

# The World Picture and its Conflict in Dilthey and Heidegger

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, I describe the hermeneutics of perceiving and picturing a world in Wilhelm Dilthey's works. I examine some of the issues facing Dilthey's approach to picturing a world [*Weltbild*] and the conflict [*Streit*] of world-pictures, contrasting Dilthey's interpretive strategies with those of the early Martin Heidegger who both borrows from and critiques Dilthey's conception of picturing the world.

## 1. Picturing a World

Wilhelm Dilthey's theory of "worldview" [*Weltanschauung*] aims at depicting the formation of life through its interpretive perception or picturing [*anschauen*] of a world [*Welt*]. A historically situated and self-reflexive life interpretively pictures and forms a world for itself and expresses and communicates this world in myriad ways throughout its life. This world-picturing [*Weltbild*] does not emerge through the self-intuition or self-assertion of a monadic subject, as the self, its subjectivity, and its world can only emerge in relation to the exteriority of things and others. As others make my self-interpretation and individuation possible through processes of learning and socialization, one's world is primarily a human world, even if it is never exclusively this. A person's world is still a human world even if one rejects the human for the inhuman, the impersonal divine or the natural, as supernaturalism and naturalism (whether scientific, poetic, or mystical) are also socially-culturally informed interpretations and world-views of life.

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A plurality of world-perspectives emerge since humans are constituted in social-historical worlds shaped by natural forces, biological drives, practical interests, sedimented customs and traditions, the reproduction of powerful structures and institutions, normative-spiritual strivings, and communicative and self-reflection. Given such conditions of diverse origins, the sciences of the human world also need to be multifaceted to address this complexity. Furthermore, unlike the natural sciences that can bracket their basis in human life, the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] cannot escape their own reflexivity and consequently the need for self-reflectively engaging the human world from which they emerge, since knowledge of the human world falls within that world itself.

As a worldly bodily being exposed in its exteriority and facticity, these processes of self-understanding and interpretation are not purely conceptual or self-contained (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. xvii/1989, p. 50). They involve all dimensions and “faculties” – “rational” and “irrational,” cognitive and affective – of human existence. The human sciences can correct for but cannot eliminate the passions and interests of human life that enter into the study of that life. Dilthey’s insight is more than pragmatic. Dilthey reformulates subjectivity as contextualized and embodied while maintaining its individuality and potential for personhood.

The immanent or internally given world of the self to itself implies the original givenness from the first-person perspective of co-agents or participants of meaningful social-cultural structures and processes. In this context, “inner” refers to the first-person life-context, which is inherently bodily, perceptual, and worldly as well as social-historical, in which objects are pre-conceptually and conceptually understood. The “internal” human world is constituted through social-historically formed practical goods, interests, norms, purposes, and values (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. 9/1989, p. 61). “Outer” or “external” refers to the abstraction of objects from their life-nexus in the third-person perspective of observation and explanation characteristic of the modern natural sciences and associated with metaphysical worldviews such as naturalism and materialism (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, pp. 9–10/1989, pp. 61–62, 67). Such worldviews give the impression of being modernistic in being associated with the development of the natural sciences. Yet they remain metaphysical in asserting that there is one definitive picture and truth about the world. Metaphysics represents the world through a unified point projected outside the world in

order to conceptualize the world as a transparent systematic totality (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 38, 96).

Metaphysical claims consequently presuppose a perspective external to any possible perspective and come into conflict with other characteristics of modernity: skepticism about cognizing the transcendent and noumenal and respect for the plurality, perspectivality, and individuality. Dilthey articulates this point not as a transcendent truth but as a conflict between the historical consciousness of the present and of difference with every form of metaphysics understood as science (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 3). This antinomy between reason and history is due to reason extending beyond itself and claiming definiteness about the indefinite, cognitive clarity about what is in fact a product of an affective mood [*Stimmung*] and historical nexus [*Zusammenhang*] of conditions. This antinomy that places exaggerated rationalism into question is itself historical rather than transcendental. If it reoccurs in different contexts, each context has its dynamics and a comparative approach that preserves particularity is crucial.

