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# EARLY HEIDEGGER'S TRANSITION FROM LIFE TO BEING

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Gilbert Vasile Lepadatu

The Graduate School  
University of Kentucky  
2009

EARLY HEIDEGGER'S TRANSITION FROM LIFE TO BEING

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By  
Gilbert Vasile Lepadatu  
Lexington, KY  
Chair: Dr. Ronald Bruzina, Professor of Philosophy  
Lexington, KY  
2009  
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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### EARLY HEIDEGGER'S TRANSITION FROM LIFE TO BEING

Heidegger was not always preoccupied, as he himself would later come to believe, with the question regarding the sense of being. Eight years before he published his *magnum opus*, *Sein und Zeit*, in 1927 he was totally devoted to finding a systematic way to bringing “life” as the ultimate source of meaning to explicate itself. In the years between 1919-1923, “life”, and not “being”, is the matter of philosophy *par excellence*, only to be disregarded, even refuted as a “proper” matter of philosophy in the subsequent years. In this paper I examine the philosophical motives that led Heidegger *from life to being*. The purpose of this project is to trace the emergence of the “thinking of being” in “life philosophy.” I will show that the transition from “life” to “being” is not at all as radical as Heidegger wants it to be whenever he voices his concerns about the metaphysical grounds of life philosophy. When “life” is understood in the exact terms in which Heidegger himself understands it in the years between 1919-1923 then, I argue, the transition to being is more a radicalization, and by no means an abandonment, of life philosophy. In the process of elaborating an understanding of life so fundamentally sympathetic to life that it can claim itself to be life’s own self-understanding, Heidegger comes gradually to realize the importance of life’s *own* way of living *understandingly*, the performative sense in which it [life] itself understands itself to be, for the very effort to understand life. Life is now interpreted as a way of being for which this very being, its way of being, is an issue for itself.

In the first chapter I go back to the original motives that led Heidegger to choose life, lived experience, as the proper topic of philosophy. It is here that Heidegger

discovers that philosophy is ultimately about an entity that is somehow concerned with *itself* already in being-engaged to “something” other than itself. Intentionality is interpreted as the manner in which an entity is playing itself out, as it were, in engaging a world. In the second chapter, I follow his elaborations of this newly discovered topic, the “personal” character of experience, with a focus on the unique way in which he develops it by both rejecting the Neokantian approach to life and by critically appropriating Dilthey’s conception of lived experience. The third chapter presents Heidegger’s “insights” into *life* – which will remain unchanged, only put to different uses when the topic changes from life to being. The fourth chapter takes up the issue of how life is (and is itself) *in being referred* to its own past. Here I show how life is found to be “in need” to appropriate what it has been as the way in which it can be itself. Chapters five and six delve into the proper relation between living and philosophizing by focusing on how life is living-in-understanding. It is shown here how Heidegger elaborates, unfortunately insufficiently, his method of “formal indicators” which will enable him to interpret *life* as a “way of being.” Such interpretation leaves open the possibility, however, of either interpreting life as the manner in which *being* itself can be experienced or, as Heidegger does in the first early years, or interpreting *being* as the manner in which life can come to itself. Early Heidegger can only justify the former interpretation: in developing for itself a sense of being which can only be performed as a way in which life lives, life develops a genuine self-understanding.

KEYWORDS: Martin Heidegger, Life, Lived Experience, Being, Life Philosophy

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May 22<sup>th</sup>, 2009

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EARLY HEIDEGGER'S TRANSITION FROM LIFE TO BEING

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DISSERTATION

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Heidegger became famous for his insistence on the idea that the absence of the elucidation of the question of the sense of being (*Seinssinn*), in short, the question of being, might have deeper philosophical consequences than meet the eye. In *Sein und Zeit* (1927) Heidegger lays out the project of elucidating the sense of being. The project is to be conducted on the basis of an ontological elucidation of precisely that entity which by its own being is capable of understanding both its own being and the being of entities different from itself. Heidegger labels that entity as “Dasein.” The ontological characteristics of Dasein are found to be existentiality, facticity and falling prey. The investigations of facticity – precisely as it is understood here in this context - were first initiated years earlier, *in the total absence of the question of being*.

An essential part of the fundamental analytic of Dasein, the actual content of the book, namely the hermeneutics of facticity, can be thus detached from the overall project of elucidating the question of the sense of being. This detachment has its roots in the way in which Heidegger conceived of the “theme” of phenomenology as of 1919. This detachment also raises some interesting questions as to Heidegger’s overall project and, equally importantly, as to Heidegger’s philosophical development until his writing of *Sein und Zeit*. This apparent autonomy of the **content** of *Sein und Zeit* from the overall **project** might also be responsible for Heidegger’s failure to bring his project to completion.

From 1919 to approximately 1922, Heidegger works on a phenomenological interpretation of factic life in the complete absence of a need for the clarification of the sense of being. In this period *life, our life*<sup>1</sup>, is the ultimate, irreducible, fundamental, originary source of intelligibility or meaning as such. These results – and their subsequent development - will later, *in the context of the question of the sense of being*, come to be known as the analytic of Dasein. At the moment of their birth, however, they were

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (1919-1920)*. *Gesamtausgabe Bd 58* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991), p.30. From now on *GA* refers to *Gesamtausgabe*. Full details on the collected edition and other works cited, as well as suggestions for further reading, are in the bibliography.

considered to be analysis towards working out the possibility of a “primal science of lived experiences,” a “primordial science of life in itself”, or of “hermeneutics of facticity.” The *same* analysis will later be put to different uses when the overall aim of investigation shifts from (our) “life” to “being.” Heidegger himself recognizes in *Sein und Zeit* that the analytic of Dasein as he understands it in this context is but the *same* hermeneutics of facticity he initiated years earlier in the early Freiburg lectures.

The author would like to remark that he has repeatedly communicated the analysis of the surrounding world and the hermeneutic of the facticity of Da-sein in general in his lecture courses ever since the winter semester of 1919-20.<sup>2</sup>

Since the hermeneutics of facticity has been obviously initiated *in the absence of the question of being*, we are now left to understand this apparent “independence” of what constitutes the actual achievement of *Sein und Zeit* (a very elaborate hermeneutics of facticity, or existential analytic of Dasein) and its professed overall aim, that of working out the sense of being *on the basis of* an existential analytic of Dasein. There is a gap, which could not be bridged, not in this book anyway, between what Heidegger achieves in this book concretely, namely the analytic of Dasein, and what he aims to achieve here, an elucidation of the sense of being on the basis of an elucidation of the sense of that being capable of understanding being. In the following I will investigate Heidegger’s shift from “life” to “being” with an eye open to the possibility that the autonomy of the hermeneutics of facticity from the overall project laid out in *Sein und Zeit* might in fact result in Heidegger’s failure to bring his project to completion. My intention, however, will be to focus on the motives behind Heidegger’s decision to abandon “life” and embrace “being” instead as the main topic of philosophical thinking. In the course of my exposition of Heidegger’s motives leading from “life” to “being” a particular theme will show up time and again: the living being is being-self, or the self-in-being (later *Dasein – to be there as a self*), a being whose *raison d’être* is itself and *is* only insofar as it realizes *it*, or put in a less solipsistic and egotistical terms, a being who is only insofar as it is concerned with *it-self factically*, that is, *in* experiencing its own world. This recurrent theme will be shown to be the main motive leading Heidegger to “move”

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<sup>2</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), p.67 footnote (henceforth BT).

from life to being and also the main reason why being is not the solution, as it were, to the problematic of life, but merely another way of formulating it.

How important is for the project as laid out in *Sein und Zeit* the fact that the analytic of Dasein can be worked out in its absence, independently - as it were - of the project itself? The answer to this question can only result from attempts at answering these three questions:

(1) Why was Heidegger preoccupied with “life” in the first place?

(2) What motives lie behind his decision to shift his focus from life to being?

(3) How can this shift be interpreted in light of the fact that Heidegger simply relocated the results arrived at in the life-context into the context of the meaning of being?

It is easy to interpret the hermeneutics of facticity (the phenomenology of life) as a “precursor” of the analytic of Dasein as if the hermeneutics of facticity grew and developed organically into the problematic of the question of being. This is exactly what most commentators, with few but notable exceptions, have done. The first lectures were regarded as just the first piece of the puzzle that Heidegger will try to put together in *Sein und Zeit*. Each piece of the puzzle could but be understood in light of what the whole puzzle, once put together, brings to light. Such an interpretation had the advantage of having Heidegger’s own blessing since he was the first one to interpret his entire philosophical career as being from its inception captivated by, if not downright obsessed with, one question only, the question of the sense of being<sup>3</sup>. On such an interpretation, even these early lectures, which do not contain a word that might, even remotely, refer one to the problematic of being **as** would be understood much later from 1923 onward, must somehow be pervaded with the same obsession with the “question of the sense of being.” Surely, when seen in hindsight, from the vantage point of *Sein und Zeit*, the first lectures can indeed come to be seen as the laboratory out of which *Sein und Zeit*, the project, was born. But this would amount to reading into them an (hidden) intention, which is not *explicitly* there. This is why I will attempt to understand the first lectures *as* Heidegger himself intended them to be understood *when* he wrote them.

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<sup>3</sup> M. Heidegger, “Mein Weg in der Phänomenologie,” in GA 14.

The main claim I will advance here is that Heidegger, as a careful reading and interpretation of his early Freiburg lectures from 1919-1924 will reveal, was interested in those early years not in the question of the sense of being but, to keep with the terminology of *Sein und Zeit*, in the question of the sense of *living being*, or factic life, and that the shift from *life* to *being* was indeed a necessary, profitable move *provided that* phenomenological ontology remained subordinated to, and within the scope and aims of, the hermeneutics of facticity, and unnecessary, and to some extent unsuccessful, the moment the living being was not longer the aim of phenomenology, but the springboard for phenomenological ontology. Around 1923, Heidegger will say repeatedly that *being*, understood transitively, means *being life*<sup>4</sup>.

We will spend a great deal of time analyzing the lectures from 1919 for the simple reason that it is here that Heidegger makes, to use Theodor Kisiel's words, his first major "breakthrough" to his own topic, which should and can explain his preference for "life" as the topic of philosophy, and also because the lectures are the foil against which Heidegger will eventually come up with "being" as the genuine topic of philosophy. These first lectures as well as the next lectures he will give over the next 2-3 years are all the more important as they contain clues as to where Heidegger is, philosophically speaking, coming from and, most importantly, heading to. Obviously, for my purposes these lectures must receive a special treatment.

Heidegger was struck early on by the peculiarity of "how we are and live," by life, by living experiences. He realized that life is an object of investigation like no other. Life *is* not like other subject matters, topics, entities, or domains of entities encountered in life. Life *is* unique and therefore calls for its own manner of approaching and addressing. Early Heidegger's philosophy culminates with the idea that life is *so* unique and different that a proper investigation of life must raise the question of the very way in which such an "object" (life) is there in the first place, namely the question of life's sense of being: in what sense is life there? In what sense am I? What is the sense of "am" in "I

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<sup>4</sup> GA 61, p.7, and M. Heidegger, Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles, Anzeige der Hermeneutischen Situation (Ausarbeitung für die Marburger und die Göttinger Philosophische Fakultät (1922))(Ditzinger: Reclam, 2003), p.40, 82, 85. Henceforth as PIA. Unless otherwise specified, all German translations are mine.

am”? In what sense do I live? His lectures between 1919-1923 can all be regarded as his original contributions to “life-philosophy”, and only indirectly to “ontology”. What he was interested primarily was not “being” per se, but *living* being, *our living* being. He tried to grasp our life first and foremost as “something” which *is* (given, present, “there,” *da*) in a way completely different from all the other ways in which other entities are said to be; as something which is in such a way that it can even elucidate the ways in which other entities are there. After a couple of years, he started focusing increasingly on life as “a kind of being.” Philosophy itself undergoes a fundamental change from being the fundamental knowing of life’s origins<sup>5</sup> to a “fundamental knowing comportment to entities as being.”<sup>6</sup> “How we are and live” is a kind of being, one unique mode of being there. Since Heidegger was all this time focusing on how life *is* in its own way, on how “I *am*” genuinely, on our ordinary, typical experiences, Heidegger “re-does” his interpretations of life this time with a more concentrated focus on life as “being”. Life is now baptized with a new name, *Dasein*<sup>7</sup>, in keeping with his new emphasis on the *way* in which “we are,” that is, our specific mode of being. This ontological spin put on his analysis of life will culminate in *Sein und Zeit*, where the living being, *Dasein*, still plays a major role but this time only insofar as it can open up an “horizon” for understanding the sense of being as such. The living being is *a* being, a special one to be sure, one that does not “merely occur among other beings,”<sup>8</sup> rather distinguishing itself from other beings by its special “relation” to being. But the living being is nevertheless *just* a being. It is no longer seen as the aim of phenomenology, but merely a necessary step towards achieving a “higher” purpose: the elucidation of the sense of being as such.

In what follows I intend to defend the following two claims: (1) The shift from life to being was not initially one from one topic, life, to a different one, being; it should rather be understood as more of a movement within the same topic, life (the sense of life), as an attempt at bringing the same topic, life, more genuinely into view by rebranding the

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<sup>5</sup> „Ursprungswissenschaft von Leben“ (GA 58, 233).

<sup>6</sup> GA 61, p.58

<sup>7</sup> “Dasein = »being« in and through life” (GA 61, p. 85).

<sup>8</sup> M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1963), xi, 437 p.

“uniqueness” of life in formal-ontological terms: “life as being.”<sup>9</sup> (2) Despite his efforts to regard life *as* being, or the living being as *a* being, *and* move beyond factic life or living being to being as such, Heidegger does not manage to surpass his insights into factic life. In other words, he does not make any philosophically significant advances over his hermeneutics of facticity.

To (2). If in early Heidegger life, the “being of life” (life as a “how” of being<sup>10</sup>), is found capable of elucidating different *other* senses of being, being in the sense of being significant to me (*Bedeutsamkeit*), being in the sense of present-at-hand or being-in-view (*Vorhandenheit*), but most importantly life’s sense of being as facticity, in *Sein und Zeit* the project is ultimately aimed at an elucidation of the sense of being as such, where the “special interpretation of a particular entity, *Dasein*”<sup>11</sup> is indeed necessary only as an “horizon” opening up the possibility of elucidating the sense of being as such. Heidegger’s actual investigations into the sense of being, however, do not move beyond his investigations into facticity as the “sense of being of life” (*Seinsinn von Leben*<sup>12</sup>), the living being. As a result, his decision to interpret our life as a “how of being” and then to increasingly put an ontological spin on his approach to life, and focus more on the various senses of being by regarding the hermeneutic of *Dasein* as the “starting point” or origin of philosophy as “universal phenomenological ontology,”<sup>13</sup> does in fact indicate the impossibility of dissociating, in any relevant way, a meaningful elucidation of the sense of being from an elucidation of the sense of being of life, from (our) *living being*. *Seinssinn* is ultimately traceable in, as and through *Seinssinn von Leben*. The only senses of being are those given *as* and *through* living being. Fundamental ontology depends on the hermeneutics of facticity to an even greater extent than Heidegger would have liked in *Sein und Zeit*. Ontology is and remains first and foremost the “science of the being of our living being.” Heidegger is absolutely right in

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<sup>9</sup> GA 61, p.189

<sup>10</sup> GA 9, p.31; GA 63, p.7; see also “Menschheit wird angerufen ohne den Menschen, Geschichte ohne das Historische, das Leben ohne sein Eigentliches, als Wie des Seins.” (GA 61, p.189).

<sup>11</sup> for which “man” or “life” would good substitutes if and only if understood appropriately as formally indicating a “kind of being.” (SZ, p. 46).

<sup>12</sup> A better translation might be „being-sense of life.“

<sup>13</sup> SZ, p.38

pointing out time and time again that the peculiarity of life, the kind of “object” (“something”) life, my living experience, is calls for a new understanding of the sense of being, but this sense of being is first and last *life’s sense of being*. *Sein und Zeit* wanted to be a rekindling of the traditional question regarding the sense of being, but it ended up being an elaboration of the question of the sense of *living* being.

In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger no longer takes “life” to refer exclusively to “our life,” and extends its meaning to incorporate “life in general,” the kind of life biology has as its proper object of investigation. By “life” Heidegger now means “biological life.”<sup>14</sup> It should be kept in mind, however, that the early Heidegger never had “biological life” in mind when referring to “factic life,” and that he comes by 1923 to identify “factic life” with Dasein.<sup>15</sup> Since “life” is in *Sein und Zeit* an expression standing for “biological life,” the ontology of (biological) life comes to be regarded as “founded upon the ontology of Dasein.”<sup>16</sup> That there is a tension even in *Sein und Zeit* between factic versus biological life is clearly evidenced by Heidegger’s indecision as to how fundamental the phenomenon of “life” is for philosophy: on the one hand, life as biological life requires a prior elucidation of the ontology of Dasein, and, on the other hand, philosophy is all about life since, according to Heidegger, “philosophy of life” says as much as “botany of plants,” that is, the expression is a tautology. The shift therefore in Heidegger’s thinking from factic life to being is simultaneously accompanied by a shift from factic to biological life. When Heidegger distinguishes the analytic of Dasein from the ontology of life, he is in point of fact claiming that biological life is to be “founded on” life understood as factic. At the beginning at least, the facticity of life, as Heidegger conceived of it, had nothing to do with biological life.

It is thus all the more important that we read the first Freiburg lectures on their own, that is, independently of Heidegger’s later developments and, most importantly, of the question of the sense of being, and understand them just as Heidegger intended them to be understood at the moment of their conception. We will avoid treating them as mere

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<sup>14</sup> 2. M. Heidegger, J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, *Being and time* ([San Francisco, Calif.]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962), 589 p.

<sup>15</sup> 3. M. J. Inwood and NetLibrary Inc., 'A Heidegger dictionary', (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), xvi, 283 p.p.119

“precursors” of *Sein und Zeit*. In other words, *Sein und Zeit* does not occupy the focal center of our investigations. We will place it on an equal footing with the lectures he has given since 1919. For our purposes it is thus all the more important to pay close attention to the existence of, the fine line between, and also the relation between, two relatively different contexts: the early context in which Heidegger developed his philosophy of factic life, and which culminates in the idea that facticity is the sense of being of life, and the context in which *being* sheds, as it were, the *living* character, and becomes itself capable of elucidating the sense of living being. If in early Heidegger the aim is to elucidate the living being and the sense of being in terms of living being, in *Sein und Zeit* the ultimate aim is to arrive at an elucidation of the sense of being in terms of living being that can eventually be able to reinterpret the living being in terms of the sense of being. For most commentators, the early lectures are nothing but an “early stage” on his path towards *Sein und Zeit*.

Our reading of the Freiburg lectures goes to some extent against the mainstream in that it proposes to read these lectures given by Heidegger in the period between 1919-1923 as exhibiting a philosophical autonomy in terms of the theme under discussion and the methods employed in addressing that theme, an autonomy which, even if easily reducible to, or appropriated by, the problematic of being as developed by Heidegger immediately after 1923, does not **necessarily** have to be so. Our claim, namely that early Heidegger was by no means interested in *being* but in *our living being*, does not go well with the by now well-entrenched popular idea that “throughout his long philosophical career” Heidegger had been “fascinated” by one question only: “What is the meaning of being?”<sup>17</sup>

*Otto Pöggeler's “Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers”*

Otto Pöggeler, one of the first and most knowledgeable commentators of Heidegger's philosophy, believes that the first requirement incumbent upon the readers of

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<sup>17</sup> Dorothea Frede, “The question of being: Heidegger's project” in *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Charles B. Guignon, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.42.

Heidegger is to “simply listen to the one question which Heidegger thinks through.<sup>18</sup>” According to him Heidegger’s thinking took its inception from its contact with the fundamental question of metaphysics: what is being<sup>19</sup>? Accordingly this question is seen operating in the background of all of Heidegger’s early philosophical attempts. Pöggeler concedes that in Heidegger’s Freiburg lectures from 1919 the discussion of being “has vanished;” in the center of Heidegger’s preoccupations is now “factic life, life in its actuality<sup>20</sup>.” The commentator appears to be familiar with the early Freiburg lectures (or at least some of them), since he dedicates almost a page to their brief summary. However, he needs to arrive at the lectures from 1923 in order to be able to comment upon them, more specifically, to comment on their relationship as a stage in Heidegger’s development to the next stage or stages. And the only way in which he could possibly relate these lectures to the later question of the meaning of being is by claiming that the proper understanding of factic life should in no way be conducted in terms of traditional metaphysics, that is, the traditional interpretation of being, but must in point of fact be conducted in such a way as to be able by itself to lead to a new interpretation of traditional ontology. That Heidegger indeed is trying to forge a new and highly original understanding of factic life, one that is in no way reliant upon the traditional concepts of philosophy, is beyond any question. Also, that Heidegger’s radical interpretation of factic life leads necessarily to a reinterpretation of traditional metaphysics is, I believe, obvious. It is, however, questionable whether this new interpretation must end up in, and have as its only aim, the forging of a new understanding of “being,” as Pöggeler appears to leave the impression. Besides, it is clear even from the way in which Pöggeler summarizes the early Freiburg lectures that their topic, factic life, stands in almost no relation to the later question of being. The only relation is that the radical interpretation of factic life has indeed the side effect of putting the entire metaphysical tradition into a new light.

For the young Heidegger, who had taken up the question of Being and whose thinking now began with factic-historical life, the question had to

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<sup>18</sup> Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger’s Path of Thinking*, transl. Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1987), p.7.

<sup>19</sup> “Martin Heidegger’s thought is enkindled by the question, *Τί τὸ ὄν*, what is a being [das Seiende], a being in its Being [Sein]?”, *ibid.* p.9

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* p. 17

be asked whether metaphysics had after all done any justice to factic life.<sup>21</sup>

But Pöggeler overemphasizes the importance of this relation at the expense of Heidegger's positive insights into factic life in order to facilitate his overall aim of interpreting Heidegger's path of thinking as a unified path guided by one "thought" only: Heidegger's thinking is all about "being" even in those contexts where being is hardly mentioned, and something else is explicitly recognized as staying in the centre of philosophical investigations, namely factic life. In all fairness, it should be said that one can indeed identify there a possibly intrinsic, however indirect, relation between these and the subsequent lectures whose climax is *Sein und Zeit*: a new interpretation of factic life conducted on the basis of the newly arrived-at insights provided by Husserl's phenomenology, perhaps Lask and Dilthey's preference for life as the source of meaning, will call for a new interpretation of traditional ontology.

The interpretation of factic life has to question anew the traditional mode of conceptualization from the ground up. The theory of Being, or ontology, must also become a problem once again in terms of the interpretation of factic life, the hermeneutic of facticity.<sup>22</sup>

But again, we do not **have to** understand them in light of what will be done after 1922. And even if we do, that is, even if we believe, as Pöggeler does, that the interpretation of factic life not only leads to, but actually must become, a new radicalized interpretation of traditional ontology, it should never be forgotten that this problematization of traditional ontology can only be done *in terms of the interpretation of factic life*. Be that as it may, even Pöggeler acknowledges that the young Heidegger's thinking "began with factic-historical life."

*Kisiel's "Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time"*

Kisiel, too, finds the early lectures to be extremely important. For one thing, they are important in that it is here that Heidegger, according to him, figures out what his philosophical topic is, the same topic that will later be in the center of Heidegger's preoccupations in *Sein und Zeit*. Of course, the "topic," although the same as in *Sein und*

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* p.18

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* p.19

*Zeit*, does not bear the same title, since it is not “being” or “the sense of being” that Heidegger is focusing on here. Only by way of an interpretation could Kisiel claim that “factic life,” or more precisely yet, the inconspicuous *Umwelterlebnis*, *the environing living experience*, is in point of fact the “same” topic as “being.”

We could not agree more with his assertion that the early “juvenilia” contain “perhaps the key to all of Heidegger” despite their “raw and crudity”<sup>23</sup>. However, this key - as Kisiel sees it - is the early writings’ ability to shed some light on Heidegger’s later development, on the conceptual apparatus employed by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* as well as on the detours and philosophical decisions taken by him long after he completed his “masterpiece.” For Kisiel the early period is one in which Heidegger makes some “fumbling steps toward his insight.” They are “raw” when compared with the riper form exhibited by *Sein und Zeit*. This insight will be refined and carefully developed in the years to come to reach its climax in *Sein und Zeit*. But these early lectures also contain some insights left unpursued by the writer of *Sein und Zeit*, insights that will be much later recovered when other options become unavailable or untenable. But the most important thing for Kisiel is that these Freiburg lectures are exactly the starting point of *Sein und Zeit*<sup>24</sup>. They are not to be considered in their own right, but in light of what they will give rise to, namely those insights conducive to the complex of ideas exposed in *Sein und Zeit*. Such a reading is, however, validated by Kisiel’s declared intention of writing a genesis of *Sein und Zeit*, although one can sense in it the implicit assumption that whatever is valuable in the early lectures is valuable precisely because of the further elaboration it receives in and after the writing of *Sein und Zeit*.

*Rüdiger Safranski’s “Ein Meister aus Deutschland”*

Safranski is not a philosopher, and has thus no intention of offering a philosophical interpretation of Heidegger’s entire life and career. He simply wants to present Heidegger, the man and the thinker, as he was in the historical and cultural

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<sup>23</sup> 4. T. J. Kisiel and eScholarship (Online service), 'The genesis of Heidegger's Being and time', (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 608 p.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.21

context in which he lived and worked. As such we would expect that he would show more sensitivity to the contextual aspects of Heidegger's philosophy than a philosopher would. He as a matter of fact spends a great deal detailing the most important philosophical achievements of Heidegger's first lecture with an unexpected sense for philosophical nuances. However, when it comes to move beyond this lecture, it is again the problematic of the "sense of being" that appears to facilitate his interpretative transition to the next lectures:

Heidegger's intention is clear. There is, however, a certain excess in the penetrating intensity of his philosophizing, an excess which makes his thinking so fascinating even at this early stage. The excess is hidden in the question, which he does not yet explicitly raise, but which would be later reiterated ritualistically: the question of being. Heidegger delves deeper into living experience in order to track down our "being in situations."<sup>25</sup>

For Safranski this first lecture contains thus a "surplus" of intention, a surplus that is, obviously, left unexpressed. It is as if Heidegger intends something in these lectures that does not quite find a proper expression in the lectures themselves. And this surplus is conveniently found to be none other than the question of being:

An excessive intention directed at 'being'.<sup>26</sup>

Not all commentators, however, share the view that Heidegger's first lectures mark a beginning that could only end in *Being and Time*. A few others see in the first lectures an originality that cannot easily be subordinated to the project as laid out in *Being and Time*. For different reasons, to be sure, and for reasons different from mine also, some commentators see in the first lectures "a unique period in his development" that "cannot be absorbed into either his *Being and Time* or his later writings, as he himself and others have attempted to do,"<sup>27</sup> while others experience in them a philosophical force whose traction is so great that "if we continue to fall with Heidegger's 1921-1922 lecture courses we will never be able to escape back (or forward) to *Being and Time*."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Rüdiger Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland, Heidegger und seine Zeit*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1997, p.121

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p.122

<sup>27</sup> John van Buren, "The Young Heidegger and Phenomenology" in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, pp.239-272.

<sup>28</sup> David Farrell Krell, "The 'Factual Life' of Dasein: From the Early Courses to

Let us now return to these early lectures and try to see them as they are, and not as they appear when looked at in hindsight.

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*Being and Time*", in Th. Kiesel, and John van Buren (eds.), *Reading Heidegger from the Start* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp.361-181.

## Chapter Two: *Erlebnis* - the “living of something” or living experience<sup>29</sup>

### *Why Erlebnis?*

In 1919, in the first lectures Heidegger gives in Freiburg as Husserl’s newly appointed assistant, he shows an interest in several topics that are closely intertwined: the idea of philosophy, philosophy as a worldview and as a critical science, the idea of science and the possibility of a fundamental or primal science, knowledge and the possibility of grounding knowledge, lived experience and the possibility of a scientific approach to lived experiences, phenomenology and transcendental value philosophy, and last but not least, the essence of the University and the University reform. The titles of these three first lectures indicate only partially the actual contents covered by Heidegger in these lectures: (1) *Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem*, (2) *Phänomenologie und transzendente Wertphilosophie*, (3) *Über das Wesen der Universität und des akademischen Studiums*.

I will now present a selective reading of these lectures in order to emphasize the topic Heidegger appears to be most preoccupied with and the strategies he works out to deal with it. Another reason for presenting a selective reading of the first lectures is closely related to Heidegger’s own methodology: according to him, it is only by going systematically through the issues as he exposes them that one can eventually arrive at a genuine understanding of the very “object” of philosophy.

Judging by the opening sections, the first lecture, *The idea of Philosophy and the problem of worldview*, is occasioned by the need to clarify once and for all whether philosophy is essentially a worldview or not. Its theme is “the idea of philosophy.”

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<sup>29</sup> I have hesitated between many equally justified translations of this very important term: experience, lived experience or living experience. The most appropriate translation, to my mind, would be „the living of something.“ However, I use „experience,“ „lived experience,“ „living experience“ and, when possible, „the living of something“ interchangeably. For obvious reasons, we cannot use „living“ in the plural, although „livings“ would probably be the best, if somewhat awkward, translation for *Erlebnisse*.

Heidegger chooses the idea of worldview as a foil against which he proposes to address the idea of philosophy. It was widely accepted among German intellectuals of that time that philosophy is a worldview and as such its mission was to find the ultimate, most universal and valid cause and interpretation of the world, and, of course, of everything occurring in the world, human existence included<sup>30</sup>. However, in keeping with the Kantian tradition, philosophy appears also to have an additional function, namely that of securing the foundation on which any knowledge can be built. In other words, philosophy retains in addition to being, and striving for, a worldview, the function of a critical science. The worldview is the aim of the critical science but by no means identical with it. Philosophy thus appears to have an inherently irreconcilable nature: it is simultaneously critical science and worldview.

What if philosophy is neither? Heidegger sets himself the task of exploring this possibility. What if philosophy is not an interpretation of human existence and the world around done with the more or less declared intention of answering the most pressing and deepest concerns of mankind? What if philosophy is, in a sense, a science “more” fundamental than any other science (critical sciences included), and any worldview whatsoever? Is that possible? How can we conceive of philosophy as a primal science? The rest of the lecture, as well as the other two lectures, will try to explore the possibility of conceiving of philosophy as a science more fundamental (*Urwissenschaft*) than any other science in a radical opposition to the idea of philosophy as a worldview.

After raising a serious methodological problem with regard to the very attempt at establishing a primal science (how can a primal science be established when it itself is called for by its very definition to establish anything else?), Heidegger discusses and

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<sup>30</sup> Could it be that Heidegger’s later ontological difference between beings and being be based actually on this distinction between the way in which philosophy as a worldview conceives of the “world” as a totality that can somehow be re-represented in an idea or sets of ideas, and philosophy as an attempt at dis-reifying the “way we deal with things?” If so, the fact that he tackles the problem of worldview is no longer accidental, a topic that he simply picks up and takes over from Husserl, but the beginning actually of his own way of understanding the peculiarity of philosophy. On the other hand, however, it was Husserl who rejected the idea of assimilating philosophy with a worldview in the first place, for other reasons than Heidegger’s.

easily dismisses the answers that can be, and have in fact been, offered to this problem: (1) the history of philosophy: it cannot determine what philosophy as a primal science is simply because we already must know what such an idea is in order for us to find it in the history of philosophy; history after all *is* only for a historical consciousness, that is, is constituted in and for life in and of itself; (2) philosophical personalities: to look in philosopher's personalities for clues for figuring out what the primal science is amounts to falling back on a previous position (philosophy as a worldview) since it takes the philosopher to be the creator of a worldview; (3) Inductive metaphysics: the idea that the primal science can be somehow inductively constructed out of the particular sciences and their relations is deficient in that it ends up according no cognitive value to this primal science: while the particular sciences deal concretely with their respective regions of being, the primal science by contrast would have "being in general" as its object of study. But it would not be capable of saying anything cognitively relevant beyond what the particular sciences have already established about their respective regions of being. Besides, such a primal science would not be primal at all since it itself is established only on the basis, and as a result of, the scientific conclusions arrived at in particular sciences. Each particular science has a region of being as its own object of investigation. The sum of all these objects (the "whole" being) does not result in a new domain with a new corresponding science. It is here the point where Heidegger makes the shift from the "object of knowledge" to the "knowledge of the object." It appears that the only way in which we can stand a chance of figuring out what this primal science could be is by focusing not so much on the object of knowledge (being in general, domains of being or life), but rather on knowledge as such (of any object). All particular sciences are bodies of knowledge. Philosophy wants to study the "unitary sense of knowledge" as such<sup>31</sup>.

The next chapter ("The critique of teleologically-critical Method") is as a matter of fact Heidegger's own *Prolegomena zu einer reinen Logik*, with the only difference that instead of rejecting the psychologistic approach to the problem of the validity of knowledge – Husserl himself did this in his *Prolegomena* -, Heidegger will go on a full-blown attack against the approach to knowledge taken by the South-West school of Neokantianism, in particular by Windelband and Rickert, and then in the next course,

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<sup>31</sup> GA 56/57, p. 33

against the approach taken by the other school of Neokantianism represented by Natorp. It is safe to claim thus that this chapter is perhaps a needed complement to Husserl's *Prolegomena* in that in critiquing the Neokantian approach to knowledge it in fact rejects another attempt at reifying the process or the event in and by which "meaning" comes about in the first place. We will see in a moment why this is indeed the case.

By shifting our focus to knowledge as such, we have apparently moved into the domain of psychology as psychology was traditionally regarded to have "knowledge" as one of its objects of investigation. Psychology regards knowledge or cognition as a mental or psychical process. The problem, however, is that psychology is after all an empirical science and cannot as such be in any position to provide "the validation, the origin for absolute knowledge<sup>32</sup>". Despite the fact that psychology as an empirical science cannot by itself account for absolute knowledge, it is however the "mental process" that constitutes the "sphere" where we should look into for figuring out what the primal science could be.

The **where**, the sphere, appears to be found; yet what is now problematic is the **how**.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, knowledge is precisely that which all sciences have in common as sciences: they are all bodies of knowledge. The problem now is to obtain a correct understanding of the nature of knowledge as a mental process.

Kant made it clear that the concept of mental process (*das Pyschischen*) is open to two different interpretations: on the one hand, the mental process can be understood as an empirical process and subject as such to the empirical laws of nature (the domain of psychology as an empirical science); on the other hand, however, the mental process having truth as its ultimate goal is guided and oriented in its course by principles and axioms that are not empirical any more. The mental process is oriented towards finding and establishing the truth, and must as a consequence follow the "laws" that ensure the obtaining of truth. This is, according to Heidegger, the position on knowledge adopted by the South-West School of Neokantianism. A mental process is not simply an occurrence

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<sup>32</sup> "...die Begründung, die Ursprung-Gebung für absolute Erkenntnis zumuten zu wollen." (GA 56/57, p. 29)

<sup>33</sup> "Das Wo, die Sphäre, scheint gefunden, aber zugleich ist das Wie problematisch." (GA 56/57, p. 30)

in the natural world, but one that has a goal, namely the truth. A mental process is therefore normatively oriented. It is only by following certain principles or axioms (in short, norms) that the mental process qualifies as a cognitive mental process. But how are these norms themselves given? The establishing of the primal science as a science of absolute knowledge, or as a science of the “unitary sense of knowledge,” requires the proper understanding of the way in which “norms” guide and orient the mental process in its search for truth. How can their validity be established?

According to this particular version of Neokantianism, it is exactly the goal/telos of knowledge (truth) that should determine the norms of thinking and their validity. Hence the title “teleological method:” there should be norms guiding anyone as to how one **ought to** think if truth is that which is sought for. The act of cognition as a mental process **must** proceed in accordance with the empirically given psychological laws, but **should** obey the normative laws of thinking if truth is its goal. These normative laws are not empirically given. They are *a priori*. The truth is an ideal. The critical or teleological method turns out to be a new way of approaching cognition; different from the psychological method that treats any act of cognition as **wholly reducible to an** empirical mental process. This method proposes to investigate cognition not in terms of the empirical mental processes, but in terms of the ideal validity inherent in any act of *valid* cognition. But what are the forms and norms that cognition as a mental process must possess in order to be valid? What norms are conducive to, and guarantee the obtaining of, truth? In order to be able to establish the “valid” norms and forms required of any act of thinking to qualify as valid, the teleological method must possess beforehand an idea of what “truth,” or validity is. The problem, however, is that the teleological method was called for in the first place to establish the norms in accordance with which an act of thinking can become valid cognition. In other words, teleological method presupposes already that which it sets itself to find out, namely the truth.

Heidegger is not content, however, with simply pointing out this apparent begging the question fallacy that this position appears to entail. He believes that the idea that the same mental process is both empirical (*is* such-and-such) and ideal (as valid cognition it *ought to be* so-and-so) is worthy of further consideration. For reasons that will become apparent later it is now important to see how and why Heidegger finds this

phenomenon, “oughtness,” worthy of discussion. He asks,

How is this ought-character there, which is its correlate in the subject?  
and then continues,

A being is theoretically cognized – what about an ought? As long as the original experiential directedness peculiar to the living experience of an „ought“, the way in which an ought-character is given and the way in which it is taken as such, is not clarified, the already problematic method remains obscure in its own core.<sup>34</sup>

The teleological method depends essentially on an elucidation of the (living) experience of ‘oughtness’, on how an “ought” is experienced concretely, as it claims that mental processes **ought to** follow certain norms in order to become valid. In other words, the oughtness-experience (*Sollen-Erlebnis*) is the place to start for the teleological method. What is needed therefore is a phenomenological description of those experiences in which we “ought to” do something. A phenomenological elucidation of such an experience brings in new questions regarding the inextricable relation between *oughtness* (ideal validity) and values, and between truth and values. Is truth a value? Is value an ideal in the sense of *Sollen*?

An ideal appears to be something “valuable”, and represents as such a “value.” According to Heidegger, however, *Sollenerlebnisse* are not identical with the experiences in which values are given (*Werterlebnisse*). As a matter of fact, “value” becomes an object only as a result of a process of formalization<sup>35</sup>. Values are not originally given as “objects” in the value-experiences. Properly speaking, there are no such objects as values, and this can be easily seen by again paying attention to those lived experiences in which something valuable is lived through. There are only valuable things, or, better yet, ‘valuing’ experiences.

A value *is* not, on the contrary, it ‘values’.<sup>36</sup>

It is one thing to regard something as a value (*Für-Wert-Erklären*) and quite

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<sup>34</sup> “Wie gibt sich überhaupt ein Sollen, welches ist das Subjektskorrelat?,” and “Ein Sein wird theoretisch erkannt – ein Sollen? Solange die originale Erlebnisgerichtetheit des Sollenerlebnisses, der Sollensgebung und Sollensnehmung, nicht herausgestellt ist, bleibt die an sich schon problematische Methode in ihrem eigentlich Kern dunkel. (GA 56/57, p.45).

<sup>35</sup> GA 56/57, p.46

<sup>36</sup> „Ein Wert *ist* nicht, sondern es ‚wertet‘“ (GA 56/57, p.46)

another to simply value something (*Wertnehmen*). It is even difficult to adequately speak of “valuing experiences” without falling back on the language of objectivity, which cannot but couch the valuing experiences in terms of the object-subject relation (the valuing subject and its corresponding value). Values as objects are a theoretical by-product. But an unprejudiced look at the way in which I live through or experience the value-compartments<sup>37</sup> reveals that “our language is not yet up to the new fundamental typology of experience.<sup>38</sup>” The elucidation of the valuing experiences, and the distinction between “taking something as a value” and “valuing experiences as such,” make it also clear that truth cannot be given in the same way in which I live through valuing experiences.

In joyfulness I am valuingly living joyfulness through; in truth as truth I live.<sup>39</sup>

The distinction lies in the fact that while I am, as it were, taken in by the valuing experiences in the sense that the valuing “irrupts in me,” the truth, by contrast, appears to be given to me in such a way that I am sort of left untouched by it: I am simply establishing it without me being somehow involved in its establishing. The truth remains what it is even without my establishing it. The truth is taken to be in such a way that it remains what it is even if I myself were not there. By contrast,

In valuing there is nothing theoretical; it has its own ‘light’, it spreads its own brightness.<sup>40</sup>

The further elucidation of the distinction between value and truth makes it necessary to clarify whether values are „valid“ in the same sense in which „truth“ is said to be valid. In other words, we need to become clear on the forms of living in which validity is experienced. Such a necessary elucidation, however, seems to be either missing in Neokantianism or demoted to the status of a secondary problem.

Norms are always norms for... In this case, it is the psychological mental process (which is a being, *ein Seiendes*) that stands for the material to which these norms

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<sup>37</sup> “Ich erlebe Wertverhalte” *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> GA 56/57, p.46)

<sup>39</sup> “Im Erfreulichen als Erfreulichen erlebe ich wertnehmend, in der Wahrheit als Wahrheit lebe ich“ (GA 56/57, p.49).

<sup>40</sup> “Im Wertnehmen liegt nichts Theoretisches; es hat sein eigenes »Licht«, breitet eigene Helligkeit aus“ (GA 56/57, 49).

are applied. The act of cognition is thus regarded as a unity having two constitutive elements: the material represented by the mental process understood as a ‘being,’ and the ideal (*Sollen*, norms) applied to this material<sup>41</sup>. The ideal is not, obviously, a being in the same sense in which the mental process orienting itself in accordance with an ideal is said to be a “being.” They appear to be two different “worlds” separated by a huge and insurmountable fissure. The value philosophy remains, according to Heidegger, numbed by this fissure gaping between *being* and *norm* (ideal, value), and incapable of bridging the gap. But *Sein* and *Sollen* are somehow intertwined in that the mental process (*das Psychische*) stands under a norm, and the norm is always a norm for ... (a mental process). Too much emphasis on the factual, thing-, or object-like<sup>42</sup> aspect of the mental process – even if considered in its dependency on or relation to ideal norms - is, according to Heidegger, the source of this rigid separation between *Sein* and *Sollen*. This is why it becomes all the more necessary that we explore deeper into „this lability of fact and cognition of facts,“ until it becomes unmistakable in itself<sup>43</sup>.

As it has become already clear, Heidegger has adopted two of the main tenets of Husserl’s phenomenology in the very way in which he deals with the cognition (of facts): (1) cognition is an experience, something we live through, and as a result its clarification is made possible by the fact that (2) it can be subjected to a phenomenological description. It is only insofar as it can be lived through that cognition could be “elucidated.” Without delving too much into it, Heidegger admits implicitly that cognition-experience is *in need* of clarification. He wants to clarify what *is going on* in the ordinary experience of cognizing something and either confirm or disconfirm the traditional interpretation of cognition on the basis of its alleged evidential origin in experience. What is elucidated, however, is cognition *as* experience, as something lived through. Nevertheless, the elucidation of cognition as experience, later as phenomenon,

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<sup>41</sup> GA 56/57, p.54

<sup>42</sup> For the most part, Heidegger uses the term “Sache” and its linguistic derivatives “sachlich,” “Versachlichung,” but on some occasions he also uses the term “Tatsache” to refer to the object-correlate of the theoretical comportment that converts everything into “objects,” standing over against the subject.

<sup>43</sup> „diese Labilität der Tatsache und Tatsacheerkenntnis, des ‘Faktums’, bis zur letzten Klarheit hineinversenken, bis sie in ihrer Gegebenheit unmißverstehlich wird.“ (GA 56/57, 58).

will not be, as we will find out soon, another “cognition.” In other words, in the cognition-experience one does not necessarily experience cognition *as* experience. The experience of cognition is not necessarily the same as the cognition-experience. One thing though that distinguishes Heidegger’s approach to cognition from Husserl’s is that the critique of previous interpretations of cognition is crucial to the proper conducting of a phenomenological description of the experience of cognition.

