

Article

Phenomenology and Transcendence: On Openness and Metaphysics in Husserl and Heidegger

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Abstract: In this paper I examine the relationship between phenomenology and metaphysics by reassessing the relationship between phenomenological and metaphysical transcendence. More specifically, I examine the notion of phenomenological transcendence in Husserl and the early Heidegger: Husserl defines transcendence primarily as the mode of givenness of phenomena that do not appear all at once, but must be given in partial profiles; Heidegger defines transcendence primarily as Dasein's capacity to go beyond entities toward being. I argue that these divergent understandings of phenomenological transcendence have resulted in a significant difference in reception among French phenomenologists of religion. These thinkers assert that phenomenology, when properly conceived and utilized, can make room for the divine and its revelation, i.e., for a *metaphysical* transcendence. I further argue that these thinkers prefer Heidegger's phenomenology to Husserl's because they understand Heidegger's transcendence as the subject's openness to being, while they understand Husserl's transcendence as a limit, as the inability to capture worldly objects. I take up Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness as a "case study" to illustrate this point. Finally, I argue that this preference for Heidegger over Husserl is misplaced and should be reversed. A close reading of Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life* shows that Dasein is confined to its own possibilities and cannot be open to a relationship with the divine. By contrast, Husserl's phenomenology provides the radical openness necessary to welcome revelation. While Husserl cannot envision a "worldly God," the structures of horizontality and temporality characterize a subject capable of an authentic openness to revelation.

Keywords: phenomenology; transcendence; metaphysics; revelation; subjectivity; Edmund Husserl; Martin Heidegger; Jean-Luc Marion; horizon; temporality



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1. Introduction

This paper inquires anew into the relationship between phenomenology and metaphysics by reassessing the relationship between phenomenological and metaphysical transcendence in Husserl and Heidegger. For both authors, the notion of phenomenological transcendence determines the accomplishments and limits of intentionality. For Husserl, phenomenological transcendence is said of phenomena that can only be given in profiles [*Abschattungen*], while for Heidegger transcendence is said of Dasein's possibility to go beyond itself and toward the world, and to go beyond entities toward their being¹. These different understandings of phenomenological transcendence have resulted in a marked difference in reception among French thinkers such as Jean-Luc Marion, who seek in phenomenology an approach that can make room for the divine and its revelation, that is, for the *metaphysically* transcendent.

In putting phenomenology to this use, French phenomenologists have tacitly privileged Heidegger's approach over Husserl's. In France, Husserl's transcendental idealism continues to be interpreted as a subjective idealism that would determine ahead of time what can appear and how it will appear². By contrast, Heidegger's reinterpretation of intentionality as the transcendence of Dasein, its openness to being beyond entities, is considered

more suitable for a phenomenology that wants to allow for the unique phenomenality of divine revelation. I will take up Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness as a "case study" to demonstrate this claim. Marion is particularly suited to this task because his work gathers excessive and paradoxical modes of phenomenality, originating from other thinkers as well as himself, under the formal rubric of the saturated phenomenon.

I argue that, on the contrary, it is Husserl's phenomenology that provides the openness to metaphysical transcendence sought in French phenomenology. The structure of horizon-intentionality and the future-oriented structure of time-consciousness constitute a radical openness that can in principle welcome something like divine revelation. By contrast, Heidegger's Dasein-structure is closed in on itself from the start and can only make room for its own possibilities. This can be observed in certain interpretive and phenomenological decisions that Heidegger makes in his *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, as well as in his 1928 essay "Philosophy and Theology".

I will conclude that a hybrid conception of intentionality, one that draws on Husserl, Heidegger, and Marion, can meaningfully relate to the transcendent, both phenomenological and metaphysical. Husserl's contribution is a horizontal structure that is both open and "generous," one that, as Espen Dahl shows, can make room for both the proximity of the divine *in* things and for its remoteness in the outer horizon. Heidegger, on his part, contributes an account of transcendence as the *movement* of a subject who is essentially restless and concerned. This hybrid account of intentionality is not simply a logical correlation between consciousness and object, nor is it merely the self-projection of possibilities. It is rather a desirous movement toward the world and beyond, a movement full of expectation and—here is Marion's contribution—drawn to excess.

2. Phenomenological Transcendence in Husserl and Heidegger

For Husserl as for Heidegger, the notion of phenomenological transcendence determines the accomplishments and limits of intentionality. For Husserl, phenomenological transcendence is mainly said of phenomena that are only given partially or in adumbrations [*Abschattungen*], and the phenomenological reduction plays an essential role in defining this mode of givenness eidetically. For Heidegger, transcendence is mainly said of Dasein and its movement toward the world, as well as its movement beyond entities and toward their being. As such, transcendence is for Heidegger a self-transcendence, an always-already-being-in-the-world.

2.1. Husserl's Phenomenology: Reduction and Transcendence

The notion of transcendence as a mode of givenness of objects is already present in the *Logical Investigations* and prior to any explicit doctrine of reduction or *epoché*. In the context of the *Investigations*, transcendence is defined under the light of a descriptive psychology, one that separates the immanent and the transcendent according to an almost common-sense understanding of "inner" vis à vis "outer" experiences. Despite the lack of any explicit process of reduction, Husserl does say that at this point he is after "ideations performed in exemplary cases of [intentional] experiences—and so performed as to leave empirical-psychological conception and existential affirmation of being out of account, and to deal only with the real phenomenological content" of intentional experiences as a pure species of acts (Husserl 2001b, p. 97). In other words, Husserl brackets ontological and empirical questions in order to focus on "real phenomenological content," but without a mature account of phenomenological reduction this bracketing happens within a psychological, empirical framework.

When parsing between the immanent and transcendent components of intentional acts, Husserl distinguishes between intentional and real contents, both of which should be understood as immanent. The object as intended in the act is "merely intentional" and not really inhering in it, while the truly immanent contents "belong to the real make-up of the act," make possible the intention, but are not themselves intended: "I do not see colored sensations, but colored things, I do not hear tone sensations, but the singer's song" (Ibid.,

p. 99). The transcendent part of the act, the object “outside” of consciousness, is *not* present in consciousness and wholly transcends the act (Ibid., p. 120). It is the object intentionally referred to and presented intentionally in the act, but it does not inhere in consciousness the way that content-sensations do. At the same time, Husserl warns against the temptation of representationalism, stating that the object “is not present to consciousness merely because a content rather similar to it simply somehow is *in* consciousness . . . but that all relation to an object is part and parcel of the phenomenological essence of consciousness, and can in principle be found in nothing else, even when such a relation points to some ‘transcendent’ matter” (Ibid., p. 126). The status of the object in the *Investigations* is thus liminal: it is present intentionally or as referred to, but does not “reside” in consciousness as liquid in a container. The intentional reference to the transcendent object makes possible the experience of it through its presenting contents.

This descriptive-psychological account of intentional acts fails to resolve the ambiguity of objectivity, as it is not clear how the object can be given in experience while transcending it. The phenomenological reduction comes to Husserl’s aid in parsing out the modes of givenness of the different moments of the intentional act. There is a shift in the status of the transcendent object once the reduction secures the field of transcendental consciousness, and this is best observed in *Ideas I*. While in the *Logical Investigations* the intentional content of the act is outside of consciousness and not part of the real [*reell*] content of the act, the phenomenological reduction allows for a distinction between immanence and transcendence *within* the phenomenological contents of the act. The intentional object, the object as presented, is included in the *reell* content and its transcendence lies in the fact that it cannot be given all at once (Drummond 2003, pp. 69–72). Thanks to the reduction, we gain a phenomenologically sound account of how the object’s transcendence is given in the act. To use the language of *Ideas I*, the object pure and simple is distinguished from the noema, which is the object *as intentionally contained*: “The intended objectivity is contained within the noema just as it is intended, and the determinable X is that object considered formally, apart from its determinations.” (Drummond 2003, p. 72) The object is *in* experience *as* transcending experience, because it is given as a noematic manifold that never ceases to reveal new profiles and phases.

By the time the *Cartesian Meditations* are composed, this paradoxical account of the transcendent object as immanent to and yet excessive of experience is thoroughly cemented:

Just as the reduced Ego is not a piece of the world, so, conversely, neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego, to be found in my conscious life as a really inherent part of it. [. . .] This “transcendence” is part of the intrinsic sense of anything worldly, despite the fact that anything worldly necessarily acquires all the sense determining it, along with its existential status, exclusively from my experiencing. (Husserl 1977, p. 26)

Transcendence is therefore said of worldly objects and is a sense that belongs to the experience of them. In the field of transcendental consciousness, transcendence is experienced as a sense that results from the excessiveness of the object vis à vis the conditions of possible experience: I cannot experience a worldly object all at once such that a prolonged temporal experience will show me nothing new, and neither can I experience a worldly object except as a complex of present and absent profiles. The worldly object always exceeds my experiential capacities.

2.2. Heidegger’s Phenomenology: Intentionality, Transcendence, and the Unity of Dasein

For Heidegger, transcendence is said of Dasein and its “movement” toward the world and the being of entities. In this sense, transcendence indicates the self-transcendence implied in the designation of Dasein as being-in-the-world and as the capacity for concern for Being. In broader phenomenological terms, transcendence is for Heidegger the essential upshot of the discovery of the intentionality of consciousness: intentionality should not be understood as a logical or representational relation between subject and object, but rather

as the indication that Dasein always already transcends all immanence (consciousness psychologically understood) and is already among entities questioning their being.

The question of transcendence first emerges in the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time*, where Heidegger discusses Scheler and Pascal in the context of their ontology of the subject³, but transcendence as a positive determination of Dasein's Being does not surface until *Being and Time*. In Heidegger's magnum opus, Dasein's transcendence is discussed in the context of a critique of the separation of consciousness and world, a category mistake that results in Husserl's erroneous doctrine of the world and its objects as transcendent of consciousness (Heidegger 1962, pp. 201–2)⁴. In Heidegger's view, one can only arrive at this account of transcendence if one fails to see that the transcendence of worldly objects is necessarily grounded on Dasein's more fundamental transcendence (Ibid., pp. 201–8). An order of grounding is given here: Dasein's ecstatic temporality is the ultimate ground, Dasein's transcendence is grounded in its temporality, being-in-the-world is grounded in transcendence, practical being-with equipmental entities [*Zeug*] is grounded in being-in-the-world, and finally the theoretical objectification of equipment is grounded in this practical being-with (Ibid., p. 364). Only when equipment is regarded theoretically with an objectifying gaze does it become possible to locate transcendence in the sphere of objectivity.

In the Summer Semester 1927 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger deepens his inquiry into Dasein's transcendence and connects it to Dasein's capacity for understanding being. It is well and good to talk about Dasein's self-transcendence as what allows it to step beyond itself and be among innerworldly entities. However, world itself is an ontological determination of Dasein and not an entity that is there alongside it. "World is not extant [nor handy] but world exists" (Heidegger 1988, p. 297) in the same way that Dasein exists. "Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object or I and Thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world" (Ibid.). Transcendence indicates the overstepping that Dasein is, and this overstepping is clear to see in the three moments of Dasein's existential movement, namely, being-toward-itself, being-with-others, and being-among-entities handy and extant (Ibid., p. 301). As a moment of overstepping, the transcendence of Dasein is itself grounded in its ecstatic temporality, and the temporalizing movement of Dasein is always at the same time an understanding self-projection oriented futurally—of Dasein as self and of Dasein as world. In this way, Heidegger lays bare the intrinsic connections not only between temporality and transcendence, but also between transcendence and understanding.

