

**Primal Christian Life Experience and Eschatological Time\***  
**Martin Heidegger’s Early Lectures on the Phenomenology of Religion**

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**Abstract:** The turning away from theoretical comportment and the concurrent attempt to gain new access to life as it is being pre-theoretically enacted and lived – the effort to go back to original experience and to find a conceptuality adequate to it – are parallel developments in German philosophy and theology at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his effort to find a hermeneutic return to “life”, for the young Heidegger – as is shown by his lectures on the phenomenology of religion – primal Christianity appeared as a fundamental paradigm. / It was by the hermeneutic transformation of Husserlian phenomenology that Heidegger attempted to make life accessible – life as it was experienced in primal Christianity and had been described in The Epistles of Paul. From this perspective, the religious-theological relevance of the interrelated structure of “Erlebnis”, “experience”, and “understanding” originates from the hermeneutic-phenomenological thematization and unravelling of the believing comportment, of how the believer enacts his/her faith. The paper undertakes the attempt to reconstruct the young Heidegger’s path of thinking with an eye to some major themes of the phenomenology of religion course, with special regard to the kairological conception of time elaborated in it.

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## **I. Introduction**

During the winter semester at the University of Freiburg in 1920-1921, the young Martin Heidegger, still a “Privatdozent” at that time, held lectures on the phenomenology of religion whose fame passed far beyond the walls of the university, and their echo disseminated all over Germany. The lecture series, or any part of it, remained unpublished: Heidegger had published nothing for 10 years

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before his major work, *Being and Time*, appeared in 1927. The student notes and accounts on the course on the phenomenology of religion circulated among students and professors, philosophers and theologians in more and more copies. The content of the lectures spread for decades among scholars all over the world in the form of five different sets of student notes, in a sort of underground way, as a secret sensation, to which only the initiated and the privileged had access. When in the late 1980s I researched in the Hegel Archive at Bochum – whose director was Otto Pöggeler, one of the most outstanding scholars of Heidegger’s lifework and author of what still remains one of the fundamental monographs on Heidegger – I considered it as a sign of honor and trust to get a copy of one of these notes, one of the *Nachschriften* kept at the Husserl Archives in Leuven. In his fundamental contribution at the representative conference organized in Bonn on the 100 years anniversary of Heidegger’s birth, the eminent American Heidegger scholar and translator, Theodore Kisiel, formulated the desideratum that the 1920-1921 course in the phenomenology of religion should be published.<sup>1</sup> This happened eventually in the mid-1990s, but not in the most adequate form. The manuscript of this famous course has not been preserved, or at least it has not been found even to this day; the lectures were thus published in 1995, as volume 60 of the complete works, based on the reconstruction of student notes. Student notes as authentic sources were regarded with mistrust by Heidegger himself,<sup>2</sup> and from a philological point of view the text should be treated with caution indeed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Theodore Kisiel, “Edition und Übersetzung. Unterwegs von Tatsachen zu Gedanken, von Werken zu Wegen,” in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers. Symposium der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung vom 24.-28. April 1989 in Bonn – Bad Godesberg*. Vol. 3: *Im Spiegel der Welt: Sprache, Übersetzung, Auseinandersetzung*, ed. D. Papenfuß und O. Pöggeler (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), 89–108, 97f.: “Man hat immer noch die Hoffnung, daß die vielbesprochene ‘Religions’-Vorlesung vom Wintersemester 1920/21, die nur [...] in fünf verschiedenen Nachschriften vorhanden ist, einmal herausgegeben wird”.

Bibliographical note: as usually in the scholarship, I refer to Heidegger’s complete works as GA (*Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, from 1975 onwards), and to Gadamer’s complete works as GW (*Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 1–10, Tübingen: Mohr, 1985–1995), followed by volume and (after comma) page numbers. Other abbreviation: SZ = Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> When asked about the Hegel-edition, Heidegger reminded of his earlier remark that students’ lecture notes are nothing else than “obscure sources” (“Nachschriften sind freilich trübe Quellen”); See *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 91; he even expressed his hope, precisely with regard to the Hegel-edition, that he will escape this fate. See: Hartmut Buchner, “Fragmentarisches,” in *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1977), 47–51, 50 f. Now, if we look at the existing editions of Heidegger’s works, we may definitely say: he did not escape this fate. And in this case it is perhaps better that he did not.

<sup>3</sup> Respectably, the editor’s epilogue does address this circumstance. “A text which is produced in this way [namely, based on student notes]”, writes the editor, “in terms of authenticity cannot be compared with textual editions based on original manuscripts” (Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, ed. M. Jung, T. Regehly, C. Strube. *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 60. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995) [henceforth referred to as GA 60], 341). Comparing the texts of previous complete works editions with

The volume is entitled: *The phenomenology of religious life* (*Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*). The editor's afterword lets us know that this title derives from an inscription on a notebook cover, which comprised Heidegger's lectures on the phenomenology of religion. Another cover contains the original title: *The phenomenology of religious consciousness* (*Phänomenologie des religiösen Bewußtseins*). Heidegger later crossed off the word "consciousness" (*Bewußtsein*) on this notebook cover, and replaced it with "life" (*Leben*). For whoever is acquainted with the evolution of Heidegger's thinking after the First World War and his in-depth confrontation of Husserlian phenomenology, the idea comes obviously to mind: this term replacement in its laconic form is suitable for characterizing Heidegger's entire hermeneutic turn and evolution in the 1920s. In other words: the Neo-Kantian and Husserlian notion of "consciousness" is replaced by "life". A word is erased, and its place is taken by another. Now, provided we know nothing of this event or development, the title still remains meaningful (*The phenomenology of religious life*), but our knowledge of the erased textual- or title-version bears such a surplus of information that yields a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the text since it implies an extra result (or station) of Heidegger's critical dialogues with contemporary philosophical schools and his inner personal development.

## **II. The intellectual climate of the turn of the century: crisis and reorientation**

Having referred to contemporary schools, it will not be superfluous to take a short glimpse at the turn-of-the-century intellectual climate, for a better embedding and contextualization of our research. The young Heidegger's path as a thinker was shaped against the background of the radical and fundamental changes or retunings of the turn-of-the-century intellectual environment, and this path can be regarded itself as one of the outstanding expressions of this retuning. This change extends from the gradual awareness of the crisis of classical bourgeois culture and of the idea of progress in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the open emergence of this

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the original manuscripts, Theodore Kisiel has compiled several errata lists, deriving from misreadings or erroneous interpretations. Taking into account that in this case there is no original manuscript, only student notes, the case of misreading can also be coupled with mishearing. At any rate, it is worth mentioning that on page 79 there is a remark on the fact that from the point of view of phenomenological understanding, the rational-irrational notion pair only has a "restricted legitimacy" ("beschränktes Recht"), and that "what is called an indissoluble rest for the mind" ("vom für die Vernunft unauflöselichen Rest") is nothing else than an aesthetic play. In the very same context, on page 131 the text reads: "unauflösbaren Recht". Considering the context and Heidegger's language use – and last but not least the above mentioned phrasing – one could hazard a guess that it should read "Rest" instead of "Recht" in the second case. For somewhat more details on Heidegger's complete works edition, see István Fehér M., "Szövegkritika, kiadástörténet, interpretáció. A történeti-kritikai és az életműkiadások filológiai-hermeneutikai problémái" (Textual criticism, edition history, interpretation. Philological and hermeneutical problems of historical-critical and lifework editions), in *Filológia – interpretáció – médiatörténet* (Philology – interpretation – media history), ed. Pál Kelemen, Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó, Attila Simon, and György Tverdotá (Budapest: Ráció, 2009), 56–151, 138 ff.

crisis at the end of the First World War. For a better understanding of the events, it will be useful to go back to the retrospective account of one of Heidegger's outstanding contemporaries, eye witness, and closest disciple, Hans-Georg Gadamer.<sup>1</sup>

The traumas of the First World War, wrote Gadamer in retrospection, shattered the faith in progress, and questioned the values of liberal culture. This is not to say that the first signs of this trauma were not already perceivable before the catastrophe of WWI; but the general crisis of the age consciousness only surfaced openly after the war. The faith in progress and the consciousness of bourgeois culture were shaken and became problematic in their very foundations. The change in the thinking of the age was signalled by the fact that the ruling philosophy, Kantian critical idealism – which had been the leading and most influential intellectual school all over Europe in the age of emerging bourgeoisie, from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of WWI – suddenly lost its ground. As Gadamer writes: “In the First World War's grisly trench warfare and heavy artillery battles for position, the neo-Kantianism which had up to then been accorded a truly worldwide acceptance, though not undisputed, was just as thoroughly defeated as was the proud cultural consciousness of that whole liberal age, with its faith in scientifically based progress.”<sup>2</sup> The increasing cultural crisis, the sense of an intensifying loss of perspective and values appeared on ever larger scales. The change of this general attitude was indisputably signalled by the works of Paul Ernst and Oswald Spengler, already in their titles. *The Collapse of German Idealism*, as Paul Ernst called it in one of the most influential books of the age, was placed in a world historical context by Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*; this work predicted the end of a culture in a prophetic tone. The sense of cultural collapse and catastrophe surfaced with an elementary force.

The criticism of Neo-Kantianism was preceded by two important events: Nietzsche's criticism of Platonism and Christianity, and Kierkegaard's annihilating criticism of speculative idealism. In opposition to the one-sided methodological orientation of Neo-Kantianism, two new catchwords were introduced and disseminated in a wide circle. One was the term of *life*, especially that of the irrationality of historical life, with a possible reference to Nietzsche and Bergson, as well as Dilthey. The other was the key term of *existence*, the new concept which emerged from Kierkegaard's works, whose influence was increasing all over Germany due to the Diederichs-edition. Similarly to Kierkegaard's objection to Hegel's forgetting the existence of the individual being, the complacent methodologism and systematicism of Neo-Kantians, which subordinated philosophy completely to the task of founding and legitimizing scientific knowledge, became now also harshly criticized. Karl Jaspers's 1919 book, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, as the first important work of German existential philosophy,

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<sup>1</sup> For the following, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Die Wahrheit des Kunstwerks,” in Gadamer, GW 3, 249 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gadamer, “Autobiographical Reflections,” in *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*, ed. and transl. by Richard Palmer (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 6.

was centred on the concept of existence, going back to Kierkegaard: the term meaning that volatile inner core of the individual which is inaccessible to any kind of conceptual fixation or illumination. And similar to the way Kierkegaard, the Christian thinker, stood up against the philosophy of idealism, the self-criticism of dialectic theology opened up now a new age.

