The Religious Elephant in Heidegger's Phenomenological Room

Abstract:
In his lectures on the Phenomenology of Religious Life (1920-21), Martin Heidegger offers a phenomenological reading of Paul's Galatian and Thessalonian letters, seeing these as themselves proclaiming the phenomenological attitude. Curiously, however, Heidegger's analysis of Thessalonian facticity appears to separate the factual status of Thessalonian ‘having-become’ from that of its faith content. This paper sees that decision as itself displaying elements of theorisation, and abandonment of the phenomenological aim of allowing experience to show itself out of itself. More, Heidegger's approach misses an opportunity to notice the ‘in Christ’ as constitutive of a structural ‘incursion of an absolute other’ that sustains the phenomenological approach, saving it from falling into its theorising other, the scientific worldview.

I. Introduction

As he explains in introducing the 1920-21 lectures on the phenomenology of religion, later published as The Phenomenology of Religious Life, Heidegger's exploration is in service of a broader aim, related to the conceptualising of philosophy itself.¹ He sets

¹ Martin Heidegger, The Phenomenology of Religious Life, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2004). Hereafter, PoRL. The lectures were published in German as Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe, vol. 60: Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens.

As becomes apparent, the conceptualising of religion in service of the conceptualisation of philosophy is double-edged, especially as regards the
out to demonstrate that philosophy has lost its way in becoming ‘science’ — the
determination of the essences of objects — and should henceforth be a
phenomenological cognizance of experience in its facticity - experience as actually
undergone. The lectures on the *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (that is, religious
experience) are intended to demonstrate a case in point. Where previously philosophy,
as science, has failed in the address to religion as such, and succeeded in treating it
simply as object, phenomenology, attending to religion as factual — as actually
experienced — philosophises on religious life as such.

In what follows, I want to track Heidegger's treatment, while asking a further
question: whether he himself fails in addressing religion in its facticity. If he fails,
why does he fail? I suggest that it is because his own phenomenological approach is
finally a prescinding from the faith-world, and thereby misses the facticity of religion.

---

danger of reduction attending the representation of religion. Sheehan,
reflecting on the possible relation of the 'Introduction to the
Phenomenology of Religion' to the incipient *Being and Time*, asks: ‘Was
[Heidegger] interested in Paul and the Phenomenology of Religion for
their own sake, or only as a means of working out the fundamental
structures of his own project of elaborating the analogically unified
meaning of Being on the basis of a new understanding of temporality?
Although this question cannot be answered here (or perhaps ever) …‘.
Thomas Sheehan ‘Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of
His own account of the religious does capture elements of the religious unavailable to the methods of his philosophical predecessors. But that account is finally not, even on its own terms, philosophical cognisance of ‘religion as experience’ or religion in its facticity. He is insightful, and more, in penetrating Paul meanings of *sarx* (flesh), *pistis* (faith), the *parousia*, and their making possible of a new encounter with facticity. But he seeks to separate the formally religious element from religious facticity, with an implied confidence that this formally religious content stands alongside, and not within, religious experience factically encountered. This move has implications for the understanding of phenomenology, not only as it applies to religious life, but more generally. By this light, the religious is seen as pertinent to the phenomenological approach, but illustratively and incidentally so, rather than necessarily. Further investigation of what constitutes phenomenology can proceed in its absence, as indeed it does in Heidegger's later work. However, as I seek to show, the attempted separation brings an interior contradiction to Heidegger's analysis of religious experience. A most interesting consequence emerges: in the terms in which Heidegger otherwise lucidly elaborates facticity, that interior contradiction is only avoided if phenomenology takes account of the ‘religious’ component, suitably broadly signified, in all experience. That component is found as the determinative incursion of an absolute other that enables experience as such, even while disrupting that experience. Phenomenology fails itself by disregarding this religious component, *as such*, and exchanging such regard for recognition of one of its derivative ‘others’ — ‘eschatological imminence’, ‘time as rupture’ and so on. In doing so, it becomes hoist on a petard of its own making. It is convicted according to the assertion that philosophy which cannot engage experience had factically - that is, as experience is
actually had, rather than as prematurely theorised objectivisation, does not deserve the name of philosophy.

A still wider point arises from this, and relates to that ‘other’ of phenomenology, deconstruction. It might it be that, paradoxically, phenomenology itself, unless and until it is given over internally to something other than itself, which disrupts it from within to thwart the theorisation and objectivisation into which it says true philosophy ought not fall, will always fail to address the factual. However, in turn, this ‘giving over’ would effect the signification of what, within experience as determined phenomenologically, is ‘other’ to experience, and incurs irreducibly within it. Arguably, no less than other methods, phenomenology has no power to subvert its own significations this way, except perhaps by way of conceding the possibility of deconstruction — that is, conceding a deconstructive play that besets both experience, and its phenomenological determination, from the inside, and even ‘helpfully’, not only in the ‘region’ of religious experience, but in all regions. In those other regions, the ‘other’ and ‘faith’ manifest themselves under nonreligious names. But this would still mean that religious experience, properly and most broadly understood, becomes the structure of all experience as such, even marking the incarnation of that experience. This is an astounding conclusion, one which must avail itself of every qualification and disqualification necessary to its sustained coherence. I cannot say that this article further pursues it. But it opens the door towards its pursuit.

