Taking History to Heart: On Making Use of Heidegger's Early Lectures

Robert C. Scharff

ABSTRACT: Almost from the beginning, Heidegger tends to see the hermeneutic explication and clarification of our existential condition – *and only this ontological condition considered as such* – as the first consideration for any aspiring phenomenologist. Why not cultivate such a radical self-awareness for the sake of becoming phenomenological "ontically" and everywhere? Perhaps this question is already being answered without our specifically asking it? Either way, this (maybe not so merely "preparatory" hermeneutic phenomenology) is surely worth inquiring about.

KEY WORDS: Heidegger; young Heidegger/early Freiburg lectures; phenomenology; hermeneutic phenomenology; Dilthey, Husserl; formal indication; lived experience; Cartesianism; postpositivism.

CONTACT: Robert C. Scharff, University of New Hampshire; Robert.Scharff@unh.edu

Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual 14 (2024): 39–73

Over a century has passed since Husserl published his famous broadside against philosophical naturalism and historicism and proposed in their place a rigorous, science-like, foundational phenomenological philosophy. And soon after, Heidegger became known as his teacher's most famous revisionist, if not his "existentialist" opponent. In my view, the young Heidegger was in fact already neither. Both revising and opposing start by silently letting someone else set the basic terms for discussion, thus pushing any revisionist or opponent toward understanding themselves as obliged either to defend "another" view or to just say "No." Of course, both moves offer lots of opportunity to clarify and argue about intellectual differences, but they also leave everyone simply "positioned" where they began – each standing outside the work of another, learning nothing new that might prompt them to critically examine their own stance. Conceptually clarifying and justifying positions and principles is often treated as the very essence of "doing philosophy," but this is certainly not Socratic[1]...or phenomenological.

The young Heidegger was of course very familiar with un-Socratic philosophizing. It was all around him, in various displays of "the theoretical attitude" that seemed to make everyone science-minded and Cartesian. Even theologians seemed more interested in defending doctrines and formalizing arguments than in the experience of faith. More importantly, however, he also felt this same theoretical attitude already functioning as a kind of default outlook *in his own thinking* – an outlook that seemed to be informing his life with a pinched and narrowed overall sense of things that was repeatedly failing to do justice to his current experiencing of lifeworld concerns. Yet Heidegger does not respond to this situation primarily by criticizing the theoretical attitude; he is more interested in understanding the "philosophical motive" that might lead someone to enact it, which might shed some light on how one could go about establishing a more open and pluralistically responsive one.

It is ultimately with this issue in mind that Heidegger develops his famous contrast between the "actual" phenomenology of Husserl and the "possible" hermeneutic phenomenology Heidegger wants to

pursue instead.[2] What makes Husserl especially interesting is that in his case, a very tradition-bound insistence on philosophical strictness or rigor (*Strenge*) seems driven by a pluralistic and non-reductive desire to be ontologically inclusive and responsive rather than judgmental regarding the really real and our relations with it. In other words, his work seems to be full of phenomenologically inspired "intuitions" that are nevertheless being betrayed by his fundamentally "transcendental" (i.e., Cartesian) account of them; and the central element in this betrayal seems to be his unquestioned commitment to establishing a phenomenological method that somehow, unlike all the previous modern epistemologies, will actually succeed in being ahistorical, de-situated, and thus finally capable of explicating the essences of "the things themselves" as actually "given."[3]

For Heidegger, it is due to this commitment to method that, in spite of himself, Husserl continues to think and speak as an inheritor of the modern (Western, Cartesian) tradition of philosophies of (theoretically concerned) consciousness. Hence, regarding the possibility of retrieving and carrying forward the phenomenological promise of Husserl's original intentions, Heidegger proposes a kind of triple interpretation. First, Husserl's silent adherence to an excessively influential, theory-minded tradition must be undercut and "destructively" loosened up to let phenomena to which no theoretical account can do justice more fully appear. Second, the resulting possibility of retrieving and carrying forward Husserl's phenomenological intentions must be articulated in an appropriate (i.e., "formally indicative," not theoretically representative) language. And third, the whole project of destruction and retrieval must be conducted and critically monitored in an atmosphere of studied self-awareness (*Selbstbesinnung*) that is conscientiously attuned to the unavoidably historical character of any articulation of factical life. In what follows, Section 1 focuses on destruction (in relation to Husserl); Section 2, on formal indication (in relation to Heidegger); and Sections 3–4, on how current philosophizing might benefit from reconsidering Husserl destructively and Heidegger through his formal indications, in order to retrieve from them, under the changed conditions of our own historicity, a better sense of how to be phenomenological.

1. TAKING HISTORICITY PERSONALLY

In Husserl's writings, "being-historical" is for the most part interpreted in the traditional way as analogous to phrases that speak of our being part of nature, namely, as referring to our empirical condition – our being placed in that big object, the past, something to be studied by the historical-human and natural sciences. For this reason, he argues, a phenomenological philosophy cannot start with either idea. Just because in fact we start our lives as natural and historical creatures and usually understand our lifeworld experience in these terms does not mean that phenomenological philosophers must stay in this natural-historical condition and adopt its standpoint in order to properly account for it. Indeed, he says, philosophers have always rightly resisted defining their task in such empirical terms. Hence, when Husserl reads that Heidegger has decided to "remain immersed in the historical" like Dilthey, he takes this to mean that Heidegger is "*forcing* [himself] to stay *mired* in mere historico-critical research" and is therefore doomed to fall forever short of achieving the proper standpoint for phenomenological science.[4] In other words, like the typical modern philosopher Husserl takes it for granted that direct, authoritative appeals to lived experience or to any alleged "facts" about it are hopelessly corrupted by an attachment to either the reductive methods of empirical science or to feelings, prejudices, cultural preferences, and murky unclarity. The philosophical "naturalism" that results from philosophers aping the standpoint of natural science is already being widely criticized, he notes, but the "historicism" that has more recently arisen with the development of the human sciences must now be undercut in the same way. As he writes to Georg Misch in 1930, to be a true phenomenologist, he simply had to become "the 'ahistorical Husserl' at times" and "distance himself from history… to come far enough methodologically to be able to pose scientific questions in regard to it."[5] Ridding phenomenologists of their historicity is one of the aims of the transcendental-phenomenological method.

The fact that Husserl speaks of himself here in the third person says everything. By the time he has embraced an outlook that views Heidegger as "*forcing* himself" to "*remain*" immersed in the historical, all hope of his understanding phenomenologically what it is to "be historical" is lost. The fact that Husserl comes back later (in the *Crisis*) to consider "history" (ontological status not clarified) is irrelevant. For it was not the historical determinateness of phenomenological thinking itself that he was unwilling to consider earlier but now acknowledges. Phenomenologists still cannot have "historical consciousnesses." As far as "who" the phenomenologists are that ask about "history," nothing has changed. They are still methodologically purified, ahistorical Minds, now turning to more phenomena, no doubt in part encouraged to do so by the then-current crises in the empirical world where phenomenological thinking is taking place.[6]

Heidegger's alternative to this ahistorical line of reasoning is early, pointed, and well-known. Nearly a decade before the appearance of *Being and Time*, he was already depicting human beings as "factically existent" in a way that is fundamental and unavoidable even for phenomenological philosophers who wish to study it. "Being historical," he says, is shorthand for how, in the widest possible sense, I meaningfully "am" already living through life. We might say that young Heidegger reminds every aspiring ahistorical thinker that they have a history problem. Having-been and already projectively understanding everything in a certain inherited and determinate way is not optional. Hence, to be human is to always find myself *both* in the process of reenacting an inherited sense of who I am, what is real, and what one does with it – a default sense, as Heidegger puts it, that is already "coming back at us from our future" – *and* currently living-through this default sense in a way that only fits imperfectly together with the global sense of one's relatedness to everything that is actually emerging experientially with it.[7] As Heidegger will eventually put it at the beginning of *Being and Time*, we are always inclined to be

> caught up in the world of ordinary affairs so that we fall into interpreting ourselves in its reflected light; *at the same time* we also fall in with a tradition that we have more or less explicitly taken up—a tradition that deprives us of providing our own guidance in asking questions and making choices. This is especially true when it comes to…developing an ontological understanding of our ownmost being. (GA 2: 28–29/SZ 21 tm, em)

Today, media-saturated common sense and a science-minded tradition together encourage objectivism in thought and consequentialism in action—even when our current experience is giving us a strong sense that this "guidance" is radically insufficient for 21st-century life.

