

Heidegger, Renaud Barbaras, and the phenomenology of desire

Introduction

The interplay between *presence* and *absence* has always been an important theme in phenomenology, especially in the hermeneutic phenomenology of Martin Heidegger.¹ This interplay has also been an important topic in other strands of philosophy, notably the ones that take Hegelian dialectics as their point of departure, fostering a particular understanding of (human) life as *subjectivity*; a subject whose life is moved by virtue of *desire*: desire to perceive, to understand and/or to incorporate the external object. As such, desire betrays a being that is finite, insufficient and incomplete. It is a subject characterized by lack.

It is generally considered that Heidegger doesn't have an account of *desire*². It is assumed that the notion of desire is ignored by Heidegger, because it is historically tied up with subjectivity and thus doesn't fit his existential analytic of Dasein. Instead of *desire*, we have an account of *mood* [*Stimmung*]. Whenever we look for the way factual Dasein moves and discloses presence and absence on the pre-reflective level, we encounter Angst.³

In this paper I have two modest aims: Firstly, I will try to present some of the main arguments of the contemporary French phenomenologist, Renaud Barbaras (Sorbonne), *who tries to articulate a phenomenology of desire*. The prospect is to try to bring Barbaras in fruitful dialogue with the young Heidegger, because I am of the opinion that at some point Heidegger did what Barbaras tries to do today.⁴ The philosophical problems that inform Barbaras's phenomenology pose a possible entry point into raising some questions and trying to attain a better understanding of some early Heideggerian notions.

Secondly, I want to show how the notion of desire does figure in young Heidegger's phenomenology of life, especially in his early Freiburg lectures.⁵ I cannot provide an exhaustive account in the space provided, but I will at least frame the issue in a way that would open up the way for a future more detailed analysis of this topic. The young Heidegger considered phenomenological (i.e. Husserlian) *intentionality* to be based on the neo-Aristotelian, scholastic, notion

¹ I would like to thank Michael Lewis (University of the West of England, Bristol) for giving me feedback on this paper, as well as Helder Telo (Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Lisbon) for sharing some of his insights with me.

² A few Heidegger scholars, such as William Richardson, have worked on the issue of Heidegger and desire. Thanks to Babette Babich for pointing this out to me.

³ For example, in *Being and Time* (1927), §53. Or in his lecture *What is Metaphysics* (1929) where the "Nothing", grasped through Angst, is the *ground* of all determinate negation, something that ascribes to mood an ontological difference with respect to what and how it *manifests* the negative, which differentiates it from desire, appetite, will or emotion.

⁴ Last year Professor Miguel de Beistegui (Warwick) delivered one of the keynote addresses of this very conference, on the work of the contemporary French phenomenologist Renaud Barbaras (Sorbonne), who tries to articulate a phenomenology of desire. This paper takes inspiration from that keynote address and takes it as a vantage point for more fruitful discussion on the prospects of a phenomenology of desire.

⁵ At a time before he even used the notion of *Dasein*.

of *desire* [ὄρεξις], taking the phenomenological account of desire and intentionality even further through the phenomena of *tendency* [Tendenz] and *motivation* [Motivation] in life.⁶ Indeed, some of these early Heideggerian notions are in some respects abandoned, and thus the said conceptual framework belongs to an early *Holzweg*. But that does not necessarily discredit the arguments of this paper.

Renaud Barbaras: Life, Movement, and Desire

Most of Barbaras' work on desire is as yet untranslated but from the few that have been translated into English we can gather what he demands from a phenomenology of desire.⁷ I will present here some of the main arguments he makes in his 2008 essay 'Life, Movement, and Desire'.⁸

Barbaras wants to rethink the *unity* and *accomplishment* of life, in terms of *desire*. Or, we can also say it the other way around: he wants to rethink desire from within the manifest *unity* of the *accomplishment* of life. That involves both a renewed understanding of *life* as well as of *desire*, aiming at a renewed understanding of *vital movement*. He wants to articulate a unity in life that overcomes a strict opposition between "life" and "interiority" on the one hand, and "non-life", "exteriority" and "lack", on the other. He wants to articulate exteriority as an absence *towards* which life strives, rather than absence that is a lack *out of* which life comes, and in relation to which life is (heterogeneously) defined.

Barbaras wants to define vital movement *on the basis of its own self*, of its own accord, and not from external phenomena that reduce life to categories that are *foreign* to life.⁹ He credits Jonas for being sensitive to the problem of defining vital movement, but he finds Jonas' definition of *life as self-preservation* to be *problematic* because in this manner life is not thought on the basis of itself but on the basis of its opposite: the negation that is death. The negation of absence. By defining the movement of life as *metabolism*, as self-preservation, one still understands life as a subject that is moved on the basis of seeking to satisfy its needs, and thus keeps *movement* and *life* apart. According to Barbaras, Heidegger's definition of life also falls prey to this problem, as it is attached to a constant threat of destruction: life is defined in terms of death, instead of on its own accord.¹⁰

Barbaras insistently asks: "*Why must the vitality of life be understood in terms of what threatens it rather than as a dynamism of its own?*"¹¹ This needs to be

⁶ We tend to miss these early Heideggerian concepts because this vocabulary is ultimately reworked, and as such one is tempted to ignore this period as a tentative period, or an immature period (remember: Dasein does not figure yet, and mood is still a marginal notion).

⁷ This analysis is restricted to Renaud Barbaras' article "Life, Movement, and Desire", which appeared in *Research in Phenomenology*, 38 (2008). One of his books has been translated into English, but it is not explored here: *Desire and Distance: Introduction to a Phenomenology of Perception*, Stanford University Press (2005).

⁸ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008) 3-17).

⁹ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 3.

¹⁰ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 10.

¹¹ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 11.

reversed, he says: "In truth, only a being that is originally capable of moving itself, that is essentially movement, is able to act to satisfy its needs", writes Barbaras.¹²

Thinking of life as the negation of death fails to grasp the *unity* and *continuity* of vital movement.¹³ By grasping movement in terms of desire as *desire for self-preservation* presupposes a kind of "interiority" and "subjectivity" that is able to feel frustration or satisfaction.¹⁴

Barbaras invites us to grasp life as *accomplishment*, not preservation.¹⁵ But accomplishment doesn't mean completeness or totality. Accomplishment is a kind of unity that still maintains the hiatus in movement. He wants us to acknowledge this primary unity of living *beyond active and passive*, while still recognizing that thought is continually torn apart by this ambiguity.¹⁶ This original ambiguity is inherent in the very word "life", he says: "to live" in French, designates both "being alive" (*Leben*) and the feeling or experience of something (*Erleben*). This linguistic ambiguity within this single word is not accidental: rather it poses a fundamental problem that we need to address, as it marks a schism in life itself.¹⁷

This hiatus directs us towards desire: "If there is a genuine unity of life, it must take root in a third kind of being, the ignorance of which leads inescapably to the schism of the living being and lived experience".¹⁸ The linguistic ambiguity that is set up and expressed in language, between "objective living being" and "lived experience" has a third alternative in "movement", which is what is *realized* in life.¹⁹ Barbaras urges us to see movement not as "displacement" but as "realization".²⁰

But how is movement realized? How is its unity accomplished? Aristotle and Hegel assume that the unity of movement is realized by a subject that is able to sum up the parts into a totality. Barbaras tries to distance himself from Aristotle and Hegel in how this unity is grasped in the first place: "Living movement should be interpreted as ontogenetic movement, which does not receive its unity from a substrate, that is, from the living being, but which constitutes its own unity and, in doing so, constitutes the unity of the living being".²¹

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "A phenomenology of life that intends to think the genuine unity of life must grasp it in its effective continuity, as that from which animal as well as man arises", Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 8.

¹⁴ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 9.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 4.

¹⁷ Heidegger makes the same remark on the ambiguity of experience, however, using the neo-Kantian word "Erfahrung", as opposed to the Diltheyan "Erleben": "Experiencing [*das Erfahren*] or the *experience* [*die Erfahrung*] – the substantive designation usually also means yet something else. Not just factual encountering as such but *that* which is encountered is also co-meant [...] We intentionally want to leave the double meaning in this word. All effectuation of factual life—that means, of the tendencies in which *something* encounters life itself—and all factual modes of such fulfillment we can describe as *experiencing*" (GA58, pp. 54-55, English)

¹⁸ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 8.

¹⁹ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 12.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Renaud Barbaras: 'Life, Movement, and Desire' (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 12-13

But for Barbaras “unity” and “accomplishment” is not “completeness” or a “totality”. While Barbaras sees a unity in life, he also sees a fundamental incompleteness at the heart of the living being, one that is always already there and cannot be fulfilled or satisfied by momentary achievements.²²

Vital movement is desire which “cannot enclose itself [...] because that to which it relates cannot totalize itself from the start. Life’s temporal openness refers to the unrepresentable or non-totalizable character of that toward which life advances”.²³

Finally, Barbaras points at a crucial operation that desire, the fundamental character of life, affords. Life does not strive for *satisfaction* but rather for *manifestation*. In Barbaras’ own words: “Life is the tendency to presentation”.²⁴

The Young Heidegger on tendency, motivation, and the actualization/enactment of life

I disagree with the view that Heidegger does not have an account of desire, and I also disagree with Barbaras’ assumption (following Jonas) that Heidegger’s definition of life is attached to a constant threat of destruction, defined in terms of death. That is true for the Heidegger of the middle and late period, but not of the early-Freiburg Heidegger. In the remaining space I have, I will point out three things: firstly, the moments when desire expressly figures in early Heidegger; secondly, how the young Heidegger makes almost exactly the same demands that Barbaras makes today, for a phenomenology of life that lets life show its fundamental character out of itself (rather than mediating its definition through its opposite). Finally, I will point out how Heidegger’s notions of *tendency* and *motivation* denote a phenomenon that encompasses what Barbaras calls desire, and in that context is also aligned with Barbaras’ demands for an account of vital movement as a) *unified, non-totalizable* and *incomplete*, and b) as *accomplishment of manifestation*.

The most important occurrence of the term “desire” in Heidegger’s entire corpus, is probably a direct reference to desire which he makes in the Summer Semester of 1923, during the lecture course *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. There he says that the notion of *intentionality* [*Intentionalität*] that Husserl inherits from Brentano, ultimately leads back to the medieval conception of directed consciousness, itself derived from Aristotelian *ὄρεξις* (desire).²⁵

²² “This incompleteness is not that of a lack that could be filled in, as the classic conception of life would have it, because then living would be nothing other than a succession of deaths and rebirths”, Renaud Barbaras: ‘Life, Movement, and Desire’ (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 14.

²³ Renaud Barbaras: ‘Life, Movement, and Desire’ (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 15.

²⁴ Renaud Barbaras: ‘Life, Movement, and Desire’ (Research in Phenomenology 38 (2008), p. 16.

²⁵ This genealogical reference made by Heidegger must be properly contextualized. It follows the interaction between Husserl and Natorp which, according to Heidegger, exposed the “deficiencies”, or “weaknesses” of Husserl’s formulations, especially the reformulations that take place in *Ideen I* (as opposed to the earlier Husserlian formulations in the Logical Investigations) with respect to the way of access granted by phenomenology to intentionality, and the way this access manages to entrap intentionality in a theoretical conceptual realm due to the reflective nature of access. In order to resolve this problem, Heidegger digs deeper into aspects of intentionality that, on the one hand, are indeed to some extent

Heidegger's early project involved the radicalization of the notion of intentionality so as to uncover the deeper ground that constitutes the unity of intentional life, at the pre-theoretical level. In this context, he tried to capture in a non-theoretical way that which supplies the impetus of the directionality of intentional life. If we see Heidegger's early work in this way, then we can already contextualize his comment on desire and intentionality and his later affective turn.

Going even further back in time to the Winter Semester of 1920-21 in which Heidegger taught his now well-known lecture course on *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, we see how Heidegger sees in Augustine a phenomenological account that considers *desire*²⁶ as one of the forms of temptation, *tentatio*, "not in a biological-psychological and theoretical attitude, but according to the characteristics of the how he has factually experienced it".²⁷ For Augustine, "life is really nothing but a constant temptation".²⁸ It is important to note that Heidegger reads Augustine here *as a phenomenologist*.

We also discover that Heidegger, during that course, identified Augustine's notion of temptation [*tentatio*] with his own phenomenological notion of *tendency* [Tendenz]. Temptation is defined by Heidegger as tendency. This is explicitly associated with desire. Temptation, or tendency, is the fundamental character of life, with desire being *one way*²⁹ in which this fundamental character manifests itself.³⁰

But how does Heidegger himself define his notion of tendency [*Tendenz*] and where can we find an account for it? We find it mostly in his Winter Semester of 1919-20 lecture course titled *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*.

In that lecture course, Heidegger tried to define the "subject matter" of phenomenology, trying to take Husserlian analysis further than Husserl himself did, and especially trying to articulate what distinguishes phenomenology from contemporaneous neo-Kantian strands of philosophy. Heidegger defines phenomenology as "original science", the science of the absolute *origin* of the

implicit in Husserl's accounts, on the other hand are suppressed by Husserl's accounts. It is in the context of unpacking these suppressed aspects of intentionality that ushered Heidegger to refer to the connection between intentionality and desire in the Summer Semester of 1923: "Husserl was influenced here by the work of Brentano, and this was the case not only regarding his method in that he adopted Brentano's method of description, but also regarding the basic definition of the domain of experience as his subject matter. Brentano had characterized consciousness of something as *intentionality*. This concept arose in the Middle Ages and had at that time a narrower sphere of application, it meant a volitional being-out-for-something and going-toward-it (ὄρεξις) [desire]" (GA 63, p. 55, english translation). "Hierfür wurde *Brentanos* Arbeit wirksam, und nicht nur methodisch, sofern Husserl die deskriptive Methode übernahm, sondern auch die Grundbestimmung der region. Brentano hatte Bewußtsein von etwas charakterisiert als *Intentionalität*. Dieser Begriff entspringt im Mittelalter und hat da eine engere Sphäre, er bezeichnet das willentliche Aussein auf etwas (ὄρεξις)" (GA 63, p. 70).

²⁶ *Concupiscentia carnis*, which is a strong desire of the flesh, and which Heidegger translates as *Begierlichkeit*.

²⁷ GA60, p. 157, English.

²⁸ GA 60, p. 152, English.

²⁹ Next to (carnal) desire, Heidegger also catalogues Augustine's *voluptas* [enjoyment, pleasure]. I take *voluptas* to be another way through which temptation, i.e. tendency, manifests itself.

³⁰ "Different meanings of *tentatio*: *tentatio deceptionis* [temptation of deception]: with the tendency to bring-to-a-fall; 2. *Tentatio probabtionis* [temptation of prohibition]: with the [tendency] to test. In the first sense, only the devil (*diabolous*) tempts, in the second, God tempts too" (GA60, p. 206, English). ["Tentatio: Verschiedener Sinn von *tentatio*. 1. *Tentatio deceptionis*: mi der Tendenz des Zu-Fall-Bringens, 2. *Tentatio probationis*: mit der T[endenz] zu prüfen. Im 1. Sinn versucht nur der Teufel (*diabolous*), im 2. Sinn auch Gott" (GA60, p.273, German)].

spirit in and for itself – ‘life in and for itself’, a science that must ruthlessly reject “every attempt to place itself outside of the vital return to the origin and the vital emergence out of it”.³¹

The sphere of phenomenology is defined as the “presentation” or “givenness” [*Gegebenheit*] of life.³² Heidegger calls our attention to the “genuine, concrete realization and the *actualization* [*Vollzug*]” of life.³³ The demands made by Heidegger in this lecture are similarly worded to those of Barbaras. Heidegger also asks that life be thought *not* on the basis of the biological disciplines, but rather approached anew on the basis of its own character so as to allow new forms of manifestation and expression to be understood from out of themselves.³⁴ Heidegger himself *also* begins by noting an ambiguity in the word “experience”, whereby the substantive designation names both the experience itself but also *that* which is intentionally encountered.³⁵

Heidegger begins by (epistemologically) prioritizing the actualization/enactment [*Vollzug*] of life. In my opinion, Heidegger’s usage of the word *Vollzug*, does not essentially differ from Barbaras’ notion of “accomplishment” and “realization”. Intentional life is enactment. Heidegger takes the fulfillment that comes with intentional givenness (i.e. the fact that a being can “intend” an object or a World) as the accomplishment of life that shows that life has a certain “self-sufficiency” [*Selbst-Genügsamkeit*].

Heidegger defines “self-sufficiency” as the *form* of intentional fulfillment, it is the form that achieves directionality towards transcendence. This self-sufficiency is what Heidegger also calls the “in-itself of life” which is so invariable in its types that is also includes what we take as “the exact opposite of the self-sufficiency of life”.³⁶

According to Heidegger, the self-sufficiency of life, is not a structural “overcoming” of life, but it is the tendency of life towards fulfilment from within life itself.³⁷ Self-sufficiency is thus a *direction* of life in itself characterized in such a way that it takes its motivation from its own factual flow.³⁸ As such, I think it is

³¹ GA 58, p.2, English.

³² GA 58, p.21, English.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “Let us think about the biological disciplines that are familiar to us today under the name of descriptive sciences and not look at the fact and at the attitudinal tendencies that are factually expressed [*ausgesprochen*] in each case. Rather let us pay attention to the basic motives to approach, somehow, the primitive forms of life that were cultivated earlier. In this way, with this tendency, there emerge new forms of manifestation and expression that must be understood from out of themselves and that one may not explain by providing more or less daring analogies with the mathematical natural sciences” (GA 58, p. 40, English).

³⁵ Barbaras notes the ambiguity of the word “to live”, *erleben*, while Heidegger marks the ambiguity of the verb “to experience”, *erfahren*. *Erfahrung* was mostly employed by the neo-Kantian philosophers, whereas “*Erleben*” from Dilthey. Even though Heidegger later on (i.e. in *Being and Time*) makes a technical distinction between the two, to my knowledge he did not hold the distinction at this early stage. In any case, I do not believe the fact that Barbaras notes the ambiguity of *erleben* whereas Heidegger that of *erfahren* compromises my argument. In Heidegger’s own words: “Experiencing [*das Erfahren*] or the *experience* [*die Erfahrung*] – the substantive designation usually also means yet something else. Not just factual encountering as such but *that* which is encountered is also co-meant [...] We intentionally want to leave the double meaning in this word. All effectuation of factual life—that means, of the tendencies in which *something* encounters life itself—and all factual modes of such fulfillment we can describe as *experiencing*” (GA58, pp. 54-55, English).

³⁶ GA 58, p. 25, English.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ GA 58, p. 26, English.

safe to discern that self-sufficiency is an expression *of* life. We can rephrase it thus: life *is* a tendency towards fulfilment, towards enactment, towards actualization, whose motivation lies within life itself.

It is important to note two things here: firstly, that life is not exhausted by self-sufficiency. Life has the tendency to fulfill itself and self-sufficiency is the form of intentional fulfillment, but this is still motivated by tendency. Secondly, Heidegger provides us here with a definition of the movement of life that is not heterogeneous: it is not grasped in relation to death or non-life; rather, it is grasped from within itself, but without being reduced to a solipsistic or subjectivistic, but it is attached to “selfhood”.

In Heidegger’s own words:

“[Life] itself poses tasks and demands to itself that always remain solely in its own sphere, so that it seeks to overcome its limitations, its imperfections, to fill out the perspectives [ergebenden Perspektiven auszufüllen] arising within it, again and again, only “in” the basic character that is prefigured by its ownmost self-sufficiency and its forms and the means derived from them”.³⁹

The fulfillment of self-sufficiency is never final, says Heidegger, since the tendency-character of life “unleashes ever-new starting goals, and from there, manifolds of motives and motivations are brought into effect”.⁴⁰ Life’s self-sufficiency is *how* the motivation of new tendencies manage to fulfill themselves. Self-sufficiency is the basic character of the “self-world” [*Selbstwelt*]⁴¹. In my opinion, the Heideggerian notion of self-sufficiency could mean what Barbaras means by (a non-totalizing) unity and accomplishment in life.

Further on, we can see how tendency works for Heidegger here, and whether it covers what Barbaras means by desire. Heidegger identifies tendency [*Tendenz*] and motivation [*Motivation*] as the basic structure of factual life. Even though Heidegger does not achieve full clarity about tendency and motivation, he gives us some crucial insights. Firstly, he identifies tendency and motivation as the structures that constitute the ground of experience, the so-called “naked homogeneity” [*nackten Gleichartigkeit*].⁴² This does not mean that tendency is something that is self-identical, stable and always present since Heidegger acknowledges a plurality of competing tendencies.

Tendency accounts for the development of “stability” in our relations, as well as for “the new” that we may encounter.⁴³ Tendency is that which gives *direction*, either explicitly, consciously posited, or even when it “sneaks up on us” [sic].⁴⁴

³⁹ GA 58, p.25, English.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Remember, at this stage Heidegger has not yet coined the term *Dasein*. Instead, he uses *Selbstwelt*.

⁴² GA 58, p.56, English.

⁴³ GA 58, pp. 26-27, English.

⁴⁴ GA 58, p. 26, English.

And just like there are many directions in life, so there is a multiplicity of tendencies in life, in the things we encounter.⁴⁵

I don't think that tendency can be either reduced to a substratum, a substance or a subject, an *ὑποκείμενον* that is present, or reduced to absence. As I mentioned earlier, there is a plurality of them, that accounts for manifestation as well as destruction/absence. It is through tendency that something new becomes available, by an exchange of one tendency for another, and it is through tendency that an interruption of the *habitus* of the self-world takes place (*habitus* here denoting developed habits, i.e. tendencies that have become stable and have created a certain "structure of everydayness").⁴⁶

Heidegger seems to use tendency and motivation interchangeably, but if we look more carefully and pick out the precarious distinction between the two. Enactment, actuality, emerges *out of* motives.⁴⁷ Motivation is the "coming-from" [*Herkommen*] in life.⁴⁸ On the contrary, tendency refers to the "going-forth" [*Fortgehen*] and the "inclination-toward" that exists in life.⁴⁹ Tendency and motivation are understood relationally, i.e. they should not be understood as two objects but as two modes of relating, and they can also exchange their functions, or their functions can coincide, so that a tendency can become a motivation and vice versa.⁵⁰

Finally, tendency and motivation are what establish *manifestation* [*Bekundung*]. Heidegger says that tendency and motivation are behind the phenomenon of "taking-notice" [*Kenntnisnehmen*]. They are the structure that provides the "directional force" behind the intentional phenomenon.⁵¹ Heidegger also draws a connection between manifestation and self-sufficiency: manifestation is that which self-sufficiency means and achieves. I believe that this relation between tendency and motivation and manifestation in Heidegger, already points in the direction that Barbaras wants to go when he argues that life does not strive for *satisfaction* but rather for *manifestation* and in that context appeals for a reconfiguration of desire in terms of a "tendency to presentation".

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it should be said that it is rather impossible to achieve full clarity on how Heidegger understood these notions, especially since he never provided

⁴⁵ One cannot easily discern that this notion ultimately refers to pre-reflective affectedness and will later on be replaced by mood [*Stimmung*], and it is not the scope of this paper to show that. But it is useful to keep that in mind, and take note of the associations that Heidegger makes of tendency with emotion, when he says, for example, that the directionality of tendencies "are absolutely of a non-theoretical, *emotional* kind", GA 58, p. 31, English. A concrete example Heidegger gives, connecting motivation with emotion is when at the end of this lecture course he says that *ἔρωσ* is the motive-ground of philosophical enactment: a motive that requires the releasement into the ultimate tendencies of life and a return into its ultimate motives (GA 58, p. 198, English).

⁴⁶ GA 58, p. 56, English.

⁴⁷ GA60, p. 100, English.

⁴⁸ GA58, p.196, English.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The phenomenon of "taking-notice" [*Kenntnisnehmen*] is "motivated in each case by the prevailing tendency of expectation and receives *directional force* from it" (GA 58, pp. 88-89, English).

a full systematic exposition of them, and since he later abandoned them. It is also impossible to establish a real-life dialogue between Heidegger and Barbaras. But I think it is worth establishing the dialogue for two reasons: firstly, because it would enable us to take up the notion of desire and share Barbaras' current concerns. And secondly, because it reveals an aspect of Heidegger's thought that still remains hidden, and allows to imagine an *other* Heidegger.

In relation to Barbaras' project, one can indeed wonder why Barbaras is interested in a phenomenological project that reintroduces a theme that is widely taken to be anachronistic, i.e. the notion of *life*.⁵² A general scepticism surrounding the appeal to such a notion is part of the current phenomenological status quo. However, perhaps the notion of life becomes interesting precisely when we feel that it does not deserve any attention. Barbaras' project is ongoing and one should not pre-emptively or abstractly denounce before one has even encountered the work itself. It is my sense that Barbaras' project, the problem and the notions he develops, does not exactly match up with the notions of the young Heidegger, and thus a dialogue between the two is doomed to fail.

But insofar as Barbaras makes some explicit assumptions (following Jonas) about the way Heidegger's definition of life is heterogeneous, developed in reference to death, then the importance of an *Auseinandersetzung* between Barbaras and the *early* Heidegger suddenly becomes important: Barbaras might have missed the way Heidegger *did* at some point provide a definition of life that was not directly based on death, being based rather more on the notions of *tendency* and *motivation*, which, even if they do not exactly coincide with Barbaras' notion of desire, nevertheless exhibit certain similarities with it.

Heidegger's work of the early Freiburg period seems to be addressing some of the problems that Barbaras is trying to resolve today. Both philosophers seem to want to tackle the same set of problems. *Apart from one*. Barbaras (at least in the paper I refer to here), wants to redefine the notion of desire because he finds the *circularity* involved in the definition of life as self-preservation, and desire understood as lack, *as something that he cannot accept*. He aims at a non-circular definition. Heidegger, on the contrary, never saw circular definitions as problematic. On the contrary, he embraced them.

⁵² I do not espouse the view that there is such a thing as "anachronism" in the strict sense, in phenomenology, as that is based upon certain presuppositions I do not share.