I have structured the present analysis by moving from Heidegger’s own contextualisation of religious facticity to the broader contextualisation demanded by his insights, and which he ignores. Heidegger frames his discussion of Religious Life
within the question of the definition of philosophy and particularly the differentiation of philosophy from science. I begin in Section 2 by describing this framing, and pursuing the emphases it prompts in Heidegger's investigation of the Pauline letters to the Galatians and Thessalonians, in a way which allows me to broach the marginalisation of formally religious content which occurs there. This leads me to explore (Section 3) what Heidegger means by facticity and, against this backdrop (section 4), the intertwined elements of analysis by which Heidegger downgrades Christian facticity to enactment: the ambiguous factual status accorded the Thessalonian experience having become Heidegger's exposition of the Thessalonian 'lived temporality', erasing formally religious content as such, and corresponding to the presentation of the Christian content of Christian lived experience as enactment. In (Section 5) I am able to offer my main point: that Heidegger's separation of Thessalonians' Christian facticity from their worldly facticity, in a move that renders the Christian facticity secondary, is beset with internal contradictions, one root cause being his refusal ontologically to recognise spirit. Through these it fails, indicating the separation as unsustainable, and as having been due to the very premature theorisation which phenomenology itself ought to have excluded. I can then finally (Section 6), outline the implications of this failure, as they apply to the place of the 'religious', narrowly and broadly described, in both religious and more general experience, and as this might lead us to revision the phenomenological project itself in terms of its internal deconstruction by the religious as such.

2. The contextualisation of the question
2a. Heidegger's Framing of the Lectures on Religious Life: the differentiation of Philosophy from Science

Seeking to differentiate philosophy from science, Heidegger begins by pointing out that scientific concepts are part of a material complex and can be exactly fixed, whereas philosophical concepts are typically 'vacillating, vague, manifold and fluctuating,' and the notion that they should not be thus is itself part of the prejudice which treats philosophy as a science. (PoRL, 3-4). Indeed even treating philosophy as the ‘origination of science’ is an assimilation of philosophy to science, as scientific ‘cognitive dealing with the world’ (PoRL, 5). But philosophy is something else, an attempt take departure from and to return to experience as it is actually had: factically, that is, pre-objectively, pre-theoretically. To this register of experience, cognition should be assimilated, rather than the other way around:

The problem of philosophy has always been taken too lightly. If one grasps this problem radically, one finds that philosophy arises from factical life experience. And within factical life experience philosophy returns back into factical life experience. The concept of factical life experience is fundamental. The designation of philosophy as cognitive, rational component says nothing at all; with this designation, one falls prey to the ideal of a science, thus obscuring precisely the main difficulty. (PoRL, 6-7)

And later:

A self-understanding of philosophy is required even if one does not presume the derivation of science from philosophy. Heretofore philosophers made an
effort to degrade precisely factical life-experience as a matter of secondary
importance that could be taken for granted, despite that philosophy arises
precisely from factical life experience and springs back into it in a reversal
that is entirely essential (PoRL, 11).

2b. Emphases that emerge In the Letters to Galatians and Thessalonians.
This framing of the goal of philosophy in terms of the cognition of factical life as
such — that is, phenomenologically — allows Heidegger to scrutinize the Pauline
letter to the Galatians, and the two letters to the Thessalonians, with a view precisely
to showing the Christian proclamation as being in touch with experience cognised
phenomenologically.

In the Galatian letter, he selects verses from the five chapters to elicit certain
emphases which he will use later: the originality Paul claims for the experience
through which he came to Christianity (1:12); the ‘merely ethical’ focus in the
‘concentrated form of the entire Pauline dogmatic in 2:19’ (‘Through the law I died to
the law’), and the ‘offense of the cross’ (5:11). But Heidegger clearly finds in the
struggle . . . [wherein Paul is] pressured to assert the Christian life experience
against the surrounding world (PoRL, 50)

an exposition of Christian religiosity as facticity encountered. This goes beyond a
mere
drawing out of certain concepts (such as pistis, dikaiosuné, sarx, etc [faith,
righteousness, flesh] and putting together their meaning from out of a heap of
singular passages of the Pauline writings, so that one has a catalogue of
fundamental concepts that say nothing. (PoRL, 51)
Thus keeping his focus on the experience that is primordial Christian religiosity, Heidegger moves past the traditional presuppositions which, by attempting simply a grasp of Christian consciousness, have already predetermined, inadequately, the task of Christian philosophy of religion (PoRL, 51). Concerned with preserving the address to facticity, he pushes towards a foreconceptualising of the material in two anticipatory conclusions. He says

As basic determinations we state two for now:

Primordial Christian religiosity is in primordial Christian life experience and is itself such.

