

RELIGIOUS LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING IN MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S THINKING*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I would like to present three approaches to Heidegger's religiosity and religious thinking and underscore the importance of Heidegger's thinking in the 20th century philosophy of religion. I will highlight the parallel interpretations of the religious movements in the 19th–20th century and Heidegger's approach to religion as a fundamental methodological problem of phenomenology. Furthermore, I will examine the connection between the original methodological inquiries and the reflection on religiosity in the later writings of Heidegger on historical being.

Key words

Religious Life; Facticity; Historical Phenomenon; Dasein; Beyng [*Seyn*]; Reality

DOI: 10.14712/23563598.2019.5

1. The Importance of the Religious Phenomenon in Heidegger's Thinking

In the early Freiburg lectures on the phenomenology of religious life, published as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger sought to interpret Christian life in phenomenological terms while also discussing the question whether Christianity should be construed as

* The present project no. PD_123883 has been implemented with the support provided from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund of Hungary, financed under the PD_17 funding scheme. The present paper is partly based on the essay: Anna Jani, 'Historicity and Christian Life Experience in the Early Philosophy of Martin Heidegger', *Forum Philosophicum. International Journal for Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (2016): 29–43.

historically defined. Heidegger thus connected the philosophical discussion of religion as a phenomenon with the character of religious life taken in the context of factual life. According to Heidegger, every philosophical question originates from the latter, which determines such questions pre-theoretically, while the tradition of early Christianity can also only be understood historically in such terms.

Even though Heidegger's theological background and his Catholic origin remains important for him in the latest period of his thinking, too, and Heidegger also emphasized the importance of his theological studies for guiding the way to his philosophical thinking in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*,¹ his approach to the phenomenology of religion did not arise from a personal religious commitment. Although he had studied theology for two semesters, in his essay 'Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie', he noted not the importance of the theological studies *per se* but the importance of the inspiration of theological studies on his phenomenology. In this regard, it is worth paying attention to the biographical circumstances of the lectures about *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* for the wider interpretation of Heidegger's relationship to the phenomenology of religion.

Simultaneously with his lectures about the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger, in a letter to Engelbert Krebs, explained his disappointment in the Catholic Church but 'not in the metaphysics'². This approach originated from the phenomenological interest in the problematics of historicity and religion that was typical of this time.⁵

¹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm von Hermann, HGA 12 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 91: 'Ohne diese theologische Herkunft wäre ich nie auf den Weg des Denkens gelangt. Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.' Cf. also Martin Heidegger, 'Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie,' in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm von Hermann, HGA 14 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 94: 'So trat die Spannung zwischen Ontologie und spekulativer Theologie als das Bauegefüge der Metaphysik in den Gesichtskreis meines Suchens.' Hereafter *Gesamtausgabe* will be cited as 'HGA,' followed by the volume number and the page number; page references in parentheses refer to translations.

² Cf. Heidegger's letter to Engelbert Krebs on January 9, 1919: 'epistemological insights, extending as far as the theory of historical knowledge made the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable for me, but not Christianity and metaphysics (the later, to be sure, in a new sense).' The letter was first published by Bernhard Casper, 'Martin Heidegger und die Theologische Fakultät Freiburg 1909–1923,' in *Kirche am Oberrhein. Festschrift für Wolfgang Müller*, eds. Bäumler, Frank and Ott (Freiburg i. Br: Herder, 1980), 541.

⁵ Cf. Theodore Kisiel, 'The Religion Courses (1920–21),' in *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time*,' Theodore Kisiel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 149–220; Holger Zaborowski, "'Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.'" Anmerkungen

Heidegger's methodological inquiries are also revealed by the parallel interpretation of the historicity as a phenomenological problem and of the religious experiences influenced by Adolf Reinach's religious notes. The fact that in the 1910s religiosity stood precisely in the centre of the phenomenological interest is proved by the shared phenomenological reflections on Rudolf Otto's book *Das Heilige* and by the contemporary interest in Reinach's religious notes.⁴ Heidegger's intention to investigate the methodology of the phenomenology rather than the theological origin of faith was influenced phenomenologically and stood at the centre of his interests in the 1920s. His phenomenological approach to religion is well documented in two letters to Karl Löwith written before the commencement of his course on the phenomenology of religion in 1920:

