

Chapter 8

Heidegger and Dilthey: Language, History, and Hermeneutics

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Introduction

It is disputable how extensively the hermeneutically and historically oriented “life-philosophy” (*Lebensphilosophie*) of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) influenced Heidegger’s intellectual development in the period between the First World War and the publication of *Being and Time*. There is a strong thesis, proposed by Charles Guignon in his classic work *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (1983) and developed by Theodore Kisiel (1993, 313) and Charles Bambach (1995, 232), which maintains that a period of Heidegger’s thought in the early to mid-1920s was influenced by Dilthey’s interpretation of concepts such as hermeneutics, historicity, facticity, finitude, and generation to such an extent that an early draft of *Being and Time* has been described as a ‘Dilthey draft.’¹

A second more minimalistic interpretation suggests that the scope and depth of Dilthey’s impact is overstated. It emphasizes an intellectual formation shaped by other sources: modern German Scholasticism, the transcendental philosophy of his teachers—Heinrich Rickert’s neo-Kantianism and Edmund Husserl’s

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¹Compare Charles R. Bambach 1995, 232.

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phenomenology, and the general existential and life-philosophical intellectual climate of the post-war years found in contemporaries such as Karl Jaspers and Max Scheler.

A third interpretive middle path is indicated by Hans-Georg Gadamer, who stressed the importance of Count Paul Yorck von Wartenburg (1835–1897) in Heidegger’s reception of Dilthey (Gadamer 1994, 23). Yorck was the politically conservative, philosophically speculative, and pietistic Lutheran friend and correspondent of Dilthey from 1877 to 1897. Yorck’s conservative style of thought, which Heidegger was exposed to through the publication in 1923 of the Dilthey-Yorck correspondence, powerfully shaped Heidegger’s reading of Dilthey. Dilthey’s culturally and politically liberal and scientific orientation remained a stumbling block for Heidegger even during his most enthusiastic reception of Dilthey’s work (Gadamer 1994, 23).

Despite the cultural and political differences between Dilthey and Heidegger, Heidegger continued to draw on concepts and strategies from Dilthey’s works in *Being and Time*. The Yorckian character of Heidegger’s interpretation and use of Dilthey is evident in the revealing statement: “the preparatory existential and temporal analytic of Dasein is resolved to cultivate the spirit of Count Yorck in the service of Dilthey’s work” (BT, 383/SZ, 404). This distinction between “spirit” and “work” signals a cultural-political distance from Dilthey even as Heidegger saw the project of *Being and Time* as continuing Dilthey’s research. Dilthey introduced key concepts used by Heidegger and offered rich thick descriptive depictions of multiple dimensions of human existence that Heidegger sought to radicalize. But, as Heidegger maintained in *The Concept of Time* (1924), Dilthey’s work must be re-oriented in light of Yorck’s ontological critique of Dilthey’s philosophy as ultimately ontic, optical or ocularcentric, and positivistic.²

The hermeneutical tradition represented by Yorck, Heidegger, and Gadamer has distrusted Dilthey of suffering from the two sins of modernism: scientific “positivism” and individualistic and aesthetic “romanticism.” On the one hand, Dilthey’s epistemology is deemed scientific in accepting the priority of the empirical, the ontic, and consequently scientific inquiry into the physical, biological, and human worlds; on the other hand, his personalist ethos and Goethean humanism, and his pluralistic life- and worldview philosophy are considered excessively aesthetic, culturally liberal, relativistic, and subjective.³

This essay involves two tasks in response to this negative evaluation of Dilthey that has shaped our current understanding of his philosophical project; first, an interpretation of the issues at stake in Heidegger’s reception of and struggle with Dilthey. These issues touch upon language, historicity, and the nature of hermeneutics. Secondly, by pursuing this task, I hope to question and challenge the “overcoming” of Dilthey’s epistemic and life-philosophical hermeneutics in the “ontological” or “philosophical” hermeneutics of Heidegger.

²See part one of Heidegger 2011/GA 64.

³See Hans-Georg Gadamer 1985; 2004, 214.

Hermeneutics and the Question of Language

According to Guignon and Gadamer, as we have seen, Dilthey can be credited with motivating the introduction of the language of “hermeneutics” and associated terms into Heidegger’s early thought. But what is hermeneutics? “Hermeneutical” signifies, according to Guignon, “a holistic field of “internal relations” in which we find ourselves most originally as place-holders in a wider field of significance relations” (1983, 3). Meaning occurs only through an interconnected nexus or network (*Zusammenhang*) in which the particular is understood in relation to greater wholes and wholes through the particulars that constitute them. This of course is the most basic account of the “hermeneutical circle.”

One controversy in the reception of the early Heidegger is the role of language and interpretation in his thought: is Heidegger operating within the paradigm of the primacy of perception and consciousness or does he recognize their constant meditation through structural processes of meaning? Already in the lectures of the War Emergency Semester of 1919, published as *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, Heidegger articulated the interpretive character of intuition, perception, and understanding. He described there how perceptual and intellectual processes inherently involve the meaningfulness of linguistic mediation. Language is not a theoretical object added on to a separate non-linguistic subject; language is more primordially a practical life-context and medium (GA 56/57, 219-20).

In contrast to interpretations that deemphasize the role of language in Heidegger’s early thought, Guignon rightly notes the priority of language in *Being and Time*:

If we assume that the primordial roots and sources of our heritage are also embedded in language, then the authentically historical encounter with the world may still be seen as constituted by language.