The historical consciousness of differences, which cannot be mediated without problematic metaphysical appeals, raises questions of skepticism and relativism. After the end of metaphysics as unified science, which includes positivistic programs of the unity of science, is there and to what extent can there be value, validity, and truth in the multiplicity and relativity of human experiences? Without the metaphysical integration of the world, which has collapsed into paradox and aporia, we are faced with incommensurable data from myriad sources. As Heidegger later complains, being [*Sein*] is absent in beings [*Seiende*], the world is lost in the plurality of worlds, and the ontological difference disappears in endless ontic differences (Heidegger, 2001<sup>2</sup>). Likewise, the positivist Richard von Mises criticizes – from the perspective of the unity of science – the disunity and ambiguity produced by maintaining the empirical difference of the subject matter (von Mises, 1968, p. 209).

Because we are always confronted by the singular as well as the whole, the disrelational as well as the relational, ontic and empirical multiplicity cannot be conclusively combined into one fixed world-picture or sublimated and removed [*aufgehoben*] by an external category or third term (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, pp. 9–12/1989, pp. 61–64). Instead of asserting the unity of the world and the sciences, or of being and knowledge, as phenomenology and positivism desire, Dilthey unfolded a non-reductive or pluralistic empiricism in relation to

knowledge, and moderate skepticism in response to metaphysical and speculative theories.<sup>1</sup>

The truth of relativism and skepticism, which their critics miss, is the therapeutic correction of false universalism that takes the established present type of human being as the natural and universal standard (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 5, 75). To this extent, Dilthey articulated the “death of man” a century before post-modernism, as no one fixed determinate type called “man” is discoverable in history (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 76-77). As the naturalistic world-picture indicates, humans are nature (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 100). Yet human biological, geographical, climatic, and historical nature is diverse. No essence or transcendental argument can exclude human diversity even though there are commonalities in all dimensions of human life.

Given the commonalities of human existence, understanding and interpretation are not random. Further, the individuality of things does not make any interpretation possible much less legitimate, as it calls the interpreter to be receptive and responsive to the other phenomenally and immanently from out of itself and in its own empirical situation. The subject matter itself in its difference becomes the basis for interpretation. Hermeneutics, at least in its non-ontological and non-universal variety, is inherently of the other. What is methodologically appropriate then, if we are concerned with universal validity and facticity, commonality and singularity, is a morphological-comparative strategy that elucidates individuality in relation to its context and its others. That is, a strategy that includes all ontic and empirical aspects of human existence, including what is dismissed as “irrational,” and especially psychology and history (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 9). These psychological and historical elements are not of course deduced from a priori ideas, transcendental categories, or universal hypothetical-deductive theories; the phenomena need to be elucidated from out of themselves. Thus, the a posteriori, contingent, and empirical as well as the descriptive and analytic are necessary for each science in its own way according to the immanent sense and direction of its objects.

<sup>1</sup> On Dilthey’s empiricism, see Nelson, 2007b.

## 2. Living in the Historical World

It is incorrect to claim, as one author does, that «[f]or Dilthey, the task of human understanding is to liberate the social from the empirical» and, as if world-picturing and the empirical were disconnected categories, it is «an image of the world, a *Weltbild*, determines the value of life...» (Horowitz, 1989, pp. 28–29). Value is not imposed on life from the outside, as life valuing itself forms a world-picture that in turn orients and disorients that life in the tension between value and facticity. Likewise, a *Weltbild* is a dynamic experientially-shaped understanding and picturing of a world rather than a static and immutable «cosmic picture» (Nagle, 2002, p. 87). Instead of being underway on a one-way street moving from a doctrinal principle, originary source, or self-evident intuition to the phenomena, experience and worldview interact and inform one another as part and whole, particular and general. Dilthey's accordingly prioritizes the empirical [*Empirie*], including the appearance of the unexpected that can reorient or traumatize a world, while resisting the exclusivity of reductive conceptions of empirical explanation.