Factual life experience is historical. Christian religiosity lives temporality as such.

These fundamental determinations are for now hypothetical. We ask if, with these, the basic meaning of Christian religiosity is hit upon, what follows from that methodologically? (PoRL, 55).

These fundamental determinations concerning Christian religiosity are, while hypothetical, most sharp. Farewell the lens of Christian consciousness as philosophical medium for interpreting primordial Christian life experience. Rather that experience is itself — preconsciously — significant. And as well, Christian religiosity is to be significant temporally in a new way, which intriguingly realises the phenomenological goal: it is to be manifest in the living of time, not as history, but as ‘lived temporality’ (one might say, approximately: time lived, not continously, but as a series of discrete ‘nows’, ever vulnerable to an interruptive future).
Thus far, then, we have the phenomenological attitude captured ‘proactively’, one might say, in terms of a theorisation helpful in its provisionality. Heidegger terms this provisional theorisation a formal indication. The move presumes nothing as yet about what is to be done with formal self-understandings associated with Christian religiosity. True, by refusing Christian consciousness philosophical status, it marginalises the conceptual content of, say, faith stances. But in no stronger way does it either make necessary or hint at the impending marginalisation, within the analysis of Christian lived experience as facticity, of formally Christian content. By formally Christian content I mean here content identified by reference to Christ, the Divine as such (one might say, as numinous, or transcendent), or more specifically, to the salvific action of the Divine in Christ, and into which the Galatians consider themselves incorporated, being thereby ‘in Christ’. The move by which these elements are taken as contributing less than factically is to come presently, in Heidegger's Thessalonian analyses.

Nevertheless, already in Heidegger's Galatian commentary, the move has been prepared by the approach taken in the Heidegger's explication of the verses. Omitted there is any mention of the Thessalonian's ‘original experience’ as an encounter with Jesus in his unique representation of God/the Divine (to take even the most minimal theological interpretation of the letters and Acts). Pauline consciousness of the divine as such, as a material component of this letter, is also seemingly deliberately bracketed. To the ubiquity of Paul’s mention of ‘Christ’ and ‘God’ in these chapters, as motivating and missioning for him, is matched Heidegger’s omission of these two words in his remarks on the text (PoRL, 48-50) except for single references to ‘the Death of Christ’ and ‘the Law of Christ’ in their determination of the ‘new world’ and
‘new Christian meaning’ Paul heralds. Clearly Heidegger’s alternative focus is the new temporality.

We have then, the omission or bracketing of the divine at the methodological level of phenomenological attention to the the divine that marks Pauline religiosity. The omission is the more curious because the divine incursion, if one may call it so, is formally the presenting, originating and authenticating experiential component of the new temporality. It is the reason the Thessalonians are found undergoing experience as ‘lived temporality’, rather than within time undergone historically. The omission finds development and emphasis when Heidegger analyses the Thessalonian letters, in the process separating Thessalonian Christian facticity from Thessalonian worldly facticity.

*Heidegger's single aim in treating both Thessalonian letters is evident as he turns his attention to the first.* All the signals are that the focus on time, and temporality, are to predominate. The methodological challenge is: by forsaking the ‘object-historicality’ of the epistolary context (i.e., Paul’s own expulsion from Thessalonika, etc), to approach the enactment-historicality of the writing event. How time is undergone is to be evinced from the relationality shown in the writing event:

- How does Paul, in the situation of a letter-writer, stand to the Thessalonians?
- How are they experienced by him? How is the communal world given to him in the situation of writing the letter? (PoRL 61)

‘Time’, then, and its phenomenological revisioning, is the quest. ‘World’ and ‘situation’ are important settings here, for both ‘time’ and the ‘factual life’ are correlated to it:
'Situation’ carries in itself, in the usual sense of the word, a sense of the static. . .But the situational complex stands beyond the alternatives of ‘static-dynamic.’ . . .The time of factical life is to be gained from the complex of enactment of factical life itself, and from there the static or dynamic character of the situation is to be determined. . . .

Thus we will pursue as what Paul has the congregation at Thessalonica, and how he has them.’ PoRL, 64-65).

