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The Nature and Role of Phenomenology in Hegel and Heidegger

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THE NATURE AND ROLE OF PHENOMENOLOGY IN HEGEL AND HEIDEGGER

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

by
Gabriel Wayne Connor
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Dedicated to Father Floyd Calais, a true fisher of men.

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of
heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my
burden light. (Mt. 11:28-30)

Ecce, Domine, jacto in te curam meam ut vivam, et
considerabo mirabilia de lege tua.

See, Lord, I cast my care upon Thee, that I may live:

and I will consider the wondrous things of Thy law.

St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chp. XLIII.

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ABSTRACT

In this work I compare Hegel and Heidegger's conception of phenomenology and its role in their thinking. Though these two thinkers are not often examined from this angle, and though there is controversy surrounding just how phenomenological each thinker might actually be, an examination of the two thinkers in this regard serves to identify interesting connections between Hegel and Heidegger while also raising questions about phenomenology in general. In short, I seek to establish that phenomenology in both Hegel and Heidegger is not adequately understood unless it is placed in the context of each thinker's conception of human freedom along with the imperative to somehow realize that freedom. In this work, I begin by examining each thinker's conception of phenomenology separately while intimating phenomenology's role in their greater project and aims. I then end with a comparison of the two thinker's conceptions of human freedom and then show how phenomenology for each thinker seems to be formed and oriented within the context of the imperative to realize human freedom. Phenomenology is thus not only a rigorous, immanent philosophical methodology, but a transformative practice. I then pose questions concerning the phenomenological method in general that arose from this investigation.

INTRODUCTION

Comparing the thought of Hegel and Heidegger is useful from many different vantage points. There can be fruitful investigations of the two thinkers' concepts of time, of history, or of being. However, the fruitfulness of a comparison between the two in terms of their conception of phenomenology and its role in their thinking can initially seem doubtful. If we are looking to examine two phenomenologists together, why Hegel and Heidegger? The choice of Hegel is the most immediately puzzling, since he is not widely considered to have a phenomenology, despite the title of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. To a lesser, but still significant extent, the choice of Heidegger brings its own difficulties. It is considered by many that only the 'early' Heidegger could be cast as a phenomenologist, since the 'turn' in his thinking supposedly resulted in leaving behind phenomenology as a failed venture. Furthermore, even if these thinkers can be brought into the phenomenological fold, what is to be gained through examining them from this vantage point?

Responding to these initial concerns is necessary for this inquiry to proceed. This response should begin with my view of the necessary conditions of one being considered a phenomenologist in the first place. Marking the bounds of phenomenology is difficult for two reasons: first, because the expressed goals of phenomenology can seem superfluous; second, because many major phenomenologists disagree on what constitutes phenomenology and who counts as a phenomenologist. A final verdict on the latter difficulty is not possible within the confines of this inquiry, but addressing the former difficulty can serve to identify my own position on the matter.

The maxim of phenomenology is 'to the things themselves,' by which is indicated an opposition "to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings."¹ However, as Heidegger himself noted, one could reply that this is simply the goal of all rigorous inquiry in general.² What is

¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 50.

² "Yet this maxim, one may rejoin, is abundantly self-evident, and it expresses, moreover, the underlying principle of any scientific knowledge whatsoever." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 50.

it that sets phenomenology apart from standard inquiry, philosophical or otherwise? Jean-Luc Marion describes phenomenology as “letting apparition show itself in its appearance according to its appearing.”³ This means that the phenomenological approach emphasizes concrete examination in inquiry, where the proper relationship to the object under examination cannot be found in anything beyond or behind that object. The phenomenological approach involves remaining with the object of inquiry in the way it shows itself to us. In this sense, what is sought is not some hidden essence of a thing or an other-worldly form, but rather the thing according to its own manner of appearance.

However, a prospective phenomenologist cannot simply recognize the principle of investigation above and proceed to phenomenological examination. For phenomenology, the capacity to remain true to things as they show themselves must be cultivated, since in its natural state the human being maps over the thing as it shows itself with its own dogmatic, presupposed notions. What is required, then, is to somehow release from our natural viewpoint so that we can strip away our distorting lenses and attune ourselves to things as they show themselves. This is why Marion uses the word “letting” when he describes the phenomenological approach, a word which, as we will see, is used by both Hegel and Heidegger to describe phenomenological insight as well as true thinking.

Phenomenology is defined by the two features listed above. First, phenomenology seeks to remain true to things as they appear, or as they show themselves. Any reference to any supra-worldly essences or to any world beyond this one at all is, in principle, forbidden. Second, this kind of fidelity to things as they appear necessarily requires the inquirer to release from their own natural, dogmatic standpoint so that the things themselves are not distorted by these preconceived schemas. If a thinker explicitly adopts both aspects in their thought, then by my view they can rightfully be

³ Marion, Jean-Luc, *Being Given*, 8.

considered as phenomenologists. The question is whether there is evidence in Hegel's work that both principles are present.

Although the full treatment of Hegel as a phenomenologist takes place in chapter two, a brief survey of Hegel's own statements here can serve to establish that both principles of phenomenological inquiry are present in Hegel's thought. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel notes that the goal for the inquiry should be to set aside our own individual criteria so that we can "succeed in contemplating the matter in hand as it is *in and of itself*."⁴ If that goal is achieved, the inquirer can "simply look on" (*reines zusehen*),⁵ releasing from all individual, distorting presuppositions. Hegel puts the same point in another way when he notes that true inquiry requires the inquirer to "give up...[individualistic] freedom and, instead of being the arbitrarily moving principle of the content, *to sink this freedom in the content, letting [the content] move spontaneously of its own nature*."⁶ With this, Hegel is clearly within the phenomenological fold.

The issue with Heidegger concerns whether his status as a phenomenologist is restricted to his earlier thought. The issue of whether Heidegger's 'turn' constitutes a distinct break from his earlier thought, or whether it simply indicates a shift in focus, leaving a core resonance in his overall development, would require its own treatment to answer definitively. However, Heidegger's own statements would seem to indicate that, in his own estimation, he remained a phenomenologist. In 1962 he stated that phenomenology designates the "possibility of thinking" (*Möglichkeit des Denkens*).⁷ Even later, in his *Four Seminars*, he characterizes his thought as a "phenomenology of the inapparent."⁸ This would seem to put the burden on those who posit a true break in Heidegger's development to show how Heidegger's later thought is no longer phenomenological. In the

⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

⁶ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 36, emphasis is mine.

⁷ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 82.

⁸ Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, 80.

confines of this inquiry, elucidating Heidegger's concept of phenomenology will focus mostly on his earlier thought, since it contains his most explicit treatments of the topic. However, the characterization given here can be shown to have a core resonance with the entire path of his thinking.

Even if it is the case that both Hegel and Heidegger can be ultimately considered as phenomenologists, the question remains as to what can be gained from a comparison of the two in this regard. I hope to show in this inquiry that an examination of Hegel and Heidegger as phenomenologists can lead us to a deeper understanding of the phenomenological method in general. The phenomenological maxim can make it seem as if phenomenology begins and ends with its rigorous commitment to looking upon things as they show themselves. Though this is certainly a necessary aspect of phenomenology, looking into the 'letting' necessary to accomplish the goal given by the phenomenological maxim brings to light another aspect of the phenomenological method – it is a praxis by which the individual frees themselves from their natural dogmatism.

This is made explicit in Hegel and Heidegger's conceptions of phenomenology and the role it plays in their overall inquiries. In both, phenomenology is not merely a methodology – it is also a transformative practice. At some point, the phenomenological analysis that takes place in the confines of their inquiries merges with the process of the human being recognizing its own essence and becoming open for freedom. In light of this, it is my contention that understanding the conception of phenomenology in both thinkers is not complete without situating phenomenology in the wider context of each thinker's conception of human freedom. Since both are, in my view, legitimately phenomenologists, the question is then raised as to whether phenomenology is inherently generated in the context of and formed by the pursuit of human freedom as understood in the enlightenment and critical tradition. If it is, then phenomenology's necessary principle of

'letting' may itself require reassessment if phenomenology is to remain true 'to the things themselves'.

CHAPTER 1. PHENOMENOLOGY ACCORDING TO HEIDEGGER

1.1. INTRODUCTION

What is at stake in Heidegger's overall inquiry is the transformation of humanity.⁹ This could perhaps be taken as an interpretation of the 'later' Heidegger, who had supposedly left behind phenomenology. However, the culminating work of Heidegger's early period, *Being and Time*, is itself geared towards the same transformation. This is due to the fact that the question of being, as the goal of Heidegger's thought overall, necessarily involves this transformation if truly thought to the end. If this is the case, how is it that phenomenology is in any way involved in this transformation?

The goal of this first chapter is to answer that question through an investigation into the nature and role of phenomenology in Heidegger's thought. This investigation will begin with a brief account of the 'guiding question' (*Leitfrage*) of Heidegger's thought – the meaning of being. Focus will be given to what makes this question important to Heidegger. Next, I will discuss some of the inherent difficulties in the attempt to provide an interpretation of the meaning of being, including the distorting presuppositions concerning being and our own fallenness. I will then treat Heidegger's conception of phenomenology in general along with a focus of its constitutive moments as noted in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Following this discussion, the proper focus of phenomenological examination from within the confines of the question of being (*Dasein*) will be treated. Finally, I will discuss the transformative aspect of phenomenological practice in Heidegger's thought, wherein I aim to show that the phenomenological enterprise serves to open one to resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*)¹⁰ and authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*). Said another way, the

⁹ "The issue is no longer to be "about" something, to present something objective, but to be appropriated over to the appropriating event. That is equivalent to an essential transformation of the human being: from "rational animal" (*animal rationale*) to Da-sein." Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, 5.

¹⁰ This later develops into releasement (*Gelassenheit*). See Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 81.

phenomenological inquiry into the meaning of being serves the deeper and more final purpose of showing us who we are.

1.2. THE 'GUIDING QUESTION' OF HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT – THE MEANING OF BEING

'Being' is likely the most elusive word in Heidegger's work, and appropriately so, since it loves to conceal itself.¹¹ However, a preliminary introduction to what Heidegger means by 'the meaning of being' will be helpful for what is to come. In the everyday sense, when we realize that something 'is,' we are realizing that it is present, or that it is 'there' occupying its own portion of space-time. This is not what Heidegger means by 'being.' In the most fundamental sense, that something 'is' means that it has shown itself to us from itself. Isolating from the particular thing that has shown itself, 'being' is meant to signify this 'showing' of any particular thing that shows itself to us. 'Showing' can be understood as 'making itself available,' 'becoming accessible,' or being 'given' to us in a meaningful way. Heidegger wants to focus specifically on this showing and (ultimately) consider its origin. This fundamental 'givenness' or 'showing' is what Heidegger is asking after when he questions the meaning of being.¹²

Heidegger believes this question is of the utmost importance, and not just in a theoretical way. The question of the meaning of being is "*of all questions, both the most basic and the most concrete.*"¹³ Why is this the case? In the first place, no investigation, whether that of the 'ontic' sciences or that of the 'ontological' science of philosophy can ever be complete until the interpretation of the meaning of being is achieved. It is a classical view of philosophy that it provides the ontological account of concepts or categories that are used by all other sciences. In this sense, philosophy is

¹¹ "Already before Plato and Aristotle, Heraclitus – one of the early Greek thinkers – had said...being loves (a) self concealing." Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 64.

¹² For the full and authoritative iteration of this interpretation of Heidegger, see Thomas Sheehan's *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*.

¹³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 29.

thought to be the foundation for all sciences. However, Heidegger notes that these concepts or categories themselves are left vague without the meaning of being.¹⁴ This can be identified as the theoretical importance of the question of being.

The question of the meaning of being has an “ontical” or concrete importance as well. Heidegger notes that the philosophical inquiry itself is a type of being for Dasein – it is a way Dasein can comport itself.¹⁵ In this sense, if the meaning of being is left unclear, the nature of philosophical inquiry (and perhaps all other ways of being for Dasein) is left undetermined. We would be engaging in the philosophical pursuit without understanding what constitutes the philosophical pursuit as a specific mode of being. Furthermore, considering the role that the existential analytic of Dasein plays on the route to the meaning of being, leaving Dasein’s ontical comportment in the dark would bring the inquiry to an end before it began.¹⁶ In general, it seems that if the meaning of being is left uninterpreted, the ground of our thinking and self-understanding is left vague and undetermined.

