

The Art of Phenomenology and its Implications for the Study of Religion

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ABSTRACT

Etymologically, and tautologically, “phenomenology” implies “a discourse that illumines, reveals, brings to light, collects, and lets stand forth that which reveals itself and is brought to light.” This paper explores some implications of what it means to be a “phenomenologist” of religion, and situates phenomenology vis-à-vis traditional categories of science, theology, and art. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is a pivotal figure in an understanding the character and semantic potential of phenomenology vis-à-vis the theological enterprise and art, though he has been all but ignored by proponents of *Religionswissenschaft*. In particular, Heidegger’s transformation of Husserlian phenomenology raises the question of whether phenomenology can remain standing in the unexplored territory between the irreducibility of theology and the reductionism of social science.

Only a poet could vindicate things.

– Gerardus van der Leeuw

Phenomenology is a word that has meant many things to some people and nothing to most. Not only is it unclear what phenomenology implies to those outside of the academic study of philosophy and the human sciences, but even among those who utilize the term and parade under its lofty-sounding banner there is uncertainty as to what such a commitment actually involves. This is especially to be the case with *phenomenology of religion*, which attempts to utilize certain philosophical concepts or methods in pursuit of a more effective study of religious phenomena. Of course, the very ambiguity of phenomenology is a blessing as well as a curse, in that its breadth (or vacuity) of meaning has allowed for various insightful interpretations across academic disciplines.

Thomas Ryba, in *The Essence of Phenomenology and its Meaning for the Scientific Study of Religion* re-examines the philosophical beginnings of phenomenology as a means of coming to a more substantive and clear “synthetic definition” of the term. Ryba makes the point that many phenomenologists, if they look back to their philosophical antecedents at all, look solely to the father of the movement, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) for answers to the problem of the meaning of phenomenology. Questioning both the rejection of phenomenological philosophy and adherence to one particular model (the Husserlian one), Ryba develops the “semantic potential” of phenomenology through an etymological analysis. In this regard Ryba follows upon the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Husserl’s protégé and later estranged disciple,¹ who placed great emphasis on re-discovering the original meaning, use, and implications of terms like being, essence, and phenomena. The semantic potential of a word “allows us to postulate the potential meaning of a word, or the limits within which a word’s meaning may change, on the basis of its contemporaneous and historical meaning.”² As such the future meaning of phenomenology is partially determined by its past as well as its present relations to a conceptual field expressive of a contemporary view of the world. It is from this point that I begin this analysis, which will develop the use and significance of the “art” of phenomenology.

The phenomenology of religion purports to be a method of *Religionswissenschaft*—a “scientific” (in the broader German sense) study of religion in terms of the phenomena/data of religion. In this sense it is wholly distinguished from theology, the confessional side of religious interpretation, and also

from traditional scientific enterprise that seeks to find the meaning of religion(s) in terms of psychology, economics, or politics. Yet the very term phenomenology is imbued with religious overtones: the Greek root *phain* refers to illumination, revelation, coming-to-light (the compound *phainesthai* signifies “that which stands forth by entering into the light”); while *logos* of course resonates with the Johannine Word and its implications of incarnate mystery. In sum, the term phenomenology might be literally defined as “a discourse that illumines, reveals, brings to light, collects, lets stand forth that which reveals itself and is brought to light.” Here we detect a certain tautological aspect latent in the phenomenological project.

With this in mind, we are set to explore what it means to be a phenomenologist with respect to the study of religion, and where phenomenology can be placed in terms of categories such as science, theology, and art. Certainly, the phenomenologist is identified by the way in which she goes about her work rather than the particular objects with which she deals, yet there are certain epistemological implications (ideas about the way people learn and know) of phenomenology as well as an undeniably humanist element—in that phenomenology strives for a *deeper understanding* of religions, which we can only assume will have some benefit to humankind in terms of tolerance and more just social relations.

These dense and weighty issues become clearer when we look to the beginnings of the revolt against traditional Western metaphysics and the concomitant new ways of speaking about truth and knowledge that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and filtered into the phenomenological project. From this vantage it is easier to understand the meaning and consequences of Husserl’s innovations, as well as the fulfillment of some of these consequences in the work of Heidegger. Heidegger is a pivotal figure in an understanding the character and semantic potential of phenomenology vis-à-vis the theological enterprise and art, though he has been all but ignored by proponents of *Religionswissenschaft*.³ Heidegger’s transformation of Husserlian phenomenology raises the question of what it means to study religious beliefs under the auspices of a phenomenological *Weltanschauung*. In short, the question can be raised as to whether phenomenology can remain standing in the unexplored territory between the irreducibility of theology and the reductionism of social science, without succumbing to either covert confessionalism or a useless and potentially dangerous disinterestedness.

What is (called) Truth?

William James did not really believe; he merely believed in the right of believing that you might be right if you believed.

– George Santayana

The late 19th and early 20th centuries was a time of great unrest and upheaval in the lives and thought of many Westerners: the rapid industrialization of societies, the growth and expansion of science and technology, and the steady secularization of European and American life brought traditional ways of thinking into question. Of course, philosophical ferment was not new to Western history, but the reactions against prevailing paradigms at this time were striking in their vehemence, reaching an apogee in the apocalyptic voice of Nietzsche heralding the “death of God.” *Lebensphilosophie* is a loose term used to describe the emphasis of many of these philosophical ideas and movements on the priority of life and experience over and against the dry abstractions of the dominant tradition of German metaphysics, which insisted that all sorts of timeless metaphysical truths could be established by rational arguments. *Lebensphilosophie* is often mentioned with respect to Nietzsche, Bergson, Simmel, and Dilthey, but both the American school of pragmatism and the continental movement of phenomenology evolved out of the same general reaction, if in a more sober and even positivistic fashion. These latter movements took a more rigorous approach, recognizing only non-metaphysical facts and observable phenomena while eschewing the “scientism” that had become a stultifying hindrance to “real” scientific enterprise. The most significant feature shared by these two concurrent movements is their revised notions of “truth,” along with a shared emphasis upon the implications of new ways of speaking upon new thinking and new understanding.