For, to be frank, all that would come of it is the kind of babble on the philosophy of religion that want to eliminate from philosophy, this talk about the religious that is familiar to us from the secondary literature (13. September 1920)⁵.

zur religiösen und theologischen Dimension des Denkweges Martin Heideggers bis 1919,' in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, eds. Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch* 1 (Freiburg: Alber, 2004), 123–58; Johannes Schaber, "Martin Heideggers 'Herkunft' im Spiegel der Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, 159–84; Philippe Capelle, "Katholizismus," "Protestantismus," "Christentum" und "Religion" im Denken Martin Heideggers: Tragweite und Abgrenzungen,' in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, 346–71; István M. Fehér, 'Religion, Theology, and Philosophy on the Way to *Being and Time*: Heidegger, the Hermeneutical, the Factual, and the Historical with Respect to Dilthey and Early Christianity,' *Research in Phenomenology* 39, no. 1 (2009): 99–131.

⁴ Not just Husserl and Heidegger, but the phenomenological movement around Husserl in Göttingen found Otto's book phenomenologically relevant. Husserl mentioned the book in a letter to Heidegger in 1918, and this probably made the book important for Heidegger. Cf. *Husserliana Dokumente* III, no. IV, Die Freiburger Schüler: Husserl to Heidegger, September 10, 1918: 'Ich las übrigens, da ich den eigenen, allzuschwierigen Gedankenbildung fern bleiben musste, mit großem Interesse Ottos Buch über das Heilige in der That ein Versuch einer Phänomenologie des Gottesbewusstseins, kühn und was versprechend im Anfang, aber freilich bald enttäuschend. Schade, dass Sie nicht Zeit haben eine (sc. tiefe dringende) Kritik zu schreiben.' Heidegger prepared a review of Otto's book, but it was not published in that time: cf. the Appendix II of *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Fritsch and Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 251–252. However, Heidegger referred to Otto's book during his lectures: cf. *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 54.

⁵ Theodore Kiesel, 'Heidegger (1920–21) on Becoming a Christian: A Conceptual Picture Show,' in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thoughts*, eds. Theodore Kiesel and John van Buren (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 176.

The previous letter above shows Heidegger's attitude to the philosophy of religion and, to some extent, expresses his relationship with the temporary theologians. It will be clear from the second letter that he did not want to contribute to the contemporary philosophical concepts of religiosity but to extend the phenomenological methodology on the field of religiosity:

I would like to do away with 'talking' about the religious, but it is perhaps inevitable. It is also a false expectation regarding my lecture course, if anyone thinks that is what I plan to do. It is probably best to say so from the start (19. September 1920).⁶

In his early sketches for a lecture on Medieval Mysticism, Heidegger also emphasises: 'Our goal can never be to awaken religious life. That only [occurs] through such life itself.'⁷ In the notes about Reinach's *Das Absolute*, which was published together with *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger pays attention not to the theological aspect of the religious phenomenon, but to the present realisation of the historical aspect of it. He relies on Reinach's thesis that religiosity is always inspired by the actual situation and that the phenomenon inspires the religious intention. Yet, the religious phenomenon transgresses the normal intentionality of the phenomenon in the way of its historical relation independent from the individual. It must have been important for Heidegger to explain the religious phenomenon through Reinach's interpretation. The popular teacher in Göttingen, Adolf Reinach, who died in World War I and left behind the important paper called *Notes [Aufzeichnungen]*, which was passed from hand to hand within the phenomenological movement after his death, and was interpreted as a religious contribution to the Husserlian methodology. Heidegger completes Reinach's thesis about the religious phenomenon with the statement that the religious phenomenon is constituted by its specific religious intention:

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, 'The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism,' in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 232. (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens*, ed. Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly and Claudius Strube, no. 60 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 303.)