*What is a mental process (das Psychische) after all? Why is it that it is precisely this being that has the peculiarity of being able to stand under a norm? The mental process in the science of psychology is a temporal object-, thing-like, reified being. It is always changing. Such a reified entity can be further analyzed into elementary processes, and as a basic fact can also be broken up into elementary parts (sensations, representations etc.). The parts are themselves reified (factual) parts since the being whose moments they are is itself regarded – in contradistinction with the ideality of the norm – as a brute fact, a reified procesual being. The only adequate method for making these reified parts accessible is “description.” However, from this perspective, description itself is but a psychological phenomenon, a reified mental process, a “thing.”*

What could this mean: a thing describes another thing?<sup>44</sup>

If there are only reified entities, what would then be the point in inquiring into whether “there are” reified entities? There would be only reified beings and that would be *all*. It would not even made sense to speak of *there being* only reified entities since in a world made of such entities there is no place for something like “there is/are...” Such a reified world is completely mute. In other words, the act of inquiring, comprehension as such, would not be found in an absolutely reified world. Things would have no “sense” or “meaning” at all, since comprehension would not be there to establish the reflective difference between entities and **what** they are, their sense. Things would be mute: in a world of stones, of “brute facts,” *there* would not *be* stones. Language itself breaks down at this point for it is incapable of comprehending such a world. Philosophy therefore would not be possible. Meaning and the grasping of meaning would have no “place” in

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<sup>44</sup> „Was soll das besagen: Eine Sache beschreibt eine andere?“ (GA 56/57, p.61)

this world (homeless<sup>45</sup>). We can indeed cast the spell of reification on anything we encounter, but by doing so the very act of inquiry<sup>46</sup>, of comprehension, encountering or experiencing itself, becomes unintelligible. In such a world there would be no place at all for comprehension. Philosophy as the attempt at making sense of what is going on would make no sense at all.

We are now at a methodological road junction which can determine whether philosophy will live or die. We are facing an abyss: either into nothingness, that is, the absolute reification, or into another world, more precisely, into the world for the very first time.<sup>47</sup>

Things, however, do make sense to us. We do experience their “being,” in the sense that we do know what they are, and even if we might be completely mistaken in our approach to, and claims about, what we experience, it is something other than a completely reified world that could “clarify” how it is that we could be “wrong.” The very question, „*Is there something?*” appears to call into question by itself the possibility of an absolutely reified world. As already said, in an absolutely reified world, this question would be nonsensical since the conditions of its possibility would not be met. “Everything” would be just stones or like stones... There would not even make sense to speak of “everything” or “like” or “just like.” Therefore, a question like, *Is there something?*, is an affront to the idea that there are only reified beings and nothing else.

And because it is clear that the absolute reification presupposes, or leads to a conception of a world in which cognition, the act of comprehension becomes homeless, Heidegger goes back to the “experience” of asking the question, *is there something?*, for no reason other than to discover in it how the “reified nexus” can still be present as an

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<sup>45</sup> Steven Crowell appears thus to be right when he claims that Heidegger began his philosophical journey with an intensified interest in the „homelessness of logic“ where by logic he means „the theory of meaning“. See Crowell, S. G. *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning : Paths toward Transcendental Phenomenology*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), p. 96, in particular the chapter „Lask, Heidegger and the Homelessness of Logic.“

<sup>46</sup> and language would be a reified language, words, their meanings, would be like stones...

<sup>47</sup> “Wir stehen an der methodischen Wegkreuzung, die über Tod und Leben der Philosophie überhaupt entscheidet, an einem Abgrund: entweder ins Nichts, d.h. der absoluten Sachlichkeit, oder es gelingt der Sprung in eine andere Welt, oder genauer, überhaupt erst in die Welt.“ (GA 56/57, p.63).

*object for comprehension*<sup>48</sup>. What is really there ultimately, and how, what concretely do we have in mind when we ask ourselves, is there something? How is the object (something as something, in general), and its comprehension, given in the experience of asking, is there something? *It all goes back to the experience of comprehending something, to the very living of comprehending something, to the concrete situation of comprehending: the concrete, factic comprehension of something as experience (Erlebnis)*. What is that which is comprehended, and how is it concretely *being comprehended* in a concretely performed (lived and living) experience, namely that of asking the question, *Is there something?* How is it lived through? At this point, Heidegger abandons his critique of Neokantian interpretation of cognition and launches into an phenomenologically original description of the “experience” of asking, *Is there something?*.

The question is lived through. I live through. I live something through.<sup>49</sup>

And this is precisely the reason why Heidegger sets himself the task of elucidating what is going on in asking whether there is something (*Frageerlebnis*). What is (the sense of) this (lived and living) experience? What does it “contain”? How does it take place concretely? If we can ask such a question, it means that the question is somehow, to some extent and in clearly definable limits, “meaningful” to us. How does the “meaningful”-character of this experience present itself? How does the concretely asked question become meaningful to us? In what sense does this question (-experience) make sense to us?

What is crucially important here is to find a way to grasp the (living) asking-experience as it unfolds itself, as it takes place; it does not matter what we have to say about it, what we already know about such things; what matters is how it itself becomes meaningful from itself, by unfolding itself. The experience of asking, *is there something?*, is already meaningful to us before and prior to us asking how it has become meaningful. It has already become meaningful through and as “our asking” the question, in our “carrying out of the asking.” It is, in a sense, meaningful *in itself*. *Erlebnis* is

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<sup>48</sup> „... alles auf die öde Frage nach einem Sachzusammenhang und seinem Erkennen überhaupt zusammenschumpfte.“ (GA 56/57, 65)

<sup>49</sup> “Die Frage ist erlebt. Ich erlebe. Ich erlebe etwas.” (GA 56/57, p.65).

already here interpreted essentially as “taking place,” unfolding, enacting, as being performed. In a sense, Heidegger is implying here that there is a distinction to be drawn between (1) the way in which the question itself becomes meaningful (how, why, to what extent, under what conditions etc.) *in our asking it* –genuine living or lived living, and (2) the way in which the question becomes meaningful when *regarded as* meaningful – theoretically regarded living, non-lived living. By paying attention to how this specific question is *concretely* lived through, or experienced, Heidegger has only one thing in mind: to take the lived experience precisely in the same way in which it itself presents from itself. To understand it in this way is by no means the same thing as finding causes, conditions, or preconditions for such an experience. To find causes for lived experiences would amount to reifying them, to explicating them as “things.” Heidegger, by contrast, wants to understand the “pure motives of the sense of pure lived experiences.”

The word *Erlebnis* itself is today so obsolete and faded that it should be left aside if it were not so appropriate. It cannot be avoided, which means that it all comes down to understanding its essence.<sup>50</sup>

Our review of Heidegger’s first lectures is intended, among other things, to show why and how *Erlebnis* comes to play such an important role in early Heidegger. We have gathered enough information to safely claim that even if Heidegger begins by placing himself clearly in the tradition of life-philosophy<sup>51</sup> which regarded *Erlebnis* as the ultimate philosophical prize, experience *as it takes place and is lived* becomes the fundamental theme of Heidegger’s philosophy in virtue of its ability, as the actual concrete unfolding (enactment, effectuating, actualizing, fulfillment, performing) of the comprehension *of* something, to contain the key to intelligibility as such, to how, under what conditions, in what sense and to what extent we can make “sense” of “something,” of anything at all.

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<sup>50</sup> “Das Wort <Erlebnis> selbst is heute so abgegriffen und verblaßt, daß man es am besten beiseite lassen müßte, wenn es nicht gerade so treffend wäre. Es läßt sich nicht vermeiden, und es kommt daher um so mehr darauf an, sein Wesen zu verstehen.“ (GA 56/57, p.66)

<sup>51</sup> François Raffoul, „Factual Life and the Need for Philosophy“ in *Rethinking Facticity*, editors François Raffoul, Eric Sean Nelson, State University of New York Press, 2008, p.71

A science of *Erlebnisse*

The proper way to grasp experiences is by bringing them to givenness in accordance with their own full sense, where by “full” sense Heidegger means the “concrete,” “factual” manner of self-presentation of lived experiences. We must “see” the living experience with its own eyes, as it were, in the manner of its own comprehension. We must always be ready to keep to the lived experience as such and grasp that which presents itself from itself. Heidegger has already employed this method when he addressed the ought-character of some experiences, and also the valuing experiences. Now it is time to apply the same method again on another experience, namely that of asking, *is there something?*<sup>52</sup>

The unprejudiced and unmediated seeing of the lived experience of asking does not find any „I“ that does the asking, nor a psychic subject who experiences contents in the form of a mental process. Relative to the specific way in which the asking is conducted, it can be safely claimed that “nobody” asks this question. The questioner is irrelevant to, absent from, the questioning *as it unfolds*. To even speak of mental processes, or even of an experiencing subject, an ego, a subject “doing,” as it were, the asking, would be to read too much into this experience as it presents itself. It itself does not know anything of a subject “having” an experience. The experience itself, in the manner of its own comprehension, does not know anything of an experience being attributed to an experiencing subject. What can be found instead is *a lived living of*

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<sup>52</sup> While Husserl chooses predominantly perceptual experiences, where single perceptual objects stand in the focal center, as his exemplary study cases clearly indicate, Heidegger extends the sphere of analyzable experiences relevant for phenomenology well over the perceptual sphere by including in it all sorts of “objects.” This will become even more apparent in the next lectures where he will venture to investigate phenomenologically (in the sense of Logical Investigations) objects like “the fall semester,” “Max Weber’s course,” “Kant’s critique of pure reason.” He will focus on the way in which such “objects” present themselves in the flow of our experiences and constitute thereby a uniquely identifiable experience of their own.

*something, a ,life out to something.* <sup>53</sup>To live is always to live something. The most important thing that has to be emphasized about this interpretation of experiences is that from such a perspective the experience is no longer comprehended as a thing-like event in the natural world, but rather as a new phenomenon of its own kind. Upon attempting to see the lived experience exactly in the way in which it presents itself, that is, as it is in its own unfolding and in accordance with its own intrinsic intelligibility, one thing becomes clear: we are no longer grasping it in the same manner in which we grasp other things and occurrences. The lived experience is not “a mere entitative natural occurrence.”<sup>54</sup> The lived experience is not a thing that “exists brutally,” a thing that comes into and later out of being. My lived experience is “something new, not of the kind of thing-like, object-like entities.”<sup>55</sup> It is not a process in the usual sense.

It is not a process, but the event of coming into its own [*Er-eignis*].<sup>56</sup>

The experience in question here does not, according to Heidegger, do justice to *Erlebnis*. As a result, he introduces an apparently different lived experience, an “ordinary” one, the experience of seeing the lectern upon entering the classroom, and contrasts it with the experience of asking, *Is there something?* The comparison reveals that this experience of seeing the lectern (*Umwelterlebnis*) “presents” the lectern (and not some object devoid of any significance - *Bedeutung*) in such an unmediated way that reification can only be understood as a secondary and derivative act founded upon the instant comprehension of the lectern *as* lectern. In the living experience of the lectern, the lectern is there immediately, directly, on the spot, out of hand (*in einem Schlag*). It is not as if I see an object devoid of any significance, and only afterwards I attach significance to it. I immediately see *it* as lectern, and then, if need be, I can eventually come to see it as an object of some sort:

The signifying-aspect is what is first; it offers itself to me immediately, in the absence of any reflective detour through grasping something as thing.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> „ein Er-leben von etwas, ein ,Leben auf etwas hin.“ (GA 56/57, p.66, 68)

<sup>54</sup> “ein bloßes seiendes Geschehen.” (GA 56/57, p.69)

<sup>55</sup> “etwas Neuartiges, nichts Sachmäßiges, objektartiges Seiendes” (GA 56/57, p.75).

<sup>56</sup> “Es ist nicht ein Vorgang, sondern ein Er-eignis.” (GA 56/57, p.75).

<sup>57</sup> “Das Bedeutsame ist das Primäre, gibt sich mir unmittelbar, ohne jeden

I live in such a way that everything, no matter how strange it may seem, makes somehow sense, is significant, means something, and matters somehow, to me. The things I deal with are things I know most of the time what to do with, and even if I sometimes may encounter things I do not know what to do with, this “perplexity” is itself an indication of the fact that I always live primarily in a familiar world surrounded by meaningful, significant things. It is, as it were, for lack of a better expression, a “familiar perplexity.” Heidegger uses an unusual expression to name this phenomenon: *es weltet*. I live in such a way that I already “know the significance” of that which I experience in the sense that I “know what to do with” it or “know how” to deal with it somehow. The constantly operating familiarity of the environing world which makes itself known in the significance of anything I can possibly encounter (“I know what to do with it”) is arguably what Heidegger refers to by the German verb: *es weltet*, it worlds.

*Es weltet* refers also to the phenomenon that each and every thing whose significance I immediately recognize, on the spot as it were, stands in an inconspicuous but essential relation to many other familiar things in its vicinity. Without saying it so explicitly, it is clear however that for Heidegger *Es weltet* operates on a wholesale manner. I immediately recognize/comprehend the thing that I see as my lectern, but along with this comprehension, I also immediately “see” the books, the windows, and already have an understanding of everything that populates the surroundings of the lectern: the lectern can appear to me as my lectern only out of the familiar surrounding populated with “things” whose significance I can already grasp: lectern, books, desks, classrooms, buildings, students, professors, semesters, universities, education etc. Familiar things can be familiar to me not in isolation from other familiar things, but only on the basis of an essential belonging to a horizon of familiar things, “together with” other things.

The unprejudiced “seeing” of an ordinary lived experience makes it clear that I am primarily surrounded by lecterns, glasses, cars, walls, friends, windows, enemies etc. and not by “objects” that become what they are, namely lecterns, cars etc. only later on in my dealings with them. The sudden encounter with an unfamiliar object is nothing but a case limit of my lived familiarity with significant (meaningful) things. The experience is thus the event of the immediacy of an on going, unfolding meaningfulness.

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gedanklichen Umweg über ein Sacherfassen.” (GA 56/57, p.73).

Living in the surrounding world, it makes sense (*es bedeutet*) to me everywhere and always, it is world-laden, 'it worlds'<sup>58</sup>

What Heidegger appears to be implying here can be formulated as follows: that which is lived through has already been comprehended somehow without having become first an object of explicit reflective focus. An important conclusion he reaches here but will develop in the next courses is that to experience something is simultaneously to have an understanding of it somehow. Cognition of it can only come about in the wake of my having already somehow comprehended it as something meaning something to me. It is only on the basis or in virtue of its having been somehow already comprehended that the object can eventually be analyzed. And the "object" is comprehended in the sense that I know what to do with it, I am already relating to it somehow, I know how I should go about dealing with it (either by holding it in my hands if it is a hammer, or by talking to him/her if it is a person etc.) To "comprehend" its significance is not a theoretical process; it does not presuppose that I have come to regard, look at or considered the significance and *then* acted on it, fulfil or carry it out. On the contrary: I know its significance in the sense that I have already somehow acted on it, realized or performed it. As Harrison Hall puts it, it is a kind of knowing in "the sense of possessing the skill or competence, not in the sense of having the right sort of beliefs."<sup>59</sup> **What** things are when encountered in a surrounding world, in an environing experience, consists in us *doing*, as it were, or *fulfilling* their significance, *taking* them as that which they are, that is, what they mean. The object is in the sense of "meaning" something to me = I am already acting, comporting on the comprehension of its significance. The significance is primarily lived through, and not merely cognized. My comportment towards something is the first, primary, fundamental expression of my comprehension of that something, of its significance. The significance of an encountered thing in the surrounding world is not a static and fixed entity. The significance *is* what it is only by my enacting, fulfilling it. The significance is not first and foremost a linguistic but a "practical" meaning. Things are what they are by my enacting their significance, by "my acting on their meaning."

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<sup>58</sup> "In einer Umwelt lebend, bedeutet es mir überall und immer, es ist alles welthaft, 'es weltet'." (GA 56/57, p.73).

<sup>59</sup> Harrison Hall, „Intentionality and world“ in Cambridge Companion to Heidegger, edited by Charles Guignon, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.132

And things in my surrounding are what they are precisely *because* I take them so, that is, I act on such a comprehension of their meaning: that thing is a car precisely in virtue of *my taking it as a car*, in virtue of *my relating to it as a car*. Although Heidegger does not say it expressly, it is clear however that for him the meaning is not a static reality, a fixed something similar to stones: a meaning is a meaning as long as I take it as meaning something, as long as I am performing it. To put it in my own words: my comportment towards things is the performing of my comprehension of their significance.

I should take the time here to note that the move Heidegger makes here and which will prove crucial to our understanding of the transition from life to being consists in distinguishing the “ordinary,” surrounding or environing experience from the reflective experience. The fundamental difference will be found in the unique “presence” (*da* or *dabei sein*), or the lack thereof, of the “I” in experiencing. In reflection, the experience is intentionally depersonalized. The cognition of the object is intentionally kept away from having any significant relation to the one cognizing. Cognition proceeds always on the assumption that it should not matter “who” cognizes. Even if Heidegger does not yet say it explicitly here, there is no doubt that this depersonalization of the theoretical experience is the source of his later conception of *das Man*: in the theoretical experience, I should see what anybody can see, I should grasp only what anybody else can grasp. I do not matter at all in and for my cognition-experiences. I have them, I live them through, but the fact that it is me who is living them through is completely irrelevant for what is to be achieved in these experiences. Are all experiences impersonal? Our first experiences, and the most ordinary ones, are far from being impersonal: I suddenly see the thunderbolt and am frightened. I am not only grasping instantly, “on the spot,” “all at once,” what is going on (the thunderbolt on the sky, myself running on the valley all by myself, miles away from other people, on a cloudy night etc.) but also what is going on affects me, I find myself somehow disposed toward what is going on. The experience involves me essentially. It is not just an experience but a lived-livingexperience: in living it I am somehow connected, stay in touch with what is going on, the *whole* surrounding world is comprehended by me somehow, and the comprehension finds its expression in my reactions to, plans about, review of, what I see as taking place. I do not see just a thunderbolt, but one that frightens me (in the darkness of the night suddenly illuminated

by the thunderbolt etc.) And my being frightened with it makes me experience it *in a different way* than what I would typically see it when I would simply want to study a thunderbolt for scientific purposes, or when I see a thunderbolt represented in a painting: *how* I experience becomes intrinsically one with *what* I experience; what I live through depends essentially on how I live it through. What I experience is the way it is precisely because I am somehow there, present (“*dabei sein*”<sup>60</sup>), I resonate in the whole experience. In my ordinary experiences, that which is experienced is not a simple object, an object-like entity, **just** a thunderbolt that I see, but something that matters to me one way or another. I am not irrelevant to my own experiences. What I live through is always lived through in one way or another, some**how**: for example, I could be bored sometimes with a mathematical problem, sometimes I could be really excited about the same problem, sometimes indifferent, sometimes I may look at it dismissively or deeply concerned. I am always there some**how**<sup>61</sup>. But this “how” characteristic of all my experiences is not itself noticeable in the experience; it is one with “what” I experience. This explains also why the experiencing and what is experienced are not two entitative objects put somehow together<sup>62</sup>. The experience is always “personal,” which means that its intentionality is not merely relational in character<sup>63</sup>. It is only when I strip the experience of the living, *personal* character, that is, I ignore the “quality of the act” in Husserl’s terms, that I can downgrade the intention to the status of a mere relation.

What Heidegger finds, at this stage of his philosophical development, as the defining mark of *Erlebnis* as it takes place is that it is *persönlichpar excellence*. It is thus the personal character of any experience that renders it “living” in the first place. This “personal” or “living” character of lived experiences will always from now on preoccupy Heidegger. It can also be said to be what distinguished Heidegger’s phenomenology from Husserl’s in that Heidegger’s phenomenology is built around the idea that the “object” of investigation is ultimately of a “personal” character, that intentionality is not “fallen from the sky,” as he will say later, but the ongoing dynamic of an entity with a unique identity, that of a living being. What I am living through is, in some sense, appropriated by me; I

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60 GA 56/57, p.69; GA 58, p.33, GA 60, p.16

61 GA 58, p.32

62 GA 56/57, p.70

63 Ibid., p.207

am always “owning” anything that I lived through by living it through as something that “speaks to” me, represents something **tome**, matters to me somehow, is what it is thanks to my experiencing it. This also explains why it is never easy for us to pay attention to “how” we experience things. “What” we experience, the content of our experiences captures our attention completely. Therefore, any experience is genuinely *my* lived-living experience<sup>64</sup>. In these experiences the familiarity of significant things is somehow appropriated by me in the sense that the familiar things “I always know what to do with” are, as it were, cut out or tailored for me: I find the mountain I see too difficult (for me) to climb, the lectern too high, my parents pretty annoying, my job an undeserved pleasure, the color of my car very intense, the house that I have in need of repair, etc. Things are not neutral, indifferent and undetermined objects. Lived experiences grasped in their performative character are ways in which “I” make the things I am dealing with “my own:” I appropriate them, take them into my possession somehow (proper-ty). And I also come to know myself in and through my dealings with things: *Erlebnisse* are *Er-eignisse*, *events of coming into one’s own*, that is, “appropriated by an historical I.”<sup>65</sup> In my lived experiences “I” appropriate the things I encounter by knowing how to react to them, how to go about in my dealing with them, by “always knowing what to do with them.”<sup>66</sup> And my own self reveals itself to itself in such “going about.” Ex. I reluctantly climb the mountain and only if I have to since I find it too high (I do not like climbing), I pretty much avoid my parents since I find them annoying (I would rather stay away from my parents), seeing the house always reminds me of the repairs I have to make etc.

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<sup>64</sup> We might be tempted to speak of the inescapable subjectivity of our experiences. Heidegger is not denying that there is an essentially “personal” aspect of all of my experiences, but is cautious about whether “subjectivity” is the right way to address it. All experiences have the peculiarity of being centered on “me,” on my selfworld, but there is more at stake here than meets the eye. The hasty recourse to the subject-object schema underlying any notion of subjectivity can prove to be a fateful decision banning us right from the start from properly understanding the proper sense in which the experiences are always “mine.” As he will say in the next lectures, he uses the term “I” as a formal indication, that is, merely formally, without making any substantive claims about its nature.

<sup>65</sup> “ge-eignet durch ein historisches Ich.” (GA 56/57,78).

<sup>66</sup> Lived experiences are “Er-eignisse, als ge-eignet durch ein historisches Ich.” (GA 56/57, p.78)

And even if lived experience presupposes the act of experiencing (*das Erleben*) along with that which is experienced or lived through (*das Erlebte*), these two are by no means two parts that can be somehow put together into a higher unity constituted by the lived experience. What is even more important is that not only the experience of asking, *Is there something?*, but any lived experience whatsoever is a phenomenon of its own kind which is far from presenting itself in the same way in which thing-like, object-like, reified entities present themselves. Any lived experience is, in accordance with its own sense, an occurrence like no other:

I understand it not as a processual occurring, as a reified thing, an object, but as something completely new, as an event (of coming into one's own)<sup>67</sup>.

In other words, an experience is an unique event whose sense can easily be distorted once it is interpreted as a real event happening in the natural world. Reified entities are established in opposition to, or at least in separation from, "me." By contrast, seen in its purity, the experience reveals that

The living (experience) does not take place before me, like a thing which I am simply laying down, like an object; I myself bring it into its own for me, and it comes into its own in accordance with its own essence.<sup>68</sup>

To summarize, lived experiences are not like any other things, objects or processes. They are uniquely "personal" events. They are of a unique character: *Ereignis*, *events of appropriation* or, better yet, events of coming into one's own. As *Ereignisse* they are fundamentally unique events in, by and as which the self ('I') appropriates a world for itself, makes it its own and becomes thereby intelligible to itself. The appropriation consists in the comprehending of the nexus of significance to which all things encountered belong, which comprehension, in turn, is *performed or enacted* in no other way than by *one's going about* in one's dealings with the things encountered *in a*

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<sup>67</sup> "...dann verstehe ich es nicht als Vor-gang, als Sache, Objekt, sondern als ein ganz Neuartiges, ein Ereignis." (GA 56/57, p.75)

<sup>68</sup> GA 56/57, p.75. Heidegger here plays with two German words, *sich ereignen* (to occur, to happen) and *Eigen* (own) that have clearly different meanings but share the same etymological root. What Heidegger alludes to here is *Erlebnis* as a manifestation, an event (*Ereignis*) in and as which one becomes experientially given to itself as itself (*eigen*). For a more detailed understanding of these terms see M. Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, p.55

*certain way.*

Any attempt at reifying experiences as events of coming into its own ends in distorting their very sense. And reification has already surreptitiously set in whenever the fundamental character of *Erlebnis* as an event in which I am comprehensibly in an open relation to “something” by taking it to be significant or meaningful to me (mean-ing it) - and I do so *in the very manner* in which I have always already found myself dealing with it -, is lost or ignored. By omitting how things encountered in a surrounding world are already meaningful to us, reification proposes another interpretation of the sense of experience as such: experience is all about the object; experience is, properly speaking, “experience of *the object*.”

The object as what it is, its being, does not touch me. *I* am no longer the one that now establishes. The act of establishing is, as living experience, still a rudiment of lived living; it is de-living. The object as such, that which is cognized, is a-way, removed from the genuine living of it.<sup>69</sup>

To be able to see familiar, surrounding (*umweltlich*) things as mere objects presupposes thus a specific modification of the originary manner of living. The originary living of something (experience) is one from which “I”<sup>70</sup> am not bracketed. Seeing pure objects, however, is an experience I take myself out of. Owing to “me,” my lived experience is precisely what it is. The living (experience) understood as *Ereignis* is the “origin” of any other kind of living. Without further ado and much preparation, Heidegger now shifts the entire discussion onto the possibility of a science of lived experiences, of the living as such. The Neokantian approach to the idea of philosophy as a fundamental science in the sense of absolute knowledge – leaving aside the fallacy which it entails and the unexplored presuppositions it rests upon -, ends up, according to

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<sup>69</sup> “Das Gegenstand-, das Objektsein als solches berührt mich nicht. Das Ich, das fest-stellt, bin ich gar nicht mehr. Das Feststellen als Erlebnis ist nur noch ein Rudiment von Er-leben; es ist Ent-leben. Das Gegenständliche, das Er-kannte, ist als solches ent-fernt, aus dem eigentlichen Erleben herausgehoben.“ (GA 56/57, p.75).

<sup>70</sup> The “I” as the subject of experience in contrast with the subject matter of the experience is, to say it one more time, not to be found when grasping the experience as it presents itself. But this does not contradict Heidegger’s further claim that the “I” is nevertheless inextricably involved in the act of experience of familiar things (*Umwelterlebnis*). The “I,” so Heidegger, “*mitschwingt*” in the living. It is not a part, nor a moment of the experience. It is a “presence” of a unique sort which has yet to be further elucidated.

Heidegger, transforming the world into a world of “mute” objects despite its initial commitment to a separation between *Sein* and *Sollen*. Such a world cannot adequately explain how inquiry, philosophy itself, is at all possible, not to mention that it cannot in the end explain anything. Philosophy, according to Heidegger, is possible only as a systematic inquiry into, a science of, living experiences as *Ereignisse*, as events of coming into one’s own. Heidegger’s breakthrough here is to have grasped the living experience as an eminently “personal” experience, as “something,” an event or happening (*Ereignis*), in which I find myself living in a familiar context, in other words, experiencing things and situations which are always, in a sense, *my own* and come to experience *myself* in such experiencing.

#### A (non-theoretical) science of lived experiences

The lived, living experience, “personal” to the highest degree, becomes now the focus of investigation<sup>71</sup>. The very possibility of philosophy depends on the possibility of there being a science of lived experiences as “the living of something”: “How is such a science of living possible?<sup>72</sup>” This science, however, appears to be from the beginning beset with some very serious problems.

According to Heidegger, any science is essentially conditioned by the ability to bracket the self from the experience as such. The emphasis on the object is proportional to the vanishing of the self. The objectivity in science is precisely this ability. The object of any science is the end result of a process of objectification understood as a process of dispossessing the living of the “object” (*Erlebnis*) of its “living” character<sup>73</sup>, which results in a separation of that which is lived through (the object) from that which lives – the experiencing or living self. The living character of the lived experience (life) consists

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<sup>71</sup> „Eines ist unüberwindlich: die Voraussetzung der Erlebnisse selbst.“ (GA 56/57, p.77)

<sup>72</sup> GA 56/57, p. 98.

<sup>73</sup> “Objektivierung” and “Theoretisierung” appear to be identical for Heidegger. See on page 91: “Aber die letzte Probleme bleiben verdeckt, wenn die Theoretisierung selbst verabsolutisiert wird und ihr Ursprung aus dem “Leben” nicht verstanden ist: Der Prozeß der sich steigernder Objektivierung als Prozeß der Ent-lebung.”

in the resonance (*Mitschwingung, Mitanklingen*) of the self in the giving or experiencing (*es weltet*) of familiar, significant things. When the self is bracketed from its own living of things, the world of significant, sense-laden, familiar things and relations **becomes** a world of objective, neutral objects awaiting further determinations. The experience is now impersonal. The truth of science is always an “objective truth” in the sense that the ideal aim of science is to arrive at an understanding of its objects having no essential relation to an I in particular, but to any I, an I in general, to a “subject in general.” Again we can anticipate here Heidegger’s later interpretation of the “fallenness” of *Dasein* as *das Man*, the impersonal ‘they.’ Theoretical comportment is precisely this ability to *contemplate or intend* objects as objects for, or as given to, an “I” *in general*, an impersonal I, a cognitive or theoretical I. The theoretical “I” is no longer the “living” I, as Heidegger puts it, but the mere correlate of an absolute objectivity. The “personal” character characterizing any living experience *as it is lived* has now become lost:

By proceeding theoretically I get myself out of the living.<sup>74</sup>

Theoretical cognition is “embodied” in the extant sciences. Therefore, the particular sciences have a special relation to this cognition. The particular sciences are designed to produce theoretical cognition. Theoretical cognition takes the truth as objective truth. The particular sciences want to establish the truth about their respective domains. Truth, in turn, is understood as “universal truth”, that is, the “theoretical” concept of truth goes hand in hand with the idea of universality; it has the character of universality. Theoretical truth is to be distinguished from other “truths,” namely from ethical, artistic and religious truths<sup>75</sup>. Unlike all the other truths, unlike all the other cognitions which all lack the character of universality, the theoretical cognition comes with the added advantage of facilitating our understanding of these non-theoretical truths since the very idea of theoretical truth has an essential relation to the idea of universal validity and thus to theoretical cognition.

In conclusion, the idea of science in general appears to stand in clear opposition to the idea of a science of *Erlebnisse* precisely in their living character as science is possible only as a dispossession of the living of its living character. The experience is no

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<sup>74</sup> “Theoretisch komme ich selbst aus dem Erleben her” (GA 56/57, p.117)

<sup>75</sup> on page 59, “truths” is in scare quotes!.

longer genuine, but *artificial* (künstlich), no longer “personal,” but impersonal; the I is no longer the “full,” concrete I but an “empty” I<sup>76</sup>. This science would have to be able to be an objective science of a non-objectified, non-reified lived experience, which clearly does not sit well with the very idea of a theoretical science in general. In other words, the possibility of a science of lived experiences in their living character calls for a science that is not theoretical in its approach, a non-theoretical or pre-theoretical science. Such a science would pay full consideration to both the way in which the I is *there* (*da* or *dabei*) or the “resonateness” of the I in the experience, and the operative significance of anything appearing in and as such an experience. In other words, this science would not lose sight of the essential appropriation that takes place in and as living, appropriation that consists in the self’s owning a world for itself and discovering itself in this “owning” of anything encountered. Or, to put it differently, such science would take into consideration the *Ereignis*-character of living, its “personal” character.

The extant theoretical sciences, by contrast, all rest on the possibility of

(1) removing any essential involvement with an I from the experience/living of the subject matter under investigation, and of

(2) stripping the subject matter of any prior “significance” (*Bedeutung*) it already had within the world of familiar things (*Umwelt*) I have always been surrounded with, and reducing it to a mere “object” in general. The lectern, for example, becomes a mere instantiation of an object in general; it no longer is a lectern **primarily**, but first and foremost an object:

If the genuine sense of familiar things, their significance, is somehow annulled, then that which is already established as merely given has been faded into an mere thing.<sup>77</sup>

Husserl blamed the inability of the particular sciences to grasp the peculiarity of consciousness (or lived experiences, since Husserl employs *Bewußtsein* and *Erlebnis* almost interchangeably) to their inborn tendency to interpret anything as a natural object, that is, as an entity fully determinable in terms of a spatio-temporal unity as prescribed by

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<sup>76</sup> GA 58, p. 247

<sup>77</sup> “Wird nun die eigentliche Sinn des Umweltlichen, sein Bedeutungscharakter, gleichsam ausgehoben, dann ist das bereits als gegeben Hingestellte zum bloßen Ding verblaßt.” (GA 56/57, p.89).

the laws of the exact natural sciences. This naturalization of consciousness has been one of the main impediments towards developing the idea of philosophy as a rigorous science<sup>78</sup>. For Heidegger, however, such an interpretation is shortsighted. It is not merely the “naturalization” tendency of all theoretical sciences that accounts for the ruinous circumstance in which philosophy finds itself today (still further away from accomplishing its historic mission of becoming a rigorous science), but rather the hidden effects of theoretical attitude at work in all sciences.

It is not simply the naturalism as people thought (Husserl, Logos-essay), it is the general dominance of the theoretical which has distorted the problems.<sup>79</sup>

The living dissolves itself under the gaze of theorizing. Philosophy should be able to come to grasp the lived experiences methodically and rigorously precisely in their “living” character. To put it differently, philosophy should be able to have an undistorted access to *Erlebnis* (the living of something) as lived and not as posited and thereby regarded in the theoretical attitude. And since the theoretical attitude is founded upon the living attitude in the sense that it can only come about as a modification of the genuine, living attitude, philosophy should be, if anything at all, a pre-theoretical science of lived experiences in their living character.

#### The theoretical attitude

In order to explore the possibility of a pre-, and non-theoretical science, the theoretical aspect of the extant theoretical sciences has to be fully acknowledged and understood. The first step thus towards establishing a non-theoretical science is a full recognition and understanding of what “theory” and “theoretical” mean.

So far Heidegger has discovered that the theoretical aspect lies in a derivative or secondary (not originary or genuine) comportment towards anything encountered

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<sup>78</sup> 5. E. Husserl, H. L. v. Breda and Archives Husserl à Louvain, *Husserliana; gesammelte Werke; auf Grund des Nachlasses veröffentlicht vom Husserl-Archiv (Louvain) unter Leitung ([Haag.: M. Nijhoff, 1950), v.pp.8*

<sup>79</sup> “Es ist nicht nur der Naturalismus, wie man gemeint hat (Husserl, Logosaufsatz), es ist die Generalherreschaft des Theoretischen, was die Problematik verunstaltet.” (GA 56/57, p.87).

which empties the experience of its “living character.” It is as if the self is disowned of all familiar things. The self is no longer at home in its surroundings: the familiarity (significance) of things lived through in the modus of a specific comportment towards (dealing with, reacting to, moving among, together, against etc.) them seems to vanish along with the self. By modifying the manner of experiencing, the “content” of experience changes as well. Consequently, theoretical explanation of lived experiences is no explanation at all. The theoretical comportment towards them is already distorting their sense:

Explanation as fragmentation, that is, in this case truncation: one wants to explain something which one no longer has genuinely, and does not want to, and can, let it be genuinely.<sup>80</sup>

The theoretical comportment sees only real objects everywhere. The only explanation it is capable of is one that explains one real object by reference to another real object<sup>81</sup>.

However, the possibility of elaborating a non-theoretical science of living experiences depends entirely on a fully-fledged understanding of the process by which the genuine living experience modifies into a theoretical experience.

The process of stripping the experience of its living character is a gradual one. The starting point is the thing as “given”<sup>82</sup> in the living attitude<sup>83</sup>, that is, in the environing experience of familiar things: for example, the lectern which is genuinely lived through as being too high, or too dirty for me etc. becomes a lectern in general, no longer too high or too dirty. The familiar thing gradually loses its original significance. This lectern is then understood as being built out of a material, wood for example. I now come to see the lectern as “something made of wood,” then as a material thing in general, and eventually as a mere “thing” in general. If the starting point is a “thing” that has a role to play in my world of familiar things, the end point of the process of reification

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<sup>80</sup> “Erklärung durch Zerstückelung, d.h. hier Zerstörung: Man will etwas erklären, das man gar nicht mehr als solches hat und als solches gelten lassen will und kann.” (GA 56/57, p.86).

<sup>81</sup> „ein Seiendes durch ein anderes zu erklären.“ (GA 56/57, p.87)

<sup>82</sup> “Givenness” is, according to Heidegger, another by-product of theorizing (ibid. p.89).

<sup>83</sup> „erlebende Verhalten“ (ibid. p.98)

(theorizing or objectification) is an object in general, and the world of such objects is there not for “me” but for a self in general. Consequently, we can even speak of degrees of liveliness of living, which, of course, have nothing to do with how passionately one can live one’s life. The degrees of liveliness refer to the gradual disappearance of the two aspects (I-resonateness and operational or worldly significance) of the living character of any genuine (that is, pre-theoretical) living.

When the self is detached or removed from living, the self becomes a contemplative or reflective I, a theoretical I, the mere correlate of “thingness.” This self enacts now a different sense of the things encountered. Things are now “different” for such a self. The self is now interested solely in achieving “cognition” about the things stripped of their significance in the world of familiar things. The experience now splits itself into the cognized object and its cognition. It is important to say it again, however, that for Heidegger the theoretical attitude is founded upon, and comes second to, the attitude the self has in and towards the world of familiar surrounding things. As a matter of fact, the theoretical attitude is born out of the ordinary, that is, *living* attitude. This explains why Heidegger raises the question regarding the “genesis” of the theoretical attitude from the envioning experience, the living attitude. The theoretical attitude is still a lived experience, but one abstracted from its genuine living character, and reduced thus to a bare minimum. In this connection, one further question arises: can the theoretical attitude account for its own genesis? Can we come to a full understanding of what the theoretical attitude is by constantly remaining in the theoretical attitude? In other words, can theory be satisfactorily explained by theory itself? Can there be such a thing as a “theory of theory?” If cognition cannot be but theoretical in nature (the setting up of an object in opposition with a cognizing subject by the gradual process of bracketing of the self along with the stripping of familiar things of their envioning significance), then, in light of what we have said so far, theoretical cognition is in no position to account for its own genesis. The theoretical attitude is but a specific modification of the way in which the pre-theoretical, living attitude is oriented towards anything it can encounter. Philosophy as a fundamental science is possible, if at all, only as a kind of comprehension which is not theoretical in character:

... there must be a pre-theoretical or supra-theoretical, anyway a non-

theoretical science, a genuine Ur-science, out of which the theoretical itself emerges.<sup>84</sup>

Once the theoretical attitude sets in, the living character of the experience is lost:

The 'it worlds' is not theoretically established; it is lived through '*as worlding*'.<sup>85</sup>

Since living experience cannot be captured in its genuineness through theoretical reflection, Heidegger admits implicitly that theoretical cognition is as a matter of fact distinct from, and even opposite to, a kind of comprehending pertaining to living experience itself. Genuine living has its own "comprehension" of the enviroing world, which is distinct from theoretical reflection. Now the most important question is how we can come closer to grasping the nature of this pre-theoretical comprehension proper to living as such. Only going back to the genuine act of living and its own comprehension can provide the answer:

We want to perform the living of surrounding things in full liveliness and then, looking at it, seeing it, we want to see both it and the looking at it, and study how the first enacted seeing occurs.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "...denn muß es eine vor-theoretische oder über-theoretische, jedenfalls eine nichttheoretische Wissenschaft, eine echte Ur-wissenschaft geben, aus der das Theoretische selbst seinen Ursprung nimmt." (GA 56/57, p.96)

<sup>85</sup> "Das »es weltet« wird nicht theoretisch festgestellt, sondern »als weltend« erlebt." (GA 56/57, p.94).

<sup>86</sup> "Wir sollen also in voller Lebendigkeit das Umwelterlebnis vollziehen und es dann im Sehen, Auf-es-Hinsehen, und das auf dieses Hinsehen hin sehen und das Wie des vollzogenen ersten Hinsehen studieren." (ibid. p.98)

## Phenomenology as the pre-theoretical science of lived experiences

The only way out of this apparently inescapable theorizing is, according to Heidegger, to follow “the principle of all principles” proposed by Husserl in *Ideas I*:

Everything that offers itself originarily in ‘intuition’ should be taken as that which it offers itself.<sup>87</sup>

This principle, however, is the highest theoretical principle, although Husserl himself is not clear on this point. Heidegger likes to see in the fact that the principle is one *for all* principles the clear indication that it is not a theoretical principle like all the others: it is prior to, or beyond, any other principle. It is a phenomenological principle.

Phenomenology, so Heidegger, is the best, perhaps the only, candidate for the role of pre-theoretical science of lived experiences. Phenomenology, however, is not construed as a science among other sciences. In a sense, phenomenology, as Heidegger understands it, is not so much a science as a fundamental attitude on the basis of which it is now possible to gain access to living in its undistorted sense. It is a *way of disclosing* experiences in their living character. It is not cognition as a heightened attention, enhanced and focused awareness, focusing, on living when living. Hence it would be more appropriate to speak of a phenomenological attitude or method than of phenomenology as a science. The principle of all principles is less a principle than an attitude, a specific comportment. This phenomenological attitude is, according to Heidegger, the basic attitude immanent in living itself undistorted in its living character, it is the comprehension proper to the act of living itself:

It is the Ur-intention of genuine life in general, the Ur-attitude of living as such, the life’s sympathy identical with living as such.<sup>88</sup>

It is, in other words, the “intention” of life itself in its genuineness. It is *how life itself is lived in accordance with its own sense*. Although it is the fundamental or basic attitude, this by no means entails that it is the first to be encountered, or the most ordinary

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<sup>87</sup> „Alles, was sich in der ‘Intuition’ originär ... darbietet, [ist] einfach einzunehmen ... als was es sich gibt.” (GA 56/57, p.109).

<sup>88</sup> “Es ist die Urintention des wahrhaften Lebens überhaupt, die Urhaltung des Erlebens als solchen, die absolute, mit dem Erleben selbst identische Lebenssympathie.” (ibid. p.110)

one. On the contrary, this basic attitude requires preparation. In a sense, the lecture so far has consisted in preparing the way for approaching this basic attitude. The path followed thus far has led away from the theoretical and towards this non-theoretical basic attitude.

