

For a Phenomenology of Religious Life

Emmanuel Falque

Catholic University of Paris

Translated by Nikolaas Deketelaere

Balliol College, University of Oxford

nikolaas.deketelaere@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Abstract

With this essay, Emmanuel Falque pays off his debt to Martin Heidegger by tracing the methodological roots of his own work to *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Falque shows how Heidegger draws a ‘facticity in common’ from a variety of Christian texts (Paul, Augustine, medieval mysticism) that is nevertheless not limited to a theological form of discourse, but is precisely held ‘in common’ between the atheist and the Christian: the terms of the general philosophical analysis of ‘the human being as such’ have a theological provenance. Moreover, Falque holds up Heidegger’s engagement with the history of Christian theology as an example of how studying the history of thought does not have to mean sinking into a straightforward historicism.

Delivered as a lecture at the University of Oxford on 13 March 2020, the centenary of Martin Heidegger’s Freiburg lecture courses (1919–1921).



Emmanuel Falque, ‘For a Phenomenology of Religious Life’,
trans. Nikolaas Deketelaere, *JOGTS* 1.1 (2020), pp. 5-24.

That I am indebted to Martin Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, that I would have to pay off this debt one day – I have never doubted this, and the time has now come to do so. Rarely has a reading or a book marked my philosophical trajectory to this extent, even before its publication in French.² *Herkunft bleibt stets Zukunft* – 'Provenance always comes to meet us from the future.'³ The famous phrase of the phenomenologist, from his 'Dialogue on Language', resounds here with a rare aptness: 'Without this theological provenance [or rather philosophical, here] I should never have come upon the path of thinking.'⁴ From *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, where 'the burden of time' is made felt (see §9: *Oneri mihi sum*),⁵ to *Crossing the Rubicon's* 'philosophy of religious experience' (see §13: 'Philosophy of the Decision'),⁶ or *God, the Flesh, and the Other*, where the method of the 'phenomenological practice of medieval philosophy' is established (see the introduction),⁷ or furthermore *The Book of Experience*, of which the title as well as the very expression are drawn from Heidegger's note on Bernard of Clairvaux's third

² Martin Heidegger, *Phénoménologie de la vie religieuse*, trans. Jean Greisch, Œuvres de Martin Heidegger (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), the German being *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, ed. Matthias Jung and Thomas Regehly, Gesamtausgabe 60 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995). One can only be astonished by, and emphasise, the delay with which this French translation was published. An English translation, meanwhile, appeared in 2004 as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press). The French translator – Jean Greisch, whom I pay tribute to for his fierce work, ever useful to philosophy – explained to Dominique Janicaud: 'I find it [problems of translation] difficult to talk about, since I have just completed the translation of volume sixty of the Gesamtausgabe, the *Phenomenology of Religious Life*. I gave the manuscript to François Fédier in March. It goes without saying that I am happy to revise my translation, but I am not happy to compromise on the terminological choices I saw fit to make. [JANICAUD:] Could we speak of blocking? [GREISCH:] Perhaps. . .' (Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France*, vol. 2: *Entretiens* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 196). In addition to the fact of translation – Vezin translates *faktisch* as *factive*, Martineau as *factice*, and Greisch as *facticiel* (the correct translation in my view) – it seems that political and editorial questions were taken into account between the end of the work of translation here announced (1999, the year the quoted conversation took place) and its publication by Gallimard (2011). This gap of over ten years, which we can only deplore, probably produced a certain delay in the French reception of Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life*. It did not, however, prevent me from having access to it very early on, in the German indeed, but also through the generosity of Professor Greisch, who was kind enough to provide me with a provisional copy of his translation as soon as it had been completed.

³ Martin Heidegger, 'A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 10 (translation modified).

⁴ Heidegger, 'A Dialogue on Language', 10 (translation modified).

⁵ Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 27–29. —Trans.

⁶ Emmanuel Falque, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Borderlands of Philosophy and Theology*, trans. Reuben Shank (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 101–107. —Trans.

⁷ Emmanuel Falque, *God, the Flesh, and the Other: From Irenaeus to Duns Scotus*, trans. William Christian Hackett (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 3–19. —Trans.

sermon on the Song of Songs (see §3: 'The Book of Experience');⁸ everything seems to come from [venir], or to 'originate in' [*pro-venir*] (*her-kommen*), the young Heidegger: precisely in this sense, the provenance or origin [*provenance*] (*Herkunft*) comes to meet me from the future [*l'avenir*] (*Zukunft*) as well.

However, the question is not solely one of returning to a past. For what is said is said, and what is done is done. Reading, or rereading, the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* at the moment opens onto a future [*futur*]. Rather than speaking of 'phenomenology of religion' (Hegel) or of 'phenomenology and religious philosophy' (Hering), it is worth considering a 'philosophy of religious experience'.⁹ Nevertheless, this phrase still awaits its determination, or rather its orientation. For to announce it, by way of a title ('For a Phenomenology of Religious Life'), is neither to return to a past nor to repeat a present – knowing what Heidegger, for his part, said so well, if he did not write it down. It is rather a matter – and this is essential – of reflecting *starting from* Heidegger and not *on* Heidegger. Factual life experience, as emphasised at the start of the lecture course 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion' (1920–1921), is characterised by the fact that this phrase must be understood as a subjective genitive rather than an objective genitive: 'One finds that philosophy arises from factual life experience. And within factual life experience philosophy returns back into factual life experience.'¹⁰ Otherwise put, it is 'factual life', namely the *how* of my experience of the world, or 'how I stand with regard to things' (9/12), that must give birth to philosophising itself. The petition, even the clamour, introduced by the young Heidegger at the turn of the previous century, must still reverberate today, at least for those who have 'ears to hear': 'I ask myself how I experience *myself* in factual life experience – no theories!' (9/13).

Philosophy (*Philosophie*) and life (*Leben*) are therefore linked, and this is probably the greatest as well as deepest teaching of this *Phenomenology of Religious Life*. For 'religion' matters little here – although it is far from being a mere pretext for the young Heidegger, as I will show. Of first and foremost importance is the method, or rather the new philosophical attitude, in matters of philosophy of religion certainly, but also in the guise of the phenomenological mode [*manière*] or attitude in general – tearing oneself away from 'theory', the double flight into historicity and scientificity, as the three lecture courses collected here unceasingly emphasise.¹¹ At least in the 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion' (1920–1921), the Protestant theologian Ernst

⁸ Emmanuel Falque, *Le livre de l'expérience: D'Anselme de Cantorbéry à Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris: Cerf, 2017), 28–34 (English translation forthcoming from University of Notre Dame Press as *The Book of Experience*). For Heidegger's note, see *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 252–254/ 334–337. —Trans.