'The relation to God gives direction for our experimental comportment to him.'⁸ What does 'relation to God' mean? Meaningfully and constitutedly, only to be formulated as a comportment of consciousness, not, for instance, ontologically, as being next to, or 'under', an (absolute) being. Rather, the opposite holds: our experiential comportment to God – the primary one, because welling up within us by grace – gives direction to the specifically religious constitution of 'God' as a 'phenomenological object'. (Reinach sees this also in a certain sense, but does not take it as a methodological principle of the phenomenology of religion).⁹

The letters above and Heidegger's notes to the contemporary discussion about the religious phenomenon prove that his thinking was not linked to the traditional theological context but rather to the problem of the phenomenological approach to religious life. In the phenomenon of religious life, which will be examined by him later in *Being and Time* as the pre-theoretical existential character of Dasein, Heidegger reveals the co-existence of historical and factual life in its real present at hand. In §43 of *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces the problem of reality by virtue of the notion of the present at hand, which does not just mean that Dasein exists in the spatial-temporal dimension, but that the spatial-temporal dimension is the existential givenness of Dasein, i.e. Dasein is present for himself in the position of being thrown into the world as a thing, while his historical life is realized in the concrete situation as a given relation of being.¹⁰ The 'present-at-hand' position of Dasein means that Dasein cannot exist other than in being thrown into the world in the spatial-temporal dimension, i.e. his existence is determined for freedom exactly in this spatial-temporal dimension.

In being-ahead-of-oneself as the being toward one's ownmost potentiality-of-being lies the existential and ontological condition of the possibility of being free for authentic existentiell possibilities. It is the potentiality-for-being for the sake of which Da-sein always is as it

⁸ Cf. Adolf Reinach, *Sämtliche Werke. Textkritische Ausgabe in 2 Bänden*, eds. Karl Schumann and Barry Smith, *Werke I* (Munich/Hamden/Wienna, 1989), 607.

⁹ Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 245.

¹⁰ Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §43, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University, 1996), 187: 'Therefore, not only the analytic of Da-sein, but the development of the question of the meaning of being in general must be wrested from a one-sided orientation toward being in the sense of reality. We must demonstrate that reality is not only *one* kind of being *among* others, but stands ontologically in a definite foundational context with Da-sein, world, and handiness.'

factually is. But since this being toward the potentiality-for-being is itself determined by freedom, Da-sein can also be related to its possibilities unwillingly, it can be inauthentic, and it is so factually initially and for the most part. The authentic for-the-sake-of-which remains ungrasped, the project of one's potentiality-of-being is left to be disposal of the they.¹¹

The religious phenomenon disappears completely from the text of *Being and Time* and gives place to the temporally determined being revealed in the real existential life. This fact underlines my claim that Heidegger's phenomenological ambitions did not coincide with the philosophy of religion, even if in his early lectures the religious phenomenon originated from the factual experience of the everyday life and constituted the existential dimension of Dasein analogically to the bodily dimension. Heidegger's argumentation for the three-dimensional world in *Being and Time*, gains its relevance by the complicated relationship to being, and the historical form of it as beying.

The first introductory part of Heidegger's lecture course about the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* is followed in the second part (entitled 'Phenomenological Explication of real religious phenomena according to Paul's Letters') which is the practical investigation of specific historical phenomena in Saint Paul's Letters to the Galatians and the Thessalonians in the New Testament. According to Heidegger, only a formal expression of historical phenomena of religion is possible in the factual life. This raises the question of how the formation of historicity is to be interpreted in the context of factual life-experience: as an experience, i.e. as belonging to one's own religious life. For Heidegger, the various philosophical notions of the time convey a 'formal indication' of the historical meaning that pertains to religious life.¹² Through reflecting on the Letters of Saint Paul, Heidegger is able to investigate the real meaning of 'formal indication' against the background of early Christianity's reflections on its own historicity. Though the historical reflection on early Christianity is not guided simply by the theological or historical interest of Heidegger, the formal phenomena of the existential life originated from the early Christianity inspire the phenomenological constitution of being qua being.

¹¹ Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §41, 180.

¹² Cf. Theodore Kisiel, 'Die formale Anzeige: Die methodische Geheimwaffe des frühen Heideggers,' in *Heidegger – neu gelesen*, ed. Markus Happel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1997), 22–40.

2. The methodology of historicity along the problem of being

Heidegger's early lecture *The Idea of the Philosophy*¹⁵ and his later lecture *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*¹⁴ offer an elementary investigation of the question of historicity in terms of an account of the historicity of our life-experience. Based on Heidegger's claim in *Basic Problems of Philosophy* that historicity is fundamentally connected to the individual's world-experience, so that our life is pre-elementarily determined by the historical life, the question surfaces in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* as one about whether or not there is a historical a priori that determines the life-experience of Dasein. In this instance, the historical a priori will be revealed in factual life by those philosophical notions whose meanings have changed during the course of the history of philosophy, but whose core meaning nevertheless shows up in the interpretation of actual life. In this sense, the historical phenomenon, which, on the one hand, embraces our entire cultural life and, on the other, shows up in individual lives, has two sources: the formation of concepts within the tradition, and the expression of an actual life. Taking this historical meaning as his starting point, Heidegger raises the question of how the philosophy of religion is related to religion itself. Does this relationship derive from the meaning of religion, or is it the theme of religion that captures the interest of philosophy – and, if so, is the philosophical significance of this theme pre-religiously determined?