3. Transcendence as Difference: Levinas, the "Theological Turn," and the Limits of Phenomenology

Both for Husserl and for Heidegger, the theme of transcendence marks the possibilities and limitations of phenomenology. In claiming that transcendence is said of worldly objects, Husserl claims that the totality of the worldly object exceeds the perceptual capacities of consciousness. It is simply impossible for the worldly object to be fully contained in consciousness and, even after the development of the reduction, the phenomenological field secured through it is not the space in which the object *simpliciter* resides. The reduction effectively shows that transcendence is announced within the phenomenological field precisely as the excess of the object and the limit of the subject. On his part, Heidegger argues for transcendence as the movement that characterizes Dasein's continuous overstepping and claims that transcendence should be understood as a designation of existence and not of objectivity. In this sense, Heideggerian transcendence becomes a double gesture, one that liberates the subject from solipsism and at the same time limits the excess of objectivity, thereby rendering worldly entities available and handy.

These different understandings of transcendence have resulted in a marked difference in reception among subsequent phenomenologists. In particular, the phenomenologists of religion associated with the so-called *tournant théologique*, or theological turn, inherited

Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies asymmetrically. These thinkers have sought in phenomenology an approach that can preserve a space for the metaphysically transcendent, i.e., for divine revelation. It is on the basis of these divergent accounts of phenomenological transcendence that some of these phenomenologists regard Heidegger's thought to be more suited to this task than Husserl's. This, however, is not as evident as it might first appear. I will show that there is just as much reason, if not more, to employ Husserl's phenomenology for this task as Heidegger's and, on the other hand, that Heidegger's phenomenology is not as suited to the task as the French phenomenologists of religion think.

Still, it is not difficult to see why one would conclude that Husserl has little to offer to those interested in divine revelation as a phenomenon. Indeed, as soon as *Ideas I* introduces the process of reduction, God as the transcendence *par excellence* is excluded from the phenomenological field: "After the natural world is abandoned, we encounter yet another transcendence which is not given . . . immediately in union with reduced consciousness but becomes cognized in a highly mediated fashion We mean the transcendence pertaining to God" (Husserl 1983, pp. 133–34). The kind of transcendence that belongs to God differs completely from the transcendence of worldly objects, for the latter still corresponds to a mode of givenness—what one might call *Abschattungsgegebenheit* or adumbrational givenness—while the former only arises as a sort of Kantian regulative idea. That is to say, God is posited either as the ultimate ground of the *value-possibilities* and *-actualities* that attach to the absolute facticity of constitutive consciousness, or as the *telos* of a "marvelous teleology" that appears when the regulated order of nature becomes evident (Husserl 1983, pp. 133–34)⁵. Because such a being "would obviously transcend not merely the world but 'absolute' consciousness" as well, and since the phenomenologist is here faced with "an 'absolute' in a sense totally different from that in which consciousness is an absolute," with "something transcendent in a sense totally different from that in which the world is something transcendent," the divine transcendence must "naturally" be excluded from the field of absolute consciousness (Ibid.). The difference of divine transcendence here remarked upon is exactly the difference between phenomenological and metaphysical transcendence that I take up here, the difference between the transcendence of worldly objects and the transcendence of God.

Nevertheless, such a precisely calculated exclusion, one that is brought up in the text even before the phenomenological field and the noetic-noematic moments of intentional acts are parsed out, certainly has a powerful effect on the reader. It feels almost as if Husserl were warning philosophers of religion not to get ahead of themselves, that in his phenomenology they will not find what they are seeking.

3.1. The Reception of Husserl in France: Levinas on Husserl through Heidegger

In addition to this terse exclusion of divine transcendence from the phenomenological field, the circumstances of Husserl's reception in France gave him little chance to be read without prejudice. Indeed, these circumstances encouraged a misunderstanding of Husserl's phenomenology that can still be observed today. It was thanks to Levinas that Husserlian phenomenology finally made meaningful contact with the French academy, specifically through two texts: his co-translation (with the help of Gabrielle Peiffer and with advice from Alexandre Koyré) of Husserl's "Paris Lectures," which would become the first edition of the *Méditations Cartésiennes*, and the publication of Levinas' doctoral thesis *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Spagnuolo Vigorita 2021, pp. 43–45). However, the "Paris Lectures" were not the momentous event that one would imagine in hindsight⁶, and *Theory of Intuition* in fact criticizes Husserl for not being Heideggerian enough. This work gives an interpretation of Husserl as a thinker more preoccupied with limiting manifestation than with letting phenomena become manifest. In introducing Husserl to the French philosophical scene, *Theory of Intuition* is just as much an embrace of the spirit of phenomenology as it is a rejection of its outdated founder and his concerns with the absoluteness of the philosophical sciences⁷. In the text proper, Levinas only hints

at the problem of an excessive intellectualism, and it is only in the conclusion that he voices his reservations.

The charge of intellectualism should bring Heidegger to mind even before he is explicitly invoked in the concluding remarks. *Theory of Intuition* reads Husserl through Heidegger from the start and not only in its critique of the former, but also in its enthusiasm for the latter. Levinas freely admits that he interprets constitutional problems as ontological problems, and that the task of phenomenology is “to throw light on the meaning of existence” (Levinas 1995, p. 154). This transposes the entirety of Husserl’s transcendental project onto a metaphysical-ontological plane and locates the core Husserlian problematic not in logic or descriptive eidetics, but rather in the question, posed in the *Logos* article, “what does it mean for objectivity to be?” [*Was besagt dass Gegenständlichkeit sei?*]⁸. This allows Levinas to claim that, although Husserl poses the question of the meaning of being, only Heidegger dares to engage it directly. “This problem,” Levinas writes, “has for its object . . . the meaning of the existence of being, and attempts to find the meaning of Aristotle’s ‘transcendence’, the meaning of the ‘substantiality of substance’” (Levinas 1995, p. 154).

Yet, *Theory of Intuition* is not primarily concerned with the lack of an ontological dimension in Husserlian phenomenology, since Levinas makes clear that, in his view, the question of phenomenological constitution can and must be posed in ontological terms. The chief problem for Levinas, and consequently for many of the French authors who were introduced to phenomenology through his work, is that Husserl never grasps the full implications of the doctrine of intentionality. While the idea of intuition harbors the hope for a direct access to *lived* experience [*Erlebnis*], Husserl’s intellectualism leads to an unliving science of life rather than to life as a lived phenomenon. Intentionality properly understood should be the point of convergence between thought and life, but Husserl’s vision of phenomenology as the science of all sciences leads him to impose methodological strictures—the reduction, the focus on essences, constitution as a process of conceptualization, to name but a few—that recast intentionality as the *distance* between thought and life. Husserl’s notion of intentionality is for Levinas a theoretical process of representation, so much so that the “Husserlian concept of intuition [cannot but be] tainted with intellectualism” (Ibid., p. 94).

Dazzled by the prospect of an apodictic science of phenomena, Husserl necessarily fails to see that the temporal and historical dimensions of life have a transcendental, and not merely empirical, import for philosophical praxis. Husserl’s philosophy “seems as independent of the historical situation of man as any theory that tries to consider everything *sub specie aeternitatis*,” and is consequently blind to the fact that historicity and temporality are not secondary attributes of the human being but “form the very substantiality of man’s substance” (Ibid., p. 156). Much like Heidegger (e.g., Heidegger 2005)⁹, Levinas attributes this failure to a misplaced emphasis on reflection as a “suprahistorical attitude” that is tasked with supporting the entirety of conscious life. The reduction, the gesture of freedom with which phenomenological philosophy begins, is motivated by the will to theory, such that “the historical role of the reduction and the meaning of its appearance at a certain moment of existence are, for [Husserl], not even a problem” (Levinas 1995, p. 157). The very possibility of the reduction, and thus of phenomenology itself, depends for Levinas on those structures that Husserl never investigates, on the temporality and historicity of the concrete and living subject who, motivated by its history, chooses to philosophize. The result is a philosophical enterprise incapable of raising the historical and temporal dimensions of life to the level of a priori science¹⁰.

Most important for my purposes here is, first, that Levinas’ critique is imported almost wholesale from Heidegger, and second, that through this critique Levinas draws an explicit connection between the meaning of phenomenological transcendence and the historical and temporal dimensions of concrete life. As Heidegger states, phenomenological transcendence can be correctly understood as belonging to the ecstatic unity of Dasein only if the order of grounding between the transcendence of objectivity, the transcendence of being-in-the-world, and the ecstatic temporality and historicity of Dasein are accurately

and explicitly delineated. Heidegger makes this clear in *Being and Time* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*¹¹, and this in turn supports Levinas's critique: if Husserlian phenomenology ignores historicity, then all the more must Husserl be wrong about the meaning of transcendence, a privileged locus of phenomenological inquiry for Levinas. Without an understanding of the grounding and transcendental roles of temporality and historicity, Husserl is doomed to pose the question of the meaning of being without finding an answer. This is why, for Heidegger as well as Levinas, Husserl can only understand phenomenological transcendence as belonging to the world and, in a more radical sense, to the divine.

In short, the publication of *Theory of Intuition*, which marks the moment in which Husserlian phenomenology finally made landfall in the French academy, is really an endorsement of Heidegger's phenomenology rather than Husserl's, especially with regard to the question of the meaning of transcendence¹². From the very beginning of his reception in France, there was little possibility that Husserl would be read in his own right. He was introduced as incapable of thinking phenomenological transcendence positively, limiting it instead to the mode of givenness of what does not adequately appear. At this juncture, Levinas calls upon Heidegger and his understanding of transcendence in order to conquer a field of experience that does not need to exclude the transcendent, a phenomenology capable of grasping lived experience *as* lived, historical, and factual. This positions Levinas as the figure connecting Husserl and Heidegger to a younger generation of French thinkers. Through Levinas' work, and in particular through his dismissal of Husserl and his endorsement of Heidegger, a space was opened for French phenomenology where, perhaps, even the divine transcendence can become manifest in its *sui generis* phenomenality.

3.2. Marion as Case Study: On the Theological Turn and the Freeing of Transcendence

In a later essay titled "Transcendence and Evil," Levinas draws an essential connection between phenomenological transcendence and Heidegger's ontological difference, a connection that builds on the conclusion to *Theory of Intuition*¹³. If in the earlier work Heidegger is praised for opening up the historical and temporal dimensions of concrete life by means of a more fundamental understanding of phenomenological transcendence, in this later essay he is acknowledged for recognizing that the self-transcendence of the subject makes it possible to think the ontological difference, the difference between entities and their being. Dasein's transcendence allows phenomenology to inquire into what does *not* appear as entities do, and with what does not appear except as its *difference* from entities. "This difference," Levinas states, "exerts a fascination upon those philosophers who, after the Nietzschean remark about the death of God—and outside of all onto-theology, dare to take interest in the meaning of transcendence." One may wonder, he continues, "whether [the ontological difference] permits us to think of a transcendent God from beyond being," whether it "can be suitable for, and sufficient to, divine transcendence," but it remains nonetheless the case that "the *ontological difference* serves philosophers as the [principal] model of transcendence"¹⁴. Levinas mentions Jean-Luc Marion by name in this context, praising his "courageous attempt" to conquer a space for the manifestation of the transcendent—be this a phenomenological or metaphysical (i.e., divine) transcendence¹⁵.

I take up Marion as a sort of "case study" for the hypothesis that I have advanced thus far, namely, the French preference for Heidegger over Husserl where the phenomenological possibility of revelation is concerned, for two reasons. First, because he is the best-known French phenomenologist of religion across different philosophical circles and debates. Second, Marion's phenomenological thought is, in my view, an encyclopedic thought because it gathers and elevates the contributions of thinkers who came before him: Levinas's face of the Other, Henry's flesh, and Merleau-Ponty's reflections on art¹⁶, are all grouped under the heading of the saturated phenomenon. An analysis of Marion's phenomenology is therefore particularly relevant for the confirmation of my claim.