At the deepest level, language is the medium in which the possibilities of understanding of the heritage are conveyed to us. It contains the sources and origins of our most primordial understanding of the world. As Heidegger says, “the essential is always handed over to the future as the authentic *heritage*.” We reach this deepest level of language by “*doing violence*” to common sense and by actually working through world-history in order to remember its disguised message. (1983, 143)

“Intuition” and perception are not direct unmediated ways of accessing the givenness of the world. Experience is already hermeneutical in being linguistically constituted and, furthermore, occurs within “the immanent historicity of life” (Heidegger TDP, 187/GA 56/57, 219). According to Guignon, Heidegger is committed to a constitutive view of language:

On the constitutive view, language generates and first makes possible our full-blown sense of the world. The constitutivist maintains that the mastery of the field of significance of a *world* (as opposed to, say, an animal’s dexterity in its natural environment) presupposes some prior mastery of the articulate structure of a language. The idea that one can first have a coherent and fully worked-out grasp of a totality-of-significations onto which a

totality-of-words is later mapped is on this view incoherent. Instead, words and world are seen as interwoven in such a way that to enter into one is simultaneously to master the other. (1983, 124)⁴

In addition to the generative character of language, another axis of nineteenth-century hermeneutics, the art of interpretation developed by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, is not lacking in *Being and Time*, as Guignon emphasized (1983, 3). There is even a remainder of what Dilthey understood as the primary task of psychological interpretation, self-reflection (*Selbst-Besinnung*), in Heidegger's early depiction of the interpretive self-reflection of the self about itself from the perspective of its own self-world (*Selbstwelt*) as well as in relation to others (*Mitwelt*) and the environing world (*Umwelt*).

While the early Heidegger rejected in the vein of Dilthey the appeal to a non-linguistic ahistorical idealistic or vitalist intuition, he also stressed how intellectual and conceptual categories arise from the movedness or motility of life. Whereas the hermeneutics of facticity is the recognition that it is life interpreting itself, this life is more mediated than the bare biological or intuitive life of vitalism. Life involves from the beginning the need born of a lack that compels it to interpret and conceptualize itself. Dilthey and Heidegger both critiqued the vulgar life-philosophy and vitalism prevalent in contemporary popular German culture.

The need for reflection and thought are not alien to life or imposed from outside of it. The vital human need to reflect springs from life itself and life and thought are intertwined from the beginning in what Dilthey called the "categories of life." Heidegger elucidates how life's very "categories can be understood only insofar as factual life itself is compelled to interpretation" (PIA, 66/GA 61, 86-88). Though concepts can do violence to life and its particularities, the self-articulation of life from and to itself need not be "an unwarranted forcing" or the arbitrary violence of what is external to life being imposed upon the immanent self-movedness of life (Heidegger PIA, 66/GA 61, 86-88).

Human existence is inevitably entangled in language and history even as it remains irreducible to being an expression or instantiation of a linguistic system or historical generation. In the lecture-course *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, Heidegger depicts how existence occurs in and through words, and how language is essentially hermeneutical: "All the primal conditions of language are, for this reason, hermeneutical in their basic character—they are not meanings regarding the matter of a "thing" but instead concern existence itself" (IPR, 240/GA 17, 314-16).

In *Being and Time*, language is not explicitly introduced as an existential category until over a third of the way through the text. This led Taylor Carman to assert that language does not have the priority suggested by Guignon (Carman 2003, 221). However, the question of language is present from the opening query into the sense and meaning of the word being and the discussion of the Greek concept

⁴Compare, however, Taylor Carman's critical discussion in *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time* (2003, 221).

of *logos*. The language at stake throughout *Being and Time* is that of *logos*, rather than everyday discourse as *Rede*. *Logos* does not mean reason or logic here but interpolation and being addressed in the address; in hearing to and listening with the other and oneself.

As the later Heidegger insisted, the *logos* is more than a gathering into one; this gathering, as self-same yet non-identical, transpires between different voices rather than being their assimilation to a monistic *logos* of identity. Heidegger's understanding of *logos* is rooted in his earlier elucidations of Aristotle. In the *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger notes how hearing is a genuine perception (*aesthesis*, ἀσθησις) that makes visible the being of the human being through the care and concern of listening to the human being's speaking. It is not the phonetic sound that is primary for Heidegger, despite Derrida's charge of phonocentrism, as: "There is phonetic speaking only because there is the possibility of discourse, just as there is acoustical hearing only because being-with-one-another is characterized originally as being-with in the sense of listening-to-one-another" (HCT 266/GA 20, 366-68).

The empirical ontic hearing of sounds presupposes the ontological possibility of listening to and hearkening to the other to the extent that even the deaf can still listen, hearken, and respond to others. More questionable than physiological deafness is the existential "deafness" of ordinary human beings to each other who hear but cannot listen or hearken. Such denial in the pathology of not listening characteristic of them (*das Man*) presupposes the possibility of a genuine listening to and encounter with the other: "Someone who genuinely cannot hear, as when we say of a man, 'he cannot hear' (where we do not mean that he is deaf), is still quite capable of hearkening . . ." (HCT 267/GA 20, 368-69).

These and related passages from the mid-1920s lecture courses are the setting for Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, his technical term for the taking place of human existence, as a fundamentally listening being in *Being and Time*. Heidegger's earlier and later understanding of *ethos* as dwelling in relation to the world, self, and others resonates in this context when he speaks of being dispositionally attuned in and through speech and silence. Ordinary in contrast with theoretical language does not primarily concern referential propositions spoken from a neutral perspective; it is intonation, modulation, and the "existential possibilities of attunement," in which one is attuned to others, which disclose existence (Heidegger BT, 157/SZ, 162).

