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THEME

The Return of Religion in Philosophy

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## CONTENTS

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	5
<b>THEME</b>	
<b>The Return of Religion in Philosophy</b>	
BALÁZS M. MEZEI	
The 'Return of Religion' in Martin Heidegger's Work: Overview and Criticism .....	9
VIRGIL W. BROWER	
Advent of Auto-Affection: Possibility, Givenness and Reception in Jean-Luc Marion .....	31
ANNA JANI	
Religious Life, Reality, and Being in Martin Heidegger's Thinking .....	45
<b>VARIA</b>	
JOSEF MIKULÁŠEK	
'I Dream of a Church ...': Certain Principles from Pope Francis on the Development of the Church .....	65
ADAM SABIR	
John, the Talking Baby of Luke 1:64 .....	83
BARBORA ŠMEJDOVÁ	
Human Words Reaching up to Heaven: The Theme of Prayer in the Dialogue with C. S. Lewis .....	101

CTIRAD V. POSPÍŠIL

Bonavetura da Bagnoregio – una teologia affettiva o sapienziale? ..... 115

JOSEF ŠIMANDL

Soukromí v latinských a českých biblických textech ..... 127

## REVIEWS & NEWS

Michele Cassese. *Martin Lutero e la sua riforma liturgica.*

*Il percorso storico-teologico di un culto rinnovato*

(Lubomír Žák) ..... 137

Gabriela Ivana Vlková a Jana Plátová. *Izaiáš.*

*Komentovaný překlad řecké septuagintní verze*

(Július Pavelčík) ..... 141

## INTRODUCTION

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The debate on the return of religion is a wide academic field with a long history. One journal issue cannot pretend to cover it in its entirety. Yet, it seems very important that *AUC Theologica* focuses on this topic which has been in the Central-Eastern European theological circles rather neglected. Texts included in this issue build a solid basis for further discussion and deal with the key figures associated with the return of religion, in particular Martin Heidegger and Jean-Luc Marion.

Balázs M. Mezei, a Hungarian philosopher with the international reputation, offers an introductory as well as a novel analysis of ‘The Return of Religion in Martin Heidegger’s Work.’ He opens his text with the exposition of the ambivalence of Heidegger’s thought interpreted, on the one hand, as atheistic (Sartre), and, on the other hand, as the reservoir of inspiration in modern theology and post-modern and post-secular philosophies of religion.

Mezei contextualises Heidegger’s interest in religion in its historical and intellectual background. Affirming the theory of the *Kehre* (the shift from the early to the late Heidegger), Mezei shows that Heidegger’s reflection on religion is difficult to link with Christianity. There is no return of religion, rather a turn ‘which goes far beyond our theological and philosophical traditions and points to a new possibility of understanding reality.’

The thesis argued by Mezei has consequences for the recent reception of Heidegger. The main addressees of the criticism are John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, whose weak thought, in Mezei’s opinion, too easily and too hastily builds the bridge between the Christian understanding of reality and the Heideggerian overcoming of metaphysics. Against

Heidegger's destruction (*Destruktion*) of religion, which ends up in a sort of philosophical mysticism in the late Heidegger, Mezei sketches his alternative, namely the concept of radical revelation.

Talking about revelation, the reader will notice that one important heir of Heidegger is not mentioned in Mezei's text. Of course, we refer here to Jean-Luc Marion, probably the most discussed Catholic philosopher of the time. Virgil W. Brower fills this lacuna with his text 'Advent of Auto-affection: Possibility, Givenness and Reception in Jean-Luc Marion.'

Brower first explains the reasons behind Marion's interest in the religious field. Interestingly, Brower offers a paradoxical argument: although Marion philosophically returns to religion, the return to religion is precisely something against which Marion warns us. If by religion is meant metaphysics, mysticism, and dogmatism, Marion can hardly be designated as a supporter of such a return. Brower then explains what the point of Marion's thought is by focusing on the concept *negative certainty*. Brower scrupulously analyses Marion's attempt to find a way between the Scylla of metaphysical philosophy and the Charybdis of mystical dogmatism. And here comes the discussion on revelation, givenness, and the (im)possibility of the impossibility of God. Brower shows how Marion's phenomenological method becomes attuned to religious thinking and concludes that not the subjugation but openness to the religious offers new possibilities for thinking.

In the final text of this special issue on the return of religion, Anna Varga-Jani returns to Heidegger and his importance for the 20th century philosophy of religion. In a well-informed text based on the wide range of both primary and secondary sources, Varga-Jani convincingly argues that philosophy of religion and all the more theology cannot simply dismiss Heidegger's thought. Especially, in the respect of a still persistent questions of metaphysics (in relation to Christian theology), Heidegger's contribution should not be overlooked. The same is true for the entire debate on the philosophical return of religion which seems to be one of the most viable intellectual debates of our time. We hope that this thematic issue of AUC Theologica will serve its purpose and will trigger a new debate around as well as beyond the texts collected in this volume.

*Martin Kočí*

**THEME**

**The Return of Religion in Philosophy**

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## THE ‘RETURN OF RELIGION’ IN MARTIN HEIDEGGER’S WORK: OVERVIEW AND CRITICISM

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BALÁZS M. MEZEI

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### ABSTRACT

Martin Heidegger’s thought is often seen in the context of its opposition to the traditional notion of religion as expressed especially in Christianity. Since Heidegger became not only estranged from, but even inimical to Christianity at least from his mid-period, some interpretations label his thought atheistic. However, as was pointed out among others by John Caputo or Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, the relationship between religion and Heidegger’s thought is complex. As a young person preparing for Catholic priesthood, Heidegger had a deep understanding of religion on the spiritual as well as the theological level. This essay attempts to show the general background of Heidegger’s attitude concerning religion in the tradition of the medieval writing entitled *German Theology* and also in the age when Heidegger developed his insights. It argues that, especially from his mid-period, Heidegger developed a peculiar kind of mysticism, which can be conceived in the context of the critical tradition of previous forms of religious mysticism. This tradition is even more critical if we leave the realm of German ‘titanism’ and seek for alternative philosophical expressions not arising from that linguistic context. The essay concludes that it is possible to understand Heidegger’s proposals as instrumental to a new understanding of the continuously changing forms and contents of religion if and only if one is prepared to apply the necessary amount of critical reflection.