The primordially of religion's historicity will be articulated within Heidegger's phenomenological purview. It is not the historical meaning, or the history of Christianity, that opens up the core of the religious a priori, but rather factual life-experience, which exposes the historical meaning of religious life. The second chapter of the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* elaborates on the meaning of the religious a priori as something that cannot be properly conceived as a mere legacy of theories of historicity, but rather only as given by facticity itself. To be able to reflect on the occurrence of religious phenomenon in the present, we must first arrive at some sort of primordial understanding

¹⁵ Cf. Martin Heidegger, 'Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem,' in HGA 56/57; published in English as *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*, in *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002).

¹⁴ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (HGA 58; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

of religion. Based on Paul's Letter to the Galatians, the primordial understanding of the religious situation is founded on the life-situation of early Christianity. Paul's interpretation of Christianity is based on the developing emergence of Christian religiosity – an event that includes his own conversion as well.

In the letters to the Galatians, Paul is struggling with the Jews and the Jewish Christians. Thus we find the phenomenological situation of religious struggle and of struggle itself. In his struggle with his religious passion in his existence as an apostle, Paul must have seen the struggle between 'law' and 'faith.' This opposition is not a final one; it is rather a preliminary one. Faith and law are both special modes of the path of salvation. (GA 60, 68–9 [48])

The historical context of Paul's Letters to the Galatians is a period following soon after Christ, which raised serious questions regarding the practice of Christianity. The apostolic synod of 48–49 A.D., which accepted Paul's evangelical call, insisted on the distinction between ritual and moral laws. The Letters to the Galatians are thus situated in the middle of a specific hermeneutic situation: the Jewish Christian members would not accept the Galatians as Christians, unless the Galatians were prepared to abide by the ritual-related rules of the religion and agree to be circumcised. This criticism of the Galatians relates not only to the practice of Christianity but also to the validity of Paul's evangelism. Since Paul was not himself one of Jesus' disciples, and only converted to Christianity after Christ's departure, the authenticity of his evangelism depends on how we understand the very term 'Christianity'.

The phenomenon of the historical Jesus that is characterised in Paul's view as a historical phenomenon is the primordial understanding of Christianity and the core of 'formal indication'. In this sense, there is a double understanding within the Pauline interpretation: Paul's interpretation of the historical aspect of his religion and the explication of this interpretation. This double structure of religious-historical material is what makes up the historical phenomenon in factual life-experience – given to Paul himself on the one hand, and to us by Paul's own evangelical explication on the other hand. The historical Jesus-event, meanwhile, remains completely independent from our factual life: a closed body of historical material which we ourselves just observe impartially from within the context of our own lives. The objective observation of the historical event assumes a relation between factual life and the past event, but the past is not involved in the present situation.

The factual life-experience of the primordial form of Christianity is grounded in the historical phenomenon of Christianity and fulfilled at different stages of the latter's historicity. When the historical moment transpires within factual life itself, the historical understanding materializes as a situation of enactment (*Vollzug*). While in the early lectures of Heidegger the situation corresponds to the moment when the historicity of the object unites with factual experience during the course of one's comprehension, the lectures on the phenomenology of religious life emphasize the historical life-experience of the religion itself. The religious experience of being is a reflection of the historical situation of Paul but this same historical phenomenon receives its full meaning only in factual life.