In criticizing Husserl's ahistorical response to this situation, Heidegger does not start by considering Husserl's transcendental/constitutive "standpoint." He has a preliminary question: What goes on in Husserl's philosophy before he "has" one, that is, before he actually takes a position (GA 63: 46/59)? This question, Heidegger argues, is about his basic tendency in thinking, that is, his philosophical concern. To understand someone "in their own terms," as Dilthey puts it, this basic tendency must be thought through as a concern which may or may not be done justice by the transcendental, empirical, scientific, pragmatic, theological, etc. account that is given of it. In Dilthey's phrasing, it must be considered from "the standpoint of life itself" and in terms of how it is lived-through such that possible modes of expression arise from and out of it.[8] People intellectually "have" positions; but they are already "living" the motivations upon which their formulation depends.

Seen in this light, Husserl's "theoretical attitude" need not be immediately subjected to conceptual critique (e.g., for its scientistic distrust of lifeworld experience and its overheated commitment to transcendental philosophy), for it is more illuminating (and brings him into closer conversation with our own concerns) to begin hermeneutically, that is, as possessing a very obviously historically determinate, experience-based concern for "the things themselves" whose general manifestation (*Lebensäußerung*) is his projected, methodologically prepared

phenomenological "system." Understood in this hermeneutical way, everything he says about "theorizing" the "essentials" of things by means of an objectivizing "method" facilitates one *but only one* possible (albeit immensely important and powerful) line of experiential "intensification," namely, a life-induced concern for the possibility of acquiring and using a certain kind of logically or empirically predictive "knowledge." Husserl's philosophical attitude is thus perfectly suited for phenomenologically illuminating the development of the hard sciences and their technologies; but it seems ontologically tin-eared when it comes to the things themselves in the human sciences, and it is still less appropriate for moral and socio-political engagement, the arts, spiritual inquiry… in short, all non-scientific life-concerns.[9] Hermeneutically understood, it articulates *only one life-inspired line of intensified concern*. It is thus unsurprising that its specific epistemological commitments make it ontologically an unsuitable model for something like an ur-science (*Urwissenschaft*). Its dogmatic assertiveness about object-being cannot hide the fact that both the differences among the sciences and between all of them and the rest of life "give themselves" to us in ontological ways too rich to be classified under the heading "different kinds of objects."

For the young Heidegger, then, the fundamental weakness of Husserl's phenomenology is that it fails to acknowledge that it cannot begin by leaping out of its own historical-factical skin. Like other human beings, phenomenologists live through life from "hermeneutic situations" they must make "their own" rather than deny having. To be sure, a theoretical attitude can be simply enacted, its philosophical value affirmed by reference to the ideal of Reason, and then embraced along with the method that marks out this direction of thought on the grounds of its empirical usefulness. In this respect, notes Heidegger, Dilthey gets us no further, insofar as he, too, fails to *make a philosophical problem* out of the "prephilosophical" condition of "actual Dasein."

Yet there is in Dilthey's work, if not his self-descriptions, a philosophical tendency that points in the right direction.[10] For he distinguishes natural and human science, not just methodologically or by assigning their "objects" to different regional ontologies but in terms of what sort of relatedness to the world one must be living through in order to engage in

either sort of science. To be sure, in regards to *subject matter*, the natural sciences "explain" objects and the human sciences "understand" people; yet at the same time, this means that *researchers* must be related to and interact with their respective subject matters differently – that is, either objectively or hermeneutically. This is an ontological, not a psychological point. Explaining and understanding are not just something that goes on in the head of a scientist; they involve different ways of engaging with what is experienced – they are methodologically and ontologically expressive of different life concerns that arise in the living-through of life, and they are existentially both different from each other (i.e., everything about what it means to do "research" is different) and very different from, say, considering beauty, formulating an ethics, or developing a worldview.

But what sort of differences are these and who says so? Here a new line of questioning opens up that cuts across the usual boundaries, explicit methods, informal procedures, and standard practices set implicitly or explicitly by each individual sort of life manifestation. It will have to be a "very general" inquiry, indeed one whose results would apparently be somehow "universal," which implies the presence of some sort of "unity" among numerous diverse life-concerns and their expressions. In other words, it will somehow have to be a "philosophical" inquiry, but one in which none of the terms in quotes have their traditional meaning. At first, Dilthey is too busy defending the "scientific" status of the human sciences against the "unified science" position of classical positivism to ask about the relation of established types of science to the ones he is defending. But once satisfied that the legitimacy of understanding (*Verstehen*) as well as explaining (*Erklären*) have both been established, Dilthey began to see that much larger issues now loomed: How should we relate these two sets of science (or maybe more?) to each other? In an atmosphere where the "unity of the sciences" meant following the lead of the hard sciences, how do we handle the differences that now appear to be forced upon us, such that science, epistemology, and warranted knowledge are fundamentally plural nouns – and "from where" is this to be philosophically addressed?

Dilthey himself manages only to identify this task as a "general *epistemological*" one – but without addressing this task itself; without noticing how this designation destabilizes the very idea of an epistemology (in the same way as Husserl's labeling phenomenology the Ur-science does); and thus finally, without recognizing how this strange new task can no longer be understood as an issue for philosophers of science alone. In order to understand experience and all of its possible articulations "in their own terms," Dilthey says, one must take up the "standpoint of life" itself[11] – that is, start from within and cultivate an awareness (*Selbstbesinnung*) of how it is for us historical beings to engage in explaining or interpreting understandingly. But the idea of thinking and speaking "from there" – from out of life itself – suggests the possibility of a radically altered, not-yet-science-concerned orientation that would allow us to treat directly and with ontological fairness *any possible life-concerns and their expressions*, not just "scientific" ones.[12]

To pursue this opening, says Heidegger, means considering *what Dilthey's inquiries actually appear to be getting at* and trying to retrieve this from the unsatisfactory state in which he left it. In seeking the epistemological foundations of natural and human science, in his work as a historian, in his concern for ethics, as a worldview theorist – in all these activities, we can see him "on the way to the question of life." All of his discordant analyses, theoretical changes, displays of uncertainty, haphazard efforts at "trying things out" in his efforts to simultaneously do justice to natural scientific explanation and establish an epistemologically separate but scientifically equal status for historical interpretation – all of this is not just a sign that he failed to appreciate the "systematic" nature of good philosophy. Through all of it, there runs an elemental restiveness (*Unruhe*) regarding the possibility of understanding, for the sake of doing justice to any of its possible modes of expression, "the whole fact of being human" (GA 2: 526; 499/SZ 398; 377).