⁹ Falque, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 104–106 ('Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Religious Experience').

¹⁰ Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 6–7/8.

¹¹ In order of publication (but not of writing), the first course is entitled 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion' (winter semester 1920–1921) (1–111/1–156); the second course is entitled 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism' (summer semester 1921) (113–227/157–299); and the third course (not held) is entitled 'The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism' (1918–1919) (229–254/301–337).

Troeltsch functions as a foil, someone to articulate one's own position against, as an example of everything one must not do in philosophy of religion, or at least in religious phenomenology: 'psychology, epistemology, philosophy of history, metaphysics' (14–18/19–26). In the eyes of Heidegger, none of his predecessors really have the right to be cited: Hegel (the system), Kant (the limits of reason), Troeltsch (the religious *a priori*), but also Otto (the numinous) and Reinach (values). According to the lecturer from Freiburg, only Schleiermacher (but with a reservation concerning his sentimentalism) and Dilthey (a hermeneutics of life, but without reducing it to a *Geisteswissenschaft*) can properly inspire a true *phenomenology of religious life*.

It is therefore a new start, and even a new beginning, that must be taken up. Hence the young professor's spirited opening to his 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion'. I am myself not far from sharing this attitude, at least as concerns medieval philosophy, which today remains stuck in a pure historicism. Thus, in his course on 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism' (1921), or in editing his working notes for his undelivered course on 'The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism' (1918-1919), Heidegger teaches the following: 'The interest in the philosophy of religion is currently increasing. Even ladies write philosophies of religion (*selbst Damen schreiben Religionsphilosophie*) and philosophers who wish to be taken seriously welcome them as the most important contributions in decades!' (14/19, translation modified).

As we can see, he who will probably become the most important philosopher – or one of the most important philosophers – of the previous century, never failed to let himself get carried away. This is probably the reason why, or rather the sign of the fact that he already knew how to decide. To say that 'even ladies (*selbst Damen*)' write philosophy of religion is not, of course, to be misogynistic here, as scandalmongers might say or believe. The young Heidegger would of course subscribe to Descartes' warning to Father Vatier, which appears in a letter of 22 February 1638, just after the publication of the *Discourse on Method* (1637): 'These thoughts did not seem to me suitable for inclusion in a book which I wished to be intelligible in part even to women [*femmes*]'.¹² This is neither derogatory nor condescending, quite the contrary: to write 'even for women [*femmes*]' is not to write 'for the ladies (*Damen*)' – Descartes knew this, and as did Heidegger after him. For, in the seventeenth century at least, 'women' were those who had not gone through schooling, in particular the nets of a scholasticism that encloses thinking in a system. They retain, therefore, the 'freshness of mind' that makes for the fact that 'good sense (that is, reason) is the best distributed thing in the world' (Descartes),¹³ or that 'authentic *facticity*' (*die eigentliche*

¹² René Descartes, 'Letter to Vatier of 22 February 1638' in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 3:86/AT I 560 (my emphasis).

¹³ René Descartes, 'Discourse on the Method' in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985), 1:111/AT VI 1. —Trans.

Faktizität) does not in the first instance designate life in the sense of being ‘biologically, objectively isolated’, but rather ‘concrete life, “marriage” (?) [sic.] – eating, drinking, meals, “teatime” – concrete, surrounding-worldly significance’ (189/252), as an astonishing note in the appendix to the course on Augustine and Neo-Platonism emphasises.

Therefore, reading, or rereading Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of Religious Life* for our present day, does not consist in entering into a ‘taking-cognizance-of’ [*prise de connaissance*] (*Kenntnisnahme*) nor a ‘consciousness’ [*prise de conscience*] (*Bewusstsein*). It is rather a matter of rendering oneself capable of ‘taking position’ [*prise de position*] (*Position*) or what the course ‘Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion’ calls ‘the whole active and passive pose [*positionnement*] (*Stellung*) of the human being toward the world’ (8/11). Indeed, the ‘believing subject’ – but only in the most general sense of one who adheres to something (‘primordial Christianity’ [*christianisme primitive*]) – becomes the object questioned rather than the subject doing the questioning. ‘Turning-around’ and ‘transformation’ mark the two achievements, of phenomenology for sure, but also of ‘religious life’ itself.

First of all, there is no phenomenology without a turning-around [*retournement*] (*Umwendung*) that does not, at least under the name of the ‘reduction’ or *epochē*, lead (back) to philosophy itself: ‘Factual life experience is very peculiar; in it, the path to philosophy is made possible and the turning-around which leads to philosophy is enacted’ (8/11). But this ‘turning-around’ (*Umwendung*) then accomplishes itself as ‘transformation’ or ‘conversion’ (*Umwandlung*), not in the sense that philosophy leads to believing in a confessional God, quite the contrary; but rather by reading and discerning, within the field of ‘primordial Christianity’, the necessity for each of us of an ‘act of faith’, at least in the sense of a ‘transformation of oneself’. Just as, in matters of ‘religious life’, the faithful does not present himself ‘before God’ (*coram Deo*) without turning himself towards God (*in Deum*), no more readily will the phenomenologist remain ‘near philosophy’ (*vor die Philosophie*) without going ‘up to philosophy’ (*bis zur Philosophie*). One enters philosophy as one ‘enters the religious life’ [*entre en religion*], to use the French idiom here,¹⁴ and this is what constitutes the meaning of factual life experience – not simply ‘to position oneself before’ but ‘to penetrate in’, or being properly speaking *inter-esse*: ‘The point of departure of the path to philosophy is *factual life experience*. It seems, however, as if philosophy is leading us out of factual life experience (*faktische Lebenserfahrung*). In fact, that path leads us, as it were, only *near philosophy* (*vor die Philosophie*), not *up to it* (*bis zu ihr hin*). Philosophy itself can only be reached through a turning around (*eine Umwendung*) of that path, but not through a simple turning which would orient cognition merely toward different objects but, more radically, through an authentic *transformation* (*eine eigentliche Umwandlung*)’ (8/10).

¹⁴ The French *entrer en religion* means not simply to take up a religion, to enter religious life in general; rather, it indicates entering *the* religious life, as in joining a religious order or taking religious vows. —Trans.