Positivist tactics miss the dynamic structures and holistic living nexus of human phenomena in breaking them down into a collection of hypotheses and data (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 15). Dilthey's holistic experientialism opens up and extends knowing to the unrestricted empiria [*unbefangene Empirie*], thus undermining doctrinal atomistic empiricism [*Empirie, nicht Empirismus*] (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. 81; 1997<sup>2</sup>, p. 17).<sup>2</sup> Dilthey's pluralistic non-dogmatic hermeneutical empiricism is especially appropriate for the demands of the human sciences. Dilthey's holism indicates a different logic that coordinates whole and part rather than subordinating the particular under a universal or integrating it into a totality (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 65). It is holistic, without eliminating the differences that make up a differentiated nexus. It is historical and “positive” as history is differentiation and the “positive” is the particular. That is, history is not only a way of seeing or a methodological science, it is at the same time the particular events, persons, structures, etc., which constitute it.

History presents an unending and dazzling richness and variety that appears to support historical relativity and incommensurability. But while Dilthey demands that we recognize the truth of historicism that each historical moment

<sup>2</sup> Compare Nelson, 2007, pp. 108–128.

has its own unique value and validity, he also criticizes historicism for its one-sidedness in forgetting the more general and universal that allows the singular to be recognized. Consequently, Dilthey argues that further historicizing is the cure for historicism and historical relativity, as historical consciousness moves from the destruction of the ahistorical and timeless to its own historically informed forms of validity (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 10, 78). On the one hand, history constitutes the very activity, self-understanding, and subjectivity of the subject (Landgrebe, 1968, p. 19). On the other hand, since such historicity entails the necessity of the self to understand and interpret itself in relation to others, things, and a world, the subject is not a brute historical given or monadic singularity.<sup>3</sup>

Heidegger (2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 346–347) suspects that subjectivity in Dilthey remains beholden to a modern conception of the epistemic and psychological subject that needs to be overcome.<sup>4</sup> This criticism ignores Dilthey's thinking of subjectivity as embodied living and worldly. Subjectivity always involves interpreting the self's contextual historicity, which permit and require developmental and comparative strategies of description and analysis. It is in this context that Dilthey introduces the notion of types that he employs in his morphology of world-pictures. Types have a preliminary heuristic character that allows them to open up and articulate the singular in relation to its contexts (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 86, 99). Types are not irrevocable constructs or irreversible prejudices. Types are the researcher's hermeneutical anticipations that can be transformed through research just as the self's anticipations about the other should be revised in encountering the other (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 99–100). This is not only a methodological issue, as a world-picture is rooted in and expresses a life (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 78). Dilthey's comparative morphology of life- and world-pictures leads to their living nexus and experiential context (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 8).

This comparative coordinating strategy also informs Dilthey's response to the question of relativism. The antinomies within a scientific world-picture and the contradictions between world-pictures are not resolvable by conceptual theorizing because they are expressions of life in its diversity and perspectival-ity (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 8). The self-interpretation of a world-picture leads Dilthey to

<sup>3</sup> On the historically situated and interpretive and reflective formation of the self, see Nelson, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> I present a divergent interpretation of Dilthey's psychology and epistemology from Heidegger's in Nelson, 2010 and 2008.

consider metaphysical and other cognitive-theoretical systems to be an expression [*Ausdruck*] of life and lived-experience [*Erlebnis*]. Metaphysics, or any other “philosophy” including Dilthey’s hermeneutical experientialism, cannot resolve the conflict, as life- and world stances and their conflict are constitutive of the dynamics and perspectives of life itself (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 98). To remove life from science and philosophy does not resolve the question and save us from “irrationality,” but leaves us with an impoverished thinking that is only calculation and an instrument of domination (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 20). The resolution of the antinomy in a projected systematic totality is to suppress the differences constitutive of life (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 24). Instead of a systematic totality that suppresses what is considered contingent and different, Dilthey appeals for an epistemic humility.<sup>5</sup> Dilthey identifies with the cultivation of a tragic sensibility that is an openness to the irresolvable differences and conflicts of life (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 71).

Although Dilthey wants to retain the insights of German idealism, he is not an advocate of idealism and the priority of consciousness over embodied worldly life. Such life not only projects and forms a world out of its own consciousness or self-existence, but its world is always already there [*da*] for it (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 16). The world is inevitably present and there as a whole for the self in one way or another (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 43). The self is not constituted in self-reflection alone but is consciousness and reflection is a response to its exteriority, facticity, and worldliness (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 39). Life becomes a world through the irremovable experience of resistance and alterity (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 16–18).