Opening then with these formal quests — the ‘as what’, and ‘how’ of Paul’s relationship to the Thessalonians — Heidegger hopes to move to the all-important and radically different register that is Paul’s proclamation as enactment, thence to ‘the time of factical life.’ What is evident is his determination to distinguish between content that is determined historically and in terms of objects, and the ontologically primary situation in which content is identified with entire ‘worlds’ of Thessalonian experience, as present to Paul. Phenomenology sees three of these: the surrounding-world, communal-world, and self-world — of these, more later.

My concern, within all this, is again with what happens to the divine, within the depiction of the facticity of Pauline religiosity. Its treatment is best explored in relation to a particular contrast. There is first its implied inclusion (despite tacit exclusion) in the Thessalonian ‘having-become’ which Heidegger gives the status of Thessalonian facticity. There is secondly, however, its later explicit exclusion from Thessalonian facticity, and relegation to the apparently secondary status of enactment. Heidegger is happy to elicit the religious framing of this enactment, while arguing that it struggles but fails to overcome worldly facticity.
So, is Christian lived experience factical under one rubric, but not under another? And how does formal Christian content come to be dropped from the factical calculus? Clearly, it is necessary to return with new scrutiny to the question of what facticity is, what, conceptually, it includes, and what exclusions preserve facticity as a proper object of phenomenological cognition.

3. What Facticity is: its contents and exclusions

3a. Facticity as pre-objectivized experience backgrounded by world(s)

As I've mentioned, Heideggerian facticity, or factical life experience, is experience had in and as its primordial setting, that is, in terms of ‘worlds’, rather than objects experienced by subjects.

Heidegger's definition is:

Factual life experience is the ‘attitudinal, falling, relationally indifferent, self-sufficient concern for significance.’ (PoRL, 11)

and

The factical of which cognizance is taken does not have an objective character but a character of significance which can develop into an objective character. (PoRL, 10).

Each of the elements of facticity given here is important. As attitudinal, factical life experience involves more than cognizance; it
designates the whole active and passive stance of the human being towards the world (PoRL, 8)

The indifference and self-sufficiency of factical life experience are related. Indifference refers to way in which, at its primordial level, experience is just ‘had’, wholistically: its content, at this level, is emphatically not broken up, either through theorisation, or in terms of subject and object of experience. Instead, factical experience is all ‘content’, indifferent as regards experiencer, sufficient unto itself. Heidegger says:

The self-sufficiency of life of factical life experience is, therefore, grounded upon this indifference, an indifference which extends itself to everything; it decides even the highest matters within this self-sufficiency. (PoRL, 9).

One needs to notice here indifference proposed as a ‘ground’ which ‘decides’, utilizing self-sufficiency as criterion, what is it that can count as factical. As regards religious experience, and its facticality, I will be asking presently whether it is indeed ‘indifference’ that decides, or rather, Heidegger himself, in its name, but too hastily.

‘Falling into significance,’ refers to the tendency for experience, initially had in indifference and self-sufficiency, to gravitate towards meaning — towards ‘signifying something to someone’, eventually through objectification. Heidegger, again:

In its self-sufficient concern, factical life experience constantly falls into significance. (PoRL, 11)
Finally, relationality: factual experience is had pre-cognitively and indifferently, and, while it is relational, within it, relationality — the ‘how’ of experiencing, generally distinguished from what is experienced — must merge indistinguishably into factual content. Heideggerian facticity locates itself in three overlapping worlds in which lived experience is had. For the surrounding-world, encountered simply in terms of physical laws, that relationality can be ‘factual’, is obvious. However, when the communal and self-worlds are described, which relational elements count as colouring experience pre-cognitively requires elaboration. In the case of the communal world, the exemplifying relations which ‘backdrop’ experience are notably formal:

Within this surrounding world is also the communal world, that is, other human beings in a very specific, factual characterisation: as a student, lecturer, as a relative, superior, etc., and not as specimen of the natural-scientific species homo sapiens. (PoRL, 8)

3b. Factuality as constant backdrop, excluding the psychological

‘Very specific, factual characterisation’ is here clearly meant to exclude from the factual calculus such relatively nebulous and changeable relationships as friendships, or like bonds or dependencies. By implication, if these exist they contribute to facticity in virtue of their public characterisation, rather than intrinsically. Would the relationship between the divine and the creature, such as is experienced by the Thessalonians, figure here? It remains unaddressed, probably because Heidegger treats it as purely psychological, in part at least because spirit cannot be factual, as we shall see later.
3c. Facticity in the self-world: the challenge of excluding subjective elements from factical content

When it comes to the self-world — again, this is the world of experience correlated to self, but in which the ‘I’ is not notionally isolable — background emotional and belief states constitute a further problem for facticity. If they are states which contribute to unthematised lived experience, but of which the experiencer also is — or becomes — aware, are they to be excluded from the factical calculus? Well, Heidegger manages the exclusion: elements which are isolable and part of self-awareness, he classes as, not ‘factual’ but (in a somewhat curious formulation), ‘factically tethered’. He says

One could object that I experience myself - how I feel — nonetheless factically, without special reflection: I know that just now I acted clumsily, and so forth. But this how, too, is no thoroughly formed manner of relating to something, but a significance factically tethered to the surrounding world.