“Hands off” for those who do not “feel” genuinely at home here’ – *Es besagt nur ‘Hände weg’ für den, der sich dabei nicht auf echtem Boden ‘fühlt’* (232/305). This new and astonishing spirited remark by the young philosopher – in his working notes for the course on ‘The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism’ (1918–1919) in this instance – may certainly suggest that ‘only a religious person can understand religious life’ (*nur ein religiöser Mensch kann religiöses Leben verstehen*) (232/304). However, this is to not see or to not understand that, phenomenologically speaking, a ‘ground’ [so] (*Grund*) is always given, to be believed or thought – including in the phenomenology of religious life, whether we consent to said religion or not: we are ‘always believing’, as I have shown in *Crossing the Rubicon*. This phrase does not mean that every ‘position’ implies a ‘confession’, in the sense of adhesion to the contents of faith (*fides quae*), quite the contrary; it instead merely indicates that we are always inhabited by an ‘act of believing’ (*fides qua*), by which we unceasingly adhere to or believe in someone or something: the world, oneself, others, even God himself. There is a ‘philosophical faith’ before any ‘confessional faith’, and the second can never take place independently of the first.¹⁵

Thus, aside from ‘ordinary facticity’ – which I will return to – human beings have in common this ‘turning-around’ (*Umwendung*), even this ‘transformation’ (*Umwandlung*), which are called for by both ‘phenomenology’ and ‘religious life’. Just as the dream for Freud’s notion of the unconscious, the ‘transformation’ shows the ‘royal road’ to a genuine *phenomenology of religious life* for the young phenomenologist. There is no ‘confession’ here, at least not in the sense of a categorical imperative to be imposed; rather, there is an attitude or a ‘taking-position’ [*prise de position*] ensuring that nothing can really be thought if one does not first know how to decide. ‘No real religion allows itself to be *captured* philosophically’ – *Erphilosophieren lässt sich keine echte Religion* (244/323). This axiom does not state that one must, in philosophy at the very least, confess divinity; it rather states that the phenomenologist shows [*laisse voir*] how much the necessity for each of us to involve ourselves philosophically hides itself behind this gesture or this religious act of believing.

‘Facticity’ and ‘transformation’ (*Faktizität und Umwandlung*), following ‘philosophy’ and ‘life’ (*Philosophie und Leben*), make up the heart and the keystone, of the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* for sure, but probably also of my own work – and for that I am now paying my debt here. [The coupling of] ‘finitude’ and ‘metamorphosis’, as in the title of *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, already learnt that lesson; though the ‘facticity’ of the young Heidegger (1921) had at this point not yet been tied to ‘finitude’ (1927). ‘He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end,’ Gregory of Nyssa remembers in the midst of ‘primordial Christianity’.¹⁶ The same goes for the warning of the young professor from Freiburg, who already

¹⁵ Falque, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 77-98.

¹⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, 8: PG 44, 941C.

knew and foresaw that one must now substitute, for the *lectio facilior* of systems and historical considerations concerning the ‘philosophy of religion’, the *lectio difficilior* of the description of the factual life experience of what belongs to the ‘phenomenology of religious life’: ‘No high-flying philosophy of religion (*Keine hochfliegende Religionsphilosophie*). We stand at the beginning (*Wir stehen am Anfang*), or more precisely: we must go back to the genuine beginnings (*order genauer: wir müssen in die echten Anfänge zurück*), and the world can calmly wait (*und die Welt kann ruhig warten*)’ (235/309).

1. The Facticity in Common

Facticity is first of all the site of a communality. It is in this sense that the young Heidegger sees in the religious kind of conversion a sort of turning-around for factual life. In other words, if the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* bases itself on a body of theological texts (Paul, Augustine, or medieval mysticism), its aim is first of all philosophical. The experience of the factual life of each of us, not the religious life experience granted to few, is the site of the turning-around first of all: ‘We have to look around in factual life experience in order to obtain a motive for its turning around’ (13/18). Therefore, far from separating ‘those who believe’ from ‘those who do not believe’ – or even seeing atheists only against the horizon of belief (even as its refusal) –, as a reader of Paul (winter 1920–1921) and subsequently of Augustine (summer 1921), Heidegger immediately understood that there is ‘originality’ (*Ursprünglichkeit*) in primordial Christianity, but not ‘exceptionality’ (*Außerordentlichkeit*): ‘For all its originality (*all ihrer Ursprünglichkeit*), primordial Christian facticity gains no exceptionality (*keine Außerordentlichkeit*), absolutely no special quality at all (*keine Besonderheit*). In all its absoluteness of reorganizing the enactment, everything remains the same in respect to the worldly facticity (*bleibt hinsichtlich der weltlichen Faktizität alles beim Alten*)’ (83/117). Dismantling all forms of apologetics that would reduce Christianity to some kind of ostracism, the young phenomenologist already knew – and understood this at a time when it was still far from self-evident (a time that is sometimes still our own) – that the Christian ‘does not live in a separate world’.¹⁷ If there is, therefore, a specific transformation in Christianity – and I will show how it is not merely a matter of a ‘turning-around’ (*Umwendung*) and ‘transformation’ (*Umwandlung*), but also of ‘enactment’ (*Vollzug*) – then ‘worldly facticity’ (*weltliche Faktizität*) remains the in-common to which all Christianity must remain anchored.

If, for me as well, there is not first of all a ‘drama’ of atheist humanism, but rather a minimal place where human beings, believing or not, can understand one another or at least encounter each other and engage in conversation – where does such a communality come or originate from [*proviert*]?’ ‘To be me, atheist, at home with oneself, separated, happy, created – these are

¹⁷ See Jean Greisch, *L'arbre de vie et l'arbre du savoir: Les racines phénoménologiques de l'herméneutique heideggerienne* (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 202: ‘Originaire mais non extraordinaire: le chrétien ne vit pas dans un monde à part.’

synonyms,' the Jewish philosopher of *Totality and Infinity* will later say.¹⁸ It is born, according to Heidegger – a few months later, in the Natorp-Report (1922), he would precisely draw this from his lectures on Paul and Augustine – out of what he calls, from the Latin, 'care' (*curare*), the equivalence with *Sorge* later becoming one of the fundamental achievements of *Being and Time*: 'The basic sense of the movement of factual life is caring (*curare*)' – *Der Grundsinn der faktischen Lebensbewegtheit is das Sorgen (curare)*.¹⁹ We will then not be satisfied with (merely) tracing the genealogy of the lecture courses contained within the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* up to *Being and Time*, by passing through the Natorp-Report. This has been done to such an extent that there is nothing I could add, especially since Heidegger himself, as I indicated, claimed the 'theological provenance' of philosophical concepts. The genealogies of other authors have the merit of better explaining these concepts as well as showing how they evolved, but the trouble is that these genealogies remain within a pure historicism that the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* unceasingly castigates.

