeit*) of experience. It is precisely this worldly character that makes a purely theoretical approach impossible. Historicity means being inserted into a world, experiencing worldliness through and through. In his ‘Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle’ lectures, Heidegger writes: “The phenomenological category ‘world’ immediately names – and this is crucial – what is lived, the content aimed at in living, that which life holds to” (GA56/57: 71).

The Dispersed Experience of Selfhood in the World

In these early Freiburg lectures Heidegger emphasises the seamless integrity of a concretely lived life (full of struggle, emotion and uncertainty), one that does not reduce à la Husserl to the stream of experiences (*Erlebnisstrom*), understood as a chain of perceptions, judgements, and so on, but rather is described as ‘full’, and, primarily simply as ‘historical’. In fact, the strongest emphasis is put on the historicity of lived experience. Heidegger maintains that the theoretical attitude that an ego takes is not the usual manner of being ‘egoically’ inserted into a lived life. To focus, as Husserl does, on the lived experience as such (*Erlebnis*) and to see that as the basic movement of

life is actually a “de-vivication” (*Ent-lebnis*) of fundamental experience (GA56/57: 90).

All experience has the character of significance and in that significance I have no experience of an ‘I’, no inner perception:

I experience myself in factual life neither as a complex of lived experiences (*Erlebniszusammenhang*) nor as a conglomeration of acts and processes, not even as some ego-object in a demarcated sense, but rather in that which I perform (*ich leiste*), suffer, what I encounter, in my conditions of depression, elation, and the like. I myself do not even experience my ego in separateness, but I am as such always attached to the surrounding world (*Umwelt*) (GA60: 13).

Heidegger is critical of Husserl’s account of the ego. We simply don’t experience an ego in the manner Husserl describes:

In being defined with the terms ‘our own’, ‘appropriation’, ‘appropriated’, the concept of facticity – Dasein which is in each case our own – initially contains nothing of the ideas of ‘ego’, person, ego-pole, center of acts. Even the concept of self is, when employed here, not to be taken as something having its origin in an ‘ego’ (GA63: 29)!

Experiencing a life is not necessarily experiencing an ego, for Heidegger. In fact, he repudiates the view that constitution consists in tracing a relation to an ego; instead Heidegger says that the being of the *sum* has to be interrogated, beginning a theme which will emerge clearly in *Being and Time* but which is already present in his discussions of St. Augustine in his early lectures.

Life-experience is the whole “positioning” or “stance” (*Stellung*) of humans in and toward the world (*Stellung des Menschen zur Welt*) (GA60: 11). The world is the surrounding world shared with others, and there is a mode of existence whereby we are “by others” (*Dabeisein*) (GA60: 231). A unique feature of my being in the world is that my standing towards those things is not itself co-experienced (GA60: 12), rather factual life is oriented towards the content itself. The ‘how’ merges with the content. The mode of experiencing itself is experienced in “indifference” (*Indifferenz*) (GA60: 12). I experience my life as spread out in time, as caught up in moods. I am dispersed across my life: “Self-dispersed life encounters its world as ‘dispersion (*Zerstreuung*)’, as dispersing, manifold, absorbing, engaging, unfulfilling, boring” (GA61: 119).

Life is in itself world-related or world-involving (GA61: 85); world gives us the content-sense of the phenomenon, life. Heidegger speaks of 'world' here as a category of life, where by category he means something that is "alive in life itself"; later he will describe it as an existential. It is also noteworthy that Heidegger frequently uses the term "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) in these 1921-22 lectures (GA61: 94), a term that Husserl had begun to use around 1917 and which played a major role in his writings of the 1920s (e.g., 'Phenomenological Psychology', *Husserliana IX*) and 1930s (specifically *Crisis*).

