After Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) is the person most responsible for promoting phenomenology as a philosophical method in the 20th century. Although Husserl, by the late 1920s, came to think that Heidegger’s philosophy betrayed transcendental phenomenology’s rigor and promise in favor of studies more akin to anthropology, he initially regarded Heidegger as the most gifted phenomenologist in the Freiburg circle of disciples of the new discipline after the war (Hua-Dok III/1-10).\(^1\) Husserl repeatedly provided crucial support to Heidegger’s early career, including his first stint at Freiburg and his Marburg appointment. Even as it became clear to Husserl that Heidegger had not understood his method (Hua-Dok III/3, 236), he successfully recommends him to be his successor at Freiburg (Hua-Dok III/8: 194–5). In a late 1926 draft of a letter to Heidegger, Husserl writes: “No one has greater faith in you than I” (Hua-Dok III/4, 140). As late as 1928, albeit before careful study of Being and Time, he tells Heidegger: “You and I are phenomenology” (Cairns 1976, 9).

The dates of these endorsements are significant, given Heidegger’s open criticisms of Husserl’s thinking in lectures at Marburg, beginning in 1923. Suggestions of substantial revision, if not explicit criticism, of Husserl’s phenomenology can also be found in the early Freiburg lectures, during times when Husserl and Heidegger are meeting each other regularly on weekends in what appears to have been mutually beneficial philosophical discussions. To be sure, upon Heidegger’s return from Marburg in 1928, Husserl notes that, after the first two months, all philosophical exchange between them came — quite distressingly for Husserl at least — to an abrupt end. Later apologizing but also explaining to former student Alexander Pfänder his recommendation of Heidegger over Pfänder for the Freiburg position, Husserl writes that he was forewarned that Heidegger’s phenomenology, far from advancing Husserl’s project, aimed at undermining it. Yet when he broached the subject of these differences with Heidegger, Heidegger “would just laugh and say: ‘Nonsense!’” (Hua-Dok III/2, 182). As Husserl tells it, then, he initially accepted Heidegger’s assurances of not abandoning transcendental phenomenology and remained blinded to their differences by a desperate need for someone of Heidegger’s intellectual talent to carry on the project. Only after sustained reading of Being and Time, he relates, did it become evident that he has nothing do with Heidegger’s project, that Heidegger’s criticisms of him are based upon “a gross misunderstanding,” and that Heidegger aimed at a philosophical system that Husserl considered it his life work to render forever impossible. To which he poignantly adds:
“Everybody except me saw this long ago” (Hua-Dok III/2, 184; Hua-Dok III/3, 254, 476; see Breeur 1994, 13).

To conclude from these revelations that Heidegger had simply played Husserl like a fiddle is perhaps too easy. To be sure, opportunism and guile play unmistakably important roles in Heidegger’s relations with Husserl, where the lines between personal, professional, and philosophical dimensions are often blurred. At the same time, Heidegger construes his early investigations as phenomenological, even if he arrives at his own version of phenomenology through critical engagement with Husserl’s phenomenology. Thus, he criticizes Husserl’s phenomenological research for being insufficiently phenomenological, to the extent that it excludes from phenomenological inquiry the domain most proper to it, i.e., being (Heidegger 1979, 159).

The aim of this entry is to establish how Heidegger understands ‘phenomenology’ when he uses the term to characterize his method. Heidegger prominently identifies his philosophical method as phenomenology in *Being and Time* as well as in lectures and occasional writings in the 1920s. Accordingly, the following entry aims at elaborating Heidegger’s sense of ‘phenomenology’ (here dubbed ‘existential phenomenology’) during this decade, particularly as it converges with and diverges from Husserl’s phenomenological method with regard to the themes: intentionality and being-in-the-world, phenomenology’s scientific promise, phenomenological reduction, basic components of existential phenomenology’s method, its ontological ambitions, and the defining roles that it assigns to affectivity and authenticity.

After 1930 Heidegger largely abandons the term ‘phenomenology’ as a label for his thinking (although he returns to the term in some late works). Notably, this abandonment seems to have been abetted by Husserl’s efforts at the time to separate his phenomenology from Heidegger’s “so-called” phenomenology (*Br* 3: 476). Precisely in response to these efforts, Heidegger tells his students that, “going forward, we would do well to call phenomenology only what Husserl himself has fashioned” (Heidegger 1997, 40). For the most part, Heidegger listens to his own advice, leaving the term, if not all the trappings of the method itself, behind.