The 'factual possibility' (*die faktische Möglichkeit*) that I am calling here *facticity in common* [*facticité en commun*] then comes down to (still according to a rereading of the Natorp-Report) 'seeing oneself in concern' (*in der Bekümmernng sich selbst in der Blick . . . nehmen*).²⁰ As specified in a footnote to this phrase, 'concern (*Bekümmernng*) does not mean a mood with a worried mien, but rather the factual Being-decided (*das faktische Entschiedenesein*), the apprehension of *Existenz* as the apprehension of that about which one is to be concerned (*das Ergreifen der Existenz als des zu Besorgenden*).²¹ One could therefore think, but probably incorrectly, that 'concern' [*inquiétude*] is here simply the equivalent of what would later become 'care' [*souci*]. In fact, however, there is nothing to this. Or better, there is perhaps 'more', or at the very least 'something else', in concern compared to care, that is to say, in 'factual life' compared to 'finitude'.²² Indeed, characteristic of 'concern' (*Bekümmernng*) – as inherited from Paul and Augustine (1920–1921), as I will show – is that it is still wholly oriented towards life, or at the very least that it has the possibility of 'falling' within this life. Care (*Sorge*), meanwhile, expresses – according to the turn taken in *Being and Time* (1927) – the characteristic of being-unto-death, as the possibility of the impossibility of *Dasein*. In other words, for the 'wakefulness' [*être en éveil*] brought into view in the *Phenomenology of Religious*

¹⁸ Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 148 (translation modified). This should be related to my *Metamorphosis of Finitude*, 30–40.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, 'Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation', trans. Michael Baur, *Man and World* 25, nos. 3–4 (1992), 361/'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)', ed. Hans-Ulrich Lessing, *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989), 14.

²⁰ Heidegger, 'Phenomenological Interpretations', 364/11 (translation modified).

²¹ Heidegger, 'Phenomenological Interpretations', 393n1/11n1 (translation modified).

²² Greisch, *L'arbre de vie et l'arbre du savoir*, 21–26 (23, 26): 'l'idée de facticité contient plus que la simple idée de finitude et de limitation Elle est beaucoup plus riche que la simple idée de finitude.'

Life by rereading Paul, *Being and Time* substitutes 'authentic Dasein' as the assumption of its being-there. There we are, or we were, before God (*coram Deo*); here we stand before ourselves (*Authentizität*).²³

However, there's nothing to condemn here, or even to regret – as is so often and surreptitiously done by the 'believing or confessing thinkers', unceasingly and more or less explicitly denouncing this 'trick' or 'bad move' made by Heidegger in the *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, which was in itself nevertheless a step in the right direction. One does not judge a philosopher on what one would have liked him to have become, but rather on what he actually became. Now, Heidegger neither became an atheist resentful of Christianity, nor a Christian philosopher who no longer explicitly claimed his faith or who resented the institution without having lost his convictions. Those two readings are as extreme as they are arbitrary, they do not correspond to the phenomenologist's 'path of thinking': in search of a new 'common ground' between human beings (named facticity and then finitude), rather than the specificity of an experience of faith that remains impossible (or at the very least difficult) to be shared.

Indeed, explicating Paul's 'fundamental religious experience' whilst 'remaining in this fundamental experience' (51/73) – quoting here the commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians in the course 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion' – does not mean to confine oneself to Paul, quite the contrary. Rather, it means understanding factual life in general starting from [*en partant*], or by thinking *taking off* from [*en pensant à partir*], Paul's fundamental experience. Neither reserved to the apostle Paul, nor uniquely communicated to believers alone, the Pauline though also human experience is here extended, even universalised, to all and for all – at least in terms of the 'care' (*cura*) and turning-around it implies: 'The primary point is', according to Heidegger, that 'the life-worlds (*Lebenswelten*) . . . become accessible to factual life experience (*faktischen Lebenserfahrung*)' (9/12).

What determines factual life experience is, precisely, what determines *all* life – Christianity in an originary way for sure, but all life in an ordinary way, namely 'concern' or 'insecurity' as such: 'There is *no security* (*gibt es keine Sicherheit*) for Christian life,' the commentary on the Epistle to the Thessalonians reads, 'the constant insecurity (*die ständige Unsicherheit*) is also characteristic (*das Charakteristische*) for what is fundamentally significant in factual life (*die Grundbedeutendheiten des faktischen Lebens*)' (73/105).²⁴ 'Factual life' (*faktischen Lebens*) or 'ordinary life' – the facticity in common – is thus paradoxically what is already brought into view here. Not merely or exclusively

²³ See Claude Romano, *There Is: The Event and the Finitude of Appearing*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 33: 'The instantaneous wakefulness as hope for the return of Christ is replaced by Being-towards-death qua authentic resoluteness . . . ; presence before God is replaced by the mortality of *Dasein*.'

²⁴ Greisch's translation (117) speaks of *ordinary life* (*la vie ordinaire*) instead of *factual life*. —Trans.

the insecurity of the Christian before the end of time, but the insecurity of every human being before every end – whether it is a matter of Parousia, as in the lectures on Paul (1921), or of death, as in the explication of authentic Dasein (1927).

Indeed, one particular passage especially draws the young Heidegger's attention (a) in his reading of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, even though the reference mostly hits (b) in his approach to Augustine. (a) Starting with the Thessalonians: 'Now, brothers and sisters, we do not need to write to you about times and dates (*peri de tōn chronōn kai tōn kairōn, adelphoi*). You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief that comes in the night (*ēmera kuriou ōs kleptēs en nukti*). . . So we should not be like the other people who are sleeping (*apaoun mē katheudōmen ōs oi loipoi*), but we should be vigilant and sober (*alla grēgorōmen kai nēphōmen*)' (1 Thess. 5:1-2, 5:6). Man's 'wakefulness' [*en éveil*] or 'vigilance' (*grēgorōmen*), and 'God's vigil' [*Dieu en éveil*] with man, such is the definition of Christian existence in the *Guide to Gethsemane* – if the understanding of the whole of my work as inheriting Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life* needed to be demonstrated again.²⁵ The 'when' (*potē, Wann*) of Parousia does not express a moment in time for Paul – and this is the great originality of Christianity that Heidegger understood so well – but rather returns, and referring ourselves to Heidegger's own commentary here, to the mode [*manière*] of being and living presently awake [*en éveil*] to this end of time, which is to say, in a 'constant and essential uncertainty': 'Through this [Paul's answer] ('let us keep awake') we see: the question of the 'When' (*Wann*) leads back to my comportment (*mein Verhalten*). How (*wie*) the Parousia stands in my life, that refers back to the enactment of life (*den Vollzug des Lebens*) itself. The meaning of the 'When' (*Wann*), of the time in which the Christian lives, has an entirely special character' (73/104). The Christian relation to time modifies time, or qualifies another temporality of time [*un autrement du temps*].²⁶ The 'end of time' [*fin des temps*] already sets in motion the 'end time' [*temps de la fin*] and its *kairos*, or opportune moment. What matters is less the end itself than the *mode* of relating oneself to this end. This is what will distinguish, at least as by extension of the method, the 'fear of dying' from the 'anxiety of death' in *Being and Time*: the 'fear of dying' as the end of life and the 'relation to death' as the modality of life.²⁷

²⁵ See Emmanuel Falque, *The Guide to Gethsemane: Anxiety, Suffering, Death*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 41–44 ('God's Vigil').