Mood and attunement are made manifest and known in discursive language, and: "Listening is constitutive for discourse. And just as linguistic utterance is based on discourse, acoustic perception is based on hearing. Listening to . . . is the existential being-open of *Dasein* as being-with for the other" (BT, 157-58/SZ, 163). Heidegger returns to the hearkening summoning character of hearing in the early 1930s in *Being and Truth*: "This hearing the other, and at the same time, one another, is therefore no merely acoustic phenomenon; rather, it means hearing a summons, lending an ear to a wish, listening to an order, assignment, and so on" (BAT, 123/GA 36/37, 157-58).

Hearkening, Heidegger notes, is a more primordial happening than psychological-physiological hearing. Hearkening is not simply a recording of sounds; it "has

the mode of being of a hearing that understands” (BT, 158/SZ, 163). In this remark, we find evidence of the difference between a purely intuitive or perceptual understanding of hearing and a hermeneutical one in which hearing is constituted by interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*). Along with *Befindlichkeit* (attunement, disposition, mood) and *Rede* (discourse, speech), *Verstehen* is one of the three lived constituents or “*existentialia*” of the “there” (the *da*) of *Dasein* through which human existence is disclosed in its interpretedness: “*Dasein*’s “happening” also has a hermeneutic structure: the events that make up a life gain their sense only from the projected point of the life as a whole, and the possibilities of projection are always determined by the events of that life” (Guignon 1983, 93).

Levinas, and other commentators relying on philosophy of the body, see a betrayal of phenomenology in Heidegger’s purported intellectualizing of the senses and the body insofar as these are elucidated through the notion of interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) (BT, 157-58/SZ, 163).⁵ The clear distinction in the German language between interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) and the intellectual representational understanding associated with *Verstand*, and with Kantianism, is lacking in other languages such as English in which both are translated as “understanding.”

Heidegger’s critics on the issue of embodiment are correct that he did not embrace the body and senses as entities that exist independently from relational processes of the generation of meaning such as interpretive understanding, linguistic-historical mediation, and pragmatic relations with things. This criticism presupposes a questionable gulf between embodiment and the bodily senses and linguistic understanding and historical mediation. It is a disembodied body without context, insofar as it is problematically assumed that the “elemental” can be isolated from the pragmatic and that the senses and the body can be directly intuited outside of language and history. It consequently risks reducing interpretive hearkening and the understanding of being to the status of the proposition; that is, to the cognitivist and the conceptualist interpretations of meaning that the hermeneutical and pragmatist traditions have rightly challenged.

Heidegger carried out a hermeneutical and historical turn in phenomenology that differentiates his thinking from existentialism and the phenomenological movement (Guignon 1983, 4, 79). The interpretive turn that Heidegger adopted from Dilthey and ontologically transformed entails that humans are always in a situation where they are forced to interpret and reinterpret themselves, their moods and emotions, and their senses and body.

Charles Guignon (1984) has described how moods offer a sense of *Dasein* as a relational whole in Heidegger’s articulation of *Befindlichkeit*. Mood constitutes a background context for what does and does not count as significant and mood is not simply given but interpreted and potentially transformable in their relation to interpretive understanding and discourse.

⁵On the problematic of the body in Heidegger and his critics, see Kevin Aho 2009.

A philosopher should not just look, see, and describe, and assume that what is seen applies universally beyond the perspectival care (*Sorge*) that orients a world. Because intuition and perception already involve stratified interpretations and conceptions, the destructuring (*Destruktion*) of those strata is called for in order to encounter the phenomenon and begin to understand them anew for oneself. This interpretive relation to one's own "hermeneutical situation," in which even the most basic elements of the world and the self are encountered, entails possibilities of revision and renewal as well as indifferent repetition. The interpretive finitude of an existence entangled in words and historical contexts and conditions suggests a precarious game; still, its dangerousness does not mean that it can be avoided.

Life-Philosophy, Historical Life, and Worldview

In addition to language, hermeneutics, and historicity, Heidegger stresses in his earliest remarks concerning Dilthey the priority of the question of life, and particularly the being and reality of the life that poses this question to itself. Heidegger describes in "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview" (1925) how this question of life and human life reflects a crisis in both knowledge and life itself. This crisis has shaken the sciences and ordinary life itself and created the conditions of a "struggle for a historical world view" (S, 148).

What distinguished Dilthey's conception of life from other conceptions was the threefold articulation of life in Dilthey's mature magnum opus *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* (1910): (1) as experientially lived (*Erlebnis*), (2) as structured through and embodied in its expressions and objectifications (*Ausdruck*), and (3) as interpretively enacted and re-enacted in understanding (*verstehen*). All three modalities are fundamentally historical insofar as they encompass relations of resistance, conflict, and the fullness of a greater life-context (*Lebenszusammenhang*) or interconnected web of overlapping and conflicting meanings and interpretations.

Heidegger differentiated Dilthey's interpretation of life as historically mediated from the immediacy of both biological—whether biology is construed to be mechanistic or vitalistic—conceptions of life as well as appeals to the self-intuitive certainty or introspective transparency of life or consciousness to itself in early lecture courses such as the *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*. Dilthey's flawed conception of "life" remains fundamentally that of the historian, since life becomes an external, formal, and ultimately aesthetic construction and reconstruction of life even as it cannot attain the presumed objectivity of the natural scientist.⁶

Despite Heidegger's suspicions throughout the 1920s of the exteriority and distance of life to itself in Dilthey, which is indeed what makes human life

⁶Compare, for example, Heidegger S, 152; PIE, 128, 159/GA 59, 145, 167; and Guignon 1983, 56.

intrinsically interpretive and hermeneutical in Dilthey in contrast to philosophical hermeneutics, Heidegger recognized at the same time the primordially of the question of life in Dilthey. Heidegger claimed in 1925 that “Dilthey penetrated into that reality, namely, human *Dasein* which, in the authentic sense, is in the sense of historical being. He succeeded in bringing this reality to givenness, defining it as living, free, and historical” (S, 159). This is not “pure life,” as Heidegger notes how Dilthey elucidates the “structures” of “the primary vital unity of life itself” (S, 159). What Heidegger gestures to here are Dilthey’s “categories of life” (such as selfsameness, doing and undergoing, and essentiality) that dynamically occur within the nexus of lived reality. Life-categories are constituted and enacted in the interpretive processes of life rather than grasped as fixed abstract categories or forms of the understanding (*Verstand*). Dilthey’s model of an immanent, self-generative, and worldly formation of networks of sense and meaning, which are not purely ideal or transcendental for Dilthey, informed Heidegger’s rethinking of categories as existentiell and existenzial structures even as Heidegger sought to eliminate their ontic and human scientific dimensions that were so significant for Dilthey.