According to Dilthey’s student Georg Misch, Dilthey’s «thereness» in the midst of life is not Heidegger’s transcendental and impersonal «it worlds». It is not a «worlding of the world» that absorbs the individual, but the formation of an individual reality and individuation of a world for a relational self (Misch, 1931, p. 247).<sup>6</sup> This process of the formation of a world for a life centers on the feeling, thought, and will of the individual and the relation of the body to its world rooted in the senses and the bodily feeling of life (Dilthey, 1977, p. 175). Dilthey describes here the traumatic emergence of the self through its differentiation from the world in resistance and the exposure to facticity of its receptive spontaneity and vitality.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dilthey’s “epistemic humility” is underexplored. This conception has been developed in regard to Kant by Langton, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> On the traumatic constitution of existence, see Nelson, 2009.

In place of a dichotomy between active spontaneity and passive receptivity, Dilthey argued for the crucial role of receptive spontaneity. Receptivity and spontaneity are a continuum, conditional, and presuppose each other (Dilthey 1957<sup>2</sup>, p. 84; 1977, p. 156). As a consequence, life is first there in the tension of non-identity, in the reflexive awareness of the self in its feeling of something exterior and resistant to itself (1977, pp. 157–158). Self-feeling and self-consciousness arise and presuppose resistance and the externality of an enviroing world (1977, p. 166). The “internal” human world is thus not an ideational or spiritual construct. It is constituted through social-historically formed practical goods, interests, norms, purposes, and values (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. 9/1989, p. 61). A world is mediated through material, social, and symbolic relations. A world is felt and lived and never merely a conceptual, ideational, or representational object (Dilthey, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 17). Life interestedly cares about and understands its own life from out of itself and in response to others.

History and biography are the most appropriate ways of expressing and provoking reflection on life. All sciences have an element of art in being practices, but some are more thoroughly artistic employing all of our spontaneity and responsiveness. Poetry and the other arts provide the most powerful and moving insights into life and the individual’s formation of a world-picture. Art and literature are nearest and most expressive of the self-presentation of life in its fullness and complexity (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 26). Works of art do not only express life, they heighten and intensify it and disclose its further possibilities that often remain unseen and unheard in the course of daily life. Art is the clearest articulation of the imagination, and it is the imagination that approaches the singular without eliminating it and allows for a non-coercive juxtaposition of singulars (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 26–27).<sup>8</sup>

Art, religion, and philosophy are extensions and intensifications of the feeling of life, or – in some cases – its condensation and impoverishment, in worldviews. The “internal” feeling of life is confronted by exteriorities that resist, threaten, and undermine it, including the irreducible exteriority and facticity of death (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 45–46, 53, 79, 81). Even at its most abstract and conceptual height, endeavors to systematically comprehend and organize the whole leads to aporias and downfall. Dilthey accordingly arrives at the opposite conclusion from Hegel. Philosophy in the end can only be deeply per-

<sup>8</sup> On the exemplary significance of the aesthetic in Dilthey, see Makkreel, 1986 and Nelson, 2007a.



sonal and individual even in expressing what is impersonal and universal (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 32). A philosophy is not merely a system of concepts; it is oriented in a fundamental mood [*Grundstimmung*] and disposition [*Gemütsverfassung*], which conceptualization and reflection in turn can influence (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 33). These moods orient the picturing the world as it is formed and individualized in its epochal and generational contexts (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 35, 82).

### 3. The Conflict of World Pictures

Another facet of Dilthey's depiction of world-pictures is their conflict and contest [*Streit, Widerstreit*] arising from the divergent conditions and agonistic dynamic of life (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 18, 98, 152). Individual and divergent world-perspectives and their tensions can be suppressed in totalizing theories and ideologies, but they are haunted and disturbed by the alterity and conflict they seek to master. These attempts at complete identity and unity result in irresolvable aporias and antinomies that are the overextension of a world-picture. In their internal aporias and external conflicts, conflict and incommensurability [*Widerstreit*] are revealed as constitutive of life. Conflict and resistance condition even the most immediate self-consciousness (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 43). Consciousness accordingly arrives at its own finitude and the need to cultivate humility in face of the ultimately ineffable character of life.