The mere possibility of seeing the living (of something) raises some questions as to whether this seeing does not again go against the very “sense” inherent in living. To be able to “see” and then, on the basis of such seeing, to describe the living (of something), I apparently must cease living it through already. Once I stopped living it through, the living becomes something I can look at<sup>89</sup>. I no longer follow the “direction” (“sense”) prescribed by, or inherent in, the lived experience itself, but come instead to turn my attention from what I was led to in the first place to that experience as such (devoid this time precisely of its performative “sense” as I am no longer performing or actualizing it). What and how something is in the living of it is distinct from what and how something is when posited and regarded as separated from the living of it. For example: I am right now looking at this screen. It is the “looking at this screen” that I am now interested in “seeing.” The danger lies in the fact that once I am no longer performing the “looking at the screen,” in other words, “living it,” the *experience of looking at the screen* undergoes an almost unnoticeable, yet fundamental, change. I am no longer living it through, but have come instead to “reflect” on it, look at it for its own sake. Reflection is based on the ability to merely “intend” something as an object, to experience (live through) the object solely for the sake of the object itself. In reflection, we are in the theoretical attitude. We already know that the theoretical attitude misses or overlooks the living character. When we are dealing with lived experiences, the living and the theoretical attitude are fundamentally different. A lived experience (the living of something) cannot be, apparently, both lived through and reflected upon at the same time. I either live it through, or reflect upon it. If so, then it follows that the theoretical attitude is unavoidable:

It is hopeless: theorizing is unavoidable if we want *Erlebnisse* to be the object of a science.<sup>90</sup>

The experience was what it was precisely because of “me” being caught up in

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<sup>89</sup> „Die erlebten Erlebnisse werden zu erblickten.“ *ibid.* p.99

<sup>90</sup> “Es ist also hoffnungslos, der Theoretisierung zu entgehen, will man die Erlebnisse zum Gegenstand einer Wissenschaft machen.” *Ibid.* p.101

performing “its sense,” in its enacting (The lectern I see is a lectern for as long as I am taking (“mean-ing”) it as a lectern and comport myself towards it accordingly). The “sense” dies out, as it were, once I am no longer “out to” orient myself in accordance with it. No longer performing the “significance,” or “living it out,” I am no longer experiencing the same thing. It is clear thus that the “significance” constitutive of the living character of experiences (*Ereignis*-character, *es weltet*) is not only constantly operating, but also performative in character. It is what it is only in the performance of it. The ability to look at experiences – no longer living them through - is apparently accompanied by the losing of the immanent “sense” inherent in any lived experience as such. What I can look at is no longer the originary lived experience in its living character, but the lived experience *in the absence of* its living character. The “looking at” presupposed by the alleged science of lived experiences appears thus to be nothing else than another form of theoretical positing of something as an object. Can there be a “seeing of,” intuiting or “comportment towards” (*Verhalten zu*) **something** which is not in itself objectifying? Can there be a “seeing” which does not stand over against that which it sees and outside it<sup>91</sup>? Phenomenology as a pre-theoretical science of lived experiences depends on an affirmative answer to this question<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> GA 56/57, p.111

<sup>92</sup> It is in this context that Heidegger mentions Natorp’s critique of (Husserl’s) phenomenology. Basically Natorp’s critique is that, contrary to what it professes, (Husserl’s) phenomenology is inescapably theoretical in character. He follows two lines of argumentation: 1. Phenomenological seeing cannot be but a form of theoretical reflection since any “seeing” is objectifying in character. 2. Phenomenology as a pure description of lived experiences cannot claim to have a direct access to lived experiences, but a mediated one; description is itself a preliminary stage of theoretical explanation. Description uses words, which are by their nature the vehicle of (theoretical) generalization. Although Heidegger agrees that Natorp’s critique is the most noteworthy among all critiques of phenomenology, he also adds two important comments intended to somehow attenuate the relevance of this critique: 1. First he notes that Husserl himself has not yet responded to Natorp’s critique. This note is important because it suggests that the critique, despite its cogency, is not definitive and ultimate for Heidegger. 2. He himself admits that the reason why he mentioned Natorp’s critique is precisely because it proceeds right from the theoretical perspective, a perspective which Heidegger himself is about to try to overcome. In a nutshell, Heidegger uses Natorp’s critique as a springboard to clarify and advance his own contribution to the debate

To answer this question, Heidegger distinguishes between two senses of the theoretical. There is, on the one hand, theory in the sense of the process of de-living we have already discussed above. Theory in this sense is a gradual process stripping progressively the lived experience of its living character. Whenever I come to intently look at something, that something has thereby been posited by me as standing over against myself, as an object (*Objekt*) I have somehow before me, and can now be looked at, separated from me and devoid of its significance in the surrounding world of familiar things. On the other hand, however, there is a “formal theorizing” (and its correlate “*die formale Gegenständliche*”) that does not consist in a gradual process of stripping the lived experience of its living character. This newly distinguished sense of the theoretical has a completely different genesis than the theoretical in the sense of a gradual process of de-living (*Ent-lebung*). For one, it is not motivated by the mere “desire to know” which

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on the nature of Husserl’s phenomenology. Heidegger’s examination of Natorp’s critique ends in a series of ideas that will stand from now on at the core of Heidegger’s own understanding of phenomenology: 1. there is an intuition which is not objectifying in character. 2. The description based on such intuition does not necessarily have to be generalizing. In other words, language is not necessarily generalizing: the meaning of a word does not necessarily find its fulfillment in and as an object. 3. The theoretical attitude, however, obstructs the right access to this intuition. The theoretical attitude has thus to be undone in order for the phenomenological intuition to come to fruition. As a consequence, Natorp’s critique, however cogent and noteworthy, “does not come even close to the truly fundamental problems” of phenomenology (GA 56/57, 109). Heidegger dismisses in the end Natorp’s critique, just as he will do with Rickert’s position, on the grounds that it fails to see and recognize the importance of lived experience in its originarity, that is, lived experience as environing lived experience (p.108).

And although Heidegger’s discussion of Natorp’s critique of phenomenology might actually be seen as Heidegger’s indirect critique of Husserl’s phenomenology (see for example p.108 where Heidegger locates Natorp’s universal logic of the object in the vicinity of Husserl’s idea of formal ontology and Leibniz’s *mathesis universalis*), a few passages help dispel this misinterpretation. One passage is the one already mentioned (p.109) where Heidegger accuses Natorp of not having been able to come even close to a serious debate with phenomenology since he misses entirely the access to the sphere of lived experience in its originarity (*Umwelterlebnis*) thanks to his absolutisation of logic. The other passage can be found in Oskar Becker’s notes of the same lecture, where the same position is expressed even more clearly: „Dieser Gedanke der Verabsolutisierung des Logischen ist festzuhalten, für den Gegensatz von Natorps psychologischer und Husserls phänomenologischer Methode einzusehen.“ (p.216)

itself has its origin in the isolation of the familiar thing from the all-around significance of the surrounding world in which “often and indeed for the most part<sup>93</sup>” I am inevitably caught up. It is not a process. Theorizing in the first sense is a highly gradual process. Depending on how far the de-living process has gone, the object of theoretical reflection appears so and so. The object of the end stage of the process of theorizing is the “theoretical something,” or “something in general.” For example, by gradually disregarding the self from the environing, ordinary, experiencing of the lectern, the lectern could gradually to be regarded as wooden lectern, then as a wooden thing, then as a thing in general, and finally as “something” in general. It is important to note that one cannot arrive at the theoretical something in general without first having gone through all the preceding stages. The theoretical something is, as it were, level-bound. At the last stage the disappearance of any material content is complete; we are no longer dealing with anything in particular:

It is absolutely worldless, world-alien; it is the sphere where one runs out of breath, where one cannot live.<sup>94</sup>

In the second sense of the theoretical, however, anything that can be lived through or experienced can be considered to be “something” (*Etwas*), a formal something: the lectern is something, the wooden lectern is something, the wooden thing is something, the thing in general is something, even the theoretical “something in general” is something in this second sense:

Whatever is in general lived through is a possible something, regardless of its world-character. The sense of something is precisely this: ‘whatever can be lived in general.’<sup>95</sup>

The interesting thing about it is that it is not bound by any level of the process of de-living or theorizing in the first sense. I do not have to go through all or any of the levels of theorizing to be able to grasp the lectern as “something,” the wood thing as “something” etc. This formal something has thus a different origin than the theoretical

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<sup>93</sup> GA 56/57, p.89

<sup>94</sup> “Es ist das absolute Weltlose, Welt-fremde; es ist die Sphäre, wo einem der Atem ausgeht und man nicht leben kann.“ *ibid.*, p.112)

<sup>95</sup> “Jedes Erlebbare überhaupt ist mögliches Etwas, unangesehen seines genuinen Weltcharakters. Der Sinn des Etwas besagt gerade: ‘Erlebbares überhaupt’.” *ibid.* p.112

something. The theoretical something is motivated by a gradual isolation of the significant thing from the world of familiar things and a concomitant focusing on the order and structure (material determination) of the realm to which the object belongs, while the formal something has its origin in what Heidegger calls “the pre-worldly something.”<sup>96</sup>

Heidegger plays with two German nouns to help him build the case that there are two fundamentally different senses of the “theoretical”: a theoretical something, *Objekt*, and a formally theoretical something, *Gegenstand*. The theoretical *object* is the end result of the gradual process of de-living, while the formally theoretical object as *Gegenstand* is not bound by any such process. The object presupposes thus the vanishing or even “freezing” of the living character of the lived experience, the receding of the “*es weltet*” from the experience of a significant thing, the “absolute cancellation of the living relation.” The experience of a theoretical object is no longer “personal.” The formal objectualization has nothing to do with the theoretical sphere, that is, with the theoretical object in general. The formal object (*Gegenstand*) appears also to be devoid of any specific material determinations. Its lack of determinations, however, by no means identifies it with the theoretical something. In the next lectures Heidegger will give more details about the “theoretical something:” generalization, as distinct from formalization, is the cognitive procedure corresponding to the theoretical something. Just as the formal something is the correlate of a process of formalization, so too the theoretical something is the correlate of a process of generalization<sup>97</sup>. Generalization is possible only within a structurally stratified region of being, an immanently organized, internally classified region, where each level is so “set up” as referring to lower or upper level of objects with which it shares something in common, like in: Veronica is a woman, a human being, an animal, an organism, then a material composite etc. Generalization therefore makes sense only within a region of being, and depends essentially on the content specifications of the region itself. Generalization presupposes a materially organized and structured region and as a procedure consists in classifying an element into an organized whole.

But how is this formal something motivated? When we say, “Veronica is an

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<sup>96</sup> “das vorweltliche Etwas.”

<sup>97</sup> GA 58, p.216; GA 60, p.61

object,” we are obviously not moving within an internally ordered region of being like others: (biological) life, history, physical nature etc. What can account for its genesis? How can we explain it out, on the basis and in terms of, living itself? Heidegger’s answer is simple: this possibility of regarding anything as a formally theoretical something sends us back to life *itself*, to something going on long before we set out to understand these things: it is how life itself is lived: to live is to “be out (to)”, “to live out towards” (something). But this tendency towards something, life’s immanent tendency, “relating,” the relational aspect alone, can be to some extent abstracted from its embeddedness in a nexus of familiar things, relations etc., and regarded on its own, in isolation from the whole living situation: this is the genesis of the formal (still theoretical) something. It is the other pole of the relating aspect of living as such: it is the “object” (*Gegenstand*) seen exclusively as that to which the tendency tends.

The thrust into a world can be theoretically diverted *before* its coming to definite expression. This is why the universality of the formal character of an object[*Gegenstand*] befits its origin in the in-itself of streaming living of life.<sup>98</sup>

It is the object seen purely from the perspective of relating itself: any relating presupposes a relation to ... something, a “formal” something. It is theoretical in that it presupposes again the same abstraction of the self from the experience, or the reducing of the fully concretely existing I to an I in general. It is formal in the sense that it lacks material determinations. The formal something does not belong to any (material) realm of being. The object is not determined in accordance with its own content (*Wasgehalt*) but as that to which any relation has to relate itself *necessarily*, that is, *formally*. The theoretical comportment stops, as it were, before it reaches the object, and “veers off” onto itself, determining that to which as a comportment it must necessarily and essentially relate as “an object in general,” a formal something.

it regards the object from the side that it is seen; it is determined *as grasped*; as that *to which* the cognitive relation is directed.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> „Die Tendenz in eine Welt kann *vor* ihrer Ausprägung theoretisch abgebogen werden. Daher eignet die Universalität des formal Gegenständlichen seinem Ursprung aus dem Ansich des strömenden Erlebens des Lebens.“ (GA 56/57, p.116)

<sup>99</sup> „sie betrachtet den Gegenstand nach der Seite hin, daß es gesehen ist; er

The theoretical something as well as the formal something are distinct, however, from the *lived something* (*erlebte Etwas*), the *something of living* (*Erlebbarkeit*). This “something” is constitutive of life in and of itself. In a sense, life is this “tendency” towards “something,” genuinely towards a worldly something, and not towards an isolated content or isolated object, be it formal or not. This “something” is neither theoretical nor theoretically formal in nature. It is not even a worldly something: a lectern, a car etc. It is a pre-worldly something. In the middle of the night, I suddenly wake up and ask: “Did you hear something?” In my experiencing of this kind of something, specific ways in which it can show up are prescribed to it. According to Heidegger, our entire comportment towards this kind of “something” is different from our theoretical comportment towards either the formal or theoretical something. It is “something” without material determinations but ready at the same time to take on a worldly character: “Ah, it was just the cat.” This categorically different “something” with its total lack of determinations is lived however in the manner of genuine, pre-theoretical living: the absence of *worldly, and not material* determinations matters to me, is significant to me: it is not *justa* theoretically formal category (something in general), or a theoretical abstraction, but a “worldly” (significant) lack of determinations. It is ready, in other words, to become a “worldly something” in the manner described above: lectern, cat, neighbor, car etc. This “something” is hence “pre-worldly:” something noticeable only in the rare situations in which familiar things lose the character of familiarity, appear “strange” all of the sudden, and are seen only in their capacity for becoming “familiar” worldly somethings yet again. This “something” understood as a pre-worldly something, or as *das Erlebbare überhaupt*, can be itself lived through understandingly if only in rare special situations. Heidegger names two of these special opportunities: in the moment of gliding from one living world into another, and in the moments of a particularly intense life. Otherwise it goes unnoticed.

In this pre-worldly something as the genuine something of living there lies “the moment of ‘towards’, ‘in the direction to’, ‘into a concrete world’<sup>100</sup>”. And what is

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wird bestimmt als Erfasstes; als das, worauf der erkenntnismäßige Bezug geht.“ GA 60, p.61

<sup>100</sup> GA 56/57, p.115

extremely important here is that the living of this pre-worldly something or the “something” of factic experience, as Heidegger will call it in the next lecture<sup>101</sup>, is not accompanied by the vanishing of the self from the living of it or the losing of the “familiar” or worldly character of genuine living as such. In other words, it does not lead to the “most radical ending of the factually lively and personal life-relation.<sup>102</sup>” In the living of the pre-worldly something there exists the possibility of experiencing “something” without the undesired consequence of losing the living character of the experience as such. In the living of the pre-worldly something the living as such, the living experience is preserved in its utmost concreteness and genuineness, but only in accordance with that which enables the experience to “anticipate” the fully concrete, ordinary experience of a worldly something. The pre-worldly something is the “index for the supreme potentiality of life.<sup>103</sup>” It is, as it were, the reminder that our life, the world as we live it, is just *a* way in which life *can* be lived, *a* way in which life can take the form of the world in which we live *de facto*. That our factual life is *a* way in which life can come to expression does not render our, or any other, “form of life” contingent. It only means that the world *as we live it concretely* is a way in which life becomes what it can be. By having discovered the “pre-worldly something” as the “index for the supreme potentiality of life” Heidegger will now have to develop a new understanding of “how life is lived,” “the world as is lived,” of “factual life,” as everything now depends on how he conceives of “life” itself as the expression of a certain “potentiality.”

In the *Objekt*-experience (theoretical something), the significance characteristic of a genuine lived experience is **no longer** there; likewise in the *Gegenstand*-experience (formal something). In the pre-worldly something the significance is **not yet** there, the “*it worlds*”-aspect of the enviroing lived experience is not yet there, but is “life full” nevertheless. It is now understandable why Heidegger avoids assimilating *Erlebnis* – always conceived of as genuine living (events of coming into one’s own, the self’s unique being there somehow, it worlds, things as significant things within a meaningful

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<sup>101</sup> GA 58, p.106

<sup>102</sup> „die radikalste Unterbindung faktisch lebendigen personalen Lebensbezug.“ (GA 58, p.106)

<sup>103</sup> “Es ist vielmehr der Index für die höchste Potentialität des Lebens.” (GA 56/57, p.115.)

context), and never as Husserl apparently did as a “mental, inner, private event<sup>104</sup>” - to either *Objekt* or *Gegenstand*. According to him, even if anything at all qualifies formally as *Etwas*, a formal object in general, the genuine living of something is not appropriately described by such a formal characterization. A more appropriate characterization would be to say, according to him, that it is a phenomenon, here in the sense of something lived through. It is “lived through” [*erlebt*] in the sense that it is only in the performance of it, in the living of it, and by no means in the sense that it is the explicit focus of our living. A phenomenon is obviously something, but such a statement does not say much about what makes *Erlebnis* unique as a living-lived “something.” *Erlebnis* as a phenomenon is lived through without being the intentional object of our experiences. As the pre-worldly something it is that which enables the showing up of the intentional objects of our experience: lectern, books, etc. in that these intentional objects are specific ways or expressions in which life encounters itself in and as worldly objects. As we will see shortly, the pre-worldly something cannot become directly “explicit” without us falling back on theorizing.

What Heidegger discovers here is that the significant things of our world as experienced by self in its ordinary (non-theoretical) experiences are themselves a determinate manner in which a pre-worldly “something” gets articulated. In other words, in the living of something he discovers an intentionality more basic than the one operative in perception and cognition. The objects of perception and cognition are themselves expressions of a more fundamental intentionality, or motivations, as Heidegger puts it at this time. They are determinate ways in which the pre-worldly something *can* come to full expression, ways in which life encounters itself. Anything in life is “motivated.” The pre-worldly, living and lived-through something is not an *object* but itself identical with the “motivational process of life.<sup>105</sup>” This fundamental intentionality/motivation, however, unlike Husserl’s intentionality, stands in much closer relation to the “appropriation” character of lived experience. It is the intentionality as the fundamental characteristic a “personal life:”

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<sup>104</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, „Heidegger’s Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality,” in *Social Research*, vol.60, No.1, Spring 1993, p.152

<sup>105</sup> “Das erlebte Etwas ... *identisch* mit dem Motivierungsprozeß des Lebens an sich und seiner Tendenz...” (GA 56/57, p.219)

The events [of coming into one's own] 'happen to me.' *Motivation* is the basic form of the nexus of life.<sup>106</sup>

There is no coincidence that Heidegger prefers *Motivation* over *Intentionalität* as he tries incessantly to keep to and never lose sight of the "personal" character of any act of living. Unlike *Intentionalität* which can, as we know from Husserl, be the fundamental mark of a "transcendental consciousness," impersonal through and through, *Motivation* indicates that whatever the object of experience is, it itself is nothing but a way in which life, always "personal," encounters *itself*. The lived experience is always the living *of* something<sup>107</sup>. Equally importantly, in addition to the immanent tendency toward an object, the lived experience is equally characterized by a motivation orienting it toward an object. *Erlebnis* is not a mere relation between a self and a possible, self-subsisting object. *Erlebnis* is an *Er-eignis*, an event of appropriation (proper-ization): whatever I experience is always significant to me somehow, a way in which a motivation comes to realization, which only means that things are always experienced *in light of* my own expectations, past experiences, acquired knowledge, in short, my possibilities.

The Ur-character of 'something in general' is the Ur-character of life in general: namely that life in itself is motivational and has tendency; motivational tendency and tendential motivation: the fundamental character of life, to live onto something, to become a world in certain worlds of living. The index for it lies in 'something'.<sup>108</sup>

The significance (*Bedeutsame*) has thus a wholesale character in the sense that it does not operate, as it were, on an individual basis, but rather holistically: *es weltet* - it affects anything and everything I have encountered or will ever encounter (in the modus of "I know what to do with it").

According to Heidegger philosophy as a pre-theoretical science can only be

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<sup>106</sup> "Die Ereignisse »passieren mir«. Die Grundform des Lebenszusammenhangs ist die *Motivation*." (GA 56/57, p.205)

<sup>107</sup> „Jedes Erlebnis ist intentional, es enthält einen ‚Blick auf‘ irgend etwas (einen liebenden, hassenden, wahrnehmenden, erinnernden Blick).“ (GA 56/57, p.207)

<sup>108</sup> „Der Urcharakter des 'Etwas überhaupt' ist der Grundcharakter des Lebens überhaupt: daß es, das Leben, in sich motivierend ist und Tendenz hat; motivierende Tendenz, tendierende Motivation: Grundcharakter des Lebens, zu etwas hin zu leben, in bestimmte Erlebniswelten auszuwelten. In dem 'Etwas' liegt der Index dafür.“ (GA 56/57, p. 218)

possible as a methodical and systematic “following” (accompanying or partaking of) (*mitgehen*) the immanent motivation and tendency inherent in the living of the pre-worldly something as a “motivational process.” It is possible, in other words, as some sort of intuiting of life’s motivation to become (or mature) itself into a world, *in its motivational tendency towards a world*, in other words, before it becomes fully immersed in, settles down as and is absorbed by worldly somethings (cars, lectures etc.) In my own words, it is an intensified re-living of life’s own “need” to settle down, as it were, in and as a world of familiar things, people and situations, which begins with the insight that the world as is lived is but a way to fulfill this need. This intuition is not objectifying because the pre-worldly something is not an object, neither theoretical (*Objekt*) nor formal (*Gegenstand*). This “partaking” is not objectifying or reifying as long as it limits itself to following the “motivation” inherent in life’s tendency towards a world, and not the full-blossomed worldly “something” resulted from life’s having already established itself in and as a world. In the way in which a worldly something is concretely, factually, that is, non-theoretically experienced, the phenomenological intuition wants to regain access to the immanent motives that have configured, and thus are still figuring in, this concrete experience of a worldly something in so far as it is an *living, personal* experience (*Erlebnis*) after all. The phenomenological intuition attempts to grasp the worldly something “in the making,” as it were, to “relive” the motivations and tendencies inherent, configuring, leading to, and at work in our experience of it, and see how it has *become* to be what it is in our experiencing of it. The worldly something is, in a sense, a result, an “expression” or “manifestation”: it “is” = it “has been encountered as”. Better yet, and to avoid the misleading suggestion that something becomes what it is in various stages, our worldly experiences are “phenomena,” expressions of various ways in which life itself fulfills its own motivations in the very manners in which it encounters and comprehends its objects *already*, before adopting any cognitive stance. Any thing, any (worldly) something, can be seen as an “expression” of a certain way in which life is lived, in which “we” can experience things. Things are what they are as fulfillments of certain sense-possibilities. The pre-worldly something is Heidegger’s condition of possibility for seeing how something can be (*is to be*) experienced *by us*, better yet, *can be* something for us.

The intuition catches life, as it were, in its orientation towards a world of significant things. The language employed by such a pre-theoretical science is not objectifying since the meanings of the words and expressions are not to be identified with their objective, thing-like references. The meanings of words have a “worldly” function in the sense that they do not refer to an object of some sort, but rather give expression to how the experiencing orients itself motivationally and *a priori*<sup>109</sup> towards something, or to *how* life itself orients itself *a priori* towards becoming established in and as a world:

They express life in its motivated tendency, resp. its tendential motivation.<sup>110</sup>

The meanings therefore have the essential peculiarity of expressing *Ereignischaraktere*<sup>111</sup>. It gives expression to the motivational tendency of the living act (*Erlebnis*) to be the living of ... something. This “partaking” of how life becomes motivationally the world in which it lives is what Heidegger calls “phenomenological intuition:

The phenomenological intuition as the living of the living<sup>112</sup>.  
Attentive immersion in and partaking of the experiencing itself in its dependency on, and motivated orientation towards, something - this is what Heidegger means by the “*living of living*” as phenomenological intuition. In ordinary life (when life has established itself in and as a world of interconnected significant things), we are fully immersed in, and absorbed by, the intentional object of a worldly character. The living as such in its tendency and motivation makes way to, and retreats before, the worldly something which now captures our attention completely. Therefore, the motivational aspect and that which is motivated are not explicitly given in such a situation.

As a result, the most appropriate method of the science of living is for Heidegger the phenomenological intuition conceived of as the living of living itself, and not description, as was for Husserl in the first edition of his *Logical Investigations*.

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<sup>109</sup> Heidegger, to my knowledge, never uses the expression *a priori* in the context of his investigations of the nature of phenomenological intuition.

<sup>110</sup> “sie drücken aus das Leben in seiner motivierten Tendenz bzw. tendierenden Motivation.”

<sup>111</sup> GA 56/57, p.117

<sup>112</sup> “Die phänomenologische Intuition als das Erleben des Erlebens...” (GA 56/57, p.219)

Description always presupposes the givenness or the presence of the object described which allows thus for a separation between the object to be described and (the method of) description as such. The object must be given prior to, and independent from, the act of description<sup>113</sup>. This entails that description always comes too late on the scene, after the object has somehow come to be given. In the case of phenomenological intuition that which it intuits is not given prior to the act of intuiting, but along with and in it<sup>114</sup>. This might explain why, according to Heidegger, phenomenological intuition is not a simple, neutral registering of the living in its *a priori* motivated tendency towards a world (there is nothing prior to the phenomenological intuition), simply given prior to, and independent from, intuition, but an attempt at making sense of it, making it speak, making it explain itself.

The phenomenological intuition as the living of living, life's comprehension, is hermeneutical intuition (making intelligible, sense-giving).<sup>115</sup>

Life is thus intelligible or graspable, comprehensible (*verstehbar*) in and of itself (which by no means amounts to saying that life is rational), as long as it is comprehended in its immanent motivated tendency towards a worldly something, and phenomenology is nothing but the investigation of life in itself<sup>116</sup>. It is, in a sense, itself the experience of the very "need," fundamental to life, to find its *own* fulfillment in the very way in which it encounters itself in dealing with ordinary things and situations. This explains Heidegger's penchant for the ordinary aspect of life, for the everydayness of life, and his reluctance to see in limit-situations, like Descartes' thought experiment of hyperbolic doubt, or Husserl's description of perceptual experiences, paradigms of how life is lived.

All these programmatic ideas are clearly in need of further elaboration.

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<sup>113</sup> GA 56/57, p.217

<sup>114</sup> Could this be the same idea Husserl refers to when he uses the expression "gebende Intuition?"

<sup>115</sup> "Die phänomenologische Intuition als das Erleben des Erlebens, das Verstehen des Lebens ist hermeneutische Intuition (verstehbar machende, sinngebende)." (GA 56/57, p.219)

<sup>116</sup> GA 56/57, p.220

## Erlebnis, Situation *and* Ereignis

In the next semester, the summer of 1919, Heidegger expands very briefly his views on living experiences and introduces a new concept, *Situation*: the lived experiences are necessarily and immanently united into what he now calls a situation.

Situation is a certain unity in natural living.<sup>117</sup>

An example of a situation is, according to Heidegger, the objects on my desk, or the climbing of a mountain to see the sunset, or the Fall semester. It is a unity not of static moments, but of *Ereignisse*: the seeing the clouds, the mountaintops, the sun, the forest, the listening to the words of your companions, the eating together with them etc. However, the mountain I have just climbed cannot be seen when standing on top of it. A situation is not genuinely a process that can be observed in the same way in which natural events can be observed and analyzed. A situation is an event of a unique kind: it is *ein Ereignis*. I am essentially involved in what is going on<sup>118</sup> without being myself the object of a conscious reflection or awareness. The self does not stand out in the situation. The self merely “swims” in the situation without having a noticeable presence: the “I” is essentially a situational I (*Situations-Ich*).

Each situation “contains” various *Erlebnisse*. The situation brings the lived experiences into a certain unity (*Einheit*). As belonging to the same situation, the experiences have a certain “tendency” or “motivation” in common. Motivation is “the fundamental form of the nexus of life.” As being motivated and somehow oriented, any situation opens up a horizon of expectations. A situation is by its own nature “open.”<sup>119</sup> The vanishing of the situation amounts to a disappearance of the “sense” all experiences had in common thanks to their belonging to the same situation. When the “unity of a situation” vanishes, it changes the experience as a whole (*die ganze Erlebnissphäre*) as it results in the vanishing of the “unity of sense” which all lived experiences had in that situation. Upon the vanishing of the situation, that which is lived retains a new identity,

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<sup>117</sup> “Situation ist eine gewisse Einheit im natürlichen Erleben.“ (GA 56/57, p.206) This is very reminiscent of Dilthey’s definition of Erlebnis.

<sup>118</sup> „Das Geschehene hat Beziehung zu mir; es strahlt ins eigene Ich hinein.“ ibid. p.206

<sup>119</sup> „geöffnete“ (GA 58, p.105,106)

allowing for a new and different way of relating objects in isolation (objectuality). This identity, however, is not longer situational<sup>120</sup>. Or, it is a new type of situation characterized by a categorically different kind of intentionality (theoretical attitude); however, what is experienced, *das Gelebte*, is there “in a different sense.” In such a case, the lived experiences lose the unity the situation gave them. The situational I recedes into the background, which for Heidegger amounts to the self’s losing the historical character. Each *Erlebnis* can, according to Heidegger, undergo this modification from *Situationserlebnis* to “merely being-oriented toward.”

Situations can interpenetrate each other. Life experience is defined as a continuously changing nexus of situations or *Motivationsmöglichkeiten* (motivational possibilities). Heidegger does not offer any specific details except to say that any situation “lasts,” and “durations” (*Dauern*) of various situations are again intertwined with one another just as situations themselves are. For reasons that will become clear in the next chapter let me point out that for Heidegger this *Dauer* intrinsic of any situation accounts somehow – again Heidegger is very skimpy on details - for the self’s inherent “historicality:”

Each situation has a ‘duration’. The particular ‘durations’ specific to different situations *interpenetrate* each other... The I is itself situational-I; the I is histor»ic«. <sup>121</sup>

Despite the scarcity of details, I can relatively easily notice a certain ambiguity in the way in which Heidegger defines “situation.” On the one hand, a situation contains, as he himself puts it, *Ereignisse* that happen to me<sup>122</sup>. Furthermore, each situation “has” *Erlebnisse* pervaded by the same “sense” (*Sinn*). Situations can vanish. Their vanishing amounts to *Erlebnisse* losing “the unity which the situation gave them.” The unity of a situation appears to be nothing else than the unity of *Erlebnisse* in the situation. Each *Erlebnis* can undergo this modification. Situations interpenetrate each other. Life experience, as I already pointed it out, is a nexus of situations, always changing. On the other hand, though, a situation is *ein Ereignis*, and no longer containing more *Ereignisse*.

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<sup>120</sup> GA 56/57, p.206

<sup>121</sup> „Jede Situation hat ‘Dauer’. Die einzelnen ‘Dauern’ der verschiedenen Situation durchdringen sich (im Motivierten und Motivierenden). Das Ich ist selbst Situations-Ich; das Ich ist histor»isch«.“ (GA 56/57, p.206)

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.205

It is *eine gewisse Einheit im Erleben* (unity in living), an *Erlebenseinheit* (unit of living). Heidegger even employs the relatively awkward expression “*jedes Erleben*”<sup>123</sup> leaving the door open to interpreting him as suggesting that *Erlebnis* and (*ein*) *Erleben* are one and the same. Few other passages lend credence to this interpretation. Consider, for example, how Heidegger accounts for the necessity of a constant renewal of the theoretical attitude out of the natural one:

This *Erlebnis* [of renewal, my note] can be taken as the core of a new situation, it ultimately determines thereby a nexus as situation (*Situationszusammenhang*), a nexus of life.<sup>124</sup>

Or consider how he defines the historical I in terms not only of the (constantly interpenetrating) durations pertaining to various situations, - situational I is historical I -, but also as *Erlebniszusammenhang*: when the “unity in living” is seen from the side of *Erlebnisse* being lived – *gelebte Erlebnisse* –, and not from the side of the possible connections between that which is lived – *gelebte Gehalte* -, the nexus appears as “historical I,” as life experience:

That which is lived depends on motives that are in turn functionally dependant on what has happened. It is *die Erlebniszusammenhang* that forms the historical I.<sup>125</sup>

On such interpretation, *Erlebnis* is nothing but *eine Einheit im Erleben*, that is, a situation. But at this point, Heidegger is not willing to go as far as to draw this conclusion explicitly. Experiences are “in” situations, situations “have” experiences, and experiences are *of* situations. He makes use sometimes of a conception of *Erlebnis* reminiscent of Husserl and Dilthey. Although he sometimes uses the term *Erlebnis* in the plural, suggesting thus that the many lived experiences form somehow life in its totality, or at least, a situation, which in turn “forms” life experience by its nexus with other situations, other times Heidegger also mentions some paradigmatic *Erlebnisse*, like for example *Umwelterlebnis*, in such a way as to suggest that *Erlebnis* is more, or even something else,

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid. p.211

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p.211

<sup>125</sup> “Erst der Erlebniszusammenhang bildet das historische Ich.” (GA 56/57, p.209). I believe that *Erlebniszusammenhang* should from now on be translated either with „lived experience as nexus“ or „nexus of lived experiences“ depending on whether the nexus is „formed“ by and in *Erlebnis*, or constituted by various *Erlebnisse*, respectively.

than *one* discreet, numerically unique, experience, standing in some essential relation (*nexus*) with other, numerically distinct, lived experiences. It is an “articulation of life as a whole,” and not merely a frozen, as it were, moment of life. When I will get to Heidegger’s critique of Dilthey we will see how important this “ambiguity” or “tension” in Heidegger’s conception of *Erlebnis* will turn out to be.

### Conclusion

There is no doubt that Heidegger is first and foremost interested in bringing to systematic transparency what it means to be alive, what *Erlebnis* is all about, to experience life, to live through, where *Erlebnis* is seen as the ultimate and irreducible source of intelligibility, of “spirit,” the last recourse of any attempt at understanding anything. All philosophical questions and problems, like all questions and problems in general, arise out of this ultimate level of *Erlebnis* and could only be adequately addressed by going back to it as its source. Philosophy itself is made possible and facilitated by specific contexts originating in life itself.

*Erlebnis*, as Heidegger understands it in 1919, has an inherent performative dimension in the sense that its proper understanding can only come about out, as a result of, and *as* its performing, carrying out:

The being of life, of lived experiences, is not the occurring (*Vorkommen*), but effectuation (*Vollzug*).<sup>126</sup>

It means carrying out a certain manner of being with, towards, in relation, out to, etc. something. In other words, the living of something can only be understood through and by “having” it, living it, through the experience of life. *Erlebnis* is also essentially, first and foremost, an *experience of life* (*Lebenserfahrung*) in its twofold meaning: the experience of life in the sense that it is life itself that has an experience, goes as it were out of itself towards some content, and also an experience of life in the sense that life itself is somehow experienced, lived through, manifests itself, makes itself known in having an experience of something: I have an experience of... and I experience myself. *Erlebnis* is thus the event in and as which I come to experience something as I experience

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<sup>126</sup> GA 58, p.156

myself in that experiencing. The living is the event in which I live my own self, as it were, in living something through. The experiencing self and that which is experienced are by no means two separable items that are brought together in the higher unity of *Erlebnis*. *Erlebnis* as *Ereignis* is precisely this event where the living self is living precisely by living itself out in living something (“live” as a transitive verb).

As such it would come as no surprise to see Heidegger abandoning to some extent using the term *Erlebnis* and using more often the term *Lebenserfahrung*. What Heidegger says about philosophy, namely that it can only be made clear out of and in the act of philosophizing itself, is all the more applicable to life and the understanding of life: life can only be made transparent through life. Differently put, understanding life requires being alive, in the sense that the ultimate motivation of life has to be available somehow, and not suppressed, at the moment of understanding life. No reflection on life alone will ever be able to seize it in its living character. Reflection as lived experience strips itself of the living character and already changes the “sense” of anything it encounters as reflection: reflection has only objects before it. The pre-theoretical living, by contrast, does not experience objects, but a context of familiar or significant things. The pre-theoretical *Erlebnis*, that is, *die umweltliche Erlebnis* or *Umwelterlebnis*, encounters objects *as* telling significant, even relevant, “things” appropriated by the self and belonging essentially to a familiar context of such familiar or significant “things.” The theoretical *Erlebnis*, by contrast, severs the self from any pre-given relation to its object, and abstracts the object itself from the familiar context out of and in which the object has been originally found. The only relation to the object left to the I is the cognitive relation: the self merely wants to know the object purely, that is, as the object is in itself, separated from any pre-cognitive relation to the I, to any I. Objects, however, are not originally or genuinely given in theoretical *lived experiences*. The theoretical lived experience with its corresponding attitude is derived from a pre-theoretical living, from the environing lived experience. A specific modification of the environing lived experience is necessary in order for the theoretical lived experience to emerge. In order to understand this kind of living one has first to “submerge” in it, go along with it, (re-)live it. If the theoretical experience can be accounted for by going back to its source, as it were, to the *Umwelterlebnis*, this experience itself cannot in turn be accounted for by anything other

than itself. It is the very “having of it” (living it – the living) that makes possible an access to it. Obviously, the having of it is essentially different from “reflecting on” it. Reflection, in a sense, comes always too late. In reflection I always make the discovery that I have already been there before I even started reflecting on my lived experiences. The enviring lived experience is thus a self-experience of life itself. It is not genuinely an object, either formal or theoretical object. It is an “expression” of the ways in which things can present themselves as belonging inextricably to a context of familiar things, to a self only in the self’s dealings with them. It is an “expression” of life as a whole. It is a phenomenon.

Crucial to Heidegger’s attempts to ground philosophy anew is his claim that there is something going on in the **very** act of living, in the very experience of life, in the **very** living of life that gets lost once one tries to reflect on it from a theoretical perspective. In other words, Heidegger more or less directly implies that there is a significant gap, in need of further phenomenological elaboration, between how I **find** myself *in* living and how I reflect on myself *as* living. The facticity of life (the manifestation of life’s “supreme potentiality,” the world as *realized* potentiality or as motivated) to which Heidegger will as of now constantly point to and discuss should be understood in this context as designating Heidegger’s attempt to capture the “living” or “personal” character of *Erlebnis*, the way in which life encounters *itself* in and as the worldly experience, the self-experience dimension of life-experience *itself*: I have always already somehow experienced myself before I could even come to reflect upon me and realize that I am the one having the experience. I know myself somehow, as it were, long before I have expressly and deliberately come to reflect on myself, and the *manner* in which I have already found myself is different from the *manner* in which I find myself when reflecting on myself. Importantly, this self-finding has its own way of understanding (*umweltliches Verstehen*) which is in no way the same as, or even similar with, the theoretical reflection.

In some notes Heidegger wrote for a projected course in 1918/19, he inserts a paragraph from one of Adolph Reinach’ books, which is, I believe, very useful in shedding light on his interpretation of life in this period:

I live an absolute dependency on God. To the extent that I myself

participate in this lived relationship, the relation does not lie before me, on the contrary, I myself live myself through in this relationship, which obviously cannot have an object-character... Thus there immediately emerges a distinction: in perception I come through the reflection on it to the knowledge that 'I perceive it.' In living the dependency through, I find myself dependent without the reflection that could lead to the realization that I myself could feel dependent.<sup>127</sup>

Heidegger's philosophical preoccupations from now on will be exclusively devoted to exploring methodically this dimension of having-(comprehensibly)-found-myself of my life-experience itself: the facticity of life, one's own world as life's way of fulfilling its inherent motivations. In the terminology of these first three lectures from 1919 the focus of philosophical endeavors must be on the life in its living character. It would not be, I believe, an exaggeration to claim that Heidegger's subsequent philosophy is largely the development of the insights contained in his conception of *the living of something* arrived at in this first lecture:

after all it is somehow *my* living. I am there, I am living it through, it belongs to *my* life...<sup>128</sup>

and

It is only in the resonance of the I that something in the environing world is lived through, it worlds, and where and when it worlds for me, *I* am somehow there.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> "Ich erlebe eine absolute Abhängigkeit von Gott. Insofern ich selbst dieser erlebten Beziehung beteiligt bin, steht der Sachverhalt nicht vor mir, sondern ich selbst erlebe mich in dieser Beziehung, die dann mir natürlich nicht gegenständlich sein kann... Dann kommt allerdings sofort ein Unterschied: bei der Wahrnehmung erwächst mir durch Reflexion auf sie die Erkenntnis ,ich nehme wahr'. Im Abhängigkeitserlebnis finde ich mich abhängig, ohne daß Reflexion nötig wäre, die ja auch nur zu Erkenntnis führen könnte, daß ich mich abhängig fühlte." (GA 60, p.327)

<sup>128</sup> „es ist sogar irgendwie mein Erlebnis. Ich bin doch dabei, ich erlebe es, es gehört meinem Leben zu“ (GA 56/57, p.69)

<sup>129</sup> „Nur in dem Anklingen des jeweiligen eigenen Ich erlebt es ein Umweltliches, weltet es, und wo und wenn es für mich weltet, bin ich irgendwie dabei“ (GA 56/57, p.79)

## Chapter Three: From *Erlebnis* to *Lebenserfahrung*

### Introduction

As expected, Heidegger will not simply abandon the ideas broached in these first lectures and start with fresh new ideas. He will continue to work on a “science of lived experiences” by building upon the insights and conclusions he already arrived at in these first lectures. In the lectures given between late 1919 and 1921 we find him preoccupied with the same philosophical problems and continuing to work on the same solutions he offered here. And he will continue to critically demolish all previous philosophical conceptions of *Leben* and *Erlebnis*. But, as Derrida so nicely put it,

Heidegger’s unceasing effort to discredit *Lebensphilosophie* suggests that the question of life disturbs almost all of his analysis and conceptual distinctions.<sup>130</sup>

It is precisely in the context of the phenomenology of life that Heidegger will develop most (if not all) of the fundamental ideas that will later enter into the construction of *Sein und Zeit*. The aim of this second chapter is twofold: 1. to show that and how *Erlebnis* will be gradually replaced by *Lebenserfahrung* (life experience), and that this move coincides with another move from *Leben* to *Dasein* - where *Dasein* should not be conceived of in traditional terms as mere existence, or reality, but rather along the lines described earlier, as the unique way in which the self is “there” in experiencing a world. It is precisely in the context of this development that Heidegger comes to use life and *Dasein* as synonyms until, in the years after 1922, he will eventually abandon life as an appropriate philosophical term in favor of *Dasein* completely; and

2. to substantiate the claim that Heidegger develops from within the context of a life phenomenology some fundamental concepts without which *Sein und Zeit* would not have been possible, concepts like *Dasein*, *existence*, *the concept of formal indication*, *different meanings of being*, and many others. Of course, I will try to show that Heidegger develops all these fundamental concepts in the absence of any question of the meaning of being, as he will understand it several years later, and also that it is very doubtful to even advance the claim that the question of the sense of being is “implicit,”

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<sup>130</sup> Derrida, Jacques, „On Reading Heidegger,“ in *Research in Phenomenology*, 17 (1987), p.173

operating, as it were, in the background of Heidegger's philosophical investigations. I will try to show that any ontological questions – not necessarily the full-blown question of the sense of being from *Sein und Zeit* – not only arise from Heidegger's constant preoccupation with life, but as a matter of fact, are entirely depend on it. The first thing that has to be said in this context is that Heidegger appears early on to be fully aware of the distinction between *beings (Seiende)* and *being (Sein)*. In a lecture from 1919, when he criticizes Rickert for not having had a clear insight into how the research into *Erlebnis* is to be properly conducted<sup>131</sup>, and takes issue with Rickert's interpretation of the content of judgment as “unreal transcendent sense” insofar as it is independent from the mental act in which the judgment is performed, Heidegger continues by saying:

Should the sense be taken to be an entity or something that exists? The entity is after all what its being says it is; this is nowhere clarified.<sup>132</sup>

and then continues

Sense is therefore by no means to be interpreted as an entity, as something that exists, and should not be assigned to the domain of being, unless of course we indiscriminately regard anything that can be thought of in general as a being; in this case, even sense would be an entity.<sup>133</sup>

This awareness on Heidegger's part of the distinction between *Sein* and *Seienden*, and its crucial but unresolved significance for Rickert's philosophy, coupled with his determination not to embark upon it in a clear and decisive manner, is *only* an indication that the distinction might not be *all that important* for Heidegger at this time after all.

The main claim is that it is precisely the fine-tuned phenomenological interpretation of factic life that ultimately draws Heidegger near to employing new terms like *Dasein* and *existence*, understood of course in a new, non-traditional sense. These new terms are not meant, not in this context anyway, to supplant the life problematic already in full play in the first lectures. On the contrary, they are all meant to *clarify*, to

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<sup>131</sup> GA 56/57, p.191

<sup>132</sup> „Darf der Sinn überhaupt zum Seienden oder Existierenden gerechnet werden? Was das Seiende nun ist, besagt sein Sein; das ist nirgends geklärt.“ (GA 56/57, p.198)

<sup>133</sup> „Der Sinn ist also in keiner Weise als ein Seiendes, Existierendes aufzufassen und in der Seinssphäre unterzubringen, wenn man nicht gerade mit Sein alles Denkbare überhaupt indifferent bezeichnet will, dann ist auch der Sinn ein Sein.“ (GA 56/57, p.199)

bring up new and important distinctions within, the phenomenology of life, distinctions that would otherwise remain undetected. But it is factic life, and by no means *being* or anything else for that matter, which requires, according to Heidegger, a more fine-tuned approach and subsequently a terminology that might leave the misleading impression that the problematic of life is increasingly abandoned. I will defend this claim in more details in the course of this chapter, but by way of anticipation let me just say that the clear indication that the terms which will later find naturally their place in the so-called language of being (Dasein, existence, facticity, fallenness, ready-at-hand, *Bedeutsamkeit*, *Vorhandenheit* etc.) not only emerge out of Heidegger's analysis of factic life, but they continue to retain an essential relation to factic life (for example, the category of having-found-myself in my worldly experiences will turn out to be the facticity of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit*) as Heidegger understands it in 1919-1920 even long after he abandons life as the fundamental topic of philosophy.

For my purposes it is no longer important for us to focus on each individual lecture Heidegger gave in the period 1919 and 1921. I will instead follow some key philosophical terms as they are used and defined by him in this period.