What is there for us to retrieve, then, is not Dilthey's epistemological questions formulated in Dilthey's way. Rather, it is the issue of "how philosophical experience explicates *itself*" phenomenologically, such that explaining, interpreting, poetizing, worshipping, responding to

art, searching for happiness and justice…can all be understood in their own terms.[13] Moreover, until the later days of positivism, philosophy had always been expected to address more than the task of grounding the sciences. How then, as *Being and Time* puts it, does one develop a hermeneutics of the whole of Dasein? Dilthey's work has shown us that there are two main problems facing such a hermeneutics: The first is how to "go back down into" life experience from all the currently preferred "theoretical" accounts of it, in order to make it an ontological problem in its own right. How, in other words, do we make Dilthey's "standpoint of life" philosophical? The second problem is finding a way to conceptualize and speak about this experienced place such that a responsive phenomenological orientation is sustainable – but again, to do so in a tradition-bound atmosphere that already encourages us to distrust experience.[14] I turn to the second problem first.

2. SPEAKING PHENOMENOLOGICALLY: FORMALIZING VS. FORMAL INDICATION

As with much of Heidegger's vocabulary, formal indication is often discussed with tight-lipped seriousness, but if one focuses mainly on *what he is trying to accomplish* by distinguishing it from other ways that language works meaningfully, this is really neither mysterious nor technical. To see how it works, consider how Heidegger analyzes "generalization."

At first, everything may appear to be obvious. Generalizations are everywhere; the problem starts when they are interpreted in an essentialist way. But it then seems to follow – especially if you have just been reading Husserl – that for phenomenology to respect phenomena as they are concretely disclosed in the living-through of life, it cannot be a "generalizing" activity at all. Generalizations, as everyone knows, "classify according to genus" (GA 60: 58/40), even if this is largely an informal affair in everyday life. Here as virtually everywhere, however, Heidegger finds matters less obvious than they seem. Generalizations don't just happen, as if they were events in Nature; they are (Dilthey again) manifestations or articulations of life. For there to be generalizations, there

must be general*izing*. And this is an ontological, not a psychological point. Whether we just consciously trace its inner logic or actually perform it, generalizing "is" always a movement of transition, say, "from 'red' *to* 'color,' or *from* 'color" to 'sensuous quality.' In Heidegger's words, there is always a "motivation" for the generalization, a concrete sense of "attitudinal enactment," where the movement from specific to general or general to specific is "bound to a certain material domain," perhaps a genus, perhaps a larger or smaller region, but in any case, *there is* a "determination of the dimension [*Anmessung*]" – that is, the creation of an atmospheric specification of the "what-content [*Wasgehalt*]" of the region that guides the transition from individual entities to a specific grouping – say, that of material object, mental object, living object, creature, etc.

Much less obviously, however, there is also another way to understand generality that involves no what-content – a generality, says Heidegger, that is free of all determination by regions, stages, or hierarchies, in which one "need not have passed through any lower generalities, in order to rise directly "to the 'highest generality' of 'object as such.'" In this sort of generalization, one "looks away from any what-content and attends only to the fact that the object is a given, attitudinally grasped one." To understand *this* sort of generalization, we must look to "the *relational meaning* of the pure attitudinal relation itself" rather than any what-content; and when we do, we find this meaning simply in the fact that "the object is given…and attitudinally found meaningful [*einstellungsmäßig erfaßter ist*]." Heidegger calls the enactment of this unregionalized understanding of generality, *formalization*, not generalization; and he gives two examples: "Something is an object (which can be said of anything and everything)," and "Experience as such, thing as such, are essences (which cannot be said of each [individual] object)" (GA 60: 59/41).

In everyday life this distinction, if noticed at all, seems unimportant. Both senses of generalization "stand within the meaning of 'general,'" and most of the time there is no apparent reason to recognize separately a generalization emptied of any reference to different domains. A generalization is a generalization. Period. Yet this is precisely why it is necessary

for an aspiring phenomenologist to make explicit both this distinction *and the usual disregard for it.* When we single out a phenomenon for investigation, Heidegger often repeats in these Diltheyan years, it is always for historically pre-given motives. Hence here, what is normally missed is the fact that formulations like "something is an object" are never ontologically innocent. It is certainly true that lots of philosophers have employed or criticized the traditional generalizing dualisms of genus/species, substance/attribute, thing/property; but one can feel comfortable or uncomfortable about these pairs without ever recognizing that even without any further specification into regions, formalization *usually already enacts the theoretical attitude* that sets the mood for regionalization; and as long as this attitude remains in place, no matter how one tries to tweak or critique these dualisms,[15] everything will continue to be "theoretically" pre-understood—"formed-out," as Heidegger says—with the "relational meaning" of "possible object present to a generalizing consciousness" standing ready for further classification as a specific sort of "what."[16]

In any case, Heidegger's unsurprising conclusion is that "Formal indication…has *nothing* to do with any of this…and falls [entirely] outside of the attitudinally theoretical." In this phrase, "formal" does not mean theoretically "formalized"; nor does it even concern generality (in the sense of not theoretically formalized…yet). It involves, he says, something much "more original" (GA 60: 59/40–41). "The formal" in his sense "indicates" a very different sort of "approach toward" possible determinations, of which theoretical formalization is only one. Phenomenological explication has its distinctive "approach [*Ansatz*]" or "enactment character [*Vollzugsmäßige*]," insofar as *its* "form" of explication "brings no preconceived opinion" about determinations with it, precisely because its guidance includes a "warning against" having any.[17] (And as we will see in a moment, the only way to secure the possibility of such explication is if we treat all explications at their point of origination in the living-through of life.)

Heidegger's purpose in analyzing the two sorts of generalization, then, is not just to distinguish them, relate them to each other, or criticize others for having mishandled them. It is to distance his conception of

formal indication from both of them, first, by uncovering their shared allegiance to a "theoretical attitude" – the former by embracing it, the latter by defining its intended departure from it, but in the former's terms – and second by explaining how, as formally indicated, we can keep phenomenology free from forming such allegiances. What Heidegger calls theoretical formalization in 1920 obviously has Husserl in mind as its most immediate critical target, but the idea of formalizing that lies behind this discussion will eventually be made explicit and transformed into the formal indication that guides his idea of the phenomenological destruction of the history of Western metaphysics. This "global" destruction, however, is a decade away. Here, the young Heidegger is still dealing with the necessary preliminaries.

The first question is not "what" to philosophize about but "who" philosophizes, and of those who philosophize, who does so phenomenologically. To philosophize as an objective thinker insures that one will encounter only objects and regions containing (various sorts of) objects. Phenomena, that is, matters given to us as they are encountered and lived-through, are only disclosed to phenomenologists – and then only sometimes, and up to now, more or less without proper awareness of how this is possible at all. Hence, "We are standing before the question of the new basic experience of life in and for itself and how a possible theory of life in and for itself prefigures itself out from it"[18] (GA 58: 228/171). As he puts it in *Being and Time*, how does one engage in phenomenology phenomenologically? By 1920, Heidegger has come far enough to explain how to think the problem of "actual Dasein" by "singling it out" while existing in a fundamentally objectivist culture with a largely "representational" linguistic tradition, nevertheless learning to use this language in a formally indicative way, while taking equally to heart the fact that phenomenology can never obtain an ahistorical outlook (GA 59: 169/129–130).

Against the objection that "singling out," like any other line of reasoning, must ultimately be understood in terms of the method used when engaged in it, perhaps all that is necessary to take the sting out of this question is to consider an analogy: What "method" did Socrates employ in his dialogues? If he didn't want to write anything down, shouldn't he

at least have included, as one of his topics, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind in Dialogues"? On the contrary, because ordinary conversation, Socratic dialogues, and hermeneutic phenomenology all come from and are always immediately responsive to lived experience itself, the very idea of delaying one's response until one gets advice about what to do is self-ridiculing. Responses in all three cases take their cues from what there is to respond to, not from pre-established procedural rules of the road. Heidegger likes Dilthey's way of putting this: Behind life, one cannot (theoretically/methodologically) go.