For Marion, phenomenology should be concerned with transcendence in two senses: first, transcendence understood as the self's capacity to go beyond the phenomenon to

its “call”¹⁷; second, transcendence understood as the various paradoxical forms of givenness that differ from the phenomenality of ordinary or “poor” phenomena (Marion 2002a, pp. 216–19)¹⁸. These phenomenological tasks follow and confirm Levinas’ evaluations, as Marion accuses Husserl of imposing artificial boundaries on phenomenality while remaining within the Heideggerian paradigm of transcendence as ontological difference. In this sense, the task of phenomenology for Marion is to liberate the transcendent, understood as that which phenomenologically *differs* from ordinary phenomena, from the strictures imposed on it. Furthermore, although it is true that Marion also criticizes Heidegger for limiting the scope of phenomenality, he does not escape the fact that, as Levinas writes in “Transcendence and Evil,” Heidegger’s ontological difference remains the structure of transcendence in his phenomenology. Marion’s project rests on fundamentally Heideggerian structures even as he criticizes Heidegger for enacting a so-called “ontological reduction” that dissimulates the radical scope and role of givenness.

In the case of transcendence as the call of the phenomenon, it is a matter of the subject’s difference from innerworldly beings, a difference that makes it possible for the subject to hear and hearken to the call, to be the place for the unpredictable “landing” of the phenomenon. In the case of transcendence as paradoxical form of manifestation, it is a matter of the difference between what is given, i.e., the phenomenon, and givenness, i.e., phenomenality as such and without restriction. Where Heidegger uses ontological terminology and points to the difference between entities [*Seienden*] and being [*Sein*], Marion uses the language of givenness and distinguishes between the given phenomenon or gift [*donné, don*] and givenness [*donation*]. In the context of Marion’s phenomenology, givenness is supposed to be prior to being, but the differential structure is the unmistakable model of transcendence both in the call and in the paradoxes of phenomenality. The last chapter of *Reduction and Givenness* shows as much in the case of the call, while Book IV of *Being Given* displays this in the case of the paradox.

In the last chapter of *Reduction and Givenness*, “The Nothing and the Claim,” Marion is at pains to distance and distinguish himself from Heidegger. He asks whether Heidegger actually gains access to being as a phenomenon, that is, to being in its manifestation. The ontological difference between entities and being is here the fundamental starting point, for the whole difficulty of achieving the phenomenality of being is precisely that it differs from that of entities: not that it does not manifest, but that it manifests differently and in its difference. Marion’s first move is to contest Heidegger’s account of the call or claim of being on Dasein, and his analysis shows that, far from compelling Dasein to listen, this call can just as well go unheeded. If in its boredom Dasein can heed the claim of Being, this is because there is a more fundamental freedom, itself unleashed by this boredom, that allows this as well as its opposite, the forsaking of the call¹⁹.

Of interest in this critique is not so much its accuracy, which is debatable, as much as the fact that Marion retains the Heideggerian model of the claim as the foundational gesture of his own phenomenology: “if boredom liberates the *there* from the call of Being, it sets it free only in order better to expose it to the wind of every other possible call; thus, the liberated *there* is exposed to the nonontological possibility of another claim” (Marion 1998, p. 197). Levinas is here called upon to furnish an alternative account of the claim that can pave the way for Marion’s own reinterpretation, namely, the call of the face: the “*en face* of the face in its expression—in its mortality—assigns me, demands me, claims me” (Ibid., pp. 197–98). Marion grounds the origins of his phenomenology not in a particular claim, whether of being, of the Other, or of God, but rather in “the call itself [which] intervenes as such, without or before any other ‘message’ than to surprise the one who hears it, to grab even the one who does not expect it” (Ibid., p. 198). This is, for Marion, not simply a matter of overcoming lesser arguments through philosophical strength, but a matter of phenomenological reduction. Just as Husserl leads back natural experience to the correlational accomplishment of *Sinngebung*, and Heidegger leads entities back to Dasein and to the claim of being, Marion reduces these particular claims to the “pure form of the

call." Any claim, even the claim of being, must take on this pure form of the call in order to be deployed²⁰.

Whence this call? Whence this form? It is not necessary to answer this question because it can only be posed after the fact, after this event. The call comes from beyond and can only be known insofar as I recognize myself called before any self-constitution or any there-ness of Being. Here, in the gesture that seeks to reach back to the most original givenness, the most original movement of phenomenality, lies the most radical appeal to transcendence as the proper theme of phenomenology. Not so much a contradiction of Heidegger as a reinterpretation, a reintegration and reabsorption. It is not surprising, then, to read in Courtine's essay on the theological turn that the phenomenologists named in it improperly applied Heidegger's phenomenology of the inconspicuous in order to reach beyond the phenomenon to phenomenality, beyond the world to life, beyond the given/gift to givenness (Janicaud et al. 2001, p. 126). Flippant or debatable as this claim is, it does point to a common structure in the projects of thinkers, aside from Marion, like Michel Henry and Jean-Louis Chrétien. A structure derived from Heidegger's original insight that transcendence does not mark the *limit beyond which* phenomenology must not inquire—because it will find nothing—but rather the *border within which* the ground of phenomenality reveals itself: even *as* limit, *as* paradox, *as* difference.

Meanwhile, Marion's critique of Husserl's work is radical to the point that the phenomenology of givenness bears little resemblance to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In his reading of Husserl, Marion imports some familiar critiques, as one clearly sees in the working hypothesis of his inquiry: "what would happen, as regards phenomenality, if a givenness was accomplished without the limit (the principle of a horizon) or condition (the transcendental I) still imposed on it by the intuition of the 'principle of all principles'?" (Marion 2002a, p. 189) Marion is referring to §24 of *Ideas I*, where the "principle of all principles" is formulated as follows: "every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition Everything originally (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there" (Husserl 1983, p. 44). Marion's conclusion is that if these limits and conditions were eliminated, phenomenality would finally be coextensive with givenness and the phenomenon would be free to appear in its own right, for "only givenness suggests that the phenomenon guarantees at one stroke . . . its apparition and the reason for its apparition" (Marion 2002a, p. 184). Husserl would certainly respond that a phenomenology without horizons, transcendentality, and even intuition, would be no phenomenology at all, as Levinas and Derrida have commented²¹. Yet, Marion insists that the exclusion of these structures and concepts actually allows phenomenology to investigate what appears differently and otherwise.

Regarding the horizon, it is as a structure involved in the intuition of objects in general. However, rather than being a description of the structure of transcendence, as it is with Husserl's description of adumbrational givenness, Marion takes the phenomenological horizon to be an organizing principle, "already defined . . . where lived experiences not yet given could simply be united with the lived experiences already given . . . in one and the same objective intention" (Marion 2002a, p. 186). The horizon would thus be something like a Kantian schema that plays the function of objectification. For "within the horizon, the unknown refers in advance to the known, because it welcomes and fixes it" (Ibid.). Therefore, the horizon takes possession of the phenomenon and inscribes it in a pattern that is already known, through an intention that has always already anticipated, and therefore limited and reduced, the givenness of the phenomenon.

As for the transcendental I, Marion sees its function in the phenomenological process as that of constituting objects. However, constitution does not take place according to a sense that the phenomenon itself gives—though, for Marion, it should—and rather becomes "a mere synthesis by [the transcendental I] of its lived experiences according to an intention aiming at an object" (Marion 2002a, p. 187). Synthesis and constitution—these are the results of the I's "transcendental posture" toward the given phenomenon, a posture

“which alone is equal to the task of fixing forms and concepts a priori, thereby determining phenomenality in advance according to conditions of experience” (Ibid.) that arbitrarily condition the givenness of the phenomenon²².

The common thread in these two phenomenological constrictions is the idea of a shortcoming on the side of intuition, one that must be made up for on the intentional side of the correlation. Both the horizon and the transcendental I must intervene, according to Marion, and shape what is intuited into an object or objectivity that, so to say, makes the best of the penury of intuition: “What keeps phenomenology from letting phenomena appear unreservedly is therefore, first of all, the fundamental deficit of intuition that it assigns to them—without appeal or recourse” (Marion 2002a, p. 192), or more directly stated, “What gives is lacking. The very thing that is lacking is precisely the only thing that could and should give” (Ibid., p. 194). Marion finds here an essential but unjustified decision to restrict the breadth of giving intuition such that, he claims, whole regions of phenomenality are excluded from the phenomenal field, without justification.

One should not miss Levinas’ imprint here, neither in the critique of Husserl nor in the aspirations for a liberated phenomenology. In the context of Marion’s critique of both horizon and transcendental I, it is illuminating to recall the following passage from *Totality and Infinity*: “Since Husserl,” Levinas writes, “the whole of phenomenology is the promotion of the idea of *horizon*, which for it plays a role equivalent to that of the *concept* in classical idealism.” Like Levinas, Marion reads Husserl as a thinker preoccupied with forbidding the manifestation of certain phenomena than with ensuring that the givenness of phenomena in general is brought to phenomenality in whatever way it gives itself. This is tantamount to saying that Husserl is more concerned with banning the transcendent than to allow its self-manifestation²³. Marion’s work combats against this suppression of transcendence. Phenomenology should seek ways to broaden the phenomenological field so that also transcendent phenomena can give themselves, in themselves and by themselves, without any interference or objectification on the part of the transcendental I, and without the imposition of a horizon that decides the modality of manifestation ahead of time. In short, Marion believes he constructs a phenomenology that liberates the transcendent from the brackets that Husserl places around it. If Husserl banishes the transcendent, Marion sees himself as rescuing it. In this way, ordinary phenomenality is better accounted for within the phenomenology of givenness, and what Marion calls “saturated phenomena”—phenomena that give themselves in excessive and paradoxical manners—are allowed to appear when Husserlian phenomenology would either turn them into ordinary objects or eliminate them outright from the phenomenological field (Gschwandtner 2007, p. 72)²⁴.

It becomes clear at this point that Marion is not only interested in phenomenological transcendence, but also, and perhaps even more so, in divine transcendence and its revelation. The saturated phenomenon *par excellence* is, for Marion, divine revelation, the manifestation of the metaphysically transcendent, the apparition of the divine transcendency that is transcendent in that completely different sense that Husserl fatefully mentions in §58 of *Ideas I*. Marion would of course reject the identification of the divine with the metaphysical, though it is often not clear what Marion means by metaphysics. Much of the secondary literature assumes that Marion’s definition of metaphysics is simply imported wholesale from Heidegger, but this is an oversimplification. Marion follows the later Heidegger in defining metaphysics as a framework common to a broad section of the Western philosophical canon. However, he finds it necessary to amend and deepen Heidegger’s definition of metaphysics as onto-theo-logy. For Marion, metaphysics is ultimately about certain a priori conditions that simultaneously ground and circumscribe the possibilities of a system of thought. In his phenomenological works, the terms “metaphysics” and “onto-theo-logy” are used almost interchangeably, but what makes a system of thought metaphysical is not its reference to the divine. Rather, “grounding, need for certainty, ontology, causality, and perfect presence circumscribe the metaphysical project”²⁵. Marion would therefore disagree that, as far as his own phenomenology is concerned, the metaphysical and the divine can be equated. However, in the context of an argument such

as mine, one that deals with the historical and philological conditions of possibility for Marion's phenomenology, it is appropriate to use this term more broadly. This helps to situate Marion's phenomenology within a context that also includes Husserl and Heidegger, the very authors he criticizes for succumbing to metaphysics. It is in this sense that metaphysical transcendence, divine revelation, and phenomenological saturation converge, and the notion of revelation as the saturated phenomenon *par excellence* shows this most clearly.