1.3. IMPEDIMENTS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF BEING

Though the end-goal (*Erfragte*) of Heidegger’s inquiry is the meaning of being, Heidegger also adopts the task of revealing the question-worthiness of the question of being. Heidegger notes that the question of being has become “superfluous” and that in the current climate it can be completely neglected.¹⁷ Heidegger realizes that there are fundamental presuppositions present in modern philosophy that themselves serve as a stumbling block to understanding the importance of the question of being. He will seek to show that these problematic presuppositions are the result of a history of thought that has covered over the original disclosures of being and that this covering up

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 31.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 34.

¹⁶ The role of the existential analytic of Dasein will be discussed in section 1.5 below.

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 21.

itself originates from the tendency of Dasein to flee from itself and pass over being in its everyday concerns.

The first of three major presuppositions about being that stands in the way of understanding the importance of the question of being is the presupposition that “[b]eing’ is the ‘most universal’ concept.”¹⁸ In this view, being’s universality means that in every concept that we form of anything, being must already be included in that concept. More specifically, this position takes it that one must already have an “understanding of [b]eing” in order to be able to form a concept of something.¹⁹ What is missed in this univocal conception of being is that being “is not...a *class* or *genus*.”²⁰ Heidegger then speaks positively of Aristotle’s analogical conception of being, which does not fall into the trap of thinking of being as the highest instance of the class of categories that describe entities.

An example can serve to make the point clearer.²¹ The concept ‘animal’ is univocal. It has the exact same meaning in the diverse things that it applies to. Importantly, those things contained under the genus of animal are differentiated on the basis of things outside of the meaning of the concept ‘animal.’ There is nothing in the concept of animal that makes for a buffalo or a dog. Both are animals, but what makes them the type of animals they are is the traits that define them specifically that are not contained in the concept ‘animal.’ Being is not a concept like this. It can apply in different ways to different things without being equivocal and remain unified without being univocal. Furthermore, the various instances or ways of being are contained in being itself, unlike ‘animal’ though the manner in which they are contained is vague. In short, the concept of being is an analogical one. Though Heidegger does not adopt this picture, he does endorse the analogical

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 22.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 22.

²⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 22.

²¹ The following example is taken from Henri-Dominique Gardeil’s *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas IV: Metaphysics* and is inspired by his discussion of analogy in general. Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas IV: Metaphysics*, 47-64.

view that being can never be a genus of beings. With this, the presupposition that being is the most universal is thrown into doubt, opening the path for questioning.

The second presupposition about being is that it is “indefinable.”²² This view takes it that definition comes by way giving the genus of something and the specifying the proper place of that thing within said genus. This is the way that all particular beings are defined. Since being is not a being and is not a genus, it seems then that being is indeed indefinable. However, Heidegger points out that this only entails that being is not able to be defined or interpreted as beings are defined or interpreted.²³ This only further raises the importance and the mystery of the meaning of being as a question.

The final major presupposition about being discussed by Heidegger is that being is “self-evident”.²⁴ In this position, appeal is made to the inclusion and use of being in almost every way we assert ourselves or behave in the world. For example, when I say ‘The table is brown’, I have to have some possession of the ‘is.’ However, this possession is the vague, pre-ontological possession of Dasein in its average everyday state. Without taking up explicitly the interpretation of this pre-ontological understanding of being, the meaning of being will remain shrouded. Each of these philosophical presuppositions, before being sufficiently questioned, close off the importance of the question of being. However, the presuppositions themselves arise from Dasein’s own tendency to allow tradition to blind it.

For Heidegger, our average relationship to tradition is one of being “fallen” (*verfallen*).²⁵ In this state, tradition dictates the human being, denying its capacity for freedom and for questioning.²⁶ What is it about this relationship to tradition that closes off the capacity for freedom and true

²² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 23.

²³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 23.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 23.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 42.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 42-43.

questioning? Our fallenness in any tradition can be characterized by what Heidegger calls a “veiling” or “distortion” (*Verstellung*) which is a form of “concealment” (*Verdeckung*). Here the received tradition presents itself and is taken as immediately apparent. It is also important to note that this is an average or even natural motion of our lives, *not a conscious decision*, in which we become lost in the world of things and the assurances that dogmatic tradition offers.

What this tradition passes on is received as if it were based on absolute, ahistorical foundations allowing for efficient proceedings in any affair, whether this be everyday comings and goings or scientific inquiry.²⁷ It is clear, then, why this form of relationship to tradition is the norm for human beings since it is quite useful. Having sure foundations and avoiding deeper problematics allows for greater efficiency. It is simply easier to take what tradition gives us immediately and without question, since in our daily affairs we are concerned with our own plans and schemes. To call into question an immediate relationship to tradition would only hinder or delay actualizing these plans and schemes – it would oppose the normal motion of human life.

However, the seemingly sure foundations given in this relationship to tradition are anything but sure. In this sense, the foundations are themselves the veil over or the distortion of the truth of the matter. This is why tradition’s form of veiling is especially dangerous, according to Heidegger, since tradition here is presented in a way that what it hands down is beyond question. Furthermore, what it does present in terms of its sure and ahistorical foundations is ultimately misleading.²⁸ Here it is clear to see that there is an anti-foundationalist aspect to Heidegger’s thought. The presence of immediate and sure principles (which themselves cannot be appropriated) is a hinderance both to proper thinking and to living authentically with respect to tradition. For Heidegger, it is of the

²⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

utmost importance to wrest ourselves away from the grip of this dogmatic relationship to tradition, which specifically veils the question-worthiness of the question of being.

1.4. PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONVERSION

Phenomenology is Heidegger's way of wresting us from our own dogmatism. As François Raffoul states, phenomenology is "the 'counter-motion' of thought, going against life's 'own tendency to fall into expropriation.'"²⁹ For Heidegger, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a historical current of philosophy or to a scientific practice.³⁰ It is rather that phenomenology is and remains the "possibility of thinking" (*Möglichkeit des Denkens*) wherein one can properly hearken to that which is to be thought.³¹ What this means is that phenomenology as a practice opens the possibility for us to move beyond the dogmatic aspects of our relationship to what is. Furthermore, phenomenology puts us in the position to come to awareness of that which is of the utmost importance for human beings, which is blocked off in our average, everyday state. But what does phenomenology entail to Heidegger? To explain Heidegger's unique picture of phenomenology, I will first follow him in elucidating what the two aspects of the term 'phenomenology' – 'phenomenon' and 'logos' – mean for Heidegger. This will give us a general picture of the nature of phenomenology. I will then move to more specific examinations of the structural aspects of phenomenological inquiry given by Heidegger – reduction, destruction, and construction.

Section 7 of *Being and Time* begins with a clarification of what is meant by the term "phenomena." In short, 'phenomena' signifies the "showing itself in itself" (*das Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*) or "the manifest" (*das Offenbare*).³² This can easily be confused with signifying a hidden 'thing in itself' in the Kantian sense. However, Heidegger will clarify that this is not how the phenomena is

²⁹ Raffoul, "The Invisible and the Secret: Of a Phenomenology of the Inapparent", 401.

³⁰ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 82.

³¹ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 82.

³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 51.

to be understood. The fundamental sense of the phenomena is to be understood as signifying exclusively the *showing* itself – signifying this *per se* – proper to any and all beings that are manifest to us.

The phenomenon is first distinguished from “seeming” (*Scheinen*), wherein something shows itself as what it is not.³³ This takes place, for example, when we see an object from a distance and recognize it as something, but upon coming closer realize that what we see is actually something else. Next, Heidegger distinguishes the phenomena from appearances (*Erscheinung*). Appearances take place when something that does not show itself “announces itself” (*Sichmelden*) through something that does show itself.³⁴ The example Heidegger gives of appearances is “symptoms of an illness” (*Krankheitserscheinungen*). We do not see the illness itself, but the illness is ‘announced’ through its symptoms which do show themselves to us. Finally, Heidegger distinguishes all of these from the Kantian notion of appearance, wherein that which appears or “announces” (*das Meldende*) is taken as something that “emanates” (*ausstrahlt*) from the thing-in-itself that is “never manifest” (*nie Offenbare*).³⁵ In this sense, the appearance does not accurately display its origin. Heidegger denies that there is an inherently hidden origin point behind appearances,³⁶ but does think that a “mere semblance” (*bloßem Schein*) wherein an appearance deceptively presents something is possible.

Though all of these aspects are distinguished, Heidegger makes a point to understand their structural relationship to one another. Heidegger asserts that the phenomenon is the primordial aspect of this structure, meaning that seeming and appearing are derivative of it. In other words, for anything to show itself as something it is not (seeming), or for something hidden to announce itself on the basis of something that does show itself (appearing), it must be able to show itself *at all* in the

³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 51.

³⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 52.

³⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 53.

³⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

first place.³⁷ It is this showing of itself in itself that is the phenomenon, and it is the phenomenon that is the focus of phenomenology.

What phenomenology “allows us to see” (*sehen lassen*) is that which is concealed to our average, everyday mode of comportment and metaphysical speculation – it is that which does not show itself in what shows itself.³⁸ In other words, phenomenology lets us see the phenomenon, and by this Heidegger means that phenomenology lets us see *the being of beings*.³⁹ The two terms (phenomenon and being) are used interchangeably. Ironically, it is an entity’s self-showing of itself, its manifestness or accessibility, that is concealed from us most of the time. Furthermore, that which is “concealed” (*verborgen*) is not separated from what does show itself in some far-off region. Rather, that which is concealed belongs (*gehört*) to that which shows itself and serves to “constitute” (*ausmacht*) that which shows itself to us as its meaning and ground (*Sinn und Grund*).⁴⁰ Jean-Luc Marion sums up phenomenological sight well in the following way:

...if in the realm of metaphysics it is a question of proving, in the phenomenological realm it is not a question of simply showing (since in this case apparition could still be the object of a gaze, therefore a mere appearance), but rather of letting apparition show itself in its appearance according to its appearing.⁴¹

At this point, we can understand the role that the phenomenon plays in phenomenology, but to truly lay out what phenomenology means for Heidegger, we must understand his particular interpretation of ‘*logos*’ as ‘letting’ (*lassende*).

Heidegger argues against the common conception of *logos* as related to rationality or to judgment. This view, however correct it may seem, hides the deeper core of *logos*, which “lets something be seen.”⁴² As Heidegger notes, it is only because something can be seen (*as something*)

³⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 51.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 59.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 59.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 59.

⁴¹ Marion, Jean-Luc. *Being Given*, 8.

⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 56.

that we can then make judgments about it, making judgment derivative of the primordial *logos*. According to Heidegger, judgment *grasps* at the object of its inquiry, utilizing self-evident presuppositions and frameworks from which to determine the object of its inquiry. In this sense, judgment does not allow the matter to speak for itself, but distorts the matter with its own presumptions. Just as with dogmatic tradition's hold and impact, taking *logos* as primarily dealing with reason and judgment makes for more veiling and obscuring.

The goal of phenomenological inquiry is not necessarily to seek and grasp, but to be led by what is sought after. If our average mode of executing judgments is derivative of the primordial 'letting something be seen,' then, for Heidegger, there must be a way to forswear judgment and attune oneself to the primordial *logos*. The only way to accomplish this in light of the need to avoid utilizing judgment is to detach ourselves from our natural tendencies through some sort of practice – namely, phenomenology. This is how to understand Heidegger's initially puzzling definition of phenomenology, which is "to let what shows itself be seen from itself" (*Das was sich zeigt, so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt, von ihm selbst her sehen lassen*).⁴³

Grasping Heidegger's interpretation of phenomenon and *logos* puts one in the right position to understand Heidegger's general definition of phenomenology given above. From this understanding, we can proceed to the more specific analysis of what phenomenology concretely entails as a practice. Heidegger provides scant information about this aspect of phenomenology, likely because phenomenology is not something that should devolve into a mechanistic process wherein an outcome is guaranteed.⁴⁴ However, there are the three structural features of phenomenology identified by Heidegger: reduction, construction, and destruction.

⁴³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 58.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 328.