Pragmatism: James and the Linguistic Turn

“Pragmatism” is a term coined by the American logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), but the movement of the same name was popularized and reached its full articulation in the writings of his countrymen William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952). James was entranced by Peirce’s innovation in talking about truth; i.e., the turn away from a correspondence theory of such to an anti-essentialist or anti-foundationalist view. Peirce claimed that since only a process of verification can decide whether a statement is true or false, why not *define* truth as the passing of such tests. Whereas the correspondence theory posits truth as a “timeless correspondence of an assertion with the real world regardless of whether it can be verified or not,”⁴ the pragmatic theory states that truth is that which “works” within a particular range of human experience. Of course, both Peirce and James realized that this new definition of truth was not exactly a new theory but rather “A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking” (the subtitle of James’s *Pragmatism*, published in 1907). In a sense, pragmatism merely affirms, without apology, the circularity of the correspondence theory that asserts “truth is a correspondence of statements with facts, and a fact is an assertion we *believe* is true.”⁵ *Belief* here is a key term, and central to the Jamesian project, which was to vindicate the right of the believer to at least have a claim to the truth of her belief.

Seeing themselves rather in the light of reformers than radicals, these early Pragmatists sought a purified scientific

method based upon a “radical empiricism” that refuses to bother with anything but experienced “facts.” In “How to Make Our Ideas Clear.” Peirce asserts that in order to understand what a concept or statement means, we simply ask what possible *consequences* in human behaviour follow from the idea in question—i.e., what it means, not in itself, but to human life; or perhaps, *what it means to*. James went further than Peirce by adding a second aspect to the pragmatist conception of truth: in the absence, he proclaims, of contrary evidence, if a belief satisfies a human desire, that too is a “practical consequence” and as such is a legitimate basis for calling a certain belief true.

This new way of speaking about truth is significant to an understanding of phenomenology and the phenomenological study of religion more particularly, which shares many of these presuppositions, and was at the heart of James’s project in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James gives an example of how the pragmatic turn affects our conception of truth and our relation to belief in everyday experience: someone observes a handful of beans on a table and in doing so sees particular patterns. The recognition of these patterns is what James calls truth: “Whatever (the observer/interactor/subject) does, so long as he *takes account* of (the beans), his account is neither false nor irrelevant. If neither, *why not call it true?* It *fits* the beans-*minus*-him, and *expresses* the *total* fact, of beans-*plus*-him.”⁶ In defending himself and fellow pragmatists against manifold attacks (usually, like the attacks made against phenomenology, for obscurantism, mystification, and vacuousness), James replies: “All that [F.C.S.] Schiller and I contend is that there is *no* ‘truth’ without *some* interest, and that non-intellectual interests play a part as well as intellectual ones.”⁷ This is not to say that truth is always constructed to fit certain interests, but that fact and value can never be clearly delineated, so why keep up the pretense—why waste the effort?

It bears reiteration that James and the pragmatists were in no way denying common sense realities, for their project is to be conceived in linguistic rather than metaphysical terms; they promoted a different way of speaking about truth (and, by extension, the validity of belief), and thereby a new way of relating to facts and phenomena. Yet to say that the pragmatist innovation is primarily *linguistic* is not to dismiss its relevance and impact. Western thought in particular, with Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and more recently Derrida has come to recognize the extent to which language shapes our world and the way we think and live.⁸ James felt that reclamation of the scientific method was secondary to an adherence to a certain kind of vision and the preference for a specific way of life based upon the implicit ideals of Pragmatism that are reflected in this new way of speaking.⁹

What is meant by a pragmatist “way of life,” and how is it brought about? Pragmatism for James enjoins a complete overhaul of traditional ways of thinking and knowing; his “dynamic functionalism” and “transactional instrumentalism,” says Cornel West, “calls into question the Cartesian dualisms of mind and matter, subject and object, immediate awareness and external world.”¹⁰ Pragmatism is *not* a new philosophy in the sense of a new system that channels our understanding, but in the more fundamental (and, as we shall see, Heideggerian) sense of a new thinking or even a new mode of being that is the consequence of the turn away from our obsession with foundations and certainties and towards effects, consequences,

and practices. Thinking clearly necessitates a *conversion* of sorts; for James the aim of thought is neither mere action nor further thought but *to be more fully alive*—“more attuned to the possibilities of mystery, morality, and melioration.”¹¹ The universe may be incomplete, the world still in the making, but this does not mean that we cannot know or try to understand the world, but that we must rather work within vocabularies of truth and beliefs. James put this into practice in his *Varieties*, which was, as one contemporary reviewer enthused, “epoch-making” precisely because of the “considerable innovation to import scientific methods into fields hitherto abandoned to *a priori* dogmatizing about what the religious consciousness must be and contain.”¹²

Phenomenology: Husserl’s *Epoche*

Phenomenology can be practised and identified as a manner or style of thinking... it existed as a movement before arriving at complete awareness of itself as philosophy.

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Anyone familiar with the philosophical movement known as phenomenology can see the striking convergences between such and the pragmatist vision that arose contemporaneously on the opposite side of the Atlantic. In fact, both Peirce (by Thomas Ryba) and James (by Eddie James) have been co-opted as “phenomenologists,” and recently the foremost contemporary neo-pragmatist, Richard Rorty, has proclaimed that John Dewey and Martin Heidegger (figureheads of the respective schools) are *the* two great figures who point the way in overcoming the mainstream Western thought tradition.¹³ Paul Tillich has made this connection, conceding that, despite the differences in surface appearance, both “phenomenological and pragmatic methods are determined on the one hand by logical considerations... [and] on the other they are... the expression of a general spiritual situation [*Geistelage*].”¹⁴ Any discussion of phenomenology in terms of method “must not fail to show this ultimate metaphysical background by means of which alone [its] spiritual import can really be understood.” Before following Tillich’s imperative, before delving into the murky depths of the metaphysical background to (anti-metaphysical) phenomenology, we shall first explicate the Husserlian task in terms of the centrality of the *epoche*.

Husserl’s battle cry is the by-now-familiar “Back to the things themselves!”—a call towards a more direct investigation of human experience via phenomena, which for Husserl includes “any possible experience of consciousness.” Similar to the pragmatic conception of truth, in Husserlian phenomenology consciousness and possible consciousness exhaust the world: “[W]hatever is not a possibility in consciousness simply cannot be thought in any sense, [and w]hat cannot be thought possible cannot exist.”¹⁵ Also with the Pragmatists Husserl combats the naïve, unquestioning, and unreflective conception of experience most people share. Yet consciousness is the *horizon* in which any possible experience has a place; to ask what lies beyond it is to ask a nonsensical question because consciousness, itself, is for Husserl *the ground of meaning*. The goal of Husserlian phenomenology is thus to eliminate the various accretions of consciousness that hide the essences behind the experiences of the world.