Since the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's relationship to Christianity has been controversial. Though the theological origin of Heidegger's thinking cannot be denied, even in his later writings, his approaches to religion became increasingly aporetic with time. Remarkably, *Being and Time* opens with the metaphysical distinction between being and beings and claims that being reveals itself to Dasein in the ecstatic-existing. Regarding the factual situation as the constitutional form of being, Heidegger is faithful in *Being and Time* to his previous conception in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. But, what Heidegger reveals in these early lectures is that the historical being discloses itself in the actual situation which returns exactly in the thesis of the existential being of Dasein. Otherwise, the historical being loses the ontological formation of the religiosity, i.e. the religious phenomenon is not the fundamental-ontological connection to being anymore in *Being and Time*, but it reveals the past as the undisclosable phenomenon of being in elapsed past. This controversial relationship to the religion as historical being already appears in *Being and Time* at the interpretation of the role of the conscience in the structure of care.¹⁵ Regarding the act of conscience, Heidegger definitely differentiates the original sin in the theological sense from its phenomenological interpretation. However, in both relationships, conscience is the call of care which discloses Dasein's original guiltiness. In phenomenological sense, conscience is the anticipatory resoluteness of Dasein, which, for him, discloses the authentic life and in this authenticity reveals the linearity of the self. § 62 of *Being*

¹⁵ Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§ 55–60.

and Time emphasises the difference between the theological sense of the original guiltiness and its phenomenological interpretation as the freedom of Dasein for the possibility of being.

Resoluteness means: letting oneself be called forth to one's ownmost being-guilty. Being-guilty belongs to the being of Da-sein itself, which we defined primarily as potentiality-of-being. The statement that Dasein "is" constantly guilty can only mean that it always maintains itself in this being either as authentic or inauthentic existence. Being-guilty is not just a lasting quality of something constantly objectively present, but the existentiell possibility of being authentically or inauthentically guilty. 'Guilty' is always only in the actual factical potentiality-of-being. Thus, being-guilty must be conceived as a potentiality-for-being-guilty, because it belongs to the being of Da-sein.¹⁶

In this sense, guiltiness gains some independency from the original guilt. Since it means the potential faithfulness of thinking to the historical being, the possibility of thinking reveals itself in the inauthentic mode of the self. Though, thinking discloses the ontological difference between being and beings, it reveals it first in the event of the historical being, as beyng. The third interpretation of being as beyng brings the interpretation of the religious phenomenon as the phenomenon of the historical being to the end. The phenomenon of the religious life, in the sense of the interpretation of the early lectures, is no longer able to disclose the meaning of the event as beyng.

Heidegger's ontological achievements and the development of the ontological difference is regularly interpreted in parallel with his relationship to the Catholicism, i.e. the introduction of the notion of beyng fulfils at the same time as his establishment about the 'death of God'. Holger Zaborowski distinguishes three dimensions of Heidegger's relationship to Christianity in his essay about 'Metaphysics, Christianity, and the "Death of God" in Heidegger's *Black Notes* (1931–1941)'¹⁷. Both

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 62, 283.

¹⁷ Cf. Holger Zaborowski, 'Metaphysics, Christianity, and the "Death of God" in Heidegger's *Black Notes* (1931–1941),' in *Reading Heidegger's Black Notes 1931–1941*, eds. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, Mass. – London: MIT Press, 2016), 195–207, 200: According to Zaborowski, 'there is, first, a *philosophical* or, more specifically, a *being-historical* dimension – that is, it is a confirmation from within the framework of Heidegger's reading of the history of Western metaphysics as the history of the first beginning and of the forgetfulness of being. This means that the task of really understanding the meaning of Christianity is no longer left to theologians and religious people. Only being-historical is, according to Heidegger, able to make sense of Christianity and particularly of what he considers its crisis and death. There is no

Heidegger's Ereignis-Denken and the Nietzsche-Lectures contain the preliminary structure of the 'beginning of thinking' in *Black Notes*. In my interpretation, this continuous beginning of thinking characterised by *Black Notes* is able to reveal the presence of God's 'totally other' in the complicated present of being.¹⁸ From another angle, but in the same sense, Jussi Backmann argues in his book *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being* that two keys elements characterise the trajectory of Heidegger's thought from *Being and Time* (1927) to *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936–1938): First, Heidegger's approach to his main topic undergoes a 'reversal' or turn (*Kehre*). This turn basically corresponds to a structural reversibility or reciprocity between the sense of being (being₂) and Dasein in the later Heidegger's articulation of being (being₃) as event (*Ereignis*). Second, a new, quadruple oppositional schema emerges, one that will ultimately become the figure of the fourfold (Geviert). This schema can be regarded as the later Heidegger's main attempt to schematize the relationship between being as meaningful presence (being₁) and being as the background or meaning context of presence (being₂) within the comprehensive articulation of being (being₃) as ontological difference.¹⁹