The basic *Widerstreit* prevents the closure of life in a metaphysical or conceptual system insofar as it inevitably is led to its limits. These limits are disclosed in the antinomies and aporias of conceptual thought. Dilthey articulated a "philosophy of world-pictures" in order to account for the genesis and conflict of systems of interpretation of meaning in relation to the feeling and nexus of life. World-pictures express a natural and legitimate tendency to unify and integrate experience even as the conflicts inherent in life prevent the questionable closure of life in a complete totality or system, as they inevitably face their limits in the self-generated antinomies and aporias of life.

The conflict of life, of its interpretations and worldviews, signifies the impossibility of an indifferent relativism in which everything is equal in its independence. The forces of life and human responsiveness make the disinterested equality of relativism impossible. Life as the differentiation of *Widerstreit* resists totalization, whether this occurs as metaphysics, science, or theology, a unified picture of the world (an ultimate worldview or metaphysical system), or a perspective detached from all contexts and perceiving life from outside of

itself without the aporias of immanence (the so-called view from no-where) (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 98). For any contextual form of thought, and all thinking presupposes a further context of conditions it cannot fully know or master, resistance and excess are irreducible, and remainder and rest remain incomprehensible to identity-thinking (1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 152).

An epoch has its homogeneity but is also an agonistic and differentiated field of forces (1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 158–159). The recognition of the intrinsic conflict and difference constituting an epoch is visible in Dilthey's concept of generation (Dilthey, 1956<sup>2</sup>, pp. 177–178/2002, p. 159; Heidegger 1985, p. 385). Dilthey characterized a generation by its receptivity and dependency that forms a relative homogeneity distinct from other generations. This homogeneity does not consist in a fixed essence but in a generation forming and sharing in an intersection of possibilities unavailable to other generations (Dilthey, 1957<sup>2</sup>, p. 37). «Generation» is a determination of the social-historical self, through which the self is understood through the possibilities of its facticity and historicity.

Each generation encompasses a multiplicity without one exclusive unified worldview. An age is typified by an individual who reveals the age's contradictory and conflicting impulses. Unlike Hegel's one person who embodies an age, there is no one definitive identity in the determination of an epoch but a field of tensions and a *Widerstreit* of worldviews immanent to the movement and self-understanding of life itself. There is a dominant yet no single unified tendency of an age, as anarchic possibilities of the creative, new, and otherwise – which contest the hegemony of the dominant worldview – emerge and defy control (Dilthey, 1956<sup>2</sup>, p. 178).<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. Resistance and World-Formation in Dilthey and Heidegger

In Dilthey's thought, the phenomenon of resistance is what enables the formation of a worldly self, a self that cannot simply be itself because it is always related to others, objects, and the world with which it is co-given or equiprimordial. It is difference that constitutes identity. Resistance is a key feature of Dilthey's thought for the early Heidegger. Its significance has been underestimated because of Heidegger's critique of it in *Being and Time*. There Heideg-

<sup>9</sup> On generation and the new in Dilthey, see O'Byrne, 2010.

ger rejected resistance as proving the externality of the world, since resistance already presupposes world, but this does not negate the import of resistance as such. Heidegger would take up and transform resistance at various levels of his thought – from the resistance of things in the breakdowns of their purposiveness to the resistance of existence to human projects and understanding in the impossibility of mastering death.

Worldly resistance remains significant in Heidegger's early thought, as experience is still related to the «resistant» insofar as experience is both passive and active and implies a differentiating setting-apart-with [*Sich-Auseinander-Setzen-mit*] and the self-assertion of what is experienced (Heidegger, 1995, p. 9).<sup>10</sup> The origin and goal of philosophy is factual life understanding and articulating itself, as thinking springs from its facticity in order to return to it (Heidegger, 1992-93, p. 173; 1995, pp. 8, 15). Facticity does not only open access to the world through differentiation but resists and blocks access to itself through its everyday indifference (Heidegger, 1995, pp. 12, 15–16). Heidegger also reinterpreted Dilthey's resistance as the ruination, counter-movement, and transversal of life (Heidegger, 1992b, p. 185). The “there” in and from which the “I” occurs is fundamentally resistant and ruining (1992b, p. 185). Thus, despite Heidegger's rejection of resistance as an argument for the self-existence of the external world, Dilthey's notion of resistance is appropriated and transformed in Heidegger's thinking of life's phenomenality and facticity.