#### *From Erlebnis to Lebenserfahrung*

As was, I hope, apparent from the first Freiburg lecture Heidegger gave in 1919, life and living always meant for Heidegger *human* life, *our* lived experiences. The remark is significant for it indicates that Heidegger has never been preoccupied with *life* in general, as it pertains to all *living* beings, of all kinds. Questions regarding the very possibility of philosophy have apparently made it necessary that he put *our life* in the center of investigation. At the same time, we should avoid the mistake of assuming that Heidegger is here restricting his attention to *just* one way of living, namely human life, and ignores thereby, or simply leaves aside, other equally important kinds of life. If *we* do philosophy, Heidegger appears to reason, then philosophy has to be understood as *a* possibility grounded in *our* life. As we will see time and again, *life* and *philosophy* are always for Heidegger deeply intertwined: one cannot be understood without the other. It is the way in which *we* live that should and can fully account for philosophy as a

possibility, one, perhaps very important, of *our* possibilities. We should never lose sight of the fact that by *life* Heidegger always means *our life*, and not biological, or animal *life*. And our living is characterized by an intelligible, transparent self-giveness or “presence” (*dabei*) of the self in the its own living of a worldly something.

From late 1919 and early 1920 on, Heidegger will come to favor “life” (*Leben*) over “the living of...” (*Erlebnis*). “Life” moves clearly and explicitly in the center of his investigations. The domain of philosophy is life in and of itself. Phenomenology is the attempt to grasp how life itself experiences itself<sup>134</sup>. Phenomenology is all about finding the way or ways in which life is being lived in its own fashion. *Erlebnis*, as a term, increasingly disappears from Heidegger’s vocabulary. For our purposes it is important to understand the reasons behind Heidegger’s decision to not use the term *Erlebnis* any more.

Heidegger is aware that there is distinction between *Leben* and *Erlebnis*. When he criticizes psychology for its mistaken conception of *Erlebnis* as a mental process, he accuses it of not rigorously distinguishing between *Leben* and *Erleben*<sup>135</sup>. He accuses psychology of borrowing its own concepts of life and living not from life as is lived but from life as is theoretically reflected upon, that is, from an objectifying conception of life. According to him, psychology operates with a concept of *Erlebnis* that is possible only on the basis of the cancelling of the “living life.”<sup>136</sup> Psychology loses thereby any possibility of understanding what *Erlebnis* is genuinely. Not even phenomenology has any chances of success unless it first clarifies this important philosophical distinction between *Leben* and *Erlebnis*:

It is necessary thus to determine the concept of living [*Erleben*]. We cannot stay content with the alternative: objects – lived experiences [*Erlebnisse*]... But how are we to understand the nexus of lived experiences? What is the relation between living and life? Do living and life coincide? Do they have different meanings?<sup>137</sup>.

If they are not identical, then their relation becomes a problem, even a

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<sup>134</sup> GA 58, p.156

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.153-156

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.243

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p.247

fundamental problem of phenomenology<sup>138</sup>. A clarification of the concept of living is also crucial for shedding light on the formation process of philosophical concepts:

Can I ask, what role can *Erlebnisse* play in the formation of phenomenological concepts if I have not defined them in their basic sense?<sup>139</sup>

An elucidation of *Erlebnisse* appears therefore to be absolutely necessary: We do not yet have any concept of ‘Erlebnis’. We want to define it precisely in a truly radical way<sup>140</sup>.

The problem, however, is that such clarification seems to be missing from the extant published material. Some notes written in 1919 bearing the title *Leben*, mentioned in GA 58 and which might have had a significant bearing on how Heidegger himself sees this relation, have been lost. The task of elucidating this distinction seems thus to be left to us, the readers of Heidegger. We have two ways to come closer to understanding how he conceives of this “relation”. One way is to pay closer attention to those passages where such a relation, or the lack thereof, is clearly alluded to. The other way is to review Heidegger’s critique of those philosophical positions that, in his view, have mistaken *Erlebnis* for something it is not (for example, for a “mental process” or an “irrational” event bound to be forever beyond the jurisdiction of rational activity). I will follow both these leads only to the point where it becomes satisfactorily clear – to the extent possible – how Heidegger viewed this relation and why *Erlebnis* comes into disfavor.

The concept of “*Erlebnis*” as emerging from Heidegger’s critique of contemporary philosophies of life

In a lecture given in the summer semester of 1920, *Phenomenology of intuition and expression* (GA 59), Heidegger devotes a great deal of time to criticize the two major conceptions of *Erlebnis* attendant on two approaches to life, and dominating the contemporary philosophical landscape of his time: on the one hand, the conception of life as manifesting, objectifying, and, on the other hand, life as a multiplicity of

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p.154

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p.183.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p.252

experiences<sup>141</sup>. These two approaches find their expressions and are fully developed in the philosophies of Dilthey and Natorp, respectively.

For Dilthey anything there is is *a priori* regarded as an expression of life; for Natorp, life itself is *a priori* viewed as a rational activity playing off an irrationality lying at its very core. In both cases, life figures as the fundamental phenomenon that solely represents the main focus of all philosophical investigations. *Leben* is the fundamental phenomenon of philosophy, of any philosophy. As a matter of fact, it is *Leben* as *Urphänomen* that represents for Heidegger the defining mark of the philosophies of his time. It is noteworthy that for Heidegger both conceptions of philosophy have in point of fact the same goal: to get to the “concrete actual *Dasein*” or “the actuality of life”<sup>142</sup>. It would be no exaggeration to claim that Heidegger himself had become preoccupied philosophically with “life” as a result of his being embedded in the most influential philosophical trends of his time. And since philosophy then took life to be the “basic phenomenon” under investigation, it only seemed natural to him to begin his philosophical career by bringing his own contribution to this research program. But, as I will try to make the case, the “first” topic is, for Heidegger, also the last.

#### Heidegger’s critique of Natorp

In Heidegger’s view, Natorp conceives *Erlebnis* only from the side of that which is lived through, *das Erlebte*. This *Erlebte* is, in turn, regarded as being mere subjectivity out of which an objective object can emerge. The subjective is subjective only relative to the objectivity emerging from it. *Das Erlebte* is not the object as such, as the object is presented via that which is lived through, via subjectivity. The object itself can become subjective, something merely lived through, or an appearance, and become thus a new occasion to conceive of a new object. The problem that arises here concerns obviously the proper way of presenting this subjectivity, in other words, the problem is to “reproduce the complete concretion of that which is lived through.”

Following on Kant’s footsteps, the proponents of this conception of life view

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<sup>141</sup> GA 59, p.18, 88

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p.143

consciousness as the constant activity of determining the subjective, sensible experience into an objective, organized experience. Scientific, objective knowledge can only come into play when consciousness has been able to configure (form or categorically determine) the unformed, undetermined raw material it has experienced via sensibility, by somehow in-forming the unformed material with its own forms (Kantian categories). Whatever is lived through, experienced but incapable of being appropriated by consciousness remains merely lived-through, but not known. *Erlebnis* in this context takes on a specific meaning: it refers to that which is experienced through sensibility but remains “categorially unformed,” “untouched theoretically”, utterly subjective, to that which is directly, *simply and passively* lived through<sup>143</sup>. As such *Erlebnis* is irrational since the very conditions under which a meaningful discourse about it is possible are not being met. As a result, there emerges a tension between *life* understood as the rational activity of informing the unformed sensible material, in general, of structuring the lived-through into an organized and cognizable totality (experience in Kantian sense), and *life* as *Erlebnis*, as the irrational, passive, purely receptive living or experiencing<sup>144</sup>. Life is regarded again as the “multiplicity” and “interconnectedness” of lived experiences<sup>145</sup> in their twofold meaning.

In Natorp’s terms, in order to be known the subjective must be determined objectively, that is, established in accordance with some universal “regulations” (logical laws of relating the multiplicity into a unity) of consciousness (*Gesetze*). The lived experience in which something appears to the subject cannot be known directly.

According to Natorp, there is no

immediate access to the immediacy of psychic experience [*Erlebnis*]; it can only be approached by a [methodical] regression from its objectivations, which must therefore [first] be secured in their own purely objective justification.<sup>146</sup>

The only way to arrive at an appropriate understanding of lived experience is

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<sup>143</sup> GA 59, p.25

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, p.26

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p.88

<sup>146</sup> Alan Kim, "Paul Natorp", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2003 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://www.science.uva.nl/~seop/entries/natorp/>

by way of “reconstruction”. We “go back” somehow from the objectification to the subjective by reconstructing the way in which the subjective has been objectified. To do so, we need to know “how” consciousness determines its objects. To be an object for consciousness is to be constituted in consciousness. Consciousness is the “unity of multiplicity”. Whatever is for consciousness “is” in consciousness in the same *sense*: consciousness knows only one sense of *being*: being constituted in the sense of being brought into the unity of consciousness<sup>147</sup>. The nexus of lived experiences can only be reconstructed by way of an understanding of the way in which the “universal logic of the object” operates. Ultimately, the “true life of the *psyche* can only reside in a supratemporal nexus (of primal thinking, or primal logic).<sup>148</sup>” Life in its concreteness is nowhere to be found.

#### Heidegger’s critique of Dilthey

In my view, we cannot overestimate Dilthey’s influence on Heidegger. I fully agree with Sharff’s finding that our appropriation of Heidegger has not so far paid due consideration to his appropriation of Dilthey. Even a cursory reading of Dilthey makes it fully clear that Heidegger took a lot from Dilthey’s conception of life. Since my purpose here is restricted to Heidegger’s critique of Dilthey’s conception of *Erlebnis*, I do not deem it necessary to go into a very detailed and thorough presentation and analysis of Dilthey’s philosophy of life, nor do I find it necessary to enter into a discussion of Heidegger’s appropriation of Dilthey. I will focus instead on those aspects only that reveal Dilthey’s take on the “relation” between life and lived experience, and how Heidegger critically interprets it<sup>149</sup>.

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<sup>147</sup> »‘Ich höre den Tön’, ‘Ich sehe die Farbe’ besagt: ‘der Ton ist da’, ‘die Farbe ist da’ im Bewußstein, als Bestandteil eines Erlebniszusammenhang, sich in ihn einordnen. Bewußstein, Dasein für ein Ich, Bewußstein besagt eben Konstituiertsein. Und konstituiert is aller Bewußsteinsinhalt. Der Sinn dieses Daseins ist überall derselbe. Hören und Sehen sind keine verschiedene Weisen des Bewußtseins, sondern nur was da ist, konstituiert ist, ist verschieden.« (GA 59, p.133)

<sup>148</sup> GA 59, p.122

<sup>149</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Heidegger’s critique of Dilthey see Robert

Dilthey wanted to arrive at an understanding of life *from the standpoint of life itself*. For him natural sciences are the advanced expressions of the felt tendency originating in life itself to overcome resistance, to overcome nature. It is the expression of our tendency to conceive of nature in such a way as to make it controllable and predictable. The human sciences, on the other hand, originate in a different “tendency” inherent in life. They are the mature development of life’s tendency towards a “thoughtfully enhanced self-awareness.<sup>150</sup>” “Life grasps here life.<sup>151</sup>” While natural sciences are possible only at the expense of bracketing or neutralizing “*der Mensch selbst*,” in other words, his lived experiences, from the cognitive experience of nature, the human sciences, by contrast, are born out of man’s “need” to understand himself, his life, his experiences in their living character.

We take possession of this physical world insofar as we study its regulations. These regulations can be found only insofar as the living character of our impressions of nature, the nexus in which we stand inasmuch as we ourselves are nature, the lively feeling in which we enjoy nature, withdraws increasingly behind the abstract conception of nature built on the relations of space, time, mass, movement. All these moments work together so that man brackets himself in order to construct nature out of his own impressions, as a great object ordered by regulations.<sup>152</sup>

Nature therefore cannot be understood; it remains forever “alien” to us. What we can understand is our “creations” and ourselves. This understanding not only is *of* life, but also *comes from* life. The human sciences are advanced ways in which life can develop from within itself an understanding of itself. Human sciences have one objective only: to provide a reliable cognition of the “concatenation of lived experiences in the human-historical-social world.<sup>153</sup>” The grounding of the human science consists in investigating the possibility of such understanding. Philosophy is coming to

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Sharff, “Heidegger’s appropriation of Dilthey before *Being and Time*,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35, 1997, pp.105-28; and Th. Schatzki, “Living out of the past: Dilthey and Heidegger on life and History” in *Inquiry*, 46, pp.301-323.

<sup>150</sup> I have used here Sharff’s translation of Dilthey’s term “Selbstbesinnung.”

<sup>151</sup> 6. W. Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 402 p. p.44

<sup>152</sup> Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.5

<sup>153</sup> W. Dilthey, “Studien zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften” in W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1966). vol. 7, 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1958, p.3 (Henceforth, GS 7)

understanding how the human-historical-social world gets formed out of the lived experience of the past<sup>154</sup>. Through thinking we become aware of, realize what is that which we have lived through. Philosophy, however, is the supreme “energy of making aware.”<sup>155</sup> It seeks to complete the tendency of the human sciences to bring life’s manifestations to self-understanding by making explicit how life itself can become its own object of understanding. In a sense, its object is not life per se, but the very mode in which life becomes, from itself, an object for itself that she can now understand:

It is the function of philosophy to bring to completion - in a way that brings together, generalizes, and legitimatizes – this scientific thoughtfully enhanced awareness of life.<sup>156</sup>

Everything thus comes down to understanding how life can develop an understanding of itself from within itself. Life is “given in living and understanding.”<sup>157</sup> The lived experiences are what is immediately given<sup>158</sup>. Anything real, the world, is given in my living of it. What I live through presently is the only reality, as it were, accessible to me:

The principle of *Erlebnis* [*Erlebnissatz*] says that anything which is there for us can be there for us only as given in the present. Even a past lived experience exists only insofar as is given in a present experience.<sup>159</sup>

The present is always there, and whatever is appears only in it. *Erlebnis*, so Dilthey, is the very way in which reality is given to me<sup>160</sup>. The “filling” of my experiencing with reality goes uninterrupted while the content of my experience changes constantly.

That which in the flow of time forms a unity in presence insofar as it has a

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<sup>154</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, p.4

<sup>155</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, p.7

<sup>156</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, p.6. See also p.4

<sup>157</sup> “was im Erleben und Verstehen gegeben ist.” (Dilthey, GS 7, p. 261). See also „Der Inbegriff dessen, was uns im Erleben und Verstehen aufgeht, ist das Leben als ein das menschliche Geschlecht umfassender Zusammenhang.“ (Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.41)

<sup>158</sup> „Das Nächstgegebene sind die Erlebnisse.“ (Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.4)

<sup>159</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, p.230. It should be also mentioned that Dilthey conceives of the present as a continuing unity.

<sup>160</sup> See Roman Betanzos’ Introductory Essay to W. Dilthey, *Introduction to Human Sciences, An Attempt to lay the foundations for the Study of Society and History*, transl. by Ramon Betanzos, Wayne State University Press, 1988, p.23

unitary meaning, can be designated as *Erlebnis*.<sup>161</sup>

It could be understood, as Prof. Schatzki does, as “the smallest unit of presence in the flow of time with unitary meaning.<sup>162</sup>”. But, it is important to note that the fact that *Erlebnis* takes place in time, in other words, it is an occurrence in time<sup>163</sup>, should however not be construed as entailing that *Erlebnis* is a “smallest moment” in time, and life as the nexus of lived experiences is the somehow unified series of discreet intervals or durations in time. *Erlebnis*, according to Dilthey, can be *any unity in time*, not necessarily the smallest, with a unitary meaning:

We then call *Erlebnis* every inclusive unity of parts of life related together through a common meaning to the course of life, even if the parts are separated from one another through interrupting processes.

*Erlebnisse* are what they are only in, and as belonging to, a *Zusammenhang* (nexus) of *Erlebnisse*. The nexus is not superimposed on them, they are not forced to belong to it: the nexus gets formed “out of” the very way in which a lived experience occurs. *Erlebnisse* form indeed a “unity” in the flow of time, but the unity should not be construed as a *temporal* unity; the unity comes into being through *meaning*. Via remembrance each *Erlebnis* is found to have a “meaning” in the whole of life, that is, is found to have a “relation” to the other *Erlebnisse* belonging to the “same” course of life.

For life itself is there in this particular modus of relations of a whole to its parts... The category of meaning designates the relation of parts of life to a whole grounded in the essence of life.<sup>164</sup>

However, life is not only the nexus *of* lived experiences, but, more importantly, some sort of a nexus *in* the presently lived experience. When I live something through I *am* necessarily, immanently, essentially taken *back* to the past and *forward* to the future. My presently lived experience can only make sense out of this being-carried-away (*Fortgezogenwerden*) back into the past and forward into the future. Life is “determined through time.<sup>165</sup>” The question is, how?

Dilthey had, in my opinion, two different interpretations of this relation and had

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<sup>161</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, 194

<sup>162</sup> Schatzki, *Living out the past: Dilthey and Heidegger*, p.303

<sup>163</sup> „Das Erleben ist ein Ablauf in der Zeit.“ (Dilthey, GS 7, p. 194)

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p.232-233

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p.229

accordingly two different conceptions of life. On the one hand, the future and the past are “related” to the present (*Erlebnis*) as past and future *Erlebnisse*. The past takes the form of *another*, only remembered, experience, temporally distinct from, but related via meaning to, the present one. The future takes the form of *another*, only possible or anticipated, *experience* to which the present refers.

In the series that is thereby emerging, the past and the future, the possible transcend the moment filled by *Erlebnis*. They are however related to *Erlebnis* in the series that organizes itself into a whole via such relations. Anything past is - insofar as its remembrance entails reiterating its comprehension - as an illustration structurally related to a former *Erlebnis*. The future as a possibility is likewise related to the series via its own specific circle of possibilities. In this way there emerges in this process the intuition of the mental nexus in time, which forms the *course or life*. In this course of life each particular *Erlebnis* is related to a whole.<sup>166</sup>

Accordingly, life is a nexus of (present, past and future) lived experiences.

They together form a “series.” Nevertheless the nexus of life should not be conceived of as a “sum” of *Erlebnisse*, nor as some “essence” common to moments which otherwise lie outside one another. It is, as he himself puts it, “a unity constituted via relations, bringing all parts together.<sup>167</sup>” It is a “constituted unity.”

On the other hand, however, the future and the past are, according to Dilthey, not “transcendent” in relation to the present, references rooted in, but sending beyond, the present, but “immanent” dimensions or moments of the present itself, of *Erlebnis* understood now as *Erleben*. On this second interpretation, the present is “filled with pasts

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<sup>166</sup> “All dies Über, Von und Auf, all diese Beziehungen des Erlebten auf Erinnerunges und ebenso auf Zukunftiges zieht mich fort – rückwärts und vorwärts... In der Reihe, die so entsteht, ist das Vergangene wie das Zukünftige, Mögliche dem vom Erlebnis erfüllten Moment transzendent. Aber beides, Vergangenes und Zukünftiges, sind auf das Erlebnis bezogen in einer Reihe, welche durch solche Beziehungen zu einem Ganzen sich gliedert. Jedes Vergangene ist, da seine Erinnerung Wiedererkennen einschließt, strukturell als Abbildung auf ein ehemaliges Erlebnis bezogen. Das künftig Mögliche ist ebenfalls mit der Reihe durch den von ihr bestimmten Umkreis von Möglichkeiten verbunden. So entsteht in diesem Vorgang die Anschauung des psychischen Zusammenhanges in der Zeit, der den Lebensverlauf ausmacht. In diesem Lebensverlauf ist jedes einzelne Erlebnis auf ein Ganzes bezogen.“ (Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.47)

<sup>167</sup> “durch Beziehungen, die alle Teile verbinden, konstituierte Einheit.” (Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.48)

and carries the future within itself.<sup>168</sup>” *Erlebnis* is not only referring, or in relation, to the past and future *experiences*, but “comprising” (the German word used by Dilthey is *umschließen*) the past in remembrance and the future in imagination. The past and future are possibilities inherent in the present, and *remaining* in it, as it were. On this reading, history is no longer something separated off from life, detached from the present by a temporal distance<sup>169</sup>. *Erlebnis* now

contains at the same time as reality the structural nexus of life; a spatio-temporal localization which extends itself from the present and so on.<sup>170</sup>

Life is there as a whole as possessed in *Erlebnis*. *Erlebnis* contains the nexus or whole of life within and understands itself – has its own *Wissen* - already as occupying a certain “place” in this whole. Not only life as a nexus of lived experiences, but the lived experience as well “is a unity whose parts are related through a common meaning.<sup>171</sup>” Only as an occurrence in or over time can life be understood in terms of parts-and-whole relation. Only as an occurrence in time can *a particular Erlebnis* be “understood,” that is, remembered or anticipated, as belonging to the nexus of life via its meaning or place in the nexus. If *Erlebnis* now comprises “everything there is” within it, then it itself is the “whole” with its own distinct dimensions and essential moments. On this interpretation it would no longer be appropriate to speak of *Erlebnis* in the plural: there is just one, *das gegenwärtiges Erlebnis*, *the (continued) living of ...*. In other words, *Erleben* and *Erlebnis* would coincide:

*Erleben* and *Erlebnis* are not partitioned off one another; they are two expressions for the same thing.<sup>172</sup>

and

The totality of our essence is in *Erleben*.<sup>173</sup>

It is precisely this ambivalence on Dilthey’s part regarding the proper

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<sup>168</sup> „So ist die Gegenwart von Vergangenheiten erfüllt und trägt die Zukunft in sich.“ (Dilthey, GS 7, 232)

<sup>169</sup> Dilthey, *Der Aufbau*, p.53

<sup>170</sup> “das Erlebnis enthält zugleich als Realität Strukturzusammenhang des Lebens; eine zeitlich-räumliche Lokalisation, die von der Gegenwart usw. sich erstreckt.” (Dilthey, GS 7, p. 231)

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. p.234

<sup>172</sup> Dilthey, GS 7, p.231

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p.278

interpretation of *Erlebnis*, and life respectively, that Heidegger will take issue with. For Dilthey, life as a temporal event itself is, on the one hand, the nexus of *Erlebnisse*. On the other hand, though, life is a nexus (the remembered past and the anticipated future in the unity of the present) possessed or contained in *Erlebnis*<sup>174</sup> – we have to keep in mind that *Erlebnis* means for Dilthey *present or actual* lived experience (*gegenwärtiges Erlebnis*). *Life thus can be understood as the nexus of lived experiences (plural) or as lived experience (singular) as such*. It is not the place here to go into any more details, but it can be argued, I believe, that this ambiguity can be traced back to the different conceptions of time and life respectively arising from *Erlebnis in der Zeit* and *Zeiterlebnis*: life as an occurrence *in* time, and as such construed as the nexus of *temporal lived* experiences, and as *Erlebnis* out of, and in which, time is lived: life as a process in time and as time-living occurrence.

When life is understood as the nexus “contained” in each lived experience, it comes to acquire characteristics not to be found in life as the nexus of lived experiences. Time, movement and wholeness are the fundamental categories of life understood as the nexus possessed in *Erlebnis*. Nexus, structure and development are the fundamental categories of life understood as the nexus of *temporal lived experiences*<sup>175</sup>. Heidegger, as

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<sup>174</sup> „Das Erlebnis enthält zugleich als Realität Strukturzusammenhang des Lebens.“ (Ibid. p.231)

<sup>175</sup> I owe to Prof. Schatzki’s article, „Living out of the past,“ this short enumeration of the essential properties of life. I disagree with him, however, on the idea that „movement, time and wholeness“ represent a „first set“ of properties of life, while „nexus, structure and development“ are a „second set“ of properties. In my opinion, he is on the right track, but this claim has to be qualified. First of all, *Zusammenhang* is a fundamental category of life regardless of how life is interpreted, in other words, it plays a fundamental role in both „sets“ of properties. Secondly, Prof. Schatzki’s remark „time, movement and wholeness do not presuppose the occurrence of lived experiences“ should be qualified as referring to „lived experiences“ as occurrences in time, and thus organized somehow into a „nexus of temporal lived experiences.“ „Time, movement and wholeness“ do not presuppose temporal lived experiences (as occurrences in time). But they do presuppose lived experience as the only way in which „reality is given to me.“ Even Prof. Schatzki touches upon this distinction when he describes on the same page lived experiences, on the one hand, as „constitutive moments of the stream of life,“ and on the other hand, as „articulations of the whole of life.“ (Schatzki, *Living out the past: Dilthey and Heidegger*, p.303). On my reading, these two formulations are not

prof. Schatzki rightly observed, will keep the first three categories and reject the last three. In other words, on our reading, he will reject the interpretation of life as the nexus of lived experiences (understood as a series of occurrences in time, series occurring itself in time), and keep to the interpretation of life as *Erlebnis* understood as a happening immanently possessing, and stretching over, the past and future: an *historical* happening. Life is not an occurrence in time, but an event of time, *ahistorically* lived event, it is how time comes to be, namely in and as *Erlebnis* (or *Erleben*).

*Erlebnis* is a qualitative being = a reality impossible to define through reflexive awareness.<sup>176</sup>

Heidegger's critique of Dilthey can be summed up in the following claim: Dilthey's conception of life as an effectuation nexus *of* lived experiences is not genuine, but the outcome of some hidden traditional epistemological commitments. According to Heidegger, Dilthey saw the phenomenon of life in its genuineness, that is, as a *historical* nexus lived always *as a whole*, all at once, but he was (mis)guided by the epistemological problem of how to conceive of the whole of life in such a way as to securely account for its understanding. Life as the nexus of lived experiences is, according to Heidegger, Dilthey's solution to this problem: in addition to whatever life is, it should also be regarded as accounting for the possibility of its own understanding. As a result, Dilthey ended up, according to Heidegger, *overloading* his genuine understanding of the nexus of life with two unwanted features: an excess of *Intelektualität* inherent in *Erlebnis*, and the idea that life is somehow a unity constituted in/over time, "*ein Verlauf in der Zeit*," which via remembrance makes possible the understanding of life as a nexus. According to Heidegger, Dilthey was right in pointing out that the self is always experiencing itself out of the totality of a situation, but he believed that Dilthey had an "intellectual<sup>177</sup>" conception of this *nexus*. Dilthey, Heidegger will write later,

wants to get at the totality of the subject which experiences the world and not to a bloodless thinking thing which merely intends and theoretically

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consistent; I see them as originating in two interpretations of life, and lived experience respectively.

<sup>176</sup> "Das Erlebnis ist ein qualitatives Sein = eine Realität, die nicht durch Innerwerden definiert werden kann." (Dilthey, GS 7, p.230)

<sup>177</sup> „Auffassungsmäßig“ (GA 59, p.163)

thinks the world,<sup>178</sup>  
but wants to do it, however, with a theoretical purpose in mind, with the intention of arriving at an “ultimate understanding.”

(With some qualifications, I can even agree with Vetter’s assessment of Heidegger’s critique of Dilthey. According to Vetter, Heidegger had a deeply ambiguous relation to Dilthey: although he fully embraced the “theme” of Dilthey’s philosophy, namely the “historicity of life,” he fully rejected Dilthey’s method of addressing it<sup>179</sup>.)

In other words, Dilthey’s epistemological concern with life finds its expression in his attempt to understand how *lived experiences* are *so* related *that* an understanding of life becomes possible in the first place. His answer was: the nexus of life is an effectuation nexus, has an historical character, is something that understands itself as a nexus *only in time*, through the passage of time. Accordingly, Dilthey, so Heidegger, has slipped into a non-genuine understanding of life. Life is not longer seen as occurring all at once, in its wholeness in *each and every moment*, and experiencing itself as a whole in each and every experience of something (*Erlebnis*) but something that can come to understanding itself as a nexus only by appropriating past experiences, via remembrance, as its own “expressions.” Hence the triad: *Erlebnis – Ausdruck – Verstehen*. *Erlebnis* has its own knowledge (*Wissen*), but it can only become aware (*Selbstbesinnung*) of itself in an indirect way by recognizing itself in both its own and also other manifestations of life. Dilthey, so Heidegger, was right: life is historical, life is whole and in movement all at the same time, and also experiences itself as a whole and in movement in every experience it has of something, but the historicity of life has to be understood as a dimension intrinsic of *Erlebnis*: the genuine unity of past-present-future is given *all the time* in my experiences, and not something arrived at in the course of time. Life,

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<sup>178</sup> GA 20, p.302, 220. I followed Kisiel’s translation found in John van Buren, „The Young Heidegger and Phenomenology“ in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, pp.239-272.

<sup>179</sup> Helmuth Vetter, “Dilthey statt Nietzsche – eine Alternative für Heidegger, Ein Beitrag zum Thema »Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie«” in H. Vetter (ed.), *Nach Heidegger. Einblicke – Ausblicke*. (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2003), pp.185-205

according to Heidegger, has its own “immanent historicity.”<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, the very “facticity” of life will be later understood not as a *factum brutum*, but in terms of the immanent “historicity” of life-experience<sup>181</sup>. It is this conception of the historicity of life that will culminate in early Freiburg years in Heidegger’s interpretation of Christian life-experience as “life living the temporality as such.”<sup>182</sup>

In other words, Heidegger rejects Dilthey’s conception of *Erlebnis* as a “constitutive moment of life” and keeps to his understanding of *Erlebnisse* as “articulations of the whole of life.” *Erlebnis* is, as Heidegger claims already in late 1919, a “form of life.”<sup>183</sup>

### Conclusion

According to Heidegger, both Natorp and Dilthey failed to fully appreciate the fundamental sense in which life *is*: namely life as *Erlebniszusammenhang* ‘is’ neither a “temporal objectivity” nor an “objective domain”<sup>184</sup> constituting and constituted either historically or logically; “life” as all-at-once lived whole “is” genuinely only in “being lived”, Once this sense of life is properly seen, the problematic of life philosophy changes radically. The failure to see this fundamental character of life is to be attributed to the epistemological tension between “method” and “object” in philosophy: between life as is lived genuinely and life as is assumed to be by a specific goal of theoretical knowledge. The nexus is in both cases seen eventually as something to be arrived at, something “constituted”, a (re-)construction:

*Erlebniszusammenhang* and the question regarding the way in which it can be so approached as to be grasped is beforehand determined by this idea [of constitution, my note].<sup>185</sup>

Life as *Erlebniszusammenhang* is understood beforehand as a product or

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<sup>180</sup> „Die immanente Geschichtlichkeit des Lebens an sich macht die hermeneutische Intuition aus.“ (GA 56/57, p.219).

<sup>181</sup> GA 60, p.9

<sup>182</sup> GA 60, p.80

<sup>183</sup> „Gestalt des Lebens.“ (GA 58, p.243)

<sup>184</sup> GA 59, p.172

<sup>185</sup> GA 59, p.143

outcome of an activity, as being somehow “constituted” by way of either an historical or logical transcendentalism. Life understood as a nexus of lived experiences – regardless of the specific way in which the nexus is believed to emerge - is a theoretical construct. Life is never lived as a nexus of lived experiences<sup>186</sup>. Life is a nexus indeed, and experienced as such in every *Erlebnis*<sup>187</sup>. An *Erlebnis* is an articulation of the whole of life that experiences itself, *Lebenserfahrung*.

A semester later Heidegger will be even more detailed about how epistemological motives have already misguided all philosophical approaches to life. Upon discussing and critiquing the ways in which history has been conceived in philosophy, Heidegger comes to the conclusion that all conceptions of history (Dilthey’s, Weber’s, Spengler’s, Simmel’s, Windelband’s, Natorp’s) have been deficient, and thus missed the very phenomenon they all were trying to elucidate, in that they were all right from the outset guided by the problem of how to secure historical *reality*, and the knowledge thereof, from what is merely historical and relative. Despite the obvious differences in the ways in which they conceived “history”, all had only one question constantly operating in the background and secretly guiding all strategies and conclusions: to move beyond the epistemological skepticism which “history” threatens to bring to unbearable proportions<sup>188</sup>. Regardless of the specific domain in which each placed “reality” (in atemporal universally valid ideas, or in the historical formations themselves, or in a combination of atemporal ideas and historical formations) they all tried in their own ways to solve an “epistemological” problem as if “history” and “life” are subject matters best approached from what appears to be primarily an epistemological interest – how to *understand* life and history in such a way as to avoid skepticism. It is not “what” and “how” they are, but rather how one can secure the knowledge of them, how one can come to a solid and secure account of them:

The historical reality is in all three accounts taken as *objective being*. The path to it is the path of knowing...<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> GA 60, p.13

<sup>187</sup> „Leben ist historisch; keine Zerstückelung in Wesenselemente, sondern Zusammenhang.“ GA 56/57, p.117

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p.40

<sup>189</sup> GA 60, p.48

It is as if “life” has already been set up to be approached in a specific manner, and that it is precisely this manner alone that determines in advance what is to be sought for, and what should count as a “valid conclusion” about what is looked for. The biggest mistake of both conceptions of life is that they have let an epistemological “idea” about cognition take the lead in their orientation towards life: life was beforehand, *a priori*, oriented towards the idea of “constitution”<sup>190</sup>. In both forms, life as expression and life as experience, life has already been understood as being constituted and constituting somehow, in different ways to be sure, the totality of experience. Epistemological considerations therefore crept in in both approaches to life and put them on a path that led further and further away from “life” as is genuinely lived. The result in both cases was the same: they ended up in forgetting what philosophy is all about, that which prompted them in the first place to search for a solution: the *unum necessarium*, the actual *Dasein*, the actual self-world, the historically enacted *Dasein of each individual as individual*.<sup>191</sup>

The actual *Dasein* has not become a possible problem.<sup>192</sup>

Since life has always been approached with the openly declared intention to arrive at a well-grounded, theoretically valid understanding of life, all life philosophies have so far fallen prey to objectifying “life” despite their honest attempts at grasping it in its peculiarity. “Securing” the knowledge of life took precedence over a faithful but enlightened partaking in living. Life as “constituted” is no longer the living life, life as is lived:

The radicalization of the theoretical in the idea of constitution can never in principal lead to the concrete actual *Dasein*.<sup>193</sup>

Life as the nexus of lived experiences coming into being in time should not be understood as being constituted, or constructed by the activity of consciousness. By doing so, *Erlebnis* becomes a temporal “objective domain” lacking a “self.” There is no self in the discreet temporal (Husserlian or Dilthean) lived experience, and we cannot arrive at a “self” unless we set out with one. The *actual Dasein* being sought for becomes a selfless *Dasein*, a selfless, lifeless existence.

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<sup>190</sup> GA 59, p.129, 165

<sup>191</sup> GA 59, p.169

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, p.170

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p.143

Life is already lived as a whole centered on a self. We are already living this totality. Life in its wholeness is already lived and experienced as a whole but in the manner of *life*, not in that of *thinking*. Lived experience understood as a component, or moment, of a bigger complex (life), and as something that has to be “related” or linked together with other lived experiences in order to be able to “constitute” life in its totality is a misguided, that is, not genuine interpretation of life. Lived experience should be understood as *Lebenserfahrung*, an experience of life in which life is already there wholly, altogether, in its totality and concreteness, all at once, for the living self.

#### *Erlebnis and Leben in Heidegger's texts*

For the most part, Heidegger uses these two terms almost interchangeably:

The being of life, of lived experiences, is not the occurring (*Vorkommen*), but effectuation (*Vollzug*).<sup>194</sup>

However, in keeping with his critique of life-philosophies which, as we know, failed to pay attention to the fact that lived experiences can only *in abstracto* be separated from one another and then put together in a higher unity, Heidegger will always emphasize the situational character of lived experiences. Neither are lived experiences hyletic data, as Husserl thought, but “concrete situations of life<sup>195</sup>”. Life *is* altogether in each situation<sup>196</sup>. Life is always concrete in situations<sup>197</sup>. Lived experiences are not things, nor isolated entitative occurrences, but expressive configurations of tendencies peculiar to concrete situations of life. The fundamental category of life is the situation<sup>198</sup>. Life is already lived through in its totality, as a whole, all at once *in every moment*. Situation is *a* life experience of life in its totality. To live *is* to live in situations, “which we ourselves are and live.<sup>199</sup>”

We should also take note of the fact that one of the first occurrences of the

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<sup>194</sup> GA 58, p.156

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p.188

<sup>196</sup> “Das Leben ist in jeder Situation ganz da” (ibid., p.231).

<sup>197</sup> GA 58, p.233

<sup>198</sup> GA 59, p.197

<sup>199</sup> “die wir selbst sind und leben” (GA 58, p. 95).

term “Dasein” which no longer takes the term to mean mere “existence”, brings clearly into stark relief the idea that *Dasein* is nothing but *Lebenstotalität*: “... a particular, perhaps unique typic of Dasein – *totality of life* –.”<sup>200</sup>“

It was already clear in 1919 that Heidegger understands *lived experience* differently than Dilthey, Husserl and Neokantians. For him, lived experience was *Ereignis* in and as which the self is *da* completely. With and in experience life *itself* is there entirely. The self is always “situational.” In a sense, there are only situations in which “I” find myself immersed, absorbed, and involved. “I am” means *my living in situations, my finding myself in situations*. A *lived experience* is thus the way in which the self is there completely in a situation, a way in which life experiences itself entirely: *Erlebnis = Situation = Lebenserfahrung*. *Erlebnis* is, as a matter of fact, *situational experience*, a concrete, actual experience of life in its totality: to live is to live in situations. It is not just one, numerically one, lived experience, an isolated, discrete experience of an isolated particular object in which one and only one type of intentionality prevails, but rather one in which the whole of life, life in its totality, is somehow given and lived through: a life experience. We do not typically have an experience, say, of seeing this piece of white paper, isolated somehow from “other” distinct, yet related, experiences: a lived experience, properly understood, is an experience of a situation, or living in a situation. It is an experiential whole (situation), which alone enables us to abstractly isolate just one moment and treat it independently. It is not by relating these abstractly distinguished moments of “living something,” that is, lived experiences, back into a unity, that we can arrive at the experiential whole, or situation. The situation as the experiential whole is already “lived” through long before we can separate it out in “discrete” lived experiences. To use Helmuth Vetter’s fitting words, the lived experience completely separated is *ein Grenzfall*<sup>201</sup>.

To be sure, Heidegger never, to my knowledge, says explicitly that *Situation* is *Lebenserfahrung*. In his terms from 1919, life experience is the “continually changing” context or unity (*Zusammenhang*) of situations. This way of understanding situations and life experience, however, is very early, dating from early 1919. And still at this time, in

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<sup>200</sup> GA 58, p.59

<sup>201</sup> Helmuth Vetter, “Dilthey statt Nietzsche”, pp.185-205

some passages at least, life experience appears to be identified with situation: after all, the nexus of *Lebenserfahrung* is the nexus of situations<sup>202</sup>. After Heidegger develops his critique of life philosophies he will increasingly come closer to identifying *Situation* and *Lebenserfahrung*. Two arguments can be adduced to substantiate this claim: (1) Heidegger will increasingly abandon using the term *Situation*, and use instead more often *Lebenserfahrung*, until he will eventually come to favor *faktisches Leben* over *Lebenserfahrung* and (2) Some passages clearly suggest that both *Situation* and *Lebenserfahrung* are ways to express “what we are and live.” Compare, for example, “Situations that we ourselves are and live,<sup>203</sup>” and “Life experience which is directly accessible, and which we ourselves are and live,<sup>204</sup>” and “Factic life that we ourselves are and live.<sup>205</sup>”

In early 1919 Heidegger is still hesitant about the proper way of understanding lived experiences and situations. Despite the actual results of his investigations, he continued for a short while to view *Erlebnisse* as emerging from, and belonging somehow to, situations. But the occasional use of expressions like *Erlebnissituation*<sup>206</sup>, *Situationserlebnisse* or *Situationserlebnis*<sup>207</sup> or even *Erlebenssituation*<sup>208</sup> bear witness to an existing indecision on Heidegger’s part as to how *specifically Erlebnisse* stand in relation to *Situation*. Even Heidegger’s definition of a situation as a “unity in living” alludes to the difficulty of making a clear demarcation between *Situation* and *Erlebnis*. In my view it is only in the wake of his critique of the shortcomings of life philosophies as expounded by Natorp and Dilthey, that Heidegger drops entirely the term *Erlebnis* and employs instead “life experience”, “situation” and “factic life”. Just as before lived experiences were understood as *Ereignisse*, so too now it is situation that is understood not as a natural event, activity or process of some kind, but rather as *Ereignis*. The occasional, infrequent reemergence of the term *Erlebnis*, however, gives me reasons to

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<sup>202</sup> GA 56/57, p.209

<sup>203</sup> GA 58, p.95

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, p.102

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, p. 82

<sup>206</sup> GA 56/57, p.115, 208

<sup>207</sup> GA 56/57, p.205

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, p.208

believe that lived experience is in fact abandoned as a term precisely because it is now replaced with *Situation, an experience of life in one of its possible totalities*<sup>209</sup>, an “articulation of life as a whole.”

Lived experience as *Situation* and *Lebenserfahrung* is now more appropriately understood as a configuration, *Gestalt* or form of life<sup>210</sup>. As the result, the paradigmatic lived experience is no longer, as was for Husserl, the perceptual experience of an object. Lived experience conceived of as *Situation* is a form life takes. It is one way of living life “completely” as well as “concretely”. That it is precisely lived experience which is now understood as situation, as life experience (experience of life in its twofold meaning), is further evidenced by the fact that whatever Heidegger found as essentially belonging to the nature of *Erlebnis* is now transferred to *Situation* and *Lebenserfahrung*. As we remember, a lived experience properly understood is a highly “personal” experience in the sense that it involves “me” indispensably. Lived experience is as much an encounter with *das Erlebte* as is, in the appropriation of it by the self, an encounter of the self with itself. The self encounters itself as it appropriates, in living something though, that which it experiences – this is the genuine meaning of *Lebenserfahrung*. On our understanding, namely that lived experience is now better understood as *situation* and situation as *Lebenserfahrung*, it does not come as a surprise to see Heidegger defining both *Erlebnis* and *Situation* in exactly the same terms, namely as the specific *character in which I myself have myself*<sup>211</sup>. It is thus safe to claim that Heidegger is not simply abandoning one topic to merely pick up another one.

To bring this section to a conclusion: Life conceived of as the “nexus of lived experiences” is in need of further elaboration if the phenomenology of life has any chance of becoming clear on its own possibility. Historically speaking, the

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<sup>209</sup> „Wir sind je versetzt in eine lebendige Erlebnis-Tendenz, Erwartungssituation.“ (GA 58, p.125)

<sup>210</sup> “Gestalt des Lebens” (GA 58, p.243), “Lebensgebilde” (GA 58, p.164)

<sup>211</sup> „Situation ist eben der eigentümlichen Charakter, in dem ich mich selbst habe, nicht den Inhalt des Erlebten.“ (GA 58, p.259-260). Compare to: „Wenn ich mein Leben »betrachte«, mich an ein Erlebnis erinnere, dann lebe ich in dem, was ich erlebt habe, und in dem Erlebnischarakter, den ich erlebt habe, habe ich mich selbst – und zwar viel konkreter, als ich »mich« habe, wenn ich auf mein leeres »Ich« (künstlich) einstellt bin.“ (GA 58, p.247)

interconnectedness of lived experiences has always been understood as being somehow either transcendently logically or historically constituted, “fabricated” or “produced”; where life has been seen as both constituting and as something constituted. Owing to its hidden *a priori* interest and commitment to solving the epistemological problem of how life can be *so* set up *as to* secure its cognition to the highest possible degree, such an approach to life in terms of the idea of constitution fails to see that life is not the “result” of bringing together discrete lived experiences into the unity constituting life. Genuine constitution, as Einer Overenget so rightly put it, is not understood by Heidegger in terms of “fabrication” (poiesis), “where the product appears temporally after the act.”<sup>212</sup> In situations, and not in discrete, uni-intentional, abstract experiences of individual objects (the perception of a tree, or the understanding of a symbolic sign), life is already lived in its totality, wholly. It is not like life gives itself piecemeal in different isolated lived experiences. On the contrary, life already gives itself wholesale in *Erlebnisse* understood now as “situations”, as “life experiences”. The question is therefore not how lived experiences can constitute a unity, but rather how life is already experiencing itself wholly in situations, that is, how life experiences itself altogether, in every respect.

It should be kept in mind, however, that even if Heidegger drops the term *Erlebnis* off his vocabulary for the aforementioned reasons, it is nevertheless clear that he *never* conceived of *lived experience* as the proponents of various forms of transcendental philosophy did. In other words, his decision not to use the term anymore has more to do with his intention of distinguishing his own conception of *Erlebnis* from those of Dilthey’s, Natorp’s and Husserl’s, than with the concern that he might have already gotten the whole idea of *lived experience* wrong. The enviroing experience as the paradigmatic lived experience was already something else than the Husserlian and, with some qualifications even Dilthean, “mental, inner, private event.” He has appropriated from Dilthey a conception of *Erlebnis* as a “reality” already “containing” the nexus of life, as a “reality” having and living time within itself.