The Ontic and the Ontological

Dilthey argued that two ways of accessing the world are manifest in the mathematization of nature and in the hermeneutic articulation of historical life, but neither can be taken as an absolute or exclusive perspective. Heidegger attempted in his fundamental ontology to articulate a more basic dimension from which to understand both nature and history and transcend their ontic and positivistic interpretation. Though Dilthey unfolded historical worldly life as the basis for all the sciences, this remained inadequate for Heidegger insofar as it did not reach the ontological questions of the being of that life and of being as such. Nor, according to Heidegger, did Dilthey achieve the necessary recognition of the difference and the intertwining between the ontological and the ontic, of being and *Da-Sein* (as Heidegger writes “*Dasein*” in his last detailed discussion of Dilthey), in the “ontological difference.”

Heidegger’s final sustained critique of Dilthey in *Introduction into Philosophy* (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*) turns against ontic difference (multiplicity) toward a more originary ontological difference. Heidegger throws into question the ontic difference of the empirical crucial to Dilthey as a practitioner of the human sciences.⁷ Instead of denying ontic or empirical difference in the name of identity, Heidegger questioned ontic multiplicity from the perspective of what he construed

⁷The problem of Heidegger’s monism is not of course new: Cassirer argued in 1931 that the “reduction to temporal finitude” in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is a monism that undermines the Kantian distinction between the knowable sensible and the unknowable supersensible. See Michael Friedman 2000, 140–42.

to be the more fundamental difference: the ontological difference between beings and being. Indeed ontological difference is necessary to think ontic multiplicity. In an intriguing passage from 1941, Heidegger claimed that: “As the same and the unique, being is, of course, forever different in and from itself Being in its *uniqueness*—and in addition to this, beings in their *multiplicity*” (BC, 44/GA 51, 52). Despite his critique of ontic difference in Dilthey, difference as ontological uniqueness and ontic multiplicity continues to arguably play a role in his thinking of being and beings.

According to Dilthey, a specifically modernistic conception of life-philosophy calls for interpreting life from out of itself (GS 5, 370). Dilthey confronted the idealization of the nonconceptual with the unavoidability of conceptual mediation and self-reflection. Notwithstanding Dilthey’s hermeneutical approach to the categories of life and the generation of meaning, Heidegger rejected Dilthey’s modernistic epistemological focus while contending that Dilthey—while coming closest, but like all “life-philosophy” in the end—did not adequately attain the categorical-conceptual clarity and ontological character of the self-articulation of life (LQT, 182/GA 21, 216; BT, 45-46/SZ, 46).

Whereas the turn toward the immanence of life led Dilthey to empirical and interpretive work in psychology, history, anthropology, and human scientific inquiry, Heidegger demanded a more radical distinction between ontic inquiry into entities (whether in the human or natural sciences) and the ontological task of phenomenology and philosophy. Heidegger accordingly concluded that Dilthey: “did not pose the question of historicity itself, the question of the sense of being, i.e., concerning the being of beings. It is only since the development of phenomenology that we are in a position to pose this question clearly” (S, 159).

Heidegger repeated the same charge in *Being and Time*. He credited Yorck with prefiguring the ontological difference by distinguishing the historical-ontological and the historiographical-ontic (BT, 378-80/SZ, 399-400).⁸ This distinction is not entirely absent in Dilthey, where it entails the unbreakable relation between history as science and history as facticity. For Heidegger, it constitutes the difference between the ontic science of history or historiography (*Historie*) and history as ontological enactment, occurrence, and event (*Geschichte*). Heidegger separated *Historie* from *Geschichte*, a tendency that culminated in his history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*), whereas Dilthey emphasized the mediated intertwinement of historical lived-experience (the lived history that we are) and historical research (the academic history that we study) through self-reflection and interpretation.

Heidegger revisited the question of multiplicity in 1927 and maintained that in Dilthey’s orientation toward the sciences and worldviews, being (*Sein*) is lost in beings (*Seiende*), the world vanishes in a plurality of worlds, and the ontological difference disappears in unending ontic differences (Heidegger GA 27, 367–68, 382–90). Human existence does not first ontically observe and inquire, generating and building a world through its experiences as Dilthey’s hermeneutical formational

⁸See Eric S. Nelson 2011, 33.

(*Bildung*) experientialism suggests, all interaction and learning presupposes the primordial understanding and intuiting world *as* the world. This separation of the ontological structure from the ontic superstructures in effect short-circuits the hermeneutical oscillation between whole and part, universal and particular, since there is a sense of the whole and the oneness of being that remains separate from the merely ontic and empirical particular and part.