How is this accomplished? The crucial step, what must take place before the scientific study of the *Umwelt* (i.e., the world in which most of us inhabit in our waking experience;

what might be called “the unexamined life”) can be begun, is what Husserl calls the *epoche*. Not a denial of existence, or doubt in the Cartesian sense, it is often explained as a bracketing, or a suspension of the pre-given world; a bracketing that does not negate the world but refuses to take a stand either in favor or against any of the presuppositions arising in the *Lebenswelten* (the total horizon within which all experience takes place). This is no small matter for Husserl—it is in some sense the essence of his phenomenology, as it implies (and necessitates?) “a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which... bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such.”¹⁶ These, assuredly, are strong claims, positively Hegelian in their affirmation of totality, and they bear witness to the spiritual significance of the *epoche* as a transformative process or event. It is a transformation of *how* we think about the world and (thus) our experience of the world, determining not only what we call things but how we live things, and involves “a suspension of judgment and willingness to take any positive position with respect to any object in order that whatever is self-evident in the object may be presented to consciousness.”¹⁷ If there is any room for truth in phenomenology, the revelation of such necessitates this extraordinary conversion, one that will enable us to give real interest by seeing disinterestedly.

Phenomenology as Science & Methodology

Phenomenology went behind scientific experience and the categorical analysis of its methods, and it brought the natural experience of life – the “life-world” – into the foreground of its phenomenological investigation.

– Hans-Georg Gadamer

The question “What is Phenomenology?” has been asked innumerable times since Husserl, usually by phenomenologists themselves, but this attempt at self-definition has produced nearly as many answers as inquirers. With the linguistic turn in mind, and with cognizance of the implications of the way things are spoken of, I have changed the question from an essential quest to a search for the semantic potential of phenomenology; what phenomenology *has meant* and *can mean* rather than what it *is*. The phenomenological quest cuts across disciplinary boundaries, certainly, but one can point to the search for essences, and the Husserlian *epoche* that must accompany or prefigure this search, as the most characteristic elements of what has been called phenomenology. As Merleau-Ponty points out, however, phenomenology is also “a philosophy which *puts essence back into existence*, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their ‘facticity’.”¹⁸ In other words, the phenomenological search for essence is not an essentialist search as in the traditional metaphysical or scientific senses, where the essence is the truth that is beyond existence, uncovered by rational argumentation or scientific observation. The phenomenological essence is always in relation to human experience, it has no reality outside of the experience of the experienter. This sounds suspiciously like transcendental subjectivist approaches to experience, and Husserl was indeed charged with such, but in his later work (perhaps under the influence of Heidegger) he insisted upon the centrality of the *Lebenswelt*, and that the world is always already

there, as an alienable presence, *before* reflection. Thus the efforts of phenomenology are concentrated upon “*re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world.*”¹⁹

Phrases such as this last one strike fear into the hearts of many academics, even many phenomenologists, as they seem to invoke a certain mysticism that is out of place in traditional definitions of objectivity, academic rigor, and the seriousness of scholarly pursuit. Yet this type of language and phraseology appears again and again in the writings of the early phenomenologists in particular, and contributes in part to the hostility felt for the movement by social scientists and philosophers alike, who favor a more rational and scientific way of speaking about their craft. This is where the tension within phenomenology is perhaps most in evidence, in the style of its writing. Is phenomenology a science in even the loosest (i.e., *Wissenschaft*) sense? Or can it claim to be nothing of the sort, but rather a new kind of philosophizing, a metatheology, a technique or perhaps even an art? The self-definition of phenomenology must go on, particularly with respect to the study of religion, and this is where its meaning rests largely upon corresponding suppositions about truth and belief. As previously discussed, phenomenology shares many aspects with the anti-foundationalist turn against traditional metaphysical thinking. Like pragmatism, it enjoins a conversion to a whole new, purified way of seeing/being. Yet while pragmatism has emphasized the interest element in truth, and does not deny its own interest in making the world somehow a better place (under the auspices of the Jamesian trinity: *mystery, morality, and melioration*), phenomenology has, for the most part, followed Husserl in eschewing ethics and attempts to remain disinterested in the face of revealed phenomena. Is this a pose, or a possibility? Is it possible to speak nothing of truth at all, and yet still to speak of something, while rejecting the constructivism of (neo)-pragmatism?

Husserl clearly wanted, in his early work especially, for phenomenology to be a science and to be recognized as such (at least partly to ensure its status and validity in the eyes of the world). In fact it was to be a better science, a purer and higher form of what has been called such in the past. Indeed, the revolt against traditional metaphysics was largely one against the sort of rationalism that hides a transparent theology (“onto-theology,” as Heidegger calls it), which characterizes thinkers like Immanuel Kant. Ironically, as the result, perhaps, of eschewing the reductionism that seems to be at the basis of traditional social scientific enterprise, phenomenologists of religion like Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950) have been accused of being theologians working covertly under the auspices of secular science.

Even in Husserl, however, we see a turn in his later work to a more expansive vision of phenomenology, and the patriarch even mentions the possibility of a “constructive phenomenology.” Typically, science is distinguished methodologically from art and theology by way of the different use and status of reason and logic, and the ends of science are generally held to be practically utilitarian, while art is laden with terms like creativity and beauty, and is thought disengaged (in a utilitarian sense), or (more pejoratively), useless. But the characterizations are Janus-faced: on the other hand *science* is often held to be (emotionally, politically, culturally) disinterested to the point of eschewing notions of use altogether, while *art* is sometimes considered a mode of enhancing one’s life through indirect apprehension of the beautiful or through

the transforming process of creation. As we have seen, phenomenology often claims to be more than simply a methodology like any other, but a way or style of thinking which envisages a different mode of being.²⁰ According to Merleau-Ponty, science is secondary for phenomenology in that “science has not and never will be, by its nature, the same significance *qua* form of being as the world which we perceive, for the simple reason that it is a rationale or explanation of that world.”²¹ That is to say, science, even at its most objective, is divorced from the world of living being. With reference to the sterility of *Wissenschaft* (reframed by a member of the Frankfurt School the “sclerosis of objectivity”), E. M. Cioran (1911-1995) makes the comment that his friend and fellow Romanian Mircea Eliade is “one of the most brilliant representatives of a new Alexandrianism that... puts all beliefs on the same level.” In spite, or rather *because of this*, says Cioran, Eliade and his ilk “cannot inspire them [i.e., the beliefs, the gods] with life, [having] extracted all their sap.”²² Phenomenological science is in fact more like what has been called art, or even theology, in its emphases on conversion, attention, and revelation. Where science attacks, phenomenology brings forth; where science uses a hammer, phenomenology incorporates a lens.