²⁶ The point here is not that a *different* time is established (*un autre temps*), like another or a separate world (*un monde à part*), but rather that time itself is temporal in a different way (*un autrement du temps*). On this distinction, which does not lend itself to translation, see Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, 21–29, 112–126. —Trans.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, rev. Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), §30 ('Fear as a Mode of Attunement') and §40 ('The Fundamental Attunement of Anxiety as an Eminent Disclosedness of Dasein').

(b) The approach of Augustine, then. *Oneri mihi sum* ('I am a burden to myself', *Conf.* X.28.39),²⁸ *Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio* ('I have become a great question to myself', *Conf.* IV.4.9),²⁹ or further *Quis velit molestias et difficultates?* ('Who would long for troubles and difficulties?' *Conf.* X.28.39).³⁰ These are the three points, the three places, or the three great formulae, that the young Heidegger takes from the Doctor of Hippo in his lecture course on 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism' (summer 1921). Without having to return to it here, for I have shown it elsewhere, it is the 'burden' (*onus*) that determines existence for Augustine. Even though one must avoid the 'reading with scissors' executed by the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* – for example, cutting off the phrase 'I am a burden to myself' (*oneri mihi sum*) from 'because I am not filled with you' (*quoniam tui plenus non sum*) and thereby relating it philosophically to the neutral place of concern, rather than theologically to the possibility of sin³¹ –, what he here calls care or rather 'being concerned' (*curare*), determines the whole of existence itself: 'The *curare* (being concerned) as the basic character of factual life (*als Grundcharakter des faktischen Lebens*)' (151/205, title of §12). With Augustine, though, an additional step is taken, at least as compared with Paul. Whereas it is explicitly a matter of 'concern' (*Bekümmern*) or 'tribulation' (*phtisis*) with regard to the end of time in the first letter to the Thessalonians, it rather becomes, as we have seen (§26: 'The Expectation of Parousia'), *cura* or 'care' in Book X of the *Confessions*. What the 'burden of life' (*onus*) brings to its concern (*phtisis*) is the charge of facticity as such, which seems to be detached little by little from all fault or sin, until reaching its peak in a 'finitude' that is this time absolutely constitutive of humanity. It is not, or not only, before [*au regard de*] God that the risk of temptation (*tentatio*) is judged and felt, but also before oneself and in light of the proper burden that one is to oneself, whether or not one is cut off from God: 'The most uncanny power of *tentatio* opens [itself] precisely in the most radical, genuine self-concern (*in der radikalsten Selbstbekümmern*), so that only here has the most radical situation of self-experience (*die radikalste Selbsterfahrungssituation*) been won, in a direction of consideration in which the self knows neither in nor out (*in der das Selbst nicht mehr aus und ein weiß*) – *quaestio mihi factum sum* [I have become a question to myself]'³² (189/253).

²⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, vol. 2: *Books 9–13* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 136–37.

²⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, vol. 1: *Books 1–8* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 146–47 (translation modified).

³⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, 2:136–37. I will add *Conf.* X.16.25/2:110–111: 'I am really struggling over this, Lord, and struggling with myself (*laboro in me ipso*). To myself I have become a land which is too unyielding, demanding too much sweat (*factus sum mihi terra difficultatis et sudoris nimii*).'

³¹ See Emmanuel Falque, 'Après la métaphysique? Le "poids de la vie" selon Augustin' in *Après la métaphysique: Augustin? Actes du colloque inaugural de l'Institut d'études médiévales de l'Institut catholique de Paris, 25 juin 2010*, ed. Alain de Libera (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 115–119.

³² The move from 'tribulation' in Paul (*phtisis*) to 'care' in Augustine (*cura*) is perfectly demonstrated by Greisch, *L'Arbre de vie et l'Arbre du savoir*, 204–206.

These two successive stages in the lecture course on Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians (1920–1921) and Book X of Augustine's *Confessions* (summer 1921), make up the heart and the centre of what Heidegger at that time still called facticity. For if there is one thing characteristic of the 'concern' (for the end) or the 'care' (for oneself) – otherwise put, of factual life experience – it is that “world” is that in which one can *live* (one cannot live in an object)' (8/11). In other words, concern and care are dimensions of the self and not of the world; or rather, they are only dimensions of the 'world' insofar as the world is the place of the 'meaning' [*sens*] of my life (facticity), instead of a series of 'facts' [*faits*] of life (objectivity).

'One cannot live in an object' – *In einem Objekt kann man nicht leben* (8/11). Here, again, the genius of the young phenomenologist – defining factual life experience in order to introduce the philosophy of religion, or rather the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* – appears forcefully. An expression – a parenthetical expression even – is all the professor needs to say everything [*tout dire*], or rather to articulate the whole [*dire le tout*], by way of a metonym ('having a drink'). Indeed, recognising that no one lives 'in an object' (*in einem Objekt*) is already admitting that only the human being [*l'homme*] lives 'in the world' (*in der Welt*): it alone suffers or enjoys [*jouit*] concern and care – and is therefore simultaneously projected towards what is to come [*l'avenir*] (concern) and turned-around towards himself as towards his own burden (care). Here, being 'factual' (*faktisch*) – understood in French as *facticiel* rather than *factice*, to avoid the risk of misinterpreting it as 'falsity' (to be *factice* is to be false, imitated, poorly formed) – denotes not the 'artificial' but the 'contingent' in the etymological sense of the word: contingent is what is most my own and closest to me, what properly speaking 'touches me' (*con-tingere*) and therefore 'forms' [*fait*] my life. Factual life experience does not let itself be reduced to life as it is 'biologically, objectively isolated,' but relates to what the young Heidegger at that time called 'concrete life' (*konkretes Leben*): “marriage” (?) – eating, drinking, meals, “teatime” – concrete, surrounding-worldly significance' (189/252). There is nothing here that belongs specifically to the order of belief or religious life. However, it is within belief or a *Phenomenology of Religious Life* that one reads and deciphers in an exemplary way, and does so for all, what it means to relate to the future (concern) and to carry the burden of oneself (care), including in the smallest, and allegedly insignificant, moments of our life. 'Religious life' does not simply and trivially let itself be opposed to 'atheistic life'; rather, it makes evident [*fait voir*] in its own body of texts and by way of its specific experience – in particular on the basis of a reading and a commentary on the *Epistles* of Paul and the *Confessions* of Augustine – what it means to be *human as such* [*l'homme tout court*],³³ when one is either before oneself (*oneri mihi sum*) or before God (*coram Deo*).