As with Husserl's commitment to a conception of "the world" that excludes the possibility of multiple potentially incommensurable worlds, Heidegger feared the lack of unity, the inductive incompleteness, and the danger of relativity in Dilthey. He concluded that this dangerous situation is a consequence of Dilthey's pre-phenomenological methodology. Heidegger noted that Dilthey prefigured phenomenology and was one of the first to appreciate the radical nature of Husserl's project (GA 27, 367-68, 382-90). Nonetheless, Heidegger maintained throughout his active reception of Dilthey's work until 1927 that: "we are indebted to him for valuable intuitions, which, however, do not reach down to ultimate and primordial principles and to radical purity and novelty of method"; the self-evidence of things phenomenologically or—in effect, intuitively, non-hermeneutically—disclosed (TDP, 140/GA 56/57, 165; S, 160). Heidegger's thinking never became fully hermeneutical and the word itself disappears from his vocabulary after the turn in his thinking in the 1930s.

Resistance and Factual Life⁹

According to Dilthey, the phenomenon of resistance facilitates the formation of a worldly self—a self that cannot purely be itself to the extent that it is always thrown and entangled in relations with others, objects. Self and resistant world are neither independent nor derivative of the other, they are co-given or equiprimordial. It is difference that is therefore the condition of self-identity.

Resistance is a primary feature of Dilthey's thought for the early Heidegger. Its significance is to some extent underestimated in the reception of Heidegger due to his critique of "reality as resisting" in *Being and Time* (BT, 201/SZ, 209). In that context, Heidegger rejected resistance as proving the externality of the world, arguing that resistance already presupposes world. Despite his suspicion of an epistemological and ontic conception of resistance, resistance probably remains operative at various levels of Heidegger's thinking—from the resistance of things in the breakdown of their instrumental and pragmatic purposiveness to the resistance of existence to human projects and understanding in the impossibility of mastering and appropriating one's own death.

This-worldly phenomena of resistance continue to structure Heidegger's early hermeneutics of factual life. Experience is still related to the "resistant" insofar

⁹A more detailed account of this argument can be found in Nelson 2011.

as experience is both passive and active and implies a differentiating setting-apart-with (*Sich-Auseinander-setzen-mit*) and the self-assertion of what is experienced (PRL, 7/GA 60, 9). The origin and goal of philosophy is factual life understanding and articulating itself. Thinking springs from its facticity in order to return to it (PRL, 7, 11/GA 60, 8, 15). The resistance of facticity opens access to the world through differentiation. It equally resists and blocks access to itself in the everyday indifference of going along with things in factual life (PRL, 9, 11/GA 60, 12, 15-16).

Heidegger further modified Dilthey's conception of resistance as the ruination, counter-motility, and transversal of life. The "there" in and from which the "I" occurs is primordially resistant and ruining (Heidegger PIA, 139/GA 61, 185). Regardless of Heidegger's suspicion of resistance as an argument for the self-existence of the external world, Dilthey's notion of resistance is appropriated and transformed in Heidegger's thinking of life's ownmost facticity.

In contrast to the portrayal of resistance as (1) the key to individuation and (2) the counter-movement of life, which is immanent to life insofar as it is life itself that presents us with its own ruination and questionability, (3) Heidegger critically interprets Dilthey's account of resistance in *Being and Time* (PIA, 98/GA 61, 130-31; BT, 201-03/SZ, 209-11). Magda King notes how resistance "characterizes beings within the world, and by no means explains the phenomenon of the world" (2001, 261). Resistance occurs from out of the world instead of being the how or way in which the world can be grasped *as* world. It is significant that Heidegger provides an ontological basis for resistance while rejecting its apparent ontic and empirical character in Dilthey. Resistance: "gives a factual existence to understand his exposedness to and dependence upon 'a world of things' which, in spite of all technical progress, he can never master" (King 2001, 261).

Heidegger contended in his Kassel lectures that the epistemological and methodological aspects of Dilthey's thinking need to be reconsidered in light of the centrality of the question and conception of life. Historical knowledge is self-reflexive; it turns on the self that relates to itself as well as to its immanent worldly context. The life that reflects upon itself is confronted by its own historicity and conditionality in attempting to comprehend itself. The self is accordingly a world to itself along with an enviroing world and a world of others. For Heidegger, this "self-world in factual life is neither a thing nor an ego in the epistemological sense"; it has the character of "a definite significance, that of possibility" (GA 58, 232; PIA, 71/GA 61, 94).

The self-world is not a denial of others; it indicates how the "I" is unremittingly referred to and shaped through interactions with others and the world in the equiprimordiality of the self-world, with-world, and enviroing world (Heidegger PIA, 71-72/GA 61, 95). These three overlapping co-constitutive worlds make up the "life-world" such that they cannot be separated from each other or construed to be self-sufficient (Heidegger PIA, 72-73/GA 61, 96). Hence, notwithstanding the constitutive but cogiven significance of the self-world, Heidegger problematized the primacy of the subject as separate from life. Life can neither be understood as merely an object nor subject (GA 58, 236).

Dilthey's primary concern was with the historically embedded self and its potential for self-knowledge in which the being who questions is at the same time addressed by and included in the question of "who" it is. Life confronts me as basically personal in the first-person perspective. It is my own life to live even as the "subject" of that life is inevitably mediated and differentiated from itself by living in a historical and worldly context: "To understand history cannot mean anything else than to understand ourselves—not in the sense that we might establish various things about ourselves, but that we experience what we ought to be. To appropriate a past means to come to know oneself as indebted to that past" (Heidegger PS, 7/GA 19, 9–11). Life is not only the ground of knowledge, since it resists knowledge and life as lived is in the last instance unknowable. The facticity of life is the "last ground of knowledge," such that knowledge cannot penetrate behind its own facticity (Dilthey GS 13/1, 53).

Life endeavors to understand itself while remaining non-transparent and ineffable to itself; human life is consequently necessarily interpretive or hermeneutical. Such alterity, excess, and remainder that restlessly pulls life out of itself is a concern in Heidegger's thinking from the singular thisness (*haecceitas*) of his early work on Duns Scotus to the thisness and mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) of my existence in *Being and Time*. As Dilthey explicated lived-experience as an exposure to life's facticity in its singularity and contingency, he should be considered a primary source for interpreting Heidegger's early philosophical project of a hermeneutics of factual, or resistant, life.