Of course, as Heidegger delves further into the manner life is lived, he emphasises the central notions of concern and care. Living means "caring" (*Sorgen*) (GA61: 89), to care for and about something. The same view towards the essence of Christian life involving something like "concern" or "worry" (*Bekümmern*) is articulated in the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* lectures (GA60: 52). Caring is the experience of objects in the world in terms of their encounterability. Every experience is an encounter, and "encounter" (*Begegnis*) is the reverse side of phenomenological givenness, for Heidegger: "The basic character of the object is therefore always this: it stands, and is met with, on the path of care; it is experienced as meaningful" (GA60: 52).

Indeed, for Heidegger, in his winter 1921-22 lectures on Aristotle: "Caring is the fundamental sense of the relationality of life" ("*Das Sorgen ist Grundsinn des Bezugs von Leben*") (GA61: 98). Heidegger wants phenomenology to correct its approach to life and move away from theoretical inspection to a kind of self-involved description. There is a manner of describing life which is authentic. However, and this is where the picture gets more complicated, the authentic existential description of life as it is lived immediately throws up the fact that the manner life is embraced by me (the character of its "mineness") is also something that can be either authentic or inauthentic.

Most of the time (and again this insight is drawn from the Christian grasp of life), we are running away from ourselves, concealing our true existence, hiding in the realm of the everyday (and also the "public" or the realm of "publicity" [*Öffentlichkeit*], which is a new category introduced by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (SZ: 127). A life filled with objects is a "self-sure" life fleeing from its facticity. Factual life has a "movedness" (*Bewegtheit*) that Heidegger calls "unrest" or "inquietude" (*Unruhe*) (GA61: 93). In his 'Phenomenology of Religious Life' lectures Heidegger identifies characteristics of factual life as

“attitudinal, falling (*abfallende*), relationally indifferent, self-sufficient concern for significance” (GA60: 16). This “concern” (*Bekümmern*) for significance is characterised as entirely worldly in direction. Concern is a deep aspect of factual existence (GA60: 52). Dasein always seeks meaning – a concrete meaning valid for it. Heidegger speaks of “Dasein” and even “living existence” (*Lebensdasein*) (GA60: 54).

The “indifference” Heidegger speaks of is my lack of concern about the manner in which my moods or modes of access to the phenomena change (I am in a different mood at a concert than at a lecture). The falling tendency (*abfallende Tendenz*) (GA60: 17) is its being drawn into the object world. We need a motive to turn this around.

This critique and dissatisfaction with the notion of the human and the living plays a large role in his choice of the alternative word, Dasein. Furthermore, right from the outset of his academic career in Freiburg, Heidegger is emphasising that human existence is being-in-the-world, making use of a wide range of terms for that. Humans cannot be extracted from the world. As he puts it in his 1924 Marburg lecture:

Dasein is that entity which is characterized as being-in-the-world. Human life is not some subject that has to perform some trick in order to enter the world. Dasein as being-in-the-world means: being in the world in such a way that this Being means: dealing with the world (*mit der Welt umgehen*); tarrying alongside it (*bei ihr verweilen*) in the manner of performing, effecting and completing, but also contemplating (*Betrachtung*), interrogating, and determining by way of conremplation and comparison. Being-in-the-world is characterized as concern (*Besorgen*) (CT: 7).

Falling, Temptation, and the Seduction of the World

Although Heidegger’s existential analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time* contains very little explicit reiteration of his earlier concern with religious life, there are certain aspects that continue to echo through in the new work. “Falling” or “Fallenness” (*Verfallen*) continues to be a “definite existential characteristic of Dasein itself” (SZ: 176), but it is now shorn of its connection with the explicitly Christian way of carrying out life. In the very first mention of “fallenness” in the Second Introduction to *Being and Time*, Dasein is said to have an inclination to “fall back upon its world (the world in which it is) and to interpret itself in terms of the world by its reflected light”. At the same time, Dasein “falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold” (SZ: 21). In

the major section devoted to fallenness (SZ § 38), Heidegger insists that the term has no negative connotation but is used to signify the manner in which Dasein is firstly and mostly “alongside the ‘world’ of its concern” (SZ: 175). Fallenness means an “absorption” in being alongside others, a phenomenon Heidegger seems to have taken over from St. Augustine. But Heidegger warns that we should not contrast fallenness with being in a state of grace or with some higher, purer status. It is not a property from which we can rid ourselves. It is not any “corruption” of human nature or its dark side. It is essential to human existence. Yet Heidegger does describe it as a kind of “temptation” (SZ: 177) – a concept that is discussed under its Latin term *tentatio* in his ‘Phenomenology of Religious Life’ lectures – also as a kind of seducing and “tranquillising” of the spirit. When one is tranquillised in this way, one is not quiet but rather caught up in the hustle and bustle (*Betrieb*) of the world.