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<sup>212</sup> Einer Overenget, *Seeing the Self, Heidegger on Subjectivity* (Dortrecht: Springer, 1998) p.5

## Chapter Four: *Lebenserfahrung*

Life is the experiencing of something as self-encounter. Life is life experience. *Das Erlebte* is always lived or experienced from the standpoint of the self, in one of the self's own tendencies. Everything in life is motivated; anything lived through or experienced has a „reason“ to be the way it is, a „sense“ inextricably bound up with how the self has found himself in encountering it. Life-experience is „active“ as well as „passive“: active in the sense that it gets to experience something and passive in the sense that it itself is experienced thereby. Life-experience designates the „whole active and passive position [*Stellung*] of human beings toward the world.<sup>213</sup>“ Anything is experienced in „a situation of the self.“ The situation characterizes the way in which *das Erlebte* is experienced. *Das Erlebte* becomes *das Erfahrene*. But

We need to maintain the ambiguity of the problematic word ‘life’ in order to be able to indicate the phenomena intended by it.<sup>214</sup>

The word „life“ thus refers initially to an unthematic relation of the self to itself<sup>215</sup>.

Although life is, on Heidegger's understanding, so close to us, even the closest, its proximity does not directly translate in accessibility and availability for investigation. The reason why life, despite its utmost proximity to us, is nevertheless so remote from even becoming a possible subject matter for phenomenology, lies precisely in the fact that life is *too* close to us: it is us. We ourselves are *it*.

What is then this ‘life in itself’, what exactly is meant by this expression – this should be defined in a preliminary way... [It is, my insertion] something which lies so close to us that we do not even bother most of the time with it in an explicit manner; something in relation to which we do not keep any distance in order to be able to see it ›as such‹; and the distance to it is missing because we ourselves are it, and we ourselves see ourselves in accordance with life's own orientations only from life itself which we are, which is us (accusative). (The absence of life's absolute distance in itself and to itself).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> GA 60, p.9,11

<sup>214</sup> Heidegger, „Anmerkungen to Karl Jaspers Psychologie der Weltanschauung“ in Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, GA 9, 1921, p.14

<sup>215</sup> Peter Trawny, *Martin Heidegger. Eine Einführung*. (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2003) p. 21.

<sup>216</sup> GA 58, p. 29

and

We live in factic life – we are it itself, to us it is the closest.<sup>217</sup>

It is precisely this unobtrusive life in its “most general typicality” on which phenomenology wants to focus somehow. Heidegger is again playing with a distinction that he draws between a theoretical self-experience of life and a *worldly* self-experience of life<sup>218</sup>. Anywhere we look, we see trees, other peoples, buildings, works of art, mathematical equations, books, stars and bodies of knowledge; life itself, however, is nowhere to be found as an object “out there” among other objects: this is how life is lived, how the *experienced* life appears in the very experiences *it* has. It is precisely *this* character of life that has to be retained throughout the phenomenological investigations of life, if we want to remain true to our topic: life should be grasped in precisely the terms in which it itself lives. Life as is concretely lived is the expression of life’s encounter with itself. And life is nowhere to be found, although we ourselves are *it*, it is us. In living, anything but life itself arrests our attention. The apparent unavailability of life for investigation makes methodological issues to be all the more important. We cannot approach life in the same manner in which we approach other “topics” for the simple reason that life is “concealed” as a topic, is not readily available. The manner of approaching is as important as the topic itself. As a matter of fact, one cannot even dissociate the topic from the way in which the topic is arrived at<sup>219</sup>. Method thus will play a crucial role in Heidegger’s phenomenology of life. How do we experience life? How is

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<sup>217</sup> *ibid.* p.174.

<sup>218</sup> „selbstweltliche Erfahrung“ (GA 60, p.13)

<sup>219</sup> In his comments on Jaspers’ psychology of worldviews, Heidegger will interpret Jaspers’ philosophy of life, his purpose of giving a satisfactory clarification of “life,” as focusing on “existence” - since Jaspers’ ultimate goal in grasping the nature of psychical life is to arrive at a (self-) reflection on “what human being is” - and will criticize him for its alleged inability to see that the topic is not readily available for observation (Jaspers’ method to approaching life). Heidegger says, “What kind of explanation is required for our “existence”? From what was noted in our introductory comments on this problem, it should be obvious that we are not of the opinion that one can approach the problem of existence directly. This problem is characterized precisely by the fact that we lose sight of it when we approach it in this way.” (M. Heidegger, *Supplements. From the earliest Essays to Being and Time and beyond*, edited by John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) p.91 (henceforth, *Supplements*).

life given? What is the basic experience of life?

However, before we get specifically into methodological problems, let's review first some of the most important "categories" of life, at which Heidegger arrives in the relative absence of an explicit, fully developed, methodological approach to life. As we will see, by category of life Heidegger does not mean what Kant, for example, meant: a concept of understanding employed in objective empirical judgments which renders such judgments universally valid for all judging subjects. A category is not an a priori conceptual manner of encountering a sensible material, it is not an intellectual activity in virtue of which *das Ding an sich* becomes a possible object of experience, an object *for consciousness*; the category is not primarily about "contents" or "objects," but a manner of living, ways in which life is experienced, possibilities of life experience.

Life has the character of a world

As noted earlier, the lived experiences, the most common and ordinary ones, are what Heidegger in early 1919 calls environing lived experiences because that which is lived through or experienced can be what it is only from within an worldly context (*Umwelt*): I see a frightening thunderbolt on the background of a clouded sky, on a chilly dark night, when no other person is around me etc. It is not just the thunderbolt that I experience, but also the chilly night as well, the cloudy sky<sup>220</sup> etc. The thunderbolt *as appears in this whole experience (Erlebnis – Situation - Lebenserfahrung)* is frightening, not just the thunderbolt apart or isolated from the rest. Everything in this experience stands intimately together, forming one experience [*Erlebnis*]: the dark sky, the chilly night, the valley, the felt loneliness, my walking down the valley etc. Thus the experience of the thunderbolt as it appears in this situation is *ein Ereignis*, an unique event occurring to me. The experience has a holistic character in a twofold manner: on the one hand, to experience the frightening thunderbolt is to experience *all* that renders the thunderbolt as

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<sup>220</sup> To claim like Husserl that the „reell“ part of our experiences is constituted by sensations (Empfindungen) that are somehow instantaneously grasped (*aufgefasst*) as the things that we actually understand, is, according to Heidegger, to read too much into the experience as it gives itself. Such an interpretation of experiences can only come about as a result of a process of theorizing.

frightening in that situation. On the other hand, however, I myself am completely in that experience, and I am experiencing myself as such: I do not experience (*erfahren*) only one “part” or “moment” of my own self in *my Erlebnis*. I do not experience myself in that experience as being something other than what and who I am in that experience, as something that stretches over that experience to other “moments” of my life, my self; there is, in other words, no “parts” or “moments” of my self left out of my *Erlebnis*. I am there completely. My being frightened in that situation does not leave any room for the co-existence or even the possibility *in that situation* of there being a self other than “frightened.” Since life is decidedly no longer understood as a discrete experience of an object, where the object is “constituted temporally after the act,” that which is experienced changes. The experience of life is genuinely a world-experience, the experience of a world. That which we experience in a situation, is not an object, but a/the world<sup>221</sup>.

The ‘world’ is something in which we can *live*.<sup>222</sup>

By contrast, nobody can live “in” an object: the self is *a self* only in experiencing a world, and not an isolated object. I live by always being somehow, one way or another but always somehow, engaged in or involved with worldly situations. Life is the world in which I live. Life is “worldly disposed”<sup>223</sup>. The world is not simply the context in which life evolves. Imagining myself in the absence of the current situation I am in now, would not result in a “pure I” but merely in a fiction. “I live always somehow in a situation” should not be misconstrued as somehow implying that I could live apart from the (any) situation (context/world) I am in. My life is my world. Life *is* the world in the sense that life is essentially my engagement, involvement, preoccupation, concern with things or issues (*Sachen*) that can be what they are only from within *my* world. The world is that which the self lives and does so by experiencing itself.<sup>224</sup>

The world in which I live is lived in accordance with three relatively distinct

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<sup>221</sup> “ ... So bezeichnen wir das, was erfahren wird – das Erlebte -, als ‘Welt’, nicht als ‘Objekt’”. (GA 60, p.11)

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>223</sup> „Die faktische Lebenserfahrung ist im wörtlichen Sinn ‘weltlich gestimmt’, sie lebt immer in eine ‘Welt’ hinein, sie befindet sich in einer ‘Lebenswelt.’” (GA 58, p.250)

<sup>224</sup> GA 58, p.206

kinds of “being there” or “engagements”: as a surrounding world (*Umwelt*: regions, towns, sciences etc.), communal world (*Mitwelt*: brothers, compatriots, neighbors, coworkers etc.) and self-world (*Selbstwelt* - the world as *my* world)<sup>225</sup>. The surrounding, communal and self-worlds are by no means three distinct and independent “parts” of the same world. Neither should they be construed as different “domains of being”. As a matter of fact, there is only one world that is however lived to some extent, *in some sense*, differently depending on what and how I encounter, deal with in living. They are just different ways in which life is lived, that is, fulfils its own inherent tendencies or possibilities. Occasionally Heidegger uses the term *lifeworld* to refer to this threefold world of the living self<sup>226</sup>.

Life is a modus in which I find myself in relation to the world, a way in which the world is experienced by me. As Heidegger will say in 1922, I am “*ein Wie des Weltnehmens*.”<sup>227</sup>

Life has the character of a self

Furthermore, my experiencing of the thunderbolt does not present my own self as a part of the experience, as a conglomerate of acts and processes going on in “me”, not even as an center of all my experiences: I find myself as the one being frightened, the one deciding to run as fast as possible, as the one feeling lonely etc: “I am” the one being frightened, running, looking back etc. “I am” not the subject or center of my experiences (the underlying substance), I am not the one “doing”, as it were, the experiencing. I experience myself by way of, and in, whatever I do, feel, encounter<sup>228</sup>. This is how I encounter myself, not by self-reflection or self-introspection. This is who I am in living: I always find myself caught, involved in, and partaking of, situations: running, talking, planning ahead, being bored, being excited, resting, shouting, listening, being in pain etc.

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<sup>225</sup> *ibid.* p.33, 39; GA 60, p.39.

<sup>226</sup> GA 58, p.62, 77, 250; GA 60, p.11

<sup>227</sup> GA 61, p.168

<sup>228</sup> GA 60, p.13

I am never first and foremost the spectator of my own experiences<sup>229</sup>. Unless I am theoretically oriented towards the content of experience, what I live through is always of significance for me. This, for Heidegger, translates into the fact that I am always somehow disposed towards everything I experience. It is not just an experience in the theoretical sense of an experience of an object, but a **lived** experience, that is, a personal experience, an experience as self-experience, an experience *of* the self: I do not see just a thunderbolt, but one that frightens me, a frightening thunderbolt. Everything appears the way it does precisely because I am somehow “there” (*dabei sein*<sup>230</sup>), I resonate in the whole experience. That which is experienced is not a simple object, an object-like entity, *justa* thunderbolt that I see, but something that matters to me, “impresses” me somehow. I am always there *somehow*<sup>231</sup>. But this “how” characteristic of all my experiences is not itself noticeable in the experience; it is one with “what” I experience. This explains also why the experience and what is experienced are not two entitative objects put somehow together.<sup>232</sup> I live by “being there” in my world somehow: I live by always somehow being either mesmerized, excited, enthralled, bored, in denial, vexed, provoked, alienated, accepting, frightened etc.:

And our life is only *as life* insofar as it lives in a world.<sup>233</sup>

From the beginning Heidegger was convinced that *Erlebnis* cannot be properly understood in the absence of, or by ignoring, the way in which “I am” “there” (*da*) in my experience. Any reification of life, which in early 1919 was interpreted as resulting in *eine Entlebung der Erlebnisse*, results inevitably in the complete loss of the “self”- and “world”-character of life<sup>234</sup>.

He will put all his efforts into trying to figure out a way in which he could adequately account for the way in which the “I” is “there” in his “own” lifeworld. *Erlebnis, Situation, Lebenserfahrung, faktisches Leben* refer essentially to the self’s participation to its encounter of a world. Obviously, expressions like “the I resonates” or

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<sup>229</sup> GA 58, p.39

<sup>230</sup> GA 56/57, p.69; GA 58, p.33, GA 60, p.16

<sup>231</sup> GA 58, p.32

<sup>232</sup> GA 56/57, p.70

<sup>233</sup> GA 58, p.34

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p.188

“the I swims” in his experiences, used by Heidegger in early 1919, should have been perceived as highly unsatisfactory. The only reason for his using these non-traditional expressions was to stress the fact that “I am” in my experiences in a totally different fashion than traditional epistemology and ontology would have had it. Once he fully develops the idea that *Erlebnis* should be adequately grasped not as a discrete lived experience of an object, but rather as “concrete situation of life”, the investigation of the way in which the self lives or “is there” in its own world will take the form of an investigation of the self-world. But *Selbstwelt* is, on Heidegger’s reading, the “I and its living.”<sup>235</sup> It is noteworthy that it is precisely this living, “personal” character of any lived experience that continues to remain in the center of Heidegger’s philosophical preoccupations, even if a continuous refinement and adjustment have led him to focus now on what he calls *Selbstwelt* or sometimes *Selbstleben*:

The self in the actual effectuation which life experience entails, the self in the movement of experiencing itself is the fundamental reality.<sup>236</sup>

and

Rather, we need to see that experiencing in its fullest sense is to be found in its authentically factic context of effectuation in the historically existing self, and this self is in one way or another the ultimate question of philosophy.<sup>237</sup>

A life without a self, or lived by abstracting the self from the living experience, is no longer a “living life.”<sup>238</sup> It is precisely the absence of the self in living that makes possible the theoretical approach to life as something to be studied, an *object*. Life, however, is not an object; life is actualization, effectuation, carrying out. Life, which we ourselves are, is always “my life”, “your life”, “our life” etc. Life is always *somebody’s* life. In other words, life is always the life of a self: a self-life (*Selbstleben*). Life is indeed carrying out, effectuation, but by no means impersonal, soulless as it were, or selfless. On

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<sup>235</sup> GA 59, p.92

<sup>236</sup> “Das Selbst im aktuellen Vollzug der Lebenserfahrung, das Selbst im Erfahren seiner selbst ist die Urwirklichkeit. Erfahrung is nicht Kenntnisnehmen, sondern das lebendige Beteiligtsein, das Bekümmertsein, so daß das Selbst ständig von dieser Bekümmernung mitbestimmt ist.... Alle Wirklichkeit erhält ihren ursprünglichen Sinn«. (GA 59, p.173).

<sup>237</sup> Heidegger, *Supplements*, p. 96

<sup>238</sup> GA 58, p.77, 78

the contrary, the carrying out occurs *im Selbst*:

The being of life, of lived experiences, is not occurrence, but *effectuation* – effectuation in self, but the self is not always there necessarily in an explicit manner.<sup>239</sup>

The appropriation Heidegger mentioned in the first lecture as the characteristic of the I or self to render everything encountered as being somehow a way of fulfilling life's own motivations, goes now under the name of *Selbstwelt*, self-world: the world is always the self's "own" world. The world is the world of a self to such an extent that any self-presentation of the self amounts to a presentation of the world the self lives in, and vice-versa, any presentation of the world amounts to a self-presentation of the self<sup>240</sup>. Although life is always lived in accordance with its own possible dimensions as self-world, communal world and surrounding world, the self-world plays however a special role: everything that appears or takes place in the world becomes intelligible on the basis of how the self living in the world is experiencing it. The special status the self-world enjoys becomes apparent for Heidegger when we pay attention, for example, to how the (communal, surrounding and self-) world is varyingly experienced depending on the changing position of the self (body) in space, or on the mood the self is in (the "same" things appear differently in accordance with the mood I am in). For all these reasons, Heidegger concludes that life is lived as centered on the self-world.

The self never experiences itself piecemeal. To be for a self is to be one(-)self. The self is always *his whole self* in all of his experiences. A *partial or fragmented* self would not make sense. All of the self's experiences are, and cannot but be, "complete". Heidegger, to my knowledge, never says it explicitly, but it would follow from his conception of the living self that, properly speaking, there are no such things as lived experiences in Husserl's sense. The unilateral experience of a single object is never a *self-experience* of a self because the self cannot experience itself as the self that it is in *merely being directed towards an object*: this experience would be a "limit-case". The experience of a single object is an abstraction. The self is and lives only in a world: in situations, that is, in possible forms or configurations that life in its totality can take. This

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<sup>239</sup> GA 58, p. 156

<sup>240</sup> "Life as lived and its aspect are the echo of self-life's rhythm." (GA 58, p.206).

explains why Heidegger can say:

The self is present to us in the expression of a situation. I am myself actual to myself in a particular life experience, I am in a *situation* -<sup>241</sup>

I am „there“ to myself not in the form of an object, or an I. „I am there“ should be understood dynamically, as an “activity” or a process, for lack of a better word. The static “I”, however, is merely a word<sup>242</sup>. Even if the I is never an object-like entity to be found in experience, the I enjoys nevertheless a unique presence. In Heidegger terms, the “I” finds its own expression in the situation. The situation is precisely the situation it is thanks to the specific way in which the “I” is there. As a matter of fact, the situation *is* the self’s own way of being present there as the self it is.

*Life has the character of familiarity*

First of all, it should be noted that I am „there“ to myself in such a way that this „presence“ does not even become the subject of an explicit investigation. I am „there“ to myself in a way that does not require any further elaboration, clarification or even explicit attention. My „being-there“ (*dabei sein*) takes the form of an unobtrusive and self-evident familiarity with myself and my world. To be familiar with myself and always live this familiarity with myself in every and each situation I always find myself in means that I always find and have myself, as well as understand myself, in every and each situation. Living in a familiar situation amounts to “understanding” myself somehow. “Understanding myself as the one being frightened” is not the same as “making a judgment about me.” In other words, it is not like I am directing my attention to my own self and as a result of my seeing myself I then come to the conclusion that I am frightened. My understanding of myself does not come about as a result of a process of deliberation. Since Heidegger expressly denies any epistemological overtones to the kind of “understanding” pertaining to the self’s self-experience in situations, he would rather use expressions like “I have my self in situations,” “the self is understandable to

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<sup>241</sup> „Das Selbst ist uns im Ausdruck der Situation gegenwärtig. Ich bin mir selbst konkret in einer bestimmten Lebenserfahrung, ich bin in einer Situation.“ (GA 58:258).

<sup>242</sup> GA 58, p.156

himself”<sup>243</sup>. In each and every familiar situation I always find myself in, I “have my own self”.

‘I have my(-)self’ means: the living situation is understandable.<sup>244</sup>

What we live through is always lived as something with which we are always familiar somehow (*vertraut*): In the current situation, I am writing. I am “there” as the one writing. In this familiarity with what I live through, I am there. It is this familiarity that is the expression of my being there. This *Dabeisein*, however, is self-referential. The self becomes present *to himself* in the familiarity that characterizes the way in which it lives in situations. *I am there* means that I am having myself somehow. I am there *by* understanding (1) what is going on and (2) what I have to do and (3) by ‘acting’ (effectuating) already on such an understanding. Everything now shifts on finding a way to bring to light this self-referential “familiarity with myself” that lies at the core of each and every situation<sup>245</sup>.

I am my own self in situations in the modus of intelligibility (*Verständlichen*). I normally do not ask myself questions like, “Who am I?” I am not normally the subject matter of a personal self-investigation, self-introspection, an object of study and inquiry. I am “having” my own self in the modus of a “process” of either losing or gaining the familiarity with the situation I am living in, that is, with life itself<sup>246</sup>. In other words, I “have my self” when, living in situations, I understand what is going on, know what to make of, how to react, what to do, or think, how to proceed, and, most importantly, I find myself performing all this “knowledge” (actually *grasping*, *knowing*, *reacting*, *thinking*, *doing*, *resting*, *talking*, *responding* etc.); and “I lose my own self” when “I am or feel lost,” as it were, when nothing makes sense to me anymore, everything loses the character of lived familiarity, when things appear strange and impossible to understand, when I do not know who I am anymore, and have troubles knowing what to do, I am

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<sup>243</sup> “worin lebend ich mir selbst verständlich bin” (GA 58, p.164,165)

<sup>244</sup> “Ich habe mich selbst, heißt: die lebendige Situation wird verständlich.” (GA 58, p.166)

<sup>245</sup> “das Erfahrene spricht an, aber in einer Weise, die uns immer irgendwie vertraut ist. Es selbst ist so, daß es auch immer irgenwie angeht, daß ich dabei bin. Ich habe nicht dabei selbst irgenwie... Es gilt, diesen im Erfahren selbst liegenden Charakter des Vertrautseins mit “mir” zu sehen.” (GA 58:157)

<sup>246</sup> GA 58, p.260

baffled and feel weird<sup>247</sup> etc: “One can live without having oneself<sup>248</sup>.”

As of now two new lines of investigations will open up as a result of Heidegger’s new conception of the self in living (*Selbstwelt*): these two lines are investigations into (1) how the self is being had (familiarity/meaningfulness), and (2) what the self is that is being had (situation). From now on we will see Heidegger being chiefly concerned with elaborating a systematic method for investigating the phenomenon of *Mich-selbst-haben* (of all lived experiences). The enigma of life lies in the very way in which the self is always there in *always its own* (world-) experiences. The lived experience is now understood as precisely the very way in which I (self-) experience myself in my own world-experiences:

It is necessary to define the concept of *living* in an ordinary manner... The ‘pure I’ does nothing to help us understand the *living Erlebniszusammenhang*... When I ‘consider’ my life, remember a lived experience, then I live in that which I have lived through and in the living character of the *lived experience* I have lived through I have myself – indeed in a more concrete way than when I have myself when (artificially) oriented towards my empty ‘I’<sup>249</sup>.

The trajectory followed by Heidegger so far can be summarized as follows:

from

1. *Erlebnis* as surrounding (environing) lived experience, through
2. *Erlebnis* experience as life experience (situation), and to
3. *Erlebnis* as the self’s self-experience as world-experience (the phenomenon of “*In eine Welt Hineinleben und Sich-selbst-lebens*”).

Grasping life in its unique character, in its “living” character, which up until now was understood as the attempt to understand how life itself lives in the manner of enviring lived experience and then life experience, takes now the more precise form of grasping how I *myself* live in my concrete experiences, that is, how I am involved

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<sup>247</sup> As, for example, when I am suddenly forced to face my own death.

<sup>248</sup> “Man kann leben, ohne sich selbst zu haben.” (GA 58:266)

<sup>249</sup> “Wenn ich mein Leben ‘betrachte’, mich an ein Erlebnis erinnere, dann lebe ich in dem, was ich erlebt habe, und in dem Erlebnischarakter, den ich erlebt habe, habe ich mich selbst – und zwar viel konkreter, als ich ‘mich’ habe, wenn ich auf mein leeres ‘Ich’ (künstlich) einstellt bin.” (GA 58:247)

there<sup>250</sup>, how I have my own self:

To have myself: life's orientation towards its liveliness<sup>251</sup>.

I live by somehow having my (own) self already in or through my involvements with the world.

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<sup>250</sup> GA 58, p.250

<sup>251</sup> "Michselbsthaben: Richtung des Lebens auf seine Lebendigkeit". (GA 58:156)

## Chapter Five: From life experience to the being of life

Ontology – the word expresses already that the decisive problem is being missed: History and Life.<sup>252</sup>

Heidegger's transition from *life* to *Sein* cannot be adequately accounted for without an adequate understanding of his newly developed and introduced philosophical method of formal indication [*formale Anzeige*]. In fact, the transition was motivated first (1) by an intensification of the efforts on his part to bring properly into view the "historical" character of life. If "historical I" was indeed mentioned, but barely explicated, in the first lectures and in contexts crucial for understanding the phenomenon of life, when the "historical" character of life is given its full due we witness the emergence of new terms, *Dasein*, *Sein*, *Faktizität* and *Existenz*; (2) secondly by the employment of a new "sense" (in a formally indicative manner) in which all philosophical concepts, life included, should be understood. As we will see, *Sein* was not something distinct from *Leben*; it was not meant by Heidegger to replace *life* as the topic of philosophy. It is simply meant to bring "life" clearer into view, to focus on life in a more appropriate way (in a formally indicative manner) by avoiding the possible pitfalls of theoretical attitude, into which one can easily fall by employing almost instinctively an insufficiently elaborated conceptual understanding of the "primordial sense" of life. *Sein* (always of life) is used to avoid the theoretical prejudices plaguing the traditional philosophical conceptualization of life. *Dasein* becomes the formally indicate term for the living, personal self; and thirdly (3), by a preference on Heidegger's part to replace "*Ich erlebe etwas*" (I live/undergo the experience of something) with "*Ich bin*" (I am). I will discuss all these three motives in full detail in this chapter.

I will now begin with an investigation into the motives that led Heidegger to use the term *Dasein* in the context of his phenomenological investigations of life. The term *Dasein* appears, even if sporadically and without having a special meaning different from the traditional one: *Dasein* as existence, reality, and almost always meant as *human*

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<sup>252</sup> „Ontologie – kennzeichnet schon im Wort, daß das entscheidende Problem nicht gesehen ist: Geschichte und Leben.“ (GA 58, p.146)

*existence*<sup>253</sup>. That he oftentimes in the first lectures does not yet rigorously distinguish between *Dasein* and *Leben* is evidenced by the employment – very rarely though - of the coined term *Lebensdasein*<sup>254</sup> and the expression, used very often, [factic life/situation/life-experience] “which we are and live.”<sup>255</sup> If in 1919/20 *Dasein* designates the “reality” or “existence” of humans themselves and their *Erlebnisse*, that is, the “reality” of life itself, starting from 1920 Heidegger begins to employ the term almost exclusively to refer to the way in which the self is *da* in and as its lived experiences, later life-experience, which, for him, is tantamount to the way in which life is *there*: *Wie ist Leben da?*<sup>256</sup> *Dasein* is initially Heidegger’s name for the “reality of life”<sup>257</sup>.

Everything depends on the reality of the latter [humans and their lived experiences, my note] if the universal science of lived experiences in general can have a meaning.<sup>258</sup>

Thus it all begins with the question regarding the *reality* of lived experiences. And we know that their reality should not be construed theoretically, that is, as a “*Dasein* occurring in some domain of being.”<sup>259</sup> What then does “I live” mean? How do I come to encounter this phenomenon? How do I experience life<sup>260</sup>?

After 1922, Heidegger comes increasingly closer to forging a new

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<sup>253</sup> GA 56/57, p.4, 9; GA 58, p.59; 66; GA 59, p.23

<sup>254</sup> PIA, p.17, 36; GA 60, p.54

<sup>255</sup> GA 58, p.82, 95, 102,

<sup>256</sup> GA 9, p.38

<sup>257</sup> „die Lebenswirklichkeit, das menschliche Dasein in seiner Bekummerung.“ (GA 60, p.51)

<sup>258</sup> „Denn auf die Realität der letzteren kommt offenbar alles an, wenn eine allgemeine Erlebniswissenschaft überhaupt einen Sinn haben soll.“ (GA 56/57, p.78)

<sup>259</sup> GA 60, 9.147

<sup>260</sup> When Heidegger defines, for example, self-worldly existence as “life in a envioning world, to be in it,” I fail to see how “being in a world” is in any way different from “life in a world.” Of course, saying “being in a world” instead of “living in a world” or “living a world” has the added advantage of avoiding the possible misleading connotations that life has come to have in philosophical tradition (as biological life for example.) Heidegger, however, never understood “life” as previous philosophers of life did. So, if we paid attention to what he has being saying all along about life and lived experience, we are not in danger of understanding life in the “usual” traditional manner. To live is to live in a world. “I live” amounts to saying that “I am somehow in a world,” provided that we understand “I am” along the lines Heidegger has interpreted *Erlebnis* and *Lebenserfahrung* so far.

understanding of the term *Dasein*, one which will find its mature and final expression in *Sein und Zeit*: although he will always keep to an understanding of *Dasein* as “being there,” “present” somehow (the world is *da*, history can be *da* etc.), he will increasingly come to designate by it that entity whose being, in its very being, is an issue for it<sup>261</sup>. However, what most commentators apparently failed to observe was that Heidegger was already employing this term systematically in 1920 in a sense not identical but very close to the one it would have later<sup>262</sup>. I am not here implying that Heidegger arrives at his unique understanding of *Dasein* already in 1920; what I am claiming instead is that the way in which Heidegger employs the term already in 1920 and in the specific context in which he deems it necessary to deploy it, paves the way to the later understanding of *Dasein* as the being which, in its own being, has being as an issue for it. Seeing how Heidegger employs this term and what he means by it will bring us closer to understanding how and why Heidegger makes the transition from *life* to *being* and also why, as we will see, this transition is more of a terminological change rather than a change in the very object of philosophy.

It is important to note that the need to give the term *Dasein* a new twist emerges, as we will see, from the need to “indicate” the historical, and closely intertwined with it, the factic character of life. It is the “historicity” and, closed associated therewith, the “facticity” of life-experience that makes it necessary apparently to introduce the term *Dasein*: the facticity of life-experience is not a brute fact, but something whose proper sense can arise only from a properly understood “historicity” of life-experience: “the facticity of life, *Dasein*, is in itself historical.”<sup>263</sup> Again and again it is not being, but a certain way of living that requires a refinement of the philosophical vocabulary. To give only a preliminary example, let us see how he employs the term in the lectures on phenomenology from 1919/1920:

A experiential ground ... ‘is there’ [*ist da*] - it does not mean that factic

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<sup>261</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell, 1962, p.32

<sup>262</sup> Helmuth Vetter, to my knowledge, is the only one who mentions this but without offering any explanations that might help me recognize whether he is on the same track as I am.

<sup>263</sup> GA 61, p.76

life registers its existence (*das Dasein*); it itself is and lives experientially in the world.<sup>264</sup>

#### Different meanings of “history”

Up until the summer of 1920, in the lectures on the phenomenology of the formation of philosophical concepts, the term *Dasein* makes very few, and philosophically speaking, insignificant appearances, only to be widely used, almost all of the sudden and without warning or preparation, when Heidegger has to clarify the various meanings in which history comes to play a role in and for life. It appears thus that it is only in connection with the historical character of life that Heidegger finds it necessary to introduce and use extensively the term *Dasein*.

It is, again, in the context of an investigation into the formation of philosophical concepts that Heidegger undertakes the task of clarifying why it is that life has become *dieUrphänomen* of philosophy. In this context, he distinguishes, as we remember, two major approaches to life: on the one hand, life as objectification - and “therewith obscurely intertwined something like being, existing *in* this life and *as* such life, -” and, on the other hand, life as living, experiencing, seizing, - and “therewith obscurely intertwined something like being, *existing[daseind]in* such life, and enhancing it.<sup>265</sup>” In the same period, in the published article on Jasper’s psychology of worldviews, Heidegger will slightly change the words in which he couches his understanding of these two versions of life philosophy as follows: “thereby meant in an obscure manner something like ‘*Da sein*’ *in* this life and *as such* life,” and respectively “therewith obscurely intertwined something like ‘*Da sein*’ *in* such life” (Heidegger’s own use italics)<sup>266</sup>. Life as living poses the question of the proper access to the “living of *Dasein* in its intimacy, richness and obscurity.<sup>267</sup>” On the other hand, the conception of life as objectification brings up the problem of historical consciousness, that is, the

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<sup>264</sup> „Ist da”, d.h. das faktische Leben konstatiert nicht erst das Dasein, sondern es selbst ist und lebt erfahrend in einer Welt.“ (GA 58, p.66)

<sup>265</sup> GA 59, p.18

<sup>266</sup> GA 9, p.14-15

<sup>267</sup> GA 59, p.23

“introduction of life as becoming into the present *Dasein*.<sup>268</sup>”. It is in this connection that history becomes a philosophical problem. For purposes that we will go into in more details in the next section, Heidegger distinguishes 6 ways in which “history” is being used in ordinary conversations (in natural attitude as Husserl might have put it), or, in other words, he distinguishes six senses in which “history” is lived through, encountered, experienced, in and by life itself:

1. History as the science of history (“He studies history.”)
2. History as an objective domain of the past. (“He knows how this problem has been treated in various historical periods).
3. History as tradition (“There are people with no history”).
4. History as a source of useful instructions for the present (“History is life’s greatest teacher”).
5. History as one’s own familiar (“That man has a sad history.”)
6. History as an event that concerns me, is somehow significant for me. (“Something terrible happened to me in all these years.”<sup>269</sup>)

It is in relation to 3), 5) and 6) (various senses of “having history” - “*Geschichte haben*”) that Heidegger will deploy the term *Dasein* extensively. The proper understanding of the various ways in which “the past” can be “had” is provided apparently by an analysis of 3). If even 3) should not be construed as representing somehow the “origin” of all the other senses in which someone can have history, it is 3) nevertheless that appears to be for Heidegger that which constitutes the background against which the other 2 fundamental senses in which history is *da* are discussed.

The sense of history articulated by 3) reveals something important about “history:” namely, that history is *something* that can be “had.” A clarification of the “sense” in which “history” can be “had” becomes therefore necessary. People with no

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p.21

<sup>269</sup> GA 59, p.43-49

history are people whose “*Dasein*,” ”*das Daseins des Stammes*,” is not affected in any way by the fact that their *Dasein* is the product of a process of becoming involving “past generations.” They do not “feel” themselves as the generation “succeeding” the previous generation, a stage in, or an outcome of, a process of becoming engulfing their own existence (*Dasein*):

For them the past is not a character in which they live factually and somehow imbues the content of their life-experience.<sup>270</sup>

Obviously, even people with no history still have access to the past: they do of course remember things they did yesterday, and are capable somehow to make use of yesterday’s experiences. “They have no history,” not in the sense that they have no past, and do not remember anything, but in the sense that the past is not “theirs specifically.” In other words, they do not feel as if the past belongs somehow to who they are and what they do, it is not a major factor in shaping their self-understanding, their actual life-experience. By contrast, to “have history” amounts to preserving, in people’s own *Dasein* - in the very way in which they are *da* -,experienced as in process of becoming, the current stage of becoming as the outcome of this becoming for this very becoming. They see the past as “representing them,” as standing for who they have been; the past is in this sense “had” or “experienced” as their “own” past. What Heidegger appears here to imply is that the past shapes the self-understanding of such people, their actual life-experiences, the manner in which their daily activities are organized, what they consist in, what the priorities are, in general, how both individuals and the community as a whole are to go about their daily lives. Everything for this people is configured by how they understand themselves as *being* in “relation” to their *own* past. And they know it somehow. It is their past that determines for them who they are and what they should do.

Out of this particular relation (*Beziehung*<sup>271</sup>) of having, intrinsic of *Dasein*, - as preservation and caring of one’s *own* past and *existing* (*dasein*) precisely in this preservation itself – the word ‘history’ acquires its specific meaning.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> GA 59, p.46

<sup>271</sup> It is not a relation in the usual sense, as we will soon see. It is more of a comportment, „way of having“ than a relation or relationship.

<sup>272</sup> „Von dieser eigentümlichen daseinimmanenten Beziehung des Habens aus – als Bewahren und Pflegen der eigenen Vergangenheit und mit diesem

The preservation of the past is the “rhythm of one’s own *Dasein*.” It is a “familiarity” of those who exist (*des Daseienden*) with their own past<sup>273</sup>. Their own past “figures into” their own *Dasein*<sup>274</sup>. The repeated emphasis on “one’s own past” is meant to bring into view that the historicity of certain people is characterized by an appropriation and absorption of the past into “actual existence,” into the actual *Dasein*. The motivation for being “interested” in the past in the first place, interest that is played out as preservation of the past, lies in the self himself (“*das Ich und sein Erleben*”): his own past opens up for the self the possibility of “finding” himself<sup>275</sup>. One’s own past represents who one is, and constitutes therefore the origin of one’s own coming to realization of what one is.

To have (or not have) history

It is noteworthy that, according to Heidegger, the “having of the past” is a relation in a special sense. First of all, it is not an objective, theoretical or cognitive relation: it does not presuppose the distinction between two different entities, people and their past. The past is not “had” as other things, like colors, hats, pets etc. can be “had:” the people are not in an “external” relation to their own past. Moreover, for people having (or not having) history, the past is not *there (da)* as something that can be acted upon, made use of, handled somehow: in other words, for such peoples the past is not something merely available for them to use. Furthermore, even if, theoretically speaking, any object can be regarded as an object *in time* and therefore as having necessarily a past, a “before,” the sense in which some people are said to not have “history” is obviously different: any people, regarded theoretically as something in the flowing time *must* have, objectively speaking, a past. But if some people are said to not have history, then the proper understanding of such “sense” of history assumes that “people,” their *Dasein*, is not merely an object in time, an objectively regarded object in the objectively regarded

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Bewahren selbst gerade dasein – gewinnt das Wort ›Geschichte‹ seine bestimmte Bedeutung.“ (GA 59, p.53)

<sup>273</sup> GA 59, p.57

<sup>274</sup> „die eigene Vergangenheit spielt herein ins eigene Dasein“ (GA 59, p.54)

<sup>275</sup> GA 63, p.15

time. The manner in which “people with (or without) history” are *da*, exist is, as Heidegger puts it, not that of a “object;” they exist, are there, more in the manner in which a “subject” is there<sup>276</sup>. The “subject” or the self is always concerned with himself; the self is *da* by living everything in an appropriating relation to himself. The *Dasein* (existence/reality) of some peoples is essentially determined by the way in which they have understood themselves “in relation” to “their own past:” these peoples have “traditions.” The understanding is merely lived through: it is all about an “immanent relation of *Dasein* to its *own* past, which itself was lived through.<sup>277</sup> “One has history” in the sense that history is “had” in the very way in which one *is or lives*. “This people have history” in the sense that the people cultivate their own tradition: they *are* and *live in* this cultivation and appropriation. In the having of history, history is not something one can have a relation with, on the contrary: history, more precisely, the manner in which one “has” its own past, defines who one is:

It involves one’s *own* [past] which it [*Dasein*] ‘has’ as its own in the proper “relation” (*Bezug*) described above, and ‘is’ in *this* having.<sup>278</sup>

As people with tradition clearly illustrate, *Dasein* has an *intrinsic* relation to its own past, rooted in itself, and consequently, *Dasein* can “have” it and “be” this very having: the having of history, how the past is experienced or lived through acquires the status of “being:” the having of history amounts to saying that one is how one was. One has the past in such a way that one “becomes” this having of one’s own past. “To have history” in this sense means that one’s own past is preserved and “taken along” in one’s own *Dasein*.

However, this manner of being-there (*Dasein*) in relation to one’s own past as preserving and cultivating traditions is explicitly directed at the shared-world. When one lives in one’s own traditions, “*which das Dasein gives itself,*” one is preserving and

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<sup>276</sup> The similarity with Hegel’s understanding of the absolute spirit as „object“ as well as „subject“ is striking.

<sup>277</sup> GA 59, p.54. It is a bit unclear, I believe, what „it“ refers to, that is, if it refers to „Vergangenheit“ or „relation.“ On my interpretation, „it“ should refer to „relation“ but such an interpretation should of course be corroborated with other passages to prove its tenability.

<sup>278</sup> „... [es handelt sich] um seine eigene, die es als eigene in dem genannten eigentlichen ‘Bezug’ ‘hat’ und in diesem Haben ‘ist’“ (GA 59, p.53) I have supplied in the brackets the terms meant by Heidegger in this context.

cultivating one's own past as the past of one's own shared world. Obviously, the self-world is always to some extent involved in the way in which the self lives this relation to the past as tradition, but it does not become an issue as such<sup>279</sup>. It is only in expressions like, "That man has a sad history," that history is meant not as one's own (*eigen*) shared past (in the modus of a constant preservation, taking along, and renewed cultivation of a shared worldly past), but as one's own most authentic (*eigenste*) past whose origins are found in life's explicit tendencies towards itself, towards the self-world. Here the self brings up the past as his own most genuine (self-worldly) past. The self does not come to himself, as it were, via the appropriation of a shared past, but directly inasmuch as the selfworld "is an issue for itself."<sup>280</sup> All these ways of "having history" point indirectly into the direction of understanding the past as an event involving me somehow. This understanding comes to full expression in sentences like, "Something terrible happened to me all these years." Here history is not an appropriation of the past, either shared or one's own authentic past, but an event "happening" to me.

#### Lived-ness of the past

It becomes thus apparent that the introduction of *Dasein* as some sort of a special kind of existing or being there of the living self characterized by an intrinsic "relation" to "one's own past" – that *Dasein* can let it come to full expression in the very way in which life-experience takes place, or the self is *da* -, is motivated by Heidegger's move to elaborate a mode of **lived-ness of history** (*gelebte Geschichte*, facticity of life) at play but distinguishable somehow from the six traditional meanings of history. The way in which the past, always as one's own, is co-experienced in actual life-experience introduces a "conflict"<sup>281</sup> right at the heart of life. The past is already experienced, "had,"

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<sup>279</sup> „Es ist eine Beziehung, die sich von allen bisherigen ausnimmt und wie keine der besprochenen auf die Selbstwelt direkt hindrängt, so da es sich nicht um sie handelt, sofern sie in ihrem Dasein leistend in der Bedeutsamkeit der Umwelt und Mitwelt lebt, sondern sofern es um sie selbst geht.“ (GA 59, p.58)

<sup>280</sup> „...sofern es um sie selbst geht.“ (GA 59, p.58)

<sup>281</sup> „Das 'Historische' ... objektiv als 'Dynamik' und 'Zwiespältigkeit' charakterisieren.“ (GA 60, p.207)

encountered, lived through somehow. The past is genuinely **lived past**<sup>282</sup>. How the self has the past is already expressed in how the self lives: the self *lives* and *is* this appropriation of his own past. The self has no other possibility of being “himself,” would not know how to conduct himself, as it were, other than by constantly drawing on his own past. The past is always operative, as it were, in how humans live *prior to* their coming explicitly to terms with the past. Life is *already historical*. The living self is there *as* the self he has been *for the* self he is going to be. Life *is* already living its own past in pressing ahead into the future. The historical is immediate livingness.

It is this specific “having of one’s own past” lived factually as a disturbing call to be oneself and giving rise to an irrepressible need of reassurance that determines beforehand anything that one can say meaningfully about history: it constitutes, in other words, the basic experience motivating the “ordinary” meanings of history. The various meanings of history find their origin in the way in which the past has *already* been encountered in life: as a source of possibilities for a self concerned to be(come) himself. History is motivated in life. As Heidegger will say a semester later: History is only emerging from and to a present. The “meanings” history has come to have are themselves the various expressions, more or less genuine, of how life itself has been referred to the past, encountered and lived it through. More generally, the living of something is already the expression, manifestation, phenomenon of life **as lived**, a certain way in which life has already been lived, encountered: and life is lived *temporally*. In other words, Heidegger wants to keep distinct how life can **live** its relation to the past (lived relation) from a theoretically understood relation to the past. To experience something explicitly as something, the past as past for example, is to have already experienced it in the very way in which one already is. Experience is not that much something the self “makes” or “does” as rather something the self “endures,” “suffers” or “undergoes.” The self lives by being referred to himself historically.

*Dasein*, as a general designation for the specific manner, *Wie*, in which life is there, comes increasingly to be associated by Heidegger with human life in its capacity of

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<sup>282</sup> see „Geschichte is gelebte Geschichte.“ P. Trawny, *Martin Heidegger*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, 2003, p.28

“already having been related, referred, oriented” (*das immer irgendwie Gerichtetsein*<sup>283</sup>) in a concerned manner. By *Dasein* Heidegger designates the mode of living proper to humans in which they are “there” by already being referred to themselves *in concern* in living their own past into the future. Past, present and future are all lived through in the self’s concern with himself. Life as it is, the self in its ordinary daily dealings with various things and situations *is* a way of being referred to his own past in opening its own future.