The change of the intellectual climate, the radical transformation of the philosophical awareness of the age, left theology naturally not unaffected either. The passionate revolt against the seemingly self-assured culture of the fathers, which Gadamer spoke about, the critical confrontation with the intellectual orientation of the older generation – a paradigm shift, as it were – was no less characteristic for theology than for philosophy or other spheres of culture. This also explains why both theology and philosophy of this new generation, affected by the changed spirit of the age, and primarily protestant theology and Heidegger, could join hands and develop a lasting spiritual relationship with each other. After World War One, in which the consciousness of cultural idealism was dissolved in the battles of materials, the new theology, as Gadamer writes, was nothing less fierce than existential philosophy in confronting the liberal traditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The fundamental experience of this generation was the disappointment with liberal culture and the idea of progress, and – related to it – the search for new ways and orientations. The years following the war, wrote the Heidegger disciple Karl Löwith, “were characterized by the criticism of all traditions and every institution of the present; [...] we lived with the knowledge that nothing prevalent can remain prevalent unless we problematize it and renew it starting from its foundations [...]”<sup>2</sup>

Approaching the subject of Heidegger’s lectures on the phenomenology of religion – and the title of the present paper as well – it is of special importance to note that the changed intellectual climate was marked in theology by a novel interest in *primal Christianity* and – parallel with it – that which was characteristic for primal Christianity: *eschatology*. Both of these: primal Christianity and eschatology were synonymous with turning away from the world – meaning, in this case, the world of bourgeois culture and values. The new generation, grown up in the awareness of crisis, formulated the following accusation: for the theology of the bourgeois age, religion has been dissolved in history. The eschatological thinking of the primal Christian community and the expectation of the end of the world was seen as being at odds with early modern cultural consciousness and the gradual secular, historical materialization of religion, the emphasis having been laid on the distance between the church and the world.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, this also explains why, in contrast with the outstanding representatives of the previous generation, who had not refrained from taking historical and political stances, and had publicly

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<sup>1</sup> Gadamer, GW 4, 75.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Löwith, *Heidegger – Denker in dürftiger Zeit*, in Idem, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 8. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984), 294.

<sup>3</sup> See Otto Pöggeler, “Heidegger és Bultmann: filozófia és teológia” (Heidegger and Bultmann: philosophy and theology), trans. Gáspár Csaba László, *Vigilia* 12 (1996), 920–927, 921.

supported and approved of the aims of the war, the new generation was less involved with the historical events.<sup>1</sup>

### **III. The confrontation with liberal theology: criticism and tacit linkage**

The change in the orientation of the new generation rising in theology was coupled with a passionate criticism of the so-called liberal theology of the older generation. The movement is customarily drawn back to Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) and his work, *Institutio ad doctrinam Christianam liberaliter descendam* (Halle 1774), although its first important representative is generally considered to be Schleiermacher. The movement's "liberal" attribute refers to the conviction that – in the sense and as a result of the freedom of consciousness claimed by Luther – the individual has the right to define his/her faith without the dictates of ecclesiastical authorities and dogmas. Emphasis falls thus on ethics and the *experience* of faith rather than on articles of faith and their dogmatic canonization. The starting point is the historical Jesus, therefore the historical-critical research of Jesus' life (*Leben-Jesu-Forschung*) becomes increasingly important for this approach. In connection to this, the reference to reason, the sceptical attitude towards supernatural events, mysteries, and miracles, as well as the differentiation between the Jesus of the faith and the historical Jesus, in addition to the disputing of ecclesiastical authority, are considered central features of the movement. The intention of liberal theology was not to undermine the foundations of faith, although, as often stressed, it actually did have such results; nevertheless, it much rather strived to make faith, and the truth of Christian faith, able to be lived and enacted by modern man, mobilizing and employing the humanist-philosophical tradition and modern erudition for this end. It endeavoured to avoid the collision of Christian faith and modern scientific thinking.

The individually experienced and enacted religiousness has been decisive for liberal theology ever since its very beginnings. In Schleiermacher's famous definition of religion, the essence of religion lies neither in metaphysics, nor in morality, but a "different kind of relationship" to the universe; not in thinking, nor action, but approach and feeling, namely, a life in the infinite nature of totality,<sup>2</sup> of wholeness, the feeling of absolute dependence.<sup>3</sup> Faith for him is equal to unshakeable confidence, meekness, devotion, and is far from metaphysics, ethics, or morality. On his view, religion only attains its reality in lived experience—in

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in 1968 Karl Barth justified his theological disagreement with his liberal teachers, Wilhelm Herrmann, Martin Rade, and Adolf Harnack, by referring to their attitude at the outbreak of the First World War. See: Christian Nottmeier, *Adolf von Harnack und die deutsche Politik 1890-1930. Eine biographische Studie zum Verhältnis von Protestantismus, Wissenschaft und Politik*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie Vol. 124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Unger, 1799); see now ed. Rudolf Otto (4<sup>th</sup> revised ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1920), 27., 33.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*, 2 vol. (Berlin: Hendel, s.a.), vol. I., §§ 4-5., pp. 13ff. ("schlechthinniges Abhängigkeitsgefühl", and "Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit").

experienced religiousness. The orientation towards an individually experienced, intimate religiousness is a basic feature of Schleiermacher's concept of religion. When speaking about the "feeling of absolute dependence", Schleiermacher also emphasizes that it does not exclude freedom,<sup>1</sup> and therefore the idea of freedom, often associated with liberal theology, does also regain its rights. Objective doctrines are seen as expressions of an intimately lived religious experience. The secular, ecclesiastical appearance and historical role of Christian religion, the increasing role of dogmas, and the intolerance in forcing their acceptance and violent dissemination, were the major challenges that the movement of liberal theology attempted to react upon, and provide an answer to, in its own way.

The criticism of liberal theology formulated by the generation growing up after First World One, primarily by Barthian dialectical theology or neo-Orthodoxy, can be summarized in the following theses: the reduction of religion to ethics, the faith in the gradual secular, historical unfolding and accomplishment of the Christian message, the perception of Jesus's person as a moral teacher, the identification of God's reverence with fraternal love, the over-secularization of Christianity on the whole, and the attempt to assimilate it to, or at least reconcile it with, worldly culture (*Kulturprotestantismus*).

The new generation's passionate criticism of the previous generations is in several important respects surely exaggerate and unfair. Trutz Rendtorff, for instance, is presumably right when writing in the introduction to a 1999 edition of the influential 1900 work of Adolf von Harnack, one of the prominent representatives of liberal theology, entitled *Das Wesen des Christentums*, that one cannot speak of a naïve hope of progress with Harnack either, nor of an uncritical adjustment to culture, of which cultural Protestantism was so often accused by the generation of theologians following Harnack.<sup>2</sup> At a closer look at Harnack's book, indeed, we may see that Christianity for him is not the least dissolved in culture, and primal Christianity and eschatology are also not left out of his perspective. Being a Protestant theologian, whose relationship to tradition, primarily church tradition defined by Catholicism, is ambivalent, it would be strange and baffling indeed if primal Christianity did not have an important word to say in his reconstruction of the essence of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> We should rather say: the new generation places accents on other issues, picks up, emphasizes and radicalizes certain tendencies apparent – albeit perhaps not too visibly – in the works of earlier generations. In this sense Heidegger's return to primal Christianity in his lecture on the phenomenology of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schleiermacher. *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. I. § 4, p. 15: "Denken wir uns nun Abhängigkeitsgefühl und Freiheitsgefühl [...] als Eines [...]."

<sup>2</sup> See Trutz Rendtorff's remarks between notes 91 and 92 in his Introduction to Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> At the same time, one of Harnack's famous theses (expressing the tension of the issue and suggesting a resigned-accepting attitude) goes as follows: "»Primal Christianity« had to cease in order for »Christianity« to prevail." (Adolf von Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums. Sechzehn Vorlesungen vor Studierenden aller Fakultäten im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an der Universität Berlin*, ed. C.-D. Osthövener [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 17: "das »Urchristentum« untergehen mußte, damit das »Christentum« bliebe").

religion can possibly be regarded as the continuation and radicalization of Harnackian tendencies. References to Harnack and Harnack's history of dogmatics are indeed not missing from the text;<sup>1</sup> for example, Harnack's harsh criticism of dogma<sup>2</sup> or the critical remarks regarding the interconnectedness of Christianity and Greek philosophy have an enduring echo on the young Heidegger's path of thinking.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, Harnack's theses penetrated the consciousness of the age, and acted as a reference framework in the first half of the century.<sup>4</sup> As Gadamer explicitly claims,<sup>5</sup> and as we shall have opportunity to discuss it later on, Heidegger took over "the Harnackian thesis of the fatal Hellenization of Christian theology"; that is, the thesis which – whether accepted or not – was widely circulating at the beginning of the century, and which today is again a subject matter of discussion.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. GA 60, 72, and also the lecture on Augustine in the following semester: GA 60, 163.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack's definition of dogma is as follows: "Das Dogma ist in seiner Conception und in seinem Ausbau ein Werk des griechischen Geistes auf dem Boden des Evangeliums". Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3 vols, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1909/10 (reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), vol. 1, 20. See also Heidegger on this: GA 60, 112. "Es ist auffallend, wie wenig Paulus theoretisch-dogmatisch vorgibt; auch im Römerbrief. Die Situation ist keine solche des theoretischen Beweises. Das Dogma als abgelöster Lehrgehalt in objektiv-erkenntnismäßiger Abhebung kann niemals leitend für die christliche Religiosität gewesen sein, sondern umgekehrt, die Genesis des Dogmas ist nur verständlich aus dem Vollzug der christlichen Lebenserfahrung." The same holds for the proofs of God as well: they do not derive so much from authentic religious experience – as its natural extension or a necessity occasioned by it – but rather signal the prevalence of a radically different theoretical interest, which overshadows the religious interest, replaces and suppresses it. See: GA 60, 27: "der Gottesbeweis ist nicht ursprünglich christlich, sondern hängt von dem Zusammenhang des Christentums mit der griechischen Philosophie ab." Cf. also *ibid.*, 104.