³³ Throughout Falque's work, including in this text, the task of thinking *l'homme tout court* takes centre stage. By this, he means the human being (finitude) on its own terms, without reference to a divinity (infinite) from which the human would derive its meaning. On this, see especially Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, 11–40. —Trans.

2. Atheistic Life

As we know, a double break marks Heidegger's advance down the path of atheism: (a) a break with the system of Catholicism, (b) followed by a break with Christianity in general. (a) Starting with the break with the system of Catholicism – which is not therefore a break with Christianity as such, however – as it is famously expressed in a letter to Engelbert Krebs of 9 January 1919: 'Epistemological insights, extending to the theory of historical cognition, have made the system of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable to me – but not Christianity and metaphysics (these in a new sense, however).³⁴ At the time of the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1919–1921), Christianity was safe and only said 'system of Catholicism' the subject of severe condemnation. In addition to the historical reasons that justified it at the time (the prevalence of Neo-Thomism) – but nevertheless do not give us any reason to think that it would have been any different if the Catholic faith had expressed itself otherwise (according to a 'false' presupposition often expressed by the 'believing' interpreters of Heidegger's thought) –, the act of breaking with the system, and even with all systems, lies philosophically within the lecture courses of the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* as such. Heidegger does not mince words, to put it mildly, as in the following quotation from the course on 'The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism' (1918–1919) (exactly contemporaneous with the letter to Krebs of 9 January 1919). Any shackles of thought that would impede thinking must be banished, whether it is a matter of Catholicism – as it certainly is – or of all dogmatic thought as such: 'the *structure of the system* – that itself did not grow out of an *organic cultural deed* – . . . must first find its way through contorted, inorganic, theoretically *entirely unclarified*, dogmatic principles and evidential procedures, only to finally dominate, darkly burden, and repress the subject as a statute of canon law with police force (*mit Polizeigewalt das Subjekt zu überwaltigen*). Still further: within itself, the system fully excludes an original, genuinely religious lived-experience of value (*ein ursprüngliches genuines religiöses Werterlebnis*)' (238/313, translation modified).

(b) The break with Christianity, this again is well known, followed very shortly after the lecture courses published as the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1918–1921). It expresses itself definitively, even trenchantly, in the Natorp-Report – the autumn 1922 entitled 'Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation' – which marks the turn from a religious body of texts (medieval mysticism, Paul, Augustine) to a Greek body of texts (Aristotle): 'If philosophy is *fundamentally atheistic* and if it understands this about itself (*wenn die Philosophie grundsätzlich atheistisch ist und das versteht*); – then it has decisively chosen factual life in its facticity and has made this an object for itself'.³⁵ In addition to the personal reasons leading to the break (in particular Heidegger's newfound fascination with Greece and his desire to join

³⁴ See *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, ed. Alfred Denker et al., Heidegger-Jahrbuch 1 (Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2004), 67–8.

³⁵ Heidegger, 'Phenomenological Interpretations', 367/15.

the University of Marburg), the question arises whether it is a matter here of a real ‘epistemological cut’ (of the sort that would change Heidegger’s work as a whole), or rather a straightforward translation or ‘retranslation’ of what already gave itself in another field. These two positions – a total break with the body of Christian texts, on one side, or a hidden continuity with a heritage that is never denied, on the other – can never be reconciled, if you ask me. Neither ‘antagonism’ nor ‘neutrality’ can truly capture the relationship that Christianity and philosophy still maintain with one another. Rather than searching for the ‘points of compatibility between Heidegger’s thought and Christian faith, as well as its fecundity for theology’,³⁶ today at least, it strikes me as more pertinent to think how atheism might change Christianity, and not merely the other way around. If it is an act of ‘crossing the Rubicon’, where the backlash [*le choc en retour*] of theology on philosophy is felt,³⁷ we can put forward the hypothesis – or at least imagine – that ‘another Rubicon’, or a small river, must this time be crossed: the impact of an atheist position, on philosophy for sure, but also on theology. Is Heidegger *without* God necessarily *against* God? Nothing is less certain. There is no *a priori* justification whatsoever to affirm that his atheism is a form of anti-theism, rather than a simple non-theism. Not, or no longer, desiring God, the Heidegger of Marburg would not deny anything from his Freiburg period, but he oriented it differently: not in the often and wrongly proclaimed way [*voie*] of a ‘hidden Christianity’, but rather on the path [*chemin*] of non-theism that calls-out Christianity itself.

We only need to read this little but crucial footnote to the Natorp-Report to be convinced of this: ‘Atheistic means (*atheistisch besagt hier*) keeping oneself free from misleading temptation which merely talks about religiosity. [One may very well ask] whether the very idea of a philosophy of religion (especially if it makes no reference to the facticity of the human being) is pure nonsense.’³⁸ The backlash of Marburg on Freiburg is clearly expressed here, or we might say the return to Greek philosophy (‘Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle’) in the face of a body of Christian texts (*Phenomenology of Religious Life*). Far from sticking to the lone figure of Heidegger, this turn – or rather this turning-around – must extend its questioning to philosophy in general and theology as such, including for our time. Indeed, the problem is not the move from one body of texts to another (from Jerusalem to Athens, for example), but the effect produced by the second (Athens) on the first (Jerusalem or Rome). Certainly, Heidegger has changed. However, this change raises questions for us, questions concerning ourselves, not just concerning Heidegger – that is what every reader must accept. One does not decipher or interpret a text in order to find oneself in it, but on the contrary in order to lose oneself there and let

³⁶ As developed in E. Brito, ‘Heidegger et le christianisme’, *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 82, no. 2 (April 1999): 241–272.

³⁷ See Falque, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 147–152 (§20: ‘The Principle of Proportionality’).

