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MARTIN HEIDEGGER
PHENOMENOLOGY OF
INTUITION AND EXPRESSION

Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation

Translated by Tracy Colony



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For the philosophers use words in whatever way they like, and they do not bother to avoid offending the ears of religious men even in the most difficult matters. But we are obliged by religious duty to speak according to a fixed rule, lest verbal licence beget impious opinions concerning the matters which our words signify.

Augustine, *The City of God*, X, 23

The interior man puts the care of himself before all other concerns.

Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, II, 5

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Translator's foreword

This book is a translation of *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks: Theorie der Philosophischen Begriffsbildung*, first published in 1993 as Volume 59 of Martin Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*. This translation is based on the slightly revised 2007 edition of this volume. The text is derived from the manuscript of a lecture course which Heidegger delivered at Freiburg University in the summer semester of 1920. The final sections of this manuscript are lost. In place of these missing sections a transcript by Oskar Becker has been inserted by the German editor. More details about the origin and compilation of the text are given in the Editor's afterword.

Heidegger never intended or prepared this manuscript for publication. Accordingly, many of its passages have the rough yet condensed and rich character of notes prepared to support further elaboration. In translating this text, I have not attempted to moderate this characteristic of Heidegger's composition. At the same time, I have striven, as much as possible, for a clear and readable translation. I have also endeavoured to maintain consistency regarding the many words that Heidegger clearly employs as technical terms. I have rendered them consistently throughout and have included them in the appended English–German glossary. With respect to terminological consistency, wherever possible I have tried to maintain continuity with other English language translations of Heidegger from this period. As is now standard in translations of Heidegger, I have also chosen to leave the term *Dasein* most often untranslated and unitalicized. Where the word *Dasein* is employed in a clearly prosaic sense, I have rendered it as 'existence'.

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

One particular translation challenge that this text presents is Heidegger's use of the terms *Gehalt* and *Inhalt*, which are both customarily translated by the word 'content'. Whereas Heidegger often chooses to employ the term *Gehalt* to designate a more originary sense of content, in contrast to the more inertial sense of content as *Inhalt*, this difference is usually clear from the context, so I have chosen not to complicate the text at this level by introducing a new term.

When I felt it necessary to indicate that the translation fails to reflect an important aspect or nuance of Heidegger's text, I have interpolated the original German in square brackets. Heidegger's references to other works are translated in the text and given in their original versions in the Notes. There are no translator's notes.

For invaluable criticisms and sagacious advice, I would like to express my gratitude to Theodore Kisiel. For meticulous and faithful assistance in the preparation of this translation, I would like to deeply thank Maren Mitterntzwey.

Tracy Colony
September 2009

Introduction: the problem situation of philosophy

§ 1 The function of a 'Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation' in phenomenology

The theme gives the impression of being a special problem and strikes one as a conscious concession to the specialization that today is fashionably much resisted. The next given reading would then lie in the opinion that it concerns specifically aesthetic problems, even with a particular relationship to expressionist art. The perplexity would only apparently be alleviated if I were to try to 'explain' right at the beginning the meaning of the words 'phenomenology', 'intuition' and 'expression' one after the other. That would lead to certain propositions and determinations that would merely create the illusion of guaranteeing a genuine understanding. At best, just sticking to words could be further encouraged. That this is not at all the way in which philosophy works is exactly what shall also be shown in these considerations. And yet, leaving aside fixed definitions, there are ways to lead towards the point of the question. To carry this out in a concrete way that would also take into account philosophy's questions regarding principles is the preliminary and only goal of the following deliberations.

The subtitle 'Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation' indicates that the task is nevertheless aiming at something fundamental, although one cannot help suspecting that even in this way it still concerns a more remote task, which, on top of that and especially nowadays, has to confront a particularly acute opposition. Provided that it is the intention

to lead step by step out of the contemporary philosophical situation as a whole and, along the guidelines of its typical configurations of problems, into the complex of problems, it becomes necessary to first of all indicate the resistances encountered in a first rough approach to the sought problem.

At first, one might consider such a theory of philosophical concept formation as abundantly premature, judging from the plausible relationship that every theory of that kind apparently must have to philosophy itself. A philosophy must have first achieved a certain level of conceptual-thematic development and systematic completion in order to allow, as it were, the structure of its concepts and the method of concept formation to be read off.