Heidegger's Final Confrontation with Dilthey

Heidegger unfolded his last sustained reading of Dilthey in *Introduction into Philosophy*, in which he appears to be answering his critic and Dilthey's student Georg Misch. Heidegger proposed in §39 to analyze worldview as world-intuition. He reinterprets intuition in opposition to its idealistic and vitalistic overtones in order to rehabilitate it against the Dilthey-school's "positivist" and "romantic" reliance on the false objectivity of empirical observation and the potentially relativistic subjectivity of artistic interpretation.

Heidegger redefines intuition as a "factically gripped being-in-the-world." It is "the differentiating confrontation [*Auseinandersetzung*]" between intuition and world that "renders being in itself available and not mere observation" (GA 27, 344). Heidegger construed Dilthey's empirical focus as wrongly prioritizing observation, which only accesses and discloses things ontically, inessentially, and in a derivative manner. Empirical observation is a deficient mode of the manifestness of truth, whereas intuition "expresses the immediate having of something in its entirety. Such having, as a sought after ideal, includes in itself the orientation toward not-having, not-possessing" (Heidegger GA 27, 344).

Observation and empirical inquiry in general presuppose intuiting as encountering and confronting things and the world as meaningful wholes without which they could not appear to observation. Heidegger rehabilitated phenomenological intuition

against his own earlier prioritizing of language and interpretation, Heidegger reenacts the transcendental turn in the late 1920s, much like his teacher Husserl, in response to the threat of hermeneutical relativity.

Intuition is not a direct immediate positive grasping but is rather structured by not grasping, by lack and absence, and ultimately by the nothing. Worldview is a world-having that cannot “have” the world. It is in “holding itself out in being-in-the-world” in which the basic lack of bearing [*Haltlosigkeit*] of *Da-Sein* is uncovered (Heidegger GA 27, 344). A worldview then merely offers the direction of bringing the world into my possession. *Da-Sein* is each time an intuiting of world, a having and not having of the world which it is. Worldview is, however, ordinarily treated as something objectively present, a fulfilled having of the world. Contrary to this reification of worldviews into fixed world-pictures, Heidegger shows how worldview expresses the lack and absence of bearing of *Da-Sein*. To have a world is to be decentered into the world (GA 27, 344-45).

Worldview is further misunderstood in the idea of a “natural worldview,” which is incoherent because of the historicity of worldviews:

One means by this a holding-itself in being-in-the-world that is natural to every *Da-Sein* and equal for each. Yet if every *Da-Sein* as factually existent is necessarily individuated in a situation, then factually there is not something like a natural worldview. Every worldview like every being-in-the-world is in itself historical, whether it knows this or not. There is no one so-called natural worldview upon which a first formed worldview is grafted, as little as a *Da-Sein* exists that would not always be the *Da-Sein* of the self and thereby dispersed in relations of self and other [*Ich-Du*]. The denial of a natural worldview does not to be sure imply that there is not something such as a common worldview, such as in groups, families, tribes, nations, peoples. In another direction there is also a common world of particular classes, castes, vocations. But this commonality is itself historical, according to the form as well as in consideration of the content. (Heidegger GA 27, 345)

Dilthey had argued that there is no one natural worldview common to all humans and that naturalism is only one possibility among others. Worldview is essentially historical, which means particular in being the perspective of *a* life. Dilthey argued further that the historicity of worldviews entails that there can be no one master worldview that can be employed to conclusively evaluate and rank the others. Instead, humans are confronted with the incommensurability, difference, and conflict (*Widerstreit*) of a plurality of worldviews from out of the perspective of their own personal life.

Heidegger confronted Dilthey’s notion of a unique factual biographical life and its pluralization of human existence with a notion of human existence that cannot be spoken in the plural and does not refer to the personal qualities and accidents of *a* life: *Da-Sein* (“being-there”). Heidegger’s *Da-Sein* does not have the identity or unity of a substance or subject even as it is contrasted with a conditional self that is a formation or bundling of empirical conditions and experiences. The ontic “bundle self” found in different ways in modern philosophers such as Hume, Nietzsche, and Dilthey is rejected through the negative unity of *Da-Sein*. The wholeness of *Da-Sein* is revealed in non-phenomena such as its anxiety, its profound boredom, its uncontrollable anticipation of death, and—in §39 of *Introduction into Philosophy*—its fundamental lack of orientation and bearing and dispersal amidst ontic beings (Heidegger GA 27, 346).

Heidegger proposed overcoming Dilthey's conditional personal and reflective self, i.e., his "psychological and epistemological concept of the subject," through a deeper more essential clarification of the way of being of *Da-Sein* (GA 27, 347). Heidegger notes the bundle of divergent contingent elements operative in Dilthey's self: "World-picture, life-experience, life-ideal . . . actuality, value, determination of the will are—according to Dilthey—aspects of worldview of 'diverse provenance' and various character (Heidegger GA 27, 347)." The next step of Heidegger's argument is that this ontic multiplicity from diverse sources in physical, biological, and historical life grasped through a variety of methods such as causal explanations and interpretive understandings cannot manifest the originary unity of *Da-Sein*. The self-intuition of its wholeness cannot be positivistically decomposed into a bundle of conditional elements. It is revealed at the ontological level of the question of being and the disclosure of the nothing that no form of empiricism, even if it is holistic and hermeneutical, can access.