### Key words

Martin Heidegger; Black Notebooks; Philosophy of religion; ‘Vallásbölcsélet’; Philosophy of revelation

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There is an ambiguous relationship between the work of Martin Heidegger and the problem of religion.<sup>1</sup> Some of the early interpreters declared Heidegger's work atheistic.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the influence of Heidegger on theology has been immense as is shown by the work of Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner or by the reception in post-modern and post-secular thought. Heidegger himself gives sufficient ground to have such contradictory views on the character of his work. Sometimes we find outright anti-Christian claims in his writings, but we can also retrieve references to mysticism, often in a poetic form, which may contribute to a better understanding of the nature of religion in a secular age.<sup>3</sup>

The best way to consider the problem of religion in Heidegger's work may be chronological. Originally a Catholic novice, Heidegger studied theology thoroughly and produced his doctoral thesis and habilitation work on philosophical-theological problems. His first main work, *Being and Time* is a scrupulously scholastic book in character, and deep layers of *What is Metaphysics* of 1929 border on the mystical. However, from the mid-1930s, Heidegger's thought became more and more esoteric in language and content. The posthumously published *On the Event* (*From Enowning, Vom Ereignis*), which was written during the 1930s, shows this peculiar turn in a detailed fashion. The published volumes of the *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarze Hefte*) give us a clear account of the way how Heidegger's thought, with a special relevance to religiosity and mysticism, developed throughout his mature philosophical career.

If we want to conceive how Heidegger understands religious topics, we need to go back to the tradition of 'German theology' in the sense John Niemeyer Findlay used the term.<sup>4</sup> According to Findlay, the best way to understand German philosophy during the nineteenth and

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<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I use the expression 'religion' especially in its traditional, i.e. Christian sense. In this sense, religion entails religious experience, faith, and also theology as the theoretical expression of religion. For a detailed discussion of the development and the ramifications of the notion of religion see Balázs M. Mezei, *Religion and Revelation after Auschwitz* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 29–53.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Existentialism is a Humanism,' trans. Philip Mairet, in *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: Plume Books, 1975), 345.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Peter Fritz, 'Heidegger on Revelation,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation*, eds. Balázs M. Mezei, Francesca Murphy and Kenneth Oakes (Oxford: University Press), forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> J. N. Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel. An Introduction and Re-Examination* (New York: Collier Books, 1966), cf. Mezei, *Religion and Revelation after Auschwitz*, 53.

twentieth centuries is to put it into the perspective of German mysticism expressed originally in the anonymous writing entitled *Theologia germanica* (*German Theology*) written in the fourteenth century. This mystical work explains that God and man can be united by following a path of perfection, as exemplified by the life of Christ, renouncing sin and selfishness, ultimately allowing the union of God's will and human will. The writing was in its age an expression of a mystical tradition the leading authors of which were among others Johannes Teuler and Meister Eckhart. Martin Luther produced a new edition of the writing in 1518 which strongly contributed to the surge of various streams of mystical thought in German Protestantism and – as is testified e.g. by the work of Angelus Silesius – also in Catholicism. Findlay applies the title *German Theology* to describe the perspective in which theology, arts, poetry and philosophy in the German territories can be better understood. The key to the proper understanding of the influence of *German Theology* is taking into consideration its presence even in the seemingly anti-religious outputs of German scholarship, such as the works of Ludwig Feuerbach or Friedrich Nietzsche.

Heidegger's work is deeply rooted in the history of Western philosophy and especially in German thought. However, even within this tradition, the perspective opened by *German Theology* seems to be seminally important. Heidegger continued in an idiosyncratic form the mystical perspective in philosophy as it was well explained for the first time by John Caputo.<sup>5</sup> It is part and parcel of this tradition that it does not only receive traditional topics of mysticism but even further develops them into new kinds of thinking. This tradition explains the depth and the innovative character of Heidegger's religious thought, a character which does not only inherit but even points beyond the received views of Christian origin.

Heidegger's *oeuvre* seems to possess its unparalleled power precisely by its innovative nature in both content and form. To reach clarity about the importance of this innovation we need a thorough understanding of Heidegger's notion of be-ing (*Sein*). This task is not dissimilar to the problem of a proper understanding of the central expressions of Plato or Aristotle. The difficulty with them is that it appears challenging to find a perspective and a vocabulary beyond the work we consider. In

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. John Caputo, *The Mystical Element In Heidegger's Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 261–270.

discussing Plato, we need to use the word ‘idea’, although the exact meaning of this term is far from being clear. In examining Aristotle, we cannot avoid using his expression of ‘form’, which again, if seen with the eyes of more modern accuracy, is at least vague. It seems that in our attempts to understand Heidegger we have to use the key expressions of his work in a similarly axiomatic way. This difficulty ultimately makes it unavoidable that only a mind more innovative or even deeper than Heidegger would be able to offer the perspective and terminology in which Heidegger’s work can be properly investigated. This is somewhat similar to the way how Aristotle corrected and further developed Plato’s views or how Thomas Aquinas was able to synthesise the works of Aristotle and Dionysius the Areopagite. In other words, only an original thinker with an important philosophical discovery may be able to offer us an overall perspective in which Heidegger’s work may be properly considered.

In my view, the merits of Heidegger’s work counterbalance the embarrassment caused by some of his confusing political remarks.<sup>6</sup> One is inclined to consider such remarks as derivations of a hyperbolic mysticism belonging to the tradition of German theology. However, Heidegger goes far beyond the horizon of that tradition and creates a uniquely innovative and complex building of thought in which the problems related to religion is considered again and again. Here it is important to point out that even when Heidegger does not use the expression ‘religion’ but rather parallel words, such as God or the Gods, the holy or the sacred, or even in some respects being and be-ing, it is legitimate to recognize in them problems belonging to the more general scope of religion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and Francesco Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger. Die Wahrheit über die Schwarzen Hefte* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2016). For the list of the so-called ‘antisemitic’ remarks, see Zachary Siegel, ‘7 New Translated Excerpts on Heidegger’s Anti-Semitism’, last modified February 23, 2015, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://www.critical-theory.com/7-new-translated-excerpts-on-heideggers-anti-semitism/>. Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschönerung* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015) is sharply criticised by von Herrmann 2016.

<sup>7</sup> I shall detail this point below with respect to Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, ‘Die drei Wegabschnitte der Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers,’ in *Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, eds. Norbert Fischer and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2011).

## 1. The Historical Context

The notion of religion shows a peculiar development paralleled by some similar concepts in the history of Western thought. Not unlike the notions of 'person', 'freedom', or 'revelation', 'religion' has gone through a spectacular semantic trajectory.<sup>8</sup> Arising from a humble beginning in Latin antiquity, the term 'religion' developed into a synthetic notion encompassing the entire building of culture from theology to the sciences, from the arts to politics, or from individual psychology to military matters. At the time of its highest development, i.e. during the first half of the nineteenth century, 'religion' was not just a name; it had a nimbus, a radiance, a power expressing the accumulated results of the development of the Christian centuries. Either in Victorian England or in France of the Restoration, either in the Catholicism of the Habsburgs or in the Protestant spirituality of Prussia, 'religion' appeared as the crown of human achievements in all walks of life.<sup>9</sup>

Not that challenges had been missing. The rise of the Enlightenment, the anti-religious atheism of the Encyclopaedists, the bitter experiences of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, or the appearance of the Russian army in such old European centres as Paris (during and after the Battle of Paris in 1814) – all these occurrences sent the signals of an epochal change in European history. After the suppression of the terror of Jacobinism, secret societies with ideals of a communist or socialist utopia strived to challenge the existing political order, not least the newly restored glamour of religion. When, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel re-established the importance of religion as opposed to philosophy, there were among his students thinkers of the coming generation who denied the existing form of religion and offered either an existential reform or even a full destruction. The left Hegelians continued the legacy of searching for a substitute for religion. The right Hegelians, on the other hand, attempted to maintain the architectonic unity between state and culture, religion and society.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Balázs M. Mezei, *Radical Revelation. A Philosophical Approach* (London and New York: T&T Clark and Bloomsbury, 2017), 1.