In contrast to this approach to resistance as (1) the key to individuation and (2) the counter-movement of life, which is immanent to life insofar as it is life itself that presents us with its ruination and questionability, we can compare (3) Heidegger's critical interpretation of Dilthey's account of resistance in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1985, pp. 209–211)<sup>11</sup>. As Magda King remarks, resistance «characterizes beings within the world, and by no means explains the phenomenon of the world» (King, 2001, p. 261). Resistance occurs from out of the world rather than being the how or way in which the world is grasped as world. It is significant though that Heidegger provides an ontological basis for resistance rather than rejecting it: Resistance «gives a factual existence to understand his exposedness to and dependence upon “a world of things”

<sup>10</sup> On the import of *Auseinandersetzung* in the early Heidegger, see Nelson, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also Heidegger, 1992b, pp. 1301–1331.

which, in spite of all technical progress, he can never master» (King, 2001, p. 261).

Heidegger recognized in his Kassel lectures that the epistemological and methodological aspects of Dilthey's thought need to be considered in the context of the centrality of the question and concept of life (Heidegger, 1992-93, pp. 153–154). Historical knowledge is reflexive of being a self (1992-93, p. 153). Life as knowing follows itself in its history in attempting to know itself (*ibid.*). According to the early Heidegger, the self is a world along with the environing world and the world of others. This «self-world in factual life is neither a thing nor an ego in the epistemological sense», but it has the character of «a definite significance, that of possibility». (Heidegger, 1992a, p. 232; 1992b, p. 94) The self-world is not a denial of others but indicates how the “I” is always referred to others and the world in the equiprimordiality of the self-world, with-world, and environing world (1992b, p. 95). These three overlapping co-constitutive worlds make up the “life-world” such that they cannot be isolated from each other or interpreted as self-sufficient (1992b, p. 96). Thus, despite the constitutive but cogiven significance of the self-world in these early lecture courses, Heidegger was already critical of the primacy of the subject and its separation from life. Life can neither be understood as an object nor a subject (1992a, p. 236).

Dilthey's central question is that of historical self-knowledge in which the being who questions is addressed by and included in the question (Heidegger, 1992-93, p. 153). Life confronts me as always mine, such that the “subject” is always already differentiated (Dilthey, 1997<sup>2</sup>, pp. 346–347). Life is, however, not only the ground of knowledge but is unknowable. Life constantly understands itself while remaining non-transparent and ineffable to itself. This remainder is also a concern of Heidegger's early thought from the singular thisness [*haecceitas*] of his early work on Duns Scotus to the «it worlds» [*es weltet*] and «there is/it gives» [*es gibt*] already discussed by Heidegger in the late 1910's. This promoted Dilthey's importance in Heidegger's eyes, since Dilthey understood life as an exposure to facticity in its singularity and contingency (Dilthey, 1997<sup>2</sup>, p. 348). The facticity of life is the last ground of knowledge, as knowledge cannot penetrate its own facticity (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. 322; 1970, p. 53).

Although hermeneutics, facticity, and life operate as basic words in Dilthey's writings, the question of the possibility of a «hermeneutics of factual life» is first explicitly posed by Heidegger in his early lecture courses. Heideg-

ger's question would then be of how Dilthey's used of these three concepts. The facticity of life shows itself in experiences of resistance, the inability of concepts to lead thought out of its own incommensurabilities and aporias, the discontinuities and interruptions, the limits and breaks which do not allow the immanence and givenness of human life to be transparent and which prevent their being grasped through mediation.<sup>12</sup> Heidegger argued that facticity is neither immediate to intuition nor can it be dialectically mediated and pushed aside in a discussion of resistance and questionability (Heidegger, 1992b, pp. 148–151). Instead facticity presents us with the immediacy of questionability and ruination that shakes up all immediateness (1992b, pp. 150–151). Facticity can only be articulated by strengthening and intensifying its factual character by lingering within its ambiguity and questionability (1992b, pp. 152–153). Facticity is formally indicative of a fullness and richness of a worldly context of determinations that we cannot fully comprehend nor escape.