<sup>3</sup> See GA 60, 72., 112., 313. Cf. GA 61, 6. Chapter title: "Vorgängige Gräzisierung des christlichen Lebensbewußtseins." Criticism of dogma already appears in Dilthey, see *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 1, 258.: "So war die Entwicklung dieses Gehaltes im Dogma zugleich seine Veräußerlichung." See also: Dilthey, *Das Wesen der Philosophie*, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 5, 388 f.: "Man tut der Geschichte des Christentums unrecht, wenn man die Aufnahme der Theoreme der griechisch-römischen Philosophie nur als ein äußerliches Schicksal ansieht, das ihm durch seine Umgebung aufgedrungen sei [...] Und hier verfällt nun die Innerlichkeit der christlichen Religion einem tragischen Schicksal. Diese Begriffe [die Dogmen zweiten Grades] isolieren die Momente des Lebens, stellen sie gegeneinander."

<sup>4</sup> For more details about Harnack's influence on Heidegger, see recently Karl Kardinal Lehmann, "»Sagen, was Sache ist«: der Blick auf die Wahrheit der Existenz. Heideggers Beziehung zu Luther", in *Heidegger und die christliche Tradition. Annäherungen an ein schwieriges Thema*, ed. Norbert Fischer, and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), 158.

<sup>5</sup> GW 3, 313.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg Lecture on 12 September 2006 posed anew the question of the Hellenization of Christian theology. See on this: Norbert Fischer and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Die christliche Botschaft und das Denken Heideggers. Durchblick durch das Thema", in *Heidegger und die christliche Tradition*, 16. For the Hellenization of



#### **IV. Theology and philosophy on Heidegger's path as a thinker**

Heidegger's path as a thinker led from theology to philosophy, and this theological past – as a sort of premise, an eternal past – as a matter of fact, did never *pass away*. On the contrary: it appeared in ever newer forms, it surfaced again and again in the course of Heidegger's philosophical career of over 50 years. Heidegger himself was also aware of it. According to an autobiographical remark in the mid-1950s, published a few years later, and thus becoming widely known, he would have never reached the path of thinking, that is to say, philosophy, had it not been for his theological background.<sup>1</sup> Another work, published only in the late-1990s, and therefore much less known, written in the second half of the 1930s – a difficult period of his life<sup>2</sup> – and making the impression of an excruciating and tortuous or even painful self-examination because of its informal tone, emphatically affirms: “Und wer wollte verkennen, daß auf diesem ganzen bisherigen Weg verschwiegen die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum mitging – eine Auseinandersetzung, die kein aufgegriffenes »Problem« war und ist, sondern Wahrung der eigenen Herkunft – des Elternhauses, der Heimat und der Jugend – und schmerzliche Ablösung davon in *einem*. Nur wer so verwurzelt war in einer wirklichen gelebten katholischen Welt, mag etwas von den Notwendigkeiten ahnen, die auf dem bisherigen Weg meines Fragens wie unterirdische Erdstöße wirkten. Die Marburger Zeit brachte dazu noch die nähere Erfahrung eines protestantischen Christentums – alles aber schon als Jenes, was von Grund aus überwunden, nicht aber zerstört werden muß.”<sup>3</sup>

Seen from this perspective, Heidegger's remark on the essence of truth, made on the first Marburg lecture in 1923/24, no longer seems so baffling. During the entire victorious sweep of the theoretical concept of truth directed towards cognition, only once has there been any attempt in European history to render some radically new meaning to the idea of truth: in the New Testament – claimed this remark in a way which displayed its own theological background as well.<sup>4</sup>

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Christianity in Harnack, see: Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, ed. C.-D. Osthövenner, 118 (“akute Hellenisierung”).

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 96. “Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft,” he added (*ibid.*).

<sup>2</sup> See Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger in seiner Zeit* (München: Fink, 1999), 14.

<sup>3</sup> GA 66, 415. “And who would overlook that I was accompanied on my whole previous way by a silent confrontation with Christianity – a confrontation which has not been, and is not, some sort of incidentally raised ‘problem’; but the protection of the most particular origin: the family home, the homeland, and youth – and *at the same time* the painful distancing from it as well. Only he who became rooted so deeply indeed in a truly experienced Catholic world may presume something of the necessities which have advanced me in my path as a thinker so far, as some underground earth wave. My period in Marburg has also added to it a more intimate experience of Protestant Christianity – however, all this is something that must be surpassed in its foundations, but must not be broken.” On his own theological past as well as the penetration of Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy into Christian theology or the New Testament, see also GA 15, 436ff.

<sup>4</sup> GA 17, 125. Before the publication of the first Marburg lecture it could only be conjectured that Heidegger's problematization of the traditional concept of truth in terms of the truth of

Theology's task should have been to elaborate this new concept of truth, he goes on to argue, but it failed to do so, and instead searched for the possibility of its self-interpretation – erroneously – in the intellectualistic network of Greek philosophy. This laconic, yet telling remark, which furthers the problem of the tensioned relationship of Christianity and Greek philosophy also pointed out by Harnack, is instrumental in drawing attention to the theological background of Heidegger's early philosophical career. As already mentioned, Heidegger explicitly stated in the 1950s that he would have never stepped on the path of philosophy without this theological past and origin, and that the concept of hermeneutics, central to his thought, had also become known to him from his theological studies.<sup>1</sup>

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cognition and assertion, going hand in hand with the resulting attempt to open up the basic stratum of this concept (in terms of the truth of life and existence), could have had religious motifs. However, ever since this text has been public, there has been evidence, represented by important textual passages, that Heidegger's investigations and interpretive efforts into this subject derived indeed from a religious background, inspired primarily by Augustine and the New Testament. In addition to the above-cited passage, see also GA 17, 120, and 128. The *loci* referring to the concept of "the truth of existence" in the *Being and Time* are also relevant: SZ 221., 297., 307.; cf. also 213 ff.; and finally GA 17, 98., a discussion of the fact that the [neo-Kantian] concept of truth as validity is not adequate to enforce or reveal/approach the truth of historical knowledge, and even less religious truth. – See more recently Markus Enders: "Was ist Wahrheit? Zum Wahrheitsverständnis in der antiken Philosophie und im frühen Christentum", *zur Debatte. Themen der Katholischen Akademie Bayern*, 1 (2010): 18–20., who thinks that the Heideggerian interpretation of truth as unconcealedness can be justified from the perspective of the New Testament, and the Gospel of John in particular. The New Testament, Enders writes, identifies God, or more precisely, God transformed into man, with truth; and although the absolute truth is basically the essential determinedness of God as a whole, within the divine trinity it refers still, in particular, to the Son, and not the Father: the Son is nothing else therefore than the Father's complete unconcealedness or perfect realization. Seen from this perspective, the embodiment, the incarnation can very well be described by the Heideggerian term of truth as unconcealedness, and Jesus' self-characterization – "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) – in accordance with Hans Urs von Balthasar's interpretation (see: *Theologik II: Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln, 1985), 13–23, 13), must be perceived not as Jesus's merely testifying – or evidencing – the truth, but as His being truth itself. (Ibid., 20.) Similar considerations have also been formulated in German idealism; see for example Hegel's following considerations: "The testimony of the spirit on the content of religion is religiousness itself; a testimony which testifies [...] [Spirit] exists only inasmuch as it [...] testifies itself, reveals itself, and is manifested." G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, I*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Theorie Werkausgabe, eds. E. Moldenhauer, K.M. Michel (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp) 1970, vol. 18, p. 94: "Das Zeugnis des Geistes vom Inhalt der Religion ist Religiosität selbst; es ist Zeugnis das bezeugt; dieses ist zugleich Zeugen. Der Geist zeugt sich selbst und erst im Zeugnis; er ist nur, indem er sich zeugt, sich bezeugt und sich zeigt, sich manifestiert." [Italics added.]