Nevertheless, one wants to say that one certainly does *something* – something which, when one continues to speak *from* the experience of doing it instead of relying on pat concepts imported from the outside, certainly is discussible at length and sharable in many ways. Phenomenological articulation, says Heidegger, needs to be like this – in other words, formally indicated, engaged in, discussed at length, but not theorized. Unfortunately, philosophers usually just begin, already theoretically predisposed toward absolutely everything – even toward those things that admittedly don't theorize very well. This means there is always the tendency to "consign ordinary factical life experience to secondary importance" and this, says Heidegger, "despite the fact that philosophy arises precisely *from* factical life experience and *returns* to it in a reversal that is entirely essential" (GA 60: 15/11, em).[19] Whether acknowledged or not, philosophizing repeatedly draws sustenance from life, and never more obviously than when it denies doing so, usually in the name of some objective formalization under which most philosophers are already thinking.[20] What a formally indicative account of this typical situation can do is facilitate a *phenomenological* return to factical life experience that acknowledges but does not bring theoretical "prejudice" and ontological compromise with it.

Let us be clear about just what Heidegger is criticizing. In separating formal indication from generalization and formalization, he is not just intent on exposing the fact that Western philosophy has "long been moving in the ontological direction" of generality-oriented theorizing and the objective classification of "the whole of Being into regions." Nor does he want all philosophizing to cease being objective. Especially

at the beginning, he wants to know why it has taken so long to feel the pinch of this orientation. Only recently, he says, has an "opposing consideration" arisen – in the form of the question, namely, of "how is the experienced experienced *in the manner of consciousness* [*bewußtseinsmäßig*]?" (GA 60: 60/41, em). One needs to hear this question in the right way. It is not asked theoretically and/or ahistorically, and Heidegger does not try to answer it with a "…because" that we can put in textbooks. In fact, he does not actively "pose" the question at all. It has, he says, simply "arisen." Like any disruption in the common course of life, it has emerged out of experience itself, not as an artifact of a previously adopted philosophical framework.[21] Is all experienced meaningfulness really to be so strictly correlated with "consciousness" – especially when consciousness is defined and judged in terms of how close or far away it is from the trained, sciened-minded consciousness operating in mathematics and in empirical research?

Of course, the defining framework he has specifically in mind is Husserl's version of the Cartesian one. "Bracketing" and moving to a "transcendental" standpoint are Husserl's version of the modern epistemological idea of cognitively "stepping back" from lived experience – in other words, they are his way of enacting a theoretical attunement, his specific way of ontologically formalizing how it "is" with everything that makes sense; and thus they are the basis of his interpreting Heidegger's "stay" with historical life as a refusal to become *phenomenologically* "conscious." But this, warns Heidegger, is only how Husserl's thinking looks from the outside. If instead, one stays with life in order to "experience the experiencing" of how it factically is with us, we can see "how" an "intensification" of our existential concerns *can but need not* move in Husserl's theorizing direction. The problem with Husserl's thinking is not that he characterizes objects as disclosed to an intentional consciousness. It is that in doing so, he remains entirely "oriented to a previously given discipline" – something like an objectivist natural science – and as a result, he cannot loosen himself up "from handed down possibilities and traditional types of determining and classifying." As a result, he cannot fully accomplish what his own principle of principles calls for, namely, to "make existence itself the theme of an inquiry that is determined by

existence itself" and not determined by one of its possible articulations (GA 17: 112/81). Like any "scientist," Husserl the rigorous ur-scientist understands himself as needing no history to secure his proper tools and achieve success.

Some commentators – rightly noting that Heidegger's target is usually Husserl even when he doesn't mention him by name – have objected as follows. Yes, yes, Husserl's original idea of a transcendental phenomenology is still too much influenced by the imagery of modern natural science; but read his later work. See how his image of "rigorous science" gets broadened and deepened, so that much of the early imagery is gone and a more sophisticated defense of being presuppositionless emerges. But this response misses Heidegger's point. His worry is not Husserl's reliance on the imagery of mathematical natural science or even his excessive use of it. It is not even Husserl's unbending adherence to a theoretical attitude and his accompanying dream of developing a phenomenological system (which he anyway sustains throughout his many reconceptualizations of phenomenology itself). Heidegger's main concern is why Husserl tends not to see this commitment, or to see its limitations.[22]

What Husserl misses is that there are two senses of "prejudice" at work in his thought. For it is precisely in being "unprejudiced" regarding the regionalization of being that he retains a prejudice toward the theoretical. In Heidegger's language, this is the "form" of Husserl's thinking – conceived as a "formal determination of the objective" – and being unprejudiced toward possible regions of being is its "content." What is "hidden" is the *relationship of objectivity* that undergirds this form-content distinction. Heidegger calls this relationship the "enactment character" of Husserl's phenomenological attitude, the attunement toward the "whole of Being," in terms of which he "turns one-sidedly toward [regionally anticipated] content" (GA 60: 63/43). As long as one looks *down* the path marked out by Husserl's formal determination, and in the *direction* of the intentional objects of various regions, being "unprejudiced" merely means not privileging any possible region. It is at least arguable that the things themselves *considered as objects* are pretty well-served in this way. But if one reflects *back* on this theorizing

attunement itself, one can see how this determination of sense itself operates as a prejudice against other possible attunements, but at the same time does so as a possible attunement that is ontologically no more or less expressive of life-experience and its concerns than the possibilities it devalues. As Heidegger notes, the problem is ontological hegemony. Even "a glance at the history of philosophy shows that [Husserl's sort of] formal determination of the objective entirely dominates philosophy" (GA 60: 63/43).

3. FORMALLY INDICATING PAST HUSSERL

It seems, then, that Husserl's way of criticizing philosophical naturalism catches his own phenomenology in the same net. Theoretical generosity towards the non-theoretical is still theoretical hegemony. Yet this criticism will remain ineffectual unless it is offered by someone whose thinking is grounded in a self-awareness of "being-historical," so that one makes sure that it does not give the impression that it is mathematical natural science itself that is being challenged but only the claim that its model of thinking is philosophically basic. To say, in a formally indicative mood, that we are always existing, living through life, being-in-the-world, temporalizing temporality, all in many possible modes, is not to make a counterclaim, at the same level of epistemic analysis, to Husserl's transcendental one. To "formally indicate" is precisely to prevent this kind of battle of assertions in the first place by speaking directly from the experience of life, ontologically turned toward the open space of possible relationships "where," but only among other possibilities, there is a theoretically formalizable mode of existential concern in which assertions are made and warrant sought. When it comes to how something can be meaningful, formal indication does not play ontological favorites. In Heidegger's words, it "stays away from any classification; everything is precisely kept open [and]…has meaning only in relation to…initially setting out [*Ansetzen*] the task of phenomenological explication" *from* lived experience itself (GA 60: 64/44). And we can see that this setting-out is possible when we understand that, as Heidegger says repeatedly in the early 1920s, formal indications find their ultimate actualization

or "fulfillment" only in and from the speaker's own temporal-historical situation. Their point is to speak of all phenomena phenomenologically, such that every phenomenon is interpreted in light of its existentially analyzed lived-through origin.