### 5. A Conflict of Worlds?

One objective, determinate, *integral system* of reality that excludes other possible ones is indemonstrable (Dilthey, 1959<sup>4</sup>, p. 402/1989, p. 235).

Heidegger becomes increasingly more critical of Dilthey during the 1920's. He unfolds his most sustained critique of Dilthey in his lecture course *Introduction to Philosophy*. Here he argues against understanding the world and world-picturing through the multiplicity of ontic differences for the sake of an originary ontological difference. Heidegger throws into question the ontic differences of the empirical articulated by Dilthey.<sup>13</sup> A worldview is not an observational interpretive response to multiplicity; it is primarily world-intuition [*weltanschauen*] and a factually gripped being-in-the-world for Heidegger:

Precisely the differentiating confrontation [*Auseinandersetzung*] renders being

<sup>12</sup> The discontinuities of time and history do not emerge after Heidegger's "turn", they are at play in his early project of a hermeneutics of facticity. Note the opposing claim in Bernasconi, 1993, p. 180.

<sup>13</sup> The issue of Heidegger's apparent monism is not new. Ernst Cassirer argued in 1931 that the «reduction to temporal finitude» in Heidegger's explication of Kant is a monism that undermines the Kantian distinction between the knowable sensible and the unknowable supersensible. Compare Friedman, 2000, pp. 140–142.

in itself available and not mere observation. Observation is a supplementary form of the possible appropriation of truth, but it is not the essential one of making manifest. It is also fundamentally the authentic meaning that dwells inside the term “intuition”. It is hardly self-evident that the Western concept of knowledge is oriented precisely to the idea of intuition and that Kant applied the idea of knowledge as *intuitus*. “Intuition” of something wants to express the immediate having of something in its entirety. Such having, as a sought after ideal, includes in itself the orientation toward not-having, not-possessing. (Heidegger, 2001<sup>2</sup>, p. 344)

Observation and empirical inquiry already presupposes encountering and confronting the world, but – as Dilthey stresses – the encounter can repeat, miss, or be transformed in the encounter such that the empirical ontic dimension should not be dismissed. In traditional thought, this encountering prior to inquiry is understood as intuition and Heidegger returns to a phenomenological intuition independent of Dilthey’s empirical interpretive strategies. Heidegger’s intuition is not only an immediate grasping but is deferred through not grasping. According to Heidegger:

Worldview [*Weltanschauung*] is basically called having-world, to possess world: that is, holding itself out in being-in-the-world that uncovers the lack of bearing [*Haltlosigkeit*], in which worldview to be sure continues to provide the direction of bringing it into possession. In the expression “world-intuition” [*Weltanschauung*], the appropriated belongingness [*zugeeignete Zugehörigkeit*] of being-in-the-world to being-there [*Dasein*] is held to be heard from there. World-intuition as world-having is at any time in one way or another factually gripped being-in-the-world. We may not then, taken strictly, say that being-there has a worldview, instead being-there is necessarily world-intuition. (Heidegger, 2001<sup>2</sup>, p. 344).

Whereas Dilthey emphasized the interpretive character of worldviews, Heidegger highlights their intuition. Heidegger contends against Dilthey that a worldview is not formed out of multiple and heterogeneous aspects and elements. It is not of “diverse provenance” but rather an originary unified phenomenon in the transcendence of *Dasein* in its nothingness and ecstatic and eccentric lack of bearing (Heidegger, 2001<sup>2</sup>, p. 354).<sup>14</sup> *Dasein* is in each case betrayed and endangered in its transcendence-in-the-world, or in «the each

<sup>14</sup> I explore the role of nothingness and lack of bearing further in a comparative context in Nelson, 2010.

time of the facticity of transcendence» (2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 358, 367). *Dasein* does not first of all ontically observe and inquire, as is emphasized in Dilthey's empiricism, it rather primordially understands and «intuits the world» (2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 367–368, 382–390). Human existence, understood as being-there [*Da-sein*], is each time an intuiting of world. It is a having and not having of the world which it is. Worldview is often treated as something objectively present, as a fulfilled having of the world. Contrary to this tendency to reify world-pictures, which Dilthey also rejected, Heidegger shows how worldview expresses *Dasein's* lack of bearing. To have a world is equally to be decentered into the world (2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 344–345).