### 44.1. From one hiddenness to the other: intentionality and being-in-the-world

Like Husserl, Heidegger conceives phenomenology as a method of uncovering a structured process that is operative in experience on various levels, but typically hidden from view within experience itself. For Husserl, this structured process is that of intentionality, a particular way of relating, attending to something by way of its sense. Perceiving, remembering, imagining, for example, are acts by means of which something is made present in a certain way respectively, i.e., perceived, remembered, imagined as a tree. In perception the object is present in a paradigmatic way, pre-eminently capable of entering into acts of knowing.

In published works before Heidegger’s arrival on the scene, Husserl focuses on acts of consciousness – opining (*Meinen*) and imagining, perceiving and knowing – that, while the subject matter of psychology, are also the very acts constitutive of scientific research. “Elements of a phenomenological explanation of knowledge,” the title of Husserl’s Sixth Logical Investigation, attests to his fundamentally epistemological orientation. Yet while perception and cognition are paradigmatic in these investigations, he initially characterizes the investigations as “descriptive psychology.” Given his epistemological concerns, the characterization is misleading, to be sure, as he comes to realize, but it is nonetheless revealing. Husserl’s phenomenology is not psychology, however the latter be understood, but the disciplines remain bedfellows of a sort. Husserl’s own continuing preoccupation with phenomenological psychology attests to this basic affinity.

The situation is dramatically different in the case of Heidegger’s phenomenology. He does not investigate acts of consciousness with a view to resolving epistemological concerns. To
the contrary, he shifts phenomenological analysis’s center of gravity from intentional experiences (where the presence of an intended object is paramount) to worldly experiences (where things are accessed without being perceived or registered themselves). A relation and the sense (meaning) of it are still fundamental. However, the sense is that of a more or less transparent involvement in a purposive complex of tools or instruments. The sense of that involvement is a combination of lateral and holistic utility, where the sense of one instrument is laterally its usefulness in relation to another instrument and the sense of their relations is the usefulness of the whole complex of which they form a part. The utility of the instruments is precisely proportional to their unobtrusiveness, their imperceptibility, as it were, in the process of being used.

Whereas for Husserl, perception and the presence of the perceived object is paradigmatic for the analysis of intentionality, for Heidegger, using implements and the unobtrusiveness of the implement in the process is paradigmatic for everyday being-in-the-world. The use of the implement presupposes a kind of understanding on two levels: an ontic understanding of it as a tool (e.g., a knife, a hammer) and an ontological understanding of its manner of being, namely, as handy (ready-to-hand). In contrast to the presence that marks the manner of being of what is perceived, what is handy withdraws in the course of being used and this withdrawal is essential to its manner of being. To be sure, its withdrawal is a relative absence, capable of becoming starkly present at any moment, as is obvious in breakdowns and defectiveness.

However, absence is not only inherent to the handiness of implements. It is also inherent to what any complex of tools is for. Appropriating Aristotle’s hou heneka causation, Heidegger notes how these complexes are for-the-sake-of something—something not literally present (temporally, materially, or spatially) within them. These complexes and what they are respectively for make up the whole that is human existence, understood as ‘being-in-the-world.’ Heidegger does not deny intentionality and its transcendence, as Husserl understands them. Nor does he simply replace Husserl’s conception of intentionality and its transcendence with being-in-the-world. He contends, however, that intentional experiences (including perception and cognition) are grounded in being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1989, 249).

It is easy to see the legacy of Husserl’s phenomenological analyses in Heidegger’s account of the structural and holistic character of being-in-the-world. Both treatments distinguish similar elements: the act, sense, and object (e.g., hammering, fastener, hammer), though Heidegger further differentiates the ontic and ontological senses in play. So, too, Heidegger’s insistence upon that holistic character captures Husserl’s sense of experience as a concretum, of which these elements are abstracta. Husserl’s account of the necessity of both horizons (indicating levels of attenuation) and empty intentions in experience signals an unmistakable appreciation of the role of absences in experience (albeit absences in principle eliminable). Yet while these homologies between the two phenomenologies are patent, there is also a decisive difference that can also be traced to the meaning of an absence. In Heidegger’s phenomenology, there is a paramount yet enigmatic sort of absence at the heart of human existence. It is paramount because it cannot be foregone or eliminated, yet stands as the pre-eminent possibility, namely, death as the possibility that signals the end (the absence) of all possibilities that otherwise make up an individual’s existence.