So, in the usual theoretical sense, generalization and formalization do indeed mark out something determinative, something intended to remain conceptually fixed in its basic meaning – something characteristic, respectively, either of every item coming under its "what" or of every conceptualizable "object" whatever. But together, as Heidegger says, they thus close off other non-theoretical paths of meaning as they guide the "move down" from a universalized standard of meaningfulness toward everything "objectively" cognized. By contrast, to formally indicate is to *see precisely what I just said* – but not as further formalizing in any particular downward-specifying way, but as opening thinking up toward the possibility of speaking *from*, not *about*, factical experience, "coming along this path from the theoretical while freeing ourselves more and more from it," seeing the "basic bearing" of such a phenomenological thinking, and following it with an increasingly phenomenological understanding of this possibility in terms of *our inherited tendency not to take it up* (GA 56/57: 110/92–93).

This sort of talk may be unfamiliar to many philosophers, but the actual everyday practice of speaking from experience from which it draws is not. In one place, Heidegger remarks that people routinely discuss "common, shared life-experiences and mutually *relate* everything to one another. . .[i.e.,] they don't lecture each other" as if they were conceptually representing "the what-character of objectivity" and describing in technical terms the sort of thing one sees through a microscope (GA 58: 11/88). Lecturing is something one does *to* another; it is thus a very specifically one-sided being-with-others. But "relating" our experiences to others need not involve a professional or social-psychological agenda. On such occasions, the language we use can look from the outside as if it were just plain sloppy, excessively flexible, and incapable of eventually being nailed down in more precise terms – in that familiar 20th century epithet, it appears Vague. But from the speakers' standpoints, all this apparent

imprecision is really motivated by a concern to be very responsive to and carefully guided by how something is actually being experienced.[25] In this sort of relating situation, says Heidegger, the "factically experienced contexts of meaningfulness will indeed be explicated, but still left in their facticity…and explicated…*in the style of factical experience*, of fully going along with life." In a footnote, he adds that "life is 'mightier' than theoretical cognition and its concepts" (GA 58: 111/216 n.2 em)!

That this way of speaking is common in life but infrequent and distrusted in philosophy prompts Heidegger to add that phenomenological explication always needs to proceed under a "warning" – that is, move with special mindfulness of the fact that a theoretical formalization of experience already tends to control the field. "Factical life gives itself in a particular deformation," namely, as a "formation into an object-thing" (GA 58: 240/181). It is this tendency to move toward the objective and materially present that Heidegger has in mind when he describes phenomenology's formally indicative "turning toward" experience as involving the opposite of following a properly trained consciousnesses in taking a "step back" from the living-through of life in order to correct or explain it. From the usual epistemological distance taken by modern philosophies of consciousness, lived experience always tends to be regarded as a kind of "puzzling presence of determinacy prior to all theoretical description…for which one invents the convenient title of 'the irrational," and then uses rational categories, either to domesticate or dismiss this puzzling disclosure" (GA 56/57: 117/99; cf., 218/187). Hence, phenomenological philosophizing must involve a "sinking *back down* into" existence, so that it can "experientially go along with the living-through of life" and thus keep itself in the position to describe life's "intensifications" pluralistically (GA 58: 254/192; cf., GA 56/57: 116–17/98–99, 220/188).

Something like formally indicative speech that routinely deals with factically unruly and theoretically elusive disclosures is in fact already common in our everyday lives. Yet as *Being and Time* recounts, in life as in modern philosophy, "just speaking" responsively (i.e., fulfilling formally indicative meaningfulness "in life" instead of with the guidance

of an epistemically sanctioned theory) tends to yield eventually to the search for something more conceptually "precise" whenever unsatisfactory situations (e.g., confronting disobedient hammers or suffering bouts of loneliness) come to explicit attention. And at this point, our default position is conceptually placing the matter objectively before us and theorizing what to do about it. In contrast, the aim of formal indication is to speak *in life's name* by declining to become objective and instead letting lived experience be and following out its own sense, both as initially disclosed and in the way(s) it might be taken up and intensified, practically, theoretically, artistically, and so on.

4. CONCLUSION: BECOMING HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL EVERYWHERE

Finally, however, I ask readers a favor. Reread the last few paragraphs. In them, I try to characterize the young Heidegger's first efforts to respond to something that seemed philosophically oppressive everywhere in his surroundings and that haunted him as he jumped through all the hoops necessary to secure a position in the German university system of his time: Sometimes silently, sometimes out loud, virtually everyone who claimed to be doing philosophy – of whatever type, on whatever subject, embracing every shade of outlook from intolerantly ahistorical to nothing-but-historical – seemed to be some sort of Kantian, or more inclusively some sort of philosopher of consciousness, most recently, in some sort of transcendental, naturalistic, or historicist form. Yet in sketching some of the features of the young Heidegger's effort to become genuinely phenomenological, I have seen no need to associate these remarks with any preparations for raising the Being question again. There are plenty of references to the way every epistemology presupposes an ontology, of course. But judging from what he does in those early Freiburg lecture courses, it appears that a great deal of good phenomenology is being done by those who have "prepared" themselves hermeneutically and "sunk back down into the living through of life," not as preparation for the Being-question but for the sake of speaking "from out of factual existing" *on behalf of specific life-concerns* that are currently encountering

interpretive difficulties that their established procedures appear powerless to fix. Is it not possible to conduct a running battle with the ending of the Western metaphysical tradition in technoscience, for example, while phenomenologically focusing specifically on the ontological challenges of quantum mechanics? Or must this concern be incorporated into something more explicitly like Heidegger's more ontologically ambitious project?

In the end, I leave this matter in the form of a question. Suppose that it is indeed possible to cultivate a phenomenologically determinate openness that might lead us off in every direction from whatever life concerns call for "intensification." How should we understand these opportunities in relation to Heidegger's own project – which, after all, starting with the last few lectures of KNS 1919, provided the original setting within which the notions of factical life, hermeneutical inquiry, historically bound motivation, formal indication, and so on, were initially worked out? It does seem as if the Anglo-American (and Northern European?) philosophical world in which Continental philosophers and other sympathizers currently study Heidegger is still as widely populated with late modern metaphysical and anti-metaphysical philosophers (i.e., Cartesians) as Heidegger's was. More recent waves of analytic philosophy and three generations of phenomenologists have changed the topical landscape much more than it has changed the landscapers. The end of the era of philosophical positivism has everywhere been announced. Metaphysics has been rejected, or naturalized. Everything is contextualized. The sciences are all equally interpretive practices, not variations on the one true form of rationality. Technologies are concretely studied, not just abstractly theorized; and the modern subject is dead. Yet "who" is doing all of this?

The fact is that many philosophers still tend to treat postpositivist and postmodern *topics* as if they were modern *subjects*, choosing their positions, making claims, and being as science-like as possible – even when they are talking about things and people that they happily contextualize and assure us are not just scientific objects. Like Heidegger, I think this issue is endemic and ontological, something to which psychological,

cultural, and socio-historical accounts merely testify and from which they then say we must "twist free" and achieve "emancipation." At first, the young Heidegger traced "the primacy of the theoretical [and its accompanying concept of Will]" in our thinking to the inherited dominance of Cartesianism; but fairly quickly, he came to regard it instead as expressive of Dasein's own basic ontological tendency to "fall away" from any phenomenological sense of its own being. In later work he comes to see even this tendency as something set up by the very manner in which everything "eventuates" for us. In any case, Heidegger argues throughout that this tendency to privilege theory (and simultaneously reduce Dasein to subject-being) "must be broken, not in order to proclaim the primacy of the practical, nor to…display [traditional] problems from some new angle, but because the theoretical itself…refers back to something pre-theoretical," namely, to what goes on in lived-experience before philosophy becomes what it is (GA 56/57: 59/50).[24] Formally indicated, the first task of phenomenological explication is to become attuned to and "live in" this historical-temporal condition. The trouble with *Being and Time* is that this task, though central and present at least by implication on every page, tends to get obscured by the sheer bulk of systematic analyses, a very misleading overall characterization of ek-sistence as "transcendental," and now a readership of confident philosophers who are often just looking in Heidegger for some good ideas to help them with their own "theoretical" issues.