Heidegger acknowledged that Dilthey interpreted world-views, including the naturalistic worldview, as consisting of much more than causally known nature; "the already known (*Erkannte*) operative in knowing (*Erkennen*), the lived psychic experiential-nexus, and binding principles of action" (GA 27, 347). Heidegger interpreted Dilthey's pluralism to be relativistic. He cannot accept Dilthey's inclusion of causal explanation and causally known nature as an "objectively present at hand ontic region" given in experience (*Erfahrung*) alongside regions that are subjectively known, felt, and willed in lived experience (*Erlebnis*) or intersubjectively known valid principles and virtues acted upon in practical ethical life. Heidegger's negative monism led him to repudiate Dilthey's pluralistic argumentation that there are basic forms of life- and world-views that are irreconcilable and irreducible to each other much less to a more originary understanding of being (GA 27, 348-49).

Cognitive, evaluative, and voluntative compartments, the differentiation of psychic-life that they presuppose and the life-stances and worldviews formed through them, point toward a more fundamental bearing and compartment of the same provenance: the bearing-lessness of *Da-Sein* in its worldly being (Heidegger GA 27, 348-49). Heidegger maintains that Dilthey allows for the factual and structural interconnection of all three dimensions, but he cannot move behind the multiplicity of modes of givenness (GA 27, 350). As a proto-phenomenological thinker, Dilthey failed to intuit their fundamental wholeness in the unity projected through and enacted in the way of being of *Da-Sein* (Heidegger GA 27, 349).

We might well ask here: Ought this indeterminacy between subject and object, the diverse ways of apprehending and the multiplicity of modes of givenness, be rejected for the sake of the lingering transcendental-like unity of *Da-Sein*? The problematic character of Heidegger's approach to ontic difference and multiplicity is revealed once again here. Can factual differences be eliminated in favor of the negatively achieved formulation of the unity of *Da-Sein* and Being? Heidegger challenged the priority of ontic difference at work in Dilthey's thought in the name of a more fundamental difference from out of which ontic multiplicity must be thought. Heidegger's ontological reduction of the ontic dualistically threatens to

undermine the recognition of and inquiry into ontic affairs. Heidegger's bracketing and subsequent radical critique of scientific inquiry into empirical conditions becomes the reification of a self-absorbed contemplation that listens to nothing but itself.

Dilthey is limited by his bundle theory of the self, according to Heidegger, while at the same time pointing toward the genuine subjectivity of the subject. Since Dilthey refers ontic multiplicity to the consciousness that apprehends it, there is a gesture toward the phenomenological unity of *Da-Sein*. This conception failed to the extent that it suggests a merely "psychological subject." Heidegger's argument for a subject behind the conditional worldly self reveals his lingering commitments to the idea of a transcendental phenomenological subject. This allowed Heidegger to claim that Dilthey's interpretive psychology remained beholden to the causal psychology that it differentiated itself from, as Dilthey did not adequately bracket causal conditions. This is a misinterpretation of Dilthey's project in light of the phenomenological project, since Dilthey never advocated the exclusion of causal reasoning even in the heart of interpretive psychology.

Heidegger contended that the failure of the bundle understanding of the self is interconnected with Dilthey's failure to achieve a decisive understanding of history. According to Heidegger, the question of *Da-Sein* is merely a psychological one in Dilthey, who considers the self as an ontic nexus of mental and physical occurrences. Instead of pursuing the question of the way of being of *Da-Sein*, Dilthey is trapped in a "higher positivism" in which *Da-Sein*, "on the basis of psychology," is a "problem of knowledge, theory of science, and culture." Because of this purported lack of radicalness, Dilthey's "most important insight of the historicity of life is not understood fundamentally, because it is not thought ontologically-metaphysically" (Heidegger GA 27, 350). Despite Dilthey's recognition of the difference between the history that we are (*Geschichte*) and the study of history (*Historie*), which Yorck and Heidegger adopted, Dilthey did not grasp history as *Da-Sein*'s own history. Dilthey introduced the problematic of historicity, but could not answer it, since history is interpreted as "cultural expression, the objectification of the psychologization of life, and an aesthetics of historicity and culture" (Heidegger GA 27, 350-51).

As a modernistic post-metaphysical thinker, Dilthey argued that we cannot go behind the multiplicity of ontic phenomena and the varying modes of givenness to reach an underlying metaphysical being, essence, or substance. Heidegger's project is to rehabilitate the metaphysical through a negative ontology. He accordingly concluded that Dilthey is captured in an ontic perspectivalism that precludes adequately posing the question of the way of *Da-Sein*'s being and of course the question of being itself. These two questions are negatively formulated and positive attributes are denied in order to avoid identifying being-there and being itself with a substance, principle or essence behind or beyond immanence even as *Da-Sein* leaps beyond and transcends worldly affairs.

Dilthey's psychology presupposes in Heidegger's estimation the ontological question of *Da-Sein*'s mode of being just as the ontic multiplicity of factualities

and facticities presupposes the ontological question of being (Heidegger GA 27, 351). Dilthey implicitly relies on an ontology of the human that it explicitly strives to exclude by interpreting humans ontically and empirically. Because this ontological question is excluded, the ontology of the human remains caught within the Western tradition of the subject that understands humans as rational animals. Dilthey remains within this ambiguous multiplicity, presupposing and using *Da-Sein* without clarifying it (Heidegger GA 27, 352).

The primordial structure of *Da-Sein* as a whole, which Dilthey implicitly and ambiguously employed in his quasi-phenomenology, is: “transcendence as being-in-the-world; *Da-Sein* is as such transcendence; it has in each case already jumped beyond beings . . .” (Heidegger GA 27, 353-54). *Da-Sein* already has in each case an understanding of being, beings, and its own being. This unitary understanding leaps ahead of beyond the scientist’s observation and studying of things such as minerals, butterflies, and stratification into social classes. It jumps beyond and in doing so jumps back to the unitary origin of the multiplicity of modes of comportment and givenness described and analyzed by Dilthey (Heidegger GA 27, 353). Dilthey’s subjective, objective, subjective-objective intersubjective dimensions of worldview each belongs to the comportment of *Da-Sein* as lack of bearing in the world and transcendence.