³⁸ Heidegger, ‘Phenomenological Interpretations’, 393n2/16n2 (translation modified).

oneself be changed by it, in what I have called elsewhere a ‘phenomenality (rather than a hermeneutic) of the text’.³⁹

A double lesson is then learned – by us, today – from this short but crucial note to the Natorp-Report. (a) First lesson: ‘Atheistic means keeping oneself free from misleading temptation which merely talks about religiosity.’ The matter is clear and will be a constant elsewhere in Heidegger. ‘Atheistic’ (*atheistisch*) does not mean going against religiosity – as, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre’s existentialism would later practice it. ‘Atheistic’ means in a way ‘suspending’ all questions of religiosity – or better, ‘keeping oneself free from misleading temptation’ (*sich freihalten von verführerischer*), namely that of ‘treating’ or even ‘saying a word’ on religiosity itself. This is somewhat surprising, especially as the ‘phenomenology’ (*Phänomenologie*) of what he precisely calls ‘religious life’ (*des religiöses Lebens*) has just been completed. It takes place as a kind of phenomenological *epochē*, in the proper sense of the word, of ‘religiosity’ (*Religiosität*). ‘What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence,’ to reprise here the famous finale of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (1918), which is contemporaneous with this same period.⁴⁰ However, here this is due not to its inexpressible character, but rather its bygone [*dépassé*], or at least bypassable [*dépassable*], character. (b) Second lesson: ‘[One may very well ask] whether the very idea of a philosophy of religion (especially if it makes no reference to the facticity of the human being) is pure nonsense (*ein purer Widersinn ist*).’ Here, the backlash is radical but also crucial. For, far from bypassing or silencing all ‘philosophy of religion’ or ‘phenomenology of religious life’ for a second time, it is rather a question of returning to it – but this time on the basis of [*à partir de*] facticity itself. New here, what we did not expect or were no longer expecting, is the ‘turning-around’ (*Umwendung*) that the profession of atheism now inflicts on the philosophy of religion itself. The path is the other way around [*inverse*] – this can and must inspire us today: not simply from Christianity to factual life (the way of the *Phenomenology of Religious Life*), but of factual life to Christianity (the path of ‘Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle’). Admittedly, there is but a suggestion of this on the part of the young philosopher: no deployment of a system, nor a true walking of the path of thinking. The task is therefore still to be accomplished, for it is precisely indicated rather than developed.

3. Transformation

As I have said – or rather, as I have announced – in the young Heidegger, the great ‘turning-around’ (*Umwendung*) slips quietly into ‘transformation’ (*Umwandlung*), even ‘enactment’ (*Vollzug*). One could believe, and one could say, that this ‘turning-around’ is first of all that of the believer and therefore belongs exclusively to the *Phenomenology of Religious Life*. In reality, however, it is

³⁹ See Falque, *Crossing the Rubicon*, 50-54 (§6: ‘Toward a Hermeneutic of the Text’).

⁴⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2001), 89.

nothing of the sort. If there is a turning-around, it is also – but, in the eyes of the young Heidegger who would soon leave Freiburg (1916–1922) for Marburg (1923–1928), perhaps *first of all* – the transformation, not of the Christian himself, but of the atheist or the ‘without’ God: without being against God, he understands that what takes place through faith before God (*coram Deo*) must now take place only with himself (*oneri mihi sum*). The metamorphosis (*Umwandlung*), more so than the turning-around (*Umwendung*), now amounts to recognising that ‘humanity as such’ must also transform itself, and that such a privilege is not the prerogative of Saints Paul and Augustine. If the ideas ‘turning-around’ and ‘transformation’ originate in or come from [*provient originairement*] theology, their true place and true meaning belong today to philosophy, even atheism as such.

A note from the appendix to one of the last lecture courses delivered at Freiburg, devoted to *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* but not identical to the Natorp-Report (1921–1922), is slightly clearer this time: ‘philosophy itself is, as such, atheistic (*Die Philosophie selbst als solche ist atheistisch*), if it understands itself radically (*wenn sie sich radikal versteht*); cf. *concept of life* (vgl. *Lebensbegriff*).’⁴¹ This time, atheism is declared, and even claimed. ‘Rigorous methodological atheism’ becomes the norm, and the law, for all philosophical thought as such. However, something new comes about, or rather a new communality that is now to be inhabited, whether we are in the ‘religious life’ or the ‘atheistic life’: ‘cf. *concept of life* (*Lebensbegriff*)’. Precisely ‘life’ (*Leben*), or better ‘factual life’ (*faktisches Leben*), will form the object of the last Freiburg lecture course, entitled *Hermeneutics of Facticity* (1923). It maintains, or retains, a true ‘being in common’, the whole of living beings insofar as they are ‘human’ and ‘in the world’: open to a future to come [*un avenir*] (concern), and bearing the load of their own existence (the burden). ‘Being a question to myself’ – *quaestio mihi factus sum* – is indeed a phrase from Augustine, but it determined or will later on determine Dasein at the opening of *Being and Time*: ‘This being, which we ourselves in each case are and which includes *questioning* among the possibilities of its being (*die Seinsmöglichkeit des Fragens hat*), we grasp terminologically as *Dasein* (*fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein*).’⁴² We equally find it, according to certain translations, in the conclusion of the episode of the blind-born man in the Gospel of John: ‘I came into this world to call it into question’ (*eis krima egō eis ton kosmon touton ēlthon*) (John 9:39). ‘Life’ or the ‘way’ [*manière*] of living life, or one’s life (facticity), becomes the injunction of all human beings that constitutes them in their ‘authenticity’.

As Edmund Husserl himself emphasises, comparing Heidegger with Heinrich Ochsner – who was at the time also a lecturer in philosophy of religion at Freiburg – in a letter to the protestant theologian Rudolf Otto of 5 March 1919: ‘Both of them are really religiously oriented personalities:

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 149/*Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotle: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, ed. Walter Bröcker, 2nd ed., Gesamtausgabe 61 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994), 199.

⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 7 (my emphasis [translation modified]).

with Heidegger, the *theoretical-philosophical interest* takes priority; with Ochsner, the *religious*.⁴³ So, I will not say that Heidegger changed (in moving [*en passant*] from the theological to the philosophical), nor that he was always doing the same thing (being just a philosopher); I maintain that he crosses [*passé*] the Rubicon, the other way around [*inverse*] this time: not theology informing and transforming philosophy, but atheism changing both philosophy and theology. Everyone is called to a shared understanding of ‘life as such’ [*la vie tout court*], as well as ‘humanity as such’ [*l’homme tout court*]. True atheism is neither pugnacious nor destructive, but rather what Heidegger – in this same note to the Natorp-Report – still calls ‘honesty’ [*loyauté*] (*Ehrlichkeit*), in a rarely equalled synthesis of his position. We should respect this *today as well* in order not to condemn the atheists, but to let oneself be changed or transformed by them: “‘Atheistic”, but not in the sense of a theory such as materialism or something similar. Every philosophy which understands itself in what it is must – as the factual How of the interpretation of life (*als das faktische Wie der Lebensauslegung*) – knows (and it must know this precisely when it still has some “notion” of God) that life’s retreat towards its own self (which philosophy achieves) (*das von ihr vollzogene sich zu sich selbst Zurückreißen des Lebens*) is, in religious terms (*religiös gesprochen*), a show of hands against God (*gegen Gott*). But only then is philosophy honest (*damit allein aber steht sie ehrlich*), i.e. only then is philosophy in keeping with its possibility (which is available to it as such) before God (*vor Gott*).⁴⁴

Whether Christianity or atheism, ‘the enactment of life is [thus] decisive’ (*der Vollzug des Lebens ist entscheidend*) (56/80). Certainly, ‘decisive’ and ‘decision’ do not mean the same thing when providing a commentary on the ‘phenomenon of proclamation’ in the Epistle to the Galatians – which is at issue here –, as when considering solely, or perhaps fully, mere factual life as such [*tout court*], as in ‘Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle’. However, we would be wrong to believe that Christianity keeps the truth and specificity of the phenomenon of enactment (*Vollzug*) to itself, keeping it for itself, as if the New Testament had no other task than to enact and therefore to ‘complete’ [*mener à terme*] the Old Testament, or as if Christianity would have to enact itself in atheism or the other way around. The structures of enactment sometimes, oftentimes wrongly, turn out to assume and swallow up what they have absorbed, like a too well-mastered *Aufhebung*. For Heidegger, ‘enacting’ [*accomplir*] – *vollziehen* – means neither ‘to assume’ nor ‘to bypass’, but rather ‘being transformed’, even ‘being converted’, to assure oneself that in one’s ‘having-become’ one will also oneself have been changed: ‘The “Having-Become” of the Thessalonians’ (65/93, title of §25). Otherwise put, ‘the conversion to Christian life experience

⁴³ Edmund Husserl, ‘Husserl an Otto, 5.III.1919’ in *Briefwechsel*, vol. 7: *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, ed. by Elisabeth Schuhmann and Karl Schuhmann (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), 205-208 (205).

⁴⁴ Heidegger, ‘Phenomenological Interpretations’, 393n2/16n2.

concerns the *enactment* (*die Umwendung zur christlichen Lebenserfahrung betrifft den Vollzug*)' (86/121).

Hodie legimus in libro experientiae – 'today we read the book of experience'.⁴⁵ This phrase, drawn from the third of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs* – on which the young Heidegger himself provided a right commentary (252–253/334–335) and which, as I said, for myself served as the spur and starting point for a book on monastic theology (*The Book of Experience*) – now prompts us to extend it to all life, and to facticity in general. *Crede ut intelligas*, 'believing and understanding' for sure, to follow the literal translation of the famous Augustinian formula; but also, and most of all, to conclude what is at issue here, the contents of facticity in volume 58 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (*Basic Problems of Phenomenology*): '*Crede, ut intelligas*: live your self vivaciously (*lebe lebendig dein Selbst*) – and knowledge is first erected on the basis of this experience (*und erst auf diesem Erfahrungsgrunde*), your last and fullest experience of self (*deiner letzten und vollsten Selbsterfahrung*). Augustine saw in '*inquietum cor nostrum*' the great unstoppable distress of life (*Augustinus sah im "inquietum cor nostrum" die große unaufhorliche Unruhe des Lebens*)'.⁴⁶

References

Augustine. *Confessions*. Trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, 2 volumes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014-2016.

Brito, E. "Heidegger et le christianisme". *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 82, no. 2 (April 1999): 241–272.

Denker, Alfred (ed.), *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, ed. Alfred Denker et al. Heidegger-Jahrbuch 1. Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2004.

Descartes, René. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 3 volumes, trans. and ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoof, and Dugald Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Falque, Emmanuel. "Après la métaphysique? Le 'poids de la vie' selon Augustin". In *Après la métaphysique: Augustin? Actes du colloque inaugural de l'Institut d'études médiévales de l'Institut catholique de Paris, 25 juin 2010*, ed. Alain de Libera. Paris: Vrin, 2013.

⁴⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 3.1.14—Trans.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. Hans-Helmuth Gander, *Gesamtausgabe* 58 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 62, quoted in the German editor's 'Afterword' to the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (350), and translated accordingly into English (262).

Falque, Emmanuel. *Crossing the Rubicon: The Borderlands of Philosophy and Theology*, trans. Reuben Shank. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016.

Falque, Emmanuel. *God, the Flesh, and the Other: From Irenaeus to Duns Scotus*, trans. William Christian Hackett. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015.

Falque, Emmanuel. *Le livre de l'expérience: D'Anselme de Cantorbéry à Bernard de Clairvaux*. Paris: Cerf, 2017.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Guide to Gethsemane: Anxiety, Suffering, Death*, trans. George Hughes. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019.

Falque, Emmanuel/ *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection*, trans. George Hughes. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Greisch, Jean. *L'arbre de vie et l'arbre du savoir: Les racines phénoménologiques de l'herméneutique heideggérienne*. Paris: Cerf, 2000.

Heidegger, Martin. "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer". In *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Heidegger, Martin. "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)". *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989).

Heidegger, Martin. "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation", trans. Michael Baur. *Man and World* 25, nos. 3–4 (1992): 355-393.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, rev. by Dennis J. Schmidt. Albany: SUNY Press, 2010.

Heidegger, Martin. *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. Hans-Helmuth Gander. Gesamtausgabe 58. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993.

Heidegger, Martin. *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, ed. Matthias Jung and Thomas Regehly. Gesamtausgabe 60. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995.

Heidegger, Martin. *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotle: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, ed. Walter Bröcker, 2nd ed. Gesamtausgabe 61. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994.

Heidegger, Martin. *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Heidegger, Martin. *Phénoménologie de la vie religieuse*, trans. Jean Greisch. Paris: Gallimard, 2011.

Husserl, Edmund. *Briefwechsel*, vol. 7: *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, ed. by Elisabeth Schuhmann and Karl Schuhmann. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994.

Janicaud, Dominique. *Heidegger en France*, vol. 2: *Entretiens*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2001.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991.

Romano, Claude. *There Is: The Event and the Finitude of Appearing*, trans. Michael B. Smith. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness. London: Routledge, 2001.