Science, like philosophical Idealism, detaches the cognitive subject from the other-object. Hegel was perhaps the first to explicitly criticize the standpoint of subjective consciousness, and in doing so he paved the way for a different understanding of human experience, one that extends down to Husserl. In phenomenology, relations between subject and object are not strictly bilateral: analytical reflection, starting from our experience of the world, *goes back* to the subject as a *condition of possibility* distinct from that experience. In Husserl’s later work we see the notion of “noematic reflection” that remains within the object and instead of begetting it (*à la* the “faculty psychologism” of Kant), brings to light its fundamental unity. The world is in a sense the environment or field for all my thoughts and all my perceptions. Truth does not inhabit the “inner man,” for as Merleau-Ponty puts it rather Buddhistically, *there is no inner man*: “man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.”²³ Gadamer asserts that, no matter how deeply the application of science enters our practical knowledge, it is a mistake to consider the knowledge that lies behind our practical decisions as *nothing other* than the application of science.²⁴ The late-Husserlian turn to the *Lebenswelt*, he explains, explodes Husserl’s own transcendental thinking by providing “not a synthesis of theory and practice nor science in a new style, but rather the prior, practical-political limitation of the monopolistic claims of science and a new critical consciousness with respect to the scientific character of philosophy itself.” Gadamer, like Jacques Waardenburg, would like to see phenomenology become more “hermeneutical,” retrieving “the old impulse of an authentic practical and political common-sense”—but at the same time he finds sympathy with the moral impulse that underlies the Husserlian project.

Phenomenology in the Netherworld—Theology?

Phenomenology seems to be caught between science and something else that is not science, or at least is such a new conception of such that it might do best to relinquish all claims to the word.²⁵ On the one hand, as Merleau-Ponty makes clear, the real has to be described, not constructed or

formed.²⁶ But what does this mean with respect to a non-essentialist conception of truth? There can be no question of a certain predilection towards the mystical in phenomenological writing, due perhaps to its novelty and the tautological nature of its self-containment and irreducibility, except to its own terms (in the most literal sense). What is this “wonder” in the face of the world that apparently emerges from phenomenological “practice”?²⁷ And what are we to make of Merleau-Ponty’s lifting comment that phenomenological reflection “steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire.”²⁸ And further: the phenomenological stance “slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it *alone* is consciousness of the world because it reveals that world as strange and paradoxical.”

It has been noted that such effusions sound suspiciously like confessions of meta-theology, and particularly the so-called Negative Theologies of Dionysius the Areopagite and John of the Cross. Perhaps even more do they resemble a certain (evaluative) conception of animism or “primitive religion,” where gods and spirits inhabit all parts of the world around us. According to Mircea Eliade, a foremost figure in the Phenomenology of Religion, human beings have lost the sacred dimension of “primitive man,” where humans were confronted at all turns by objects over which they had no control, and so could only respond with awe and wonder.²⁹ Van der Leeuw, in similar fashion, speaks of the religious power of “things” for the primitive mind. Thus what makes a situation religious is neither the subjective nor the objective element, but *the way in which these elements come into contact*. For Eliade and Martin Buber (1878-1965), “religion” can best be defined neither in terms of what a person attends to in her religious behavior nor in terms of the human capabilities and faculties with which people behave religiously, “but in terms of the way in which they relate to the object of their attention.” This understanding of religion ties in to a certain type of knowledge: “the world becomes apprehensible as world, as cosmos in the measure in which it reveals itself as a sacred world.” In similar fashion, Tillich famously defines religion as “ultimate concern,” which “is manifest in all creative functions of the human spirit... and the infinite desire to express ultimate meaning.”³⁰ In light of this quite obvious conflation of the object of study with the form of studying, it may be pertinent to ask, *What is the ultimate concern, the religious “truth” of phenomenology?*

As we have seen, phenomenology at times seems to work on the Blakean premise that once the doors of perception (in the broadest sense) are cleansed (through phenomenological conversion, the *epoche*), all things will appear as they “truly are”—“infinite and holy.” In order to see the world and grasp the essence of phenomena (which may still be paradoxical and mysterious), we must break completely with our familiar uncritical acceptance of it. Yet it is in the relation that the truth emerges—the “laying down of being” through our interaction with such. Merleau-Ponty echoes both James and Husserl by proclaiming that “true philosophy” consists in relearning to look at the world: “philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, *like art*, the act of bringing truth into being.”³¹

Phenomenology as Art... and Life

Phenomenology is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cézanne – by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world as of history as that meaning comes into being.

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Perhaps, then, phenomenology can be called an art. But what would this mean? Gadamer, in his *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, contends that the preoccupation of hermeneutical theory with methodological questions pertaining to scientific understanding has distorted the hermeneutical project by limiting its universality, isolating the kind of methodical understanding in the *Geisteswissenschaften* from the broader processes of understanding that occur “everywhere in life beyond the pale of critical interpretation and scientific self-control.”³² The task of hermeneutics, which for Gadamer is an extension of the phenomenological project, is an *ontological* one, not a *methodological* one: it is not “what we do or what should we do, but rather what happens beyond our willing and doing”—or perhaps what happens as a result of our *being*. Moreover, the differentia between methodological sterility and genuine understanding is *imagination*—the capacity to see what is questionable in the subject matter and to formulate questions that question the subject matter further. Joseph Bittis speaks quite rightly of scientific reductionism and the dangers of the generic fallacy and resultant “schizophrenic dishonesty” that occurs when such produces a cleavage between the meaning of an event for the observer and its “scientific meaning,”³³ but fails to raise the question as to why the meaning of an event adheres in all cases to the believer rather than the observer? Obviously, it is nicer (read: more politically correct), but is it any closer to the truth? Or can such a query even be raised? Also, Bittis does not take into account the danger of phenomenology’s unwillingness/inability to deal with problems of existence and history more generally. Without *bring-in-time*—without the integral time dimension—truth can only be seen and not experienced, and as such is not really truth at all, except in the (anathematized because “sterile”) traditional metaphysical sense.³⁴ If phenomenology is more than method by virtue of the *epochal conversion*, then to do phenomenology is *to be a phenomenologist*, and being a phenomenologist entails some acknowledgment of what such has and can entail according to its suppositions.