Each moment of the phenomenological method is a structural aspect of the overall counter-motion against our average, everyday comportment with regard to things. The moment of reduction is of essential importance in this overall movement. Heidegger describes reduction in the following way:

Apprehension of being, ontological investigation, always turns, at first and necessarily, to some being; but then, *in a precise way*, it is led away from that being and *led back to its being*. We call this basic component of phenomenological method – the leading back or re-reduction of investigative vision from a naively apprehended being to being – *phenomenological reduction*.⁴⁵

It seems unintuitive to come to an understanding of the being of something by proceeding away from it. Shouldn't we be able to look at the thing and focus on it to determine its being? Heidegger thinks not. Understanding why involves keeping in mind the counter-motive aspect of phenomenology.

Our average relationship to beings is pre-theoretical and dogmatic. In John Caputo's words, reduction allows for us to "no longer take the being naively, as something simply there."⁴⁶ This is because reduction moves us away from the view of the being as a being and towards the being of this particular being.⁴⁷ Our average relationship to any being is one where the being of that being is covered up or concealed. This is why we must strive against that concealedness and take ourselves away from the average understanding, which at first seems to be an unintuitive move. This movement away from the average understanding, though, will end up coming back to the being with possession of its being at the culmination of the phenomenological inquiry.⁴⁸

What can make for confusion is the difference between Heidegger's phenomenological reduction and Husserl's. If we take reduction in the Husserlian sense, what is being prescribed is (at

⁴⁵ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 21.

⁴⁶ Caputo, John D. "The Question of Being and Transcendental Phenomenology: Reflections on Heidegger's Relationship to Husserl", 89.

⁴⁷ This seems to be just as operative in the later Heidegger: "...the nature of thinking...can be seen only by looking away from thinking." Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 58. It can be shown with relative ease that each step of the phenomenological method is present in the inquiry into thinking here.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 21.

least in Heidegger's view) "a philosophical technique which makes possible the disclosure of a pure, absolute transcendental consciousness which requires no relationship to the world in order to be."⁴⁹ In this Husserlian sense, we turn away from our natural attitude towards a transcendental and pure vantage point. For Heidegger, there is no such purity. It is true that for Heidegger we turn away from our 'naïve' relationship to the being under phenomenological investigation in reduction, but we can never get outside of our own being-in-the-world. What we accomplish in the reduction is to wrest ourselves away from the pre-ontological understanding of the object under inquiry to proceed toward its ontological foundation. In Heidegger's words, we "[project] upon the way [the object] is unconcealed."⁵⁰ There is no journey to the purely transcendental, but rather a journey away from the being to its being and then back again.

However, simply moving counter to one's pre-ontological understanding of a being is not enough. If we do not set parameters for this movement away, one could simply just negate what is under observation. More specifically, without guidelines or structure to an inquiry, the reduction could spin out into something that has nothing to do with the matter at hand. What is needed is to raise the barriers to enclose a reduction properly and allow it to proceed to the end-goal. This is how to understand the second structural aspect of phenomenology as a practice that Heidegger calls "construction."⁵¹ In construction, the phenomenologist seeks to "find the right horizon, the right framework of conditions, the right structure of [b]eing...in which the being can be what it is."⁵² This is a more specific way of stating the phenomenological requirement of letting something show itself *from itself*.

⁴⁹ Seeburger, Francis F. "Heidegger and the Phenomenological Reduction", 213.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 21.

⁵¹ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 22.

⁵² Caputo, John D. "The Question of Being and Transcendental Phenomenology: Reflections on Heidegger's Relationship to Husserl," 91.

Finally, there is destruction. Heidegger defines destruction as “a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn.”⁵³ No inquiry takes place in a void. To be in a phenomenological inquiry of a certain being means utilizing the common concepts by which that thing is understood. However, far from simply negating or relativizing those concepts, deconstruction is the attempt to shake their self-evident foundations. This is done in hopes of revealing and appropriating the original inspiration or source that brought these concepts forth.

All three aspects of the phenomenological method work in concert with one another. The three moments of phenomenological investigation do not proceed in any sort of rigid order, as if the reduction must be done followed by deconstruction, and so on. The phenomenological method, understood fully, is the response to our own fallen relationship to tradition as well as our own fallenness in general. Phenomenology is the attempt to plunge ourselves into the fog that we usually avoid both consciously and unconsciously in our everyday lives. In this sense, phenomenology is a ‘turning-back’ or a ‘conversion,’⁵⁴ wherein our deliverance over to beings is recognized and striven against in the hopes that can culminate in a radical transformation.

1.5. THE LOCUS OF HEIDEGGER’S PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY - DASEIN⁵⁵

Although it was not explicitly stated in the previous section, it is worth noting that phenomenology, as defined by Heidegger, does not delineate a specific object of inquiry (unlike disciplines such as ‘geology’). This is because phenomenology describes a method rather than an object of focus.⁵⁶ This means that a phenomenological investigation can take as its focus any being and proceed to its

⁵³ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 23.

⁵⁴ Phenomenology as Heidegger describes it almost mirrors Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s (later Pope Benedict XVI) description of coming to believe, in which one must work to enact a “reversal” of their “natural centre of gravity” in which one is “drawn to the visible.” Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal, *Introduction to Christianity*, 25.

⁵⁵ The word ‘locus’ is chosen carefully here. I do not want to claim that Heidegger’s phenomenological examinations throughout his *Denkweg* were restricted to the existential analytic of Dasein, since this is not the case.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 61.

being. Heidegger's particular phenomenological investigation occurs within the construction (or 'free-projection') of the question of being. Within this framework, there does happen to be a particular being that is to be interrogated (*das Befragte*).

The particular being that should be interrogated is Dasein, which may seem confusing if we focus on the fact that the question of the meaning of being is a question about *being*, and not a particular being. However, for Heidegger, "[b]eing is in every case the [b]eing of some entity."⁵⁷ In that case, an interpretation of the meaning of being must take place *through* the examination of a particular being, since being as such cannot be found somewhere else. The question is thus raised as to which being is the most proper to interrogate to expound and interpret the meaning of being as such. Why is this being Dasein? Because there is a unique relationship between Dasein and being that is apparent even in Dasein's average, pre-theoretical comportment.

What sets Dasein apart from other beings is that "in [Dasein's] very [b]eing, that [b]eing is an *issue* for it."⁵⁸ Heidegger puts it differently when he notes that "existence is the determining character of Dasein."⁵⁹ What does Heidegger mean by 'exist'? In short, 'existence' means being outside one's self or beyond one's self in possibilities.⁶⁰ Beings that have the character of existence are constituted in their being by being ahead of themselves in the ever-unfolding project of their lives. Dasein is compelled in its being to exist, it is confronted with possibilities and must stake its claim in them – though this often takes place in a manner in which Dasein does not take up its possibilities authentically. Dasein is not a being whose story is fundamentally set, but rather a being whose very nature is to be incomplete, or thrust into a being that is always 'not-yet'.

⁵⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 61.

⁵⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

⁵⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 33.

⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, 71.

This fundamental lack of completeness and always being ahead of itself means that Dasein's own being is an issue for it. It is confronted with the issue of which possibilities of being to seize on – a confrontation which it can take up or flee from. However, to 'exist' in this manner necessarily means that Dasein must always possess a certain understanding of being, whether pre-theoretical or not. In other words, Dasein must either implicitly or explicitly have some understanding of what it means *to be* to set the horizon of possibilities in existence.⁶¹ The being that is confronted in its essence with the problem of its own being must possess an understanding of being in the first place.

The fact of Dasein's understanding of being sets it apart as the being which is to be interrogated. Furthermore, the inquiry into the meaning of being is itself a way of being, a possibility that Dasein seizes upon, which means that unless Dasein is made more phenomenologically apparent in accordance with *its own* being, the question of the meaning of being as such will remain vague and underdetermined. Interestingly, Heidegger also notes that the inquiry into the meaning of being is "nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-being which belongs to Dasein itself – the pre-ontological understanding of [b]eing."⁶² In our everyday 'essential tendencies' we inhabit an understanding of being that is determined by our tradition and by the court of public opinion that Heidegger calls "the They" (*das Man*).

Heidegger's inquiry, as a 'radicalization' of this everyday tendency, requires wresting oneself out of that externally determined interpretation of being to soberly assess both the structure of one's own being and to confront the issue of being as such. In light of this, it becomes more apparent how, in the end, the phenomenological inquiry into Dasein's being is itself an exercise in resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*), which means furthermore that the culmination of the inquiry into the question of being is meant to open the path for the transformation of humanity. But it remains to be

⁶¹ 'Understanding' should not be interpreted in an intellectual sense.

⁶² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 35.

seen just how the existential analytic of Dasein paves the way and sets the proper horizon for the interpretation of the meaning of being.

The existential analytic of Dasein is geared towards determining the structures of ‘existentiality,’ the structural aspects that make up the unified way of being for Dasein in terms of its being outside of itself in possibilities. This requires approaching Dasein in such a way that it can “show itself in itself and from itself” (*an ihm selbst von ihm selbst her*).⁶³ To do so means examining Dasein as it is in its average, everyday state. To sum up the incredibly detailed existential analytic much too briefly, Dasein’s being is interpreted as care (*Sorge*). ‘Care’ should be understood in the sense of things ‘mattering’ to us. However, we often think of this as a passing state for human beings. Sometimes I am in a state where I care about things and other times I am not. However, Heidegger takes care to be what constitutes our being as Dasein, that things ‘mattering’ to us is who we are and something we cannot escape. Again, we are confronted with the problem of our lives, which is the fate of being thrust into the problem of one’s own being.

In our average, everyday state we are ‘fallen’ (*verfallen*). Here care shows itself in our absorption into our usual tasks and projects. We are geared towards involvement with things that get their significance as that which is ‘ready-to-hand’ (*Zuhandenheit*) in the context of whatever project we are engaged in. These average projects are possibilities of being that we seize upon by way of tradition and the They. This motion of existence interpreted as care has a temporal structure.⁶⁴ It is perhaps a result of the tradition of western thought that ‘temporality’ signifies that which is ‘in time.’ However, Heidegger does not view Dasein as ‘within time’ but as temporal in the structure of its being.

⁶³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 37.

⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 486.

The temporality that underlies care is thought by Heidegger to be the proper horizon by which to interpret the meaning of being.⁶⁵ Whereas temporality was prior the dividing line between the higher form of being (which would be timeless presence) and the lower form of being (that which is contingent and ‘within time’), now Heidegger stresses that being is itself temporal. The self-showing of what shows itself unfurls within the space opened up by Dasein’s own temporality. It is only within the framework of Dasein’s being always ahead of itself in possibilities, its thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), and its falling into concern with the ready-to-hand that there is being. As will be discussed in the next section, this realization is what makes for the authentic phenomenological disclosure of Dasein’s being that itself opens the possibility of Dasein’s transformation.

1.6. THE CULMINATION OF PHENOMENOLOGY - RESOLUTENESS

The aim of this chapter is to show how phenomenology plays a role in the transformation of the human person in Heidegger’s thought. Up to this point, the focus has been given to the nature of phenomenology and how it fits into the projection of the question of being. The phenomenological enterprise seeks to let the focus of its inquiry show itself from itself. In other words, phenomenology seeks a disclosure of its focus that comes from the focus itself. The focus of the phenomenological inquiry in the question of being is Dasein, meaning that what is sought is a disclosure of Dasein’s own being that comes from Dasein itself. In this case, it would then be accurate to claim, in the confines of the existential analytic of Dasein, that resoluteness and a proper phenomenological account of Dasein are one and the same. To understand how this is so, I will examine Heidegger’s explanation of resoluteness as “letting oneself be called forth to one’s ownmost *Being-guilty*” (*Sichvorrufenlassen auf das eigenste Schuldigsein*).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 39.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 353.