(PoRL, 10)

What is at issue here? That ‘factically tethered’ moods and feelings have both a factical and a cognized dimension, simply means that factical and reflective experience are never entirely discrete in occurrence, precisely because they are bridged by the impetus to significance, contained within facticity, and to which it tends, in its character as falling. One sees here a fissure, or at least tension, within the edifice by which Heidegger walls off the factical from that which is disqualified from constituting facticity. Whether the edifice will survive its attempted housing of the lived experience of the Thessalonians remains to be seen. For within Thessalonian lived temporality formally Christian elements of faith and knowledge seem intrinsic and inseparable from the whole.
4. Elements in the downgrading of Christian facitity to ‘enactment’

4a. The Thessalonian having-become: its ambiguous factical status

As I’ve mentioned, in exposition of the first Thessalonian letter Heidegger emphasizes the Thessalonian ‘having-become’. Is this ‘having-become’ an element of facticity? ‘Yes and no’, it seems. It is initially a ‘formal ‘knowledge’ had by the Thessalonians and by Paul. As ‘knowledge’ however, it as it were ‘penetrates’ into facticity, in the sense of accompanying and informing all other states of Thessalonian Being, so that it is ‘co-experienced’ with these. Heidegger says:

Knowledge about one’s own having-become poses a very special task for the explication. From out of this the meaning of a facticity is determined, one which is accompanied by a particular knowledge. We tear the facticity apart from the knowledge, but the facticity is entirely originally co-experienced. Especially in this problem, the failure of the ‘scientific psychology of experience’ can be shown. Having-become is not, in life, [just] any incident you like. Rather, it is incessantly co-experienced, and indeed such that their Being [Sein] now is their having-become [Gewordensein]. Their having-become is their Being now. We can grasp that more closely first through a narrower determination of having-become. Can one explicate this meaning from out of the letter itself? (PoRL, 66)

Firstly, what is curious here is the rather indeterminate relationship of the ‘having-become’ to the factitivity which it (for want of a better word) informs. From one angle, things are clear: ‘having-become’ is a ‘knowledge’, which cannot contribute directly to facticity, since facticity is had on an unthematized level, prior to knowledge.
Rather, knowledge contributes at the level of determination of the meaning of facticity — a level which phenomenology can no longer regard as factical, even though, within it, the factical is given conceptual shape.

From another angle, though, Heidegger clearly wishes to recognize the Thessalonian ‘having-become’ as thoroughly a part of facticity itself: the facticity [corresponding to the having-become’] is ‘entirely originally co-experienced with the having-become’; it is ‘incessantly’ co-experienced, and ‘indeed such that their being now is their having-become.’ One can perhaps summarize this by saying that the Thessalonian ‘having-become’ is structurally contributive to their facticity, as a component of awareness which brings significance to enactment. This significance presumably falls short of objectivisation, and thus still factical.2

From this second angle, what is curious is Heidegger’s reluctance permanently to include within reference to this ‘having-become-as-significance’, and as the meaning for Paul of Thessalonian facticity (including his own), the state which such ‘having-become’ clearly qualifies (for both Paul and his readers), in any of the terms which specify it: Christianity, ‘transformation by God,’ ‘inheritance in Christ.’

---

2 Use of the term ‘awareness’ seems unavoidable, though Heidegger emphatically attempts to exclude the ‘psychological’ from facticity, in the interests of retaining the objectivity of the worlds from which facticity emerges. This emphasis is puzzling, and perhaps ultimately unsustainable, though an attempt might be made to distinguish uniquely private psychological interpretations, or components of these, as ‘psychological’, from interpretations shared with others, as factical.
At other levels, the divine component is not explicitly refused, and its general acceptance might be inferred from the three references in the commentary on individual verses which link it to the situational facticity:

1 Thess. 9-10: . . . ‘a transformation before God and an obstinate waiting’ (PoRL, 66) (and) . . . ‘The turning toward God is Primary. . . . For explication, the task arises to determine the objecthood of God’ (PoRL, 67).