Philosophy has the task of preserving the facticity of life and of intensifying the facticity of *Dasein*.<sup>284</sup>

Philosophy, to use my own words, should keep to the very basic experience of life, undistorted by theoretical reflection, try to always keep into view the very way in which the self is “there” to himself or “having” himself in living a world, and try to bring pointedly into stark relief the fundamentally self-referential concern for himself in how the self has **already been** projected, related, referred to and as himself in his life-experiences. And life lives the past by having appropriated it in its actual experiences in an orientation toward itself, out of the fundamental preoccupation of the self to be himself. The past is “had” (“missing it” as in “not having it” is a form of having) by and in an actual *Dasein*; this having is lived, in other words, it has some sort of “existence” or “presence.” In short, it is there. Humans are this having of their own past: “Man in his concrete, individual, historical *Dasein*.<sup>285</sup>” Andrew Barasch explains this relation to the past in these words:

The past has meaning only according to the mode in which it is appropriated by the self in its concern for fulfillment of a sense of existence.<sup>286</sup>

And the same idea that *Dasein* is the way in which the self is *da* by being

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<sup>283</sup> GA 58, p. 64

<sup>284</sup> GA 59, p.174

<sup>285</sup> GA 59, p.86

<sup>286</sup> Jeffrey Andrew Barasch, *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning*, (Fordham University Press, 2003), p.141. It is not the Annotations from 1921, as Barasch believes, that marks Heidegger’s move from an understanding of history as an objective domain to an interpretation of it as the way in which the self fulfills a sense of existence, but the lectures on the phenomenology of intuition and expression from 1920.

somehow already referred to himself – even if, in this case, inauthentically-, surfaces in another passage from the lectures on Christian religiosity from the same period:

*Dasein*, the self, the being-real character of life is an absorption. The self is lived by the world, and this happens most intensely precisely when the self intends, in such *Dasein*, to live authentically. This ‘being lived’ is a particular How of facticity...<sup>287</sup>

And the self develops a sense of what it means to be himself only in and out of this *being-lived* of the self. It is only because the self is *already* being lived that he can now encounter something, always in a concerned manner, in his own world.

### Existence

Soon Heidegger will claim that the past is not a “feature” humans can choose to have or not have, an attachment to the actual life-experience which life can, if so chooses, lose somehow. Humans live historically in the sense that they “live and are” a certain way of being “in relation to” their own past. *Dasein*, at least initially, comes up in association with lived “having” of the past. This self’s *intrinsic* relation to one’s own past is always *da* in living. – *I am what I have been*. The *concrete Dasein* should be understood along the lines of Husserl’s conception of parts and wholes: the concrete *Dasein* is the *whole Dasein*<sup>288</sup>. Whole in the sense that *Dasein* is intended not only as the self’s experience of a world (what Heidegger in 1919 called *erlebte Gehalte*), the “living of something”-aspect of life, but the self-experience of the self (*gelebte Erlebnisse*, *gelebtes Leben*), the “lived”-aspect of life, expressed or manifested in and as the self’s experience of a world.

If *Dasein* begins by designating a kind of living in which one is and lives one’s own understanding of being in relation to one’s own past, it will be soon be used in

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<sup>287</sup> „Das Dasein, das Selbst, das Wirklichsein des Lebens ist ein Aufgehen. Das Selbst wird von der Welt gelebt, und gerade dann am stärksten, wenn es in solchen Dasein meint, eigentlich zu leben. Dieses ‘Gelebtwerden’ ist ein besonderes Wie der Faktizität...“ (GA 60, p.228)

<sup>288</sup> Not Haecceitas (hic et nunc, Hier und Jetzt) as much as wholeness. „Das Konkrete... ist das, was in der Verdichtung und aus der Verdichtung, im Zusammenwachsen wird und ist.“ (GA 61, p. 28). See also „Diese Abhebung ist nicht Abstraktion denn die anderen Faktoren sind doch stets mitgegeben.“ (ibid. p.88)

association with *how* human life is itself the expression of a certain way of “having” itself “temporally”. *Dasein* is the self who always *ishimself* what and how he *himselfwas*. This is HOW the self “has” himself in living. Life has an intrinsic temporal dimension. But, in providing possibilities to be himself, his own past is opening up the future. It is not only the past that can be lived, or had, the future also figures into the way in which the self is performing, in his own life, a manner of being himself: “Waiting gives the basic historical sense of facticity.<sup>289</sup>” *Dasein* is the term employed by Heidegger to designate this kind of life, that is, *human life*. To live is to be a self who comes to (has) himself in being what he was for a possibility of himself to be. To live is to *be* a certain manner of having one’s own self *temporally* (*Dasein*).

The living character of all experiences was characterized by the inalienable unique holistic nature of the self in the experience of a familiar world and of a self-transparent self. The self is a self only insofar as he is concerned with or care for himself. This self-concern that defines the self, coupled with the idea that the self can only come to be himself *temporally* is what will eventually determine Heidegger to focus more on the way in which life *is there*. As we can easily see, life is now conceptually couched in terms like “self,” “concern,” “familiar world,” “*is*,” “*was*,” or “*having become*.” Small wonder therefore to see Heidegger starting to focus increasingly on the temporality of life that soon will become known as the fundamental distinction between *being* and *time*. I will return to this important point later.

The fact that the self lives its **own** relation to its own past - which is nothing but a possibility of finding himself, of living *as himself* - does not necessarily mean that the self always *lets* this relation shape its own self-understanding or determine the manner and content of experience: “the motivations towards the self-world ‘*sind mit da*’, but they are *existenzfrei*.” The self is itself only by appropriating the past in such a way as to give it expression in and as the present:

The performing-*situation*, authentic existence. - To appropriate the ‘having’ so that the having becomes a ‘being’.<sup>290</sup>

In other words, the relation to the past, although always lived somehow and

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<sup>289</sup> GA 61, 184

<sup>290</sup> GA 60, p.195

always at work in determining how life conducts itself, can be downplayed in the actual experiences to the point where it not only plays no role anymore, but is even considered to be an obstacle to achieving a desired relation to the content of experience (see the theoretical attitude) – that is, is lived or experienced in a sense different from the one required by the very fact that the past is always the self’s “own” past, in a similar way in which the lived experience can be de-livened to the point where it no longer counts for the determination of the content of experience and the manner in which the content is experienced. But when the self’s own relation to its own past is given full due and taken as a fundamental factor in determining the content and manner of self’s experience, then the self’s relation to one’s own past is not only *da*, but also “makes up” the actual, factic, concrete, historically present *Dasein*.

In this sense of co-being-there [*Mit-da-Sein*], of co-playing-a-role [*Mit-Eine-Rolle-Spielen*], of “co-occurring” [*Mit-vorkommen*] in the factic world of experience, the past *makes up* [*mitausmachen*] the actual *Dasein*<sup>291</sup>.

In Heidegger’s words, *Dasein exists*. The self himself lives *as* himself, can exist, in appropriating its own past, and lives this appropriation “understandingly” as an appropriation of himself, that is, is no longer merely *da* in his experience, but *da as himself*. The self is no longer alienated in life-experience. The self lives in the manner in which he can be his own self somehow, and this means the way in which he can “be” his own past:

I monopolize my own past so that it is always again had for the first time and so that I myself am - from myself – affected always anew and thus ‘am’ in a renewed performing.<sup>292</sup>

The other extreme would be one in which “Man can *be there*, can have *Dasein*, without existing.”<sup>293</sup>

This is the kind of “reality” pertaining to *humans*. It is the human being “in its concrete, individual historical *Dasein*.”<sup>294</sup> This is the primordial sense in which I live, I

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<sup>291</sup> GA 59, p.80

<sup>292</sup> „...die eigene Vergangenheit reiße ich an mich, so dass sie immer wieder zum ersten Mal gehabt wird, und dass ich von mir selbst immer neu betroffen bin und im erneuten Vollzug ›bin‹.“ (GA 59, p.84)

<sup>293</sup> „Mensch kann da sein, Dasein haben, ohne zu existieren.“ (GA 59, p.82)

<sup>294</sup> GA 59, p.86

am:

Such experience is not a type of immanent perception that is pursued with a theoretical purpose in mind and is intent on observing the qualities of present-to-hand 'psychical' processes and acts. On the contrary, the experience of having-myself in fact extends historically into the past of the 'I.' This past is not like an appendage that the 'I' drags along with itself; rather, it is experienced as the past of an 'I' that experiences it historically within a horizon of expectations placed in advance of itself and for itself. And here the 'I' also has itself in the form of a self. To explicate phenomenologically the 'how' of this performing of experience according to its basic *historical* sense is the task that is most important for us in the whole complex set of problems we face concerning phenomena of existence.<sup>295</sup>

### Facticity

The fundamental question guiding everything that follows concerns the manner and sense of the having of living [*Erleben*].<sup>296</sup>

Heidegger was always interested in finding a way to reveal the way in which life lives and is lived *before* we can readjust our worldly orientation in the world and come to regard life from the theoretical standpoint, that is, before life is posited as an object and attempts are now made to discover what life can be - *as* an object before our eyes. Unfortunately, in the early lectures Heidegger is very skimpy on details about what exactly is the historicity of *Dasein* and how exactly does it constitute the facticity of life. We can only glean what Heidegger might have meant by it from the many references to facticity and historicity in the first lectures, references that, as said, are left mostly unexplained. He could give a more developed account of history, one that would find its way into *Being and Time*, only when the transition from life to being as the subject matter of philosophy is already in full swing, that is, in 1922-1923. This lends credence to the idea that it is the historical character of life that appears to have prompted Heidegger to abandon to some extent "life" as a proper philosophical term and employ instead "being" more and more. I will continue to follow Heidegger's development by focusing on those

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<sup>295</sup> Heidegger, *Supplements*, p.94

<sup>296</sup> „Die Grundfrage, die alles Folgende beherrscht, ist die nach Weise und Sinn des Habens von Erleben.“ (GA 59, p.96).

apparent motives that led him from life philosophy to existential ontology. So far we have tried to show how the occurrence of the term *Dasein* understood as the manner in which life, or the self is *da*, appears to be motivated by Heidegger's preoccupation with the historical character of life experience, and followed Heidegger's own claim about the historicity of life constituting the facticity of life, by interpreting historicity as the self's 'carrying out' his own past, his having-been, out of a self-concern for himself, and facticity as a moment of being-already-referred-to-himself constitutive of historicity. I will now bring in some passages from Heidegger's lectures on the phenomenology of Christian life experience from 1920-1921 in order to provide further evidence that it is indeed the historical character of life that leads Heidegger to employ *Dasein* and *Sein* even in those contexts in which life, factic life now, or factic life-experience, is still claimed to be the subject matter of philosophy - the word *factic* now is no longer a relatively unnecessary addition to *life* meant merely to invoke life *as such*, "in and of itself," but a crucial qualification intended to reveal what it is that we have in view now, namely life as "already-having-been," life in its historicity. The having-been moment should remind us of the preworldly something as the "motivational process" of life itself, which renders life as is *already* lived, *factual*<sup>297</sup> *life*, as a way life encounters itself, finds a solution, as it were, to its own inherent motivations. The interpretation of some passages from these lectures will also flesh out how Heidegger develops the idea that "facticity of life" is its "historicity."

To see life as it lives and is lived, "in its own orientation and its own style, in its own rhythm," is to see it in its *facticity*<sup>298</sup>. Factic life is what "we are and live." We live *it* in the sense that *it* "happens" to us. It is an encounter with ourselves<sup>299</sup>, which we experience in encountering worldly things (hammers, friends, the sunset, the plans we make, etc.). It is also, or better, *the* manner in which we live (*faktisch leben*): we live

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<sup>297</sup> The term, *Faktizität*, appears to originate in Fichte. It finds its way into Heidegger's vocabulary not directly, through his readings of Fichte - he will study Fichte later -, but via Dilthey and apparently Lask. See Kisiel, "On the Genesis of Heidegger's Formally Indicative Hermeneutics of Facticity" in Francois Raffoul, Eric Sean Nelson, *Rethinking Facticity*, p.41-69.

<sup>298</sup> „Faktisches – in seiner eigenen Richtung und in seinem eigenen Stil, in seiner eigenen Rhythmik – lebensweltwärts verlaufendes Leben“ (GA 58, p.66)

<sup>299</sup> We are encountered???

*factically* means that things are encountered in an orientation or tendency of the self to “come to itself.” Being-already-oriented or –referred-to and the specific manner in which this being-referred-to is realized in encountering a world constitutes the “facticity” of life. The facticity is historical, is in fact the historical<sup>300</sup>: “the facticity of life, *Dasein*, is historical in itself.<sup>301</sup>”

My own past, history in general, is always of concern to me. My own past is not genuinely an objective domain of “past” entities that can or cannot have significance to me. But how does the self experience the past genuinely?

How does the historical stand in *Lebensdasein*selbst?<sup>302</sup>

Time and again, Heidegger goes back to the source, the living-lived experience in which “the historical” originates and which alone “motivates” the various “standard” interpretations of history. The various interpretations of history are all “expressions” of, or various “responses” to, the “need” to deal with history, originating in *factical* life experience. In life, the “motive” to deal with “history” (the precise meaning is to be explicated only through a renewed performing of the experience which prompts us to deal with something like “history” in the first place) appears to be in our experience of our life’s passing. In *factic* life as opposed to life as is reflected upon, the past is never experienced as an object or a collection of objects having a certain common attribute. The past, genuinely my own past, is had as the disturbing reminder of my own temporality, where by temporality we should only understand a relation to an yet undetermined “transient” (*Werden*) character of my own life. I encounter my own past by finding myself “in need” to cope, as it were, with the “transiency” of my own *being*. My own past worries me insofar as it is somehow the source of my living genuinely; in his self-concern the self is always oriented towards living himself as the “self” he genuinely is: the transient character of life needs to be lived as such, in complete purity, as it itself is the “original” experience of the historical as such. The genuine sense of the historical can be grasped only in keeping with the “transient character of life” as such. This transiency of my own life has to be fully experienced.

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<sup>300</sup> „die Faktizität des Lebens, Dasein, ist in sich selbst historisch“ (GA 61, p.7)

<sup>301</sup> GA 61, p.76

<sup>302</sup> GA 60, p.54

Since it worries me, I always find myself trying to somehow “secure” myself in relation to my *own* past. Put it more bluntly: confronted with my *own* past, I always already find myself in “need” to know that everything is ok<sup>303</sup>, that I can come to appropriate my own past so as to make it stop being troublesome, worrisome, a cause of concern. The past is factically experienced – that is, before I even come to reflect on it, it expresses how I am already “oriented” towards it – or lived as a disturbing character of my own life. But the past is also there for me to be appropriated by me, it is a task, something I have to deal or cope with somehow.

Different philosophies of history are all various ways in which life can cope with “history,” can respond to its troubling and disturbing presence, as it were. For Heidegger, traditional philosophy managed to have three fundamental responses to the worrisome character of history: it tried to secure *Dasein*<sup>304</sup> by going *against* (Plato), *with* (Spengler) or *out of* history (Dilthey). While the first position wants to break up with history as it places the domain of being in opposition and beyond the historical, beyond anything transient and ephemeral, the second position sees the historical as the domain of being, and tries to secure the present (that is, itself) as one of the possible forms being can take in history, and the third position tries to reconcile the first two by regarding the historical as necessary for achieving trans-historical values and truths<sup>305</sup>. In all these three attempts at securing the present against the past, the factic character of history as a disturbing task in and of my own life, is annulled and, along with it, any possibility of reaching *Dasein* in its intimacy is thereby abandoned. In all previous philosophical

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<sup>303</sup> Another way to formulate what Heidegger is saying here would be as follows: 1. The past does not matter: „the past is all gone, water under the bridge“; so we should not be concerned with it. Stay focused on the Now! 2. The past does matter but only insofar as it somehow reminds us of how we got here, where „here and now“ is something that satisfies us completely; The „present“ is wonderful; the past is „nice“ to know! 3. The past is just as good as the present; no big deal. So, let us concentrate on the present!

<sup>304</sup> „das beunruhigte Dasein“ (GA 60, p.53)

<sup>305</sup> In this connection, Timothy Clark writes very appropriately: „The drive to attain some realm of unchanging essential truths beneath phenomena is also, necessarily, the positing of human reason as the capable bearer of such a timeless stance. Is this, Heidegger would ask, a denial of our mortality, and of the historical nature of our existence?“ Timothy Clark, *Martin Heidegger* (New York: Routledge, 2002) p.11.

attempts at understanding history, life itself, “the human-historical *reality* [*Wirklichkeit*],” was beforehand conceived of as something in need of a “meaning:” only by having an unique meaning, life, that is, human reality, could now feel relieved knowing that it would not simply *go away*, that it stands for something that prevents it from historical dissolution. Life now can feel safe about itself. It no longer feels threatened by “his own past.”

Nonetheless despite the fact that I am and live *how* I “have” my own past, I do not normally - first and foremost - live focused on, or even aware of, this “manner” in which I myself live and am. The manner in which I live and am leaves itself out of play. The manner of *Dabeiseins* goes therefore unnoticed<sup>306</sup>. I do not live in such a way as to normally come to see how I live. Whoever makes experiences does not in turn make the experience that he makes experiences<sup>307</sup>. In other words, the way in which I live is not genuinely determined by the very way in which I am, namely always already referred to myself temporally. To be able to turn around and focus on your *Weise des Dabeiseins* requires, according to Heidegger, a unique experience. This experience was achieved in the primitive Christian life-experience. Primitive Christian life-experience should be interpreted as this turning around of factic life onto itself, as the self’s reorienting and focusing on the very manner in which the self is there. As a result, Heidegger claims, Christian life-experience was historical through and through. *Das Ich und sein Erleben*, the self-world, becomes the decisive shaping factor in determining WHAT life is all about and HOW it should go about. In doing so, the Christians made the primordial experience that life (life of the self) is ... time.

The factic life-experience is historical. The Christian religiosity lived temporality as such.<sup>308</sup>

In factic Christian life-experience the self comes to itself, that is, experiences himself as the self in preparation for the “end of time.” His life is an incessant experience of living *how* the present is drawing near to its end; it is the experience of *life* as coming-

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<sup>306</sup> GA 60, p.16

<sup>307</sup> Dieter Thoma (ed.), *Heideggers Handbuch, Leben-Werk-Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003) p.16

<sup>308</sup> GA 60, p.80

to-the-end of time<sup>309</sup>. Moreover, a Christian is someone who knows he has *become* Christian (by listening the proclamation of the “good news.”) Christian life-experience is essentially determined by this experience: one *is* a Christian only as someone *who has become* Christian and *knows* it. To be a Christian is to constantly experience, and know at the same time of, one’s own “having-become” Christian: I am now what I have become, and this means, I live as a Christian, I lead a Christian life: my having-become a Christian *is now the manner in which (How)* I lead my life (*how* I comport myself in factic life<sup>310</sup>). Let us now pay attention to Heidegger’s choice of words when he clarifies these relations:

Knowledge of one’s own having-become (*Gewordensein*) poses a very special task for the explication. From out of this the meaning of a facticity is determined, one that is accompanied by a particular knowledge. We tear the facticity apart from knowledge, but the facticity is entirely originally co-experienced... Now, having-become is not an arbitrary event (*Vorkommnis*) in life; it is constantly co-experienced and in such a way that their being now (*jetziges Sein*) [Christian’s being, my note] is their having-become. Their having-become (*Gewordensein*) is their being now (*jetziges Sein*).<sup>311</sup>

This paragraph is significant for our purposes in several respects: 1. Firstly, it brings life, facticity, the sense of temporality, and being all-together in a way that makes it a little easier to decipher what Heidegger means by them. 2. Secondly, it clarifies to some extent what Heidegger means by the genuine “historicality” or temporality of life; from this paragraph it is clear that the *historical character of life* lies in the way in which the self *lives* by *being* somehow, in a horizon of expectation, how he *has become*. 3. And thirdly, it offers us a clue for understanding why *being* was found to be “appropriate” for clarifying the phenomenon of life in its historicity: the historical character of life cannot easily, if at all, be couched in terms derivative of *life*: that is, by using expressions like “past life,” “present life,” “I live,” “I have lived,” “lived past,” “my having-lived,” and so on and so forth. It is noteworthy that Heidegger introduces now words in his vocabulary (I was, I am, *Gewordensein* etc.) to clarify the phenomenon of life *before* he comes

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid, p.119

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, p.95

<sup>311</sup> GA 60, p.94. For “*Gewordensein*” I followed the English translation from M. Heidegger, *Phenomenology of religious life*, translated by Matthias Frisch, Jennifer Anna Gosseti (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) p.64

explicitly to reject “life” as the proper topic of philosophy. Initially, these terms, *being*, *time*, *historicity*, *world* and so on and so forth were all meant to interpret life, and not being. The way in which the “past” figures into the “living present” does not lend itself to be couched *as easily* in terms taken from the vocabulary of life. Expressions like “I am living the past,” “lived past” and so on have been used by Heidegger relatively often, but they must have appeared to him not only as too easily open to misinterpretations but also as too *rigid* to express the inner “dynamism” of factic-historical life. How can one use “life” and its linguistic variants to speak of the “becoming” inherent in life but in such a way as to avoid the theoretical attitude which cannot but understand the becoming as the transition from one temporally distinct stage or phase to another temporally different stage or phase? 4. And last but not least, the paragraph contains also the key to understanding Heidegger’s next step in his investigations of the phenomenon of life: “facticity” and *Wissen* of one’s own having-become are “entirely originarily co-experienced.” Factic life-experience has therefore its own *Wissen* and *Wissen* of its own “having become.” In other words, factic life-experience is already an expression of an understanding, which is co-experienced together with the facticity itself: factic life experience has thus its *Eigenexplikation*<sup>312</sup>. I will come back to this later when I will discuss in detail Heidegger’s phenomenological method of *formal indication*.

Of course, if even Heidegger has now some good reasons to deploy the terms *Sein* and *Dasein* more often in correlation with factic (historical) life, this alone by no means entails that Heidegger has yet already a full-fledged understanding of the fundamental distinction between beings and being, of the ontological difference as he will coin this distinction a couple of years later. He has nonetheless a clear understanding of the fundamental difference between the sense in which the self *is there* (lives – coming to itself temporally) and the sense in which everything else can *be* (is lived by the self – genuinely as worldly significant things, and then, in the non-genuine derivative theoretical attitude, as “objects” in and for a cognitive relation).

Knowing of one’s own having-become for a coming-to-an-end is originarily co-experienced with the facticity of life, with the *fact* that one *is* how one has become in anticipation of an end. Anything experienced is now experienced against the background

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<sup>312</sup> GA 60, p.145

of awaiting or expectation. Something is the way it is in virtue of its being experienced in a certain expectation stemming from life itself. For example, I can come to experience something as hard, strenuous, or difficult precisely *because I have been* somehow expecting things to be easy, uncomplicated, and undemanding: I “myself live in a *delectatio*.<sup>313</sup>” Everything is what it is as the expression of the fact that life has **already** been oriented somehow, had its own expectations and tendencies. And everything experienced is itself the expression of how life *performs*[*Vollzug*] its own tendencies. Life-experience is, Heidegger concludes, historical: it can experience something only insofar as the self himself is implicated in “an historical experiencing.”<sup>314</sup> And most importantly the experiences of the self are not “simply there” [*einfach da*] in the flowing stream of consciousness, but are “possessed” [*sind gehabt*] in experiencing.

For Heidegger Christian life experience is not a special experience that only Christians can have. On the contrary, what Christians have experienced is how life itself experiences itself. Their experience is life experience itself in its facticity. In other words, life itself *is the self-experience of Gewordenseins*, and *ein Wissen davon*, a co-experience of its own having-become along with an understanding of its own having-become. Facticity refers to the having-become moment of the *being of life* as such, which itself is co-experienced in any experience. Experience of something is only possible within the horizon opened up by life as this kind of entity. Life itself comes to itself in this kind of experience. Life *is* this self-concerned self-having of life as a temporal stretching.

Since now Heidegger speaks more and more of the *being* of life, it comes as no surprise to see him baptizing some of the fundamental terms in which he addressed the phenomenon of life with new names: life no longer lives and is lived, but now “my life ‘is’<sup>315</sup>”; the “self-concern” of the self [*Selbstbekümmern*] becomes “concern for one’s own being”<sup>316</sup>; the self himself becomes *ein Wie des ‘bin’*<sup>317</sup>; the lived past becomes the

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<sup>313</sup> „Ich erfahre ein Gegenlaufendes nur, sofer ich selbst in einer *delectatio, cura prosperorum* lebe.“ (GA 60, p.207)

<sup>314</sup> „Das Selbst ist in ein historisches Erfahren ... hineingenommen.“ (GA 60, p.208)

<sup>315</sup> GA 60, p.242

<sup>316</sup> „Bekümmern um das Sein seiner selbst.“ (GA 60, p.245)

<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*, p. 238

fundamental experience of time; the self becomes the self's temporally stretching self-having, while lifeitself is now understood as a mode of being [*ein Wie des Seins*<sup>318</sup>].

The phenomenon of "*Ich erlebe etwas*" investigated in the first lectures, after having been recouched in terms of the phenomenon of *Michselbsthaben*, becomes now the phenomenon of "'I' 'is' and as such 'has' it."<sup>319</sup> meaning that, the self is in his own having-become and has the "is" as its own, that is, the self "is" (facticity) and "has" (existence) its being. Heidegger has now clearly stepped onto the path to his later conception of *Dasein* as the being who is its own being. Rudi Visker in this article "Intransitive Facticity?" writes:

One is *one's being*, like one lives *one's life*. But not quite like one cooks *one's dinner*... One can choose not to cook one's dinner and eat out instead, but one cannot choose not to be one's being.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> *ibid.*, p.246

<sup>319</sup> „'Ich' 'ist' und als solches 'hat' es.“ (GA 60, p.147)

<sup>320</sup> Rudi Visker, „Intransitive Facticity?“ in Francois Raffoul, Eric Sean Nelson (eds.), *Rethinking Facticity*, p.153

## Chapter Six: Philosophy and Life

### *Haben and Vollzug*

The question of how lived experiences can be investigated in their genuine character as lived experiences has taken the form of the question regarding the way in which the self is *da* in his (worldly, holistic, familiar, self-oriented) experiences of a (his own) world. The self lives his own life experiences in the manner in which he is participating (active verb) therein<sup>321</sup>. As we remember, for Heidegger the ultimate reality is the self in the actual performance [*Vollzug*] of life-experience, the self in self-experiencing. The self is *da* by having himself somehow, and this “having” entails to some extent having its own past in the way in which he lives (into the future). The self is *da*, “is having” his own self in concern, by carrying out his having-become [*Gewordensein*] in the expectations he already has and cannot but have. Any experience of a worldly thing takes place within this “stretching of temporality.”<sup>322</sup> Since *life’s self-having* is, however, not amorphous and undetermined, it is already an historical self-understanding, the concern in self-having is a concern for a certain kind of his being in life, a certain way or sense of himself in life. I am not concerned with being in general, abstractly as it were, but with what and how I myself *can* be. “One’s own having-oneself – realized, intended in that of ‘life’ - is concern for one’s own *being*.”

To say that the self has himself somehow is to say that the self already possesses an understanding of what it means for him to be himself and lives it, that is, the self *ishow* he understands himself to be: to live in an understanding of himself, which is the way in which the self is *da*, is to *be* it. This understanding is itself *historical*, and not simply attached to life like an accessory from the outside: in other words, the understanding is the understanding of someone who *always is (now) what he was*, interpretedness. It is an understanding in the form of *having been interpreted*. Life’s own understanding is the performance of how it has always already interpreted itself. It is, in a sense, the very performance of life, how life is lived:

The nexuses of performance [*Vollzugszusammenhänge*] themselves are, in

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<sup>321</sup> GA 58, p.250

<sup>322</sup> GA 9, p.31; GA 61, p.153

accordance with their own sense, an ‘understanding’.<sup>323</sup>

To say that life has always already interpreted itself at the most originary level of temporality, and understands everything in light of this self-interpretedness, is to say that life has already always “addressed” its contents somehow. In any *having*, whatever is experienced is already somehow “spoken of.” That means that the self is himself somehow “spoken of” in his worldly experiences. Factic life has its own way of speaking of itself, its own *Explikation*, its own language. Moreover, life experience, life’s self-having is not static, but an intrinsically dynamic movement. The “having” can only be experienced in ... “having.” It has, in other words, a performative character again. It is the same idea from the first lectures, namely that the living character of lived experiences can only be experienced in living. Questions regarding the manner in which the self “is having” itself temporally in his world experiences will take us to what is arguably the most important element in our reconstitution of the motives that prompted Heidegger to move from “life” to “being.” As I will try to make clear in this chapter, terms like *Dasein*, *Sein*, *Faktizität*, even *Temporalität* should all be understood as “methodological” concepts proper to a hermeneutics whose only aim is to situate itself in life experience so as to make explicit the very sense in which *life is da*, in other words, how the self is concretely the self that it is, or, in other words, the very sense in which “I am.” I have not used the expression “in other words” arbitrarily, as a mere form of speech. It is the point of this section and of the next chapter to show that “I am” is *indeed* a different – so Heidegger – methodologically more adequate formulation of *Ich erlebe etwas*, that *Faktizität* is indeed a different, methodologically speaking, more adequate expression of *the way life is da*, just as *Dasein* is a better methodological expression for *the living self*. All these expressions are not meant to change the subject of philosophical research, but to bring it instead more adequately, methodologically speaking, to self-presentation. The philosophy of being is not meant, at least initially, to overcome, but to radicalize, life-philosophy.

Heidegger’s breakthrough

Heidegger was constantly preoccupied with methodological considerations

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<sup>323</sup> „Die Vollzugszusammenhänge selbst ihrem Sinn nach sind ein ‘Wissen.’“ (GA 60, p. 123)

concerning the adequate manner in which the object of philosophy, life, is to be approached. From the middle of 1919 when he was questioning into the manner in which the eminently concrete lived experience of something is to be addressed until later when we find him preoccupied with the manner in which the self “is actualizing his self” (is having) himself in self-concern **as** factic world experience, he will not cease to raise the question regarding the proper manner in which this *Etwas* can be properly experienced and explicitly revealed as it itself is. Heidegger realized from the beginning that *life* (*Erlebnis, Lebenserfahrung, factic life*) cannot be “had” as *ein Etwas* one can look at. This *Etwas* (*Erlebnis*) was given originarily and genuinely *only* in the experiencing or living of it; it is highly “personal.” To experience something is to for a self to “have” it somehow *in* one of life’s tendencies and motivations. The self lives inasmuch as it itself is somehow lived, it always finds itself one way or another *in* the movement of performing one of life’s ways of “having” itself in the way in which it encounters worldly things. Philosophy as a systematic and explicatory approach of life in its unique character had to be centered on the problem of liv-*ing* or experience-*ing*. The proper access to life as life is to be gained through a radicalization of the “personal” character of life, and by no means by an eradication of it. As such, philosophy can genuinely have its “object,” life in its living character, its performative character, only in and as a “repetition” of this “performance.” As a result, philosophy itself has a performative character: it only consists in “philosophizing:” it is the movement of life’s *own* understanding to come to a clarification of *itself*. Philosophy understands itself as an illuminating of the *living*. Philosophy is not *about* life; philosophy is *life* caught in the movement of self-understanding<sup>324</sup>. Philosophy itself is an accomplishment of life<sup>325</sup> or a particular, yet crucial, way in which life is performing (*vollziehen*) itself.

This is the reason why for Heidegger philosophical concepts are not like theoretical concepts in general in that they are not intended to *describe* an object and *place* it into an internally ordered objective region of entities. Philosophy understands itself as an intensification of life’s own tendencies and motivations, an “intensified”

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<sup>324</sup> Crowell says: „ Philosophy is not a theory about life but life’s own homecoming.“ Steven Galt Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning*, p.145

<sup>325</sup> *ibid.* p.164

living, a radicalization of life's own interpretative tendencies, for the sake of pushing for an explication of life that brings it face to face to itself. As mentioned above, *Haben* and understanding are co-originary: one "'is" what one apprehendes and apprehends what one "is".<sup>326</sup> To "have" something is to have understood it somehow already<sup>327</sup>.

Philosophy, according to Heidegger, is nothing but a "repetition" of life's own self-interpretation, aiming at preventing life from getting totally absorbed in its contents and at revealing the having-become presence (*Dasein*) of the self in the articulation of those contents, or, to put it slightly differently, the interpretedness "in" which *Dasein* lives. Any experience is an encounter<sup>328</sup>: things encountered in situations are various "resolutions" to life's motivations.

Heidegger's breakthrough, I believe, was when he realized that the performative character, the *living*, personal dimension, of any experience, has already "entered" factic experience as the unquestioned, taken-for-granted, obvious "manner" in which an object has *already* been encountered as an object of concern for self.

Having-myself and being can be determined in accordance with its sense out of the concrete situation, that is, out of the lived lifeworld.<sup>329</sup>

Life is lived in the manner in which life is *living*. It is precisely this manner of having already encountered the world somehow that represents life at its most basic, originary level. The (always one's own) world is already *verstanden*, the world as is factically lived is an "answer," as it were, to life's questions and needs. Life lives in *how* the world has been encountered already. The self lives in its *Verständlichkeit*. It is what life is in and of itself: factic life. Husserl's phenomenology provided him with the conceptual means for conceptualizing this HOW of life without falling back on the theoretical attitude, which cannot but "view" its objects objectively, more dangerously so when it comes to "objects" that are not objects at all, while Dilthey gave him the insights into the nature of the philosophical understanding as a movement of, from and for life

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<sup>326</sup> GA 61, p.61

<sup>327</sup> GA 61, p.18

<sup>328</sup> GA 61, p.91

<sup>329</sup> „das Sichhaben und Sein bestimmt sich gerade seinem Sinne nach je aus der konkreten Situation, d.h. der gelebten Lebenswelt.“ (GA 61, p.172)

itself<sup>330</sup>.

Any worldly experience of something is performed or lived in the manner in which that something *has* already *been* encountered, intelligibly articulated, in and for life. This “articulatedness” (having-interpreted, interpretedness) refers to *eine Grunderfahrung*. It is a fundamental experience in the sense that it is “prior” to any concrete, factic experience but “constituting” at the same time precisely the concreteness of the experience, the structure, the articulation, the “senses” in which something can become an object of concern for a self always in the movement of being concerned for itself. In other words, the ways in which the concrete experience is concretely *taking* place (performed): as always an experience of a self. It is a “concrete,” not abstract moment of experience. It cannot be given in any other way than in experience. Prior, of course, not in the Kantian sense of *a priori*, as subjective categories of objectivity, but prior in the sense that it pre-figures, projects the way in which the experienced can make sense as an object of concern in advance, can appear in the experience of the self’s movement of performing [*Vollzug*] his care for self. It is the “lived” moment, or the experiencing [*Erfahren*] moment of experience, set in contrast with the content of experience (*Erfahrenes*). Or, as Crowell likes to point out, it is the locus where Heidegger discovers the difference between meaning (of entities) and entities<sup>331</sup>. It is noteworthy that for Heidegger, the lived [*gelebte*] aspect of life is precisely the performative character of life: *gelebt*, that is, *vollzogen*<sup>332</sup>.

### Living and Philosophizing

To drive this important point home one more time, crucial for Heidegger is the fact that in any concrete experience the way in which the self has decided to “possess” (*verstanden*) the content of experience is already operative in the experience as such and,

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<sup>330</sup> See John van Buren’s article “The Young Heidegger and phenomenology,” in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, pp.239-272

<sup>331</sup> Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning, Paths toward transcendental Phenomenology*, p.146

<sup>332</sup> „Die Bezogenheit ist solche eines Bezugs, d.h. vollzogen, gelebt.“ (GA 61, p.86)

very importantly, is itself lived-through in that experience<sup>333</sup>. Any ordinary experience of an object (understood formally as *something*) is the “expression” of a fundamental experiencing of that object. In encountering an entity in the world the self is already implicated into a self-experiencing which is *da* (Heidegger says oftentimes “structured”) as the way in which the object has “already” been addressed, *verstanden*, interpreted as something *in principle*, and as requiring both its own manner of access *in principle* and its own manner of accomplishing this manner of access *in principle* – the pre-worldly something. As we will see shortly, by “in principle” Heidegger means “formal” in a special sense. Philosophy is life’s movement of making explicit the way in which objects (*das Erlebte*, later entities) have already been encountered, and this always means, *verstanden in principle* by a self who always lives by being concerned for self: philosophy is, says Heidegger, “*prinzipielles Haben*”<sup>334</sup>; it is, if I understand Heidegger correctly, a “re-doing” of how life is having its (own) world but only in regard to how it can have it *in principle*, as something the self can be concerned about in and for his dynamic concern for self. Philosophy does not replace life, it only points the way in the direction of those own possibilities in which life can have itself genuinely, in other words, it only prescribes the ways in which life can accomplish or perform its concern for self more adequately relative to its own possibilities.

This repetition (re-minding) of *das Verstandene* for the sake of illuminating the way in which the self has already taken it into possession, put its stamp on it, made it its own (the appropriation inherent in *Erlebnis* as *Er-eignen*), has to deal with the fact that *das Verstandene* is life’s own *Verstandene*, which here means that it is *das Verstandene des Verstehens*<sup>335</sup>. It is a repetition (re-minding, re-calling, re-searching) of what one has already understood, and not of a “foreign” body of knowledge. For Heidegger this amounts to saying that what philosophy (life’s movement towards an “explicit” self-understanding) has to do is to appropriate what life itself has already understood. This appropriation of its own *Verstandene* can only take the form of a disarticulation of the

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<sup>333</sup> „Man übersieht, dass gerade mit der Zeitigung des Zugangs selbst zwar das Wie der Entscheidung in die Erfahrung tritt...“ (GA 61, p.37)

<sup>334</sup> *ibid.*, p.19

<sup>335</sup> „...das Verstandene im Sinn der eigensten Situation nehmen und für diese ursprünglich wiederholen.“ (PIA, p.11)

ways in which *das Verstandene* has become *verstanden*. *Verstehen* has to disarticulate its own manner in which it has had its *Verstandene* with regard to its *Verständlichkeit*. Philosophy is thus inevitably caught up in a *historical understanding*: it is life's turning back onto itself<sup>336</sup>. Philosophy as life's own tendency to self-appropriation in understanding can only *come to understanding life* - life in its facticity as a movement of the self - only by way of a dis-articulation or de-pretation (*Destruktion*) of its own *articulatedness* or *interpretedness* with respect to its *being-intended* as articulated, intelligible as an object of concern for self. Life is *intentional* but intentionality is not the mark of a "pure ego," a transcendental I, or of pure consciousness; it is instead the mark of a self always found in the movement of being concerned for self. Intentionality, so Heidegger, has not fallen accidentally from the sky. On the contrary: it is embedded in life<sup>337</sup>. It is how life "operates," the movement of concern for self: "*gerichteteten, sorgenden Aussein auf etwas*"<sup>338</sup>.

#### Heidegger's Critique of Life Philosophy of his time

This idea that philosophy can only proceed by destructively appropriating its factual understanding is what constitutes the main charge Heidegger raises against all preceding philosophies of life. Their biggest failure, according to him, was that they did not take into consideration the fact that their investigation of life was already moving within a prior interpretedness of life as a "specific kind of object" with its "specific manner of access." One cannot arrive at an adequate understanding of the movement of life unless one pays attention to the fact that any understanding of life moves already "in" a prior interpretedness of life: in other words, it is itself caught up in one of life's motivated tendencies and itself an articulation of such a motivation. Life has already been *verstanden* somehow. If one fails to see that life has already been *verstanden* prior to one's explicit coming to terms with life, one misses thereby the opportunity of freeing oneself from the shackles of an inauthentic understanding, which amounts to missing the

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<sup>336</sup> see Kisiel, *The Genesis of Being and Time*, p.55

<sup>337</sup> GA 61, p.131

<sup>338</sup> PIA, p.14

opportunity of living authentically<sup>339</sup>. The “interpretedness” of life is to be found not in the positive advancements philosophers make in their push to conceive of life in “better,” “deeper” or “more accurate” ways, but in the “implicit” manners in which they have *already* taken their object, life, to “stand in view,” as something, *Etwas*, an object to be investigated. The way in which life figures already in their understanding prior to any explicit focusing on it theoretically, is an articulation of the way in which life has encountered itself already. The “past” haunts the present not by imposing its “old” contents on the present, but in the very manners in which “new” contents are to be experienced: new contents are so experienced that they are already appearing “in” a prior addressing of them by the self in the movement of concern for self.

Pre-worldly something = Phenomenon (*Gehalt, Bezug, Vollzug*)

The phenomenological, *living*, pre-worldly *Etwas* of the first lectures has become now *the manner* in which the self is performing the concern for self in situations by possessing himself *already, in advance* in the experience of a worldly something; it reveals, in other words, the manner in which *something* can figure in self’s self-performing concern for itself. The problem of the proper way of grasping lived experiences in their living, personal character has now been redescribed as the problem of the manner in which the self is having itself (coming into one’s own possession) concretely in and as world experience: interpreting any ordinary, taken-for-granted experience of something (history or life for example) as itself the expression of the way in which the self is encountering itself and taking itself into possession factually or, to use Heidegger’s early terminology, as the expression of how life itself fulfills its own inherent motivations, is Heidegger’s next step towards finding a solution to the problem of the proper way of grasping living experiences in their living character. It is clear, however, that the problem of the proper manner in which living experiences are to be addressed in advance as the proper topic of investigation, and of how one can grasp the

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<sup>339</sup> Heidegger gives a relatively brief explanation of what he means at this point in time by living inauthentically, and authentically respectively: one lives authentically when one is capable of „concretely grasping a radical idea and managing to be (Dasein) in it“, and inauthentically when one „lives, does research and functions on unproven needs and suggested feelings.“ (in GA 61, p.70)

living experience in its living character (how the self is there), has continued to be of crucial significance for Heidegger, and more important than any new discoveries about it based on a conceptual frame left unexamined and unquestioned. Lived experiences as the ultimate source of meaning can be explicated in their meaning-conferring role only by exploiting life's own tendency to "turn back upon itself." This now is couched by Heidegger as life's tendency to snatch itself back from its absorption into the world. The very "manner" in which the world is factually experienced refers life back to itself. The preworldly something is the "manner" in which life, the living self is *da* and for itself in experiencing a worldly something (as fully understood and taken for granted). And the living self is *da* in concern for self. The concern for self makes explicit, however, that the self is "something" it *can* have: the self is *da* by being always open to the possibility of either losing or gaining it-self. This possibility is played out however in the self's active, performative engagement with the things and situations it deals with. The question now is how Heidegger can make explicit the way the self is *da*, the very active engagement or participation of the self, or the pre-worldly something as *die Motivierungsprozeß des Lebens*, without lapsing into an objectifying attitude which would render the self as yet another "object" in the world.

The experience of any object is characterized formally by a specific manner in which the object has (1) *already* been had, taken into possession [*Vorhabe*] as something (for example, as an object-like entity), (2) has *already* been *conceived* of in *specific terms* [*Vorgriff*], for example, as a mental process), and (3) equally importantly, by a specific manner in which the having and conceptualizing have been performed or carried out concretely. A concrete experience consists in both *having* and *conceiving* of "something." The "having," "conceiving" and "performing" are all, in a sense, formal properties of any concrete experience: they constitute the structure of the pre-worldly something, as Heidegger understands it. A living experience can now be understood as a living experience provided that we grasp the three "senses" or modalities figuring into any experience and whose "completion" or fulfilling is the concrete, ordinary, factual experience: the content-sense (*Gehaltsinn* - the "whatness", the formal character of that which the experience is about; for example, "objectively real," "worldly significant" etc.), the relating-sense (*Bezugssinn* - the formal character of the attitude, comportment,

relation to the content; for example, perceptual, loving, cognitive, emotional etc.), and the performing-sense (*Vollzugsinn* - the formal character of the manner in which the relating-sense is performed, “and thus governing the manner in which the content is presented<sup>340</sup>”). I live “in” an interpretedness of life -which amounts to saying that the self is in possession of itself factually and lives in this constant preoccupation with itself-, means now that the self is *da* in accordance with these three intentional moments<sup>341</sup>.