The mode of access to Dasein is one in which Heidegger fixes the phenomenological gaze on Dasein's average, everyday state. This fallen state of being is identified by Heidegger as inauthentic mode of Dasein. There is another, authentic mode of Dasein that is a possibility-for-being, and what constitutes this authenticity is, at its core, the sober realization of its own constitutive inauthenticity and a willingness to confront and appropriate its 'being-guilty' (*Schuldigsein*). In other words, the authentic Dasein has chosen resoluteness, wherein Dasein adopts a construction/self-projection "upon [its] *ownmost* [b]eing-guilty."⁶⁷

What does Heidegger mean by 'being-guilty'? His own description is quite hard to grasp on a first read – "Being-guilty belongs to Dasein's [b]eing, and signifies the null [b]eing-the-basis of a nullity" (*[Schuldigsein] gehört zum Sein des Daseins und bedeutet: nichtiger Grund-sein einer Nichtigkeit*).⁶⁸ Important to note first is that being-guilty is not a passing state for Dasein, like a predicate applied to a subject. Rather, being-guilty 'belongs to Dasein's being.' It is a structural aspect of who Dasein is. How should we understand this structural aspect in terms of 'the null being-the-basis of a nullity?' In short, Dasein is launched into being with no ground as to who it is or whence it comes from. At the same time, Dasein's existence forces upon it the need to supply such a ground and interpretation in the existential process of taking up possibilities. However, Dasein in its everyday state flees from these facts and takes shelter in inauthenticity, adopting traditional interpretations of the human being that deceptively paint humanity's essence and origin as fixed and transparent.

Being-guilty signifies the double-bind of Dasein's own groundlessness and its existential imperative to supply such a ground. The inauthentic response to being-guilty is the flight into readymade grounds that are taken as absolute and ahistorical – Dasein thus fools itself into disregarding its fundamental groundlessness and fails to take up and supply its own grounding. The

⁶⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 343.

⁶⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 353.

authentic response to Dasein's own being-guilty is resoluteness, where rather than fleeing from being-guilty, Dasein takes this up and sets it as the projection/construction in which it can finally confront itself. The result is "a distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness" wherein we "[arrive] at that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is *authentic*."⁶⁹ In other words, to be resolute is for Dasein to accept and take up its own lack of ground as well as its imperative to supply such a ground (which will never fully encapsulate it), and to set this self-understanding as the construction by which it is open to the call of conscience, or open to coming to itself.

When Dasein discloses itself authentically to itself in resoluteness, the "question of the meaning of the [b]eing of [Dasein]" finally finds its basis upon which "will stand any test."⁷⁰ This simply *is* the same result that Heidegger is looking for from the phenomenological examination of Dasein, in which was sought a way of letting Dasein "show itself in itself and from itself."⁷¹ In other words, the proper construction in the phenomenological examination of Dasein wherein we can properly *let* Dasein show itself to us from itself *is resoluteness*.⁷²

At this point, the structure of phenomenological examination and the existential confrontation of Dasein with itself coalesce into a single possibility, an opportunity presented to us through Heidegger's existential analytic that one can reticently take up or flee from. The opportunity given is one of true freedom, in which we break free from the dogmatic confines that close-off the mystery (*Geheimnis*) that undergirds our existence, coming to an awareness of that very mystery. Rather than being externally determined by tradition or by popular opinion, the possibility opens to freely take up one's own existence, not through a self-determination of self-consciousness, but through the recognition of the groundlessness and the openness of the human being.

⁶⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 343.

⁷⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 348.

⁷¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 37.

⁷² The later way to state this would be that it is only through releasement that we can let beings be.

CHAPTER 2. PHENOMENOLOGY ACCORDING TO HEGEL

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Hegel has often been characterized as a sort of ‘arch-metaphysician.’ Due to this, the phenomenological aspect of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is often disregarded, if it is even noticed at all. However, that this work is called a ‘phenomenology’ by Hegel is no accident. Although Hegel is not explicitly a phenomenologist as we understand this today, phenomenology plays an important role in Hegel’s complete philosophical system as a propaedeutic to what Hegel takes to be true philosophical thinking and human freedom. In this chapter, I aim to examine Hegel the phenomenologist to determine the method and role of phenomenology in his thought. To accomplish this task, I will focus mainly on Hegel’s 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

I will begin with a general discussion of Hegel’s philosophical aims in general and his aims in the *Phenomenology*, which revolves around the achievement of ‘absolute knowing.’ Next, I will discuss the major challenges faced by Hegel on the way to this goal, each of which serve as general problems faced by any triumphalist view of philosophy’s aims and capacities. Overcoming these challenges motivates the adoption of the method of the *Phenomenology*. This phenomenological method will then be examined in terms of how it plans to meet the difficulties on the way to absolute knowledge. I will also discuss Hegel’s motivations for choosing consciousness as the object of phenomenological investigation, as well as what we can infer about phenomenology’s investigation of objects in general from Hegel’s perspective. Finally, I will discuss the transformative aspect of phenomenology in the *Phenomenology* and in Hegel’s system in general.

2.2. THE GOAL OF HEGEL’S PHENOMENOLOGY – ABSOLUTE KNOWING

In the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel describes his goal overall (not just for the *Phenomenology*) as seeking “To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where

it can lay aside the title ‘love of knowing’ and be *actual* knowing.”⁷³ This would seem to be standard fare, as a large portion of philosophers would claim to be pursuing ‘actual’ knowledge, but Hegel’s standard for true knowledge takes a particularly stringent form. True knowledge, for Hegel, is only achieved at the culmination of *the* “systematic exposition of philosophy” which Hegel calls “Science.”⁷⁴ ‘Science’ is worthy of the name only in systematic form, which requires that all “concepts or propositions” be “connected.”⁷⁵ Everything must be contained (and justified) within the system, which leaves out any attempt to introduce a self-evident principle of any kind.

However, Hegel realizes that, to meet his own standards, his account of science cannot simply be appealed to. If Hegel did not attempt to justify his own standards for science, this standard would remain external to the system of science itself. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand what science is before engaging in it, lest we be led astray by mistaken assumptions about science or knowledge in general. It is for these reasons that a “systematic introduction” to science is necessary,⁷⁷ one that charts a developmental path to understanding what science is before one can engage in it. For Hegel, this developmental path is itself part of the complete system of science.⁷⁸ This developmental path wherein “the coming-to-be of *Science as such* or of *knowledge*” is achieved is described in the *Phenomenology*.⁷⁹ As Hegel put it in the later *Science of Logic*, what the *Phenomenology* achieves is “the *concept of science*.”⁸⁰ This means understanding what science/knowledge is as well as its conditions prior to engaging in the scientific pursuit explicitly. It would be right, then, to say that absolute knowing, the culminating form of the *Phenomenology*, is equivalent to the concept of science.⁸¹

⁷³ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 3.

⁷⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 3.

⁷⁵ Heidemann, “Substance, Subject, System: The Justification of Science in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*,” 10.

⁷⁶ “...knowledge is only actual, and can only be expounded, as Science or as system...” Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 13.

⁷⁷ Heidemann, “Substance, Subject, System,” 5.

⁷⁸ “...the way to Science is itself already Science...” Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 56.

⁷⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 15.

⁸⁰ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 28.

⁸¹ “The goal is Spirit’s insight into what knowing is.” Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 17.

This would perhaps seem to be unsatisfying. If we were to offer someone absolute knowledge, what would be expected is some positive fact of the matter or something similar. However, for Hegel, absolute knowledge means recognizing what science/ knowing is and what it entails, which then allows us to embark explicitly on the scientific pursuit of the complete system of knowledge. Richard Dien Winfield aptly describes absolute knowing in the following way:

Absolute knowing consists in nothing but this self-annulment of the knowing that presumes to have a presupposition, a foundation, a given that serves as the standard for validating its knowledge. Accordingly, Absolute Knowing cannot be considered a privileged standpoint, from which what is in itself is unraveled, nor some privileged given providing some kind of absolute truth. Instead, Hegel presents Absolute Knowing as the gateway to a knowing that can manage not to take anything for granted, not to confront anything given, and not to make any claims about being or knowing.⁸²

Absolute knowing has both a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively, absolute knowing constitutes the realization that all attempts at external, ‘objective’ justification are doomed to failure. There can be no “presupposition,” “foundation,” or “given,” as Winfield states. Every aspect of the system must be interconnected in such a way that nothing stands outside or escapes its own justification. There are two positive aspects to absolute knowing. First, absolute knowing means knowing the essence of consciousness.⁸³ Why this is the case will be explained below. Second, achieving absolute knowledge allows us to reach the position to be able to engage in the scientific pursuit with the guiding standards for science in our possession.

2.3. IMPEDIMENTS TO ABSOLUTE KNOWING

Hegel’s goal of a completed system of science cannot immediately be engaged in without courting skepticism as to the possibility of the enterprise in general and without risking disaster in execution. Neither can one simply adopt a model of ‘absolute knowing’ to establish the requirements of science and the (robust) capacities of human knowledge. The immediate skepticism concerning the

⁸² Winfield, “Is Phenomenology Necessary as Introduction to Philosophy?”, 289.

⁸³ “When consciousness itself grasps this its own essence, it will signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself.” Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 57.

possibility of achieving the goal of science and of the capacities of human knowledge in particular to possess the capacity for this endeavor are the main concerns for the *Phenomenology*. Hegel recognizes three related concerns in the epistemological realm that undergird the immediate skepticism that the average person or philosopher would have. These are not simply abstract concerns, but real roadblocks that consciousness as such must overcome to open the path towards absolute knowing proximately and the achievement of science ultimately.

The three epistemological concerns are the problem of the criterion, the presupposition of knowledge as a medium or instrument, and the presupposition that epistemology is first philosophy. All three are related, and I will discuss each of the three along with the problems they pose. Furthermore, I will discuss the fundamental presupposition underlying each of these problems: the assumption that knowledge and its object are independent from one another. Though the path taken by the PS is motivated by many common difficulties, I have chosen these more epistemological difficulties to highlight Hegel's reasons for adopting his particular phenomenological method. Phenomenology, as we will see, is particularly useful for avoiding objections driven by each of the three epistemological concerns.

(A) The Problem of the Criterion

For the aspiring philosopher or even for the curious onlooker, the variety of positions and oppositions in the history of philosophy can provoke a simple but puzzling concern – how do we know who is right? The deeper issue that the problem of the criterion identifies and that Hegel recognized as of fundamental importance is that the criterion for determining who/what is correct must itself also be justified. As Kenneth Westphal states, “settling controversy about claims to knowledge...requires adequate criteria...though the controversy often also concerns those criteria.”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Westphal, “Hegel’s Phenomenological Method and Analysis of Consciousness,” 2.

This would seem put the enterprise of the *Phenomenology* in a precarious position. To try to achieve absolute knowing as defined above, it would seem as if one would already need to be in possession of absolute knowing. This would mean that the concept of science as well would already be fully in place, though Hegel is explicitly attempting to justify his conception of science in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel puts the matter this way:

If [the exposition of the *Phenomenology*] is viewed as a way of relating *Science* to *phenomenal* knowledge, and as an investigation and *examination of the reality of cognition*, it would seem that it cannot take place without some presupposition which can serve as its underlying *criterion*. For an examination consists in applying an accepted standard, and in determining whether something is right or wrong on the basis of the resulting agreement or disagreement of the thing examined; thus the standard as such...is accepted as the *essence* or as the *in-itself*. But here, where Science has just begun to come on the scene, neither Science nor anything else has yet justified itself as the essence of the in-itself; and without something of the sort it seems that no examination can take place.⁸⁵

What could seem at first the naïve question of a beginner carries with it a problem that challenges philosophy as a whole, but particularly Hegel's ambitious conception of philosophy and its goal.

The issue seems to place the philosopher in a no-win situation. On the one hand, the philosopher could claim a self-evident criterion or principle to avoid the problem. However, this would mean allowing for a different type of knowledge – one that justifies itself or is its own criterion. The attempt of justifying one's claims would end up with a claim that could not be justified in the same manner as all other claims. The concept of science that Hegel is seeking to justify would not allow this option, since Hegel's condition for the system of science is that all its parts are contained in a cohesive and fully justified whole, with no part standing outside of it as a founding principle. The other option seems to be infinite regress, which would close off the possibility of science, since the comprehensive finality required by Hegel's notion of science would be impossible in principle. There would always be another aspect, *ad infinitum*.

(B) Viewing Knowing as an Instrument or Medium

⁸⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 52.

The introduction to Hegel's *Phenomenology* begins with a discussion of the position that regards cognition as "either the instrument to get hold of the Absolute, or as the medium through which one discovers it."⁸⁶ In the former, cognition is viewed as the application of a tool possessed by human beings that has the capacity to reach and grasp the truth. It then becomes a primary concern to 'fine tune' this tool so that it can grasp the truth properly. In the latter, cognition truly takes place when one has abandoned attempts to grasp and somehow reaches a passive state where cognition can then purely receive the truth. The goal here is not to 'fine tune' but to get out of cognition's way so that it can, to the best of its ability, receive the truth.