As stated above, the phenomenological project is entirely self-grounding, and involves a necessarily transformed way of relating, of being-in-the-world in which we dwell, or perhaps, *with which* we dwell. Martin Heidegger, Husserl’s prodigal and prodigious pupil, explored in his writings the implication of taking the Husserlian project away from its ties to subjectivism and methodology and towards an “ontology of foundations.” Heidegger explored, in particular, the “forgetting of being” (*Seins-vergessenheit*) that has characterized Western intellectual history since Plato, and which can only be revoked through a conversion to an entirely new, phenomenological way of being. In the study of religion, Mircea Eliade saw phenomenology as a way of opening up the sacred (Heidegger’s *Sein*) by “tuning” (cf. James) ourselves in a new—or old and forgotten—way. Thus besides Husserl’s “Back to the things!” another motto for phenomenology might be the poet Rilke’s Heideggerian dictum: “I won’t endure these half-filled human masks.”³⁵ The life-style aspect of phenomenology seems to

invoke a meta-theological belief-system (however vacuous in terms of actual content) and cannot be lost upon those who invoke its name and methodology, especially in the study of religious phenomena. It is a call to all humans to re-examine their lived lives in totality. Thus rises a question of whether phenomenology can go halfway; whether or not it is nothing if it does not strive to be everything.

But if phenomenology cannot be an ethics, neither can it slip into confessional theology unless it is to disappear as a form of secular academic study. What of a third possibility between theology and science, as irreducible as the first and as non-confessional as the second: that is to say, phenomenology as *art*? For what is meta-theology but another name for a revelatory art—a clearing of the ground in (eschatological) expectation. Certainly its ultimate self-giveness and non-essentialism lend phenomenology an aura of such, as do the poetic turns of its often very unscientific phraseology. Like theology, phenomenology is *irreducible*, but unlike theology, it is uncommitted to a particular content of faith. Like William James, phenomenology “believes in belief itself.” But it cannot fall into the trap of *l’art pour l’art*; phenomenology, like the best art, has a point, though often if not always an indirect one. It presupposes a certain broad ethic, of the meaningfulness of revelation, of the importance of letting shine forth. This may be the truth of (what is called) phenomenology.

Rilke’s Poetics of Being

Since Mallarmé, European poetry has pulled itself away from the social world, as its words have divorced themselves from referential meaning. Like phenomenology at its most mystical, poetry in the Symbolist-Expressionist turn “made a music which lifted the traces of objects where they half survived in the referential meaning of words... towards a place where they lived in the eternal stillness of the poem.”³⁶ As such, poetry was held by the poets to have more ultimate meaning for humans. For a poet like Rainer Maria Rilke, who with his thing-poems (*Ding-Gedichten*) became something of a phenomenological muse, art is less a visionary recital than a practice. Rilke wanted to write poems “not about feelings, but about things felt”; poems about observing—animals, people, paintings—in which the focus was thrown off the lyrical speaker of the poem and onto the thing seen; a move from the transcendental subject-object relationship to the *Lebenswelten* of revealed Being (the “holy”). Important for Rilke is the trope of mirroring, he imagines the artist as a polished surface, disinterested, who mirrors (cf. Spiegelberg’s phenomenological lens) the world back to itself, and *by wanting nothing of it, makes it real*.

So free of curiosity your gaze
had become, so unpossessive, of such true
poverty, it had no desire even
for you yourself; it wanted nothing: holy.

Note the final word. As Robert Haas puts it: “I don’t think Rilke ever made a plainer statement of what he wanted art to be: cessation of desire; a place where our inner emptiness stops generating the need for things which mutilates the world and turns it into badly handled objects, where it becomes instead a pure, active, becalmed absence.”³⁷ The point of art is to *show* or to *say*, which is, in Rilkean terms, is also to *praise*; singing, revealing is being—it creates our presence

and affirms the real presence of the world. There is a sense here of both the Augustinian revolt against *concupiscentia*, the grasping after objects (cf. Heidegger’s obsessive “lust for novelty” [*Neugier*]) and a primitivist transcendence-in-immanence (“now it is true that gods come walking out”) that brings to mind once again Eliade (as well as, to some extent, van der Leeuw) and the sacralized life of the primitive mind, found, for example, in the Shinto conception of the *kami* that are in all worldly things of significance. Rilke:

To allow the completion of every impression, every germ of a feeling deep within, in darkness beyond words, in the realm of instinct unattainable by logic, to await humbly and patiently the hour of the descent of a new clarity: that alone is to live one’s art, *in the realm of understanding as in that of creativity*.³⁸

If art is indeed a way of life, it must involve not only creation but understanding. This is the point where Heidegger took up the dual challenge of Rilke and Husserl, responding with his phenomenology of being-in-the world.

Heidegger’s *In-die-Welt-sein*

Martin Heidegger transformed what is meant by phenomenology by dissolving it in a reconciliation with the world of Being, which comes about from the task of a certain type of new thinking. Holding on to the intuitionism of Husserl, Heidegger relieved phenomenology of its claims to be methodical and set it free for a “privileged inherence” in the truth of being.³⁹ The centrality of poetry and art more generally for Heidegger is crucial, as art is a “thinking that memorializes and responds.”⁴⁰ As such (for Heidegger, *knowing is being*) a new authentic way of existing is envisaged “as mortal to other mortals, to earth and sky, to the divinities present and absent”; it means “to let each of these be... and to hold oneself open to its being, recognizing it and responding to it appropriately in one’s own being, the way in which one oneself goes on, lives.” If “phenomenologists” are not “philosophers” or “scientists” they are certainly *Denker* (“thinkers”) caught in the radical astonishment of being, but always “*en route* to the Being of beings, that is, being with respect to Being.”⁴¹ Heidegger clarifies the phenomenological fence-sitting: neither of the two historical legacies of Western thought, the idealist-metaphysical (of Plato) or the scientific-technological (of Aristotle) satisfies the original, authentic condition and task of thought, which is to *experience*, to think through the nature of existence, the Beingness of being. To maintain a pretense of scientific distance and analytical objectivity is to remain within the circle that perpetuates the modern world’s forgetting of being, a long process that has produced “the alienated, unhoused, recurrently barbaric estate of modern technological and mass-consumption man.”