Among today's philosophers, Husserl's 1911 description of the philosophical life still seems to fit "actual Dasein" all too well and all too often. Philosophers, he says, need "theoretical talent," not nobility and profundity.[25] Period. And so it is that today's Socrates does a lot of arguing; but he is no lover of wisdom.[26] Hence, I find myself "experientially" in a "Heideggerian" cultural atmosphere. I want to know how to proceed once I realize that "being historical" is not an optional condition from which it is possible to *existentially* "step back," even if *theoretically* doing so is all too easy. Temporally regarded from within rather than chronologically measured from without, the future that is currently coming back at me

to pre-determine "how everything is" seems just as "theoretico-logical" in its dominant and discomforting form as Heidegger described it in 1919.

So, I feel quite at home with the infelicities of Heidegger's early language – both regarding what he wants to do and in the unsatisfactoriness of his attempts to do it. That is what one would expect from anyone trying to speak from experience about troubling practices. By following his awkward, sometimes overly dramatic, still somewhat tradition-bound phrasings (e.g., about attitudes, postures, intuitive understanding, sciences (*Wissenschaften*) and an ur-science (*Urwissenschaft*), a phenomenological method that is not a method), I believe one can learn to read Heidegger himself in a formally indicative spirit. What he is getting at, rather than what "position" he is taking or what "theories" he holds, can thus be made the central issue and lines of thought he opened up can be made our own. Why, for example, is it formal indication, not scientific jargon that has to be called a "special" sort of conceptualization, when we use language routinely to tell each other in formally indicative ways what "really matters" to us in our lives, whereas facility with the language of science requires years of high-level instruction? Are deep misgivings about the technoscientific condition of our current global surroundings really best interpreted through theories of the "Anthropocene" – a geologically uncertified new age defined by us, conceived in terms of human characteristics and behaviors, and delivered with the instrumentalist conclusion that we caused it so we must cure it? Yet critiques of these moves are easier than securing better ways to understand coming to terms with their "motivations." Opposition again, not a path forward….

From the usual "methodologically prepared" distance of all those philosophies still based on the belief that philosophers must first become epistemological, every reference to lived-experience will seem like a counter-productive appeal to "subjectivity," mere opinion, and the irrational – perhaps even a display of weak-minded refusal to go where truth is found and transhumanism can take us (GA 58: 110–20/87–94, 161/123–24).[27] "Techniques" are introduced to assure that everyone takes their distance from experience along the same lines; and becoming educated means learning these techniques. Specific techniques change,

but not what they accomplish; and every appeal to them seems to reaffirm the idea that to "be" educated is to think and act according to the rules – which, as "objective," are also considered "neutral" (and so also silently reinforcing the views of the socio-politically powerful and the philosophical mainstream). What Heidegger retrieved from Husserl is the breakthrough idea that the phenomena of experienced life are never simply given to us; they must always be *won from* the hegemony of the double heritage of ordinary common sense and tradition (GA 58: 29/24). Husserl himself thought phenomenological "winning" meant securing some sort of advance *theoretical* guidance; hence, life *as lived* ultimately proved elusive for him. Yet his own repeatedly revised accounts of how to implement his principle of all principles already strongly suggest that the very idea of a method-guided phenomenology is fundamentally unphenomenological; indeed, it is "a sin against its ownmost spirit" (GA 56/57: 110/84)!

To picture – even as an unreachable ideal – a thinking that throws off its everyday and traditional impediments, assumes a proper posture with a proper set of directives, and communes with the things themselves is to dream precisely the old dream of somehow *not* being historical. But human circumstances are otherwise. Any philosophy that wishes to be phenomenological for more than an abstract minute must stay as engaged by life's social conventions and dominant tradition – that is, remain as mindful of our "being-historical *fallingly*" – as of our potential for "authentic" phenomenological openness. There is no methodological substitute for what must of necessity be a continuous, provisional, and repetitious process of "winning" a phenomenological attitude. Thanks to Dilthey, Heidegger could formulate an intention to "stay with life" and understand this to mean *dwelling in the tension* between Husserl's disappointingly tradition-bound self-descriptions and his enormously promising phenomenological notion of responding to the things themselves.[28] To "be there," making our own necessary ontic adjustments, seems to me still a most viable option.[29]

NOTES

1 I discuss this point at length in *How History Matters to Philosophy: Reconsidering Philosophy's Past After Positivism* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 33–62.

2 Fifty years later, citing the passage in SZ about phenomenology as having a "higher possibility" than becoming an "actual school" (GA 2: 51–52/SZ 38), Heidegger is still making this distinction and affirming – in the spirit of what "matters," if not in the same terms – his continuing concern for "what is most its own" in phenomenology, viz., "*corresponding to the claim* of what is to be thought" (GA 14: 101–102/82, em). As I have argued elsewhere, Heidegger's hermeneutic interpretation of Husserl is in no way oppositional or revisionist because he is already approaching him in light of what he has learned from Dilthey, as this is "corroborated and strengthened by the ideas of Count Yorck" (GA 2: 525/SZ 397). See Robert C. Scharff, *Heidegger Becoming Phenomenological: Interpreting Husserl through Dilthey, 1916–1925* (London: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2019), esp. Ch. 5.

3 The full passage reads: "No conceivable theory [or argument] can make us stray from the principle of all principles: that each intuition giving [something] in an original way is a legitimate source of cognition, that whatever presents itself to us in "Intuition" in an originary way (so to speak, in its incarnate realness) is to be accepted simply as what it gives itself as being, but also only within the limits in which it gives itself there" (Edmund Husserl, *Collected Works, vol. 2: Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. Fred Kersten [Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1983], 44, tm). Translation modified to highlight Husserl's reflexive use of variants of *geben*. See GA 56/57: 109–10; cf., GA 20: 103–11/75–80. Also, Scharff, *How History Matters*, 99–104, 138–140.

4 Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, eds. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston

(Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981), 196. Husserl initially directed this critique at Dilthey and his alleged historicism, but it is ultimately redirected and intensified in the direction of Heidegger. Though he eventually modified his view of Dilthey after the two corresponded, there is to my knowledge no evidence that Husserl ever stopped worrying about the threat of relativism that he thought lay even in Dilthey's kind of appeal to immediate experience, nor that he changed his mind about Dilthey's failing to distinguish clearly between empirical and phenomenological "psychology," nor finally that Dilthey's idea of philosophy as worldview theory escapes his criticism that worldviews "teach the way wisdom does" – by offering philosophically worthless, culture-bound "profundities" about "lofty practical interests" expressed by "noble personalities" (Husserl, *Rigorous Science*, 194–96). And to the extent that Heidegger, too, admits Dilthey's sort of fuzziness into phenomenology, he is interpreted as corrupting it in the same ways. I agree with Donn Welton that to find Husserl's substantive response to Dilthey's objections to the account of him in the *Logos* article, with the exception of the so-called Kaizo essays delivered in Japan (1922–23) that were available only much later, one has to go all the way to Husserl's *Crisis* volume, where "constitutive" phenomenology plays a much more tenuous role in his thought than it did in the years when Heidegger was working out his own understanding of the differences between Husserl's "actual" phenomenology and his "possible" one. See Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 457n.78). As to what it means to say that Husserl speaks for "our" tradition, I leave for another day.

5 Letter to Georg Misch, Nov. 27, 1930, cited in Bob Sandmeyer, *Husserl's Constitutive Phenomenology: Its Problem and Promise* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 169. Cf., Husserl, *Rigorous Science*, 196.