1 Thess. 3:8 ‘The awaiting of the parousia of the Lord is decisive.’ (PoRL, 67).

4b. The new historicality as ‘lived temporality’

What then is the status of these formally religious components within Heidegger's description of the new historicality corresponding to Thessalonian having-become? As Heidegger paints this new historicality, it is temporality as disturbance that constitutes its heart and mark. This new temporality is experienced as enactment, rather than in objectivization. Put simply, the parousia of the Lord, which might have been interpreted under pre-Christian consciousness as an object-event like all others — presently in the future, soon to become present, then to be past — is now itself constitutive of history as enactment, and of the ‘having-become’. It is constituted as disturbance (perpetual, renewed in each moment, never terminated). This disturbance replaces the security of future-presentpast historicality with the insecurity of a present that consists, irrevocably, of invasion by its own successive moment, and demands to be lived as such. To the Thessalonians' question, then, concerning the parousia: ‘When will it happen?’, Paul's answer is in terms of its already ‘having happened’, by way of their ‘having-become’. There has been ushered in a new dispensation, viz. the ‘what happens’ itself as a parousial category, in which each
'now’ is structurally, disturbingly, compenetrated by the ‘to come.’ Those outside the having-become continue to partake of a facticity which, failing to live temporality, is, for that reason, ‘peace and security’. (1Thess. 5:3;PoRL,72). The Thessalonians, however, are in stark contrast: forsaking the hope for an event that ‘will come’, their invitation is instead to a living of temporality itself, in and as the enactment in which each moment cannot be walled off from its simultaneous constitution by the disturbing succeeding moment:

There is no security for Christian life; the constant insecurity is also characteristic for what is fundamentally significant in factical life. The uncertainty is not coincidental; rather it is necessary. (PoRL, 73).

4c. The result: the erasure, from factical discussion, of the formally religious
And yet, in this sharply drawn contrast, which includes Heidegger's reference to Paul's derogation, as ‘worldly,’ of those who fail to adopt Christian temporality, reference to the divine as intrinsic to the project of ‘living temporality’ — as its how and why, and intrinsically rather than incidentally causal — is notably absent. This absence correlates to the implicit separation, elsewhere in the analysis, of Christian facticity from the Thessalonian ‘having-become’, so that it is not noticed that, if the Thessalonian ‘having-become’ is accepted as factical, then so too must ‘Christian facticity’ be. Rather, there is an implication, at odds admittedly with the remainder of the logic of the analysis, of the possibility of a ‘lived temporality’ that is factical absent its Christian framing, and that it is this which constitutes the Thessalonian having become as ‘factical’. For example, one notices that Heidegger speaks about the facticity of the 'Thessalonian ‘having become’’, but not about the ‘Christian having-become’. In any case, when the status of the having-become is under discussion, the absence of reference to the religious itself, in terms in which a believer
would accredit it — divine power or majesty exercised salvifically, divine absoluteness etc — seems clear.

What drives Heidegger's thinking here? It is possible that Heideggerian rigour places a dividing line between ‘having-become’ and ‘having-become-in-Christ’, because, were the formal indication, or provisional thesis, extended to encompass ‘having-become in Christ’ the analysis would court, from his point of view, dangers in relation to prejudgement of the material which he has been careful to forestall. But within Heidegger's phenomenological method, the formal indication is itself preliminary and in that sense prejudicial, and acceptably so, as a way of starting the analysis. Is it reasonable that it ontologically reference the new temporality, in Pauline terms applicable for all who are in Christ, without simultaneously referencing the ‘in Christ’ that is motivational for the new living?

In any event, the separation is so marked that studied omission must be suspected. Heidegger's thinking here is hinted at in a further significant direction taken by the analysis, in its proceeding to class as enactment experience lived under formally Christian understandings. For Heidegger, such enactment bids, but fails, to constitute the facticity which would comprise a determinative world-housing experience. He turns for support to I Cor 7:29-32. Christian facticity as enactment is really a quasi-facticity - occurring through their living Hos mé (‘as if not’) the relational structures in the surrounding world: marriage, mourning, property. Those structures remain, says Heidegger, ‘objective’ (here a synonym for factical); the mé (not) creates, not create a parallel objective structure (read, new facticity), but a parallel enactment, short of
facticity. Hence the enactment will inevitably be lived out in *Thlepsis* (struggle, distress). Heidegger says:

> The ‘*hos*’ means, positively, a new sense that is added. The *mé* [literally, ‘not’ - author]) concerns the complex of enactment of the Christian life. All these relations experience a retardation in the respective enactment, so that they arise out of the origin of primordial Christian life experience. Christian life is not straightforward, but is rather broken up; all surrounding world relations must pass through the complex of enactment of having-become, so that this complex is then co-present, but the relations themselves, and that to which they refer, are in no way touched.’ (PoRL, 86).

It is here, however, that Heidegger's typically intricate elaboration courts self-contradiction, and in the final sections of this paper I outline Heidegger's dilemma, correlated to a theoretical decision taken against enspiritment of flesh, in refusal of a meaning of the ‘in Christ’ which would restore, not only the plausibility of Heidegger's analysis here, but , more generally, the plausibility of his phenomenological method itself.