<sup>9</sup> It is this development of 'religion' that made it possible to have an understanding of 'world-religions', i.e. religions outside Christianity. Remarkably, it was Nicolaus of Cusa that first extended the use of 'religio' to Islam and Judaism after 1453 (the fall of Constantinople) in his short work *De pace fidei*.

Parallel to the scientific explosion of the second half of the nineteenth century, the meaning of ‘religion’ was rapidly losing attraction. The ceremonial blessing of the classicist basilica in Esztergom (Gran) in 1856 – the monumental attempt of the Habsburgs to create a Central European version of the Vatican – took place only ten years before the collapse of the military power of Austria at Königgrätz. Franz Liszt’s becoming a Franciscan tertiary in 1857 preceded just a generation the composition of Wagner’s *Parsifal*. While Liszt decided to dedicate his life to ‘religion’ in a post-Napoleonic sense, i.e. in the sense of the Restoration, Wagner offered the idea of a groundbreaking reform of religion in many of his musical poems.

The nineteenth century, thus, offered two directions in the development of religion: on the one hand, it opened the conservative way of the return of established religion and, on the other, the way of radically challenging established religion. When challenges were becoming stronger in the political as well as the cultural senses, the reactions turned out to be also tough, sometimes even ruthless. Just think of the occupation of Rome in the midst of the First Vatican Council by the army of General Cadoma and the ensuing liquidation of the Papal State in 1870! The answer was the inexorably rigid anti-modernism of the Church expressed variously in Catholic teaching and practice.

While God may have died during these epochal events, as Nietzsche suggested, religion did not really pass away.<sup>10</sup> Religious renewals appeared in several outlines, some of which pointed to a complete reform, and some others to a full return of earlier forms. From Socialist reformers, such as John Ruskin, to the ‘religion of humanity’ of August Comte, new attempts were formulated to renew religion. While these attempts disappeared in a few decades, Catholicism also began the process of self-renewal, most definitively formulated in the encyclical letter *Rerum novarum* of 1891.<sup>11</sup> This game of ‘change things so that the essence remains unchanged’ continued up to the First World War with overall and tragic consequences to established religion. Pastors and priests blessed the cannons of national armies entering battles against

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. my text on ‘the death of God’ in Balázs M. Mezei, ‘Death of God,’ in *The History of Evil in the Early Twentieth Century. 1900–1950 CE*, ed. Victoria S. Harrison (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), ch. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Rerum Novarum. Encyclical Letter (1891),’ accessed June 1, 2019, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html).

each other. Theologies were developed against countries belonging to the same confession. Catholic countries, such as Austro-Hungary and Italy, were fighting desperate and mutually devastating battles. And the deeply protestant United States hastened to help – not the country of origin of their faith, i.e. Germany, but rather the officially laicized, but still massively Catholic France ... While Pope Benedict XV attempted in vain to create peace among the warring parties, the topical atmosphere was better expressed by *The Holy* of Rudolf Otto published in the middle of the war in 1917. Many contemporaries considered this book as the revelation of a renewed Christianity which evil powers were trying to destroy.

After the war, as for instance the work of Max Scheler clearly demonstrates,<sup>12</sup> the call to conversion and a new beginning was initially very strong. However, the life and work of Scheler demonstrates that the period of religious renewal gave way to a second kind of conversion, a conversion to esotericism and mysticism.<sup>13</sup> Or again, it was overwritten by a conversion to radical atheism. The work of Heidegger shows this trajectory very clearly.

Heidegger faced the problems of religion in his *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* of 1920/21 (Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion, cf. Heidegger 1995). He offers a profound understanding and interpretation of the then contemporary philosophies of religion, with a strong emphasis on the notion of the 'factual experience of life' (*faktische Lebenserfahrung*). In Heidegger's understanding of life, life-experience, or facticity, we find the preliminary notions of his emerging framework of *Being and Time*. Heidegger does not offer a theory, explanation or interpretation of religion; rather, he *reduces* religion to factual life-experience of the individual (*Dasein*) and points out the importance of a 'destruction' of religion as a structure opposing the reality of factual life.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Max Scheler, *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Leipzig: Der neue Geist, 1921).

<sup>13</sup> Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Darmstadt: Otto Reichl, 1928).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 'Trotzdem leistet auch die moderne Religionsgeschichte viel für die Phänomenologie, wenn sie einer phänomenologischen Destruktion unterworfen wird.' Also p. 135: 'Es wird nicht zu vermeiden sein, daß die Aufdeckung der Phänomenzusammenhänge die Problematik und Begriffsbildung von Grund aus ändert und eigentliche Maßstäbe beistellt für die Destruktion der christlichen Theologie und der abendländischen Philosophie.' Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens* (GA 60) (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), 78.

The *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* does not represent a ‘return of religion’. Rather, Heidegger analyses various theologians, philosophers, and phenomenologists (especially Ernst Troeltsch) in order to point out the complexity of the meaning of religion. He never tries, however, an independent and overall interpretation of the notion of religion. Instead, he offers readings of various authors on religion and develops their criticism based on the notion of factual life-experience and the ‘formal indicator’ (*formale Anzeige*). The ‘formal indicator’ is Heidegger’s early description of the specific character of human beings bound up with the understanding of their uniquely concrete life.

This move, nevertheless, contributes to a better understanding of the changing character of religion during the first decades of the twentieth century. Rudolf Otto’s *The Holy* outlined a grandiose view of religious sentiment as centered on the notion of the holy. The holy was defined as ‘the irrational’. Heidegger rightly pointed out that, by introducing the category of ‘the irrational’, Otto tacitly presupposed a full-fledged notion of rationality of which he never offered a structured description. After Otto, the emergence of various ‘phenomenologies of religion’, such as that of Gerardus van der Leeuw or Friedrich Heiler, developed complex notions of religion so that a new understanding of religion may have become possible.

We need to understand the two ways outlined by these authors: on the one hand, a return of, and to, religion was taking shape in authors like Otto, van der Leew, Scheler, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and others. On the other hand, a sharp criticism of religion emerged, a criticism often spilling over to atheism. One should not forget that, with the establishment of the Soviet Union, history’s first officially atheistic state was created in 1922. In this state, the destruction of religion did not remain on the theoretical level; it actually resulted in the ruins of church buildings and the dead bodies of Christian priests. While Catholicism was shaken by the consequences of the Great War, it succeeded in re-establishing its state form in 1929 and began to modernise its theological structures in many ways, for instance in the movement of *nouvelle théologie*.