Provided that we are, however, of the conviction that we are really philosophizing and that means always working on a reshaping [*Neugestaltung*] of philosophy, it must also be simultaneously granted that the concrete structural complex of philosophy, in the fully sufficient totality of its fundamental features, is not remotely achieved and that therefore the theory of concept formation necessarily related to it cannot yet be undertaken at all.

The unambiguous factum of philosophy in concrete configuration is the precondition for a possible research into its structure. This necessary dependence of all so-directed structural research on the respective preceding and factual being-available of the concretion of science can be shown in Kantian philosophy and its 'gaps' which are much belaboured again today and have been for the last half century. The system of Kantian philosophy is lacking, so one says, for one thing the systematic setting-out – analogous to the critique of the knowledge of nature – of the a priori transcendental conditions of possibility of the human sciences, especially the science of history; in Kant's time there were no developed historical human sciences. Likewise, a primordial, pure research into the independent a priori of religion is lacking because Kant did not recognize the latter as a primordial phenomenon, but rather included it in morality.

However, with respect to philosophy itself and the task of a consideration pertaining to the theory of science and directed back to philosophy itself, one would nevertheless like to find a way out. Because even if a theory related to the tendencies, approaches and initial ground-laying creations would necessarily have to reach into what is vacillating and flowing, one could still try to make it possibly understandable by

referring to the history of philosophy. The latter's abundance in concrete immortal achievements is undisputable even with the restriction to the philosophers of first and undisputed rank, especially for a philosophy that presses away from an epigonic mere adoption of standpoints and systems from history and pushes towards radical questioning. Exactly in this wanting-to-become-free from an un-genuine, non-primordially appropriated tradition this philosophy is always obligated to the continuing existence of what it 'deconstructs' [*abbaut*], not fortuitously but for primordially philosophical reasons.

But the historical past – the creations of philosophy, however readily the works seem to be accessible still today – is no erratic block that one encounters as standing there steadfast and complete and that one can confidently scan from all sides. The past of intellectual history only becomes objective in living understanding. The historical philosophies as *facta* are objective only in living philosophical apprehension. The past newly grows towards every living present in a particular way and within certain limits. The fundamental sense of intellectual history – and every history – is pre-delineated [*vorgezeichnet*] by the living preconception that leads and guides understanding.

But it would after all – renouncing for a moment an independent posing of problems – be possible, by closely following the Kantian or Hegelian philosophy, to unitarily interpret the history of philosophy from there and in this way make available a sufficiently abundant concrete material of factual philosophy that would also be free from the disadvantage of the isolating restriction to a single system. This material could serve as the basis for a theory of philosophical concept formation. The certainly limited fruitfulness of such an attempt should not be simply rejected here.

However, is not – granted, in every respect, the feasibility of such a theory related to the entire unitarily interpreted history of philosophy as *factum* – the very idea of such a theory already something secondary and essentially belated, indeed superfluous and uncreative? Is this idea not the suspicious sign of a mechanized excess of reflection, a philosophizing about philosophy? This objection is certainly apt in principle; it already characterizes the idea of the task – to say nothing of its factual realization – as exposed to weighty reservations.

(The first conscious attempt at a 'logic of philosophy' on the basis of a transcendental philosophy of value was made by Lask, without getting any further than programmatic intimations. His early death as a soldier brought these plans to naught.)

The above objection bears on such an attempt all the more decisively, when the latter is to be set in motion within the tendency towards a reshaping of philosophy so that such a theory would amount to a premature hyper-reflective blocking-off of every positive problematic built 'on the matters themselves'. This objection is inescapable. The questionability of such a theory is complete as long as one sees the problem simply within the framework of a specifically transcendental-critical or transcendental-dialectical philosophy of reflection. Here there is the difficulty of the factum that is to be presupposed and here, on the standpoint of reflection, and only here, there is a new potential excess towards hyper-reflection and its secondary, fruitless 'results'.

It is therefore necessary to step completely out of this framework and come into the open [*ins Freie*]. With that the mentioned difficulties may fall away, but for that the uncertainties of a tendency towards reshaping are inhibiting. The phenomenological basic posture, provided that one understands it in the widest sense as descriptive analysis of the essence of the phenomena of consciousness that are not psychologically apperceived, is, however, not sufficient for a fundamental philosophical problematic as long as it is not itself genuinely philosophically primordially explicated. Critical advancements can certainly already be made from the basic posture alone; the edifice of an entire philosophy can be broken apart and shaken in its individual linkages; it is also possible to perform, within a limited region, positive, epistemic work in terms of subject matter. But if the ultimate – I do not say the 'systematic' – sense-relations that converge in a concrete concept of phenomenological philosophy that organically grows out of the sense of the phenomenological basic posture are missing, then the problems do not come to a full resolution and the perspectives of positive philosophizing itself remain concealed. At the same time, the danger of lapsing into a given but now purified and radicalized philosophical standpoint constantly persists, i.e. the danger of falling back into the commonly accepted framework of the philosophical problematic.