Phenomenological saturation is defined according to Kant's logical categories of quantity, quality, modality, and relation (Marion 2002a, p. 199; Marion 2002b, pp. 34, 100, 112, and 159). Saturation describes the form of a phenomenological possibility without determining its content, so there is no a priori restriction on what can manifest as a saturated phenomenon, as long as it gives itself in an excess of intuition and there are no obstacles to limit this givenness. In this sense, the saturated phenomenon represents a form of maximal phenomenality that Husserl's phenomenological apparatus otherwise distorts or does not allow to appear. Furthermore, while various phenomena can be saturated in one, two, or even three categories²⁶, only the phenomenon of divine revelation is saturated according to all four. In fact, revelation "saturates phenomenality to the second degree, by saturation of saturation" (Marion 2002a)²⁷. Divine revelation is the ultimate phenomenological possibility and shines forth with such an excess of givenness that, far from being constituted by a transcendental ego, it instead constitutes the I in a process of counter-intentionality²⁸. Such a radical reversal, in which the self receives itself from the givenness of the phenomenon rather than giving meaning [*Sinngebung*] to the phenomenon, is a direct response to §58 of *Ideas I*. For where Husserl's transcendental phenomenology excludes the divine transcendence on the basis that "this being . . . obviously transcend[s] not merely the world but 'absolute' consciousness" (Husserl 1983, p. 134), and is thus not given in intuition, the phenomenology of givenness allows the divine not simply to reveal itself as common phenomena do, but to appear in such an excessive manner as to overwhelm and reshape the ego (Marion 2002a, pp. 234–36).

The rejection of some of the most fundamental structures of Husserlian phenomenology—the horizon, the transcendental ego—along with the absorption and reinterpretation of essential parts of Heidegger's thought—phenomenality as event and the phenomenon as gift, in addition to the call and the ontological difference—come together to form the very ground on which Marion's phenomenology of givenness stands. The liberation of the divine transcendence and its unimpeded manifestation depend entirely on these gestures of rejection and absorption. Husserl's phenomenology is too concerned with objectivity and absolute scientificity to concern itself with givenness *tout court*, and for this reason it is unable to investigate paradoxical forms of phenomenality. By contrast, Marion cannot but resort to Heidegger's philosophy, appropriately interpreted and modified, to proffer his own phenomenology. This is not to say that Marion is not critical of Heidegger, but rather that his critique of Heidegger takes place within a larger context of appropriation, as Levinas saw and despite Marion's protests to the contrary²⁹.

4. Emendations: The Capacity for Transcendence in Transcendental Phenomenology and Fundamental Ontology

Thus far, I hope to have shown that the concept of transcendence, phenomenological and metaphysical, is at the heart of the preference for Heideggerian phenomenology found in the thinkers of the theological turn. The analysis of Levinas's text on intuition showed that Husserlian phenomenology was introduced to France as incapable of taking transcendence into account, while Heidegger was endorsed as the purveyor of a phenomenology more suited to the task. Furthermore, Levinas underlined that the French theological phenomenologists invariably take the ontological difference as the model for transcendence, and he identifies Marion and his *God without Being* as a privileged example. A deeper examination of Marion's phenomenology of givenness has shown that not only the structure of the ontological difference, but also other Heideggerian themes such as the event and the gift, are cornerstones for Marion's phenomenological thought³⁰. By contrast, Marion finds

in Husserlian phenomenology all the constrictions that limit phenomenality: the horizon, the transcendental of the ego, and intuition as a de jure deficit of phenomenality in need of synthetic support.

I will now attempt to overturn these conclusions and show, on the one hand, that Husserlian phenomenology in fact has much to offer to phenomenologists of religion and, on the other, that the reliance on Heidegger's ontology is misplaced. Husserl's double horizontal structure (internal and external horizons), along with the future-oriented structure of time-consciousness, establish a radical openness that can, in principle, make room for the revelation of the divine transcendence. Heidegger, meanwhile, conceives of Dasein as an entity entirely closed in on itself, and the only transcendence of which it is capable is self-transcendence toward itself in its ecstatic temporality. However, this phenomenological transcendence is only possible if it is preceded by, and grounded in, a more original metaphysical transcendence. An examination of his 1920–1921 lecture courses on Paul and Augustine will confirm this hypothesis³¹.

4.1. Proto-Christian Life: The Epochē of Grace and the Self-Enclosedness of Dasein

Toward the end of his first Freiburg period, between the Winter Semester of 1920 and the Summer Semester of 1921, Heidegger taught two courses on the phenomenology of religious life. The first, *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, contains a long preamble on methodology and a phenomenological interpretation of Paul's letters to the Galatians and Thessalonians³². The second, *Augustine and Neo-Platonism*, enacts a detailed interpretation of Book X of Augustine's the *Confessions*. In both courses, Heidegger focuses on the radically new way in which early Christianity lived its relationship to time and develops an account of ecstatic temporality that is essentially bound up with grace, alterity, and transcendence both phenomenological and metaphysical.

Before any phenomenology can be carried out, it is imperative for Heidegger to "attain to the genuine object of religiosity itself," because methodological presuppositions also presuppose the kind, form, or type of object in question (Heidegger 2010, pp. 52–53). Only by means of a phenomenological destruction [*Destruktion*] can the factual life of primal Christianity be regarded phenomenologically at all. The only possible beginning of a phenomenology of religion is to be found in the motivation of factual life itself, and this entails two lines of questioning: first, one must ask what motivates proto-Christian factual life itself; second, one must ask what motivates the phenomenologist (Ibid., p. 54). Insofar as factual life is in question in both cases, Heidegger's phenomenology of religion is an existential-historical self-questioning³³. One may rightly ask, why turn to religious phenomena to clarify ontological questions about existence and history? Heidegger had already answered this question in a lecture course held the previous year (WS 1919–1920): early Christianity is the "historical paradigm" [*historische Paradigma*] that best exemplifies the temporality of factual life in general (Heidegger 1993, p. 61; Esposito 2003, pp. 143–44). In other words, primal Christian facticity is the ontic instance in which the ontological structure of temporality becomes manifest most clearly, an event in time where factual life discovers its peculiar temporality. Thus, the phenomenology of religious objects must become a phenomenology of factual life in its religious specificity, carried out as an existential-historical self-questioning, and therefore a questioning of the "how" [*Wie*] of life's self-possession. Only if these indications are followed can the phenomenologist grasp the essence [*Wesen*] of religious life.

For this reason, Heidegger's reading of the Pauline letters focuses on Paul's historical situation within the existential context of the communities to whom he writes. The two fundamental experiences in 1 Thessalonians are (1) their having-become, which for Heidegger also entails Paul's own having-become, and (2) their knowledge of having-become, which Paul bids them to remember. Having-become, along with the knowledge of it, determines the "how" of a factual life situation in which temporality and historicity are experienced "kairologically" (or ecstatically, as *Being and Time* would state seven years later): "Having become is not, in life, [just] any incident you like. Rather, it is *incessantly co-experienced*, and

indeed such that *their Being now [Sein] is their having-become [Gewordensein]*" (Heidegger 2010, p. 66). Heidegger recognizes that the Thessalonian Christians are determined in the "now" by their having-become, a past that is not simply a present time that came before but rather a constant inheritance co-experienced in their present-being, the continual movement of conversion that coincides with the experience of life's ineluctable facticity.

Paul describes the Thessalonians as if suspended between, on one hand, their having-become and the continuous movement required by the act of conversion, and on the other, Christ's second coming. The latter presents a futurity that is as imminent as it is incalculable; Christ will come like a thief in the night, precisely when the present time is lived as peace and security. By contrast, Paul writes that he lives in constant distress over the second coming of Christ: "These moments—the impossibility of bearing it any longer, the devil, the call to prayer, the imploring at the end—all this makes possible . . . an understanding of Paul's distress" (Ibid., p. 69), the situation that allows him to live the future coming of Christ in an entirely peculiar way. The parousia of Christ is not a particular date that will eventually become present, but an eschatology that calls the first Christians to live the present as hope and vigilance. Paul lives time as the hope of parousia, and it is for this reason that he does not speculate about the precise moment in which it will take place. The "day of the Lord" already takes place as the present expectation of an unobjectifiable eschaton (See Esposito 2003, pp. 295–96; Ruggiu 1998). In this regard, Heidegger states that "the When is determined through the How of the self-comportment, which is determined through the enactment of factual life experience in each of its moments" (Heidegger 2010, p. 75). Time cannot be understood here as a series of present moments, and the time of Christ's parousia depends rather on one's comportment [*Verhalten*]. The three structural moments of temporality—past (having-become), present (facticity), and future (parousia), are radically altered within the factual life of the early Christians, so that the kairological-ecstatic temporality of factual life becomes transparent for the first time.

Heidegger follows a similar path in his lecture course on Augustine. If in his reading of Paul temporality is uncovered in conversion and in the expectation of Christ's parousia, in his reading of Augustine temporality is uncovered in memory [*memoria*] and in the restless search for God. Within the context of an investigation of memory, Book X of the *Confessions* places the reader in front of the paradox of forgetting: how can memory, a supreme power of the soul, also represent forgetting [*oblivio*]? "If *memoria* is present—representation to myself—then *oblivio* cannot be present, and vice versa . . . How then is it present for me to remember when, if [forgetting] is present, I cannot remember?" (Ibid., p. 138) It is an existential-theological rendering of the well-known Meno's paradox where what is sought is God himself, the one whom Augustine loves. The only possible solution, for Augustine, is that he must in some way already have God in mind if he knows that he is searching for God. Heidegger states the solution in an equally paradoxical way: "As long as we have still lost something, we still 'have' it" (Ibid., p. 140).

"But what do I love when I love You?" Augustine asks. His answer is *beata vita*, the happy life (Ibid., p. 141). The search for God is the search for a kind of life that Augustine must somehow have in his memory, that he remembers having forgotten. This is a temporal knot in which having comes before searching and forgetting comes before knowing. When Heidegger asks about the How of this fore-having, he discovers an ecstatic temporality that is structurally the same as that found in his reading of Paul: on one hand, life already has the *beata vita* insofar as it searches and hopes for its future advent, and on the other hand, life has the *beata vita* as what is always already forgotten, what must always already be retrieved. Memory, perhaps the loftiest power of the human soul, can make present the forgetfulness of God and of the happy life, but only precisely *as forgotten*. Likewise, life searches for and hopes to have the *beata vita* when in fact this searching and hoping are the only ways in which it can possess the happy life in the now. In this sense, proto-Christian life makes clear what most of the time is unclear, namely, that factual life as such is fundamentally determined by a non-linear, ecstatic temporal structure.

Heidegger identifies a further essential characteristic of factual life in Augustine's *curare*, a restless concern for oneself that Heidegger will transform in the unitary structure of care [*Sorge*] in *Being and Time*. The context here is Augustine's description of temptation or trial [*Tentatio*] as a ubiquitous phenomenon in the life of those who seek God. "Is human life on earth not perhaps a trial?" (Ibid., p. 152) Augustine asks, and Heidegger comments that, in the very asking of this question, Augustine expresses a "fundamental character of factual life" (Heidegger 2010, p. 152). Augustine's *curare*, his care and concern, is lived as fearing or as desiring, and this concern is itself placed in its own concrete horizon of awaiting. In this regard, the fundamental experience of being concerned is always a question about how this concern is enacted in concrete living, but in every case factual life is this concern. "Thus, the enactment of experience is always insecure about itself," such that life can find no respite in a neutral middle ground devoid of trials and concern (Ibid., p. 154). Whether as fearing or desiring, life is always concerned about itself.