Heidegger’s relationship to religion must be seen against these historical developments. We can add the rise of national-socialism and the devastating course of the Second World War together with its fatal consequences to Western culture; without any question, all important



factors in the development of Heidegger's understanding. Since this background cannot be outlined here in more detail, let me summarily say that the gradual collapse of the traditional forms of religion is reflected in Heidegger's work in three different ways: first, in the attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the theological traditions; second, in the distance created by the mature Heidegger between his work, expressed especially in *Being and Time*, and the subject matter of religion; and thirdly, in an often mystical-sounding attempt to rephrase and rewrite traditional religious subject matters in radical new ways, which started in the 1930s and continued till the end of the work of the philosopher.

## 2. Spiritual Background

We can see Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* as one of the greatest proposals of an overarching reform of *religion* in the synthetic form of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* (comprehensive artwork). The opera is in fact the expression of the rebirth of religion in line with the tradition of Christian Protestantism, pietism, religious philosophies of the nineteenth century, and the musical development of the same period. In terms of music, Wagner's opera is perhaps the peak of nineteenth century composition. In terms of symbolism, it expresses the hard way to the renewal of religion.

According to the plot, when Parsifal appears in the woods, the Order of the Holy Grail is in utmost ruins. Evil Klingsor possesses the Holy Spear and hits the holy order with fatal wounds; the knights of the order are after pleasures and they have forgotten their sublime legacy. The wounded Amfortas and the lazy knights point to various faces of then contemporary Christianity; Klingsor symbolises the magical power of the age. Parsifal is the providential renovator of religion, but even he is submitted to the temptations of Kundry and other unknown demons. Yet Parsifal emerges victorious, because he was able to retrieve the Spear; through his victory, he frees the Grail and activates its holy might. By this act, he receives the Holy Spirit expressed, in accordance with the original instruction of Wagner, by the traditional symbol of the white dove. Parsifal proves to be the saviour of religion who thereby also renews humanity.

We know that Nietzsche abhorred the opera. His *Zarathustra* was actually a response to *Parsifal*. Instead of the renewal of religion,

Nietzsche talked about the ‘death of God’, about the God who died ‘of his pity for mankind.’<sup>15</sup> According to Nietzsche, God is dead and ‘now we want the overman to live.’<sup>16</sup> It is important to emphasise that while Nietzsche may have wanted the destruction of ‘religion’ in some form, he still insisted at the recovery of truth in an original sense. Truth, as expressed in the life of the overman, is like religion reborn in a new form. Nietzsche’s influence originated in his attitude to truth, which appeared to him as absolute and undeniable, something which ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man ...’<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche’s protest notwithstanding, Parsifal is the archetype of the *Übermensch*.

Heidegger’s understanding of a return of religion may be better understood in the perspective of Nietzsche than in the contexts of Troeltsch, Barth, Rahner, or Hans Urs von Balthasar.<sup>18</sup> His criticism of Nietzsche confirms that the Nietzschean revolt against religion was actually the highest expression of religion itself. Nietzsche in fact offered a fully renewed form of religion, as it is suggested by the entire genre and content of his (religiously sounding) *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. Inasmuch as Nietzsche is crucially important for Heidegger, we may see here a kind of affirmation of a notion of the return of an at least *Nietzschean* religion. While acknowledging the paramount importance of Nietzsche, Heidegger offers a criticism of his work as well in terms of Nietzsche’s fulfilment of Western metaphysics and his ignorance of the genuine sense of being.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Nietzsche’s sarcastic references to Wagner and his *Parsifal* e.g. in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo. How To Become What You Are*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Duncan Large (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 26–9, 38, 45, 48–50, 52, 56–8, 102, 107.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: University Press, 2006), 59.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 2:9. See Mezei, *Radical Revelation*, 323f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Cyril O’Regan, *The Anatomy of Misremembering: von Balthasar’s Response to Philosophical Modernity* (Chestnut Ridge, NY: Crossroad, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. ‘For Heidegger, the most important thing is not the overcoming of nihilism, but rather to answer to Being in its failure to appear, to wait for it and thus to think it anticipatorily. The respect for Being as Being ends the murder of god, which began with the metaphysics of the Greeks and reached its fulfillment in Nietzsche’s metaphysics.’ (My translation). Johannes Brachtendorf, ‘Heideggers Metaphysikkritik in der Abhandlung Nietzsche’s Wort “Gott ist tot,”’ in *Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, eds. Norbert Fischer und Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2011), 126.

Thus, we need to be very careful as to what Heidegger may consider acceptable in the notion of a 'return of religion'. Heidegger would clearly reject the notion of return as the return of an earlier phase in the development of the notion of religion. He would never accept that, for instance, the notion of religion as reflected in the canons of the Council of Trent could be fully or even partially re-established. Nor could he accept the distinction between Christendom and Christianity along the lines of Kierkegaard's evaluation.<sup>20</sup> Heidegger considered Christianity both as Christendom (official forms of religion) and as *Christensein* (the personal dedication to Christ) as part and parcel of the same Christianity; and he opposed 'Christianity' in a peculiar way, in which criticism becomes the most important form of appreciation. In Heidegger's view, the 'genuine criticism' of the ideas of a thinker equals 'the genuine appreciating of a thinker'.<sup>21</sup>

However, in a fundamental sense, Heidegger would certainly accept the importance of a return. In terms of the notion of the 'eternal return of the same', i.e. the continuous emergence of the absolute (if I may reinterpret here Nietzsche's dictum), we have the possibility of an understanding of return which fits in with Heidegger's mind. Here return refers to the irreducible importance of the emergence of reality, i.e. *Sein*. More concretely, if by return we understand a turn back to the absolute, *Sein*, Heidegger could not be more in accord with us. For indeed, 'return' is not only about religion's reappearance in some form, but rather the change of our attitude to religion, just as John the Baptist preached conversion.<sup>22</sup> Return may express a deep conversion of the

<sup>20</sup> In a text entitled 'The Tragedy of Christendom Is That It Has made Christianity into Nothing but a Doctrine', Kierkegaard complains that treating Christianity as doctrine eliminates the obedience, renunciation, and self-denial that constitute genuine Christian discipleship. Indeed, 'if it were God's idea that Christianity be merely a doctrine, the whole apparatus of the New Testament and Christ's life betrays that God as a student of human nature is, to put it bluntly, a complete bungler' Quoted by David R. Law, 'Kierkegaard as Existentialist Dogmatician. Kierkegaard on Systematic Theology, Doctrine, and Dogmatics,' in *A Companion to Kierkegaard*, ed. Jon Stewart (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 256.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I-II* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1961), i. 5: 'Auseinandersetzung ist echte Kritik. Sie ist die höchste und einzige Weise der wahren Schätzung eines Denkers.' See also Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I-V. Schwarze Hefte 1942-48*, ed. Peter Trawny (GA 97; Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015), 168: 'Aus der Kritik stammend steht das Denken in der Gerechtigkeit zur Sache.'