Setting the esoteric mystification of the Heideggerian vocabulary to one side, we can see the aesthetic/meta-ethical appeal of the phenomenology of being-in-the-world, and in it a determination to move away from the “thin abstractions” of representational thinking and the “stratospheric constructions” of scientific theorizing, and towards a full concreteness of lived experience. Perhaps, says Heidegger in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” “what we call feeling or mood... is more reasonable—that is, more intelligently perceptive—because more open to Being than all that reason which, having mean-

while become *ratio*, was misinterpreted as being rational.⁴² Heidegger rejects the three basic capacities delimited by traditional metaphysics (knowledge, memory, and the will) and contrasts these with the three attitudes needed for thinking about Being. Where knowledge (Cioran's "crime of indiscretion") is no longer decisive, nor can be, with respect to "un-hiddenness" (from the Greek word for truth—*aletheia*), we must turn to belief, defined as "a holding in the true (*Sichhalten im Wahren*) and so a holding in the double sense of giving support (*einen Halt geben*) and preserving an attitude (*eine Haltung bewahren*)."⁴³ Belief then is not to be thought of as a level of cognition, but rather as an attitude (*Haltung*) assumed when one does not adhere to something that has been fixed, and so does not "dogmatically adhere to beings or look for final foundations among beings." Once again, this approach must become a "way" (Ch. *dao*) and thus ultimately lose its strained purposivity. "Where the attitude remains *only* a result of something held to or a stance purposely taken, then it is not an attitude we hold to because this can only hold if and so long as it is able to stand for itself."⁴⁴

For Nietzsche, a thinker held in great regard (though criticized for his virulent subjectivism) by Heidegger, to *do* is to *be*; for Heidegger to *think* is to be—or rather, "thought lets Being be" (*das Denken lässt das Sein sein*)—but thinking involves, first and foremost, questioning.⁴⁵ Heidegger does not allow himself (unlike many neo-Nietzscheans, like Foucault) to fall into "the slippery Nietzschean slope of the wholesale metaphorical construction of reality,"⁴⁶ where truth is entirely interpretation. In fact, Jürgen Habermas has criticized Heidegger for exactly this "holding onto truth," which leads to his failure to free himself (despite his claims) from the traditional granting of a distinctive status to theoretical activity, from the constitutive use of language, and from the validity claim of a propositional truth.⁴⁷ According to the critic, Heidegger also remains attached, even in a negative way, to the foundationalism of the philosophy of consciousness, and perhaps even to the dreaded deceit of doing implicit onto-theology. Because he does not reject the hierarchical orderings of a philosophy bent on self-grounding, "he can only counter foundationalism by excavating a still more deeply laid, and henceforth unstable, ground."⁴⁸

Phenomenology of Religion?

Our passionate nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between presuppositions, wherever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances 'Do not decide, but leave the question open', is itself a passionate decision – just like deciding yes or no – and is attended with some risk of losing truth.

– William James

This, it seems, is the crux: Phenomenology distances itself from the foundationalism of traditional metaphysics and the reductionism of traditional science, yet it claims to be something other than theology. The hinge of the dilemma may be the question of disinterest and what that means. It is interesting that the three attitudes of Heidegger are virtually identical to the three Christian theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The link between Heideggerian *andenkendes Denken* and Negative Theology has been made; but for Heidegger, though God/Being cannot be rationally conceived of, there is

still great importance attached to the rational process of thought in the "sphere of beings" of the everyday *Lebenswelten*. Yet even here knowing is a mode of "being-there" (*Dasein*) founded upon being-in-the-world. Instead of a transcendental subject who in knowing or acting confronts the objective world as the totality of existing states of affairs, "the acts of knowing and doing performed in the objectifying attitude can now be conceived as derivatives from basic modes of standing within a life-world, within a world intuitively understood as context and background."⁴⁹ These modes of being in the life-world are characterized by Heidegger as so many modes of "caring"—in the sense of "having concern for" something.

Having concern for the phenomena one studies (or questions) sounds like a rather vague or banal precept, but it is, in a sense, the essence of the phenomenological code artistically conceived.

Care is always concern and solicitude, even if only privately... In willing, an entity which is understood—that is, one which has been projected upon its possibility—gets seized upon, either as something with which one may concern oneself, or as something which is to be brought into its being through solicitude.⁵⁰

Moreover, care is the existential mode in and through which being "grasps its necessary location and implication in the world." As George Steiner puts it, to be-in-the-world is to be *besorgt* (lit., careful); it is *Sorge* that makes human life meaningful.⁵¹ This is the deeper foundation or meta-theology of Heideggerian phenomenology, and it states quite clearly that there must be a limit to disinterestedness. Heidegger sought, in the unfolding of the new ontological thought, a turning-point in which the divine, or the holy, would appear in "new and unanticipated forms."⁵² Heidegger repeatedly denied that his work was theological, proclaiming that it "decides neither positively nor negatively about the possibility of God's existing"—yet he certainly imbued his new thinking with overtones which would be considered religious in the broader Tillichian definition of such, i.e., as the quest for "ultimate concern" or "revealed Being," as not only a possibility but a *necessity*.⁵³ Heidegger was not completely disinterested; he denied not only doing theology but also objective science, which in its indifferentism must degenerate into the sort of nihilism that has brought on our present state of technological terror. In fact, for Heidegger the single most crucial need of the hour is much more thinking through of the basic religious concepts and phenomena—"the cognitive clarification of the meaning of words such as God or the holy."⁵⁴