<sup>1</sup> This remark is duly emphasized and appreciated in the literature. However, it receives less attention that Heidegger's remark does not refer to a general interest in hermeneutics, that theology and hermeneutics are not interconnected in a general way: hermeneutics is not treated as biblical exegesis or – as with Schleiermacher and Dilthey – a general science of interpretation. Heidegger in his memories refers to a more restricted aspect or concept of

Heidegger's philosophical reorientation after the war had an inner influence on the debates around theology's self-interpretation and conceptual foundations. As Gadamer recollects, shortly after his arrival at Marburg, on an evening debate following a theological lecture, Heidegger took the floor and explained: "the true task of theology, to which it should return, lies in finding the word which is able to summon to faith and preserve one in it". This formulation, according to Gadamer, sounded like a real task assignment for theology. The questions which have been stirring in Heidegger since the earliest times, thinks Gadamer, were theological questions.<sup>1</sup> In the 1927 lecture, "Phenomenology and Theology", Heidegger describes theology as the science of faith, highlighting that theology derives from faith, from a believing comportment, while its task is to formulate and mediate the faith in a conceptual form adequate for this existence.<sup>2</sup> This completes the remark in *Sein und Zeit* according to which "theology is seeking a more primordial interpretation of man's Being towards God, prescribed by the meaning of faith itself and remaining within it," and "it is slowly beginning to understand once more Luther's insight, that the 'foundation' on which its system of dogma rests has not

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hermeneutics, which could be termed "sprachphilosophisch", because it is particularly oriented and connected to language. "At that time I was especially interested in the relationship between the word of the Scripture and theological-speculative thinking" – he wrote in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, p. 96. Heidegger's remark is occasioned by the discrepancy between the verbal expression and dissemination of faith on the one hand, and its written recording, transmission and scientific-theological conceptualization on the other. Heidegger has perceived this situation as laden with tensions from the very beginning. Later in the course of his philosophical path the issue concerning the language and conceptualization adequate for faith is transformed into the issue of the relationship between philosophy and its language, being and language. In his autobiographical note quoted above Heidegger mentions that hermeneutics was known to him from the same source as to Dilthey, namely from his theological studies. However, at a closer look at the matter it becomes apparent that Dilthey defined hermeneutics as the science of "life manifestations recorded *in writing*", and "the interpretation of *written* records" ("Kunstlehre des Verstehens schriftlich fixierter Lebensäußerungen", "Kunstlehre der Auslegung von Schriftdenkmalen"; see Wilhelm Dilthey, "Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," in Idem, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 5, 332f., 320), whereas Heidegger placed emphasis on the "word" right from the beginning. The "word" can equally be a live, living word, and a written, transmitted word, as also a dead word (the Hungarian term "szó" [word] carries its verbal characteristics already in the expression "szóbeli" [verbal]). As revealed by Gadamer's recollections – to be quoted later on –, Heidegger has always thought that the fundamental problem of theology was the search for, and finding of, the right, the adequate word; it consisted, in other words, in the linguistic nature of theology in terms of the tension between orality and literacy. Thus, in a way hardly usual and expectable from a philosopher, he tried to protect theology from thoughtlessly taking over from time to time some out-dated philosophical conceptuality. The fundamental Heideggerian criticism of philosophical and theological tradition springs from the same source, and it can be summarized as follows: both philosophy and theology move in the conceptuality of a theoretical attitude perfectly inadequate from the point of view of living life and living faith.

<sup>1</sup> Gadamer GW 3, 197., 199. cf. GW 1, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Heidegger GA 9, 55 ff, 59.

arisen from an inquiry in which faith is primary, and that conceptually this ‘foundation’ not only is inadequate for the problematic of theology, but conceals and distorts it.”<sup>1</sup> As A. Gethmann-Siefert noted according to Heidegger “religion requires a way of treatment adequate for its own logos.”<sup>2</sup>

For the thinker grown up in Catholic tradition and seriously facing the challenges of Lutheran theology, the most debatable part of the former may have been the fact that in the course of its development, the Christianity of Christian theology gradually faded and perished; this theology knitted an intellectualistic-theoretical conceptual network, lent from Greek philosophy, around faith, which not only bound up theology, but directly distanced, alienated from it. Influenced by Franz Overbeck, Heidegger investigated the relationship of faith and theology, religion and theology, and – as previously referred to – on the basis of Adolf von Harnack’s then groundbreaking works, he accepted the thesis of the fatal Hellenization of Christian theology.<sup>3</sup> It is thus hardly a coincidence, and indeed a sign of consistent thinking, that when Heidegger published his lecture “Phenomenology and Theology” in 1969/70, after several decades he once again drew attention in its preface to the fact that Franz Overbeck “pointed out that the world-denying expectation of the end is the basic characteristic of primal Christianity”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger SZ 10/ BT 30; see GA20, 6/4.)

<sup>2</sup> Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert: *Das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie im Denken Martin Heideggers* (Freiburg - München: Alber, 1974), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Gadamer GW 3, 313.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. GA 9, 45 f. See on this Otto Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger* (Freiburg - München: Alber, 1992), 482., and also 26, 32, 111. The growing interest in early Christianity and eschatological comportment characterizing it was also signalled by the works of Johannes Weiß, highly influential in the age – Heidegger referred to them in his lectures on the phenomenology of religion (see GA 60, 133) – summarized in the posthumous *Das Urchristentum*. Turning to primal Christianity meant for Weiß too the re-thematization of the relationship of religion and theology on decisive points. “[...] seit Paulus ist im Christentum Religion und Theologie so eng mit einander verkoppelt, daß es bis zum heutigen Tage nicht möglich gewesen ist, diesen Bund zu lösen. Es ist sehr zu fragen, ob das ein Segen für das Christentum gewesen sei. So notwendig die Theologie für die Kirche und ihr Verhältnis zur umgebenden Welt ist, so wünschenswert wäre es doch, wenn man im Leben des Einzelnen für das Religiöse eine Form finden könnte, bei der das Theologische ganz ausgeschaltet bliebe”. (“Ever since Paul, religion and theology have had such a strong inter-dependence in Christianity”, writes Weiß, “that it has been impossible to break this alliance even to this day. It is important to ask whether this has indeed been a blessing for Christianity. It would be desirable to find a form of religion devoid of theology in the life of the individual just as much as theology is necessary for the church and its relationship with the world.”) Johannes Weiß: *Das Urchristentum*, ed. Rudolf Knopf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 321 f. This tensioned relationship of religion and theology is also echoed in one of Heidegger’s notes in GA 60, 310: “Scharf zu trennen: das Problem der Theologie und das der Religiosität. Bei der Theologie ist zu beachten ihre ständige Abhängigkeit von Philosophie und der Lage des jeweiligen theoretischen Bewußtseins überhaupt. Die Theologie hat bis jetzt keine originäre theoretische Grundhaltung der Ursprünglichkeit des Gegenstandes entsprechend gefunden.” (“Sharply separate: the problem



**Octavian Cosman, *Aquarium*, 100 x 71 cm, oil on canvas, 1973**

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of theology and the problem of religiousness. As for theology, its permanent dependence on philosophy and the situation of the respective theoretical consciousness must be observed at all times. Theology has not found the original theoretical attitude adequate for the originality of its subject even to this day.”)

Seen from this perspective, *Being and Time* may be considered as a kind of attempt to unite both Catholic and Protestant traditions. The Catholic influence is perceivable in the ontological orientation emerging in Heidegger under the influence of Brentano's dissertation on Aristotle (*Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles*, 1862) and Carl Braig's work *Vom Sein. Abriss der Ontologie* (1896) – the latter creating, while opposing to, the expression of modernism—and of Neo-Scholasticism in general; in other words, it is perceivable in the fundamental question which determined and accompanied Heidegger's entire path as a thinker from the beginning to the end, namely the meaning, and then the truth, of being (in the terminology of his major work, fundamental ontology). The Protestant, and primarily Lutheran influence is shown by the emphasis on the individual believer, religious experience and enacted life (in the terminology of the main opus: existential analytics), expressed in a new kind of reading of Aristotle, disrupted from Scholastic interpretations, and favouring practical philosophy, and also in the reception of, and reference to, medieval mysticism, Luther, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Dilthey, and the tradition of the philosophy of life.<sup>1</sup> In one of the endpoints of the methodological reflections in the introductory part of the *Being and Time*, Heidegger concludes that fundamental ontology is to be sought in existential analytics;<sup>2</sup> this well-known, thesis-like formulation – which of course marks a significant tension in the relationship of the two disciplines,<sup>3</sup> a tension which in a sense becomes the reason for the incompleteness of this great work – is in fact a concise expression of the attempt to synthesize the two great Christian traditions.

## **V. The influence of Husserlian phenomenology**

It is hardly possible to treat here all the fundamental philosophical influences that the young Heidegger took up in his thinking; however, the previously sketched image must be completed at one point. It is about the decisive influence of Husserlian phenomenology on the young Heidegger's development as a thinker. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Heidegger was completely immersed in an inner discussion with phenomenology, therefore it is not superfluous to follow up some of the instances of this discussion.

The phenomenology elaborated by Husserl conceived of itself as a basically descriptive science. Its purpose is the description of phenomena as they directly reveal themselves. The rejection of any theoretical construction which has not

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<sup>1</sup> In August 1917, a few months after his wedding, as a belated celebration of his wife's birthday, Heidegger gave an inspiring speech in a private circle on Schleiermacher's work *Über die Religion*. See Otto Pöggeler, *Schritte zu einer hermeneutischen Philosophie* (Freiburg - München: Alber, 1993), 14., 389.; Idem, *Heidegger in seiner Zeit*, 250.

<sup>2</sup> "Daher muß die *Fundamentalontologie*, aus der alle andern erst entspringen können, in der *existenzialen Analytik des Daseins* gesucht werden" (SZ §. 4, p. 13.)

<sup>3</sup> I tried to expose these ideas in more detail at the end of my Introduction to the Hungarian translation of the *Being and Time*: Fehér M., Introduction to *Lét és idő* (Being and Time) by Martin Heidegger (Budapest: Gondolat, 1989), 50 ff.)

justified itself in “presentive intuition” is essential here;<sup>1</sup> it is solely by “presentive intuition” and adequate description rather than by the mere authority of philosophical tradition that any concept or theory can be justified.<sup>2</sup>

Heidegger’s appropriation of Husserl’s phenomenology was accompanied from the very beginning by motifs derived from life-philosophy and historicism. Heidegger’s hermeneutic turn following the First World War meant returning to man’s concrete life, to “actual life” and “life experience”. This return to, and concern with, actual life conceived of itself at the same time as a return to the “origins”, and this is how Heidegger critically took up, and committed himself to, Husserl’s phenomenology. However, the origin for Heidegger, distinctly from Husserl, was not transcendental consciousness (with its meaning-giving acts, its immanence and intentional life), but actual, historical, experienced life; this is the source of meaning, the original starting point of philosophy and its conceptuality. On Heidegger’s view, the intentional being must be experienced in a way more authentic, more “natural”, “unprejudiced” – that is to say, more “phenomenological” – than was the case with Husserl. Husserl’s “natural comportment” becomes thus more radical with Heidegger, and gets transformed into a “hermeneutic of facticity”, and later, in the *Being and Time*, “existential analytics”.