<sup>22</sup> In Mat 3:2, we read 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' (NKJV). The Greek for 'repent' is μετανοείτε, which expresses the turn of the mind, a return to God, 'religion'.

heart and the mind; and it may express the return of religion to us in the form of illumination, insight, new awareness, faith, and knowledge.

Heidegger did not talk about 'religion' in many of his writings, but rather of fundamental ontology, the opening of truth on the horizon of being, of Being and Be-ing, that is, of the Event – and of gods, godhead, god, the last god. I am going to say a little more about these aspects of Heidegger's work below; here let me add that Heidegger's terminology, much before the publication of *Being and Time*, became highly idiosyncratic. His entire vocabulary and semantic network presuppose not only the original German, but also the complicated developments we find in the language of academic philosophy after the turn of the century and especially in phenomenology. The centrality of expressions, such as *Dasein*, *Sein*, or even *formale Anzeige* grew out organically from academic philosophy of his age and led him develop one of the most original, consistent, and illuminating vocabularies in the history of Western thought.<sup>25</sup>

### **3. *Vom Ereignis***

Part Eight of *Vom Ereignis* or *On the Event* or *On Enowning* begins with the motto: 'The totally other over against gods who have been, especially over against the Christian God.' We need to understand these words properly. Heidegger's thought is directed to the 'totally other' as a preparatory action. This thought is capable of conceiving, though not grasping, the truth of the totally other. This is the reason why Heidegger applies his characteristic mode of writing of Be-ing: *Sein*. Since Heidegger talks about the totally other, he implies thereby the rejection of what has been before, that is, 'the gods who have been'. It is especially the 'Christian God' that is judged to be *passé*. Heidegger suggests that the Christian God, in the form of theologically and philosophically limited approaches, expresses the classical case of ontotheology, i.e. a fundamental kind of idolatry, in which God as the Highest Being is construed from our subjective experience of particular or limited beings. What can thus be construed is indeed an idol which turns out to be the universal automaton, the archetype of all machine-like misuse of reality in the form of *Machenschaft*, i.e. machination.

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<sup>25</sup> A more detailed account of the place of Heidegger's ideas in twentieth century German thought, especially phenomenology, see my chapter 'Revelation in Phenomenology.'

We do not have space here to go into the numerous details of the extremely rich and enlightening text of *Vom Ereignis*. I focus only on the famous expression of the 'stillness of the passing of the last god' (*Die Stille des Vorbeiganges des letzten Gottes*). What does Heidegger mean thereby?

First, the notion of 'stillness' (*Stille*) shows a Biblical parallel in The Book of Revelation: 'When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour'. To refer to the Bible is not irrelevant, since Heidegger was also a Bible scholar. When he speaks of 'the last god', he was aware of the parallel place in the Book of Revelation ('I am the first and the last'); and he was aware of the parallelism between the expression and traditional Christian eschatology. Second, *Stille* in the work under consideration comes to the fore in its various meanings: stillness is silence, quietness, speechlessness, and tranquility. For the author, stillness is at the same time expectation, preparation, and the capacity of receiving. These terms refer to the conceiving of the totally other of the absolute as it is given to the few prepared to receive him.

What is the meaning of passing, *Vorbeigang*? This word is quite complex, because *vorbeigehen* means both to go past and to stop by. I believe that the implications of this double meaning express the message of the author. The absolute in its new form as 'the last god' – as the ultimately divine – may go past us or stop by us, depending on our preparedness and its own decision. The English translation here has 'passing', which also has a double meaning: passing by and passing away. The last god may remain unnoticed and pass away; or else he may come to us in the silence 'when the seventh seal was opened'. We should not forget that, in the Bible, the opening of the seventh seal launched the apocalyptic events leading to the revelation of the New Jerusalem. In Heidegger, the stillness is again connected to the apocalyptic scenes determined by technology, machination, and *Ge-Stell*.<sup>24</sup>

The last expression in our phrase is 'the last god'. Here the situation is so much clearer as Heidegger gives us a definition: 'last' does not mean the last element of a countable series but rather the unique moment that cannot be reduced to anything; its better translation is

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<sup>24</sup> 'Wir nennen jetzt die von sich her gesammelte Versammlung des Stellens, worin alles Bestellbare in seinem Bestand west, das Ge-Stell.' Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, ed. Petra Jaeger (GA 79; Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994), 52.

‘ultimate’. The attribute ‘last’ refers to ‘the uniqueness of the essence of God’ which cannot be expected, counted, measured, or grasped. This last god is the god that, through the activity of the gods, i.e. the prepared few, makes it possible to conceive the godhead un-ontotheologically. The un-ontotheological understanding of god is the conceiving of the totally other in his absolute otherness.<sup>25</sup>

One needs to comment on the so often described notion of ‘the gods’, *die Götter*, in the same volume. *Die Götter* is indeed a crucial expression for Heidegger and refers to the *few* that are able to conceive being and contribute to the emergence of the last god. The gods shape the One God on the basis of be-ing (*Seyn*). For Heidegger, being is indeed the first and the last; it is the absolute in the sense of an absolute event, *actus purus*. ‘The gods’ are agents by whom the divine is newly constituted. The rise of the ‘god’, especially the last god, is closely connected to the apocalyptic and eschatological activity of these agents.

#### 4. *Schwarze Hefte*

Finally, let me point out a few important references in Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarze Hefte*) of which so far five volumes have appeared.<sup>26</sup> In these volumes, ‘religion’ is used in line with the earlier critical approach. Religion is ontotheology in theory and practice.<sup>27</sup> One cannot compare *Ereignis* to religion, because *Ereignis* is more original and more primary than religion. *Ereignis* is the occurrence of the truth of being as the totally other elevation of men and the opening of the other abysmality.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (GA 65; Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 406.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–V. Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938*, ed. Peter Trawny (GA 94; Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen VII–XI. Schwarze Hefte 1938/39*, ed. Peter Trawny (GA 95; Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV. Schwarze Hefte 1939/41*, ed. Peter Trawny (GA 96; Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen VI–IX. Schwarze Hefte 1942–48*, ed. Peter Trawny (GA 98; Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> ‘Ein wesentlicher Unterschied ist es, ob der Mensch schaffend vor den Gott zu stehen kommt oder ob er nur die “Religion” als eine für seine Zwecke nützliche Einrichtung in die Rechnung stellt.’ Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–V*, 331.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ‘Das Ereignis aber ist ursprünglicher, weil anfänglicher als alle »Religion« – das Geschehnis der Wahrheit des Seyns als die ganz andere Erhöhung des Menschen und als die Eröffnung der anderen Abgründigkeit.’ Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–V*, 357.