Through his readings of Paul and Augustine, Heidegger gains a radically new way of understanding the relationship between life, time, and concern for oneself. As I have shown above, ecstatic temporality will become the ground of Dasein's transcendence in *Being and Time* and *The Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology*: it is because Dasein's temporality is ecstatic that it constantly transcends itself toward the world. It is imperative to recognize, however, that Heidegger secures this account of temporality from texts in which it is indissolubly bound up with the experience of grace. For instance, Heidegger comments that "the Christian is conscious that this facticity cannot be won out of his own strength, but rather originates from God—the phenomenon of the effects of grace" (Ibid., p. 87). Likewise, Oscar Becker writes in his notes to the course on the *Confessions* that "the tendency toward *vita beata*—not [in actuality] but [in hope], emerges only from out of the [remission of sin], the reconciliation with God" (Ibid., p. 214). It is not possible for Paul to live time as he does without a prior opening of his life to God's grace, and Augustine's life is pure, restless concern because "[God] touched me, and I am burning for [His] peace" (Ibid., p. 151).

It is clear from the texts in question that the condition of possibility of these radicalizations of factual life is a constitutive relationship with God and a fundamental openness to grace. In this sense, the possibility of a phenomenology of factual life, whose temporality Heidegger discovers in these texts, rests on the condition that life be open to the metaphysically transcendent. Augustine himself goes so far as to say that "I will pass beyond [*transibo*, transcend] my memory to reach [God]," that the very movement of life's self-transcendence is possible only because life's constant searching searches for God (Ibid., p. 139). Likewise, Heidegger comments that Paul's transcendence of the Now into the futurity of parousia is only possible if one "*understand[s]* everything *salvation-historically* . . . in fundamental comportment to God" (Ibid., p. 110). Far from being a self-transcendence toward the world (i.e., toward Dasein in its unity), the transcendence that enacts the movement of ecstatic temporality is self-transcendence *in a metaphysical sense*, transcendence toward something that is precisely *not* already one of life's own possibilities. According to Heidegger's own reading, phenomenological transcendence should and must include metaphysical transcendence not as another of its own possibilities, but as the condition of possibility for factual life itself and for a phenomenology of it.

Heidegger is, of course, perfectly aware that what he gains for his phenomenology of factual life can only be gained on the condition of an efficacious relationship with God: "The proper *object of the proclamation*," he writes, "*is already Jesus himself as Messiah*" (Ibid., p. 83). Likewise, Augustine is clear that all goodness comes from God, and that it is a form of temptation to think that any good is received because of personal merit (Ibid., pp. 178–79). Yet, Heidegger consistently reinterprets Paul's and Augustine's relationship with God as factual life's relationship with itself and, more specifically, with its own nothingness. Christian life accomplishes itself in the temporal modality of the relationship to the parousia, but it is as if the radical rereading of this temporality as a paradigm for factual life must put aside the relationship that makes it possible for it to be at all. The way

Paul lives time must be strictly separated from this originary relationship. Similarly, the Augustinian novelty of *memoria* and the temporality that it entails are not irreducible in their content, that is, in the way that they relate to God. Better yet, even if the content is irreducible, life's relationship to this content "is then curved definitively in the centripetal, or endogenous, mode with which life . . . is in relation to itself as radical self-reference" (Esposito 2010, p. 302). A real relationship with God and grace is simply not possible, because even when proto-Christian experience is most aware that this relationship is constitutive of how Christian life lives itself, Heidegger insists this is ultimately a self-relation. Thus, when Augustine describes temptation with respect to a good that, like all goods, comes from God, Heidegger translates the phenomenon of temptation as a mode of enacting the experience of being-there. The good should not be understood as something given to the self, but as existence itself (Ibid., p. 298). Worldly temptation is not evidence of creatural imperfection, but the full manifestation and realization of the self (Ibid., p. 299). For, Heidegger writes, "even if genuine insight into the character of the good exists, and if a genuine good belongs to the self ('being good': authentic existing!)—which, as such, can only be from God—it is, to oneself, taken as self-appropriated, *as having been given to the self by itself . . . having elevated oneself to this position of existence*" (Heidegger 2010, p. 179). Factual life is at once radically open and radically closed. Open, because it can never grasp itself due to its ecstatic temporality. Closed, because the temporal ecstasies of factual life can only ground a transcendence of oneself *toward* oneself, toward one's own possibilities.

Heidegger justifies these interpretive decisions by claiming that they are methodologically necessary. Apart from various statements in the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* in which Heidegger discusses why specific phenomena should be regarded phenomenologically and *not* theologically (Heidegger 1992, p. 367)³⁴, Heidegger makes more general methodological remarks in his "Natorp-bericht," composed the following year:

If philosophy . . . exists . . . as *questioning* knowledge [*fragendes Erkennen*], i.e., as *research* [*Forschung*], simply as the genuine, explicit actualization of the tendency towards interpretation which belongs to life's own basic movements (movements within which life is concerned about itself and its own Being); and secondly, if philosophy intends to view and to grasp factual life in its decisive possibilities of Being; i.e., if philosophy has decided radically and clearly on its own . . . to make factual life speak for itself on the basis of its very own possibilities; i.e., if philosophy is *fundamentally atheistic* and if it understands this about itself; then it has decisively chosen factual life in its facticity and has made this an object for itself. (Heidegger 1992, note 2, p. 393)

Here, it is not simply a matter of the relationship between philosophy and theology, but about the relationship between authentic inquiry (*questioning* knowledge, *research*) and inquiry about the experience of God. If one wants to grasp life in its most essential being, if one seeks to understand facticity as the being of life, then it is necessary for philosophy to be fundamentally atheistic. However, this is not simply a methodological requirement motivated by the difference in principles between two sciences. Here, Heidegger is much more radical. Any and all investigations of life's most essential determinations *must* be fundamentally atheistic, or else they are not authentic. There is a strict exclusivity between the very question of God's manifestation in life's experience—be this understood as grace, as the relationship with a truly present Christ, or as mystical experience of the Godhead—and the possibility of understanding life in its facticity. In a note on this passage, Heidegger explicates that "life's retreat towards its own self," i.e., authentic philosophizing, is "a show of hands against God. But only then is philosophy honest . . . [and] in keeping with its possibility . . . before God"³⁵. Simply put, if philosophy wants to remain true to itself, it must reject the possibility that the facticity of life is essentially bound up with life's relationship with the divine.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the reason for Heidegger's strict separation of factual life and the life of faith³⁶. My purpose here is to show the implications of this Heideggerian decision for the relationship between phenomenological and meta-

physical transcendence. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes that transcendence should be understood as the self-transcendence of Dasein toward the world. He deepens this insight in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), indicating not only that Dasein's transcendence toward the world is a transcendence toward itself (since the world exists, has the same manner of being as Dasein), but also an order of grounding that leads from temporality to Husserl's mistaken view that the world and its objects are transcendent³⁷. This order of grounding reveals that phenomenological transcendence, for Heidegger, is grounded in Dasein's temporality. A careful reading of Heidegger's courses on the phenomenology of religion (1920–1921), however, shows that Heidegger obtains his account of ecstatic temporality from Christian texts where this new account of intentionality is itself grounded on a relationship to the divine and to grace, that is to say, it is grounded on a prior, metaphysical transcendence. It is not possible for Paul to live time as he does without first being in a relationship with Christ and his proclamation. In the same manner, Augustine cannot transcend himself (or his *memoria*, which is the same) unless this movement of transcendence restlessly seeks God. It is clear, then, that Heidegger separates the fruits of proto-Christian life from the relationship that makes them possible in the first place. The ecstatic temporality of factual life, along with its care for itself, cannot properly be said to be the deepest onto-ontological structures of life because they do not show themselves except in the context of a relationship with God. In this sense, life's transcendence cannot be exclusively toward itself and its own possibilities, because its very condition of possibility is a metaphysical transcendence which Heidegger excises from his phenomenological interpretation of proto-Christian texts.

It is not surprising, then, that Heidegger spends the next years of research working on an Aristotelian reinterpretation of the results obtained in the courses on Paul and Augustine. The framework of Aristotelian science hangs on the notion of *ousia*, the self-sufficient being that functions according to the movement [*kinesis*] prescribed by its form and inherent to its structure. Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's *Physics* supplies a non-relational account of movement which, in his eyes, could describe the motility of factual life while dispensing of the external relationality that, according to his Christian sources, grounds the possibility of this motility. Heidegger is thus able to recast the care and temporality of factual life in terms of the practical, concerned movement of the human substance, and any relation to a transcendent other becomes internal to the ontological motility of life, a matter of life's own possibilities³⁸. In this regard, Heidegger writes in the *Natorp-Bericht* that, since "theological anthropology must be traced back to its philosophical experiences and motives," the problem of facticity that emerges from the courses on religious life can only be adequately grasped through "a concrete interpretation of the Aristotelian philosophy, [such that] the central phenomenon, whose explication is the theme of the *Physics*, becomes the being in the How of its Being-moved"³⁹. The fundamentally religious and relational origins of ecstatic temporality and care must be reframed in terms of Aristotelian science, that is, as the modes of movement internal to and possible for the human being. Human existence will prove to be the exception to Aristotle's entire doctrine of *ousia*, as Heidegger famously states that in the being of Dasein, existence precedes essence and possibility is higher than actuality (Heidegger 1962, p. 38). but what is most significant for my purposes is that Heidegger nevertheless develops the ontology of Dasein in Aristotelian terms. What Heidegger gains from this gesture is a purely philosophical account—purged of all references to God, Christ, and grace—which he maintains is more fundamental than any theological expression. This position will become cemented over the years leading up to the publication of *Being and Time* and is clearly expressed in Heidegger's 1927 lecture "Phenomenology and Theology" (Heidegger 1998, pp. 39–62; Graves 2021; DeLay 2020).

4.2. Teleology, Horizon, and Futurity: Husserl and the Possibility of a Phenomenological Theology

After the examination of Heidegger's lecture courses on religious life, it might appear that he and Husserl agree on the compatibility of phenomenology and theology, especially with regard to a possible divine phenomenon or revelation: Husserl clearly states in *Ideas*

§58 that the divine transcendence must be excluded from the phenomenological field, while Heidegger makes clear that philosophy, in order to be authentic research, must stop before it becomes entangled in theological categories. Yet, Husserl's phenomenology is more open to metaphysical transcendence and the divine than many give it credit for. The works that Husserl published in his own lifetime present a sporadic insight into Husserl's thinking at a particular time, but his sustained reflection and philosophical experimentation become visible only when the published works are supplemented with his posthumously collected works. My purpose here is not to give an exhaustive account of Husserl's openness to metaphysical transcendence, nor to reconstruct a Husserlian phenomenological theology. Rather, I will first show that Husserl's phenomenology is fundamentally and radically open to the other not only in the form of the *alter ego*, but also in the sense of the divine and its revelation. Second, I will briefly describe how Husserl himself treated the question of a phenomenological metaphysics and theology.

I begin by referencing again §58 of *Ideas I*. Scholars have argued that even if this text is taken by itself and without reference to the posthumous *Husserliana*, it is not at all clear that *Ideas I* definitively excludes the divine transcendence from phenomenological science. From a textual point of view, Husserl's bracketing of the divine transcendence can be understood neither as a secular prejudice nor as the final word on the possibility of experiencing the divine. If §58 is read in the context of the reduction and with reference to Husserl's principle of principles, it becomes clear that Husserl thinks not that God has nothing to do with experience, but simply that God is not given "in person" [*leibhaftig*] the way a feeling or the profile of a worldly object is. We can thus distinguish between the experience of God "in person" and the experience of God as revealed, that is to say, God as phenomenon in the etymological sense. In addition, we should keep in mind that the bracketing enacted in the *epoché* does not eliminate what is bracketed, but rather suspends it and puts it out of play for the sake of eidetic analysis. For Husserl, if something is bracketed then there is something to bracket, and a description of it must be given.⁴⁰ Beyond the exclusion of the divine transcendence from the phenomenological field, it is just such a description that Husserl provides in §58.