6 "The historical is not merely something of which we have knowledge and about which we write books; rather, we ourselves are the historical and are tasked by it. . . .[But given our "tendency to fall

away into more objective kinds of meaningfulness"] the motives for returning to the historical by way of our own history remain inactive and hidden from us" (GA 9: 33–34/29). Hence although it is true that continental Europeans were "doing" substantially more *Historie* in Heidegger's time than North Americans, they too were typically inspired by the same ahistorical model. Indeed, it is to such science-minded "linguistic" historians (i.e., "philologists," in the German sense) that Nietzsche addressed the second of his *Untimely Meditations*. See Babette Babich, "Nietzsche's Philology and Nietzsche's Science: On the 'Problem of Science' and '*fröhliche Wissenschaft*,'" in *Metaphilology: Histories and Languages of Philology*, ed. Pascale Hummel (Paris: Philologicum, 2009), 155–201; and William Arrowsmith, "Nietzsche: Notes for 'We Philologists,'" *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, New Series 1 (2): 1973/74: 279–380.

7 Heidegger could see, for example, how Dilthey the historian lives through his empirical practice with an awareness that he is engaged in a kind of research that is illuminating, sharable, and would clearly profit from detailed "epistemological" articulation; but when he tries to do so, he finds himself doing traditional epistemology in spite of himself, i.e., framing his concerns in naturalistic-Kantian terms and defensively assuring everyone that he really is being "scientific," even if his research has little to do with external observation, quantifiable data, laboratories, instruments, and law-like explanations.

8 As here (100–104), I sometimes draw in what follows on my *Heidegger Becoming Phenomenological*. A quick study of the language of the early lecture courses – with all its references to life, to its unified pre-theoretical togetherness/connectedness, to living things through (*er-leben*), to starting with experience as a temporal process, and so on (above all in GA 56/57 and GA 58) – shows Heidegger's explicit incorporation of Dilthey's approach to *Erlebnis* into his thinking nearly a decade before the appearance of *Being and Time*. See Scott M. Campbell, "The Intensity

of Lived-Experience in Martin Heidegger's *Basic Problems of Phenomenology (WS 1919/1920)*: A Comparison to *Being and Time*," *Human Studies* 42 (3): 2019: 581–99. To see how Heidegger ultimately comes to terms with him, see GA 59: 149–74/115–33; and esp. the Kassel lectures (GA 80.1: 103–58/SUP 147–76).

9 Of course, this is not to say that physical science literally cannot be involved here. It's just that its "coverage" of them is ontologically thin. In Heidegger's phrasing, "everything that crosses the path of this [predominant mode of] care is cared for in such a way that what is not cared for is not just 'merely not there' but instead is cared for as something that does not have to be there" (GA 17: 85/62). For example, medicine's interpretation of illness undoubtedly needs to include patient experience, but that experience is phenomenologically distorted when conceived in terms of "subjective reports." Here as elsewhere humans do indeed process information; but is this the phenomenological truth about "life as it is lived through" that should then be immediately linked to "objectively" understood causes? Cognitive neuroscience has much to say about the mechanics and material conditions of thinking; but is this enough to tell us what thinking "is"? Theologians do indeed make arguments; but are these arguments expected to produce faith when they are well-formed? And so on. I ignore here all the recent questions – raised especially by developments in quantum mechanics and in the human and life sciences – about whether the traditional conception of knowledge modeled after "physics" as it has been understood since the days of Newton and Galileo is still a good model for the epistemology of any "sciences" at all.

10 Among the important early writings that already assume this imbalance of promise between Husserl and Dilthey, there is what amounts to "the very first draft," as Kisiel calls it, of what will later become *Being and Time*, whereas no documents with similar promise can be found in the case of Husserl (GA 64: 3–103/1–88). The essay started life as an ever-expanding (and ultimately unpublishable) review article of the Dilthey-Yorck correspondence,

a small part of which actually found its way verbatim into §77 of SZ's final typescript (GA 64: 9–14/6–10; GA 2: 527–33/SZ 399–403). See Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 321–57; and "Why the First Draft of *Being and Time* Was Never Published," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 20 (1): 1989: 3–22.

11 …where "standpoint" is clearly not the appropriate term. Since mathematics and the empirical sciences both begin, as Descartes hoped, with explicit procedures that keep all researchers on the same ontological page, it makes sense to say they have, over against their objects, a separately established "place from which" thinking starts. On the other hand, as Dilthey notes, to understand the lives of other human beings, initially taking such a standpoint would be the very opposite of establishing an appropriate interpretive relation. For more on Dilthey's standpoint of life, see Scharff, *Heidegger Becoming*, 31–36. See also n.9.

12 Heidegger sometimes characterizes this as speaking to phenomenology's need to cultivate a pre-methodological "absolute sympathy with life," rather than follow the usual epistemological path of taking distance from one's situation so that "every living experience can be turned into something looked at" (GA 56/57: 109–110/92–93). Removing any such observation-like distance allows us to "directly join in [*mitmachen*] personal life-experience with the greatest vitality and inwardness" (GA 58: 254/192; cf., GA 56/57: 116–17/98–99). Again, the basic problem is not Husserl's *preference* for "the theoretical attitude." Indeed, given our inheritance, most of us display a simple and ordinary fondness for theorizing everything. That is part of the point of SZ's famous analysis of the broken hammer. When just living through life is somehow disrupted, informal distance-taking and objectification – rather than, say, worshipfully dropping to one's knees – is the modern West's default response. The problem is that, encouraged by this traditionally reinforced preference, when Husserl raises the question of the proper "approach" of a phenomenological philosophy,

like other modern philosophers (Heidegger cites Natorp), he "turn[s] himself toward his experiences in an act of reflection [*Reflexion*]" and thus carries the theoretical attitude along with him (GA 56/57: 109–110; 216; cf. GA 58: 254–55/192; also Scharff, *Heidegger Becoming*, 109 n.27).

13 Here "phenomenologically" is my quick hand-waving placeholder for Heidegger's lifelong efforts to find adjectives to "properly" characterize the sort of inquiry in which a hermeneutic phenomenologist (ontological questioner, destructive retriever, thanker, thinker, developer of free relations with technology…) engages. The full passage reads: "It is the question about the how of philosophical experience and about the how in which philosophical experience explicates itself, about the motive and the [motivational] tendency of philosophical experience itself. From this arises the task to secure the employed means and ways in which we approach the origin; in this the particular characteristic of philosophical concepts is expressed" (GA 59: 171/131, em).

14 A lead question in a number of Heidegger's early lecture courses is how to respond to his culture's scientistic assault on the minds of aspiring philosophers – a question, he says, that Husserl never asked and that is made all the more urgent because the tendency to privilege "theorizing" and "objectification" seems to come so naturally to us (GA 56/57: 112–14/94–96). What, e.g., could be more obvious than the need for a STEM-centered education in a technoscientific world? There are, of course, good reasons for the young Heidegger to be a little judicious in print about how to present his disagreements with Husserl. Often he approaches the problem by criticizing someone else (e.g., Natorp) with the implication that Husserl falls under the same criticism; and sometimes he lets someone be his mouthpiece (e.g., Yorck): "When philosophy is conceived as a manifestation of life [*Lebensmanifestion*] and not as the expectoration of a groundless kind of thinking (groundless because one's glance gets turned away from the ground of consciousness), then one's task is as meagre in its results as it is complicated and

arduous in the obtaining of them." Cited in GA 2: 531/SZ 402; GA 64: 14/9–10, from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey und dem Grafen Paul Yorck von Wartenburg, 1877–1897*, ed. Erich Rothacker (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923), 250–251. For phenomenological theorizing, think of Husserl's treatise on time consciousness, where a perceptive phenomenological account of the experience of lived time is presented in diagrams about primal intentions, retention, protention, etc., that have taken on a "conceptual" life of their own in the secondary literature in ways far removed from anything one might actually live through and directly describe.