Another aspect of fallenness is the self-alienation it induces. Overall Heidegger sums up the characteristics of fallenness as including “temptation, tranquillizing, alienation and self-entangling”. Dasein is in a downward plunge towards “the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness” (SZ: 178).

The Authentic Existence, Resoluteness and Choosing a Hero

One of the most important insights of the early Heidegger is that authenticity is a modification of inauthenticity: “On the other hand, authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon” (SZ: 179). Being-in-the-world is always fallen (SZ § 39). The ‘I’ with which one speaks in the usual way is a part of this falling (SZ: 321), it is speaking in the mode of *das Man*. Authentic Dasein is simply a way of coming to terms with or taking hold of our inauthentic condition. Authentic Dasein is seen as being in some kind of stance of decisiveness with respect to inauthentic everyday Dasein. Authenticity is a kind of keeping silent in a kind of reticence that somehow protects the self in its anxiety. As he will put it in *Being and Time*, it is “resoluteness” that brings Dasein back from falling through some kind of peculiarly personal retrieval of what is still futural for oneself (SZ: 328). Somehow gaining a new sense of temporality is what lifts one from inauthentic falling. This authentic sense of the future is what Heidegger calls “anticipation”. This anticipation is not just oriented

to the future but involves a new way of seizing the present in the “moment of vision” or “blink of an eye” (*Augenblick*) (SZ: 338). This is an explicitly Pauline notion. Yet, what one decides and resolves about is always something that is in some sense inherited, passed on by tradition, repeated. As Heidegger will always underscore: “The assumption of the tradition is not necessarily traditionalism and the adoption of prejudices. The genuine repetition of a traditional question lets its external character as a tradition fade away and pulls back from the prejudices” (GA20: 187).

Repetition as a genuine way of living it is something Heidegger had found in Kierkegaard’s study, *Repetition*, where it is parsed as a dedication of one’s life to someone else.³⁰ Heidegger does credit Kierkegaard with analysing the “moment of vision” in a penetrating manner as an existential situation, but criticises his conception of time as being the ordinary one which gives prominence to the “now” (SZ: 338, n. iii). But his own sense of experience of lived temporality wants to emphasise the possibility of a genuine recovery of tradition through a seizing of the time and a patterning of one’s life on that of another (Paul on Jesus, for instance).

Although he says very little about it in any of his works, Heidegger grasps the essence of Christianity as a “choosing of a hero”, a deliberate decision to make one’s life a kind of repetition of an original authentic life. Repetition is a genuine way of seizing hold of a possibility for life; repetition involves the handing down of tradition (SZ: 385). The life of Jesus is for Christians the paradigm of how life should be lived, with authentic futurity and with anxiety. But Heidegger is more interested in the way Paul is the first one to live in this mode of patterning a life. Paul is the one who has ‘chosen a hero’ (it is noteworthy that Paul never met Jesus so he is choosing a kind of life for himself, taking on the mantle of a genuine tradition, patterning himself after a life that he has only as an inspiration).

Most of the time, and following Kierkegaard’s view that there is also an inauthentic form of repetition, humans choose *das Man* as their model or hero (SZ: 371), but it is also possible to choose anyone as a hero. Indeed, choosing a hero is an essential possibility of Dasein:

The authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been – the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero – is grounded existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for it is in resoluteness that one first chooses the

choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated (SZ: 385).