Phenomenology is not disinterested, and cannot be. For it either rejects foundationalism and truth claims *in toto* (sliding down the inevitable Nietzschean slope); or it accepts a deeper foundation that is the basis for a meta-theology or meta-ethics of "concern." In either case phenomenology is less a science than an art: in the first instance it is close to the constructivism of the neo-pragmatists like Richard Rorty and Jeffrey Stout; in the second it is an art in the expressionist sense, one whose end is not the construction of stories but the revelation of what is human in the deepest Heideggerian sense. Above all, phenomenology must aim for honest and critical self-description; it can no longer pose as a mediator between sympathy and pure understanding, but rather is deeply involved, *implicated*,

in both. Jacques Waardenburg thinks that the study of religion can and should be conceived of as “an academic and empirical area of studies, without a specific philosophical or theological stand.”⁵⁵ But it is difficult to conceive of even the most rigorous and objective approach that does rest upon certain specific philosophical tenets and presuppositions or beliefs. The science done by phenomenologists is so far from traditional science that it should eschew the term and all its trappings and pretensions, worrying less about its own status *vis-à-vis* the social sciences and more about a clearer self-understanding, in its own terms. This can only begin with a re-appraisal of the meaning of phenomenological truth, and what its goals may be. Knowledge for knowledge sake is at best idle talk, at worst a chimera which conceals specific interests; in science, as we know too well, disinterest is often used to justify potentially disastrous undertakings in the name of “objective truth” and the “progress of knowledge.”

In whatever form, constructivist or neo-essentialist, phenomenology seeks, through the revelation of beliefs and religious phenomena in non-reductionist terms, the (potential, but not guaranteed) human benefit of the availability of perspectives. But there is more to “concern” than just this—it invokes a measure of responsibility. This does not mean that academic rigor is denied, or that confessionism seeps in, but merely that phenomenologists, as human beings in-the-world, must be wary of pushing the notion of valueless facts too far. Waardenburg asks, quite seriously, whether a scholar should restrict himself entirely to “judgments of existence and refrain from any value judgment at whatever price and under whatever conditions.”⁵⁶ The answer must and can only be no. Heidegger speaks of what is “worthy of being questioned” (*Fragwürdige*)—that which “dignifies the question and the questioner” by making of the process of interrogation and response “an ever-renewed dialogue and counterpoint.”⁵⁷ The difficulty lies in knowing *when* to show a concern that transcends concern for the phenomena itself, but there can be no question that there is such a point. It is not only questionable whether a valueless judgment of fact can exist (and if one chooses to follow through on non-essentialism, it cannot), but what, ultimately, is the significance of such a distinction? From a neo-essentialist perspective, the truth is neither necessarily welded to the good, as in the rationalist liberal utopia (“the truth will set you free!”); nor is truth anyone’s constructed (ahistorical) whim (the slippery slope that threatens Nietzschean strains of deconstruction and neo-pragmatism)—the phenomenologist (like any human) must be eternally cognizant of Cioran’s lament: “What I *know* wreaks havoc upon what I *want*.” As long as values adhere to facts, should we not at least attempt to speak of these values and what implications they may have; should we not bring a hermeneutical self-awareness into phenomenology? If phenomenology has no point, then it is an intellectual game; an interesting and potentially valuable and constructive game, no doubt, but a game nonetheless. If it has a point, as it seems to in most instances, such must be acknowledged and made clear. The acceptance of what we have called meta-theology at the heart of phenomenology may be cause for fright by some who are wary of all things “theo”, or profound sadness by those who strive for a stronger commitment.⁵⁸ Yet this may be the sacrifice which must be made in the name of understanding, a real and pragmatic understanding of beliefs.

Conclusions

It is true that our study is a theoretical activity with which our practical life is not concerned... There is simply no doubt (however) that we grow during our work: when religion is the subject of our work, we grow religiously... In saying this, we have indicated the highest significance of our scientific task... We believe that we work objectively and scientifically, but the fruitful labour, without any doubt, takes place by the illumination of a Spirit who extends above and beyond our spirit.

– W. Brede Kristensen

By way of conclusion I will reiterate the three main issues raised in this paper, to which the manifold and diverse points raised within may cling and provide some focus for the task accomplished, or set underway. The first issue is the problem of *linguistic confusion* in phenomenology. As we have seen, the pragmatist turn against the tide of traditional metaphysics was largely the inauguration of a new way of speaking about things, truth in particular; it was a challenge on the front of language, coupled with a belief in the transformative power of language on our lives. Phenomenology in its early phase was also quick to realize that the old ways of speaking were stifling and had become unfit to address real questions of experience. Unfortunately the attempt to invent an entirely new vocabulary, either in the sense of using old words to mean new things (like the pragmatists and to some extent Husserl), or in the sense of the creation, from scratch, of a whole new terminology (as in the case of Heidegger, for whom “philosophy is a distinctive manner of language”) leads to great confusion and misunderstanding among those outside of these very specific language games (which was, at its extreme, everyone but the inventor himself—Heidegger must have felt at times like the man with the first telephone before a second was invented). Much of this linguistic misunderstanding fuels the debate between phenomenologists and social scientists, and as such there can be no resolution besides a mutual acknowledgment that both, quite literally, speak their own languages. Even among phenomenologists, the range of vocabularies is impressive and confusing. The only cure for greater misunderstanding would be for all sides to continually redefine their basic tenets, as well as their intentions, beyond the realm of the banal and platitudinous.

This brings up the second issue raised in this paper: the question of *self-definition*. It is my contention that phenomenology can only benefit from an infusion of Gadamerian hermeneutics, which more or less sprung from such to begin with, but which retains a critical edge and a sense of history quite lost upon most phenomenologists. The phenomenologist must evaluate her own beliefs with regard to the ultimate concern of phenomenology. There must be a constant process of confession so that confessionism may be avoided, just as reductionism can be held off through a conscious avowal of what is being reduced when facts and values meet up. The question must be raised, however strange or unwieldy it sounds: What is it to ask what the phenomena of religious beliefs signify, in terms of belief?