‘Phenomenon’ is sense-completion with respect to these three directions. Phenomenology is the explicating of this sense-completion; it gives the ‘logos’ of phenomena...<sup>342</sup>

It should be kept in mind that these three senses are not, according to Heidegger, a new kind of “object.” They can indeed be brought out in any experience of an object in general, but this should not be construed as if the possibility of bringing them into view makes them into “objects” in the theoretical or formally theoretical sense. The making explicit of these three sense dimensions in accordance with which any experience takes place and can be an experience of the self, can only be conducted from within the experience itself as any attempt at stepping out of the experience results in its objectivation. As Oudemans rightly observes – with the help, I believe, of Heidegger’s later interpretation of categorical intuition from his lectures on the history of concept of time from 1924 -:

The sense of objectlike-ness is *not* a new objectuality or a new region of objects; it only indicates a manner of *experiencing*, a sense of relation which shows itself only in a ‘manner’ of performing.<sup>343</sup>

These senses are, according to Heidegger, *gelebt* and not *erlebt*: experience consists in theirperforming, but is not *about* them<sup>344</sup>. They characterize the modalities in

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<sup>340</sup> Crowell, *Husserl and Heidegger and the Space of Meaning*, p. 145

<sup>341</sup> John van Buren, “The Young Heidegger and phenomenology,” in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, pp.239-272

<sup>342</sup> “‘Phänomen’ ist Sinnganzheit nach diesen drei Richtungen. ‘Phänomenologie’ ist Explikation dieser Sinnganzheit, sie gibt den ‘λόγος’ der Phänomene, ‘λόγος’ im Sinne von ‘verbum internum’ (nicht im Sinne von Logisierung).” (GA 60, p.63)

<sup>343</sup> Th.C.W. Oudemans, “Heideggers ‘Logische Untersuchungen’”, in: *Heidegger Studies* 6, (1990), 85-106

<sup>344</sup> „Die Sinnbezüge sind im faktischen Leben nicht erlebt in phänomenologischer Gegenwärtigkeit, sondern gelebt als ? - ... sondern gelebt im

which something shows up as what it is in our dealings with it. They are “implicit,” not “explicit” in experience. Life is not concern *for* understanding, but *for* some *understood Etwas*. Something, however, would not be an object of concern for self unless it appears “in” an understanding of the self for self: that is, unless it appears *as* somehow already *interpreted in*, from and for a situation of the self. It is *die Verständlichkeit* of life that accounts for the sense in which *Etwas* is. Needless to say, in any situation the three senses are to be distinguished only insofar as emphasis on each one of them reveals aspects not easily accountable for when emphasis is put on the other two. Any situation can be analyzed in accordance with these three immanent dimensions – Heidegger uses often the term “direction” instead of “sense.” They all form one unitary sense-completion<sup>345</sup>. They are “elements” constituting the sense<sup>346</sup>. They express the *Urstruktur* of any situation:

The leading back to the sense-relations and the articulation of the genuine sense-directions incorporated therein is the end of phenomenological task.<sup>347</sup>

To gain access to the manner in which the content is had in a particular situation, one must pay full attention to the concrete, factic performing of the situation; in other words, one has to pay close attention to the manner in which the self “engages in” the whole experience<sup>348</sup>. We cannot properly account phenomenologically for a phenomenon without taking into consideration a carefully distinguished “sense” of existence. The performing sense is the “being-there” of the self<sup>349</sup>. Phenomenology, according to Heidegger, is the attempt at making these “senses” explicit in such a way as to make them available for a systematic grasping of life in and of itself. The *content*, *relational* and *performing* sense are Heidegger’s proposal to rethink the “being-there” of the living self, of the way in which life is *da* concretely, in and for itself. As I understand

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Vollzug faktischen Lebens in personaler Existenz wie auch der Gemeinschaftsexistenz.“ (GA 59, p. 196)

<sup>345</sup> Sinnzusammenhang or Sinn Ganzheit (GA 58, p.160, GA 59, p.60, 179-180)

<sup>346</sup> GA 58, p.261

<sup>347</sup> GA 59, p.74

<sup>348</sup> “Ich frage nun, wie ich in der konkreten Erfahrung selbst lebe, wie ich dabei beteiligt bin (Weise des “Vollzug”)" (GA 58, p.250)

<sup>349</sup> “Der Bezugssinn ist keine Beziehung zwischen zwei Objekten, sondern ist selbst schon Sinn eines Vollzugs, eines Dabeiseins des Selbst” (GA 58, p.260).

it, Heidegger has now reinterpreted the living, personal character of lived experience as the “manners” or “senses” in which “something” can figure into the self’s concern for self. These *gelebt* senses represent the very manner in which the living takes place, the way in which life encounters itself, the manner in which the self is having itself. Life and philosophy have the same “content” but they differ both in the manner in which they go about this content and also the manner in which they perform this engagement with it.

As mentioned earlier, life itself – as is the case with any “object” - has already been interpreted. This interpretation can be subjected to a phenomenological investigation intent on laying bare the three directions in accordance with which “life” has been addressed already<sup>350</sup>. Heidegger discussed in his early lectures three cases in which “life” has already been interpreted one way or another: Dilthey’s, Rickert’s and Jaspers’ philosophies of life. The manner of approaching life, that is, the relating sense, is different in each case (historical, epistemological and “aesthetical”), but all three have two important things in common: a prior “setting-up” of life as something “made-up of” or “constituted by” isolated, discreet lived experiences, life as a flowing series of lived experiences (which, to Heidegger, is the most advanced form of theorizing), and an indifference as to how life makes itself “present” concretely in our concretely lived living experiences (the performing sense). As a result of this critique Heidegger refuses to take life *as* being somehow constituted (“life is altogether there”), and puts emphasis on the sense of performing (*Vollzug*) of life, which for Heidegger is, again, nothing but the “being-there of the self<sup>351</sup>.” The performing sense characterizes life in its livingness; it is the facticity of life. Without gaining access to the facticity of life, “the fundamental sense of the being of life<sup>352</sup>” would remain closed to us.

The destruction or de-pretation of *das Verstandene* takes now a more elaborate and precise form in light of the intentional moments “constituting” any situation as situation. The content-sense commits the self to a certain manner of addressing and also to a certain manner of performing this manner of addressing. Sometimes it may so happen that the relational sense may turn out to be incompatible with the content sense, to

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<sup>350</sup> GA 61, p.80

<sup>351</sup> “Dabeisein des Selbst” (GA 58, p.260)

<sup>352</sup> GA 61, p.87

the effect that the manner of approaching can be more or less unsuitable for the kind of content sought to be experienced: what is experienced may be distorted partially or completely by the very manner in which the content is experienced. Also it may also happen that the manner of carrying out the relational sense might turn out to be unsuitable for the specific kind of relational sense in which the content is sought to be had/experienced. It is precisely this kind of “unsuitability” between the three sense-directions that opens the door to a philosophical critique [*Auseinander-setzung*]. A situation can be analyzed on the basis of the proper mutual suitability of its three dimensions<sup>353</sup>.

The difficulty right at the heart of life lies in the fact that this *sense-completion* in which the world and the self are *there* is not readily visible. It takes phenomenology, a special movement of life, to bring it to light. Phenomenology is life’s own re-channeling of its own tendency to get absorbed in the *telos* of *actualizing*, *das Verstandene*, in the world and self-world as they have already been understood and now factually engaged with in the manner in which the self understands to deal with things, people and various issues in situations, into itself as a self-*actualizer*<sup>354</sup> as such. Accordingly, philosophy does not deal with “concrete” contents, but only with the ways in which contents of experience can become “concrete:” in other words, it only deals with the ways (senses) in which something can “become” and has as a matter of fact already become “concrete” for a self who is the very manner in which “something” can appear only as “taken into care.”

To talk of “ways in which something becomes concrete” can be misleading in this context. It may leave the false impression that what we are dealing here with is an activity of a subject who is “imposing” its own structures of understanding on the “real objects” and modifies them so as to correspond to what the “subject” *can* apprehend: it is not “the result of the activity of intellectual understanding upon the external world.”<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> See Heidegger’s critical comments on the proper way to address Jaspers’ philosophy of life in „Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers ‘Psychologie der Weltanschauungen’“ in GA 9.

<sup>354</sup> As in ‘enabler.’

<sup>355</sup> Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, Prolegomena, translated by Theodor Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) p. 71. (Henceforth abbreviated as HCT).

Heidegger's reinterpretation of intentionality as the basic mode of being of a self caught in the movement of being concern for self is not a return to Kant's transcendentalism. The senses do not "constitute" a phenomenon in the sense of "fabricating" or "producing" it. It is only an accentuation of some ideal moments meant to present things in a "new" light. They are indeed *a priori* but in the sense of "unquestionable from within," and not in that of "universally valid."<sup>356</sup> They bring to light the manner in which *Etwas* can be experienced. Nor do the senses represent a redescription of the Husserlian sense of the "formal," for the "intentional act" is grasped first and foremost as the very manner in which a self performs its own concern for self. The intentional act is not interpreted as an act of consciousness in general, as an intentional act as *eidos*: it is, on the contrary, the way in which self's concern for self "takes place."

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<sup>356</sup> Cristina Lafont, „Heidegger and the Synthetic A priori,“ in Stephen Crowell and Jeff Malpas (eds.), *Transcendental Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p.107

## Chapter Seven: Life as being

### Formal Indicators

In the wake of his critique of the philosophies of life of his time, Heidegger is now fully aware that philosophy cannot proceed blindly, that is, without taking into consideration its own “presuppositions,” its own taken-for-granted, always *in action* (*vollzugshaft*), *a priori* “take on” the object of investigation. This taking into consideration of one’s own already operative “take on” the object cannot, however, be done directly. Any attempt to tackle the three “fore-senses” directly falls prey to the theoretical attitude in that it fails to account for the object from within its performative dynamics. Any “direct” approach to one’s own philosophical presuppositions would enforce once more the hold the interpretedness of life has on any attempts at interpreting life from within. What philosophy can do, however, is to re-actualize a concrete experience in which the object of investigation has already been addressed and try to “accentuate” the senses in which the object of experience has already been “had,” “conceptualized” and “actualized” *as* the very manner in which the object has been *in advance* held into view as *Etwas* dealt with, in the hopes that such an accentuation will eventually lead to the genuine way in which the object has already been encountered and whose expression the concrete experience is: experience as a phenomenon. “Here as well as everywhere it is all about bringing to mind an experience,<sup>357</sup>” for the sake of accentuating the manners of its concretization. As a repetition of a performance that has already its own self-interpretation, philosophy can only re-perform the self-interpretation of life *in an accentuation of* the fore-having already operative in any experience. Since, however, philosophy does not want to be an ordinary “calling to mind” of an experience, a mere repetition, but a “re-doing” [*Wieder-holen*] of the experience with a “new intention” in mind - with the intention namely of explicating the manner in which the object has already been “had” and “conceptualized” in advance in accordance with the three senses -, the philosophical approach is barred from the beginning from having its objects in an authentic way, that is, in the fully concrete way in which things are ordinarily experienced. That which is the object of philosophical investigation can only

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<sup>357</sup> GA 61, p.82

be approached and open to investigation only in the *manner* in which it has already been encountered. Philosophy is a formal activity. Its concepts are “formal,” in the sense that they express a “sense” in which things can be and in fact are already, that is, *in advance*, encountered in life. They are formal in that they express a manner of *experiencing*. They do not refer to a “region of being.” Philosophical concepts are formal only in the sense that they characterize the manner in which the fully concrete, that is, the whole intentional act is *performed*. They give expression to the *manner* in which a self is the movement of being concerned with self by living in a world already interpreted by and for self.

Despite the fact that in factual, ordinary concrete experience, the self is having itself more genuinely than in theoretical experience, in ordinary experience the self is still constantly prone to lapsing into forgetting itself, that is, is still not having itself authentically. The self lives first and foremost in a tendency to fall away from itself. The performative character of living, which is the being-there of the self, gets lost, as it were, in the very performing of living. The self loses itself when *being* itself. Philosophy is life’s movement of turning back upon *itself*, the self’s own movement of re-capturing the way it itself *is there* in the experience of something, as a possibility of the self to encounter itself more authentically. Philosophy begins with this inauthentic having of life and as a movement or “struggle” against it. As already mentioned, life and philosophy have the same “content;” philosophy, however, has a different manner of going about this same content. What is different is the manner in which the content is *being* presented: in philosophy the content (the world as such) is so presented that the *being-there* of the self is addressed only from within those life experiences in which life itself has become highly questionable. In other words, philosophy is made possible by those contexts in life in which the ordinary intelligibility of life collapses, and life becomes questionable and itself in need to come to an understanding of itself. Instead of finding itself oriented towards the world through experience/living, life comes to experience the world’s character of “being experienced” itself. The world therefore appears in a “new” light insofar as the manner of approaching it has changed.

The performance of philosophical interpretation is an anti-ruinance movement, and indeed so that it performs itself in the appropriated manner of access specific to questionability. It is precisely through questioning

that factual life comes to its authentically developable self-giveness.<sup>358</sup>

According to Heidegger, it is crucial to re-experience the “content” and the “relating” sense from the standpoint of life’s movement [*Vollzug*] of turning back upon itself. “That something, something lived, gives itself always in some way or another (what I encounter – I myself whom I myself encounter in various ways), can be terminologically formulated as follows: it *appears*, it is a *phenomenon*.”<sup>359</sup>

As a phenomenon life, like any other phenomenon, can only be understood *in a formally indicative manner*, *indicative* in the sense that any concrete situation (any concrete, ordinary, factic lived experience of something) as a phenomenon *refers* the phenomenologist to life’s structured a priori “take on” *das Erlebte*; to the *three senses* in accordance with which the situation takes place, and make up *die Ur-struktur* of the situation. The phenomenologist can understand the living experience, now situation or factic life or life experience, in its living character, that is, in its peculiarity of being a self’s experience and self-experience, but only in a “formally indicative” manner, only insofar as he can grasp the three senses “making up” the situation. All philosophical concepts are to be understood and employed as “formal indicators.”

We call the methodical use of a sense guiding the phenomenological exposition ‘formal indicator’.<sup>360</sup>

Philosophy wants to pave the way for a genuine encounter of the object, on the basis of an ongoing directed dis-articulation of the ways in which the object has already been encountered. Philosophy, in other words, wants to lead life to a more genuine self-encounter. To this end, philosophy must *in advance* “take” its own object in such a way as to leave open the possibility of encountering it anew. In missing out the concrete,

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<sup>358</sup> GA 61, p.153

<sup>359</sup> “Daß sich irgendetwas, etwas Erlebtes, immer irgendwie gibt (was mir begegnet – ich selbst, der ich mir verschiedenartig begegne), können wir auch so formulieren, daß es erscheint, Phänomen ist...” (GA 58, p.50)

<sup>360</sup> GA 60, p.55. It appears that Heidegger’s sources of inspiration for “formal indication” is Georg Simmel’s conception of death as a “formal moment” of life (see Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben verstehen: Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen, 1919 bis 1923* (Königshausen & Neumann, 1997), in particular the chapter “‘Formales Moment’ in Simmels Aufsatz ‘Zur Metaphysik des Todes’” pp.145-147) and Kierkegaard’s conception of “indirect communication” (see Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger in seine Zeit* (Fink Verlag, 1999), p.28)

whole manner (*Sinn Ganzheit*) in which an object is genuinely encountered, all previous philosophies of life missed the opportunity of encountering life in the only manner adequate to it. Their mistake was to focus solely on the content-sense and leave intact the relating and performing sense in which the object was genuinely, that is, factually, given. Life, Heidegger suggests, develops a “sense” of itself only in living, only in being itself, and this “manner” of self-giviness has to be replicated for an illumination of life. Philosophy, as Heidegger understands it, can no longer afford to repeat the same mistake: “*Die Erben haben es verspielt*”<sup>361</sup>. Philosophy as formal indicating must not, therefore, blindly pre-judge (fall into it unreflectively) the *manner* in which its object is given in and for experience (*Bezug*), nor the *manner* in which the object is to be given in its experiencing (*Vollzug*). As a result, the philosophical method must keep the content and performing sense open for further determinations. Only by accentuating the *senses* (the hows, manners, modes) in which the object has already been experienced with the intention now of becoming aware of one’s own concrete *manner* of having the object as an object of investigation (*Bezug* and *Vollzug*), can philosophy succeed in pressing for a more genuine encounter (the unity of *Gehalt*, *Bezug* and *Vollzug*) of the object by revealing new possibilities of genuine encounter. Life itself comes to itself in understanding *how* it has already encountered its contents, in understanding the world in its being-encountered by life itself. Formal indicators are formal also in the sense that they are indications of *a manner of a genuine encounter* with an object. They regard the object only with respect to the twofold manner [*Bezug* and *Vollzug*] in and through which its *content sense* is *being presented as* an object of concern for self. Philosophical concepts are *indicators* of a genuine encounter of the object.

The [formal indicator] belongs to the phenomenological exposition as a methodical moment. Why is it called ‘formal’? The formal character has to do with the relating aspect. The indicator wants to indicate in advance the relating of the phenomenon – though in a negative sense, only as a warning, so to speak. A phenomenon should be given in advance in such a way as to keep its relating sense in suspension. One must avoid assuming that its relating sense is originally theoretical. The relating and performing sense of the phenomenon are *not* determined in advance; it is held in suspension... The formal indicator is a *defence*, a preliminary measure of security, so that the performing character still remains free.

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<sup>361</sup> “The inheritance has been used up.” (GA 61, p.35)

The necessity to have a measure of security stems from the fallentendency of factic life-experience that threatens constantly to slip in objectlikeness [*Objektmäßiges*] from out of which we must however bring the phenomenon out<sup>362</sup>.

Accordingly, concepts as formal indicators are meant to be articulations of the ways in which objects are to be given in living, in experience. Their retrieval coincide with an appropriation of life itself. They express a “manner of access:” that to which they provide access is not however an “object” *per se*, but a manner of experiencing it, that is, to a *sense* of the self *as* living.

It is important to underscore the point that *das formale Anzeige* is, for Heidegger, the only manner in which we can articulate our understanding of a situation as a “unity in living.<sup>363</sup>” The point is important because it indicates that the elaboration of the formal indicator as the proper philosophical method has been arrived at and conducted in the context of Heidegger’s preoccupations with life. As we remember, a situation is “*eine Einheit im Erleben;*” it is the concrete, factic articulation of the (whole) self’s having himself in his (holistic) experiencing of something, which *experiencing* takes places as the self’s *living* (acting, thinking, remembering etc.) in an interpretedness of that something as an object of concern for self. A situation, a factic life-experience is Heidegger’s elaboration of the “living character” of *Erlebnis*.

Heidegger is now claiming that the only proper way to keep the “living” character of *life experience*, *life*, *lived experience* alive in philosophy, is by keeping the relating and performing*sense* of the phenomenon of life open to more genuine determinations.

In light of his newly elaborated method of formal indicating, Heidegger will approach again all the “categories” of life he had already found as being exhibited in and by life, this time, however, in the clear consciousness that they all should be explicitly interpreted as “formal indicators.” If up until now methodological considerations accompanied Heidegger’s incursions into the proper way in which life can become an object of investigation, from now on they will take center stage. In the early years, Heidegger appears to have only to some extent arrived at his insights into the “categories

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<sup>362</sup> GA 60, p.63

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, p.91

of life” as a result and in the wake of a destruction of contemporary life philosophy. Living in a world, concern as the manner in which the self finds itself and its own world, the self encountering himself not as an I but in the manner in which he lives in his own world, the self-having of the self, the facticity of life as the lived structural disclosure of the self and world, prior to but performed in and as the specific manners in which worldly objects are concretely encountered or experienced, all these are not the direct result of Heidegger’s destruction of traditional interpretations of life. Heidegger’s critique of previous life philosophies is in point of fact conducted on the basis of a prior grasp (*Vorgriff*) of life as anything but a “natural occurrence,” and of an explicit refusal to take life as something “in” nature that can be genuinely given in a theoretical, contemplative relation to it. Heidegger’s *Vorgriff* of his “take on” life has all along been “directed, caring being-out-to.” In other words, his insights into *life* (situational-, world-, self-character of life, *Bedeutsamkeit* as the sense in which worldly objects are given in and for the concern for self) have been to some extent gained *prior*, or, in any case, along with his renewed attempts at developing a clear understanding of how philosophical method works. Once he becomes clear on the nature and precise role of philosophical method in the form of formal indicators, Heidegger appears to change his tactics a bit: in the years 1920-1922 he appears to be preoccupied *more* with re-appropriating his early insights into life in a manner explicitly consistent with the formal indicating character of *all* philosophical concepts: life, world, care, self, even philosophy itself will be now revisited in order to bring out their formal indicative character. Anything philosophy operates with – “life” included - is reinterpreted explicitly now as a formal indicator. The shift from life to being will be accounted for by Heidegger’s explicit move to revisit his philosophy of life and re-appropriate it in light and terms of his understanding of the formal indicating character of philosophy.

Heidegger’s move, however, is more of a reformulation of the same problem concerning the manner in which the self is *da* rather than a solution to it.

## Philosophy revisited

Philosophy undergoes the same process of being redefined in light of a more mature understanding of how philosophical concepts work as formal indicators. As already said, formal indicators pave the way for a genuine encounter of a phenomenon in the totality of its intentional moments. They should enable one to “go back” and “repeat” those original life situations out of which philosophy as a possibility of life become meaningful in and for life in the first place. “They thereby open up recollective access to the origins of meaning as lived.” On the basis of an explication of the conceptual fore-having operative in the way in which philosophy has already been encountered and interpreted, phenomenology, as Heidegger understands it, has the task of pushing for a renewed genuine experiencing of the phenomenon in question in order to bring out the missed opportunities, as it were, in the preconception already at work in the concrete experience of the object. To open the way for a new, more genuine, interpretation of the phenomenon - in fuller agreement with its own basic intentional moments -, Heidegger has to avoid pre-judging the phenomenon relative to its intentional moments. However, since no interpretation can dispense with a preliminary addressing of its object, Heidegger opts for a fore-conception believed to do as little pre-judging as possible to the genuine encountering as is being sought. On the side of the relating sense, philosophy is interpreted as a conceptive (*erkennen*) comportment to... which can be given only in and through philosophizing, in its concrete performing. Formally, philosophy can only be encountered “in” and “as” the tendency or movement to conceive of objects as objects<sup>364</sup>, whereby ‘object’ designates formal-ontologically anything that can be experienced in its respective concrete [*gehaltlich*] sense<sup>365</sup>.

Philosophy as a conceptive comportment “‘says’ that, what and how the object is.”<sup>366</sup> Philosophy is thus interpreted as an unique relating to what is *concretely* (in its *jeweiligen gehaltigen Sinn*) experienced, intent on *determining* [*Bestimmen*] *what* and *how* it is in its being-experienced:

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<sup>364</sup> “erkennendes Verhalten, Beziehen” (GA 61, p.53-54)

<sup>365</sup> “Jedes in einem jeweiligen gehaltlichen Sinn Erfahrene ist formal-ontologisch als Gegenstand als solcher zu fassen” (GA 61, p.53)

<sup>366</sup> *ibid*, p.54

The comportment [...] holds on to the object [...] insofar as the object 'is' something somehow. The relating is held by something as being, and being as being and such being.<sup>367</sup>

Accordingly, the content sense of philosophy, the towards which of the relating sense, can be determined formally – without determining in advance what it is, just indicating the sense/manner in which it can be the “towards which” of the relating - as follows: “something as a being and being such-and-such.” Being is thus not a descriptive label for an entity: it is instead a formalization of the concept of “object” – that is, that content-sense of “object” - which in turn is a formalization of the concept of *Erfahrene*, itself a formalization of the concept of *Etwas* which finally is the formalized version of *das Erlebte*. If we remain faithful to Heidegger’s methodology of formal indicating, then we should interpret “beings as being” as the “towards which” or the content-sense of “philosophizing” as a phenomenon - as a *lived* possibility of life – that towards which life “holds on to” when it finds itself in need to come to an understanding of itself. Philosophy as a possibility life can develop out of itself can be genuinely, yet formally, encountered in the comportment to beings *as* being, in terms of ‘being,’ that is, in terms of what and how they are (the sense in which they are: *Seinssinn*). The conceptive comportment to beings as being is ultimately a possibility of life emerging from, and signaling, the need for life to appropriate itself: the necessity to conceive of beings in their being is triggered by, and returns eventually to, factual life that now experiences itself in need to be itself.

If this is what philosophy is, then the possibility of encountering philosophy genuinely presupposes in turn that it itself as the conceptive comportment to beings as being can be encountered as a being and conceived in its character of being something and somehow. The very comportment to beings as being should thus be given as a being, as something, an object that is and is somehow. A genuine interpretation of philosophy presupposes thus that it itself can be experienced, “had” as a being (something) in its being. It is the “having” or “experiencing” of the conceptive relating to beings as being that should be given as “something,” as a being which can be conceived in its being. The self-interpretation or self-experience of philosophy depends therefore on the “being of

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<sup>367</sup> “Der Bezug wird gehalten von etwas als einem Seiendem als Seiendem und so Seienden.” (ibid, p.54)

having of the conceptive comportment to beings as being.<sup>368</sup> In the very way in which the conceptive comportment to beings as being takes place (philosophy as philosophizing, *performing sense*) and for it, there exists the possibility of disclosing the sense in which this very conceptive comportment *is*. The *sense* in which the conceptive comportment to beings as being *is* (*Seinssinn*) must somehow be given in and for this very comportment. The conceptive comportment itself *ishow* it concretely comports conceptively to beings as being.

The object of philosophy (beings in their being) co-determines from out of itself (function of principle) the comportment. As a comportment at the level of principle, what is an issue in it is its being. The conceptive comportment has a quite original and radical relation of principle to beings in their being (not a mere attitude toward grasping, a mere discussion, but a relating that even and precisely through grasping ‘is’ what it grasps and grasps what it ‘is’).<sup>369</sup>

To “have” a comportment is to comport oneself in a certain way. It is, in other words, a manner of the comportment itself. The “being” of the comportment is a “manner” of the comportment itself. Accordingly, philosophy requires a sort of “being” (*Seiendes, die Verhaltenden*<sup>370</sup>) that “is” (*Sein*) in a certain manner of “being” for itself. *Sein* is taken, of course, as in a formally indicative manner: but now in addition to being the content-sense of “philosophizing” it is also the very manner in which the content sense, *being*, is *being* presented [*Vollzugsinn*]: in a certain manner of being for itself the very being of this being can be disclosed in and for this manner of being<sup>371</sup>.

It is about being, namely that it ‘is’, *being of being*, that being ‘is’, in other words, it is genuinely and in accordance with its import (in phenomenon) there as being. Phenomenon: existenziell. It is about ‘being’, about the fact that ‘being’ is what is striven for, but is not there for mere reflection and inspection. It is indeed the being of comportment, that is, here (phenomenologically) through comportment; its temporalizing. Comportment is what is it is only in becoming fully concrete, that is, in

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<sup>368</sup> GA 61, p.60

<sup>369</sup> M. Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, transl. by Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2001) p.46. Translation slightly modified: instead of capital “Being” for *Sein* I opted for “being.”

<sup>370</sup> GA 61, p.63

<sup>371</sup> “Formale Anzeige: ‘Sein’ ist das angezeigte Formalleere, und doch die Ansatzrichtung des Verstehens fest bestimmend; auf das Haben des Verhaltens als Seiendes!” (GA 61, p.61)

*concrete problematic.*<sup>372</sup>

In other words, the access, or comportment, to comportment (self-interpretation of philosophy) is a manner of the comportment itself which means that its being can be disclosed only in a specific manner of comporting itself. We can only find out “how” the comportment “is” by, in and for the comportment itself. The being of the comportment (as-what and as-how) is disclosed in the very manner in which *die Verhaltenden* ‘are’. In other words, it all depends on “how” we, *die Verhaltenden*, “are.” As we know already, we live always already in a concrete worldly situation, in a concrete context of life. We live “it” in the manner in which we are, “out of and in our *factic Dasein*.<sup>373</sup>” The having of the conceptive comportment to beings as being requires accordingly an interpretation of factic life as a being - as something whose content (What) and relational (How) senses can be somehow disclosed. Life is now in advance interpreted, in a formally indicative manner, as “being in and through life:”

Life = Dasein, ‘*being*’ in and through life.<sup>374</sup>

It should be noted, nevertheless, that despite his efforts to push for an increasingly radical formally indicative understanding of philosophy, and go deeper to “the source of meaning as lived,” Heidegger finds himself facing the “same” haunting problem: how can he explicate how *we are* factually where *factical life* is an expression of the very way in which life *is* being *itself* somehow in its lived relating to beings as being. The sense of *life* inherent in, and accessible only through, the very performance of living, is now expected to be elaborated out of an interpretation of life as a being (*Gehaltsinn*) that becomes itself somehow only “in” *being* related to beings as being.

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<sup>372</sup> “Es kommt auf Sein an, d.h. daß es “ist”, *Seinssein*, daß Sein “ist”, d.h. als Sein echt und nach seinem Belang (im Phänomen) da ist. Phänomen: existenziell. Es kommt darauf an, daß es zum “Sein” kommt, daß es in Bemühung steht, aber nicht für die Betrachtung und schlechte Reflexion. Es ist ja Sein des Verhaltens, d.h. hier (phänomenologisch) durch Verhalten; dessen Zeitigung. Verhalten ist aber, was es ist, nur in voller Konkretion, d.h. *konkrete Problematik*.” (GA 61, p.61).

<sup>373</sup> *ibid*, p.76

<sup>374</sup> *ibid*, p.85

## Life revisited

We should keep in mind all the time that life for Heidegger is both “passive” and “active,” both the *experiencing* and the *experienced*, both *erlebt* and *gelebt*. If we miss this twofold dimension of life, then we would find difficult to see how life can be for Heidegger both *the indicated*, as well as the *indicator*. It is the *indicator* in the sense that it is the source of lived meaning as such: any object whatsoever makes sense only out of and for a basic life experience (being-experienced) in which it is fully, concretely given. The lived experience of an object (the *experiencing*) *indicates* how life itself is lived “in” and “as” the experience of an object (the *experienced*). And it is the *indicated* in the sense that the lived tendency or possibility to conceive of objects as objects out of and in terms of their original life experiences refers us ultimately back to life’s own need to understand itself, which is the very manner in which life lives: it lives “in need” or “in the tendency” to understand itself. By tracing philosophy as a possibility of life back to its original life experience, life itself is thus “shown” to be “the tendency” to understand itself, to conceive of itself as “something” that is and is somehow. This need, however, is *given* only “in” (that is, is itself lived or experienced as) the need to conceive of objects as objects, of beings as being. In other words, life as *lived* or *experienced* cannot be given independently from life as *living* or *experiencing* (of an object). Life is *lived* only in its *motivated tendency to... , in living*. This is the only sense in which living life can be disclosed in its living character: any factual experience, any life situation is the expression of a “tendency to.” The “tendency to” is the “formal” moment of the *experiencing*, and represents “life” as such.

Life itself arises as an object out of specific life situations. Analysing these life situations in a formally indicative manner holds the prospect of showing how life itself “speaks of” itself as something that is and is somehow. As such, “life” as a phenomenon can be investigated relative to its *content*, *relating* and *performing* sense. In keeping with the method of formal indicating, *life* is not *in advance* determined in its relating and performing sense. At the beginning of investigation, “life” is merely a word whose content-relating-performing determinations are left in suspension for the sake of a more

genuine encounter of the phenomenon designated by it. At the beginning, we act as if we do not know what life is, and work on the assumption that our standard interpretation of life could be “inappropriate.” The ‘object’ sought is therefore not *genuinely* given. What we know however is that, since I am “it,” the sense of life is somehow already “operative,” at work in my endeavours to articulate it even if inauthentically.

The formally indicative investigation of life takes its cue now from those experiences in which *life as such* has already been interpreted and expressed. As such the next step is to re-call [*vergegenwärtigen*] a life-experience in which life figures prominently so as to make explicit the senses/manners/modalities in which life has already been experienced. For Heidegger the place to locate where life has already articulated its own self-understanding is language, more specifically, in the ordinary use of language<sup>375</sup>. Life is factic, and as such it already lives in an interpretedness of itself<sup>376</sup>. The ordinary use of language is the expression of this interpretedness. It is the “exponent of our situation.”<sup>377</sup> As a result, how “life” is “spoken of” in the ordinary use of language, the various meanings it has, should be regarded as expressions of a certain experience or encountering of life, of a particular “sense” in which life as a phenomenon has already been intended *as something*, and *in a specific manner* of intending.

The ordinary use of language “has” life as an intransitive as well as transitive verb: *to live* [*am Leben sein*] as well as *to live something* [*etwas erleben, das Leben leben*]. The linguistic use of the intransitive in all of its various forms (live in, for, against, with, alongside etc. something) *indicates* that life has already been interpreted as having “something” to live on, in, out to, against, for, from, side-by-side, alongside with etc.<sup>378</sup> In a purely indicative manner, Heidegger calls *world* the “towards which” of life as *living out to*, that which life is “out to, on, from, against, alongside with, for the sake of etc.” “World” is not a descriptive name of an entity. It is that towards which life is “out to.” Life is “relating-to-world” *performing*. Life is “in-the-world” living. “World”

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<sup>375</sup> „Wir bringen die Situation zur ersten interpretativen Abhebung durch Vorgabe eines Sprachgebrauchs.“ (GA 61, p.42)

<sup>376</sup> „Es selbst spricht sich immer nur in seiner eigenen ‘Sprache’ an.“ (GA 58, p.31)

<sup>377</sup> GA 61, p.43

<sup>378</sup> *ibid*, p.85

constitutes the content-sense of the phenomenon of “life.”

By the phenomenological category of ‘world’ we designate at the same time – and this is important – that *which* is lived, that by which life is sustained, that which it holds on to.<sup>379</sup>

The content sense is always “had” in a relating to it, in a way of having the content. How is the world lived? In what way is life lived as its own world? What is the way in which life relates itself to its own world? Heidegger’s answer is: concern (*Sorge*). Life is *daby* being concerned about that which it goes about, the world. Concern, again, arises from life’s own self-interpretation but is “formalized,” emptied of its everyday reference “while retaining reference to their attitudinal motivation” in life such that it can “indicate” the immediate life situations out of which they arise and toward which the philosopher, thinking by means of them, comes to be directed<sup>380</sup>. It is not the name of a “feeling” among other feelings. It is not a descriptive term. It is, again and again, the manner (category now) in which the content sense is presented: “in concern.” The things encountered are not mere things, simply lying there before the self, but things meaning (*Bedeutsam*) something to the self, about which the self is concerned. Worldly things are encountered in this relating, not merely noticed as “rocks on the road:” they are always genuinely “far” or “near,” “hard” or “easy,” “achievable” or “beyond reach, impossible,” “worthwhile” or a “waste of time,” a cause of “pain” or “joy” etc., and by no means mere “realities,” objective, neutral, indifferent entities:

The world, the worldly objects are there in the fundamental manner of life’s relating: concern.<sup>381</sup>

The access to the relating element of life is not yet another relation. Factic life is genuinely given only *im Vollzug des Sorgens*, in the performance of concern, in concern. The proper access to it is, obviously, not observation, but by somehow *being* this very performing: anything, life itself, can only show up, be experienced, as an object of concern. The access to life in its performing character lies therefore in a specific manner

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<sup>379</sup> „. Mit der Phänomenologischen Kategorie “Welt” besprechen wir zugleich, und das ist wichtig, das, was gelebt wird, wovon Leben gehalten ist, woran es sich hält.“

(GA 61, p.86)

<sup>380</sup> Crowell, *Heidegger, Husserl and the Space of Meaning*, p.124

<sup>381</sup> GA 61, p.90

of *being* concerned. It is only for someone living “in concern” that life can be made accessible in its performative character as the performing of *Sorge*. Differently put, the possibility of apprehending the performing sense precisely in its performing character is provided by our “having” it somehow already.

The genuine having of a relation [*Verhalten*] qua relation is a manner of its performing. Important is therefore *the being of performing* (temporalizing, the historical)...<sup>382</sup>

The possibility of disclosing the performative character of life lies in the „fact“ that being-concerneditself can be concerned with itself<sup>383</sup>. When the self-concerned self becomes – in the very movement of concern, that is, “in” concern - concerned about his concern for self and remains concerned about his concern for itself there arises the opportunity of apprehending life in its performing character. Life „occurs,“ that is, “is” in the performing of concern for self. It encounters itself for the most part in a worldly manner, by lapsing completely into that which it concerns about (the world), while the self as the very “activity” of concern is performed for the most part as a concern for things other than itself. Life „shines through“ this worldly character<sup>384</sup>: in it it is revealed both what life is (object-sense, what kind of an object it is) and that it is (being-sense). This occurrence, of course, is not an objective event in the natural world, but itself a manner in which concern is performed:

The way in which life (as a formal indicator) is something ... so that it itself, as its world, is something that is in such a way as to have the tendency, to “be” in the sense in which it performs the *having-itself*<sup>385</sup>

Decisive for Heidegger is therefore, time and again, the *fact* that life “is” or “occurs” *as* the manner in which the self is *having* its own self *as absorption* in its own world in which he lives concernedly: the having-itself and being are to be determined

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<sup>382</sup> „Das eigentliche Haben aber eines Verhaltens qua Verhalten ist ein Wie seines Vollzugs. Entscheidend ist also das Seins des Vollzugs (Zeitigung, das Historische)...“

<sup>385</sup> GA 61, p.60. See also „Der Bezug wird gehabt im Vollzug.“ (GA 59, p.62)

<sup>383</sup> GA 61, p.135-136.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., p.137

<sup>385</sup> „Wie Leben (formal-anzeigend) so etwas ist...als seine Welt so ist es selbst etwas, das “ist” in der Weise, die Tendenz zu haben, zu “sein” im Vollzugssinn des “sich” Habens.“ (GA 61, p.171)

from “the respective concrete situation, that is, from the lived lifeworld.<sup>386</sup>” Life becomes what it itself “is” in the self’s having-itself as the (its own) world in which the self lives.

### The self revisited

Heidegger searches for a disclosure of life more originary than traditional interpretations of life. Such an original disclosure can only be done with the consciousness that it is not a new interpretation of life that is needed, fixing somehow the shortcomings of previous interpretations and ending up supplanting them, but a full understanding of why traditional philosophy has always missed the *unum necessarium*, life in its uniqueness. The original disclosure of life must therefore go hand in hand with the attempt at explicating how life had the tendency to constantly lapse into its own mis-interpretation, in an interpretation of itself as an “object.” The assumption that previous philosophers had somehow gotten the whole “idea” of life wrong originates in Heidegger’s conviction that life cannot “be” an object of contemplation. What then is life? What life is has already been “expressed” in the very way in which life has “spoken” of itself. To get to that we need first to take “life” as something spoken of in a variety of contexts and in a variety of ways. Since we cannot describe life - as description presupposes again its objectification -, we must leave this word in its indeterminacy regarding the relational and performing sense. Whatever life is its sense must not be read off or into a particular life situation. So far Heidegger has come to know that much: the movement of understanding life is itself a unique performance of life that must be uniquely qualified to take itself somehow into consideration *as a performance of life*. Nevertheless, the vagueness surrounding the term “life” should not be taken for meaninglessness.

Whenever life is being spoken of, it is always addressed as *someone’s* life. In a formally indicative manner, therefore, life can be said to always involve *someone* somehow, an “I”: my life, your life, their lives etc. In order to again avoid the pitfalls of objectification, Heidegger does not yet decide what this “I,” intrinsically related to life, is. The I itself is left indeterminate. In a formally indicative manner, the “I” is meant

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<sup>386</sup> „...das Sichhaben und Sein bestimmt sich gerade seinem Sinne nach je aus der konkreten Situation, d.h. der gelebten Lebenswelt“ (GA 61, p. 172)

only as a “self,” itself left undetermined: the self can only be disclosed in *being* it, in living *as* self. “Life” indicates *formally* that a self is *da* somehow. A self, again, indicates formally a relation to oneself. In order to genuinely encounter something as a self, we must apprehend the sense of self as somehow *relating* to oneself and also of being there *for* oneself in this relating. In keeping with the phenomenological commandment to constantly keep away from objectifying the object of investigation, the sense of self as being somehow in “relation to and for self” is taken to indicate formally a dynamical, self-concerned *SichHaben*: the self ‘has’ oneself, is in one’s own possession. Accordingly, the sense of self indicates formally - that is, the very ways<sup>387</sup> in which it can be<sup>388</sup> genuinely experienced - the phenomenon of having-himself as coming oneself into one’s own possession<sup>389</sup>. “Self” as *SichHaben* is genuinely given only in the process of a concerned coming oneself into one’s own possession, or of a concerned self-appropriation of the self<sup>390</sup>. Factic life is always “*volle eigene*.” To be for a self means - in a formally indicative manner again, that is, without pre-judging either the manner in which we are going about the “being of self” or the manner (self-oriented or not) in which this being of self is concretely presented in that manner - to be coming oneself into one’s own possession. Moreover, the self is whatever it is only in, through and for this self-having. Thus “life” indicates formally a “being” in the process of bringing itself into one’s own possession (*Haben*). In a purely formally indicative manner, *life* can be interpreted *as a way of being*. Formally conceived-and-indicated, life is a way of being whose peculiarity lies in the fact that it “is” only as, in and for the tendency to be itself.

Of course, the burden now shifts from revealing the sense or senses in which life is what and how it is to showing how “being” itself can be revealed in its peculiarity: *Seinssein*.

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<sup>387</sup> hence the formal character

<sup>388</sup> hence the indicating character

<sup>389</sup> “die Tendenz des faktischen Lebens, zu “sein” in der Weise des Sich-selbst-zum-Haben-Bringens.” (GA 61, p.171)

<sup>390</sup> “bekümmerten Selbstaneignung des Selbst.” (GA 9, p. 35)

The formally indicative “I am”

That life is conceived and indicated a way of being can be also seen when, instead of engaging in a phenomenological investigation of the phenomenon of life as has been already addressed and interpreted in factic life, one starts explicating phenomenologically the sense in which an I is interpreted to be in the everyday understanding of the expression “I am” [*Ich bin*]:

In a formally indicative manner, the question concerning the sense of the being of factic life, or, concretely, the respective one’s own concrete life, can be framed as the question concerning the sense of ‘*I am*’<sup>391</sup>.

In order to avoid objectifying the phenomenon of “I am,” Heidegger takes it to refer to the unique kind of being there whose proper interpretation can only be arrived at from within itself, from within its own manner of being there. The sense of being of “I am” as well as the sense of “I” to be interpreted is left initially undetermined. What is not left undetermined, however, is the manner in which this phenomenon has already been and therefore is to be encountered: namely in *being* it, in the performance of “am” in “I am,” which itself is the sense in which the self is<sup>392</sup>. Only an “I” fully engaged in being itself can develop an understanding of what it means for itself “to be” and to be as itself<sup>393</sup>. Life, self and being are all now fundamental concepts closely intertwined.

Life can only be adequately interpreted from the performing of “am” and not from the self as an “I.” The determination of the way in which I *am*, life as my *being* me, life as my being in such a way as to have to be me, should take precedence over the determination of life as an “I” or “self” (the I as subject, consciousness, rationality, spirit etc.). Therefore the being (“am”) of the self becomes relevant for an understanding of life in and of itself:

In the specific character of being belonging to ‘I am’ decisive is “am” and not ‘I’. This approach is here taken as a formal indication into a radically different problematic: to bring life to show itself.<sup>394</sup>

The framing of the question of the sense of life as the question concerning the proper sense in which “I am” becomes fruitful only when I notice that in asking the

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<sup>391</sup> GA 61, p.172

<sup>392</sup> “eine Seinsweise des Seins des ‘ich’.” (Ga 9, p. 29)

<sup>393</sup> GA 9, p.29

<sup>394</sup> GA 61, p.174

question “Am I?” I leave open the possibility that I might not be myself. The interesting thing about the significance of “I am” for the entire problematic of an originary access to life in and of itself is that it appears to introduce a distinction now that will prove crucial to understanding Heidegger’s move from life to being. The object of investigation is, as always has been, life, factic life as concrete life experience. Factic life, however, in the “form” of “I am” can be interrogated with respect to its own kind of “am,” of being. In asking “Am I?” life is giving expression to (or *indicates*) its own way in which it is (*indicated*): as the tendency to be itself, or as the concern for being itself. In asking “Am I?” life is concernedly raising the possibility that it is in a way *improperto* the kind of being it itself is. I “am” the concern for “being myself”. My being and my being myself in concern are thus not to be immediately identified: existence is only a possibility rooted in facticity<sup>395</sup>. The mere possibility of asking the question, “Am I?,” indicates again that my being is not directly accessible: I am in such a way that my own “being” has to be disclosed and is to be disclosed only “in” being me, in having to be me. I am not in such a way as to experience or encounter the genuine sense in which I am directly and without preparation. The sense of my own being is not something I normally come across. The sense in which factic life is, which formally can be said to be the sense in which I am in being myself, is something “to be elaborated.”<sup>396</sup> It emerges only from, through and for the act of questioning the very sense in which I am, the sense of being proper to factic life. Such questioning is a possibility rooted in factic life. It is only in the concrete factic actualizing of a possibility of life to question itself with regard to the very sense in which it itself is, and in being such possibility, that opens up the possibility of encountering the sense in which life as life is, “*der Seinssinn des faktischen Lebens.*” What is therefore sought for is not *the* sense of being of life, but *a* sense in which factic life is, one obtained through my radical questioning of the sense in which “I am” and making thus possible an encountering of myself as myself, my being myself.