15 In Heidegger's day, as in our own, perhaps the most familiar opposition is now launched in the name of "the concrete vs. empty, merely logical considerations and vs. formalistic compulsions… inasmuch as it is in the concrete that actual work takes place" (GA 61: 27/22). As he already understands from Dilthey, there is something to this, but until we learn how to express this hermeneutically rather than in modern terms, we will have to settle for a deliberately formulated "fiction [!!]," namely that "this concrete work is in fact what it is claimed to be, and thus in some [yet to be properly determined] way it furthers the issue" (GA 61: 27/22). Are "two red spots" more "concretely" experienced than "the red ball"?

16 Hence, analytic philosophers cannot become less positivistic in the "formalized" sense just by rejecting the specific methodological and theoretical generalizations of logical empiricism.

17 GA 60: 55/38; 63/43–44. [*Aside*: Merleau-Ponty does a lot of formal indicating – in a manner that drives some of his readers crazy. He will go on for several pages, following out a line of thought or a sense of how "one" approaches this or that phenomenon, only then to stop, refer back to what he's just done and say, See, this is the trouble we get into if we assume that X….]

18 For more on Heidegger's initial conception of a "pre-theoretical science," see, e.g., Sophie-Jan Arrien, "The Hermeneutical Turn of Phenomenology in the Young Heidegger's Thought," in Saulius Geniusas and Paul Fairfield, eds., *Hermeneutics and Phenomenology: Figures and Themes* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 138–148.

19 The sentiment is repeated in SZ, in the famous passage about the hermeneutic of Dasein being "the point at which philosophy arises and to which it [always] returns" (GA 2: 51/SZ 38). The phenomenological problem is never which sorts of thinking should remain dependent upon experience and which should not. Because late 19th century discussions of the necessities of the human sciences stress the experiential "closeness" of understanding (*Verstehen*) and the theoretical remoteness of *Erklären*, the hermeneutic importance of the fact that natural science, *as much as human science*, is a complex manifestation of life is often underappreciated. This is what Yorck encouraged Dilthey to say more about. The "ocularity" of natural science is not a *product* of theorizing and constituting; it is a *manifestation* of a "theoretical attitude," expressive of life in a powerful way that nevertheless, precisely because it is only one possible attitude, cannot serve as a philosophically basic model for all life-manifestations or "intensifications." In fact, because of its dominant cultural/philosophical status, promoting this theorizing model as being ontologically basic obscures the fact that no "model" can be "basic" for a phenomenological philosophy.

20 In this context, think of Rorty's account of the "red-faced snortings" regarding what is and what is "not philosophy" evoked among his analytic colleagues in the 1960s whenever their sense of philosophy as a natural kind feels violated. See, e.g., "Introduction," in Richard Rorty, Jerome Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 8.

21 The implications of this idea of how "problems" arise in philosophy and "values" get challenged are wide and deep. How many philosophical inquiries actually begin "experientially" and with this recognition in mind? "Who" is most likely to begin in this way? When one "picks a topic" on which to write a philosophical essay, how does this "picking" function and what "motivates" it? Is the development of the essay guided by an originating experience, or by "the logic of inquiry," or "what everyone knows," or "what recent studies have shown," or…?

22 I cannot discuss here the general question of the "later" Husserl's possible immunity from criticisms of the period of the *Logos* article and *Ideas I*. I agree in general with Sebastian Luft that through all his changes, new starts, planned and abandoned introductions, and drafts for "my system," Husserl remains an Enlightenment thinker and therefore that his notion of phenomenological reflection, which he defends against the (allegedly) far too historical *Selbstbesinnung* of Dilthey and Heidegger, determines a fundamentally different trajectory of thought from theirs – a trajectory in which the traditional ideas of system, method, rational clarity, science, and transcendental subjectivity are not abandoned but at most *somewhat modified* for genuinely phenomenological purposes. See Sebastian Luft, *Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 12–22. Husserl's displays of greater concern for historical science and the meaning of history in his later years are still a topic addressed by a transcendental consciousness.

23 Consider the matter this way: If you're relating something you understand deeply and you're stopped in mid-sentence by someone saying, "There. Now I think I really see what you mean. Say it again," you can't. If you have been speaking from experience, you can find other words, but there is no guarantee they will be the same words, because your focus has been on relating the understanding you are living through, and on speaking from it, and not on a set of concepts that try to get it right once and for all. Even thus trying to be definitive tends to leave the speaker with a renewed sense that there is still a better way to say it. In short, the main problem is not that speaking from experience is unfamiliar, or that words are rarely used and understood to be used in a formally indicative way; it's that in a technoscientific culture, one tends to get trained to distrust experience-expressive articulations and to aim at something more precise, something conceptually clear that represents what really matters, and something you or a machine can say quickly.

24 "Even unbiased seeing is a seeing and as such has its position of looking and indeed has it in a distinctive manner, that is, by having explicitly appropriated it so that it has been critically [i.e., epistemologically] purged"; hence, the very idea of a position defined as "freedom from all standpoints…is itself something historical…not a chimerical in itself [that really is] outside of time" (GA 63: 83/64).

25 Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," 195.

26 And so today, the APA web site identifies philosophy's many topics, questions, and critical skills. It speaks of the diversity and pluralism that it hopes for in its membership; and it praises its ability to make us better problem-solvers and to introduce us to unfamiliar topics (e.g., the arts, other cultures). But there is not a word about how philosophizing "attunes" itself to all these topics and questions, or how to establish one's sense of "becoming" a philosopher, or about the sort of self-understanding and self-critique that might problematize rather than just "clarify" the idea of acquiring "useful information" and useful tools to employ against skepticism and relativism. See e.g., "Philosophy: A Brief Guide for Undergraduates," American Philosophical Association. (last revised, 2017) <http://www.apaonline.org/?page=undergraduates>, accessed May 9, 2024.

27 "[E]ven when theorizing, I myself originate in and come out from lived experiencing, *and something experienceable is brought along from this experiencing*, with which one now does not know what to do, and for which the convenient title of the irrational has been invented" (GA 56/57: 117/99).

28 "Staying with life," "understanding life out of its own origin," "going along with factical life" are common expressions in the early lecture courses (e.g., GA 58: 137/106, 157/120–21). Careful readers of Heidegger's *Being and Time* will recognize that I am ignoring here a crucial question that is only finally addressed fully and directly in Division II, §§74–77, viz., the fact that achieving such a grounded interpretive focus requires nothing less than *one's own*

practiced refusal to regard "history" as a research topic and instead to mindfully re-experience being-historical as the very condition *one already lives through in the process of trying to ask about it.*

29 At the very end of the summary of a seminar held from September 11–13, 1962, in Todtnauberg, after Heidegger has explained that what the *Kantbuch* calls the "finitude of Being" is no longer to be contrasted with infinity but thought in itself (i.e., in terms of *Ereignis*) and thus "made secure in one's own" being, he cites this line from Hans Erich Nossack's novel, *Impossible Trial* [*Unmögliche Beweisaufnahme*] (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1956; reissue, 1970); Eng., *The Impossible Proof*, trans. Michael Lebeck (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), 29: "But the accused declined. One had to be there, he said, if one is called upon, *but to call oneself* was the greatest error that one could make" (GA 14: 64/54 tm, em). (Lebeck's rendering of *abwinken* as "refused" rather than "declined" or "waved off" misses precisely Heidegger's point.)