Dilthey’s ontic comportment consequently requires a transcendental turn to the ontological comportment of *Da-Sein*’s transcendence in the world. Heidegger locates the transcendental in the transcendence that reveals the nothingness and lack of bearing to which humans are exposed (GA 27, 353). Instead of rejecting ontic differences for the sake of the unity or identity of a positive essence or substance, ontic difference is only possible for Heidegger on the basis of the originary difference of *Da-Sein*—its thrownness into nothingness and the fundamental lack of bearing of its worldly comportment. Heidegger’s monistic critique of Dilthey’s pluralism is of a “higher order.” The wholeness of *Da-Sein* is glimpsed in exposure to the *via negativa* of anxiety, boredom, and lack of bearing in death, nothingness, and the ontological difference.

Heidegger contends that a worldview is not formed out of multiple and heterogeneous aspects and elements. World-viewing is an originary unified phenomenon arising from the transcendence of *Da-Sein* in its nothingness and lack of bearing (Heidegger GA 27, 354). *Da-Sein* is in each case betrayed and endangered in its transcendence-in-the-world; in “the each time of the facticity of transcendence” (GA 27, 358, 367). As such, *Da-Sein* does not first engage, observe, and inquire, but understands and “intuits the world” as one world through confrontation and conflict (GA 27, 367–68, 382–90). Dilthey’s elucidation of the conflict of worldviews and interpretations also one-sidedly points toward the truth that difference, conflict, and violence are constitutive of the wholeness of *Da-Sein* for Heidegger. The fundamental differences between perspectives led Dilthey to advocate a liberal tolerance and genial dialogue between them. Heidegger, however, rejected the multiplicity of perspectives and forms of life as leaving the necessary and needful in ambiguity and indecision.

Conclusion

Heidegger was less swayed by Dilthey's personalist interpretive psychology, even as he appreciated Dilthey as a thinker of human life as immanently worldly, self-interpretive, historical, and affective (Heidegger HCT, 117/GA 20, 161).¹⁰ Dilthey's project was, from Heidegger's standpoint, a flawed anti-naturalist personalism and a failed phenomenology that gave the naturalistic and historicist approaches, impersonal positivistic and personal aesthetic and biographical perspectives, too much validity (Heidegger HCT, 117/GA 20, 161). As scientific inquiry and the contingencies of personal auto-biographical life are beneath the dignity of philosophy, Dilthey is an ambiguous source for the new phenomenology and philosophy advocated by Heidegger.

Heidegger's criticisms did not go unanswered. Heidegger's earliest critics included former students of Dilthey, such as Misch, or scholars inspired by the "spirit" of his philosophical project, such as Helmuth Plessner. Misch's *Lifephilosophy and Phenomenology* (*Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie*) is one of the first sustained detailed critiques of Heidegger, which he responded to in his lecture-courses and correspondence.

Dilthey's full hermeneutical legacy only partially resonates in the ontologically oriented hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer. Neither of them further articulated the emergence and individuation of the biographical human individual immanently from the mediating contexts of a natural-biological and social-historical life. In contrast to Dilthey's historical-anthropological approach to human existence, Heidegger affirmed the dignity of the ontological and the transcendental against the complex mediations of life that call for continuing empirical observation, experimental inquiry, and interpretive understanding.

Misch responded that Heidegger marginalized the discourses of the natural and human sciences as ontic by separating them from the tasks of fundamental ontology. Heidegger did not recognize therefore the basic role that particular sciences play not only in research but in critical self-reflection. According to Misch, the "dispersion" into an ontic multiplicity that Heidegger criticizes in Dilthey is not a fall or decay "into" confusion but ontic multiplicity is the very starting point of life and reflection. Such multiplicity is not the negation of the essence and dignity of philosophy, if it is the arena in which philosophy takes place as an event and enactment not of impersonal being and neutral *Dasein*—a formal neutrality that is derived "after the fact" from the partiality and perspectivity of historical life in Misch's estimation—but, extending Dilthey's interpretive individualism, of individual and personal biographical life (Misch 1931, 47).¹¹

¹⁰Compare E. von Aster 1935, 149, 155.

¹¹On Misch's pluralistic and life-immanent personalism, in contrast with Heidegger's history of being, see Nelson 2012.

A basic move repeated throughout Heidegger's career is the claim that anthropology, psychology, and the entire range of human sciences, have nothing to say in response to the question of what it means to be human. This polemic against scientific inquiry, including the human sciences, is unfolded initially vis-à-vis Dilthey's pluralistically and empirically oriented manner of philosophizing that draws on the natural and human sciences of his day. Accordingly, it was not in Heidegger or Gadamer, but in the bio-hermeneutical anthropology of Plessner and the hermeneutical logic of Misch that the historically mediated character of nature and spirit continues to be analyzed in a way that combines critical self-reflection and inquiry into the ontic multiplicity of the world.

Resonating with Dilthey's elucidation of an individuated self in the midst of the conditions and forces of natural and historical life, Plessner corrected the partiality of naturalism and an anti-naturalistic personalism by clarifying their immanent consistency in the formation of a relational self: that is, the naturally eccentric and artificial constructive animal called human occurring within historical life.¹²

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¹²On the philosophical-anthropological turn stemming in part from Dilthey, and opposed by Heidegger, see Joachim Fischer 2008; and Salvatore Giammusso 2012.

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