Husserl’s phenomenology proclaimed as well as committed itself to the principle “Back to the things themselves!” For this reason it favoured intuitive evidence in contrast to all kinds of constrained argumentation or deduction. Heidegger enthusiastically accepted both principles – as well as the view that any philosophy worthy of this name and taking itself seriously is phenomenology –, but already at the beginning of his hermeneutic turn, in 1919, he transformed and developed intuitive evidence into “understanding evidence” [verstehende Evidenz].<sup>3</sup> On a lecture held in the same year he spoke about “hermeneutic intuition” [hermeneutische Intuititon],<sup>4</sup> and he emphasized that the main thing in philosophy is

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<sup>1</sup> “The expression »phenomenology« as Husserl used it” – writes Hans-Georg Gadamer – “was in a polemical opposition with all theoretical constructions deriving from any obscure systematic constraint”. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 104.

<sup>2</sup> See Husserl’s “principle of all principles” in *Ideas I*, § 24: “No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originally* (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ actuality) *offered to us in ‘intuition’ is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there*” (*Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book. General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, translated by F. Kersten, Husserl, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983, p. 44; see Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* ‘24, *Husserliana*, III/1, p. 51: “*Am Prinzip aller Prinzipien, daß jeder originär gebende Anschauung eine Rechtsquelle der Erkenntnis sei, daß alles, was sich uns in der ‘Intuition’ originär* (sozusagen in seiner leibhaften Wirklichkeit) *darbietet, einfach hinzunehmen sei, als was es sich gibt, aber auch nur in den Schranken, in denen es sich da gibt, kann uns keine erdenkliche Theorie irre machen.*”)

<sup>3</sup> GA 56/57, 126.

<sup>4</sup> GA 56/57, 117.

“to understand by looking at the thing” [zuschauend zu verstehen].<sup>1</sup> For both Husserl and Heidegger the essential issue to decide philosophical debates is nothing else but the things themselves, i.e., the way in which things themselves are. But what it comes down to for Heidegger is not the way things are in *consciousness*, but the way they appear in actual human *life*. This is how Heidegger came to understand Husserl’s password “Back to the things themselves!”: back to how they happen to present themselves (rather than in and for transcendental consciousness) in actual life. And, as a matter of fact, the fundamental mode of actual life is hardly a contemplative-theoretical kind of relating to things.

The struggle against theoretical comportment, in an attempt to comply with life not in the (deduced) conceptuality of “theory”, but on the level of actual experience, and the effort to find one’s way back, and regain access, to this level, while finding the adequate concepts, the language for it – were equally decisive characteristics of German philosophy and theology at the turn of the century. When Heidegger in his hermeneutic effort turned back to actual life – and began making it speak in a new, particular language –, the above-mentioned religious-theological motifs were probably influencing his thinking. And indeed, as we shall soon see: from the point of view of his hermeneutic return to “life”, for Heidegger – as is apparent in his lectures on the phenomenology of religion – primal Christianity emerged as a decisive paradigm.

Indeed, Heidegger attempted to interpret the concept of life of life-philosophy by thematizing religious life; the particular time structure of the latter (and its eschatological nature) was later built into the parts on temporality of his major work. Two efforts meet thus in the concept of religious life. Heidegger’s answer to the question “what is life?” is the following: it is religious life. His answer to the other question, “what is religion?”, is the same: it is religious life. But, since the questions and their directions are different, the meaning of the answers is also different. In the first case the intended meaning is approximately this: life can be truly unravelled through religious life; it is in and by religious life that life can actually be experienced as what it is; it is religious life that really knows, and from which it can be read off, what life really is. In the second case the answer is a stance taken in the theological disputes of the time, a latent connection to Schleiermacher and Harnack, and at the same time a critical distancing from certain self-interpretations of religion and theology (theoretical-intellectualistic forms, alienated from faith): religion is primarily not doctrine, not theory, but – life.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> GA 56/57, 65.

<sup>2</sup> This approach continues in the 1950s, when Heidegger speaks about the metaphysical and ontotheological concept of God, about God as *causa sui* as follows: “Man cannot pray to this God, nor commune with Him. Man cannot fall down to his knees in front of the *causa sui*, nor play music or dance for Him”. Compared to this, he adds, *god-less* thinking, which gives up the God of philosophy, the *causa sui*, is perhaps closer to the true, divine God. Martin Heidegger, “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik,” in Idem, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 35–73, 70 f., and also GA 11, 51–79, 77. See my studies for more details, István Fehér M., “Der göttliche Gott. Hermeneutik, Theologie und Philosophie im Denken Heideggers,” in *Das Spätwerk Heideggers. Ereignis – Sage –*



## **VI. The structure of the lecture on the phenomenology of religion**

The lecture on the phenomenology of religion consists of two larger parts: an introductory, methodological-logical part, and the interpretation of the Epistles of Paul. The introduction starts with considerations in logics and the philosophy of language concerning philosophical concept formation, and discusses these topics in ever wider, concentric circles. The problem of the linguistic medium (the conceptuality, the linguisticity) of philosophizing has been a concern of Heidegger ever since the earliest times, it appeared already in his habilitation paper – this point of view was in fact just as decisive for Heidegger’s preliminary understanding of the task of *theo-logy* (as a talk about God, or the conceptual elaboration and verbal mediation of faith) – and it also meant one of the fundamental, if not *the most* fundamental, impulses for his hermeneutic turn after the war. Heidegger’s concept of language and concept formation underlying as well as outlining at the same time, his early hermeneutical thinking centres around the concept of “formal indication” [formale Anzeige], and leads to the treatment of fundamental problems such as “the language of philosophy” or the conceptuality of philosophy in general (the case is similar with the language and conceptuality of theology, although Heidegger does not treat it just as thoroughly). From this perspective, it is important, but not sufficient, to simply find a new object for philosophy (namely, actual life): a new language, a new conceptuality “tailored” to this new object must also be found, such that may render and make accessible this new object adequately, in its absolute originality. Heidegger’s objection to the entire European philosophical-theological tradition can be summarized by saying that its “theories” derive from a “theoretical” compartment which is only secondary from the point of view of actual life, actual experience, and therefore they speak the language deriving from this kind of relation. That is why this language and this compartment cannot do justice for, or comply with, actual life and life experience. It is this consideration which, after the First World War, leads Heidegger to the theory of “formale Anzeige”, and this is where such views appear – in the unpublished review on Jaspers, for instance – that the products of philosophical interpretation are so-called “hermeneutic concepts” which are not abstract or freely floating, but gain their meaning in the course of the particular interpretation being discussed.<sup>1</sup> A main characteristic of “formale Anzeige” is that it points to a certain direction, it signals, draws and directs attention, instead of defining or designating an object. Philosophy is usually not understood because it is approached with a wrong theory of language; it is tacitly assumed that language is always objectifying. Characteristic for the concept of “formale Anzeige” is its nature of “attracting attention”, and this pertains to the

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*Geviert*, ed. Damir Barbarić (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 163–190.; Idem, “Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers,” in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Philosophie*, ed. Hans-Dieter Klein, vol. XXXIX/2007 (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller Universitätsverlag, 2008), 141–164.; Idem, “Heideggers Kritik der Ontotheologie,” in *Religion und Gott im Denken der Neuzeit*, ed. Albert Franz and Wilhelm G. Jacobs (Paderborn – München – Wien – Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 200–223.

<sup>1</sup> GA 9, 32.

applicative moment of hermeneutics.<sup>1</sup> Human life is not a static being but movement, mobility, and the categories of hermeneutics are characteristically “Bewegungskategorien”, “formally indicative”.<sup>2</sup> This is most spectacularly epitomized, as Heidegger himself acknowledges, by the concept of “running forth to death”, “Vorlaufen zum Tode”, “Vorlaufen in den Tod”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Of the many occurrences, see first of all GA 59, 85. Cf. also *ibid.*, 29., 61 f, 74., 97., 173., 190. In his lectures during the 1920s, Heidegger repeatedly treated the subject of “formale Anzeige”, which concentrated for him the question of the linguistic-conceptual nature of philosophy; see GA 9, 9 ff, 29; GA 58, 248 f; GA 60, 54 ff; GA 61, 20., 32 ff, 60., 66 f, 113., 116., 134., 141., 175.; GA 63, 85.; GA 21, 410.; GA 29/30, 421 ff, 441 ff, 491. On the character of “attracting attention,” see especially GA 29/30, 429. (Gadamer also refers to this aspect; see GW 3, 316.) The weight of the issue is well marked by Heidegger’s committed statement made in this lecture: “Alle philosophischen Begriffe sind *formal anzeigend*” (Every philosophical concept has a formal indicative nature). GA 29/30, 425. A bracketed remark of the young Heidegger’s unpublished review on Jaspers also pointed in this direction (GA 9, 10 f.), and it is not subsidiary to our subject that Heidegger also noted there, that as long as we fail to consider this nature of the philosophical “method” and conceptuality, we would only deal with a “surrogate concept” (“Begriffssurrogat”), which presents itself as the true phenomenon, but its possibility of experience vanishes and “it will only remain correct *by the sound of the word*” (lediglich noch *dem Wortlaut nach* richtig bleibt). *Ibid.*, 10. (Emphasis mine, I. M. F.) The expression “formale Anzeige” appears on occasions in the terminology of *Being and Time*, not very often though, only around half a dozen times, but without any reference to its theoretical background or considerations; that is to say – to be stylish in formulation – without attracting the least attention to itself (cf. SZ 114., 116., 117., 231., 313., 315.) On this issue, see: Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1983), 271 f.; Daniel O. Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Method: Philosophical Concepts As Formal Indications”, *The Review of Metaphysics* 4 (1994): 775–795; Th. C. W. Oudemans, “Heidegger’s ’logische Untersuchungen’”, *Heidegger Studies* 6 (1990): 85–105, 93 ff. Ever since Theodore Kisiel formulated in his fundamental monograph the view that “formale Anzeige” is nothing less than “the very heart and soul of the early Heidegger” (Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* [Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 1993], 172), Heidegger scholarship has received new impulses, and the literature on this subject is increasing, especially in the English-speaking world; see lately more studies in S.J. McGrath and Andrzej Wierciński, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Religious Life* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2010), *Elementa – Schriften zur Philosophie und ihrer Problemgeschichte*, vol. 80, first of all, S.J. McGrath, “Formal Indication, Irony, and the Risk of Saying Nothing”, 179–205; Jean Greisch, “Heidegger’s Methodological Principles for Understanding Religious Phenomena”, 137–138, especially 141 ff; Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, “The Poetics of World: Origins of Poetic Theory in Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of Religious Life*”, 239–262, e.g. 239: “Formal indication anticipates poetic dwelling; the structure of Pauline proclamation anticipates poetic calling”; and Gerhard Ruff, “Present History: Reflections on Martin Heidegger’s Approach to Early Christianity”, 233–238, e.g. 236.: “The first part of the lecture [...] culminates in Heidegger’s central methodological concept: formal indication”).