In the second volume of *Überlegungen*, religion refers to experience, *Erlebnis*, which is the content of the radical subjectivisation of being.<sup>29</sup> Experience defines religion and experience defines god; both become empty and meaningless thereby. Religion becomes also 'culture', which is the expression of the extreme emptiness of reality. There is no possibility of the rise of a new religion or even the return of religion; religion is defined in terms of the past, which sank into subjectivity together with its theology and church forms. Religion belongs to the series of 'science, art, morality' – all are expressions of the forgetfulness of being in various forms. The only positive context in which Heidegger mentions religion is the notion of religion by the poet Hölderlin. Hölderlin is the prophet of the totally other and thus his 'religion' – when he uses this expression – can be seen as a reference to the totally other absolute.

In the third volume of *Überlegungen*, religion appears as the expression of machination (*Machenschaft*). Machination is the word to name the subject's objectifying (*vorstellende*) activity, by which the subject reduces the totally other to its own partial being, while declares this partiality totality. Religion is functional in this process, especially in the form of the emphasis on 'religious experience.' Religion contributes in this way to the rise of the gigantic (*das Riesige*), which aims at the collapse of reality.<sup>30</sup> The first volume of *Anmerkungen* confirms this thesis and links religion to the 'hidden essence of technology'.<sup>31</sup> In the same volume, religion is used as the reference to publicity, which is cultivated by national-socialism; national-socialism is indeed a form of religion in the sense of an attempt at the revival of the past. Heidegger notes too, that genuine thinking is sometimes tempted to interpret itself as a form of science or a kind of religion. However, these are indeed temptations and thinking must be seen as the opening to the totally other.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, *Überlegungen VII–XI*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV*, 125.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, 65.

<sup>32</sup> 'Auch das Denken unterliegt Verführungen, insofern es sich an der öffentlichen Verwendbarkeit und Zugänglichkeit der Wissenschaft mißt oder sich nach der Religion und deren Rolle geartet meint. Beides ist irrig. Aber der Weg zurück ist schwer und durch seine wesenhafte Unmerklichkeit selber unbemerkt und unbeflegbar.' Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, 479.

## 5. Heidegger's Influence

While Heidegger could have seen deeply problematic to talk about a 'return of religion', many of his interpreters had a different opinion. Authors beginning with Emmanuel Lévinas through John Caputo to Gianni Vattimo seem to think that Heidegger's philosophy of being is in some way linkable to a renewal of religious thought and practice. We would need separate chapters to show in detail the various interpretations in accordance with their merit and demerit. It may suffice here to point out that the authors just mentioned have very different ways of the interpretation of Heidegger's legacy. Lévinas shows the kind of criticism vis-à-vis Heidegger that counts to be a thorough reception and opposition. Heidegger's thought of the totally other found its way into the notion of the Other in many forms, not least through the sources of dialectical theology which both Heidegger and Lévinas knew very well. On the other hand, Lévinas's understanding of the Other is still different from Heidegger's 'other thinking' and 'totally other' inasmuch as the latter are not put into the relationship of an irreducible antagonism between the same and the other. Heidegger's totally other is in fact not of the kind of a polarity but rather of an unconceivable unity of difference. There is no way to identify the totally other with the God of traditional metaphysics either; the totally other as *Seyn* is the source of the divine.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, John Caputo's interpretation of a religious return points rather to the direction of simple realism instead of a post-metaphysical thinking. His 'weak theology' appears to be very different from the position of the end of philosophy of Heidegger; instead of an end, Caputo appears to defend a weak form of the 'life after life' of classical metaphysics. A similar point is true of Vattimo, whose thought could never reach beyond an eclectic set of various propositions borrowed from other authors. While these attempts are connected to what Dominique Janicaud called the 'theological turn of French phenomenology', we need an additional occasion to enter this field. In the latter development, nevertheless, Heidegger's influence is thoroughly mediated by Lévinas's thought deeply rooted in Jewish beliefs.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Mezei, *Radical Revelation*, 266f.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), John Caputo, *Theology and Philosophy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (eds), *Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998),



In an interview, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann makes it clear that Heidegger's criticism of religion – especially the criticism based on ontotheology – cannot be considered as ultimately anti-Christian in any superficial sense. 'As a reflecting person', von Herrmann 'takes the liberty' (as he himself says) to override Heidegger's self-interpretation in the sense that he calls our attention to the profoundness of Heidegger's thought and its ability to contribute to an overall renewal of Christianity. Von Herrmann believes that Heidegger's thought is ultimately Christian even when it is apparently directed against Christianity. In other words, 'religion' – and Christianity is religion in the full sense of the word – can be renewed on the basis of what Heidegger's thought expressed about the status of our reality.<sup>55</sup>

Here I repeat what I mentioned with respect to Nietzsche: to think 'against' an idea is part and parcel of the reception of that idea. The more radical we think against it, the more deeply we are involved in the realisation of the idea. One of the consequences of the idea is precisely its rejection, because rejection is the ultimate affirmation, more robust than all other kinds of affirming or reaffirming. This is not only valid for Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysics and religion, but also for Heidegger's opposition to 'the Christian God'. 'Opposition' is a form of *entgegendenken*, to think against something, but also: to think anticipatorily about something. Heidegger's sharp opposing 'the Christian God' may very well be understood as thinking anticipatorily of what is hidden in our thinking itself. 'Anticipation' fulfils in fact both proleptic expecting of something and, at the same time, thinking against it in terms of time and essence.

## 6. Summary and Critique

One can clearly see that a return of religion on the level of the primary meanings of these words is out of the question for Heidegger. One need not take seriously that Heidegger did not offer a reform or a new

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Dominique Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn'* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Von Herrmann's interview at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=b95z2yPo4pA> (accessed June 26, 2019), where von Herrmann explains in detail in which sense the Christian idea of God is compatible with Heidegger's criticism in its ultimate form. As von Herrmann says (after the 50th minute), 'the future God can become effective in the reality of the Christian God.'

kind of religion but rather a totally other kind of thinking by which the divine may become expressed (even in a Christian sense) in an ultimate way. His radical thought, however, is not fully disconnected from what we normally conceive by religion. The complex development of the notion of religion shows the flexibility and further possibilities of this expression. In a peculiar way, Heidegger's criticism of religion together with the development of the notion of being, event, and be-ing, may be subjected to an even stronger criticism. If one uses the expression of 'the totally other', one gets into a performative contradiction, because the totally other appears in his or her mind as part and parcel of the not totally other, i.e. immanence. We can understand that Heidegger criticises the notion of transcendence, because transcendence – in the accepted, i.e. inductive sense – is the classic case of ontotheology: it approaches the absolute from the relative as what is transcended. However, once thought of, the totally other is still expressed in our mind and that far it belongs to the identical as opposed to the totally other.