The two positions are the active and passive side of the same coin.⁸⁷ Both positions view knowing or cognition as means to an end.⁸⁸ This means that in both positions, the activity of cognition or the passive receptivity of cognition, the truth would not be delivered as it is in-itself, but as it is through the lens of the active/passive cognition.⁸⁹ It would be the truth 'for us,' which is not the truth as a whole. Whether advocates of the position would realize that or not, Hegel believes that if either of these positions is actually the case, the culmination of absolute knowing in the *Phenomenology* would be impossible.

(C) Taking Epistemology as First Philosophy

The final epistemological impediment is closely related, though distinct, from the problems discussed in (A) and (B). Hegel characterizes this impediment as the view which believes that "before we start to deal with [philosophy's] proper subject matter...one must first of all come to an understanding about cognition..."⁹⁰ This view gives epistemology logical priority over metaphysics and ontology specifically and ultimate priority in general. According to this view, we must be sure

⁸⁶ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 46.

⁸⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 46.

⁸⁸ "Either way we employ a means which immediately brings about the opposite of its own end..." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 46.

⁸⁹ Winfield, "Is Phenomenology Necessary as an Introduction to Philosophy?", 280.

⁹⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 46.

that our knowing can achieve “objectivity” before pointing our knowing faculties towards objects of knowledge.⁹¹ Hegel associates this position squarely with Kant, and it gave him the opportunity to make the quip that the position is analogous to “the old story of the [scholastic] who would not go into the water till he could swim”.⁹²

Despite the quip, Hegel understood that the position had great appeal to common sense.⁹³ As Richard Dien Winfield states, the position “has become virtually a natural assumption.”⁹⁴ Furthermore, this position is often associated with an opposition to dogmatism in philosophy. One who simply dives into the philosophical pursuit without the requisite inquiry into the nature and reach of cognition is liable to fall into seemingly self-evident tropes (or so the position says). All of this makes the assumption a powerful stumbling block towards absolute knowing, since the developmental path charted by the *Phenomenology* does not engage in a direct inquiry into the nature of cognition or its proper reach. It does not argue for a specific account of cognition nor does it seek to argue against any other. It would seem, then, that Hegel’s enterprise is missing an essential first step on the journey towards absolute knowing and a complete philosophical science.

(D) The Underlying Assumption – The Independence of Knowledge from its Object

In the common conception, truth is absolute and unchanging. What is true always was and always will be true, regardless of whether any knowers are present. In an important sense, this makes truth independent of knowledge. It then becomes a struggle to find a way for our cognitive faculties to fully grasp onto the objects of our inquiry that are independent of those faculties. Hegel realizes that this common conception undergirds each of the epistemological roadblocks discussed

⁹¹ Winfield, “Is Phenomenology Necessary as Introduction to Philosophy?” 279.

⁹² Hegel, *History of Philosophy: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, 428.

⁹³ “To the healthy understanding [the position] is plausible, and to it this has been a great discovery.” Hegel, *History of Philosophy: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, 428.

⁹⁴ Winfield, “Is Phenomenology Necessary as Introduction to Philosophy?” 279.

so far. More importantly, he believes that this conception is an *assumption* that has not itself been proven.⁹⁵

As it relates to the problem of the criterion, the criterion itself is taken to be the independent standard that any inquirer must possess. It is the independence of the criterion in this problem that makes for the issue, since an external criterion itself needs to be justified. For the instrumental view of knowing, it is the assumption that the object of knowledge is independent from knowing and its faculties that creates the anxiety about fine tuning the faculty of knowledge so that it can adequately *reflect* the object of any inquiry. Finally, the idea that one can or should determine the nature of knowledge and its limits prior to engaging in any particular inquiry of an object assumes that there is such a thing as objects of knowledge that are independent from knowledge.⁹⁶

The difficulty Hegel raises with this view is that, if it is true, there will never be anything like actual knowledge. We may claim that although we cannot access the fullness of truth due to the fallibility of our faculties of knowledge, we can still access some truths, especially those that are useful to us. However, for Hegel this is tantamount to leaving aside the struggle for philosophical knowledge while also merely assuming that there can be such a thing as partial truth. It is the case that the human progression towards knowledge and truth is fraught with error. However, the journey of the *Phenomenology* seeks to show that this is not due to an essential limitation of human knowledge or of an inseparable gap between knowledge and its object, but that error arises from the very presupposition that knowledge and its object are distinct. This is not to say that no one will ever make a mistaken judgment post-absolute knowing, but it is to say that debate on fundamental matter, such as justification, will be finished, or even sublated.

⁹⁵ "To be specific, it takes for granted...that there is a *difference between ourselves and this cognition*. Above all, [these positions presuppose] that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it, and yet is something real..." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 47.

⁹⁶ "Knowing cannot be investigated without making claims about objects of knowledge unless knowing is separate and distinct from objects of knowledge." Winfield, "Is Phenomenology Necessary as an Introduction to Philosophy?", 279.

After recognizing all these difficulties, Hegel seems to be at a desperate impasse. He must find a way to proceed towards absolute knowing without already assuming a criterion for what counts as absolute knowing. Furthermore, he cannot merely assert his position and argue against others, as that would assume the possession of that which he is seeking to establish. He must also proceed in a manner that avoids taking the faculties of knowledge as instruments that either grasp or receive the true, as that would thwart the ultimate goal of science. Finally, he cannot begin with a systematic inquiry into the structure and nature of knowledge, since this would require embracing all of the difficulties above as well as the ultimate barrier of taking the truth to be independent of knowing.

2.4. HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL SOLUTION

Hegel's solution to these issues is to leave to the side all concerns about what is true concerning the nature and structure of knowing and instead focus on "knowledge as it appears."⁹⁷ More specifically, this means observing the appearance of knowledge in the phenomenon of human consciousness (or 'Spirit') *qua* knower.⁹⁸⁹⁹ This approach allows the observer to "simply look on" (*reines zusehen*).¹⁰⁰ To simply look on means to observe without applying any of one's own criterions to what is being observed. In this 'pure observation':

...we do not need to import criteria, or to make use of our own bright ideas and thoughts during the course of the inquiry; it is precisely when we leave these aside that we succeed in contemplating the matter in hand as it is *in and of itself*.¹⁰¹

One can recognize the resonance between this approach and the mantra of phenomenology: 'to the things themselves.' The attempt to let things speak for themselves, both with Hegel and

⁹⁷ Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," 617.

⁹⁸ Maker, "Does Hegel Have a 'Dialectical Method,'" 77.

⁹⁹ This does not mean taking an individual conscious subject as the object, but rather the different forms of human consciousness that have been instantiated at what we might call the 'cultural' level.

¹⁰⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

¹⁰¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

phenomenology in general, involves the observer getting out of the way in some manner to allow the matter at hand to progress of its own accord.

However, for standard phenomenology, this ‘getting out of the way’ often involves an explicit reduction on behalf of the observer. With Hegel this is never mentioned, because for him it is unnecessary.¹⁰²¹⁰³ The object of the phenomenological inquiry (consciousness *qua* knower) contains both particular items of knowledge and the criterion for said knowledge within itself already. For Hegel, human consciousness naturally proceeds towards the goal of knowledge, which includes the justification of knowledge.¹⁰⁴ In each of its forms noted in the *Phenomenology*, human consciousness produces its own knowledge and the standards for knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Because of this inherent self-production, we observers can truly disengage and look on with the requisite purity. For Hegel, the necessary vantage point for phenomenological observation is generated by the object being analyzed, not by a reduction made by the observer prior to the observation.

The pure looking on done by the observer allows Hegel to bypass each of the major concerns listed in the prior section. The phenomenological gaze includes the release from any criterions of the observer, so as to avoid the problem of the criterion. This release is possible because the object under examination, human consciousness as knower, already provides its own criterions. With no criterions present in the observer, there is also no presupposition made as to the nature of cognition or the logical priority of epistemology (or any other discipline). Hegel makes no specific claims, nor does he adopt any presuppositions about the nature of knowledge or its logical priority in investigation. In addition to avoiding these concerns, Hegel believes his method has

¹⁰² Maker, “Does Hegel Have a ‘Dialectical Method?’”, 76-77.

¹⁰³ This also explains his very brief discussion of his phenomenological method in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*.

¹⁰⁴ “Our object here – consciousness as knower – is an epistemic structure which is engaged in the attempt to arrive at, to determine and demonstrate the unconditional truth of its mode of knowing.” Maker, “Does Hegel Have a ‘Dialectical Method?’”, 77.

¹⁰⁵ “Consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself; for the distinction made above falls within it.” Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 53.

secured the goal of allowing the matter at hand to determine the progression of the inquiry. The self-developing, successive forms of human consciousness culminate in the final form of absolute knowing, the realization of which puts us in the proper place to begin the concrete scientific effort in the Logic.

To further understand Hegel's conception of phenomenology, we should also address what Hegel means by the *appearance* of knowledge in human consciousness as the object of his phenomenology. As Kenley Dove states, 'appearance' means two things for Hegel. In the first instance, Hegel means by 'appearance of knowledge' the fact of human consciousness' attempts at knowledge and self-justification. Second, Hegel means to signify the 'appearance of knowledge' as it is experienced within human consciousness.¹⁰⁶ The latter involves the process of natural consciousness continually failing in its attempts to procure and justify knowledge until it culminates in absolute knowing. Hegel himself calls this latter appearance "phenomenal knowledge".¹⁰⁷

As 'phenomenal knowledge' is natural consciousness' mistaken attempts at knowledge, one could be led to believe that phenomenon are mere appearances over and against reality for Hegel. However, one of the hallmarks of natural consciousness for Hegel is that it mistakenly distinguishes appearances as false and temporal over against true and unchanging reality.¹⁰⁸ Rather than the 'appearance of knowledge' being taken as false instances proceeding towards the true, Hegel is observing natural consciousness' attempts at knowledge which develop into absolute knowing. Each form has some truth to it, but only in the end, with all forms understood in their connection, is absolute knowing achieved. In this sense, though natural consciousness is such because of its

¹⁰⁶ Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," 625.

¹⁰⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," 625

dogmatic presuppositions that cause it to continually fail, this process of failure as such is positive in that it continues the development towards absolute knowing.¹⁰⁹

The failure is seen as destructive from within the experience of human consciousness that is being observed. The failure of a certain mode is tantamount to the leveling of a culture or epoch's understanding of itself and its world. However, the inadequacy inherent in that mode of knowledge is what brings about its own destruction while marking out the next step for us, the observers of the progression of human consciousness. We see, from our vantage point, what was lacking in a particular mode of human consciousness as well as what was true in it, along with the driving force towards the next step. With this, Hegel is committed to appearance no longer being simply false. However, it is also clear that phenomena take place within consciousness for Hegel and that these phenomena are what is present for consciousness.

2.5. THE PROPER OBJECT OF PHENOMENOLOGY

In Hegel's unique conception of phenomenology, it may be nonsensical to speak of a truly phenomenological examination of anything other than human consciousness. It is true that phenomenology is a methodology for Hegel, with the stress on 'simply looking on' and allowing the matter at hand to move 'in and of itself'. However, for different reasons, it is reasonable to interpret Hegel's version of phenomenology as restricting the proper object of phenomenology to human consciousness.¹¹⁰ Hegel's motivations for philosophy as a whole and his attempt to avoid the previously discussed pitfalls on the way to absolute knowing accomplish this restriction implicitly.

In the most general sense, Hegel's overall goal of bringing us to 'actual knowing' orients his conception of phenomenology and influences the chosen object of phenomenology. To phenomenologically examine the appearance of knowledge, it makes sense to observe the site where

¹⁰⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 50-51.

¹¹⁰ This does not mean that phenomenological examination for Hegel concerns 'what it's like' for consciousness in certain life experiences.

knowledge is striven for and eventually achieved - human consciousness. The intent to avoid issues like the problem of the criterion also lead Hegel to take the *appearance* of knowledge as the object. To merely observe knowledge as it appears is to avoid applying any criteria or presuppositions about knowledge. Phenomenology in general is chosen for its methodological usefulness towards the overall aim of science.