<sup>2</sup> Heidegger, GA 61, 113 ff., 117 ff., 142., 174.; SZ 392.; GA 21, 410.; GA 29/30, 425 ff; GA 61, 32 ff, 93.; GA 63, 16., 80.

<sup>3</sup> GA 29/30, 425 f.

This introductory part of the lecture on the phenomenology of religion is not at all self-sufficient: it apparently serves the purpose of finding the linguistic medium adequate for the subsequent interpretation of the Epistles of Paul, the context for their interpretation, while permanently facing the difficulty that the (linguistic, what else?) attempts to warn against erroneous linguistic attitude in the audience – exactly inasmuch as they are not unfounded – are also misunderstood. Therefore the statement (or “warning”, if you’d like) is placed right at the beginning of the introduction: “All of you – with little exception – always misunderstand all the concepts and definitions I give [...]”.<sup>1</sup>

The conceptuality used in the sense of “formale Anzeige” is entirely characteristic of Heidegger’s philosophical language usage; theoretical reflections on the matter repeatedly appear, in the decade between the late 1910s and the late 1920s, in his various lectures, in shorter or longer treatment, sometimes even in the range of several pages (as in the lecture on the phenomenology of religion or towards the end of the 1929/30 lecture) – but a thorough analysis is still missing. Several signs indicate that Heidegger did attempt to provide some kind of a temporary theoretical clarification of the concept of “formale Anzeige” exactly here, at the end of the introductory part of the lecture on the phenomenology of religion: he articulated the problem of philosophical concept formation, “formal indication” claimed to be the “theory” of the phenomenological method<sup>2</sup> in ever more profound circles, when this part unexpectedly interrupts without any transition. In Theodore Kisiel’s pertinent expression, the lecture – at least from this point of view – has remained to be a *cursus interruptus*.<sup>3</sup>

What exactly happened, is described by various anecdotes of Heidegger’s former disciples. According to the dramatic version, one or several students denounced Heidegger to the Dean – it is more likely, however, that they only went to complain or made some critical comments. Almost five weeks of the semester had already passed, Christmas was approaching, and the students were expecting the reading of Paul’s letters to convey them some kind of a moving, edifying message (at any rate, some sort of a religion), but instead Heidegger kept serving them preparatory, abstract logical meditations – such as the detailed discussion of the difference between generalization and formalization in Husserl’s works. The Dean might have given instructions to Heidegger – whether there was any reaction or manifestation during the lectures themselves, is unknown. Be it as it may, the hope – not completely unfounded, as seen from the preliminaries of the previous classes – for a temporary theoretical clarification of “formale Anzeige” did not come true because of this incident.<sup>4</sup> Oskar Becker’s lecture notes stop right in the middle of a

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<sup>1</sup> GA 60, 16: “Ich möchte behaupten, daß sämtliche von ihnen, von ganz wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, die sämtlichen Begriffe und Bestimmungen, die ich Ihnen gebe, beständig mißverstehen [...]”

<sup>2</sup> GA 60, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, 170.

<sup>4</sup> This interruption, writes Kisiel, came at a very unfortunate moment, since we fail to hear Heidegger’s always valuable and often creative summary of his previous class, which at that point would have been the synopsis of “formal indication.” “Formal indication” pertains, as

sentence,<sup>1</sup> and then they continue, without any transition, with Heidegger's following remarks – not lacking any annoyance and resignation, but still quite enigmatic in want of more background knowledge –: “Philosophie, wie ich sie auffasse, ist in einer Schwierigkeit. Der Hörer in anderen Vorlesungen ist von vornherein gesichert: In kunsgeschichtlicher Vorlesung kann er Bilder sehen, in anderen kommt er für sein Examen auf die Kosten. In der Philosophie ist es anders, und ich kann daran nichts ändern, da ich die Philosophie nicht erfunden habe. Ich möchte mich aber doch aus dieser Kalamität retten und daher diese so abstrakten Betrachtungen abbrechen und Ihnen von der nächsten Stunde an Geschichte vortragen, und zwar werde ich ohne weitere Betrachtung des Ansatzes und der Methode ein bestimmtes konkretes Phänomen zum Ausgang nehmen, allerdings für mich unter der Voraussetzung, daß Sie die ganze Betrachtung vom Anfang bis zum Ende mißverstehen.”<sup>2</sup>

In the next class Heidegger did in fact proceed to the interpretation of the Epistles of Paul. However, it belongs to the truth that the “formale Anzeige” and the “so abstract” terminology that characterized it kept returning again and again in the interpretation of the Epistles of Paul; what is more, it formed the actual axis of the

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amatter of fact, to philosophy's self-understanding, and it was one of the focal points of the young Heidegger's efforts. In the same systematic way as he began discussing it in this lecture, was he never to return to this subject any more; the topic appeared in his subsequent lectures only in an incidental way (see Kiesel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 172).

<sup>1</sup> See *Ibid.*, 171.; Otto Pöggeler, “Heideggers Luther-Lektüre im Freiburger Theologenkongress”, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 1, Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander, and Holger Zaborowski, eds. *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens* (Freiburg/München: Alber, 2004), 188. The following note appears at Becker: “Infolge von Einwänden Unberufener abgebrochen am 30. November 1920”.

<sup>2</sup> “Philosophy, as I perceive it, finds itself amidst difficulties. On other lectures the student is ensured: on lectures of art history, he will see images, and on other lectures as well he will get what he expects. With philosophy, it is different, and I cannot change anything about it, since it was not me who discovered philosophy. However, I would like to escape this unfortunate situation, therefore I will interrupt these abstract considerations, and I will tell you stories as of the next class; namely, I will choose a concrete phenomenon as starting point, without any further considerations as to the starting point or methodology, with the preconception for myself that you will misunderstand the entire lecture from the beginning to the end.” GA 60, 65. As a matter of fact, the first class already contained the sobering remark: “Über das Eigentliche in der Philosophie selbst habe ich Ihnen nichts zu sagen. Ich werde nichts bringen, was stofflich interessant wäre oder zu Herzen ginge.” (“I can tell you nothing of the essential things of philosophy. I will present you nothing that would be interesting in subject, or move your hearts”.) GA 60, 5. He also began his first 1923/24 Marburg lecture in a similar way: “Hier wird keine Grundlegung, kein Programm oder System gegeben: nicht einmal Philosophie ist zu erwarten.” (GA 17, 1.) “Sie sehen selbst, daß in der Tat das, was wir hier gewonnen haben, ein Geringes ist und es ein Mißverständnis wäre, das Gewonnene im Sinne einer Philosophie zu nehmen.” (GA 17, 276.) (“The lecture will lay no foundations, formulate no programme or system – not even philosophy is to be expected [from it]”; “You can see for yourselves: what we have gained so far is very little, and it would be a misunderstanding to perceive those said as some kind of philosophy”.)

analysis. No record is extant however on the students' reactions to it, or whether and how they were able to deal with it.

### **VII. Life, religious life, paradigmatic life: primal Christian life experience as a being having become between rebirth and kairological time**

As previously discussed, in the years following the war Heidegger transformed Husserl's transcendental (consciousness-) phenomenology into a phenomenology of life; this phenomenology of life, however, at a decisive point of its concretization, understands itself as a phenomenology of religion, or, more precisely, a (hermeneutic) phenomenology of religious *life*.<sup>1</sup> It would be a misunderstanding to think that "religious life" should be conceived of as a regional specification of the wider generic concept of "life": for Heidegger the phenomenology of *religious life* – as he understands it in the pertaining lecture – is not a subspecies of the phenomenology of *life*. Primal Christianity appears as a decisive paradigm for Heidegger from the point of view of the hermeneutic return to "life" (and not merely to religious life), that is to say, religious life seems to him most adequate to represent the characteristics of life. Meanwhile Heidegger, as apparent, understands life in an entirely worldly sense, as an actual, factual life. Such things as life after death, eternal life, or the immortality of the soul as possible philosophical subjects utterly fall outside his phenomenological perspective.<sup>2</sup> Life is always an actual life, facticity. This may eventually be one of the reasons why Heidegger's analysis focuses on the Epistles of Paul, that is, the secular life of the earliest Christian communities. His interpretive efforts center around primal Christian experience of life as it manifested itself in the believing life of the first Christian communities, around the dynamics of this experience, and its making accessible by the means of phenomenology.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Making use of a possibility of refinement offered by the Hungarian language, one may say: the phenomenology of religious life is not a religious phenomenology, but simply a phenomenology without an attribute. "One can hear these days", he says in a remark in the 1927 lecture, "that my philosophical work is Catholic phenomenology. It is presumably because I am convinced that thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus understood something of philosophy – maybe even more than the modern thinkers. Nevertheless, the concept of Catholic phenomenology is even more meaningless than the concept of Protestant mathematics." GA 24, 28: "Man hat gesagt, meine philosophische Arbeit sei katholische Phänomenologie. Vermutlich deshalb, eil ich der Überzeugung bin, daß auch Denker wie Thomas von Aquino und Duns Scotus etwas von der Philosophie verstanden haben, vielleicht mehr als die Modernen. Der Begriff einer katholischen Phänomenologie ist jedoch noch widersinniger als der Begriff einer protestantischen Mathematik."