This is a dense claim, one that resonates of St. Paul and Kierkegaard, and which also will be taken up in the Sartrean conception of authenticity. For Heidegger, it is connected with a specific manner of completing, carrying through, or “enacting” a life. But it must be a life that can be repeated. In other words, to retrieve or repeat the original moments of Greek philosophy is to make a venture into the future. The life which is brought to enactment (*Vollzug*) is a life where the essence of the historicity of life is faced and somehow, in the facing, is transformed, is faced towards the future. Finally, for Heidegger, this involves a kind of resolute facing one’s destiny which is at the same time an authentic way of belonging to one’s time, one’s “generation”: “Dasein’s fateful destiny in and with its ‘generation’ goes to make up the full authentic historizing [*eigentliche Geschehen*] of Dasein” (SZ: 384-385).

History had been the inner meaning of the Christian life, as we saw from the early lecture courses. Heidegger furthermore agrees with St. Augustine in recognising that Christianity makes history a vital matter. It is no longer an eternal cycle of recurrence but rather a vector going in only one direction. The Christian has to grasp the inner meaning of the historical and turn it around in authentic “historical happening” (*Geschehen*). Christianity somehow recognises the fullness of time in the midst of the uncertainty of actual lifetime and, at the same time, asserts the pressing need to seize the time. In all these discussions in the early Heidegger, the Christian characterisation of the life experience turns out to be exemplary; it offers nothing less than a phenomenological “formal indication” of the vital temporality of life, free of imposed and distorting philosophical concepts. What Heidegger takes into *Being and Time* from these early lectures is the framework of essential descriptions of living: the structures of everydayness, falling, concern, and so on. In his analysis of Christian experience, Heidegger spends more time on the inauthentic experience of time than on the authentic. His remarks on authentic life are brief, and in fact for Heidegger, as he believes for Paul, it is a matter of decision and seizing of the moment guided by one’s concept of a hero. That Heidegger would later choose to follow Hitler as his ‘hero’ is a matter for further and deeper reflection.

Notes

¹ See the entry in Schuhmann (1977: 231). For the significance of Husserl's achievement in gaining funding for a paid assistantship, see Ott (1993: 115-16).

² For example, Heidegger criticises Dilthey for misconstruing Augustine's significance by seeing it as a validation of inner life as later developed by Kant (GA60: 164).

³ See Kisiel (1993: 150).

⁴ Heidegger's letter to Krebs is reproduced in Ott (1993: 106-107).

⁵ See Heidegger (1989: 16).

⁶ See GA60: 324f.

⁷ *Destruktion, even Zerstörung.*

⁸ Heidegger's first use of the term "destruction" is in GA58 (139). John van Buren has pointed out that Heidegger's model for the method of phenomenological destruction is Luther's attack on Aristotle and Scholasticism. See Van Buren (1994: 167). However, Van Buren overstates the case when he claims, "The young Heidegger saw himself at this time as a kind of philosophical Luther of Western metaphysics" (Van Buren, 1994: 167). In fact, Heidegger's tone in his lecture courses is still one of coming to terms with the meaning of the various competing philosophical methods (neo-Kantian, phenomenological, hermeneutic, etc) that were current in contemporary Germany. It is true, however, that Heidegger arrived in Marburg with a reputation as an expert on Luther. See also Crowe (2006).

⁹ Dilthey too had written on the nature of early Christianity and had specifically treated of Augustine in his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, which Heidegger had studied carefully. See Dilthey (1988).

¹⁰ See for example GA60 (131).

¹¹ Heidegger was not alone in wanting to free religion from its philosophical superstructure. Ernst Troeltsch was doing something similar, as of course was Rudolf Bultmann.

¹² In this sense, Heidegger is advocating the phenomenological approach to religion akin to what was developed somewhat later in the thirties by Mircea Eliade. Both Heidegger and later Eliade were deeply influenced by Rudolf Otto's seminal *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Otto, 1950).

¹³ See also GA60 (323).