After the bracketing of the natural world, Husserl writes that another transcendence, i.e., God, is "encountered" and at the same time "not given . . . immediately in union with reduced consciousness." There must be other ways of encountering things beyond direct intuition, and although the divine transcendence is not directly intuited, it is "cognized in a highly mediated fashion" (Husserl 1983, §58 p. 133). Husserl confirms this in a note appended to §51 while considering the mode of transcendence of the "theological principle." God must be transcendent in a completely different way than the world's, for if the two senses of transcendence were the same there would be a fallacious circularity in the order of rationality that Husserl is uncovering: "the ordering principle of the absolute [the field of absolute consciousness] must be found in the absolute itself [the theological principle] considered purely as absolute" (Ibid., §51, p. 116). If it were not so, God would have to be considered either worldly in the same way as any worldly objectivity, or immanent to consciousness in the same way as a mental process or act⁴¹. Thus, Husserl concludes that "there must be . . . within the absolute stream of consciousness and its infinities, modes in which transcendences are made known *other than the constituting of physical realities as unities of harmonious appearances*" (Ibid., p. 117). Furthermore, there must also be "intuitional manifestations to which a theoretical thinking might conform so that, by following them rationally, it might make intelligible the unitary rule of the supposed theological principle" (Ibid.). The highly mediated cognition of §58 is just such an intuitional manifestation, a noticeable order in the world that has complex theoretical acts as its noetic correlates.

This noticeable order is, on the noematic side, a "*morphologically ordered world*" that allows for classification on the part of the positive sciences and, on the noetic side, "[factual] concatenations of mental processes" that allow the ordered world to be determined theoretically as the bearer of exact laws (Ibid., §58, p. 134). I have translated Husserl's term "faktisch" as "factual" rather than using Kersten's term, "factual," because it indicates a

precise modality of being of the noeses correlated to the ordered world. It is imperative to understand that for Husserl the rationality disclosed in the noeses is *not* demanded by the essence of the world-correlate; it is merely made actual by the factual mental acts. In other words, the morphological order of the world, its rationality, is an absolute “Faktum” for which no explanation can be found outside of its being there. For Husserl, there is no deeper condition of possibility that accounts for the order of the world. If the essence of the world were to dictate a necessary rationality, it would be impossible for us to imagine a world without such a rational order. The world is amenable, so to say, to our rational mental acts, but, from a phenomenological point of view, this need not be the case. The factual nature of this rationality discloses, for Husserl, a “marvelous teleology” (Husserl 1983, §58, p. 134) on both the noetic and noematic sides, and it is the teleological form of this factual rationality that leads us to posit a theological principle as the ground of the Faktum. The order of things is indeed given, and given as a teleological path not dictated by an essential rationality. But the acts in which this path is disclosed “[lead] necessarily to the question about the ground for the now-emerging [factuality] of the corresponding constitutive consciousness” (Ibid.).

It is as just such a ground that the divine transcendence is “cognized in a highly mediated fashion.” It is indeed excluded from the phenomenological field, but this is only because God is not *immediately* given in union to reduced consciousness, that is, because it is not given in an original intuition. However, this does not mean that there is no evidence of a theological principle. In fact, the epoché makes this mediating evidence much more recognizable because it leads reason away from the attitudes that obscure it. In the natural and naturalistic attitudes, most of us take for granted a worldview in which the world is simply what the natural sciences say about it, a world in which efficient causality and abstract idealizations take the place of final causes as explanatory principles. In bracketing these and other theses, the epoché renders evident both the teleology that is woven into the world and the insuperable factuality of this order.

In indicating this evidence of the theological principle, Husserl follows a traditional path in Western philosophy, namely, that of arguments that reason from the teleologies observed in the world to an ultimate final cause (Bello 2009, p. 27). However, as someone like Marion might object, the mediating evidence of final causality is not itself divine revelation. If all that Husserl can offer is yet another version of the cosmological argument, and if the possibility of an immediate self-disclosing of the divine is definitively precluded, then Husserl does not, in the final analysis, have more to offer to theologically minded phenomenologists than Heidegger does. Both phenomenologies would be theological *Holzwege*, errant paths that cannot lead to divine revelation. Just as Heidegger’s conception of phenomenological transcendence cuts off the constitutive metaphysical transcendence that makes it possible, so would Husserl’s epoché exclude the possibility of divine revelation simply because a worldly God is, in Husserl’s eyes, a countersense.

The dense argumentation found in §51 and §58 of *Ideas I*, while short to the point of appearing dismissive, actually delineate a precise direction of research which will occupy Husserl for the rest of his life. The idea of God as the ground of a constant teleological process resurfaces and intensifies in the manuscripts from the early 1920’s along with another way of understanding God, namely, God as the intersubjective totality of monads which, acting within each monad, creates endlessly augmentable values⁴². These conceptions of a theological principle describe a complex and subtle relationship between phenomenology and transcendence, and as such they are important for anyone who wishes to develop a metaphysically minded Husserlian theology⁴³.

Nevertheless, Husserl does not believe that the divine can become worldly, nor does he offer a structural description of divine revelation as Marion attempts to do. The rational order that can lead us to posit a ground for the world, along with the intersubjective teleology of monads, are for Husserl the only ways in which phenomenology can say something about the divine. However, I believe there is a space in his phenomenology for revelation in a robust sense, i.e., revelation as the self-showing of the divine in experience.

It is Husserl's conception of the phenomenological horizon, understood not as Marion interprets it but as Husserl describes it, that can welcome revelation *into* experience. This means encountering the divine within what Husserl calls the "world-horizon" [*Welthorizont*] rather than outside of it⁴⁴. Husserl's notions of the divine transcendency as ultimate ground and telos, while significant for those interested in the possibility of a Husserlian metaphysical theology, cannot count as instances of revelation because they do not fall within the scope of the world-horizon. They are ideas posited in response to the *facticity* of the world's rational and axiological order, and as such they cannot lead to a phenomenology of revelation. At most, they can be seen as grounding and directing the ordered world, but they themselves do not fall within it. Revelation in a robust sense, on the other hand, can, eidetically speaking, be welcomed within the horizon of experience. A brief description of the notion of horizon is all I can offer here, but this should be sufficient to show that the horizon in fact makes possible the experience of revelation.

The notion of horizon indicates the interplay, eidetically present in all intuitive experience, between the "foregrounded" object and its "background" context. Whenever a phenomenon is given intuitively and thematized by consciousness, a background is always co-given that remains unthematized. This is easiest to notice in the case of external perception. I am walking along a trail in the mountains and a bird flies by. My gaze automatically follows the bird, which becomes the thematic focus of my experience. However, I do not cease to intend everything that "surrounds" the bird. The beaten path, the gurgling stream, the blue sky, the panoply of trees—everything else that is part of the "scene" is still there, but it is given as a non-thematic context that contributes to the sense of the phenomenon that is the object of my attention. However, anything that contributes to the sense of an object is a horizon for it: not only the visual-perceptive context, but also the language one speaks, the culture in which one grows up, the history of the nation that one is a citizen of, etc. In short, the horizon is a universal structure of consciousness, it is always co-given non-thematically along with the thematized phenomenon, and it contributes to the sense of the phenomenon by providing a context of meaning within which the phenomenon finds a place⁴⁵.

Husserl distinguishes between the inner and outer horizons. The outer horizon refers to the "surroundings" that provide a context of sense for the thematic focus of consciousness. This may be a spatial field, a linguistic horizon within which a word or judgment has its sense, or, most generally, the world itself as the ultimate horizon of all objectivities. The inner horizon, by contrast, has to do with the temporal structure of experience: one and the same perceived object, for instance, is given in adumbrations both spatially and temporally, that is to say, is given in a manifold of intuition that spans space and time. The structure of inner time consciousness, in its retention of the recent past and in its protention toward the near future, makes it possible to "gather" the many appearances under one and the same noematic sense. In this way, the transcendence of the worldly object with respect to the capacities of consciousness is still accounted for, albeit non-intuitively. Where perception grasps one side of the worldly object in one momentary phase, the unseen sides are apperceived along with it and the retentional and protentional moments of the temporal experience make possible the unity of the object across a certain span of time. The outer horizon is the surrounding context within which a phenomenon makes sense, while the inner horizon unites under a single sense the noematic manifolds in which one and the same phenomenon is given⁴⁶.

What makes the horizontal structure relevant for the possibility of divine revelation is its essential openness to novelty and revision. On the one hand, it is true that the horizon of sense prescribes, to a certain extent, the general sense-configurations within which the thematized phenomenon can make sense. Insofar as this is true, Marion's objection to the horizontal structure is correct in regarding the horizon as marking a limit of possibility of sense. On the other hand, the horizon's gamut of sense is not fixed once and for all but is rather the result of sedimentations [*Schichte*] of sense that become habitual. In this sense, the phenomenological horizon *can* change, become more nuanced, and even undergo paradigm

shifts that alter one's entire outlook on the most fundamental questions of existence. This possibility of revision bespeaks an inherent openness to what comes, a welcoming of phenomena in general that Espen Dahl has aptly called the "humility" and "generosity" of the horizon (Dahl 2013, pp. 344–60). However, these characteristics are possible only if temporality plays a transcendental role in the process of constitution.

The temporal and historical qualities of the horizon reveal a hermeneutic relationship between the sense of the thematic phenomenon and the pre-delineations of sense of the horizon. From the perspective of static phenomenology, the thematized phenomenon is indeed almost always limited, in its possibilities of sense, to what the horizon prescribes. However, from a genetic perspective, that is to say, from the perspective of an analysis that takes into account the genesis of constitution and its habitualities, things are markedly different. When phenomenological analysis also considers the transcendental role of temporality—a dimension of sense constitution from which static analysis abstracts—transcendental subjectivity is recognized as a process of becoming in which the subject is temporalized as a single flow of experience, a dynamic unity, and horizons of sense are themselves revealed to be the result of a process of sense-layering⁴⁷. Horizons are not impervious to the modifications that the monad undergoes, but change according to the ways in which the monad changes. The genetic broadening of Husserl's phenomenology reveals the hermeneutic co-affectation of single lived experiences and the horizons that contextualize them. The monad always lives experience while "keeping in mind" the general sense-structures it becomes used to, but over time the very experiences of sense that are informed by the horizon can deepen, alter, and perhaps even completely overhaul the kinds of sense pre-delineations of the horizon itself⁴⁸. Transcendental subjectivity does not simply come to be with pre-constituted horizons of sense that are then imposed on phenomena. Rather, the repetition of general types of experience motivates the coming-to-be of horizons in such a way that transcendental subjectivity forms a certain *style* of constitution, a certain fore-understanding of phenomena's general delineations (Husserl 2001a, Part 2, §5, p. 64).