The goal of our concrete task is exactly to attain the idea as well as the concept and basic structure of phenomenological philosophy as co-motivated out of the phenomenological basic posture and to therewith for its part 'concept'-ualize that posture itself. That means: The *theory of philosophical concept formation* has in phenomenology itself a completely different position than in the philosophy of reflection. It is therefore not the correlate of a reflection externally imposed on a complete philosophy,

but the enactment and existing effectuation of philosophy itself. That which is sought has to be one of the radical problems if with its solution a getting at the sense of phenomenological philosophy is to be possible. This explicating and determining of the essence of philosophy may not be further understood as a task of gaining knowledge, as the setting-out of a material content in itself, but must be understood enactmentally.

After all, it is at first not very clear that the problem of concept formation in the formulated form of a phenomenology of intuition and expression can have such a central meaning, even if one entirely takes distance from the hitherto familiar and cultivated form of its treatment. If one, however, poses the problem within the act of aiming at a radical new foundation of philosophy, then one must nevertheless pose oneself the following questions: First, whether the concept has a central position in philosophy; and then quite in principle, whether it makes sense at all to speak of concepts in philosophy; furthermore, whether concepts in the most commonly understood sense mean something remote from philosophy, whether they constitute the basic structure of the objecthood of philosophy or whether they can even affect it at all and, if so, in which sense.

Only in the direction of these questions is the subtitle to be comprehended. It is supposed to indicate that it concerns the element which the sciences know as 'concept', without hereby prejudging that the sense of 'scientific concept' is, according to its sense, something primordial. *Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation* is therefore a formula in the prevailing language of contemporary philosophy that is supposed to merely indicate something to be primordially understood. The decision about the sense, character and function of the 'philosophical concept' becomes dependent on how philosophizing itself, in opposition to the scientific-theoretical attitude towards subject matter, is determined according to origin and not according to classes.

This determination and the understanding of the manner of its enactment shall now be methodologically prepared, namely in such a way that from the distinctly comprehended present problem situation, with the tendency of leading towards the origin, the prevailing problematic is demonstrated as not primordial and the origin itself is in this way indicated as negative for the understanding.

§ 2 The distinction between scientific philosophy and worldview philosophy

Every attempt at a radical 'laying of the ground' of philosophy – and in earnest, philosophy always remains with the giving of the ground, the calling attention to the ground – mostly presses in some form towards securing philosophy as absolute knowledge, as last and first science, and towards pre-delineating the guidelines and framework for subsequent work. In this way, the idea of *philosophy as strict science* also arose from phenomenological research. That meant, within the situation of intellectual history in which phenomenology had its breakthrough, a demarcation from other philosophical basic goals subsumed under the title of *worldview philosophy*.

With this division between strict scientific philosophy and worldview philosophy, the possibility, justification and necessity of concrete worldview formation in factual life, with its factual spiritual-mental difficulties, was in no way contested. Just as little was scientific philosophy's enquiring work towards knowledge barred from utilization for concrete spiritual life. On the contrary, exactly through it a genuine foundation of total spiritual life and being was to be worked out; although in the posture of strictly and constantly developing research that grows from generation to generation, that is patient and contents itself with its respective concrete goal and does not allow itself, 'on the basis of emotional needs', to be led astray into a premature bending-around of the problematic and to rash rounding-off conclusions and systems. Whether this idea of philosophy as strict science, in this form, is necessary and fully motivated in the idea of the phenomenological basic posture, must remain open at this point. For the time being it is important that the tension between 'scientific philosophy' and 'worldview philosophy' is understood as such.

We begin with a brief clarification of the phenomenon of 'worldview'. It is a figuration that, according to its sense of content, of relation and of enactment belongs entirely in the basic structure of factual life experience. If we understand every single and communal life in its totality as having grown out of *one* spiritual situation and maintaining and completing itself in it, then worldview means the living concrete motivation-complex of the fundamental stances, decisions and life-worlds that pervade the situation of *one* life. Worldview grows and falls to concrete life out of and within factual life experience; it is no