However, it seems like the kind of phenomenological investigation required by Hegel is only able to be achieved if the object being observed is one that can provide criteria and items of knowledge from itself. As stated above, our ability to ‘simply look on’ comes from the fact that what we are observing (human consciousness in its attempt to know) naturally produces criteria of knowledge as well as specific items of supposed knowledge. This ultimately means that only objects that possess self-consciousness in this way can be phenomenologically observed. In any other situation, the observer would not be protected from supplying its own conceptions and criteria to what it is observing. In this sense, although Hegel has a methodological conception of phenomenology, his goals delimit the object of phenomenology to human consciousness and also implicitly gives human consciousness priority in the path towards science.

2.6. THE ENDGOAL OF PHENOMENOLOGY

In Hegel’s notes for the never released second edition of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel states that the work was “Looking ahead, to Science [,] bringing consciousness to this standpoint.”¹¹¹ Also, as stated above, Hegel claims in the *Logic* that the *Phenomenology* achieves the “*concept of science*.”¹¹² One might wonder what it means concretely for the *Phenomenology* to accomplish these goals. Is it simply that the *Phenomenology* gives us the requisite knowledge to ensure that we can correctly move on to the task of the *Logic*, avoiding certain pitfalls that would be present if we lacked absolute knowing?

¹¹¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Cambridge Edition) 469.

¹¹² Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 28.

Or, is it that, in addition to realizing the structure of cognition, human consciousness itself unlocks its capacity to truly think in the culmination of the PS? In this final section, I aim to present the case for the latter, which would then situate the role of phenomenology in Hegel's thought squarely within the process of unlocking human consciousness' capacity for true philosophical thinking.

To establish phenomenology's role as proceeding towards philosophical thinking, it is helpful to establish just what Hegel means by 'philosophical thinking.'¹¹³ Two quotes from Hegel are informative for this topic:

What is looked for here is the effort to give up...[individualistic] freedom and, instead of being the arbitrarily moving principle of the content, *to sink this freedom in the content, letting [the content] move spontaneously of its own nature, by the self as its own self*, and then to contemplate this movement.¹¹⁴

If pure being is taken as the *content* of pure knowledge, then the latter must step back from its content, *allowing it free play and without determining it further*.¹¹⁵

The first quote is from the *Phenomenology*, where Hegel is describing the proper effort required "in the *study of Science*," which he calls the "effort of the Notion."¹¹⁶ The second quote is from the *Science of Logic*, and concerns the work's object of inquiry – pure being. The former quote concerns what philosophical thinking does in general while the latter speaks to a specific instance of philosophical thinking. Both quotes talk of 'letting' or 'allowing' the content to move of its own accord (both use the word '*lassen*', which means 'to let').

By 'letting,' Hegel does not mean to require a passive receptivity, since one of the assumptions that Hegel is trying to avoid is the assumption that our knowledge faculty is an instrument for the passive reception of the truth. The key to understanding what Hegel means by 'letting' or 'allowing' is to focus on the first quote's requirement of giving up an *individualistic*

¹¹³ The following discussion of Hegel's conception of philosophical thinking is owed entirely to Stephen Houlgate's work, especially *Hegel on Being*. See Houlgate, *Hegel on Being*, vol. 1, 60.

¹¹⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 36, emphasis is mine.

¹¹⁵ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 50, the latter emphasis is mine.

¹¹⁶ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 35.

freedom towards the content of inquiry. This kind of freedom applies its own criterions to the content under inquiry. The ‘free’ inquirer is the moving engine of the inquiry, which gets in the way of the content’s own self-movement. Without the content guiding the inquiry of its own accord, the distortion of the truth cannot be avoided. What is needed, then, is for the inquirer to release from their own individual freedom in determining the inquiry to let/allow the content to speak from itself.

However, it is not as if human consciousness can simply take note of this requirement and proceed towards science. Human consciousness must first be raised into what Hegel calls the “Aether” of philosophical thinking before it can engage in and proceed towards science.¹¹⁷ Why does human consciousness need this raising? Can it not simply take note of what is required and proceed? Raising human consciousness into the aether of philosophical thinking, or what Hegel otherwise describes as “the coming-to-be of *Science as such*,”¹¹⁸ is necessary because of the natural state of human consciousness. In its everyday state, human consciousness is not concerned with philosophical thinking. It is content to take what is “ready to hand,”¹¹⁹ or what is self-evident, as it goes about its normal tasks and aims. In this sense, everyday consciousness, whether it is engaged in theoretical activity or in ordinary activity, is *dogmatic*.

Hegel describes dogmatism (whether in daily life or in theoretical activity) as “the opinion that the True consists in a proposition which is a fixed result, or which is immediately known.”¹²⁰ Dogmatism’s modern iteration, according to Hegel, involves this sort of conceptual rigidity that applies its absolute schemas to all content. Hegel’s goal, then, is to “[free] determinate thoughts from their fixity so as to give actuality to the universal, and import to it spiritual life.”¹²¹ The first

¹¹⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 14.

¹¹⁸ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 15.

¹¹⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 28-29.

¹²⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 23.

¹²¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 20.

step towards this process is the phenomenological method of the *Phenomenology*, wherein we leave behind all fixed criterions and ‘simply look on’ at the dialectical progression of human consciousness. In the end, when each form of human consciousness has been phenomenologically described and taken together in their logical progression, human consciousness itself will “[grasp]...its own essence” and “it will signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself.”¹²²

Human consciousness grasping its own essence is here equivalent to human consciousness actualizing its essence. The actualization of the essence of human consciousness begets absolute knowing, which then allows for a proper scientific effort. This effort begins with taking the content of pure being in the *Science of Logic* and ends in the completed system of science. The completed system of science finally accomplishes the goal of complete self-determination that is begun in the *Phenomenology*, and this completed self-determination of thinking as such is tantamount to the achievement of true freedom for human consciousness, where there is nothing outside of consciousness to determine it.¹²³ The goal of science in light of the value of freedom can then make more sense. As Markus Gabriel states, for German Idealism, the meaning of being is freedom.¹²⁴ For Hegel, then, the phenomenological inquiry in the *Phenomenology* can adequately be described as the initial step towards true freedom.

¹²² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 57.

¹²³ This should not be understood as a subjective idealism where reality is a production of the subject in some manner.

¹²⁴ Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology: Essays in German Idealism*, xii.

CHAPTER 3. FREEDOM AND PHENOMENOLOGY IN HEGEL AND HEIDEGGER

3.1. INTRODUCTION

What has come to light from the first two chapters is that phenomenology is not confined to a rigorous observation of the matter at hand, but also serves as a transformative practice for both Hegel and Heidegger. This transformation is one where the human being confronts its own essence. For both thinkers, as I aim to show in this chapter, the human being is essentially free (in each thinker's unique conception of that term). The phenomenological practice that confronts human beings with their own essence is thus the path towards human beings recognizing their own freedom. Therefore, a complete consideration of phenomenology in the thought of Hegel and Heidegger requires that we situate phenomenology in the context of each thinker's conception of freedom.

To examine phenomenology in the light of freedom in Hegel and Heidegger requires first a familiarity with the unique conceptions of freedom in both thinkers. This will be the first examination of this chapter, where the concept of freedom in both thinkers will be elucidated and connected with the conceptions of phenomenology achieved thus far. Following these examinations, I will identify key differences in the conceptions of freedom offered by the two thinkers, but also a core similarity – the imperative to overcome the external determination of the human being. Finally, I will raise the question as to whether the philosophical anthropology of the enlightenment in general and the critical tradition in particular necessarily accompanies and motivates the phenomenological impulse. The phenomenological gaze in Hegel and Heidegger seems to take as given a picture of the human being as inherently dogmatic, requiring a movement against this dogmatism to be able to proceed 'to the things themselves.' However, there can be no

givens in phenomenology other than givenness itself. In this sense, the phenomenological rigor of each thinker's inquiry, and perhaps the rigor of phenomenology itself, is put to the question

3.2. HEGEL AND FREEDOM

With Hegel, freedom can only be actualized in will,¹²⁵ which means that an examination of the concept of freedom in Hegel must focus on his treatment of what makes will truly free. When the will is truly free, it is “completely *with itself*...because it has reference to nothing but itself, so that every relationship of *dependence* on something *other* than itself is thereby eliminated.”¹²⁶ Two related features, then, make for freedom in the will – the excision of anything external to the will that serves to determine it and the will no longer being at odds with itself and its essence. Mark Tunick describes the core of Hegel's view well by stating that “all human beings, by virtue of their ability to think and their capacity for self-consciousness, are free and need only will their freedom actually to be free.”¹²⁷ To understand what this means concretely, one should follow Hegel's own progression on the topic. In this section, I will treat the three moments of freedom in Hegel's philosophy of right – the in-itself, the for-itself, and the in-and-for-itself.

Each moment identified by Hegel is ultimately a self-determination of will itself, which is only realized in the culminating moment. In the initial phase, the will in-itself, this realization is not possible in principle. The will in-itself is the will driven by content it takes to be natural and immediate, such as “*drives, desires, and inclinations*.”¹²⁸ This deterministic picture is the polar opposite of what is to come, but even in this state, the seed of freedom is still present. The aspect of the natural will that is necessary for freedom is its resolve. As Paul Franco notes, this resolve takes place in two steps. First, out of the many natural drives that jostle for influence, the natural will “picks

¹²⁵ “Will without freedom is an empty word, just as freedom is actual only as will or as subject.” Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 35.

¹²⁶ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 54.

¹²⁷ Tunick, Mark, “Hegel's Conception of Freedom,” 42.

¹²⁸ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 45.

out...one drive with which to identify itself.”¹²⁹ However, the drive that wins out is still indeterminate itself. The natural will, though, further “transforms this indeterminate drive – say, hunger – into a desire for a determinate object – say, a banana.”¹³⁰ Although the natural will lacks the aspect of abstraction or negation that is required to be truly free, it has the crucial capacity to externalize and orient itself through its resolve.

The next moment is the opposite side of the coin. The will here is characterized by what Hegel calls “*arbitrariness*.”¹³¹ What comes to the forefront is the will’s capacity to abstract or negate. We perform this abstraction, for example, when in the middle of a certain task we decide to pull ourselves away to follow some other decided end. The arbitrary will does what it wants and only what it wants, with its ends coming only from itself. This constitutes the common definition of freedom as we encounter it today – the freedom to choose whatever one pleases. The arbitrary will is shaped by contingency.¹³²

Ironically, it is the arbitrariness and contingency of the will that makes it stop short of true, actualized freedom. Hegel notes that the contingent ends decided upon by the arbitrary will are each merely particular. For example, my arbitrarily chosen ends would be deciding to have ice cream rather than cake. Hegel makes the interesting claim that if the arbitrary will is defined by the contingency of its choices, then the arbitrary will is externally determined by contingency itself.¹³³ This claim hinges on the idea that the will itself is universal and thus not limited to any particular content. If this is the case, then to will particular, contingent content is to no longer be determined by the (universal) nature of my willing. In other words, freedom for Hegel requires that there be

¹²⁹ Franco, Paul, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Freedom*, 164.

¹³⁰ Franco, Paul, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Freedom*, 164.

¹³¹ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 48.

¹³² Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 48.

¹³³ “It is inherent in arbitrariness that the content is not determined as mine by the nature of my will, but by my *contingency*; thus I am also dependent on this content, and this is the contradiction which underlies arbitrariness.” Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 49.

symmetry between the will and what it wills, or else what is willed limits the full exercise of the will.¹³⁴

It follows, then, that the final moment where freedom is truly actualized requires the will having “universality, or itself as infinite form, as its content.”¹³⁵ Put even more directly, freedom is actualized in “*the free will which wills the free will.*”¹³⁶ It is only when humanity recognizes its own essential freedom and then resolves to take that freedom as the object of its willing that “the absolute drive...of the free spirit” is satisfied.¹³⁷ Each of the prior moments of will are taken up into their truth. The resolve of the natural will is present as the resolve to will the freedom of the will. The abstraction of the arbitrary will is present as the capacity to lift the will from its ties to any particular content so that it may set its sights on its own universality. In a move that will be returned to below, the recognition of the essence of humanity is coupled with the imperative to actualize that essence.