doubt, that there is also, second, an *autobiographical* and *personal* dimension to it. In the *Black Notes*, Heidegger is still – or, perhaps, again and more forcefully than ever – dealing with his own religious origins and his personal loss of faith in Christianity. He is now explaining it with respect to the general crisis, or “completion”, of Christianity due to the forgetfulness and withdrawal of being and against the background of his somewhat Gnostic talk of the “last” or “coming” God. There is, third, a *historical* and *cultural-critical* dimension, because when Heidegger talks about Christianity or Christian issues, he incorporates many references not only to concrete movements and tendencies within Christianity, but also to events and phenomena in the wider culture that he characterizes as the “age of utter questionlessness” and that he very closely relates to Christianity.’

¹⁸ Cf. Zaborowski, ‘Metaphysics, Christianity, and the “Death of God” in Heidegger’s *Black Notes* (1931–1941)’, 198: ‘But it is not just Nietzsche who is important for Heidegger’s view of Christianity in the *Black Notebooks*. Even more important is Hölderlin’s poetic insight into the “absence” (Fehl) of Gods. When Heidegger writes that “we have already lived for a long time and will continue to live for a long time in the age of the departing God,” [“Jetzt kommt es an den Tag, dass wir seit langem schon und für lange im Weltalter der scheidender Götter leben”, Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, 167] he is clearly alluding to Hölderlin, whom he singles out for particular attention again and again. For the Hölderlinian absence or “refuge of the Gods,” he finds considerable evidence in the people “who turn ‘their’ faith into a movement,” in the movement of the “German Christians” and in tendencies to found a position on “godlessness” or even on indifference.’

¹⁹ Cf. Jussi Backmann, *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being* (New York: Suny Press, 2015), 121.

3. The reality and its link to the religion's phenomenology

The previous analysis shows how the question of reality is connected in Heidegger's interpretation to religion's phenomenology. However, Heidegger's question of reality has a meaning in relation to the fundamental ontological question of being that is independent from the phenomenology of religion. Already in *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduced the ontological difference of being and beyng in the question on reality in § 43, and this difference is gradually deepened by the analysis of the relation between temporality and care. Even though the problem of being qua being, which is different from the human existence, discloses the existential relation to God in the historical being qua being, it also appears in different formations in the Heideggerian philosophy during the constitution of the hermeneutic-phenomenological understanding of being. There is a growing interest in the problem of reality in Heidegger's philosophy in a relation to the ontological difference in his thinking. Tobias Keiling interprets Heidegger's question about reality in *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus*²⁰ from the point of view of the debate on the idealism or realism of the Husserlian phenomenology's methodology. According to this argumentation, there is a parallel reflection on the reality synonymous to being and the opposite of the ideality as the mental constitution of the experienced thing, in Heidegger's thinking. In the work for habilitation, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, Heidegger phenomenologically analysed the relationship between the outside world, ideality, and reality, and he connected the problem of the reality to the scholastic problematic of being. The early essay from 1912, about *Das Realitätsproblem in der modernen Philosophie*, presents the first critical interpretation of Medieval Christian philosophy and through the notion of 'Lebensphilosophie', which was coined by Dilthey, interprets the fundamentally realistic position of philosophy via the phenomenological approach. According to Heidegger, 'Lebensphilosophie' has a direct relationship with life, i.e. it originates from life, and the philosophical understanding of life is grounded on the question of being. The statement that being is not an abstract logical structure of scholastic philosophy but originates from the factual life itself led Heidegger to

²⁰ Tobias Keiling, *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

break with 'the system of Catholicism' (1919) but not with metaphysics. Heidegger's avowal in the letter to Engelbert Krebs is put in a complex position by the progress of Heidegger's thinking. Since *Being and Time*, Heidegger has separated the traditional, dogmatical metaphysics (as he called it after his turn: ontotheology) from the post-metaphysical interpretation of being based on radical distinction between being and nothing. Both the lecture *What is Metaphysics?* and *Theology and Philosophy* are in this sense the first step to overcoming metaphysics in its traditional sense.