On a different level, Heidegger's thought appears to parallel the sociological form of a 'disconnected connection'. We often face the phenomenon that a social form, like the form of government, is re-established in a new version just after a radical break in society, such as a war or a revolution. One form of government is abolished, but the new is strikingly similar to the abolished one. In a similar fashion, Heidegger tried to abolish religion in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, what he restores is strikingly similar to the abolished form. Indeed, elements of the tradition of German Theology, the tradition of original mysticism, can easily be recognised in the philosophical mysticism of Heidegger. His personally intimate link to Be-ing, the often Biblical flavour of his narrative of history, present, and future, put his figure in line with the great thinkers and poets of German mysticism, pietism, and idealism from Meister Eckhart through Luther to Angelus Silesius, Georg Hamann, or J. G. Fichte.<sup>36</sup>

My final criticism is based on language. German is an original language as opposed to the derivative languages of Italian, Spanish, French, or English. German has its peculiar character and a way of expression, which can be detected also in German music and poetry. Perhaps we can identify this character as 'titanism', an expression

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<sup>36</sup> Fichte's use of *Daseyn*, *Seyn* in his various works obviously points to Heidegger's meaning.

developed by Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker.<sup>57</sup> 'German titanism' attempts to break through limits and borders and reach the unreachable – with an unavoidable and even tragic failure. We can recognise philosophical features of this German titanism in Heidegger's thought and language. And we can also understand its utmost failure, not only to conceive, but also to grasp the totally other *as* totally other.

A few languages express the notion of religion with a word *not* originated in the Latin. Hungarian *vallás* is one of these words. *Vallás* as a noun literally means disclosing: the personal revealing or confessing something uniquely important as truly as possible. Yet, its accepted meaning in everyday use is 'religion'. By using this word, however, the verbal root, *vall*, i.e. disclose or confess comes to the fore. One hears that 'religion' in essence is about the most important 'disclosure'; it *entails* the personal dedication to truth and reality and its unmediated and sincere revelation by an ultimate act of a person. *Vallás*, thus, is about the disclosure of truth in its essence and also in its various forms and contents. Based on this characteristic, I have developed the notion of a 'philosophy of *vallás*' (*vallásbölcselet*), which considers the tradition of religion in terms of a recurring attempt at a fundamental renewal of the notion of absolute and personal reality as disclosure.<sup>58</sup> *Vallásbölcselet* is not a 'totally other' sort of thinking, not a titanic attempt to conceive the unconceivable, but rather an organic kind which discloses the fundamental newness in all traditional and contemporary forms of religion, a newness which is at work even today in our thinking and life.

On the same token, I have developed a similar train of thoughts concerning the notion of revelation.<sup>59</sup> Since *vallás* is fundamentally about disclosing, it was not difficult to find the term more or less equivalent in other languages, i.e. 'revelation'. Revelation is the essence of religion; yet revelation is not confined to the secondary, cultural, and political roles religion is often put into. Revelation is irreducibly original, yet at the same time a historical process in which various forms or models can be identified. Thus, instead of religion, we may focus on the notion of revelation, so that we conceive the reality of the absolute as much as

<sup>57</sup> Carl Friedrich v. Weizsäcker, 'Der deutsche Titanismus,' *Merkur* 32, Heft 367 (Dezember 1978): 1207–1217.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Mezei Balázs, *Vallásbölcselet. A vallás valósága*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Attraktor, 2004–2005).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Mezei, *Radical Revelation*.

possible in itself as well as in its historical contexts. Instead of the titanic thinking of a German philosopher, in *Radical Revelation*<sup>40</sup> we are given the possibility of a different tradition, in which history is a meaningful and organic process aiming at a continuous renewal in all possible forms – not in spite, but in virtue, of its abysmal interruptions.<sup>41</sup>

By the emphasis on the notion of revelation we are given the possibility of leaving behind the semantic framework of ‘religion’. Despite the fact that the notion has been in a constant change throughout the centuries, in its essential form ‘religion’ has remained attached to its original meaning of ‘binding’, ‘being bound’ (*religo*).<sup>42</sup> Religion was and still is a notion of binding, i.e. something compulsory, obligatory, or requisite. The consequence of this semantic legacy is that religion even today conceals the reality of freedom. Freedom, however, is the essence of revelation.<sup>43</sup> Thus, instead of a ‘destruction of religion’, we have the possibility to work out in all details another notion, deeper and richer in semantics, which permeates and transcends the notion of religion and leads its enduring contents to a higher fulfilment. In this way, we may overcome the ambiguous legacy of a titanic thinker so profoundly determining our thought today.<sup>44</sup>

As to the question if Heidegger could see in this approach anything relevant to his thought, one may give this answer: To understand Heidegger we have to immerse in its incredible complexities made possible by the unique kind of form (language) and content (Heideggerian thought). Heidegger would agree, however, that as soon as we leave the matrix of the original language of the texts, we need to find words expressing notions close to the intention of the author. And he could also accept that some new expressions, such as ‘vallás’ or ‘revelation’, may contribute to a better understanding of his thinking of being. He would also argue that the tradition of a subjective interpretation of such expressions may be overridden by a deeper and more proper understanding. ‘Revelation’ can be understood along the lines of the ultimate freedom referred to by Heidegger in his definition: ‘The essence

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Mezei, *Radical Revelation*.

<sup>41</sup> As it happened in ‘Auschwitz’, cf. Mezei, *Religion and Revelation after Auschwitz*.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Religio est!’ in the Classical period meant: it is strictly forbidden. The history of the notion is explained in more detail in Mezei, *Religion and Revelation after Auschwitz*.

<sup>43</sup> Mezei, *Radical Revelation*, 154 (chap. 4, section 3).

<sup>44</sup> *Radical Revelation* is a systematic attempt to realize this project. See: Mezei, *Radical Revelation*.

of truth is freedom', where freedom expresses the original openness of reality.<sup>45</sup> Revelation is also related to 'event', *Ereignis*, both as a special event and as the ultimate structure of original giving and receiving. Revelation, thus, is about the utmost openness of reality which has the concrete form of the divine. 'The last God' is nothing else than the occurrence of the ultimate event of openness, i.e. the ultimate event of radical revelation.

Here the points can be connected and the structure of a unitary tradition and common thinking is clearly disclosed. It is impossible to discard the richness of Heidegger's thought in any appropriate philosophical investigation of religion. If we reject the proper analysis of his works, we avoid the greatest challenge in understanding the problems of religion. 'As a reflecting person' – to repeat the words of von Herrmann – I also take the freedom to say that *it is* possible to continue Heidegger's path, necessarily in a critical fashion, to find the way to the meaning of religion in our days as well as in the future.

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, 'Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,' in *Wegmarken (1919–1961)*, Martin Heidegger and ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976).