Worldview is further misunderstood in the idea of a “natural worldview” for Heidegger:

One means by this a holding-itself in being-in-the-world that is natural to every *Dasein* and equal for each. Yet if every *Dasein* as factually existent is necessarily individuated in a situation, then factually there can be no natural worldview. Every worldview like every being-in-the-world is in itself historical, whether it knows this or not.

There is no one so-called natural worldview upon which a historically formed worldview is then additionally grafted, as little as there can be a *Dasein* that would not be the *Dasein* of the self and thereby, Heidegger concludes, dispersed in relations of self and other [*Ich-Du*] (2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 344–345). Heidegger's denial of a natural worldview extends beyond Dilthey's analysis, as Dilthey interprets naturalistic world-picturing to be an expression of a mode of life that, as a life rather than a theory, has its own legitimacy and cannot be refuted. Dilthey argued that there can be no one unified natural worldview common to all humans, but concluded from this that naturalism is one expressive possibility of life among others rather than impossible. Naturalism is one expression and enactment of the truth for Dilthey and only untrue when it overextends itself and takes on a dogmatic totalizing metaphysical form. A worldview is essentially historical for both Dilthey and Heidegger, but for Dilthey this entails that it is irreducibly individual and worthy of recognition for itself.

The empirical ontic multiplicity of worldviews is not irrelevant to any given picturing of the world, which is confronted by and must recognize or repudiate other ways of picturing the world. Dilthey noticed that the historicity of worldviews entails that there is no master worldview from which to neutrally rank others, even one that appeals to an ontological principle of difference. Instead, individuals are confronted with the incommensurability, difference, and con-

flict of worldviews that make a unified thinking of being impossible and undesirable, because they are inevitably participants in and party to agonistic life. This is why, despite their affinity on numerous questions, Heidegger increasingly sided with the hermeneutic conservatism of Graf Paul Yorck von Wartenburg and his drive toward ontology against Dilthey's "liberal" and "tolerant" hermeneutics with its ontic pluralism born of interpretive humility and charity.<sup>15</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Dilthey's philosophy has been appropriately interpreted as hermeneutical because of how he responded to the questions of the historicity of knowledge and human nature. Knowledge results in epistemic humility when knowers realize their limited access to the infinity of relations that determines its inescapable contexts. The pursuit of knowledge is unable to provide irreversible answers to the questions that are posed to it whether they concern the world of nature or spirit. Dilthey's life-philosophy is not so much one of the «last offshoots and consequences of Platonism», as Heidegger accuses (Heidegger, 1989, pp. 218, 337). Dilthey's project is more akin to the beginning of philosophy in the Socratic sense of a love of wisdom that recognizes its own ignorance and finitude.

In Dilthey's thinking, two varieties of the interpretive and indirect picturing of the world are the mathematically-oriented sciences of material nature (the scientific world-picture) and the hermeneutic articulation and analysis of historical life (historical consciousness). These are two facets of the modern world that orient Dilthey's thinking, and Dilthey would not disagree with Carnap, Hahn, and Neurath's statement that: «Die Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung dient dem Leben, und das Leben nimmt sie auf» (Verein "Ernst Mach", 2006, p. 27). In response to Dilthey's apparent duality, Heidegger demands a fundamental ontology of being that discloses a more basic dimension from which the unity of both nature and history can be understood.

Even though Dilthey unfolded embodied historical worldly life as the point of departure for the sciences, Dilthey's project of a «critique of historical reason» remained inadequate for Heidegger as it did not reach the ontological

<sup>15</sup> Compare Hans-Georg Gadamer contrast between Dilthey's "cultural liberalism" and Yorck and Heidegger's conservatism in Gadamer, 1995, pp. 9, 186.



questions of the being of that historical life and of being as being. Heidegger asserts therefore that Dilthey missed the crucial difference and intertwining – the ontological difference – between the ontological and the ontic, and between being [*Sein*] and human existence as being-there [*Da-sein*]. It should be asked though, based on the account of Dilthey unfolded above, whether this is the weakness or strength of Dilthey's philosophy and whether it continues to modestly offer something that is underappreciated in twentieth-century hermeneutics and phenomenology.

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