44.2. The scientific promise

Like Husserl, Heidegger regards phenomenology as the gateway to critical consideration and revision of the basic concepts of the sciences. For Heidegger, this scientific promise of phenomenology depends, above all, on a sufficient clarification of the sense of being as such that is more fundamental than “the ontic questions of the positive sciences” (Heidegger 1967, 9–11). In his
1927 lecture “Phenomenology and Theology,” Heidegger iterates this contention in the course of stressing how absolutely different philosophy ("the ontological science") is from theology (an ontic science), by virtue of the former’s phenomenological character. After observing that there is no such thing as a phenomenological mathematics or theology, Heidegger advises that ‘phenomenology’ designates nothing but “the procedure of ontology that is essentially different from that of all other positive sciences” (Heidegger 1976a, 66–7). Yet this difference brings with it a fundamental connection between phenomenological ontology and the ontic sciences. Precisely when the researcher in an ontic science, coming to grips with the traditional basic concepts of his science, questions their adequacy for the entities that make up the science’s subject matter, philosophical knowledge becomes “relevant and fruitful.” At this juncture alone (“at the limit, as it were, of his basic concepts”), Heidegger contends, the researcher is able to step back from the horizons of the science and inquire into “the primordial constitution of the being of the entities.” In this process, he adds, those entities “remain the object” and yet they also “become new” (Heidegger 1976a, 67).5

44.3. Phenomenological reduction

In the first decade of the last century, Husserl explicitly identified the process of reducing the contents and objects of experience to their constitution in and by consciousness. Without denying the transcendence of things, the reduction requires a shift in focus from things to how they are experienced, from ordinary ways of experiencing things to how they are constituted as such in consciousness. In Ideas I (1913), reductions on several levels become the defining feature of the phenomenological method, so much so that a phenomenology without reductions is impossible.

Yet in Being and Time, Heidegger does not characterize his phenomenology as a reduction of any sort. As a result, scholars have long been divided on the question of whether reductions are implicit or simply missing in Heidegger’s phenomenology.6 Some light has been shed on this issue by the publication of Heidegger’s lectures in the 1920s, though the issue remains controversial (not least because of Husserl’s own developing ways of regarding the kinds and status of reductions).

In one of his first explicit mentions of phenomenological reduction (winter semester 1919–20), Heidegger remarks that it is deemed necessary only from the transcendental standpoint, and that only after performing the reduction would the genuine problem arise, namely, “what now?” Though the context of these transcribed notes is typically underdetermined, two points of emphasis seem evident. First, the reduction in this sense is dispensable, serving a purpose only from a standpoint that Heidegger places in apposition, as it were, with an epistemological standpoint (he writes “transcendental, epistemological”), the standpoint concerned with knowledge of objects. Should someone consider the reduction necessary (in the sense of freeing us from a model of experience that lends itself to idealism), “it is, however, not itself productive,” requiring a further step of seeing, but leaving up in the air “what and how” (Heidegger 1993a, 151). Thus, Heidegger first portrays the phenomenological reductions as dispensable, necessary only from a specific vantage point, and, even then, limited.

In these same lectures, however, Heidegger more often speaks of phenomenological reduction in a positive way, a way that he appropriates into his own project. Thus, there is a specific sort of reduction of lived experience that, Heidegger submits, neither takes its bearings from psychology, nor eventuates in knowledge of life as an object, nor refers it back to a foregoing I in some “transcendental consideration of the constitution of consciousness.” Instead, the reduction takes place as part of transporting ourselves into a “living, factical experience,” immersing
ourselves in it, and sharing (Mitgehen) in it. The actual context and flow of the experience in question are bracketed, “phenomenologically reduced” to our way of becoming acquainted (Kenntnisnahme) with them, purportedly lending them a new intensity (Heidegger 1993a, 123). The aim of this reduction is “the acquisition of pure, completely un-reified life, freed from any reification,” on the basis of the different “sorts of meaningfulness” (Bedeutsamkeiten) that compose it. In this attempt to enter into life not as an impersonal event but as something we bring about (nicht Vorkommen, sondern Vollzug), “everything devoid of meaning, everything that cannot be understood, is suspended or siphoned off (phenomenological reduction!!)” (Heidegger 1993a, 156).

In these same lectures, Heidegger also comments on Husserl’s phenomenological reduction explicitly. In the comment, which cannot be considered unfavorable, Heidegger identifies the reduction’s negative and positive sides. The former is the process of withholding (epoche) all transcendent objectifications and thereby enabling the critical rejection of “false attitudes.” The positive function (which, he adds, echoing his earlier ‘what now?’ comment, must be set forth) is to set off the sphere of what can be understood, “the pure self-sufficiency” (Selbstgenugsamkeit) that characterizes, as Heidegger puts it, life “in itself” (Heidegger 1993a, 249–50, 254).

What these first lectures reveal is Heidegger’s appropriation of the phenomenological reduction to a conception of phenomenology, the central focus of which is not the subject matter (die Sache selbst) of theoretical or even proto-theoretical investigations.7 The focus is, instead, life as it is lived and the means of access to it requires a gaze from within, a way of seeing and thereby in some sense arresting it, to be sure, but by way of sharing in it. Notably, in these lectures Heidegger does not indicate any explicit differences between this conception of the phenomenological reduction and Husserl’s conception. The discussion remains at a level of generality that preserves something of the spirit of a phenomenological reduction without entering into the letter of Husserl’s account of it.

Once in Marburg, however, Heidegger “takes the gloves off.” In his first Marburg lectures, he openly criticizes his mentor’s phenomenology and the place of the reduction within it. Once again, he identifies the reduction’s positive character, albeit with a different emphasis, as he contrasts it with Descartes’ rematio. Whereas Descartes initially removes the world and the sciences from the cogito, Husserl takes them up through the reduction “into the thematic region of the new science” of phenomenology.8 But Heidegger also voices two criticisms that implicate Husserl’s conception of the phenomenological reduction. He criticizes Husserl for orienting the entire reduction to consciousness and, indeed, as something self-evident (so that, in the end, the charge of a basic kinship with the Cartesian cogito stands) (Heidegger 2006, 267). Out of a concern for certainty much like the concern that motivated Descartes, Husserl construes the reduced consciousness as the absolute region of being, i.e., the region “in which every transcendent being is in some sense there” and which underlies all other sciences. By doing so, he not only follows Descartes in setting up the cogito as “the explicit norm” for grasping this region, but expands the region’s reach to every possible object of science, in disregard of their specific manners of being (Heidegger 2006, 264–9, 172, 316).

If we compare this criticism with Heidegger’s positive remarks about the reduction, both here and in the earlier Freiburg lectures, it seems safe to conclude that his problem is not with the reduction as such, but with an ontological shortsightedness in Husserl’s use of the reduction. This conclusion is further supported by Heidegger’s explicit criticism of the eidetic reduction in these same lectures. Heidegger does not take exception to the idea of reducing individual instances of consciousness to consciousness in general; indeed, acquiring scientific propositions demands as much. But he does take exception to determining consciousness, intentionality, and its various basic genera in terms of genus, species, specific difference, and the like. The latter,
Heidegger observes, are “categories that have their determinate grounding and say nothing about such a being as consciousness [ein solches Sein wie Bewusstsein]” (Heidegger 2006, 273–4, 303).

Heidegger returns to the topic of reductions in two further Marburg lectures, identifying transcendental and eidetic reductions as two stages of the phenomenological reduction. In the first of these lectures (summer semester, 1925), his gloss is fairly straightforward. He relates how we first gain access to consciousness as a field of experiences, as its own region, by refraining from positing any transcendent world. In other words, we bracket entities with a view to “making present” how they are, “the character of their being” (Heidegger 1979, 136). This reduction is transcendental in the sense that it suspends all positing of something transcendent – not to do away with it, but to determine its manner of being. Following this transcendental reduction (the first step of the reductions) is the eidetic reduction of the newly acquired field of consciousness, the suspension of the individual character of the experiences with a view to securing solely their structure.

This much of Heidegger’s gloss could easily be transposed to the existential analyses in Being and Time and their focus on the essential manners of being of what is encountered in and with the world. Yet there are further aspects to Husserl’s “twofold” reduction, as Heidegger reads it, from which his existential analysis departs and that he flags at the conclusion of his gloss. According to the account in Ideas I, Heidegger notes, what is perceived in the field of pure consciousness is immanent to it and, as such, absolutely given. As such, it stands in sharp contrast to the contingency of any perceived transcendence. Against the background of this gloss on the reductions and the absolute sphere of consciousness achieved by them, Heidegger raises the obvious question of how this absolute sphere and the transcendence of the world can come together (Heidegger 1979, 139).

This criticism gives way, however, to a more basic criticism, the criticism, namely, that Husserl’s own use of the reductions, the reduction to consciousness, has the effect of leaving the question of being generally, and intentionality’s being in particular, unaddressed. Precisely insofar as the reductions move away from any positing of reality, including that of intentionality, they are “fundamentally unsuited to determine the being of consciousness positively” (Heidegger 1979, 150–2). To be sure, Heidegger is quick to add, Husserl would disagree, arguing that only after the reduction are we able to regard reality as it announces itself in pure consciousness. But to this riposte Heidegger asks rhetorically whether such an answer suffices for the being of the intentional. Heidegger’s complaint is that the reductions aim at what something is without addressing what it means to say that something is.

Heidegger supposes a further riposte, namely, that the being of the intentional is given in the reductions’ point of departure, namely, in the natural attitude, “the theoretically unmodified experience” (Heidegger 1979, 152). But then, Heidegger protests, the being of the intentional is taken as “that of real occurrences in the world, organic beings that are objectively on hand [vorhanden], built into the ‘fundamental layer’ of all reality, into the material being of a thing, as far as its being is concerned” (Heidegger 1979, 153). In sum, Heidegger argues, in Husserl’s hands the reductions reduce the being of the intentional to something to be constituted – supposedly like anything else or, better, anything else in nature – as an object of consciousness. “The being of the acts is determined from the outset in theoretically-dogmatic fashion as being in the sense of the reality of nature” (Heidegger 1979, 157). In this way, Husserl not only posits but answers the question of being, albeit precipitously by equating it with what thus presents itself to a scientific consciousness. To be sure, Heidegger adds, this object (the actual being of the intentional) has to be understood like any other object as the correlate of pure consciousness. But, driving home his point, Heidegger cites Husserl’s claims that, in the wake of the reductions, it is “absurd” to construe the latter as real (Hua III–1, 134).
These criticisms in the summer semester of 1925 could leave the impression that Heidegger is washing his hands of the phenomenological reduction. However, in the summer semester of 1927, he endorses a version of the phenomenological reduction, as he did in his early lectures.

For Husserl the phenomenological reduction … is the method of leading the phenomenological gaze back from the natural attitude of the human being living in the world of things and persons to the transcendent life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic experiences in which the objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. For us the phenomenological reduction signifies the process of leading the phenomenological gaze from the grasp (however it be determined) of entities to the understanding of the being of the entities ([understanding in the sense of projecting the manner of its unhiddenness]). Just as very scientific method grows and develops, so, too, does the phenomenological method on the basis of penetrating to the matters, doing so precisely with its help.

(Heidegger 1989, 29)

This passage, penned after the completion of Being and Time, demonstrates that Heidegger has a place for phenomenological reduction within his own thinking in the late 1920s. As the last line attests, the method of the reduction, while not the same as Husserl’s, has grown out of it.11

44.4. The three basic components of the phenomenological method

Heidegger’s endorsement of the phenomenological reduction is qualified, not only because he requires its redirection from an ontic to an ontological theme, but also because he regards it as one of the method’s three basic components: reduction, construction, and destruction. In lectures billed as a new elaboration of the unpublished third section of part one of Being and Time, Heidegger stresses that an understanding of phenomenology cannot be given in advance but is to be obtained only in the course of investigating concrete, individual problems that lead to phenomenology’s “basic problems.” One aim of these lectures is to demonstrate that “phenomenological research can present nothing other than the more explicit and radical understanding of the idea of scientific philosophy” that philosophers, from the ancients to Hegel, have striven for. “Phenomenology,” Heidegger adds, is the name for “the method of scientific philosophy in general.” 12

To be sure, the expression ‘scientific philosophy’ is a pleonasm but necessary in Heidegger’s view, given a tendency to equate philosophy’s task with that of forming a world-view. This tendency is motivated by the view that, in contrast to the positive sciences, philosophy does not relate to entities as such. In a sense, Heidegger concurs, but precisely because philosophy, in his view, is ontology, a science of being, a science of what every positing of entities (including a world-view’s positing) must presuppose. The lectures’ immediate aim is to become conversant with “the phenomenological manner of handling problems that refer to being” (for example, specific, interrelated theses about being) as a means of preparing his students for consideration of the basic problems of phenomenology (“What does ‘being’ mean? From what vantage point is something like being to be understood at all? How is understanding of being possible at all?”) (Heidegger 1989, 19–20).

In addressing these problems, one of the central tasks is the elaboration of the sense of the a priori character of being in relation to entities. After noting that this elaboration requires in turn “a specific type of access and manner of grasping being: the a priori knowledge,” Heidegger adds: “The basic components that belong to a priori knowledge make up what we call phenomenol-
ogy” (Heidegger 1989, 27). After designating the first such element, that of directing attention away from entities to their being, “the phenomenological reduction,” Heidegger distinguishes it from Husserl’s version, as cited above. But the reduction, he advises, is not even the central, basic element of the phenomenological method, since it does not, by itself, lead to being itself. Being has to be brought into view in a free projection. “We designate this projection of the pre-given entity onto its being and its structures as phenomenological construction” (Heidegger 1989, 29–30).

The phenomenological construction is by no means an unmediated creation. To the contrary, it takes its bearings for considering being from the entities themselves, and the latter are determined by the historical setting of the research and the researcher’s factical way of being-here. Already among the ancients, Heidegger avers, an average conception of being became established and was applied indiscriminately across domains without regard for the specific manner of being of the entities in those respective domains themselves. This ontological obliviousness has persisted, he contends, into the present, requiring the third component of the phenomenological method.

Hence, with regard to the concepts that have come down and initially need to be applied, a destruction, i.e., a critical razing of them down to the sources out of which they have been gathered, belongs necessarily to the conceptual interpretation of being and its structures, i.e., to the reductive construction of being.

(Heidegger 1989, 31)

Following this all too brief gloss on the three components, Heidegger adds that, as far as their content is concerned, they belong together and that they must be established mutually in that regard. The reduction of entities to their being goes hand-in-hand with a projection (construction) of the entity onto a sense of being and this construction, in turn, entails a dismantling (destruction) of the handed-down conceptions of being.

Regrettably, this gloss leaves much to be desired, particularly since Heidegger did not give the third part of these 1927 lectures, in which he planned to address phenomenology’s basic components. As reviewed above (section 44.3), he gives ample clues to his distinctive understanding of the phenomenological reduction. He is also somewhat forthcoming when it comes to the phenomenological destruction. The account of destruction given in the 1927 lectures is a more streamlined version of §6 of Being and Time (“The Task of a Destruction of the History of Ontology”). In both texts he insists that the destruction is not a matter of relativizing, shaking off, or finding fault with past ontological standpoints. It is instead a process of breaking them down “until we reach the primordial experiences in which the first and leading determinations of being were achieved” (Heidegger 1967, 22). Heidegger apparently construes the phenomenological destruction, then, not as an eliminative procedure, but as an interpretive process of dismantling traditional conceptions of being that have been fashioned in good faith but within certain limits (the historical limits peculiar to every philosophy, respectively). The aim of the phenomenological destruction is to retrieve the experiences on the basis of which past philosophers fashioned their conceptions of being, such that those conceptions continue to have a hold on us today. At work in this rather fanciful conception of phenomenological destruction is a presumption that the texts of past thinkers provide a means of differentiating their still operative determinations of being from the pre-ontological experiences underlying them.

As for phenomenological construction (the third basic component of the phenomenological method), Heidegger leaves few clues for unraveling what he understands by it. Yet, while he is critical of “free-floating,” “abstract conceptual,” and “pure” (“logically empty”) constructions, he deems the existential interpretation an “ontological ‘construction’” and seeks a basis for it.
that moves beyond “a merely arbitrary construction.” The acknowledgment of the constructive character of phenomenology is not surprising, particularly when juxtaposed with the reductive and destructive components of the method. The reduction precludes reliance upon talk merely of entities (whether pre-scientific or scientific); the destruction guards against naively taking up traditional determinations of being (whether explicitly or implicitly). In the face of these constraints, recourse to construction is unavoidable. Yet this recourse obviously brings with it the burden of discriminating between constructions that are genuinely phenomenological and those that are not.

44.5. The ontological ambition of existential phenomenology

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger initially characterizes phenomenology as a concept of method, the manner of treating the fundamental question of philosophy, i.e., the question of the sense of being. As such, it signifies neither a standpoint nor a direction nor a problem. These qualifications are gibes at Neo-Kantian conceptions of philosophy, but they also underscore an important feature of Heidegger’s phenomenology as his philosophical method. Instead of finding application to an already established discipline (e.g., epistemology, ethics, etc.), his phenomenology is part of an inquiry that makes a discipline’s (ontology’s) development possible at all. Just as Scholastics, following Aristotle, ground the method of a science in its subject matter, Heidegger observes further that a concept of method is more genuine and farther removed from a technical device, the more originally it is rooted in the critical engagement with the matter itself. He regards his phenomenology accordingly as rooted in and constrained by its subject matter, the being of beings (Heidegger 1967, 27–8).

As a means of clarifying, in a preliminary way, what this means (namely, how the method is rooted in its subject matter), Heidegger examines the two roots of the term, *phenomenon* and *logos*. ‘Phenomenon’ signifies fundamentally what is manifest, an entity’s showing of itself and thus “a pre-eminent way of encountering something,” since even semblances and so-called “mere appearances” trade on that significance (Heidegger 1967, 28–31). Despite the myriad uses and translations of ‘logos,’ Heidegger contends that, as talk or discourse (*Rede*), it primarily signifies “making manifest” what is talked about, “letting it be seen … of itself” (*von dem selbst her*, i.e., on its own terms or as it presents itself), and thereby rendering it accessible to others. Thanks to this function, *logos* takes the form of a synthesis, making it possible to see something together with something else, to see it as something. (While the synthesis can thereby bring something out into open, uncovering it, the synthesis can also be deceptive and conceal it.) Combining the glossed meanings of the two terms, Heidegger defines phenomenology as “letting what shows itself be seen of itself, [i.e., on its own terms] just as it shows itself of itself” (Heidegger 1967, 34).

Aping Husserl’s principle of all principles, Heidegger further explains that ‘phenomenology’ stands for “grasping its subject matters in such a way that everything up for discussion about them must be treated by directly showing it and directly identifying [or demonstrating: *ausweisen*] it” (Heidegger 1967, 35; see, too, Heidegger 1979, 117–18). In this context, Heidegger also endorses the descriptive character of phenomenology, albeit under these constraints.

With this formal concept of phenomenology in hand, Heidegger turns to the question of “de-formalizing” it, the question of what it should let be seen. To this question, the answer has already been given above. What needs to be identified explicitly is “what initially and for the most part precisely does not show itself … but at the same time belongs to what shows itself such that it makes up its sense and ground” – i.e., the being of beings (Heidegger 1967, 35). After making the point that phenomenology is the way of accessing and identifying
ontology’s theme, Heidegger adds: “Ontology is only possible as phenomenology” (Heidegger 1967, 35; see, too, Heidegger 1967, 38).

Yet the phenomenological focus of Being and Time is not ontology as such, but rather fundamental ontology, an investigation required for any ontology, namely, the investigation of the being of the entity for whom being matters and who has, accordingly, an understanding of being. Heidegger reserves the term Da-sein or ‘being-here’ for this entity that is equivalent (but not identical) to a human being. The phenomenology of Being and Time is thus a “phenomenology of being-here.” The corresponding phenomenological descriptions display or lay out (auslegen) its manner of being, in keeping with the original meaning of the term ‘hermeneutics.’ What is said in this phenomenology of being-here has this hermeneutical character, through which – Heidegger unhesitatingly, even peremptorily, declares – “the authentic sense of being makes itself known to the understanding of being that is inherent to being-here itself” (Heidegger 1967, 37).

44.6. Affectivity and authenticity

The constitutive character of affectivity for being-in-the-world (and, by consequence, for intentional experiences) and the pretension to authenticity make up two additional ways in which, at least prima facie, Heidegger’s phenomenology saliently diverges from Husserl’s phenomenology. Far from being ancillary, affectivity informs the other basic existential characters of being-here: the ways that we understand and talk. In this way, Heidegger builds into his account of being-in-the-world Aristotle’s notion of orexis (felt motivation). A mood like angst, furthermore, is fundamental in its capacity to disclose what it means to be here. It discloses, among other things, a capacity to be authentic, in the face of an inevitable tendency to conform. No analysis of being-in-the-world (or the intentionality spawned by it) can lose sight of the fundamental, affective struggle to be responsible for it.

Notes

1 For Husserl’s increasing wariness and eventual rejection of Heidegger’s “so-called” phenomenology, see Hua-Dok III/3, 234–7, 254, 456–7, 473, 476; Hua-Dok III/6, 277–8.
2 In the first half of 1923, after declaring that “Husserl was never a philosopher,” Heidegger writes Karl Löwith that his latest lectures deliver the main blows to phenomenology, and that, once he publishes, Husserl will see what he is up to, leaving him no chance of getting an appointment with Husserl’s help or succeeding him; see Ted Kiesl and Thomas Sheehan, Becoming Heidegger (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 372. Yet he does not share such sentiments with Husserl himself. Husserl, in fact, vacations at Todtnauberg with Heidegger in April of 1926, as the galleys for Being and Time arrive. Husserl helps him proofread the galleys, writing that he does so “enthusiastically” and that it is giving him a great deal of satisfaction (Hua-Dok III/3, 347). Within a month or so of this episode, however, Heidegger writes Jaspers that Husserl not only found the work strange but could find no place for it in his phenomenology, from which Heidegger concludes that he is further removed from Husserl than he can believe (Heidegger and Jasper 1990, 64).
3 For interpretations of Heidegger’s phenomenology after 1930, see Crowell 2017 and Sheehan 2016.
4 See Dahlstrom 2018.
5 Heidegger envisions a reciprocal – ontic-positive and transcendental-ontological – questioning that negotiates the rapid and complex self-critical developments on the part of the positive sciences themselves with philosophy’s own developing clarification of its essence. Communication on this level cannot be tied down to fixed rules; instead it is genuine and fruitful only if guided by an “instinct for the matter and by the sureness of a scientific good sense [Takt],” beholden to nothing but the “inner necessity of the scientific problem itself” (Heidegger 1976a, 67).
6 See Dahlstrom 2001, 113 n72.
7 Heidegger 1979, 274. As with “the given,” Heidegger is anything but consistent when it comes to die Sache selbst; see, for example, Heidegger 1993a, 58, 24, 95, 249. So, too, Heidegger identifies phenome-
nology with the negative task of securing an account of the matters themselves in the face of prejudices and the positive task of analyzing them in such a way as to explain how preconceptions about them emerge; see Heidegger 1976b, 32–3.


9 For an analogous criticism of essentialism, see Gilson 1952.

10 Heidegger takes issue with taking the natural attitude as the reduction’s starting point insofar as (1) the attitude is “not natural at all,” but proto-theoretical and (2) attitudes suppose but are not the same as “the human being’s natural manner of experience” (Heidegger 1979, 155–6).

11 This section’s aim has been to demonstrate how Heidegger appropriates the phenomenological reduction. Whether in the end, as Husserl contends, Heidegger fatally misunderstands it is a separate issue. Crucial for this issue are the documents (drafts and correspondence) surrounding their ultimately failed collaboration on the phenomenology entry for Encyclopedia Britannica. On this issue, see Crowell 1990 and Theodorou 2015, 78–100.

12 All passages cited in this paragraph are from Heidegger 1989, 2–5.

13 On the following page, Heidegger rejects the idea that his is a “Catholic phenomenology,” a notion as absurd, he observes, as that of a “Protestant mathematics.” This endorsement of an a priori investigation is iterated (with a nod of appreciation to Husserl) in Heidegger 1967, 50 n1. In Heidegger 1979, 99–103, Heidegger depicts “the primordial sense of the a priori” – detached from subjectivity as well as what transients it – as the third decisive discovery of phenomenology.

14 Phenomenology is said to be opposed to all “free-floating constructions” (Heidegger 1967, 28; see, too, 302); Heidegger also criticizes philosophical constructions, particularly among Neo-Kantian philosophers (Heidegger 1993a, 2, 26, 133, 135, 174, 191, 214) and “Hegel’s ‘constructions’” (Heidegger 1967, 435).

15 Heidegger 1967, 197, 260, 303; he refers, too, to a “phenomenological construction” and an “existential construction” of historicity (Heidegger 1967, 375–6, 378). Once again, anticipations of this positive sense of ‘construction’ abound in Heidegger’s early lectures; see, for example, Heidegger 1993a, 138, 148, 228, 233.

16 In early lectures Heidegger speaks of phenomenology’s proximity to art, as it gives shape to what has been taken apart; see Heidegger 1993a, 255.

17 For Husserl, too, phenomenology is a means to ontology; see Hua II 32, 58f; and Hua I 38.

18 This grounding is unique, to be sure, since in this case what is investigated coincides (allegedly) with how it is investigated; see Heidegger 1967, 35: “Ontologie ist nur als Phänomenologie möglich” and Heidegger 2004, 123: “Nur das Wie ist wiederholbar.”

19 In 1923/24 and 1925, he similarly appeals to Aristotle’s analysis of ὄρεξις in terms of what shows itself in the light of day or darkness and his determination of λόγος as talk that is meaningful vocalizing and ostensive; Heidegger 2006, 6–41; and Heidegger 1979, 110–21.

20 Heidegger 1967, 32; there are, Heidegger is quick to add, forms of discourse (such as requesting) that make something manifest in a different way.

21 Heidegger 1993b, 310: “The object is not grasped through αἴσθησις but instead through ὄρεξις; the ‘striving’ has the function of discovering …. Not an observing being that first looks around itself observing and then moves toward something; ὄρεξις is instead the basic manner [of movement].” For the accompanying affective state in which one finds oneself (translated as sich befinden), see Heidegger 1993b, 185–6; see, too, Heidegger 1967, 171. So, too, Heidegger characterizes intentionality as “being out for something volitionally (ὄρεξις)”; see Heidegger 1988, 70.

References