The horizontal structure is what allows the divine to manifest itself at all, what allows the divine to reveal itself and "land within" experience at all. It is a necessary characteristic of phenomena in general that, along with its appearing, inner and outer horizons are co-given⁴⁹. However, far from limiting the givenness of the phenomenon, the horizons allow it to be experienced as sensical, and this must be so especially in the case of revelation. A phenomenon given absolutely without horizon would not appear at all—would it not be given in an adumbrational manifold? Would it not be experienced as a sequential experience, and therefore as in some sense temporal?—or would be tantamount to a radical trauma that cannot be integrated within the stream of consciousness⁵⁰. If it does not appear at all, this would be because it does not and cannot have any sense, nor any hyletic impression, for the subject. Outside the horizons of temporality, spatiality, and the deepest levels of passive constitution, the subject simply has no way to detect manifestation. It would be no phenomenon at all. However, if a phenomenon somehow manages to appear without co-given horizons, it would strike the subject as a trauma so profound that it could not be integrated into the stream of experience at all⁵¹. Outside the temporal horizon, this phenomenon would not be part of any logical sequence; outside of the horizon of sense, this phenomenon would be outside the possibility of any comprehension; outside the horizon of the lived body, it would not be possible to regard this phenomenon in any way. Following Geniusas I ask of Marion, "how else is one to recognize saturated phenomena as saturated if not *in virtue of the horizon?*" (Geniusas 2012, p. 143) Indeed, without horizons, the phenomenon of revelation cannot hope to be experienced *as* divine revelation at all.

Furthermore, the type of revelation in question calls for the analysis of horizons as they are relevant to this or that type. In the case of mystical experiences, for example, an inquiry into the "stretching," broadening, or even abolishing of particular horizons is indeed warranted. For instance, the excessive and overwhelming experience of the Christian mystic Margareta Ebner should give the phenomenologist pause: reciting the

Pater Noster “is so well with me then that I think, ‘can heaven be better than this?’ My human understanding cannot grasp this. Such a powerful love and such a strong faith are given to me that I perceive God’s presence as real, so that all things become delightful” (Ebner 1993, p. 108). The experience reported here likely raises certain exceptions to Husserl’s doctrine of the horizon. Yet, although this excessive experience was most likely impossible to capture in language and may have modified the temporal horizon beyond recognition, it nevertheless *made sense* to Ebner, and this means that to some extent this experience could be related to a broader context of sense. Ebner’s own reflection and writing attempt to reintegrate this experience further within the horizons that are shared by others, so that it might be of help to her cloistered sisters and, ultimately, for the good of all. Outside of a horizontal structure, be this a linguistic, cultural, or temporal horizon, mystical or excessive experiences remain uncommunicable. Integration within a horizon, even if it happens after the fact, allows the experience to be shared and to benefit all members of the religious tradition in question⁵².

In a similar manner, the medieval Christian debate on how the beatific vision can appear as such to a finite intellect relates directly to the question of the subject’s capacities as the dative of manifestation. Thomas Aquinas, for example, describes a supernatural expansion of the created intellect, caused by the “light of glory,” so that human creatures may know God as he is⁵³. From a phenomenological point of view, this debate can be reframed as a debate on the horizontal structure before and after death: what modes of givenness do the medieval philosophers describe, and do they make sense outside of a speculative theological context? In what sense can there be a beatific *vision* if, at least in the Abrahamic religions, God is immaterial? These and other related questions bear directly on the possibility of broadened or breached horizons, and answering them is crucial for the possibility of a phenomenological metaphysics or a phenomenological theology.

However, within a phenomenological context, mystical experiences and beatific visions should be treated as exceptions rather than as rule. If the paradigm for the phenomenon of divine revelation is an experience so excessive and incommunicable that it completely isolates the religious subject (Marion uses the language of a phenomenon “saturat[ed] . . . to the second degree . . . the *paradoxōtaton*” (Marion 2002a, p. 235)), there can be no hope of religious community nor of the formation of religious traditions. Even if something like a tradition were to arise around such an experience, those who do not have them would over time become alienated from the few who do. In this sense, shared horizons are what make religious communities and traditions possible.

It is no accident that religious and spiritual traditions from all parts of the world invite their adherents to cultivate a certain way of regarding all things, a “deeper” way of seeing. The repetition and maintenance of particular forms of prayer or meditation, regular attendance of religious rituals and worship, and religious-spiritual calendrical cycles all educate the religious subject to remember that space, time, and all of life itself are fundamentally related to the ultimate truths of the subject’s religious tradition. Over time, the rhythm and repetition of these practices form what Husserl calls a habituality or style of constitution that modifies our horizons quite radically. For example, the canonical hours, which invite Christians to pray seven times a day at different hours, are supposed to sanctify the day and to help the Christian cultivate their relationship with God. This daily repetition is meant to help them grow in their awareness of God’s presence in their daily lives, so that eventually the temporal horizon itself becomes tied to the awareness of the presence of God in all things. When new lived experiences or phenomena take place, the “religiously charged” horizon, so to say, will motivate the subject to make sense of the novel experiences according to the style of constitution that has developed from the sustained practice. A deeply painful experience, such as the sudden death of a loved one, may immediately evoke the beginning of Psalm 22, which the canonical hours prescribe as one of the Friday psalms: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁵⁴ An occasion for deep joy, such as the reconciliation of estranged siblings, may elicit thanksgiving toward God and bring to mind the words of Psalm 133: “How good and pleasant it is when kindred

live together in unity!”⁵⁵ In a Buddhist context, the steady practice of meditation might help to develop one’s detachment from impermanent things, according to the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha (Gethin 1998; Gowans 2003, 2015). In each case, the horizontal structure makes possible a gradual conversion, the deepening of one’s religious sensibility that realizes the ideal of a religious tradition.

The question must therefore be posed: what kinds of experiences count as divine revelation? While Marion seems to think that saturation is a *conditio sine qua non* of revelation, most people are not bowled over in religious ecstasy as they pray, meditate, attend communal worship, or read sacred texts. Yet, the religious traditions that recommend these forms of practice generally claim that the divine is in all things, nearer than we are to ourselves, perhaps to be found at the heart of our own subjectivity. If the divine is omnipresent and at the same time inconspicuous, and if it is possible to develop a sensitivity to the divine through these kinds of religious practices, then the horizontal structure and its hermeneutic implications are necessary for an adequate account of religious experience, practice, and revelation.

5. Conclusions

In the foregoing text, I have argued for several interconnected claims. Foremost among these is the claim that the notion of phenomenological transcendence is of paramount importance not merely because it reveals an essential difference between the phenomenologies of Husserl and the early Heidegger, but also because it bears directly on the question of divine revelation as a phenomenon. It is due to their different conceptions of transcendence that French phenomenologists of religion, in particular Levinas and Marion, have preferred a Heideggerian framework over a Husserlian one. I have attempted to argue this historically—by laying out the fraught reception of Husserl in France through Levinas’ first works—as well as thematically—by taking up Marion’s phenomenology of givenness as exemplifying this preference. Finally, I have argued that this preference for Heidegger with regard to the revelation of the divine is wrongheaded.

On the one hand, the lecture courses on Paul’s letters and Augustine’s *Confessions* show that Heidegger is eager to detach the fruits of Christian faith from the relationship with God that make them possible. The ecstatic temporality and care that make up the most fundamental determinations of factual life cannot be discovered except as the result of a prior relationship with the divine and the grace that this relationship grants. In this sense the transcendence of Dasein, which is grounded in its ecstatic temporality, itself depends on a prior metaphysical transcendence of self toward the divine other. Heidegger’s reinterpretation of these Christian experiences in an Aristotelian key ensures that they can be reinscribed in the fully endogenous context of Aristotle’s theory of substance.

On the other hand, Husserl’s phenomenology provides the radical openness necessary to welcome something as unexpected as divine revelation. While §§51 and 58 of *Ideas I* irremediably deny that there can be a worldly God, a God in and of experience, the Husserlian structures of horizontality and temporality define an open subjectivity that welcomes what is to come. It is counterproductive—if not downright nonsensical—to demand that divine revelation be manifest on the condition that there be no horizon, because this structure is what allows phenomena to be recognized as what they are in the first place. There certainly are experiences where these structures appear changed or abolished, and these warrant a phenomenological investigation. Mystical experience and the notion of beatific vision are two such experiences that I have briefly mentioned, but they are exceptions that confirm the ubiquity and necessity of the horizontal and temporal structures.

This analysis on the relation between phenomenological transcendence and the possibility of divine revelation as a type of metaphysical transcendence is meant as an invitation to further study (See, for instance, DeLay 2022, another piece that profitably takes up many of the same themes). The analyses and arguments I have presented ultimately lead to the very notion of intentionality: What account of intentionality can take into account both a

phenomenological and a metaphysical transcendence as they relate to religious experience? The phenomenologies of Husserl, Heidegger, and Marion are not, on their own, capacious enough to welcome the divine in its manifold modes of revelation: Husserl does not think a worldly God possible, Heidegger rejects the metaphysical openness that his own account of subjectivity presupposes, and Marion does not admit the possibility of an un-saturated phenomenon of revelation. I conclude with a hybrid proposal that seeks to gather what is valuable in each: a radically open intentional subject with an essential concern for what is to come and for what it itself is. Such a subject would be characterized essentially as a *subject of desire*, an openness to the world and beyond, full of care, full of the drama of a desire that is never completely extinguished⁵⁶.

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Notes

- ¹ For the sake of clarity, I will translate Heidegger's "Seiend" as "entity" and his "Sein" as "being." This is the way J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson's translation of *Sein und Zeit* renders this distinction, though it seems to have fallen out of style in recent years. J. Stambaugh's translation conveys this distinction through capitalization—"Seiend" is translated as "being" while "Sein" is translated as "Being." Because this distinction names the ontological difference, I find it best to make this difference as clear as possible by using different English terms rather than a capitalized or uncapitalized version of the same word.
- ² This reading of Husserl was made popular by Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1967); *A Key to Husserl's Ideas I* (Marquette University Press, 1996); (Ricoeur 1975, p. 85), Emmanuel Levinas (Levinas 1995, 1998, pp. 47–90; Maritain 1959).
- ³ Heidegger states in this regard: "Inasmuch as Scheler sees the person in the unity of acts, which means in their intentionality, he says: the essence of man is the intention toward something or, as he puts it, the very gesture of transcendence. Man is an eternal out-towards, in the way that Pascal calls man a god-seeker" (Heidegger 2009, p. 130).
- ⁴ German pagination. Because there are several translations of *Sein und Zeit*, I will henceforth give the German pagination whenever *Being and Time* is cited.
- ⁵ It is an open question whether for Husserl the "highly mediated cognition" of the divine transcendence should be considered a mode of givenness. I will return to this question toward the end of the paper.
- ⁶ Spiegelberg reports Jean Cavaillès' impression of the event: "[Husserl was] very much the small town university type, in a frock coat and bespectacled, but in his delivery the warmth and the simplicity of the true philosopher" (Spiegelberg 1994, pp. 431–44).
- ⁷ Husserl's philosophy came to be considered in its own right in France much later than one might first suspect. Prior to Levinas' efforts, Husserl's work was taken up in an ancillary manner, for instance as a method that might aid neo-Scholastic philosophy or as a precursor to the "true innovators," Scheler and Heidegger, both of whose works were translated before Husserl's. Spiegelberg attributes the eventual success of Husserlian phenomenology in France to Sartre, in particular to his 1936 essay *On the Transcendence of the Ego* (Sartre 1991) and his book-length studies on the imagination and the emotions (Sartre 2012; Sartre 1962), composed between 1936 and 1940. However, as De Beauvoir writes in *De Beauvoir* (1960), Sartre was himself introduced to phenomenology through Levinas's *The Theory of Intuition*, which, so the anecdote goes, he began to read voraciously as he walked home from the bookstore on Boulevard St. Michel.
- ⁸ (Husserl 2002, pp. 260), my emphasis. This transposition brings the discussion on the meaning of transcendence to bear on the current debate on the metaphysical neutrality of Husserl's phenomenology. A full consideration of this is beyond the scope of the current paper, but the relevant texts are the following: Crowell (2001); Burch et al. (2019); Crowell (2008, pp. 335–54); Carr (1999); Zahavi (2017); Drummond (2019, pp. 265–73).
- ⁹ See (Heidegger 2005), esp. Part 1, ch. 2, §§ 4–11, 15–16; Part 3, ch. 2, §§ 46–47; ch. 3, §§ 47–49. In §47, Heidegger states that "the *care about certainty* [in the sense of an a priori apodicticity] is here a *care about the formation of science* . . . , [it is] based on a science held up as model," and he continues in the following section: "The same care about certainty leads . . . to *mangling* . . . what . . . was *positively* accomplished in phenomenology, [namely] . . . with respect to *intentionality* insofar as this is always construed . . . as *specific theoretical behavior*," so much so that "for every intentional context of a complex sort, *theoretically meaning something* forms the *foundation*, that each judgment, each instance of wanting, each instance of loving is founded upon a *presenting* [*Vorstellen*] that provides in advance what can be wanted, what is detestable and loveable" (208–9).
- ¹⁰ In (Cassara 2020), I detail Heidegger's critique of Husserl on the unexamined assumption that phenomenology must be an a priori science. This assumption prevents Husserl from seeing that the a priori in phenomenology is the temporal and historical situation of the subject, i.e., the hermeneutic situation. In criticizing Husserl on his blindness to the historical, Levinas is very much following the same path as Heidegger and seizing on the same point regarding the hermeneutic nature of the knowledge that phenomenology affords.
- ¹¹ See II.B above.