¹⁴ Some verbs can be used transitively or intransitively, e.g., ‘to grow’. Plants can simply grow in the garden (intransitive), or else the farmer can grow a crop (transitive). ‘To live’ is also in this sense both transitive and intransitive; one lives in a house for instance (intransitive) or one can ‘live a long life’ or ‘even live a lie’ (transitive) or, Heidegger’s example, ‘to live one’s mission’. See GA61 (82) where Heidegger makes this distinction between transitive and intransitive senses of ‘to live’.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Eliade (1954).

¹⁶ See CT.

¹⁷ See Heidegger (1993: 91-116, especially 108).

¹⁸ In the words of the Protestant theologian Heinrich Buhr who was present at Heidegger’s speech to student representatives at a meeting in 1933 in Todtnauberg, see Ott (1993: 227).

¹⁹ Interestingly in *Being and Time*, Heidegger will characterise this kind of living before God as caught up in ‘anthropology’.

²⁰ In his ‘Letter on Humanism’, Heidegger emphasises that *Verfallen* does not signify the theological fall of humanity but rather an essential relation of human being to Being, see BW (212).

²¹ See, for instance, Heidegger’s review of Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews* (GA9: 13) as well as SZ (249, n. vi).

²² Heidegger mentions Max Scheler’s 1919 essay, ‘Versuch einer Philosophie des Lebens’.

²³ See Rickert(1920).

²⁴ See Heidegger (1992: 358-93, especially 361).

²⁵ Heidegger in Biemel (2003: 62).

²⁶ It is somewhat unfair to characterize Gerda Walther as a populariser; in truth she was a deeply intelligent and respected student of Husserl during the Great War when his audience were primarily women students, e.g., Edith Stein (most of the men had been drafted into the war effort), and foreigners like the Canadian Winthrop Bell and the Pole Roman Ingarden. This period is precisely at the time when Heidegger was becoming active in Husserl’s circle and indeed Walther describes Heidegger in her memoir of that era. See Walther (1960).

²⁷ See GA60 (1959).

²⁸ See Husserl (1976: 26).

²⁹ See GA60 (314).

³⁰ See Kierkegaard (1983). For a comprehensive study of repetition in Kierkegaard, see Eriksen (2000).

References

- Biemel, W. and Hans Saner (eds) 2003. *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence* (1920-1963) (tr. Gary E. Aylesworth). Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.
- Crowe, Benjamin D. 2006. *Heidegger's Religious Origins. Destruction and Authenticity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm. 1988. *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (tr. Ramon J. Betanzos). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1954. *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History*. Princeton : Princeton University Press.
- Eriksen, Niels Nymann. 2000. *Kierkegaard's Category of Repetition* (Kierkegaard Studies Monograph 5). New York: de Gruyter.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1993. "'Only a God Can Save Us": Der Spiegel's Interview with Martin Heidegger (1966)' (tr. Maria Alter and John D. Caputo) in Wolin, Richard (ed.) *The Heidegger Controversy. A Critical Reader*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 91-116.
- 1992. 'Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation' (tr. Michael Baur) in *Man and World* 25 (1992). 358-393. Originally published as 'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)' in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989). 228-74
- , and Elisabeth Blochmann. 1989. *Briefwechsel 1918-1969* (ed. Joachim W. Storck). Marbach a.N.: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft.
- Husserl, Edmund. 1976. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. I. Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (ed. Karl Schuhmann) (Husserliana III/1). The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. 1983. *Fear and Trembling/Repetition* (tr. E. H. Hong and H. V. Hong). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kisiel, Theodore. 1993. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ott, Hugo. 1993. *Martin Heidegger. A Political Life* (tr. Allan Blunden). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Otto, Rudolf. 1950. *The Idea of the Holy* (tr. John W. Harvey). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rickert, Heinrich. 1920. *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modeströmungen unserer Zeit*. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Schuhmann, Karl. 1977. *Husserl-Chronik. Denk- und Lebensweg Edmund Husserls*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Van Buren, John. 1994. *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*.

Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Walther, Gerda. 1960. *Zum anderen Ufer. Vom Marxismus und Atheismus zum Christentum*. Remagen: Reichl.

– 1923. *Zur Phänomenologie der Mystik*. Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer.