



Theology must clearly and unambiguously represent "the Fall" as a symbol for the human situation universally, not as the story of an event that happened "once upon a time."

~Paul Tillich

People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in the cases of the bow and the lyre.

~Heraclitus

4. Heidegger's Concept of Falling, with Reference to Religion & Ideology

Our thesis is that Heidegger's concept of "falling" is a principle that ontologically unifies religion and ideology and also bears on understanding the phenomena of religions and ideologies. This unification is not a collapsing of religion and ideology into the theoretical oblivion of an explanatory "ur-phenomenon" and still less is it a claim that religion and ideology are basically one and the same; rather, this thesis of unification is a way of expressing a relationship of "religion" and "ideology" as names of **the two kinds of fundamental symbol systems** that are available to a Dasein which must use its own existence to come to terms with being in the world. The term "falling," which has been proposed as the conceptual glue that can bind these two types of symbol system together, suggests that the relationship of "religion" and "ideology" is not one of ontological equality, and that is accurate; though the Dasein of the Heidegger corpus will be shown to be in ontological need of both, religion and ideology are not on that account to be imagined as symmetrical elements in the constitution of its reality. The well-known fragment of Heraclitus quoted above provides us with a useful and appropriate mnemonic image for ordering the ontological abstractions which follow into a conceptualized unity-in-discord.

In *Being and Time*, there is a tension set up from the very beginning between two possible, mutually exclusive states (modes) of Being in which Dasein may exist, namely, the state of authenticity (*eigentlich sein*) and the state of inauthenticity (*uneigentlich sein*). In the ontology of *Being and Time*, authenticity and inauthenticity exhaust the formal dimension of Dasein in which they are located. Heidegger's opening remarks in the main body of the book focus on these two possibilities, specifically as belonging to the essential constitution of Dasein, thus defining them as formal possibilities that Dasein can and must choose to be. In authenticity, says Heidegger, Dasein chooses itself and wins itself, while in inauthenticity, Dasein chooses the public interpretations of the "they" and thereby loses itself. This asymmetry carries over into the regional ontologies of religion and ideology, which correlate with authenticity and inauthenticity, respectively.

Just because one of Dasein's two formal ontological possibilities entails a "winning" and the other a "losing" does not mean that

Dasein is free simply to grasp its winning possibility in a moment of enlightenment and thus forever dispense with the possibility of losing itself. Salvation (which is not one of Heidegger's terms) works out differently, more dynamically, in the framework of *Being and Time*. Since the possibilities of winning or losing oneself are not choices like items on a menu but belong to the essential constitution of Dasein, the constant can never be authenticity or inauthenticity; **the only constant is choice**. The fact of the constant of choice is the ontological datum that makes it impossible for this study to be read as a simple advocacy of the way of religion to the exclusion of the way of ideology, even if one's reading of *Being and Time* emphasizes those parts of the ontology which valorize authenticity.

Dasein remains Dasein whether it factually exists in the mode of authenticity or inauthenticity. Whether it is resolutely living its "there" in a moment of vision or indulging in idle talk, Dasein neither rises so high nor descends so low that it is released from the fundamental ontological conditions of its existence. Heidegger makes it plain that while there is reason to give a certain (not absolute) priority to authenticity, it would be inaccurate to imagine an externalized division among factual entities with the Being of Dasein that cast inauthentic Dasein as a lesser class of being, the limitations of inauthenticity notwithstanding. In an important passage, he writes, ". . . the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity — when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment."¹ These readily recognizable features of normal existence that Heidegger catalogues as characteristic of the mode of inauthenticity make it clear that abandoning inauthenticity forever is not an option for human beings insofar as consciousness has to do with organization, anticipation, and desire. Even if it were an option, it would not be a very attractive one in the conventional economy of desire.

What allows inauthenticity to give authentic existence such stiff competition when existential choices are being made is its beckoning promise of enjoyability, no matter how one wants to define enjoyment. Even though lasting enjoyment can never really be delivered to match one's anticipations, hope apparently springs eternal that somehow "things will be different this time." This hope and the actions which follow from it give inauthentic existence many of the familiar features of daily life that Heidegger observes. Not con