- 12 On the theme of transcendence in Levinas's philosophy, see (Bloechl 2022).
- 13 On the connection between phenomenological transcendence and ontological difference, see also (Courtine 1990). esp. "Différance Métaphysique et Différance Ontologique," as well as (Courtine 2005).
- 14 Emmanuel Levinas, "Transcendence and Evil," in (Levinas 1998), p. 125.
- 15 Levinas is referring to (Marion 2012, p. 126).
- 16 On the aesthetic connection between Marion and Merleau-Ponty, see (Fritz 2009, pp. 415–40), which tacitly argues that (Merleau-Ponty 1968) informs Marion as well as Henry on the relationship between art and the manifestation of the invisible.
- 17 (Marion 1998, chp. 6, pp. 183–86) and conclusion.
- 18 See also (Marion 2002b, chp. 1) "Phenomenology of Givenness and First Philosophy."
- 19 For Heidegger's treatment of boredom as a fundamental attunement [*Befindlichkeit*], see (Heidegger 1995, chps. 2–4).
- 20 Jean-Louis Chrétien has profitably expanded the notion of the call from beyond phenomena in several of his works. See (Chrétien 2004, 2007).
- 21 (Derrida and Marion 1999, p. 66). Marion says, "I said to Levinas some years ago that in fact the last step for a real phenomenology would be to give up the concept of horizon. Levinas answered me immediately, 'without horizon there is no phenomenology.' And I boldly assume he was wrong!" Derrida responds, "I am also for the suspension of the horizon, but, for that very reason . . . I am not a phenomenologist anymore. I am very true to phenomenology, but when I agree on the necessity of suspending the horizon, then I am no longer a phenomenologist. So the problem remains, if you give up the [as-structure of hermeneutic understanding], *what is the use that you can make of the word phenomenology?*" [my emphasis].
- 22 There is also no lack of criticism of Husserl's career as a mathematician and logician, which for Marion means being a master of "poor" phenomena, phenomena so abstract and lacking in intuition that they are the only ones allowed to achieve perfect evidence.
- 23 (Marion 2002a) §20–23, in particular his distinction between "poor," "common," and "saturated" phenomena.
- 24 This is an extensive and definitive treatment of the subject of metaphysics in Marion's work.
- 25 This is the case with the face of the other, which is saturated according to quantity, quality, and relation. See (Marion 2002a, p. 233; Marion 2002b, pp. 114–15; Gschwandtner 2014, pp. 100–1).
- 26 (Marion 2002a, p. 235; Marion 2002b, pp. 28–29, 52–53, 158–62), and the conclusion.
- 27 Book V, "The Gifted," esp. §25–28.
- 28 In addition to *Reduction and Givenness* and *Being Given*, see also (Gschwandtner 2007, chp. 3; Pettinari 2014, esp. "Introduzione" §3, Part II §10, and Part III §§1 and 4).
- 29 This preferential option for Heidegger's thought in those phenomenologies that seek "the transcendent within immanence itself" has also been observed by others: not only Levinas and Courtine, who are mentioned in the paper, but also Janicaud, Dufrenne, and Benoist. See (Janicaud 2005, p. 80). For an engagement that brings Janicaud, Dufrenne, and Benoist together on the question of the theological in phenomenology, see the first two essays in the same volume.
- 30 It is beyond the scope of this paper to come to any conclusions on whether Heidegger's post-*Being and Time* thought forecloses any openness to metaphysical transcendence. But Heidegger's conception of the history of metaphysics and his advocacy for a new path of thinking, one that is not metaphysical, indicate a clear aversion to it. As for a conception of the divine that is not metaphysical, one may refer to what the *Contributions to Philosophy* say about "the last god," or what Hölderlin's *Hymns 'Germania' and 'The Rhine'* says about the holy. But these motifs are not about the divine in the sense of a highest entity—Heidegger's diagnosis of onto-theology as the essence of metaphysics explicitly condemns this understanding of the divine. Rather, the holy and the last god are part of the preparation for a new way of thinking, one that stands outside of metaphysics.
- 31 Heidegger might have spent the entire course on these rigorous methodological requirements if students had not complained to the dean that there was very little religion in the course. Heidegger was then forced to abruptly interrupt his crucial discussion on formal indication and to begin a concrete, phenomenological explication of Paul's letters. See (van Buren and Kisiel 1994, pp. 175–92; McGrath 2014, pp. 185–207).
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 6. On this point, Heidegger states that "philosophy arises from factual life experience. And within factual life experience philosophy returns back into factual life experience." In this sense, philosophy is necessarily a hermeneutic endeavor. See (Esposito 2010, pp. 137–48).
- 33 See, for instance, (Heidegger 2010, p. 96) on the formation of philosophical concepts; p. 103 on Paul's concern and urgency in his letters to the Thessalonians; p. 125 on how to read the *Confessions* phenomenologically; and p. 155 on the correct understanding of Augustine's analyses of *tentatio*.
- 34 This text is commonly referred to as the "Natorp-bericht."
- 35 Some have claimed that Heidegger simply no longer believed in God, and that for this reason his phenomenology could not but be atheistic. Others have claimed that Heidegger secularizes Lutheran themes. One need only think of Luther's rejection of a natural desire for God, which in Heidegger would become life's tendency to fall into itself, or Luther's doctrine of the total depravity of human nature, which in Heidegger would become Dasein's basic state of inauthenticity and its tendency to fallenness. And still others have argued that Heidegger does not simply secularize Luther, but rather follows and complements

him, and that the hermeneutic phenomenology of factual life should be understood as a “phenomenology of the Godforsaken.” See (McGrath 2014, chps. 1–2, 6).

36 See note 11 above.

37 A famous footnote in *Being and Time* (p. 199, note vii) states that “the way in which ‘care’ is viewed in the foregoing existential analytic of Dasein, is one which has grown upon the author in connection with his attempts to Interpret the Augustinian (i.e., Helleno-Christian) anthropology with regard to the foundational principles reached in the ontology of Aristotle.” In the body of the text, however, Heidegger relates a brief fable about the personification of care and her encounters with various Greek deities, reported by K. Burdach and said to have been reworked by Goethe. It should not be lost on the reader that, despite his indebtedness to Christian sources, Heidegger’s confrontation with Augustine and its translation into the terms of Aristotelian ontology are merely mentioned in a footnote.

38 “Natorp-bericht,” pp. 372–73. See (Kisiel 1995, chp. 2, 5; Esposito 2010, pp. 293–94; van Buren and Kisiel 1994, pp. 175–92).

39 (Bello 2009, p. 25), Other treatments of Husserl’s overall reflections on God can be found in Ales Bello’s untranslated (Bello 1985), in (Housset 2010; Hart 1986) cited below.

40 Of course, it is also possible that God does not exist. But this is not a possibility that Husserl considers, and it is telling that this lack of consideration is an integral part of his phenomenology.

41 This is already referenced in §58 of *Ideas I* (see note 105 above), though not in terms of Leibniz’s *Monadology*. It becomes the subject of a much broader set of metaphysical reflections that have been collected in (Husserl (1973, 2014)).

42 This kind of theology has been developed in the works of James G. Hart, Angela Ales Bello, Espen Dahl, Stefano Bancalari, and Edith Stein, among others. In addition to Ales Bello’s works cited above, see (Hart 1986, pp. 89–168; Dahl 2010; Bancalari 2015; Stein 2002, 2004).

43 (Geniusas 2012), Part III: “The World-Horizon as the Wherefrom, Wherein, and the Whereto of Experience.”

44 (Geniusas 2012) is an outstanding and comprehensive study of Husserl’s notion of horizon.

45 (Husserl 2001a) Part 1, §6 and Part 2, §44, among others; (Luft and Overgaard 2013, pp. 129–30). See also (Drummond 2003), (Welton 2002, esp. Part III), and (Jacobs 2022, chps. 12 and 13).

46 See (Husserl 2001a), “Translator’s Introduction” pp. xxxii and passim., Supplementary Section 4, esp. B, “The Phenomenology of Monadic Individuality and the Phenomenology of General Possibilities and Compossibilities of Lived-Experiences: Static and Genetic Phenomenology.”

47 Hart puts it this way: “‘World,’ [the ultimate horizon] is not merely the frame and motivational principle for the particular meaning-acts, but as *noema* of *noemata*, as base/horizon of the mind’s intentions, it is itself incessantly in a process of revision, confirmation, incremental growth, and decline as a result of these achievements.” Hart 1986:91. See also (Geniusas 2012, pp. 143–44).

48 Husserl states that “a physical thing is necessarily given [in such a way that it] is apprehended as being surrounded by a horizon of ‘*co-giveness*’ . . . of more or less vague *indeterminateness*. And the sense of this indeterminateness is . . . pre delineated by the universal essence of this type of perception which we call physical-thing perception” (Husserl 1983, §44).

49 Gschwandtner reaches a similar conclusion in (Gschwandtner 2014) and advocates for a more hermeneutic understanding of the saturated phenomenon.

50 A fascinating possibility opens up here, though for Marion it is certainly unintended. Unmoored from any horizon, the saturated phenomenon could not appear as such for the subject. However, following a psychoanalytic framework, it could reappear as (neurotic or psychotic) *symptom*. This path is outside the scope of this paper, but warrants further investigation. Brian Becker’s excellent work is related to this line of inquiry. See (Severson et al. 2016; Becker and Manoussakis 2018; Bath et al. 2018, pp. 252–67). Richard Kearney’s work on the intersection of narrative and trauma is also worthy of mention: see his contributions to the edited volumes just mentioned.

51 See (Gschwandtner 2014), esp. “Introduction” and chs. 6–7. See also (Gschwandtner Forthcoming).

52 *Summa Theologiae*, part I, Question 12, Articles 4, 7, 13.

53 Psalm 22:1, New Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition, 1st ed. (Bible 2009).

54 Psalm 133:1, NRSV—CE.

55 See (Gschwandtner Forthcoming, chp. 5) on Devotional Experience, for a related phenomenological analysis that expounds this point.

56 Such a subject has been described, with varying degrees of success, by Scheler, Barbaras, and Butler, among others. See (Scheler 2009; Barbaras 2011, 2022; Butler 1999).

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