<sup>2</sup> Death is analyzed in the same manner in the *Being and Time*, in a completely secular way. (Cf. SZ 248.)

<sup>3</sup> It may not be superfluous to specify that the expressions "primal Christianity" and "primal Christian" (life experience or religiousness) are obviously used in a twofold meaning: on the one hand in a historical-chronological designation, referring to the early history of Christianity, and on the other hand as analogies to other expressions of Heidegger, such as "original science" – the first semester after the war began exactly by the discussion of the idea of philosophy as original science ("Urwissenschaft", see GA 56/57, 13 ff, also 95 ff.) –

It is however one thing to claim that religion is primarily religious life, and it is quite another to say that religious life is the paradigm of life. Heidegger does not only claim the former, but – precisely in the lecture on the phenomenology of religion, and in an emphatic way – the latter as well. Primal Christian religiousness lies not only *in* actual life experience – it is identical, co-significant with it. Christian religiousness and life experience overlap or coincide.<sup>1</sup>

The following considerations try to offer an explanation for this fact. In his early lectures Heidegger repeatedly discussed what he called the “self-sufficient” nature, “self-sufficiency” (*selbstgenügsam*, *Selbstgenügsamkeit*) of life.<sup>2</sup> One of the fundamental meanings of this is that – as Heidegger explains – this phenomenon is “self-sufficient” insofar as it stays within life and within itself, that is to say, it is not visible (the concept of the *Being-in-the-world* in his major work will be similar to it, that is also so encompassing that it remains concealed in front of itself). Life remains within itself, it is sufficient for itself (it needs no philosophy, for instance), and its own imperfections or insufficiencies (that it may be very much aware of at times) do not lead past it: any attempt to surpass them will always only lead to another form of life. Therefore, because of its self-sufficient nature, life is not visible for itself.

Heidegger’s basic term for the characterization of early Christian life experience is the concept of “Gewordensein”, *having-become*. This is a kind of being which resulted from some kind of past happening or occurrence, its (present) being is due to that, while at the same time (and not unimportantly) it has also some kind of awareness, knowledge, or understanding about it, that is, it knows itself as such, it has an awareness or understanding about itself as such (such that it always already knows some past occurrence behind its back, as it were).<sup>3</sup> This is such a

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in the sense of “authentic”, “genuine”, “model-like”. “Primal Christian life experience” from this perspective is equal to an original experience, authentic, non-distorted from the point of view of the experience (of Christian faith). At the same time, the two levels of meaning – historical-descriptive and normative-prescriptive – are more often than not interconnected.

<sup>1</sup> See GA 60, 80.: “Urchristliche Religiosität ist in der urchristlichen Lebenserfahrung und ist eine solche selbst”. Ibid., 82.: “Urchristliche Religiosität ist in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung. Nachsatz: Sie ist eigentlich solche selbst.” Ibid., 131.: “*christliche Religiosität ist in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung, ist sie eigentlich selbst*”. (Emphasis in the original).

<sup>2</sup> See GA 58, 41 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See GA 60, 93 ff, especially 94.: “Das Wissen über das eigene Gewordensein stellt der Explikation eine ganz besondere Aufgabe. Hieraus wird sich der Sinn einer Faktizität bestimmen, die von einem bestimmten Wissen begleitet ist. Wir reißen die Faktizität und das Wissen auseinander, aber sie ist ganz ursprünglich miterfahren [...] Das Gewordensein ist nun nicht ein beliebiges Vorkommnis im Leben, sondern es wird ständig miterfahren und zwar so, daß ihr jetziges Sein Gewordensein ist. Ihr Gewordensein ist ihr jetziges Sein.” Cf. also 120: “Das christliche Leben ist nicht geradelinig, sondern ist gebrochen: Alle umweltlichen Bezüge müssen hindurchgehen durch den Vollzugszusammenhang des Gewordenseins [...]”. Furthermore, the following excerpt is also characteristic for the relationship of faith and theology as outlined by Heidegger, while it confirms Gadamer’s recollection mentioned above (see note 2, p. 213), and also the relating theses of “Phänomenologie und Theologie” (and thus, so-to-say, philologically “legitimates” itself): “Das Wissen um das eigene Gewordensein ist der

transformation of the original comportment which, at the moment when it becomes aware of it, wakes to its own consciousness as a being which has *become* that which it presently is. In other words: it is only and exclusively that which it is because it *has become* that – and it also has some awareness of this *becoming* or having become. It is solely because it has become what it is that it is what it is – and it does also have a specific awareness of it. Christian life experience seen from this perspective is not only a being that has become, but also – inseparably – a kind of accompanying knowledge as well, which at decisive points contains the fact that this becoming being, this being emerging from a past event was not initiated by itself, neither caused nor completed by it.<sup>1</sup> Primal Christian life experience is the movement of turning away from the world and of turning towards God, a movement not initiated and performed by itself, and/but perceived as something always already lying behind.

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Ansatz und Ursprung der Theologie. In der Explikation dieses Wissens und seiner begrifflichen Ausdrucksform ergibt sich der Sinn einer theologischen Begriffs-bildung” (ibid., 95.; cf. also 124.). Yet another thing worth mentioning is that the concept of *Gewordensein* is entirely a “formally indicating”, that is, a phenomenological concept in the sense of “formale Anzeige”. This is not about the content or how to fill it up, not about the “what”, but about the “how”, the way it happens, the concept formally indicates and signals to a certain direction. That it is not a definition of content, is shown by the fact that Gadamer later used this same concept (with a slight grammatical-stylistic difference, in the form “gewordenes Sein”) with no difficulty or distortion at all for the characterization of *Bildung*. It is about a kind of knowledge which is at the same time being, more precisely being that has become (“gewordenes Sein”); it is thus equally a “way of knowledge or a way of being”, a knowledge “which is not detached from any being that has become”. (GW 1, 22, 317). What is more, the *hermeneutic problem* as such is characterized in Gadamer’s view by “*distancing itself from »pure« knowledge, detached from our own being*” (GW 1, 319 – emphasis in the original). Heidegger could have unproblematically accepted such formulation of the hermeneutic problem, all the more so because in the famous 1923 lecture he offered precisely an ontological radicalization of hermeneutics inasmuch as he reformulated it as the self-interpretation of facticity (“Selbstausslegung der Faktizität”), emphasizing that “interpretation belongs to the existential characteristic of facticity itself” (cf. GA 63, 14 f.). Seen from this twofold example, the concept of *Gewordensein* articulates as follows. To be educated or to be Christian: both may thank their present being to some past occurrence, both – as soon as they are and as long as they are – always already have some happening and knowledge of it behing them – the educated person was shaped, (trans-)formed, turned into a different person by his education, his present being is due to some past event, while (primal) Christian life experience similarly – or perhaps even more radically – experiences itself, its own, present being in the light of the event of “salvation”, “rebirth”, always happening in advance. A broad connection is created thus between Christianity and education (humanism), which cannot be overshadowed by the fact that they do not overlap, and that they may be at odds with each other in certain respects. Heidegger in this regard tended more towards an anti-humanist attitude (see on this István M. Fehér, “Hermeneutika és humanizmus” (Hermeneutic and Humanism), in *Hans-Georg Gadamer - egy 20. századi humanista* (Hans-Georg Gadamer – a 20<sup>th</sup> century humanist), ed. Miklós Nyíró (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2009), 43-117, mainly 64-97.)

<sup>1</sup> See GA 60, 121 f.

As a result of the strict relationship in Christian life experience of facticity and the knowledge thereof – that is to say, because it is impossible to be a Christian without the knowledge of the previously epitomized movement that man *has become* one – it can be legitimately claimed that early Christian religiosity experiences the facticity of life, or that it experiences life in its facticity – or what is more, that *is itself facticity*.<sup>1</sup> Seen from here, Christian religiousness or life experience, as a new being emerging by formation, by having become what it is, opens up actual life as such as rebirth, and makes possible some kind of a particular approach and access to it. Subsequent to this turn actual life opens up and becomes accessible as a particularly this-worldly life. Due to this formation, this having-become, always perceived in the background and – inseparably from it – the consciousness connected to it, actual life emerges, in the light of some awareness, for itself *as such*, being actually that which it is. Thereby Christian life experience experiences the whole life or the wholeness of life: past, present, and future – it lives time, and is itself this time.<sup>2</sup>

This time is directed towards the future. Or, we may also say: it starts from the future. When Paul the Apostle says: “the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5. 2.), then he speaks about an imminent, future event without a precise timing. This future cannot be described in the form of objective contents; and the relating to it is not merely an (idle) expectation of some future event, but – in contrast to the “sleepers” – “wakefulness”. Sleepers cannot be saved, because – as Saint Paul says – they live in darkness. This means – comments Heidegger – that they cannot save themselves since they hold no possession of themselves, they had forgotten their selves<sup>3</sup> – and therefore they do not have any experience of life in its facticity. It is only the second birth – we could say – that is, *rebirth*, that opens up and makes accessible the first birth. We could also say: *rebirth* is the true, the actual birth.<sup>4</sup> That which, inseparably from it – as soon as it already is and is born –

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<sup>1</sup> See above the places quoted in note 3, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> See GA 60, 80. Cf. also *ibid.*, 82., 104., 116. The interpretation put forward in this part of the present paper – as well as some of the earlier subjects treated only sketchily – were discussed in more detail in my following studies: “Religion, Theology, and Philosophy on the Way to *Being and Time*: Heidegger, the Hermeneutical, the Factual, and the Historical with Respect to Dilthey and Early Christianity”, in *Research in Phenomenology*, ed. John Sallis, vol. 39, 2009/1, 99–131. Expanded German version: “Religion, Theologie und Philosophie auf Heideggers Weg zu *Sein und Zeit*. Das Phänomenologische, das Hermeneutische, das Faktische und das Historische mit Blick auf Dilthey und das Urchristentum,” in *Modern Homelessness, the Political and Art in Light of Machination – Revisiting the Question of Nihilism. Heidegger Studies / Heidegger Studien*, ed. Parvis Emad, F.-W. von Herrmann, et al., vol. 24 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2008), 103–144.