Third and most significantly is the issue of truth, and what *phenomenological truth* can be, if anything. The pragmatist representation of truth may be useful, but as we have seen, an avowal of non-essentialism precludes an adherence to pure constructivism, where truth can only be built (effectively reducing the religious meaning to its use) and it is doubtful that

phenomenology would either accept this proviso or choose this path.⁵⁹ Heidegger's trope of *bauen* (building) does not imply solely creation/construction but also "attending" and "tending to." Perhaps the most useful way of thinking about phenomenology, and about what it is to be a phenomenologist, is in terms of a revelatory art—something that stands not between science and theology but between pure creation and disinterested objectivity; a "poetics of religion" that strives for a certain amount of scholarly distance, but knows the futility and possible dangers of complete detachment, of indifference in the face of the "problems of being." For thought involves more than the mind and brain, it invokes the *Seelenfünkeln* of Meister Eckhart—"the little spark or live ember of the soul." In studying religion, in particular, a volatile and deeply human subject (in Tillichian terms, "a dimension of existence that influences every segment of human activity"⁶⁰), phenomenology must be vigilant and have "care." The paradoxes and deep ambivalence latent in the *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effects) of the phenomenological project itself arise in the brute fact of Martin Heidegger's complicity with and silence about possibly the greatest "forgetting of being(s)" in the modern world, and maybe in human history. But that is the grounds for another study.⁶¹ If phenomenology believes in the right to believe, it must be something more than mere observance; something more than a voyeurism which lets phenomena reveal themselves and go on their way, without interchange and dialogue. The truth may set us free (and even this is of course in origin a theological supposition), but only if it divests itself of the coat of abstract finality and becomes more historical and perspectival, while avoiding, somehow, the temptations of pure relativism and the indifferentism to which such oft gives leash.

Notes

1. Spiegelberg notes that in the 1920s, Husserl made the comment that "There are only two phenomenologists, Heidegger and myself." After the publication of *Sein und Zeit* in 1927, the master would have to rethink this statement as perhaps too inclusive, at least in terms of what Husserl himself would call "phenomenology."
2. Ryba, *Essence of Phenomenology*, 15-16.
3. Heidegger was in close contact and ideational interchange with Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), and greatly influenced the writings of the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (1904-1984).
4. Gardner, *Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*, 37.
5. Gardner, *Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*, 33, my emphasis.
6. James, cited in Gardner, *Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*, 20.
7. James, *Letters*, 133.
8. Richard Rorty, the recently late American neo-pragmatist thinker who writes of this "linguistic turn" in modern Western thought, says that pragmatists "keep trying to find ways of making anti-philosophical points in nonphilosophical language" (Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*, 11).
9. West, *American Evasion of Philosophy*, 55.
10. West, *American Evasion of Philosophy*, 54.
11. West, *American Evasion of Philosophy*, 56.
12. Marty, "Introduction," xvi.

13. There does not appear to be a single explanation for the curious silence between American Pragmatism and continental phenomenology, although some reasons might be the eventual connection of the latter with the (very un-American) pessimism of Sartrean existentialism; or the simple fact that popular writers like James are not taken seriously by the continental academies of higher learning.
14. Tillich, *What is Religion?* 46.
15. Ryba, *Essence of Phenomenology*, 112.
16. Ryba, *Essence of Phenomenology*, 118.
17. Ryba, *Essence of Phenomenology* 120.
18. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 13.
19. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 13, my emphases).
20. Like Thomas Ryba, Merleau-Ponty holds the conviction that there is a certain "will to phenomenology" that can be pointed to even in the work of non-phenomenologists (an assertion which, ironically, goes beyond the self-understanding of the 'experiencer' herself). Merleau-Ponty cites as phenomenologists Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud. Who else, one is tempted to respond, is there?
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 15.
22. Cioran, *Anathemas and Admirations*, 188.
23. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 17-18.
24. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 196.
25. It seems sadly ironic that if phenomenology follows the modern (i.e., post-Schleiermacher) conception of religion as wholly irreducible to reason or logic, then it must also accept (with Marxism and Freud's psychoanalysis) Sir Karl Popper's shutting of the gates to the "pseudo-sciences" that claim scientific status despite their irrefutability.
26. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 16.
27. Spoken of, for example, by Husserl's pupil Eugen Fink (1905-1975).
28. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 20-21.
29. Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 200.
30. Tillich, *Theology and Culture*, 179.
31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 29, my emphasis.
32. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, xi.
33. Bettis, "Introduction," 7.
34. For Tillich, this means phenomenology retains only the significance of a "standing protest," and ultimately an ineffective one due to these limitations (Tillich, *Theology and Culture*, 47).
35. Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 126.
36. Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, xi.
37. Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, xvii.
38. Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 26, my emphasis.
39. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse*, 138.
40. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, x.
41. Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 28.
42. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 25. Cf. William Blake: "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio sees only himself" ("There is No Natural Religion").
43. Grassi, *Heidegger and the Question*, 8.
44. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 387, cf. Nietzsche's comment in *Beyond Good and Evil* that ethics can only be an entire mode of being, not a set of rules or prohibitions.

45. *Denn das Fragen ist die Frömmigkeit der Denkers*—"For it is questioning that is the piety of thought" (Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 55).
46. West, *American Evasion of Philosophy*, 184.
47. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse*, 138.
48. "Heidegger passes beyond the horizon of the philosophy of consciousness only to stay in the shadows" (Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 138). Similarly, Steiner says "Heidegger operates in the shadow-area between rational speech and 'something else'" (Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 42).
49. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse*, 148.
50. Heidegger, in Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 101.
51. Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 101.
52. Buber, *Eclipse of God*, 71.
53. Heidegger claimed that his Being (*Sein*) "is not God and not a foundation for the final abyss of the world" (Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 57). Yet, like the Judeo-Christian God, Being is tautologically self-defined (cf. YHWH, lit. "I am that which I am"), and is clearly transcendent in some fundamental way.
54. Buber, *Eclipse of God*, 71.
55. Waardenburg, *Reflections*, vii.
56. Waardenburg, *Reflections*, 15.
57. Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 106.
58. Those such as Cioran, who says that "We are all, Eliade first of all, *ci-devant* believers, we are religious spirits without religion" (Cioran, *Anathemas and Admirations*, 122).
59. Tillich cites pragmatism *vis-à-vis* phenomenology's denial of the individual and creative possibility; pragmatism "regards concepts as subjective constructions, as words or fictions, which have meaning for life but no reality in the sense of objective truth. Their meaning for life consists in the fact that they facilitate the control exercised by an organism or a species of being, especially of mankind, over the environment and the inner world, thus strengthening the power of life in the subject that devises the concepts... [Thus] to understand a reality like religion means to... indicate the life-enhancing significance of the religious fiction, to point out the place in the life-process at which the fiction necessarily arises" (Tillich, *What is Religion?* 47).
60. Bettis, "Introduction," 170.
61. A topic treated briefly but insightfully in Steiner's *Martin Heidegger*.

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