But what does this have to do with Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and with his conception of phenomenology in general? If Hegel’s *Phenomenology* constitutes the entryway into the proper standpoint for science, this would seem to restrict its application to the theoretical realm, with no real relationship to the actualization of human freedom. However, this seeming difficulty arises out of what Hegel determines to be a mistaken supposition – that the intellect and will are two distinct faculties. Hegel makes it a point to note that thinking and willing are “theoretical and practical attitudes...not two separate faculties.”¹³⁸ The priority, though, seems to be given to thinking, since willing is described as “a particular way of thinking – thinking translating itself into

¹³⁴“The will in its truth is such that what it wills, i.e. its content, is identical with the will itself, so that freedom is willed by freedom.” Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 53.

¹³⁵ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 52.

¹³⁶ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 57.

¹³⁷ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 57.

¹³⁸ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 35.

existence...thinking as the drive to give itself existence.”¹³⁹ Furthermore, the final ascent of the will to actualize is freedom requires a thinking self-consciousness “*asserting itself*” to fix the universality of the will as its “object, content, and end.”¹⁴⁰ As Hegel states, “it is only as *thinking* intelligence that the will is truly itself and free.”¹⁴¹

The path to absolute knowing and the actualization of the will’s freedom are two sides of the same coin. On the more theoretical side, the actualization of humanity’s essence takes the form of the fight to excise from itself the burden of external justification on path to true knowledge. Human consciousness must recognize not only that there can be no justification for knowledge that is external to it, but that *it is its own criterion for justification*. This two-tiered recognition is also what takes place with the will, where freedom requires there to be no particular content in the will and the willing of the will’s own universality. Both hinge on leaving behind all external determination and one cannot happen without the other. It would be inconsistent to hold that human consciousness can achieve absolute knowing while having yet to achieve its own freedom. One way to understand this is that if human consciousness were to recognize its own nature as absolute but fail to externalize this nature through willing its own freedom, its essence would fail to be fully actualized.

Considering this important connection, it also becomes clear how the end-goal of science for Hegel is tantamount to the end-goal of freedom. As stated before, science, for Hegel, involves a complete system of interconnected concepts with each being justified by nothing outside of the system. The whole of science accomplishes the goal of reconciling all content prior taken to be externally given. All is taken up in its proper place. This means that freedom, which was present only abstractly, finally becomes actualized, as any particular or external determination is impossible.

¹³⁹ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 53.

¹⁴¹ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 53.

The scientific system eliminates the possibility of any external givens that can determine the human being from without.

We must also recognize the role that the will plays in the phenomenological exercise of the *Phenomenology*. Hegel's phenomenological method is taken up for the sake of "contemplating the matter in hand as it is *in and of itself*."¹⁴² The method itself requires the inquirer to forego applying any criteria of their own, "letting [the content] move spontaneously of its own nature, by the self as its own self."¹⁴³ Of key importance is that this overall process is described as "the effort to give up...[individualistic] freedom" where we as individuals are "the arbitrarily moving principle of the content."¹⁴⁴

That individualistic freedom is described as 'arbitrary' should prompt one to recall Hegel's account of the will as arbitrary, wherein although seemingly free due to its ability to do otherwise, the will is ruled by the contingency that it takes to be the mark of its freedom. Furthermore, the phenomenological practice itself contains the markers of the first two moments of the will as described by Hegel. There is the abstraction or negation involved in releasing from one's individual criteria and dogmatic presuppositions that itself takes place amid the resolve to let the matter at hand speak from itself. In this sense, it is apparent that the phenomenological exercise constitutes the beginning of the process of breaking free from the dogmatism of natural consciousness with an eye towards the final moment wherein freedom is actualized. The phenomenological approach takes its shape already in recognition of the limitations of natural consciousness and seeks to counteract these limitations. In this way, it is an early form of the freedom that will culminate the end of the phenomenological journey given by Hegel.

3.3. HEIDEGGER AND FREEDOM

¹⁴² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

¹⁴³ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 36.

¹⁴⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 36.

Situating Heidegger's conception of phenomenology within his conception of freedom (and supposing freedom to be the goal of his entire enterprise) is, admittedly, quite controversial. The immediate response would be to note that, in the final account, Heidegger sought to overcome metaphysics, and that the concept of freedom was taken to be inextricably wedded to metaphysics. In this sense, one would respond that Heidegger cannot be considered in the final account as a thinker of human freedom. This quick treatment allows for Heidegger's own statements, such as "...the question concerning the essence of human freedom is the fundamental question of philosophy, in which is rooted even the question of being,"¹⁴⁵ or "The question concerning the essence of freedom is the *fundamental problem* of philosophy, even if the *leading question* thereof consists in the question of being,"¹⁴⁶ to be explained away as statements of the not-yet mature Heidegger in whom vestiges of the metaphysical tradition remained.

However, Heidegger's critique of metaphysical freedom centers around his claim that this notion of freedom is ultimately grounded in the will and therefore in subjectivity.¹⁴⁷ As will be shown below, Heidegger's conception of freedom, ontological or existentiell, cannot be reduced to the conception of freedom present in German Idealism. When Heidegger speaks of his own concept of freedom, no matter when he speaks of it, he is not envisaging the centrality of the will or of human subjectivity. It may be objected further, though, that Heidegger in effect ceases to use the term in his later thought. This is a common refrain in the interpretation of Heidegger, that his abandoning a term amounts to a renunciation of his prior thought surrounding that term. A clear counterexample would be Heidegger's understanding of himself as a 'phenomenologist,'¹⁴⁸ wherein

¹⁴⁵ Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 203.

¹⁴⁶ Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 205.

¹⁴⁷ "Freedom: metaphysically as the name for capacity by itself (spontaneity, cause). As soon as it moves metaphysically into the center (into true metaphysics) it intrinsically unifies the determinations of cause and selfhood (of the ground as what underlies and of the toward-itself, for-itself), that is, of *subjectivity*." Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, 192.

¹⁴⁸ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 82.

he does use the term less as he develops in his thinking, but not because he no longer sees himself as a phenomenologist (in his understanding of that term).

The use of the term ‘freedom’ should be viewed in a similar manner to the use of the term ‘phenomenology.’ Although it is the case that Heidegger virtually abandons the word, he did not abandon what he used the word to signify. In this sense, Heidegger does have a conception of freedom, but he realizes that the term ‘freedom’ (like the term ‘phenomenology’) has lost its potency due to its being taken up into the philosophical tradition. In other words, the term freedom has become so tied up in common conception with the will that using the word could obfuscate what Heidegger is trying to indicate. In the context of this inquiry, what Heidegger was trying to indicate is ultimately more important than the word (or in this case, words) that he used in the indication, but nevertheless, what he sought to reveal can genuinely be described as Dasein’s constitutive freedom along with the choice to attune oneself to that freedom in order to live an authentic life.

Dasein’s constitutive freedom allows for the possibility of the choice to attune oneself to that freedom, seizing on the possibility for being authentic. In this sense, Heidegger has a two-tiered notion of freedom – ontological freedom and existentiell freedom.¹⁴⁹ To gain a comprehensive understanding of Heidegger’s notion of freedom, ontological freedom should be the first focus, as it is the most primordial. The most straightforward definition of ontological freedom is given by Heidegger in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*:

Now insofar as transcendence, being-in-the-world, constitutes the basic structure of Dasein, being-in-the-world must also be primordially bound up with or derived from the basic feature of Dasein’s existence, namely, *freedom*. Only where there is freedom is there a purposive for-the-sake-of, and only here is there world. To put it briefly, Dasein’s transcendence and freedom are identical! Freedom provides itself with intrinsic possibility. A being is, as free, necessarily in itself transcending.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Han-Pile, “Freedom and the “Choice to Choose Oneself” in *Being and Time*,” 294.

¹⁵⁰ Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 185.

Considering the exposition contained in first chapter, this should sound familiar. Dasein's transcendence, its being ahead of itself in possibilities, is a 'basic feature of Dasein's existence.' This means that the fact of Dasein's futurity is not a passing state but rather the *essence* of Dasein.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, this constitutive transcendence (or later, *openness*) just *is* freedom. This means that Dasein, as a being that is ahead of itself in possibilities, is inherently free.

How do we understand this freedom concretely? As Hans Ruin notes, this freedom is "essentially a freedom for, not a freedom from...[it] is a freedom for a world."¹⁵² Dasein's world is the interconnected nexus of the 'for-the-sake-of-which,' which means that at its core, the world is formed or allowed in and through transcendence/openness. There can only be a 'for-the-sake-of-which' if one is constituted in their being by possibility. Understanding this point is key to showing why Heidegger's ontological freedom could never be mistaken for German Idealism's general conception of freedom. Kant's thought and the thought of the German Idealists (and Hegel in particular) can aptly be described as placing freedom as the ultimate philosophical principle. Freedom for these thinkers is the grounding principle of the human being. Freedom for Heidegger indicates the fundamental *lack of ground* that makes Dasein what it is.¹⁵³ The core of Dasein is not free will, as willing is only possible due to transcendence and freedom.

The centrality of ontological freedom is further indicated by Heidegger's statement in *The Essence of Human Freedom* that "Freedom is the condition of the possibility of the manifestness of the being of beings, of the understanding of being."¹⁵⁴ This 'manifestness' is the 'showing-itself' that characterizes the phenomenon noted in the first chapter. Freedom is what lets there be manifestness/self-showing/givenness/presencing/meaningfulness *at all*. With this, Heidegger means to reveal

¹⁵¹ The classic definition of essence as the 'what it is to be' a thing is signified here.

¹⁵² Ruin, Hans, "The Destiny of Freedom in Heidegger," 280.

¹⁵³ "Freedom is freedom for ground." Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 127.

¹⁵⁴ Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 205.

something deeper than the being of a particular being or even the meaning of being – he means to reveal that which allows for being in the first place. Later in his career, Heidegger identified this most primordial concern of his thought as the “letting of presence” (*das Anwesenlassen*).¹⁵⁵ In Thomas Sheehan’s words, “...Heidegger’s sights were ultimately set on what *allows for or makes possible* meaningfulness...that is, the *source and provenance* of meaningfulness.”¹⁵⁶

If all of this is the case, then it is appropriate to say that the primordial concern or goal of Heidegger’s thought was freedom. Heidegger’s statement, noted earlier, that the question of freedom is the ‘fundamental problem’ of philosophy, whereas the question of being is the ‘leading question’ can now be addressed in its proper light. The question of being is ultimately situated in the region of freedom, since it is freedom that allows for being in the first place. The inquiry into being is the initial guiding thread that turns into the revelation of the constitutive freedom that allows for being. In other words, the inquiry into being is meant to lead to the discovery of freedom and, more importantly, to our Dasein being faced with the choice to choose itself or flee.

Heidegger’s assertion that Dasein, as existing, is inherently free seems to clash with his phenomenological examination of Dasein. As Béatrice Han-Pile states, “...[Dasein] must be free, and yet phenomenological analysis shows that it is not free.”¹⁵⁷ The phenomenological analysis of Dasein takes Dasein as it is in its average, everyday comportment. In this comportment, Dasein is dispersed into its daily tasks, the self-evidence of tradition, and the expectations of the They. Here Dasein is seen in its existentiell mode of inauthenticity, where Dasein remains oblivious to its own freedom. This obliviousness closes off the possibility of being faced with the choice to take up its freedom or flee from it. However, the phenomenological examination of Dasein exposes all the structures that shelter Dasein from itself as deceptive. The firm ground that dogmatic tradition

¹⁵⁵ “Only because there is letting of presence, is the letting-presence of what is present possible.” Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 37.

¹⁵⁶ Sheehan, Thomas, “The Turn: All Three of Them”, 31.

¹⁵⁷ Han-Pile, “Freedom and the “Choice to Choose Oneself” in *Being and Time*”, 291.

gives is chipped away until all that remains is the anxiety in recognizing Dasein's own groundlessness. In other words, Dasein is confronted with its own freedom.

The revelation of freedom's claim on Dasein is not to be understood as the comprehension of a fact. It is rather to be understood as a confrontation in which Dasein is "[faced]...with an ultimatum: Dasein has to choose to choose itself or not."¹⁵⁸ To embrace the former option introduces the first step towards what Heidegger views as existentiell freedom, where Dasein recognizes that it has been led by external factors – tradition, the They, etc., to the extent that it has failed to choose anything at all in a genuine sense. The authentic and free Dasein then "makes up" for its lack of choosing by "*choosing to make this choice* – deciding for a potentiality for [b]eing" which "*makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-for-[b]eing."¹⁵⁹ This culminates in resoluteness, in which Dasein sets up its construction or free-projection upon its now recognized groundlessness, finitude, fallenness, and transcendence. Here one accomplishes the feat of "letting oneself be called forth to one's ownmost *Being-guilty*,"¹⁶⁰ as discussed in the first chapter.