Even though Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics in *Being and Time* starts with the radical turn from traditional metaphysics²¹, his approach to the problem of being is influenced by his theological studies of the relationship between finitude and eternity. Both *Being and Time* and the lecture *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* demonstrate Heidegger's Christianity through the question on reality. However, the lecture about *The Basic Problems ...* is the first step from the unique notion of being to its fourfold notion which determined Heidegger's interpretation of being in the second stage of his thinking. Concerning the unity versus multiplicity of being, i.e. the fundamental ontology of being qua beyng, Backmann emphasises that Heidegger's *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* provides a specific discussion of the question about the unity and multiplicity of being, where it is designated as one of several basic ontological problems.²² In recent studies, informed by the constantly growing amount of texts published in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, there is an increasing awareness of the complex, heterogeneous, and untraditional character of the Heideggerian 'ultimate unity'.²³ Even though the problem of reality already appears in the very first essays

²¹ Heidegger opens *Being and Time* with the statement that we are not be able to say any more what being is. We must put the question again: 'This question has today been forgotten – although our time considers itself progressive in again affirming "metaphysics".' (Cf. *Being and Time*, § 1, 1).

²² Cf. Backmann, *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being*, 4: 'We will see that the problem-horizon of the unity of being/presence will offer a new perspective on the unity of Heidegger's thinking itself. Heidegger has not often been read from this particular thematic perspective. Those who have touched upon the topic have mostly done so with a clear awareness of the central role of unity in traditional metaphysics. As a result, the vocabulary of unity, identity, and uniqueness in Heidegger's later work, culminating in the articulation of the fourfold as a *onefold* of multiplicity, has sometimes been suspected of being a traditionalism or an unquestioned metaphysical remnant.'

²³ Backmann, *Complicated Presence*, 6.

of Heidegger, it discloses a close relationship to the phenomenological interpretation of being in *Being and Time*. The phenomenological interpretation of the previous givenness of the outside world, i.e. the thesis that the outside world as a reality is the pre-condition of being-in-the-world, overcomes the theological sense of creation in *Being and Time* by the ecstatic existence of Dasein as thinking.

These inquiries, which take precedence over any possible ontological question about reality have been carried out in the foregoing existential analytic. Accordingly, cognition is a founded mood of access to what is real. The real is essentially accessible only as innerworldly beings. Every access to such beings is ontologically based on the fundamental constitution of Da-sein, on being-in-the-world. This has the primordial constitution of being-of-care (being-ahead-of-itself – already-being-in-a-world – as being together with innerworldly beings).²⁴

In *Being and Time*, the scholastic sense of reality, according to which reality is equivocal with the outside world, turns from the question on reality into its phenomenological analysis. In this sense, the reality of the world is the pre-ontological requirement of being which is disclosed by the care (*Sorge*) as the ecstatic existence of Dasein. Due to the complexity of the interpretation of being in the 1930s, the problem of the reality constitutes a new level in Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger's lectures and essays from the beginning of the 1930s are gradually wrestling with the distinction between reality and materiality. During the Nietzsche-lectures at the end of the 1930s and in the lectures of this time, Heidegger begins to eliminate the three-dimensional structure of time constitution and construes the present which is being determined historically, being created by history and appearing in history. The most emblematic articulation of the reality conception versus materiality is expressed in the pages of *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, where Heidegger reflects on a new relationship to the historical being of Dasein explained in *Being and Time*. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger expresses a direct departure from the original concept of reality in the sense of being-in-the world and explains reality by virtue of the possibility of thinking about the historical dimension of being.

What remains incomparable, and can never be grasped in meta-physical concepts and modes of thought, is the projection of being as

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 43, 188.

appropriation, a projection that experiences itself as thrown and that repudiates every appearance of having been fabricated. Here beyng reveals itself in that essential occurrence whose abyssal character is the reason the en-countering ones (gods and humans) and the conflictual ones (world and earth) attain their essence in their originary history between being and beings and admit the commonality in the naming of being and beings only as something most question-worthy and most separated.²⁵

This complicatedly formed present, which includes the being of Dasein in a historical situation and in the historicity itself, transforms the traditional ontotheological metaphysics to the ontic-ontological problem of being. Reality is in this sense the event of beyng in the revelation of the present as the absence of the event. The event is the disclosing historical beyng in the present situation which is not any more the event of the past, but the uneventfulness of the present. 'Beyng as the innermost "between" is then akin to nothingness for this moment; the god overpowers the human being, and the latter surpasses the god – immediately, so to speak. Yet both are only in the event, and the truth of beyng itself is as this event.'²⁶

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²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 376.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Contributions*, 328.