Life “in general” does not have a sense. Life is always *voll eigene*. It acquires a

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<sup>395</sup> “Faktizität und Existenz besagen nicht dasselbe, und der faktischen Seinscharakter des Lebens ist nicht bestimmt von der Existenz, diese ist nur eine Möglichkeit, die sich zeitigt *in dem* Sein des Lebens, das als faktisches zu bezeichnet ist.” (Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen des Aristoteles*, PIA, p.27)

<sup>396</sup> Auszubildenden (GA 61, p.176)

sense through my “living in” a tendency to question myself, the sense in which I myself am. This questioning is itself a factual life experience, a way in which life is. As factic life, I have been already *in* a possibility of me being myself. “I am” means having to be me. What this is can only be disclosed in and for the lived possibility of my radical questioning of my own being:

“One cannot ask directly and in general what existence is. It can become accessible in itself only in rendering facticity questionable, in the respective concrete *deconstruction* of facticity relative to its directions, motives and intentional availability.”

Formally conceived and indicated, life is *eine Weise des Seins*<sup>397</sup>. The only possible way in which life can be genuinely experienced is in the concern for being oneself. The formal indicative method of philosophy has the aim of intensifying the concern of self by radicalizing the “manner” in which the content-sense is *being concretely presented in a relating to it*.

Of course, being is just another formal indicative concept.<sup>398</sup> It only indicates formally the way in which the genuine experience of life can be performed: as a being which “is in such a way that it is concerned with its being in the very concrete temporalizing of its being.”<sup>399</sup>

One is what and how one becomes *in the process of being* oneself. One’s own being is not a fact, something “given” already, but a task: one has to be one’s own being. Life is not some thing. Life is, in a sense, a “production” [*Zeitigung*] of its own being. Life is not an “object,” but the fulfilling of a *way of being*. If one fails to understand that the being of life (as its own) is “had” (disclosed and performed at the same time!) only in

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<sup>397</sup> GA 63, p.7

<sup>398</sup> PIA, p.26

<sup>399</sup> “Das explizite Ergreifen einer Grundbewegtheit des faktischen Lebens selbst, das in der Weise ist, daß es in der konkreten *Zeitigung* seines Seins um sein Sein besorgt ist” (PIA, p.10). For an explanation of the different meanings of *Zeitigung*, see M. Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, p. 220: “‘Zeit’ means time. [...] *Zeitig*, ‘happening at the right time’, hence ‘early’, gave rise to *zeitigen*, ‘to let/make ripen, bring to maturity, bring about, produce’. Its affiliation with *Zeit* is lost in standard German, but Heidegger revives it, using (*sich*) *zeitigen* in the sense of ‘produce (itself) in time, extemporize, temporalize (itself)’. It retains the flavour of ‘producing’; hence it is not ‘to time,’ and Heidegger does not coin a term *zeiten*. It applies, in this specific Heideggerian sense, to timeliness...”

and for the act of calling its own being into question,<sup>400</sup> and that it can only emerge as a “result” and “in the process” of such questioning and for it, one fails to understand *das Sein des Lebens* in its uniqueness. The “essence” of life is that it is *ein Wie des Seins*.

Philosophy has now a redefined task: to reveal beings in what and how they are, in their being, but only for the sake of “showing” or disclosing life as the very “sense” in which beings as being “are” what and how they are. Life as the manner or sense of beings’ being-experienced can be disclosed only through the process of a radical destruction of life’s security and comfort – when it becomes utterly questionable. When the world has become highly questionable in its being (its what and how), the living self has the opportunity to “shine through.”

What is immediate: life. Indication of a being-character: life as being. Genuineness of the approach: being! Mode of being!... Life (especially restricted: subjective! ‘I’, self) is alien or too familiar; life philosophy: trivial!) It must be both! The object is consumed in ‘immediacy’ and decline! Not genuine: not as ‘being’ and the questionability of being, as worthy of questioning being.<sup>401</sup>

#### 1923 – Ontology: Hermeneutics of facticity

If in early 1919 Heidegger was trying to figure out a way to express and articulate the living character of any experience genuinely given as my own experience, efforts which will culminate a couple of years in the attempt to investigate the phenomenon of *Sichselbsthaben*, or “own-ness” constitutive of any genuinely lived life-experience, as of 1922 he will narrow down the task of phenomenology and define it now in ontological terms: phenomenology is about factic life but now formalized as *the being* (its pure sense of what and how) of factic life. It is about factic life *in its being*, and

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<sup>400</sup> Factically, not theoretically: in situations in which what one is becomes a problem. It is like asking questions having constantly in the back of one’s mind the possibility that one can no longer be what one is.

<sup>401</sup> „Das Zunächst: Leben. Anzeige eines Seinscharakters: Leben als Sein. Eigentlichkeit des Umgangs: Sein! Wiesein!... Das Leben (speziell eingchränkt: subjektivistisch! “Ich”, Selbst) ist fremd oder allzu bekannt; Lebensphilosophie, trivial! Muß beides sein! Gegenstand im “Zunächst” und Verfallen ist verbraucht! Nicht eigentlich; nicht als “Sein” und Seinsfraglichkeit, Seinsfragwürdigkeit.“ (GA 61, p.189)

eventually about being *as* being, the sense of being. The object of philosophical investigations is now “the *human Dasein* as interrogated about its character of being.<sup>402</sup>” The reason why *Dasein*, factic life<sup>403</sup> or the facticity of life, is now placed in the center of investigations has, of course, to do with Heidegger’s discovery that the being of such an entity is itself the concretization (*Zeitigung* – temporalization or maturation) of a certain way of being itself. This being is both a fact, *factum*, something already “made” and at the same time always “on its way to being itself.” Life is a way of finding and simultaneously bringing oneself into one’s own possession<sup>404</sup>. Life is being in such a way that one *is* in search for one’s own “*is*,” *being*. The mystery of life lies, as it were, in the fact that I am in such a way that I have to be myself. *Dasein* is the formally indicative term for that entity characterized above all by a sense of “own-ness” (*Eigenheit*<sup>405</sup>). My life is who I am, the task I always have to accomplish. I am always “in” the process of appropriating myself<sup>406</sup>. I always find myself in the process of accomplishing “who I am,” on my way to being “myself”:

*Dasein* is only in itself. It *is*, but as its *underway* to it.<sup>407</sup>

*Dasein* “is” *properly* who *Dasein* has been in play to be. The double play of being and being itself the accomplishing of being itself is what Heidegger designates by the term *facticity*. Facticity is the name for this mode of being:

*Facticity* is the designation for the kind of being characterizing ‘our’ ‘own’ *Dasein*.<sup>408</sup>

Phenomenology draws near ontology. It is not traditional ontology, however, in that its “object,” being, is not something that can be had<sup>409</sup> in experience: it can never be

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<sup>402</sup> “Der Gegenstand der philosophischen Forschung ist das *menschliche Dasein* als von ihr gefragt auf seinen Seinscharakter.“ (PIA, p. 10). See also GA 63, p.16 where the theme of philosophy is no longer “human *Dasein*” but rather “one’s own *Dasein*.”

<sup>403</sup> GA 63, p.80, 85

<sup>404</sup> GA 63, p.65

<sup>405</sup> *ibid.*, p.7. Can it be translated with “proper-ty”?

<sup>406</sup> GA 9, p.35; GA

<sup>407</sup> “*Dasein* ist nur in ihm *selbst*. Es *ist*, aber als das *Unterwegs* seines selbst zu ihm!” (GA 63, p.17)

<sup>408</sup> “*Faktizität* ist die Bezeichnung für den Seinscharakter “unseres” “eigenen” *Daseins*.” (GA 63, p.7)

<sup>409</sup> “Sein selbst nie möglicher Gegenstand eines Habens, sofern es auf es

given as “something” one can intentionally be directed to. As was the case with life, “being” only becomes “apparent” only one “does” certain things, namely when one goes against the natural tendency to get absorbed in the “content” of experience, and focuses instead on the manner of concrete experiencing. It only appears “in” such counter-movement. This being cannot be contemplated: one cannot see “it,” one can be “it:” to be for *Dasein* is to be “it”. This *being* will always have for Heidegger a transitive meaning built into it: the table is, the car is, but “I am” for me always means, “I am *myself*”. I am “it,” I have my “own” life.

Being – transitive: to be factic life!<sup>410</sup>

Accordingly, factic life can be understood in a formally indicative manner as *Dasein*, a unique mode of being (being “there”). *Dasein* is that wherein *Dasein* lives.<sup>411</sup> And I am also the manner itself in which I can be myself:

If one takes ‘life’ as a mode of ‘being’, then ‘factic life’ means: our own *Dasein* as ‘there’ in some form of explicitness of its character of being.<sup>412</sup>

Explicitness therefore is itself a mode of being of this being. To be in an interpretation of oneself is not something super-imposed on this being, it is not as if in addition to being what it is, *Dasein* has also the ability to interpret itself. *Dasein* is interpreting, and interpreting oneself. In other words, one’s own life *is* itself the interpretation of what factic life *is* (its sense of being): *Dasein* “lives in” an interpretation of itself. As such, the disclosing of one’s own being *is* a certain mode of being: “The interpretation is a being of the kind of being peculiar to factic life itself.<sup>413</sup>” This interpretedness “in” which *Dasein* lives is not, however, easily appropriated. It can “show” itself only when it fails to deliver, as it were. In such a breaking-up of everyday

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selbst, das *Sein*, ankommt.” (GA 63, p.7)

<sup>410</sup> GA 63, p.7

<sup>411</sup> GA 63, p.48

<sup>412</sup> “Nimmt man “Leben” als seine Weise des “Seins”, dann besagt “faktisches Leben”: unser eigenes *Dasein* als “da” in irgendwelcher seinsmäßigen Ausdrücklichkeit seines Seinscharakter.” (GA 63, p.7). *Seinsmäßig* could be translated with “ontological” or, more awkward, “beingwise,” but I believe if I do so the translation misses the point, namely that the explicitness *is* how this being comes to disclose its own being.

<sup>413</sup> GA 63, p.15

interpretedness, Dasein has now the opportunity of interrogating its own self, and be 'it', in the form of an interrogation about beings as being - instead of being related to beings through sense. In a certain mode of being itself, the self could come to experience what it means for itself to be itself: to be "it." "It is *there* only insofar as it 'is' a life each time.<sup>414</sup>" In such an experience *Dasein* encounters itself: its own being is disclosed in its being for this being. The genuine self-interpretation of life is life's most decisive way to encounter itself, that is, to be itself. For Heidegger this self-interpretation as self-encounter has taken place in philosophy and history, most notably, in the philosophy of history.

In conclusion, life is a mode of being. The formally indicative name for life as a mode of being is *Dasein*: *Dasein* is the designation for the being characteristic of "human life" as well as of "the world,"<sup>415</sup> since life is always life in a world. Life can be encountered *as* a way of being characterized primarily by concern for self, for being itself. This way of being can itself be encountered only in a certain way of being *for* itself. The way in which *Dasein* as a way of being itself can be encountered is a possibility of this being: it can be encountered only in the self's being its own self, being itself *proper* or authentically. *Existence* is a way of being of *Dasein*, and as such a way in which *Dasein*, itself a way of being, can be encountered. *Existence* is the formally indicative term for the mode of being of *Dasein*, the possibility of being itself in the most authentic way, 'it' itself, which itself is not an accomplishment of an inquisitive and deep understanding, but a being, a certain kind of living, and in which *Dasein* can encounter itself as *Dasein*, that is, *exists* in the most authentic possibility of it being itself. Philosophy does not aim at "taking cognizance of" (one's own) being, but at existential knowing: in and by it *Dasein* strives to *be* itself for itself in the transparency of its own being. In other words, it strives at "being."<sup>416</sup> The explicitness of its own being in which *Dasein* "lives" and which itself makes possible, as an articulation of this explicitness itself, the self-interpretation of *Dasein*, is something "woraus es lebt, wovon es *lebt*

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<sup>414</sup> "Sie ist nie "Gegenstand", sondern Sein; sie ist *da* nur, sofern je ein Leben sie "ist". (GA 63, p.19)

<sup>415</sup> "Mit "Dasein" wird gleicherweise das Sein von Welt wie vom menschlichen Leben bezeichnet." (GA 63, p.86)

<sup>416</sup> GA 63, p.18

wird (ein Wie des Seins.)<sup>417</sup>” This interpretation is “what life in its most authentic Self is and through which it is.<sup>418</sup>”

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<sup>417</sup> *ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>418</sup> GA 61, p.87

## Chapter Eight: Concluding Chapter

### Introduction

We are now in a position to not only to review Heidegger's transition from *Erlebnis* and *Leben* to *Sein*, but also to point out the motives that led Heidegger to such a move and even to evaluate their philosophical validity. In this last section I will try to defend the claim that (1) Heidegger's main preoccupation has in fact been all along with bringing to methodical grasp the very phenomenon of "en-owing" (*Eigenheit, sich er-eignen*) he discovered early on as the fundamental characteristic of *living* experiences, and (2) that the move from *life* to *being* required to some extent by the very ontological-methodological considerations called for by the very "object" under investigation, namely *the mineness-character of all of my experiences lived always only as and in my living as self (being myself), in my experiencing something*, is a narrowing down of the topic itself, a purification, as it were, of that which Heidegger is after, a "formalization" of "life" meant to bring it more clearly into view, and by no means an answer to, or a resolution of, the problematic of life: *being* refers to *how* life (always one's own) *is*. *Being* is not a different topic, but life as *it-self*. The question, of course, remains whether this formally indicative move from life to being is indeed capable of delivering what it proposes to do, namely to find a way to grasp methodically the very *living* character of life, or to put it in more formally indicative terms, the *being* of life. The professed impossibility of this "object" to be intended as such in a cognitive orientation towards it raises doubts as to the possibility of such an endeavor. Life, being are not, after all, objects in the usual sense. With the move from life to being Heidegger has indeed more precisely defined that which he has had in mind all along: with this move, however, he does not appear to be in a methodologically superior position to bring to systematic grasp that which he is after, life as a mode of being. It should come as no surprise therefore to see that Heidegger's contributions to life philosophy and then to the thinking of being as it evolves into *Sein und Zeit* not only originate in but as a matter of fact are almost all accomplished when Heidegger is still in transition from life to being. Dasein's existentials are all the categories discovered by Heidegger to belong to life, to be the very ways in which life "comes to itself." My claim is that Heidegger has managed indeed to

determine even more pointedly that which is at stake, namely life *as* a mode of being, or being as and through “my” being, but he is still, methodologically speaking, in the same difficult position as before: how to bring being as always my “own” being, as my accomplishing, performing of the kind of being I myself am, in a systematic manner into view. The formally indicative method of philosophy is not a “productive” method to the effect that it is not by itself capable of bringing the object under investigation to a more genuine experience. The method of philosophy has, in the end, a prohibitive or defensive effect: it is, more than anything else, a method of avoiding falling back on the objectifying attitude; as such the method is only indirectly, if at all, capable of “producing” new insights. It is, in other words, a way to clear the path towards a more genuine pre-conception of the object, which in and by itself does not guarantee that such a pre-conception can be achieved nor how can it be achieved.

Crucial to understanding life as living are two elements: (1) to live is to live in an understanding of itself, and (2) the way in which I have *always already* been and understood *myself* is the very explicitness of my own being that I have to be. The performing character found initially to be the distinguishing mark of any living experience, then the very performing of concern for self, then the performing of “am” in “I am,” that is, of my *being* me as myself, and much later the modes in which *Dasein* “is” as being-in-the-world, is “interpreted” every time without a clear indication of how and why such an interpretation is justified. How Heidegger arrives, methodologically speaking, at these specific interpretations of *Vollzugdes Lebens* remains unclear: the phenomenological intuition is ultimately justified by an “intimacy” with the “issues themselves.” Of all the three senses making up the internal structure of a phenomenon, the performing character remains always the most enigmatic.

### *Erlebnis*

From the beginning Heidegger was convinced that the world posited or entailed by theoretical knowledge does not make room for comprehending why things appear to us the way they do. All sciences and even philosophy, as modes of articulating the world

in understanding, have their “roots in life.”<sup>419</sup> The world as is posited in and by theoretical attitude has already been somehow disclosed in the mere living of the world in pre-theoretical experience. If the world is made solely of objects given originally in an act modeled on the act of perception, as theoretical cognition presupposes, and by an object for understanding we always mean an object “before our eyes” posited in separation from the knowing subject, then it becomes impossible to account for *my* experience of the object, my making *sense* of it: the experience itself will never be capable of becoming an “object” in this sense. If things do make sense, then it would be natural to inquire about the way in which things do make sense to us the way they do: the object is what and how it is “in” my experiencing it. The experience of the object as *my* experience of it is not to be found in the world theoretically conceived, that is, in a world made of (reified) objects only. Moreover, the world as experienced prior to our intending it as an object of perception, and, by extension, reflection, is already much richer and fuller than the world as intended in theoretical attitude.

It was thus clear for Heidegger what philosophy should, at least initially, be about: the object of philosophy was the pre-theoretical experience, that is, *how* things are lived *meaningfully* in our experiencing of them prior to any attempt at articulating our understanding of them theoretically. Such a topic so conceived required, of course, a rigorous distinction between theoretical and pre-theoretical experience. The starting-point and the very way in which such a distinction was to be elaborated had to be found in the pre-theoretical experience itself. If theory is a “de-living” to some extent of the way in which we already experience the world in natural attitude, then theory proves incapable of explaining itself. The “origin of theory” was of a non-theoretical nature. It was the pre-theoretical experience for Heidegger that contained the key to understanding the nature and limits of theoretical experience itself. But the elucidation of what gives itself in this pre-theoretical experience had to be “scientific;” in other words it had to take place as a “categorical” elucidation.

But how could pre-theoretical experience, genuine lived experience as such, become the focus of philosophy without being objectified in the first place? Heidegger’s

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<sup>419</sup> Richard Polt, *Heidegger. An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) p.17

first step towards finding a solution to this legitimate problem was to point out that this “experience” we try to grasp categorially was not an alien, external thing that has nothing or little to do with us, but “something” which I myself am and live. It is “me.” Above anything else, such an experience was always *mine* somehow. Moreover, this experience was not mute and incomprehensible in itself. In (pre-theoretical) lived experience life has already been interpreted. Accordingly, philosophy’s aim was not to construct or reconstruct the way in which things make sense, but simply to *make explicit*, to lay out, to thematize the very “categories” which life itself has already employed to interpret itself and, in doing so, to “live and be” in such an interpretation. The implicit claim Heidegger is already making here is that life is a kind of entity that has to “interpret itself” as the only way in which it can “be” itself *properly*. Heidegger will make this claim explicitly and draw out all its philosophical potential in 1923, when *being* is already replacing *life* as the theme of philosophy<sup>420</sup>.

To grasp lived experience in its peculiarity amounted thus to “immersing” in the very way in which I had already been conceiving/interpreting myself in relation to the things I was involved with pre-theoretically. This “immersing” was a “repetition” of life’s “own” understanding. The repetition or “partaking of” lived experience, however, was conducted with the intention of “making explicit” its own unique mode of understanding. Philosophy therefore was essentially an “explication,” a laying-out of an understanding as a possibility of that understanding itself. The access to lived experience was a certain “partaking” of a lived experience we had already performed or lived through countless of times before, this time however with a intensified focus on how this “experience” *itself* has *already* disclosed itself to itself *as* itself. In Kisiel’s words, it was a return of “experiencing life upon already experienced life.”<sup>421</sup> The access to lived experience in its genuineness was to be provided by those particular “experiences” in life-experience in which life had already disclosed itself to itself as itself. The science of *Erlebnisse* was not based, according to Heidegger, on a certain “reflection on” *Erlebnisse*. Natorp has already made it clear that reflection on lived experiences cannot

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<sup>420</sup> “dieser [Gegenstand, my insertation] sein Sein hat als auslegungsfähiger und –bedürftiger, daß es zu dessen Sein gehört, irgendwie in Augelegtheit zu sein.” (GA 63, p.15)

<sup>421</sup> Kisiel, *The Genesis of Being and Time*, p.48

but end up in reifying them: “reflection necessarily dissects and objectifies the reflected-upon, transforming its character by ‘stilling the stream’ of mental life.<sup>422</sup>” Heidegger’s way out of this apparently insoluble problem of the proper way of grasping the living character of life without objectifying it was to point to those experiences (life stories, biographies, philosophy of life, philosophy of history) in life in which life had already somehow conceived of itself and thus showed itself to itself without at the same time objectifying itself, and raise the possibility of there being a way of conceiving of life while remaining “in” life altogether and of elaborating it in a manner fully consistent with the non-objectifying manner of self-interpretation proper to life. The possibility of a science of lived experiences was to be elaborated out of the “way” in which life had already conceived/experienced itself.

The possibility of grasping lived experience in its unique character as the source of intelligibility was conditioned by the kind of “object” lived experience itself was. Heidegger never tired repeating over and over again that *how* lived experience was to be approached had to be determined by *the manner in which* this “object” has been “had” in experience originarily. Consequently, ontological considerations took precedence to some extent over methodological ones. Heidegger was aware that too much insistence on the “method” of philosophy could be a fateful decision preventing us from ever experiencing the unique kind of object we are trying to grasp in the first place. He charged Natorp with letting methodological considerations decide too much the kind of object *Erlebnis* was meant to be, instead of letting the object, *Erlebnis*, decide the proper method of addressing it<sup>423</sup>. The critique of Jaspers’ philosophy too consisted mainly of the same charge: too many uncritical assumptions about the way in which the object was to be approached crept in the pre-conception of the object, so much so that any ulterior insights into *life* were secretly guided by these assumptions and could not longer allow for a truly genuine experience of life. The insights into the unique kind of entity lived experience was (*es weltet, Er-eignis, Bedeutsamkeit*) largely preceded Heidegger’s methodological elaborations of the proper access to it. Nonetheless,

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<sup>422</sup> Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning*, p.123

<sup>423</sup> The main charge of Heidegger’s critique of Natorp was the claim that Natorp showed an unrestrained inclination to “*ein Primat der Methode.*” (GA 59, p.113)

methodological considerations were necessary above all to ensure that ontological insights were on the right track. This double play of ontological and methodological considerations eventually flew into a conception of philosophical method as constant renewal and renewed approval of the insights arrived at in the process of “partaking” of life: the insights were to “be critically appropriated in light of a renewed showing of these ‘things’ as the ultimate criterion of phenomenological research.<sup>424</sup>” Once Heidegger became clear on what exactly he was after, namely *my* lived experiencing of something as the source of meaning and in whose performing life gives expression to its *own* interpretation of itself, he will *from now on* tirelessly try to develop a method appropriate to this “topic.”

Kisiel was therefore right: Heidegger has indeed arrived at his lifelong topic in the early Freiburg lectures. He would, from now on, continuously refine “this” topic, but never abandon it as a topic of research. The only qualification is, however, that this topic is not that much a “topic” as is a “manner” in which a “topic” is what it is. His focus was indeed on lived experience, but the ultimate aim was the way in which lived experience as a meaningful experience of something can so be carried out as to make possible, from within itself, a disclosure of *itself* as the source of its own intelligibility. Kisiel’s idea that Heidegger’s “topic is a double play of matter and method, What and How, drawn to a point where they are one and the same<sup>425</sup>” should be qualified as follows: WHAT Heidegger was after was a HOW (and not the other way around). He was interested in methodological issues not *because* he was a philosopher in the first place, as Crowell, in my opinion, mistakenly assumes<sup>426</sup>, but simply because he was after the very “way” in which life is so lived that a self-interpretation of life is not only possible but always already operative in any attempt at grasping the living character of life. He never asked, what is *Erlebnis*?; on the contrary, his question was always: how is experience experiencing so as to show itself as itself and as making sense of itself?

And what were Heidegger’s first and arguably most enduring insights into the

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<sup>424</sup> John van Buren, “The Young Heidegger and phenomenology,” in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, pp.239-272

<sup>425</sup> Kisiel, *The Genesis of Being and Time*, p.21

<sup>426</sup> Crowell, p.117

kind of “something” *Erlebnis* was and that would make up from now on his “pre-conception”(later *sense of being*) of *Erlebnis* prior to any focused elaborations of it, and significantly determine the kind of method called for by such an object of investigation? Lived experience was to be *in advance* approached as: (1) something we ourselves *are*, we are it, it is our life; (2) something so unique and so fundamentally different from any object-like, or reified entity (*Ereignis*, neither *Sache* nor *Vorgang*); (3) something whose fundamental character lies not in being some thing, but in “being out to something” (*Aussein auf Etwas*); a carrying out of a way of having something as something; (4) something of the character of a *Self* (*Ich, Selbst, Mein*) always experiencing itself but not necessarily as a self (*voll eigene*, never an “isolated act,<sup>427</sup>” *sich er-eignen*); (4) something that was itself *its own* “expression,” the articulation of how it had already understood *itself* “in relation to” whatever was to be experienced (the world in *Bedeutsamkeit*). This “object” as so conceived (or had) in pre-conception was to be further elaborated and elaborated in a manner consistent with its own object-character. This elaboration had to be a categorical elucidation. At this stage in his philosophical journey, Heidegger has become aware that *Erlebnis* is missed as a phenomenon once we lose sight of that which renders it “alive” in the first place: the “presence” of a “self” as *Er-eignis*.

How does life know itself? The interpretation of life presupposes thus that life itself can find a way to lay out its own manner in which it knows or encounters itself.

### *Selbstleben*

The next decisive step Heidegger will take would be to equate the living character of life with the character of any experience to be “my” experience somehow, *Leben* is essentially *Selbstleben*, the world is always self-world, life is the life of self. The science of lived experiences takes the form now of an elaboration of the very way in which the self knows itself in ‘living’ (it-self), of course, in a pre-theoretical way. To know itself amounts to saying that the self is somehow disclosed to it, and lives “in” self-disclosure. The self in the concrete movement and performing of life experience is, according to Heidegger, “the ultimate question of philosophy.” That life experience can

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<sup>427</sup> GA 63, p.87

itself be experienced in its living character, that is, can show itself in experience somehow, is then to be investigated in the form of the question regarding the proper way in which any lived experience lives and is lived as “mine.” To say that life itself is somehow experienced amounts to saying that “I” myself am somehow co-experienced in “my own” experiences: I not only live but “am lived” (*gelebte Erlebnisse*) as well. It is now the moment when *Erlebnis* is further refined as *Lebenserfahrung* via *Situation*: a *situation*, which is a full, concrete (life) experience of worldly somethings (“spring semester,” “marriage,” “reading a book,” “going on a mountain trip” etc.), is *how* I co-experience myself (always as a “whole” self). I am *da* somehow in my worldly life experiences. Life experience is the “whole active and passive human comportment to the world.” It is the self’s experience of something (active) along with the co-experience of the self itself (passive). The question now becomes, how does the self co-experience itself in and as its own worldly life experiences? And how can Heidegger make explicit this showing up of the self in its own experiences?

Crucial, again, is that the living self is not an object; it is what it is, concretely and wholly, only in its “own” *experiencing*. It is an ongoing fulfillment of tendencies, a “self-exercise” rooted in itself. The sense in which the self is *da* in its experiencing must be disclosed in accordance with its own sense, that is, in accordance with the very way in which it shows itself (to itself) within its own experience. First of all, the way in which it shows itself (to itself) is not explicit. It has to be made explicit. In experiencing, I find myself neither as an object, nor a self, but always already engaged in various situations. For the most part “I” do not show up as a self, an “I,” nor as a subject or consciousness, but *as* playing a role in the situations I always find myself engaged in. The self as engagement in situations is disclosed to itself *as* the manner in which the with-which of engagement *makes sense*: as a meaningful world. Furthermore, fully immersed in experience, in the usual daily activities, I always find myself *concerned* with one thing or another, but always somehow concerned. The self *is there*, therefore, *in concern*. “World” and “concern” are the very categories of life used by life to interpret itself. They are formalized in the sense that they have lost their ordinary references, but are maintained in their capacity to refer one to the very manner/sense/how in which life can be encountered from within itself. The living self, the living character of lived

experience, is *disclosed to itself* - in an implicit manner nevertheless – “as” the character of meaningfulness or familiarity of the world in which it lives.

To understand the next step Heidegger will make we must keep in mind that philosophy, as he conceives it, is life’s own movement to thematize or make explicit its own self-understanding in and as its own experience of a world. This thematization, however, should not be understood as a simple tendency to self-reflection, to mere taking notice of itself, but as life’s striving for being *it-self*, for appropriating itself. The possibility to categorically elaborate the mode of understanding peculiar to life in its world would be opened up by Husserl’s phenomenology. As understanding life is intentional through and through. Concrete life experience is an intentional phenomenon. Adopting the language of Husserl’s phenomenology, Heidegger will define a phenomenon as the unity of three intentional moments: the content sense (Husserl’s noema), relating sense (Husserl’s manner of intending), and “performing sense” or “temporalizing meaning” (the performance of the intentional relation – the equivalent in Husserl would be “making-present.”) The living self is *da* in the sense that any life experience can be articulated in accordance with the three intentional senses. To experience something (the pre-worldly or living something) coincides thus with the concrete performing of the relating sense in which the content shows up. The *da* of the self in experience gets expressed and articulated in the way in which “things” have already been encountered, taken as, showed up or “given” in the pre-conception belonging necessarily to factic life, without which things would not possibly show up as the things they are: in the context of worldly meaningfulness *a priori* lived by the self, the self is disclosed to itself. Life, once again, *is* comprehension, is itself a way of rendering everything meaningful. And the self is *da as* the manner in which that towards which life is always out to, has already “showed up” in pre-conception somehow. The living, pre-worldly something of experience shows itself up as the “way,” mode or sense in which life already approached (as-what), addressed (as-how) and concretely performed this approaching and addressing *in* a situation. Contrary to what Husserl believed, for Heidegger interpretation, and not sense perception, was what is primary: as he will later

put it, we do not say what we see, but see what we say<sup>428</sup>.

Heidegger himself wishes to make primary precisely the prior unthematic categorical ‘interpretedness’ or ‘expressedness’ of all experience in preconception, without which the sensed object would never have been accessible.<sup>429</sup>

If Husserl took intentionality as the structure of consciousness, ultimately of the transcendental I, that renders everything meaningful, and as such as the possibility of making sense of this very process of making sense, for Heidegger intentionality becomes the fundamental function of the living self always in “need” not to “understand” but to “be itself.” “Understanding” is one way, perhaps the way, in which someone always in need to be oneself is exercising this very need. The ultimate goal of philosophy is not cognition or knowledge, but “being,” “living as self.”

The meaningfulness of the situation is precisely that which, for Heidegger, constitutes the way in which the living self is *da* to itself. The meaningfulness of any situation is articulated in the intentional structure of preconception. In preconception the living self encounters itself in a way more primary than in any ordinary experience of something wherein the self is fully absorbed, and the concern is primarily concern *for* something, and concern for self. The meaningfulness of a situation, when things “make sense” and the self “finds its way” in dealing with them, is the self-disclosure of the self.

In preconception the living self has been disclosed to itself. Philosophy as hermeneutics has the task of “re-calling” the preconception, “doing” it again, for the sake of laying it out, making it explicit. In ordinary life, fully caught and immersed in dealing with various problems and things, the self is merely blindly repeating and reinforcing a self-disclosure (in preconception), a certain manner of addressing and conceiving of worldly things, its own self included, that is simply taken for granted and no longer regarded as itself *one decisive, critical* interpretation of the proper way in which the self is *da*. The *there* of the self is merely preserved and reinforced instead of being appropriated and turned into an opportunity for self to decide it-self. In ordinary living, the self is lost in that it lives in the forgetfulness of its being a self, and of its own

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<sup>428</sup> Heidegger, *History of The Concept of Time*, p.56

<sup>429</sup> John van Buren, “The Young Heidegger and phenomenology,” in *Man and World*, 23, 1990, p. 257

“calling” to be a self. Proximally and for the most part, the self lives absorbed in its worldly engagements, and in so doing passes over the opportunity of understanding the worldly engagements as its way of being there. The tendency of the in-the-world-living self to be itself is lived only in its dedication to the world. When the meaningfulness of the world collapses, the self can now deal with itself *explicitly*. When the world is seen in that towards which the in-the-world-living-self is oriented, the self finds itself “called upon” and “on its way” to deciding who it is. Life is ultimately the dynamic between “me” and “my self.” In ordinary life, however, life has become unproblematic. Life has to be made again problematic, uncertain, and insecure for the sake of opening up a way for a more genuine self-appropriation. In those concrete worldly situations in which life has already found an inner motive to become questionable and problematic to itself (“Am I?”, Jaspers’ notion of limit-situations, philosophy of life, history), Heidegger’s proposal is to partake of them in such a way as to retain the “motivational” aspect as much as possible, that is, the element that prompted such a “controversy” regarding one’s own life in the first place. Philosophy must retain for understanding the questionability of life, and even enhance it, and not the “solutions” (fulfillments of possibilities projected in understanding) and answers offered thus far in its response. In the solution/answer offered – that is, in the actual interpretations of life – philosophy has to trace back the preconception that led to and render meaningful the proposed ‘solution’ (*that* interpretation of life). The intent is “eminently critical and in accord with the tradition of enlightenment.<sup>430</sup>” Philosophy is ultimately life’s own way of coming to *itself* since in philosophical interpretation life’s “understanding does not become something else<sup>431</sup>” but itself. Philosophy is the working out of the possibilities projected in understanding, that is, an interpretation (*Auslegung*), laying-out, unfolding, ex-plication<sup>432</sup> of the preconception for the sake of a more genuine appropriation of the self. The self becomes existentially it-self in such a reflective appropriation: life comes to itself. The self *is* the

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<sup>430</sup> Jean Grondin, “The Ethical and Young Hegelian Motives in Heidegger’s Hermeneutics of Facticity” in Th. Kisiel and Van Buren (eds.), *Reading Heidegger from the Start* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999) p.350

<sup>431</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, p. 188

<sup>432</sup> lat. *explicare* = *ex-* (out) – *plicare* (to fold).

exercising of this self-appropriation. Time and again, Heidegger's steadfast focus appears to be constantly on the "selfhood" or the "own" dimension of life without which it would no longer be *my own* life: for him, life is characterized fundamentally, above anything else, by the concern for self or, better yet, the demand, call or need, even burden to *be itself*. Life is something "in need" to be *itself*: formally indicatively, life is a being in need of being itself. And Heidegger is also unwavering in his conviction that this "concern for self" or "has-to-be-itself" is the source of intelligibility, the origin of sense. The world makes sense out of and in terms of this "concern for self," of this need to be itself. The self itself is what and who it is out of the concern for self. Life becomes explicit in the 'exercising' of (*Vollzug*) the concern for self, in other words, when it itself comes to grasp its need to be itself. The "need" to be it-self belongs to the very being of this being. In laying out the preconception at work in self-understanding, as in any understanding of anything at all, life becomes explicit on its own "need" to be itself and can now develop a sense for a more "appropriate" way to come be itself *understandingly*.

*Michselbsthaben – as lived time*

The next element needed to understand why Heidegger moved from *life* to *being* is the historicity of life. Time itself is disclosed as time in and by the self's "need" to be itself. "In the lived experience as such which I have lived through I have *myself*." What historicity will bring new to the table is (1) that the living self finds itself only in 're-living,' in retrieving itself from its own past (having-been) (2) that in "retrieving" itself from its own have-been, the self lives in an interpretation of itself that already decided what and who the self *is*; and (3) life is ultimately faced with the "burden" of deciding what and who it was, is and will be. All these new insights will pave the way to the next step: the living self is in such a way that its own being is an "issue" for itself. This "entity" *is* not, not in the same sense in which a table, for example, is; the self *is* only insofar as it is deciding, out of its own having-been and for its future, who it is.

In laying out the preconception operative in "history" as a phenomenon that we already experience, that is, in the various meanings "history" has come to have in ordinary language, in other words, by interpreting "history" as a formal indicator,

Heidegger tries to trace back and outline the projected meaningfulness whose one possible fulfillment is those very meanings of “history.” This *a priori projected meaningfulness* represents the self at ground zero, the self-disclosure of the self, the *da* of the living self.

What history as a formal indicator reveals is that the self finds itself as always already having been caught in certain way of understanding itself and the world it lives in. The self is bound to rediscover itself in what and how it has been. This discovery or self-appropriation, however, is not a mere taking note of itself in the past, where the past is understood as a region of beings comprising anything which is “no longer” present. The self needs to recapitulate, go back to its own past experiences in order to be now in a position to retrieve itself. The self comes to itself, “has” itself only in and as its retrieving from its own having-been. The self *is*, that is, can be only historically. The ‘performance’ of living has a ‘historical’ character. The self is living in the sense that it “stretches” temporally. It is itself the “stretching of temporality:” it is and determined to be so by knowing that it itself is who it is as having become the one who it is. Furthermore, his ‘knowledge’ of one’s own having-become as an integral part of what one is presently is crucial in shaping one’s own future. Heidegger finds this experience of ‘lived time’ as the very way in which the self comes to itself in primitive Christian life experience: there one’s own life ‘is decided’ by one’s ‘knowing’ of one’s own having become for the sake of a ‘imminent’ future.

On the other hand, “history” is not something added to the self, but the very condition of possibility for the self to “have” itself. “History” is the participatory living of life, the familiarity of life with itself<sup>433</sup>. History is not an appendage to the self, but the condition of possibility for self to become appropriated as itself. History, again, is not the collection of things past, but that which “disturbs” the self and constantly calls upon it to decide its own being.

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<sup>433</sup> “Geschichte ist hier nicht verstanden als historische Wissenschaft, sondern als lebendiges Miterleben, als Vertrautsein des Lebens mit sich selbst und seiner Fülle.“ (GA 58, p.252)

## Conclusion

The living self is always living in a self-interpretation. In factic life this interpretation takes the form of an understanding of “what is going on” in a particular situation. Any disturbance in the taken-for-granted familiarity of the self with a situation could become an occasion for self to “look for itself.” Life is ultimately the struggle to come back to oneself from self-alienation. Once in the movement to snatch itself back from alienation, life does not encounter *it-self* as an object.

For as long as life is, life remains essentially a *movement*, a *doing*, a *performance*, and consequently it can encounter itself genuinely only as a *movement*, *performance*, *doing*. In *being* [*Vollzug*] somehow [*Bezug*] oriented towards a wordly something [*Gehalt*] life “knows” itself already, ‘has’ itself but in a way what does not call for an explication; this knowledge/interpretation is “lived” through and only shown or “indicated formally” by the very manner in which the self’s being-oriented-towards takes place factically, concretely, historically. This implicit, “lived” self-interpretation of life is the “origin of meaning,” and has to be made explicit, in other words, has to be appropriated. This movement corresponds to Heidegger’s transition from being *gelebt* to being *erlebt*, from being implicit to becoming explicit. Such a “turning back of life upon itself” can only be done in the manner of life, that is, in *being-oriented-towards*-something, in living out to. But what Heidegger tries to distinguish in it is *how* this being-oriented-towards-something *indicates* the *da* of the self, the way in which the self’s own being is in play for the self. The in-the-world-living self lives always “in” an interpretation of what it means for it to be. The living is “done” or “performed” as a movement *in* itself, *as* itself, *for* itself, *out of* itself and even *against* itself since life *is* “its own need to be itself.” Life is the “exercising” of the need to be itself. *Die Vollzug des Selbst* remains for Heidegger the highest philosophical prize that can only be formally indicated.

As such life can encounter itself as *life* only in those situations in which life *itself* has found *itself in need* to come to a decision about *itself*. Philosophy as life’s self-interpretation can only succeed as a repetition of these situations for the sake of an illumination (explicitation, laying-out) of that intentional pre-conception that renders life problematic, but not necessarily in a theoretical sense: problematic in the sense that it

*itself* becomes a problem for itself, an undecided “issue.” Philosophy is life’s own “movement” of making explicit its own *need* to decide itself. The self, of course, is not an isolated entity that finds itself in an external relation to the world in which it lives. *Itself* means also the way in which its own world is. To decide itself is to decide the way in which its “own” world is.

This is the role, I believe, Heidegger assigned to formal indicators: the formal indicator ‘indicates’ those experiences in which a decision is being made as to what and how life understands itself to be, or is to be. The *being-oriented-towards-the-world* is the expression of life’s own identity. It is life’s own way of re-mind itself of its own ‘need’ to be itself (concern for self) and of how life ‘now’ is already a “satisfaction” or “fulfillment” of this need. In ordinary life, the self is ‘exercising’ the need to be itself by falling constantly back on an interpretation of itself (and its world) blindly accepted as the last solution to what one is and should be. To interpret “life” as a formal indicator is to “go back to” what made life “questionable” in the first place: in the questionability of one’s own being life itself appears as an “issue” to itself, as in need to decide who it is. One’s own being is decided in the ways in which the questionability of one’s own being is being “exercised” by the self.

This is Heidegger’s decisive discovery that prompted him to abandon life and embrace *being* as that which philosophy is ultimately concerned with, philosophy as life’s own movement of making itself explicit in its own need to be itself. But *being* for Heidegger will always mean *being it-self*, *one’s own being*, and never ‘being’ in general, or the “sense” as such of what something is. ‘Being’ means ‘*being it-self*,’ life as being. What makes life problematic and questionable, in other words, is not *life per se*, Heidegger appears to argue, but a *sense* in which it itself can be.

What is immediate: life. Indication of a being-character: life as being. Genuineness of the approach: being! Mode of being!... Life (especially restricted: subjective! ‘I’, self) is alien or too familiar; life philosophy: trivial!) It must be both! The object is consumed in ‘immediacy’ and decline! Not genuine: not as ‘being’ and the questionability of being, as worthy of questioning being.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> „Das Zunächst: Leben. Anzeige eines Seinscharakters: Leben als Sein. Eigentlichkeit des Umgangs: Sein! Wiesein!... Das Leben (speziell eingchränkt: subjektivistisch! “Ich”, Selbst) ist fremd oder allzu bekannt; Lebensphilosophie,

One's own being as the sense in which one can be itself, I believe, rightly regarded by Heidegger as that which is at issue in and for life, and also at issue in any attempt at making explicit the "living" character of life, but by itself is no "solution" to life problematic. It only represents the mode in which life can be genuinely encountered: in the 'exercising' of the questionability of "one's own being." Heidegger is thus correct in moving from life to being but the move is not from one topic to another: being as the sense of one's own being at issue in one's living is the very way in which life, encountering its own immanent need to be itself, wants to be itself. But the difficulties besetting Heidegger's first attempt to grapple the living character of *Erlebnis* are by no means overcome. They are still there. And it should come as no surprise to see Heidegger essentially repeating in *Being and Time* what he already discovered in his investigations of *lived experience*.

Much later in life, in the so-called *Four Seminars*<sup>435</sup> from 1968-1973, Heidegger will discuss Hegel's interpretation of the "need for philosophy" by interpreting Hegel's apparently paradoxical claim that "a torn sock is better than a mended one." For Heidegger what Hegel's claim makes clear is that it is precisely the tear that reveals the unity of the sock. The tear is not that much an undesired state of the sock, but rather the very condition of the sock to be seen in its unity, as unity, as an "integral" sock: "it is only in the tearing that the Unity, as absent, can appear." Life is the need to be itself, is the struggle for itself, the struggle to find itself out of estrangement, from alienation. What philosophy can do is make this "tear" be experienced as such: "In the tearing, the unity, or necessary conjoining, always reigns, that is, the *living* unity."<sup>436</sup>

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trivial! Muß beides sein! Gegenstand im "Zunächst" und Verfallen ist verbraucht!  
Nicht eigentlich; nicht als "Sein" und Seinsfraglichkeit, Seinsfragwürdigkeit." (GA 61,  
p.189)

<sup>435</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, transl. by Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). Henceforth FS

<sup>436</sup> FS, p.11

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