**5. The contradictions besetting the disqualification of Christian experience as such from facticity**

If the abovementioned separation of ‘Christian facticity as enactment’ from ‘wider Thessalonian facticity’ holds, it also disqualifies Christian facticity from the factual status Heidegger has emphatically awarded the Thessalonian ‘having-become’. But, as far as I can see, ‘Thessalonian’ and ‘Christian’ are synonymous in Heidegger's text, as in the Pauline letters. If this were not so, it would make no sense for Paul to be
discussing the ‘having-become’ of the Thessalonians, for the non-Christians of Thessalonika have ‘become’ nothing new in the given context. So what Paul's Thessalonians ‘have become’, his Christians ‘have become’, without remainder; in this light, the disjunction between the different claims for Christian facticity is clear.

It becomes important to seek in the analysis the root cause of the disjunction, and I conclude with one such, to which, if there were more, I suspect those would also be related. We have seen that under one version of the disjunction, the facticity that is the ‘Thessalonian having-become’ is not, as it were, able to ‘bring with it’, into surrounding-worldly facticity, the Christian enactment or inspiration to which it correlates. In what is the decisive stroke, Christian enactment is confirmed as insufficiently factual on the basis of a distinction, between the world of sарx (flesh) and that of pneuma (spirit), which becomes the reason for excluding the entire religious content as unwordly, even while confirming its grip on the Thessalonian psyche:

Sарx is the complex of enactment of authentic facticity in surrounding-worldly life. Its opposite, pneuma, is thus the doulouein (slavery) and anamenein (waiting). There is in Paul no pneuma einai [being spirit](as in Corpus Hermeticum), but rather a pneuma exein, en pneuma peripatein [having spirit, living in spirit], or epiteleisthai [being subject to]. [PoRL, 88]

5a. The exclusion of spirit from being

Spirit then, is distinct from being, and by implication, cannot find place in any ‘having-become’. The ‘in other words’ for this comes sharply from Heidegger
himself, and exhibits a root decision: a theoretical move by which Spirit (as also, spirit) is excluded from the calculus by which enactment, to be truly factical, must attain the status of being. For, as Heidegger continues:

Thus it is false to view pneuma as part of the human being; rather anthropos pneumatikos is one who has appropriated a certain peculiar property of life.

[PoRL, 88]

Spirit, then, in communion with Thessalonian spirit, and motivating Thessalonian transformation into the newly lived temporality, and the ‘having-become’ it constitutes, is itself figured as incidental to that temporality. It is a ‘property of life’, cast adrift from the Thessalonian ‘having-become’ which we have already seen Heidegger present emphatically as their ‘Being now’ [PoRL, 66]. And even here, if it is merely knowledge of having-become that contains the pneumatic elements, then there is a resiling by Heidegger from the previously eminently reasonable assertion that the knowledge of having-become and the having-become itself are ‘incessantly’ co-experienced, and cannot effectively be separated. We are back then to the original questions: what indeed is the ‘having-become’ of the Thessalonians? What remains of its ‘factual’ content, minus the elements of spirit, and service, and waiting ‘in Christ’? The separation has not succeeded, or, if it has, the assertion of the factual status of what has remained has come under decisive pressure.

5b. Failure of the exclusion: Christian ‘having-become’ as fully factual

The remaining possibility then, is to accept what might be called the overarching implicit position of the text, one which survives the obscurity involved in the sometime separation of Thessalonian knowledge of Christ from the Thessalonian having-become. Within this survival, there is indicated the Thessalonian ‘having-
become’ as a whole, including its pneumatic, spirit-infused pre-consciousness, as a religious facticity — as Christian facticity, in competition with a wider worldly facticity. In that case, though, Christian ‘having-become’, confident in all the ontological attributions applied by Heidegger to the ‘having-become’ as such, is no ontological ‘poor relation’, constituted as mere enactment.

If there are now ‘two facticities’ operative for the Thessalonians, they are equal facticities. And indeed there is a sense, which Heidegger most interestingly ignores, in which the religious facticity has replaced the other in all but formality, and even in ‘objectivity’ — for the Thessalonians, but also in terms of how temporality ought to be lived by anybody, henceforth.


Among the costs of the religious ‘excision,’ the most evident is the vitiation of the Thessalonian ‘having-become’. When Heidegger comes to describe Christian enactment, his enthusiasm for recognizing Christian content is unbridled. He says, as we have seen, in discussing I Thess 1:9-10 ‘The turning to God is Primary’ (PoRL, 66). What is the effect of his then determining Christian enactment as not, after all, facticity, and as, at best, ‘co-experienced’ with (that part of) the having-become which is admitted to surrounding-worldly facticity?