<sup>3</sup> GA 60, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Romano Guardini also emphasizes this nature of rebirth, opening up a beginning and a perspective, in a different context. See Romano Guardini, *Vom Leben des Glaubens* (1935), Unchanged reprint of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1963). (First edition 1935), *Topos-Taschenbuchausgabe* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1994, 45: “Gläubigwerden ist eben ein Anfang” “das eigentliche Glauben selbst aber ist ein Beginn lebendigen Daseins, und als solches nicht abzuleiten. Sucht man eine Entsprechung dafür, dann würde sie nicht darin



extends to the future. However, the unpredictable future cannot be dominated by chronological calculations. The believer becomes (and has always become) that what s/he is only in this insecurity towards the future. This character of *kairos* as opposed to *kronos* cannot be adequately represented by any kind of inherited concept of time.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the *kairos* expects a decision;<sup>2</sup> the extension towards the unpredictable future, while giving up chronological calculations, does not sink into a passive, idle waiting. The “wakefulness” – we may say, continuing Heidegger’s thought – is none other than a sort of “readiness”, or – anticipating the terminology of his major work – “a running forth”, a “resolution”. “It is impossible to grasp this temporality drawing on any kind of objective concept of time”, says Heidegger.<sup>3</sup> The meaning of this temporality is fundamental for the actual

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liegen, wie ein Denkender aus seinen Voraussetzungen den letzten Schluß zieht, sondern etwa in dem Vorgang, wie morgens der Schlafende ins Wachsein auftaucht [...] er schlägt die Augen auf; er wird geboren”. 59: “Gläubigwerden = Hervorgang neuen Lebens”. These considerations further justify the above thesis according to which religious life is life *par excellence*, that is the one which opens up access to life.

<sup>1</sup> For more details on this point, see István M. Fehér, *Martin Heidegger: Egy XX. századi gondolkodó életútja* [*Martin Heidegger: Path of thinking of a 20th Century Thinker*] (Budapest: Göncöl, 1992), 66.

<sup>2</sup> As the *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch* clarifies the concept, the *Kairos* means “adequate time”, “adequate opportunity” in the sense that at the same time it summons man for a decision; and this situation of decision – while not containing the word itself – repeatedly appears in the Old Testament. The completion of time, the completeness of time in Jesus’ case refers to the nearness of the kingdom of God, which requires an immediate, urgent decision: conversion and faith. See Herbert Vorgrimmler, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch* (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 335.: „*Kairos* (griech. = die rechte Zeit, Gelegenheit), bezeichnet in der griech. Philosophie innerhalb einer Zeiterfahrung eine kritische Situation, die den Menschen anruft u. ihn zur Entscheidung herausfordert. Ohne den Begriff kommt die Entscheidungssituation im theol. Zeitverständnis des AT vielfach vor (»Zeit der Gnade«, »Zeit den Herrn zu suchen«). Nach Mk 1, 15 verkündete Jesus den »erfüllten K.« mit der nahe herbeigekommenen Herrschaft Gottes; dies verlangt ohne Zeitaufschub Entscheidung, Umkehr u. Glauben.“ It should also be added that this instance of decision with the help of the method and means of the hermeneutic phenomenology of the “formal indication” is contained in the concept of authenticity of Heidegger’s major work, namely in the concept of *Entschlossenheit*.

<sup>3</sup> GA 60, 104. That any kind of objectivistic concept of time fails here, is largely shared by recent theological interpretations. The “eschatology” entry in Rahner and Vorgrimmler’s *Teológiai Kiszótár* (Theological Dictionary) for instance writes, among others, that “Eschatology is *not an account in advance of events to be happening “later”*, but man’s [...] anticipation of the peremptory fulfilment of his existential situation. The purpose of this anticipation is that man perceives his own present as a concealed, *peremptory future already present*, which proves to be salvation already at present, if man accepts it as the act of God, the only disposer, the *date and method of which cannot be calculated*”. (Budapest: Szt. István, 1980), 189 f.; italics added. See also Herbert Vorgrimmler, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch*, 171 f.: “Rahner verwies auf die Notwendigkeit einer Hermeneutik biblisch-eschatologischer Aussagen, bei denen es sich *nicht um vorausschauende Reportagen des noch ausstehenden Kommenden* handle, sondern um Ansagen der »je jetzt« gegebenen Situation u. der in ihnen liegenden, auf die Zukunft gerichteten Möglichkeiten. [...] Das in

experience of life, but “due to the penetration of Aristotelian philosophy into Christianity these problems were not perceived in the Middle Ages any more”,<sup>1</sup> while the present situation only further increases this disorientation. What we have to do with here is precisely the centre of Christian life, the eschatological problem – but the eschatological problem had already been forgotten at the end of the first century.<sup>2</sup> To such an extent, says Heidegger in a later characteristic remark, that the eschatological designation itself is false: inasmuch as it derives from Christian dogmatism, and it designates the doctrine of the last things. While the problem itself loses its meaning in this rigorous theoretical-disciplinary approach.<sup>3</sup>

“The time concept still alive in Paul and re-emphasized by Heidegger is not a Greek one”, writes Gadamer. “However, it was the Greek concept of time defined by Aristotle as the measure and number of movement that ruled the conceptual possibilities of subsequent ages from Augustine to Kant and Einstein. Thus the question of the Christian expectation of the last times as Heidegger’s most particular and profound problem had to remain open: was the Christian message not made unrecognizable by the influence of Greek thinking over the Christian experience of faith, and did it not alienate Christian theology from its most particular task?”<sup>4</sup> Regarded from here, Gadamer’s already quoted statement that “Heidegger appropriated the Harnackian thesis of the fatal Hellenization of Christian theology” is now understood in a more nuanced form.

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vielfachen Bedeutungen auftretende Eigenschaftswort eschatologisch ist dann eindeutig, wenn es *nicht für Voraussagen der Zukunft* oder für apokalyptische Endzeit steht [...].” (Italics added.)

<sup>1</sup> GA 60, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. GA 60, 104. “*Zentrum des christlichen Lebens: das eschatologische Problem*. Schon zu Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts wurde das eschatologische im Christentum verdeckt. Man verkennt in späterer Zeit alle ursprünglich christlichen Begriffe. Auch in der heutigen Philosophie sind noch hinter der griechischen Einstellung die christlichen Begriffsbildungen verborgen.” (Italics added.) The eschatological feature pervades and characterizes Heidegger’s entire path as a thinker. Ever since the very beginning, Heidegger had treated the question of being, a permanent inspiration for his own thinking, in a perspective in which the crisis of European history appeared as a result of historical development, as a kind of nadir – as a product of neglecting or forgetting the question of being, exhausting the Greek beginnings, and falling from its heights –, while his own historical age appeared for him as a possible turning point, a cross-road. Heidegger’s *seinsgeschichtliches* thinking, coming to take shape after the turn in the 1930s and directed towards the surpassing of metaphysics, centers around the idea of “another beginning” (“*der andere Anfang*”), a new beginning following the first, Greek beginning of European history and philosophy, the preparation of which would be his task: the outbreak from the dead end of European history and the advent of a new age of the history of being, become projected over each other. This feature might have had some role in Heidegger’s short political activity. Hugo Ott pinpoints this feature of Heidegger’s *habitus* as a thinker, not without any critical poignancy, in the chapter entitled “*Der beständige Advent*” of his biographical sketch on Heidegger. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Philosophie* (Frankfurt / New York: Campus Verlag, 1988), 26 ff.

<sup>3</sup> GA 60, 115.

<sup>4</sup> Gadamer, GW 3, 313; cf. also *ibid.*, 314.

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The present paper may be concluded with the following remarks: life experience and time cannot be rendered independent from each other. It is not accidental that in his major work Heidegger fixes the highest definition of (human) existence (the latter being the concept which takes the place of the early concept of life experience) as being in time, in temporality. Its primary dimension continues to be the future. Experiencing time is the same as experiencing the entirety, the wholeness of existence: time is the ultimate definition of existence. To exist totally means to exist temporally, while (entirely) filling out time; the complete life experience is the experience of time. The completeness of factual life experience is the experience of *time itself* (and not the experience of itself – or of something else – *in* time); it is an extended extension, the total possession of ourselves. Whoever has time, has an ego, a self. Who loses or wastes one's time, loses (or even fails to gain) oneself.

Heidegger concluded his 1924 Marburg lecture on the concept of time with the following remark: "The question »What is time?« has changed into the question »Who is time?«, or more closely: are we time ourselves? Or even more closely: am I my own time?"<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Emese G. Czintos

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<sup>1</sup> GA 64, 125. On Heidegger's relation to theology, see my earlier studies: "Religion, Theology and Philosophy on the Way to *Being and Time*: Heidegger, Dilthey and Early Christianity," *A Companion to Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religious Life*, eds. S.J. McGrath and Andrzej Wiercinski (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2010 [Elementa – Schriften zur Philosophie und ihrer Problemgeschichte, vol. 80]), 35–65; and "Der göttliche Gott. Hermeneutik, Theologie und Philosophie im Denken Heideggers," *Das Spätwerk Heideggers. Ereignis – Sage – Geviert*, ed. D. Barbarić (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 163–190.