The use of 'letting' here is of central importance. Heidegger notes that the "letting-be-encountered of beings, comportment to beings in each and every mode of manifestness, is only possible where freedom *exists*."¹⁶¹ With that in mind, existentiell freedom through resoluteness is properly understood as Dasein's existentiell comportment being attuned to its own ontological freedom. If this is correct, then phenomenology should be understood as a pivotal practice to engage in to allow for that attunement. Phenomenology itself means "to *let* that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself."¹⁶² To see phenomenologically means to see in resonance with Dasein's own essential freedom, transcendence,

¹⁵⁸ Han-Pile, "Freedom and the "Choice to Choose Oneself" in *Being and Time*," 294.

¹⁵⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 313.

¹⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 353.

¹⁶¹ Heidegger, *On the Essence of Human Freedom*, 205.

¹⁶² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 58.

or openness. This method constitutes the initial step towards breaking free from inauthenticity, which, when pointed towards Dasein, makes for the possibility of authenticity and existentiell freedom.

However, one might take issue with the fact that this discussion has prioritized the language and framework of the early Heidegger. Indeed, as stated earlier, ‘freedom’ is a word that all but disappears from Heidegger’s lexicon in his later years. Furthermore, talk of choice and resoluteness can bring about discomfort for those who set a great deal of importance on Heidegger’s later confrontation with the will. Although I have argued that relying on the number of times a word is used is a shaky principle for interpreting Heidegger, it can be valuable to show briefly how what was discussed can be put in terms of Heidegger’s later thought.

The first thing to note is that Heidegger connects resoluteness and releasement (*Gelassenheit*) explicitly. He states that “the nature of thinking, namely, releasement [*Gelassenheit*] to that-which-regions, would be a resolve [*Entschlossenheit*] for the coming forth of truth’s nature.”¹⁶³ Furthermore, Heidegger notes that “one needs to understand “resolve” [*Entschlossenheit*] as it is understood in *Being and Time*: as the opening of man *particularly* undertaken by him *for* openness.”¹⁶⁴ Here resoluteness is not painted in terms of the ascendancy of the will, but rather put in the context of seeking to attune oneself to one’s own constitutive openness (in other words, to attune oneself to one’s own constitutive freedom). With this connection made, the later Heidegger’s language, while indicating real developments, can be shown to maintain a core resonance with his earlier framework. As Hans Ruin notes, “the truth of the thought of [releasement]” is to “place us in the free.”¹⁶⁵ This ‘free’ is the open in which Dasein inherently stands. This is the ontological freedom which possesses Dasein and which Dasein must seek to attune itself to in order live an authentic life.

¹⁶³ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 81.

¹⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 81.

¹⁶⁵ Ruin, Hans, “The Destiny of Freedom in Heidegger,” 297.

3.4. INTERSECTIONS AND DIVERGENCES

The intersections in the conceptions of freedom in Hegel and Heidegger are the primary focus in the confines of this inquiry. However, the major differences between the two must be noted as well. The primacy of the will and self-consciousness constitutes a major gulf between Hegel and Heidegger. Dasein's ontological freedom is what makes self-consciousness and will possible in the first place, whereas the conditions of the possibility of those things are not treated in Hegel's thought, due to their universality. Because of this, Hegel is perhaps vulnerable to the critique that his notion of freedom remains at what Heidegger would call the *existentiell* level.

For Hegel, the human being *qua* self-conscious is always free. However, this freedom is implicit, or potential in the beginning. Hegel's *Phenomenology* charts the path from that freedom being implicit to it being fully actualized in the end. Freedom is not truly present until it is externalized in the free will. With this, we see perhaps the widest gulf when it comes to the conception of freedom – the primacy of actuality versus the primacy of possibility. Hegel's treatment of possibility is limited to his analysis of the arbitrary will, where all that is signified is the ability to abstract, or the ability to do otherwise. True freedom for Hegel is coupled with necessity and actuality, not contingency and possibility. At least at the level of the Absolute, self-consciousness in freedom has become transparent to itself, recognized that it serves as its own ground, and has set the object of its willing to externalize this.

For Heidegger, possibility is the more primordial. Dasein's capacity to will and its ability to relate to itself in self-consciousness presuppose transcendence, or being in the open of possibilities. Possibility here is not restricted to what Heidegger would identify as the *existentiell* ability to do otherwise, but is rather an aspect of Dasein's being. Furthermore, Dasein's *existentiell* freedom can never result in a complete self-transparency. Dasein does not become free in the *existentiell* sense by recognizing that it is its own ground, but by recognizing its own groundlessness. Self-

transparency is impossible in principle due to Dasein's thrownness. It is interesting to note that while the preservation of criticality is coupled with a fundamental lack of transparency in Heidegger, Hegel's supposed culmination of the critical tradition ends in universal self-determination.

There are many more differences that are easy to note between Hegel and Heidegger on freedom and in general, but the intersections on freedom complicate the picture of two opposed thinkers. For both thinkers, concrete freedom requires the human being's own essential freedom to come to light and to be embraced. It is not the case for either thinker that the human being is ever fundamentally determined or unfree. What is necessary is to recognize what is already the case. This recognition has a transformative capacity in both thinkers, which for Hegel takes the form of the culmination of a necessary progression and for Heidegger takes the form of opening the possibility for authenticity.

The movement of recognition is required because both thinkers have received and creatively appropriated a certain conception of the human being that became explicit with Kant. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant asserts that human beings have been "afflicted" by "nature" with the need to engage in metaphysics (which here means a pre-critical, first-order metaphysics).¹⁶⁶ It is our "lust" for knowledge, itself characterized as a "compulsion," that must be subject to "discipline."¹⁶⁷ This discipline is practiced through critique, wherein one strives against these natural impulses to determine the limits of Reason and to set metaphysics on the path to being a true science. The point being made is that, in its merely natural state, the human being is dogmatic. This dogmatism, for Kant, can take the more theoretical form of a first-order metaphysician who fails to reflect on the condition of metaphysics' own possibility, or in the more practical form where the will is not autonomous.

¹⁶⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxvii.

¹⁶⁷ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A709/B737.

Hegel and Heidegger individually take up certain aspects of this view and leave to the side others, but what they each take on is the dogmatism of the human being in its natural or everyday state. Furthermore, this dogmatism expands to encapsulate all aspects of the human being's natural or everyday existence. Before the human being comes to critically reflect, all its activities, motivations, goals, theorizing, etc. are externally determined and therefore dogmatic. In light of this picture, freedom becomes not only a topic for philosophical consideration, but an imperative to break the binds of the merely natural.¹⁶⁸ Whatever differences Hegel and Heidegger have when considering human freedom, they are both in complete agreement that breaking away from the natural or everyday, which means breaking from external determination of the human being, is necessary for human freedom.

Phenomenology as an approach for both thinkers takes its shape from within this context. The method is tailor-made to begin the struggle against the natural or everyday inclinations of the human being. In seeking to let the matter speak from itself, the process of detaching from dogmatic presuppositions and ways of being begins with freedom in its sights. Phenomenology is far from being simply a rigorous philosophical methodology in Hegel and Heidegger's thought. It is a transformative practice wherein we become truly critical and truly open to the essential freedom of the human person. Hans Ruin describes Kant's view of enlightenment as seeking "to realize in full the freedom in oneself, and to become what one was meant to become."¹⁶⁹ If this is the case, despite all of their differences, Hegel and Heidegger are firmly with Kant in this fundamental respect.

¹⁶⁸ Ruin, Hans, "The Destiny of Freedom in Heidegger," 278-279.

¹⁶⁹ Ruin, Hans, "The Destiny of Freedom in Heidegger," 279.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this inquiry was to show that the phenomenological method in Hegel and Heidegger cannot be completely understood unless it is placed in the context of each thinker's conception of human freedom. The phenomenological method in general prioritizes a rigorous and immanent fidelity to what shows itself to us in the manner in which it shows itself. However, accomplishing this rigorous and immanent fidelity requires a change in the observer wherein they practice a release from their natural or everyday presuppositions that serve to obscure the matter at hand. This practice in Hegel and Heidegger coalesces with the revelation of human freedom and the possibility of attuning oneself to this fundamental freedom.

This is shown in Heidegger's own phenomenology, wherein what is sought is to let the matter at hand show itself from itself. When the matter at hand is Dasein, the proper phenomenological sight that allows Dasein to show itself requires resoluteness (and later, releasement) from the phenomenological observer. However, this requirement of resoluteness for the proper phenomenological sight and access to Dasein is itself the way in which Dasein becomes open to its own inherent freedom, its fundamental openness that frees Dasein for its world. With this, the phenomenological examination of Dasein merges with the opportunity to take up our freedom and attune itself to it or flee into ready-made structures of inauthenticity.

In Hegel's phenomenology, the goal is to look purely upon the inherently dialectical progression of human consciousness as it culminates in absolute knowing. This pure sight requires us abandoning all individual criteria and dogmatic presuppositions to allow the matter at hand to move of its own accord. This move to abandon dogmatism and individual caprice is an initial step where the chains of the natural start to fall away. In absolute knowing, human consciousness realizes that it serves as its own criterion and justification, exorcising once and for all any external

determinations of the human being that would serve to block it off from the actualization of its freedom. This realization is not simply the registering of a fact, but a transformative culmination of the human spirit. The merely natural is left behind.

What is gained from these investigations is then placed within the context of Hegel and Heidegger's conceptions of freedom. For Hegel, human freedom is fully actualized when the will takes as its content the only thing that can match its universality – itself. Only when the will wills its own freedom is the human being truly free. Here we notice the practical side of the theoretical pursuit to vacate all external justification. For Hegel, each are one side of the same coin. Absolute knowing is not possible without the actualization of freedom, nor is freedom possible without absolute knowing. Furthermore, the phenomenological gaze itself is a prefigurement of actualized human freedom, as it is an attempt to release from all particular content with the resolve towards letting the matter at hand move of its own accord.

For Heidegger, the human being is ontologically free. By this, he means to indicate the fundamental openness, transcendence, and groundlessness of the human being which allows for being in general. However, in its everyday existence the human being frees from its own essence into the ready-made structures of tradition, of the 'They', of the will, etc. Heidegger calls us to move against this everyday dogmatism and attune oneself to the fundamental 'letting' that allows for being and for the world. The phenomenological method is the initial step towards this attunement, since it takes 'letting' as its goal in encountering beings. This 'letting', when directed towards Dasein, reveals our ontological freedom to us, making possible a true attunement with our own essence.

Though their conceptions of freedom have many significant differences, their similarities call for further questioning not just about their thinking, but for phenomenology in general. Despite all differences, Hegel and Heidegger are in fundamental agreement that one necessary condition for

human freedom is the abandonment of external determination. At the root of this agreement is their shared philosophical heritage from the enlightenment in general and the critical tradition in particular, made explicit first by Kant. This heritage paints a picture of the human being as naturally dogmatic, being driven around by everything but itself. The goal then is to oppose this natural attitude through critique and to somehow flush out the baggage of dogmatic tradition that, by Hegel and Heidegger's time, has become not simply a tendency of the human being but a feature of its being in general. The fight for freedom becomes an existential imperative, a journey from the darkness of the natural, or every day, to the light of the human spirit in its full exercise.

The phenomenological gaze and its constitutive moments take shape from this imperative. Phenomenological 'letting' is the beginning of the attempt to free oneself from its natural, every day being. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that the phenomenological method takes as given the enlightenment picture of the human being in this respect as well as the imperative to release from the natural or dogmatic. This likely applies not only to Hegel and Heidegger, but to phenomenology as a movement. With this realization in mind, the onus falls to phenomenology to consider whether its critical inheritance just so happens to be the proper 'free-projection' for inquiry, or whether it too is an obfuscating lens that mars all that it touches.

The theoretical virtue of phenomenology lies in its fidelity to 'the things themselves,' but the question is raised – what does this fidelity truly require from us? The history of phenomenology can be adequately represented as a series of thinkers accusing those that came before of not meeting the standard set by phenomenology's principles. One by one, phenomenology's own 'dogmas' have been put to the question. As for this inquiry, the question is whether the movement and method itself remains closed off from what is by its very *modus operandi*.

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