The most proximate and serious effect is simply this: the application to Thessalonian facticity of a prejudicial theorization which isolates and then excises a key component of that facticity. In this case, that component is the already incurred, and continously
incurring, ‘other to being, found nevertheless within being’, which is part of Christian and all spiritual facticity, and, as such, can only be excised from that facticity at the cost of the traduction of that facticity as facticity. Indeed it is that incursion and incurring which is intrinsic to the new temporality, and as such contributes to the phenomenological manifestation of facticity, or ‘lived experience’, as itself, that is as ‘lived temporality.’ Disregard of this incursion effects a surrender to the very objectivisation from which facticity has, with all effort, hitherto been distinguished.

6a. The cost for Phenomenology

In phenomenological terms, this disregard means that loss of contact, with experience as experience, which theorization effects. In Heidegger's terms here, it is a loss which occurs through the objectivisation attending formalisation, as a removal of the content of the having-become.

To recall: the challenge for phenomenology, as Heidegger has cast it in these lectures, has been that of providing a cognition of facticity that remains in the realm of facticity, and does not fall into the realm of scientification or objectification. Curious, 3

3 The key point is that phenomenology remains properly philosophical only when it offers nothing which reduces the engagement with existence itself. Thus Sheehan correlates Heidegger's account of factual experience here to ‘what is said in Being and Time (German, 8): Philosophy as universal phenomenological ontology takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein which ties all philosophical enquiry down to the point whence it arises and to which it returns: existence.’ (Sheehan, 'Heidegger's Introduction', 47)
then that he does not notice the possibility, which bids to be necessity, of determining such cognition in terms of the Thessalonian having-become, compenetrated by Spirit, as the Other to the ‘surrounding-world’, that is nevertheless in it. This other is not to be excluded from facticity, precisely because the exclusion itself would transform facticity into its own other, i.e., objective presence.

6b. Conclusion: the relationships between phenomenology and deconstruction, and philosophy and faith

I end with two speculative suggestions. The first concerns the implication of the above insight for the relationship between phenomenology and its own ‘other’, deconstruction. It seems to me that what is shown here is that phenomenology survives as ‘itself’ — as ‘cognition that is not objectivization’ — only when given over to an ‘other.’ This ‘giving over’ however must needs be ‘internal’ to phenomenology, and would occur if phenomenology were amenable to a subversion, from within, of its own unavoidable theorization. (External subversion would be inadequate, providing only negation, and a new theorization). Might such a destabilizing ‘giving over’ occur through deconstruction, cognized as play that, occurring within phenomenological determinations, radically subverts the

4 In these terms, deconstruction bids to preserve, within the phenomenological, precisely that openness to engagement with existence as such which Heidegger sought to preserve against Husserlian phenomenology, viz. in Sheehan's insightful phrase, assertion of ‘the temporarily disclosive conjunction of man and the primordial absence whence issues the meaningful presence of all that is, [Husserlian] Ur-ego vs. [Heideggerian] Ereignis.’ (Sheehan,'Heidegger's Introduction', 60).
phenomenological theoretical, thereby indeed rendering phenomenology as itself? If so, one typically deconstructive mechanism might be seen as exhibiting itself in Heidegger's analysis above. Christian facticity, initially exhibited as ‘enactment’, or ‘quasi-facticity’, begins as supplement to the worldly facticity corresponding to its surroundings, but ends by supplanting what it supplemented, becoming the ‘full meaning’ of Thessalonian factual life: time lived as temporality rather than history.

The second suggestion, as coda, appreciates the following challenge jointly faced by religion and philosophy. In the quest for life as life, philosophy is right to give itself over to that which is other than science. But to date, insofar as the ‘giving over’ has never truly been a giving over, but has incorporated a ‘taking back’, precisely at the edge of the precipice where enacted life confronts the numinous — confronts what disrupts time, form and cognizance of form — philosophy has failed to embrace the death which is its life. Could it be that this death is none other than the giving over to the religious as such, and, as such, likely incorporates a ‘worship in spirit and truth’? If so, it should come as a relief to defenders of the philosophical and scientific attitudes alike that this worship might occur in a different register to that found at present in religion and religions. In those, in fact, the ‘tendency to secure’, which for Heidegger epitomizes how philosophy has come adrift of life, has hitherto stubbornly reasserted itself. In replacement, one can believe and philosophise towards something else: the revisioning of credal and epistemological stances, in confession of the ways in which these have, all too often against their own aspirations, resisted the incursion of the Other as other. In this light, it might only be recognition of this incursion which finally brings philosophy to that holy grail, ‘experience as it is’, and, alike, religion to the Nazarene’s original invitation, to ‘save one’s life by losing it.’