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ADVENT OF AUTO-AFFECTION:  
POSSIBILITY, GIVENNESS AND RECEPTION  
IN JEAN-LUC MARION\*

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VIRGIL W. BROWER

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**ABSTRACT**

Jean-Luc Marion obliquely suggests that we return to religion when we think through and struggle with those topics that philosophy excludes or subjugates. This paper investigates a selection of such subjugated motifs. Marion's recent claim (perhaps even 'principle'): "auto-affection alone makes possible hetero-affection," will be examined through piecemeal influences made upon its development through Marion's return to religious thinking beyond the delimited jurisdiction of philosophy. Although still proper to the philosophies of Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, Marion finds new insights by tracing their legacy back further to the Christian gospels, Augustine, Aquinas, and, importantly, Nicholas of Cusa. Philosophy, proper, (if there is such a thing) may well adumbrate human understanding of data, phenomena, and possibility by discouraging any further thinking of them in terms of love, givenness, or revelation. It is by preferentially opting for these themes that philosophy excludes or subjugates that makes possible the entanglement of truth with love, suggested by Marion: "truths that one knows only if one loves them first."

**Key words**

Revelation; Phenomenology; Onto-theology; Nicholas of Cusa; Affect theory

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I seemed to believe ... I didn't know why.  
*Something* in me seemed to believe ... – my consciousness,  
as you may say; but my reason didn't.

~ Mark Twain<sup>1</sup>

When considering a return<sup>2</sup> to religion in the works of Marion, one might first recall a brief comment he makes regarding what religion has become and what its field of study comes to include. “The field of religion could be defined simply as whatever philosophy excludes or at best subjugates.”<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that Marion’s openness to religion (and questions ascribed to its study) discloses a nearly inescapable *preferential option for the excluded*. Phenomenology, too, “feels compelled to address itself directly to the oppressed”<sup>4</sup> and subjugated. It would ally itself with praxes akin to the social gospel and might merit due consideration by anyone believing that, today, “every theologian must adopt a liberation theology.”<sup>5</sup> This facet of phenomenology’s potency (or promise) to comingle with liberation theologies has yet to blossom and further develop.

By adopting questions that philosophy debases or excludes from its proper delimited field of study, religion might thereby become a field of engagement with the canonical failures of philosophy (though not *only* its failures). Marion is very interested in *failure*. “Failure speaks, in its own way ... failure remains as provisional as it is serious.”<sup>6</sup> One can learn this from Paul and what “reveals” (itself) “as folly.”<sup>7</sup> For Marion,

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 16; [Chap. 2].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jean-Luc Marion, *Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn': The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); Hent de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. C. M. Gschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 18.

<sup>4</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. C. Inda and J. Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 67. Cf. Thesis 5 in Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, trans. M. D. Meeks (New York: Scribner, 1969), 140.

<sup>5</sup> Clodovis Boff, “Epistemology and Method of the Theology of Liberation”, trans. R. R. Barr, in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, eds. I. Ellacuría and J. Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 57–85 [citation, 61].

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and the Distance*, trans. T. A. Carlson (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2001), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, trans. T. A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 52.



Kant, for example, “is the thinker of the *intuitive shortage* of the common phenomenon,”<sup>8</sup> that is to say: the failures of intuition. If philosophy’s conceptualizations of motifs are lacking or wanting, we are, then encouraged – perhaps even sanctioned – by Marion to return to them. In doing so, one likely finds oneself within the realm and scope of religion. In what follows, I shall try to address a few such motifs: *impossibility*, *givenness*, and *reception*, all of which are entangled with one another. Religion is no stranger to these phenomena and has, perhaps, always already laid claim to them under different names (e.g., *miracle*, *grace*, *creation*, or *advent*).

There are oblique indications in Marion that would advocate the systematic or specialized study of religion, religious studies, or theology. A lamentable lack of rigorous theologians and serious scholars of religious phenomena in the public sphere becomes indicative of the “Cartesian doctrine of the unity of the sciences [into a] single ‘human wisdom’ taken as ‘universal’”<sup>9</sup> that grows into modern scientism and positivism, of which Marion believes “religion” to be one of the “principal victims” (in addition to “ethics and philosophy”).<sup>10</sup> He suggests that the construct of the *public intellectual* is an epiphenomenal byproduct of the overarching metaphysics he so tirelessly critiques throughout his works. This aspect of metaphysics is based on naïve presumptions of the “universality of knowledge”<sup>11</sup> that results in a “model of the ‘intellectual’ [that] can only last in a strictly metaphysical scheme.”<sup>12</sup> This accounts for an intellectual climate from which “a great many physicists, astrophysicists, or biologists believe themselves authorized to deal authoritatively” with themes such as god, faith, and religion.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Believing in Order to See: On the Rationality of Revelation and the Irrationality of Some Believers*, trans. C. M. Geschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 66.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 66. An exemplary performative of Marion’s point, here, can be found in the vitriolic backlash received by Adam Kotsko, a well-informed and outspoken critic of religious phenomena in the public sphere (who yet holds a Ph.D. in theology) from his Twitter post on 20 August 2018, 5:44 PM, criticizing the political commentary of a *popular* astrophysicist: “I dare you to read Neil deGrasse Tyson’s attempts at political commentary and tell me we need more focus on STEM and less on humanities.” The more vicious responses thrust upon Kotsko are grounded upon the very kind of universal scientific authority presumed beyond question and critiqued by Marion. This breed of *popularity* is invested with a kind of “publicity, beyond its current usage”

Nobody seems more confident to caricature, deride, and dismiss religious phenomena than those who do not go to the trouble to seriously study it. The caliber of argumentation in popular texts produced for mass consumption with incendiary – i.e., marketable – titles (e.g., by Dawkins<sup>14</sup> or Hitchens<sup>15</sup>) pales in comparison to the intellectual rigor of an Augustine, Luther, Barth, or even Weber.<sup>16</sup> There are of course serious reasons to be suspicious of the hubris or bullying of unquestioned authority and the crippling intellectual effects of what Russell calls “the evils of specialization.”<sup>17</sup> There remain, nevertheless, equally serious

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critiqued by Marion in his studies on painting. Be it dissemination by either tele-visibility or social media, such publicity constitutes a public image of the ‘intellectual’ “always available for transmission, broadcast, and consumption by the viewers.” Jean-Luc Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, trans. J. Smith (Stanford: University Press, 2004), 52. Cf. Cornel West’s critique of the “televsual style” that can become “too preoccupied with TV cameras [and] relies on charisma at the expense of grassroots organizing [or] programmatic follow-through.” As such, it “downplays people’s participatory possibilities . . . More pointedly, it shuns democratic accountability.” *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), xxxiii.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Grand Central, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Far from colloquial socio-scientific dismissal of theology, Weber explicitly expected the most “fruitful and instructive” critiques of his own work to come not from historians or sociologists, but rather from theologians. “We [sociologists] must also investigate thoroughly the beginnings of similar developments in the Middle Ages and early Christianity...which will *certainly require very intensive collaboration with theologians*” (italics added). It was “a great cause of satisfaction” to Weber that his “forays into” the Protestant ethic were “*not* received . . . with either complete indifference or hostility” by “a number of reputable theological colleagues.” He intimates a preference for collaboration with theologians rather than properly disenchanting historians that might become overly positivist. “I completely understand that to them [theologians] this way of relating certain series of religious motivations to their consequences for civil life must appear not to do justice to the ultimate *value content* of the forms of religiosity in question – since from the standpoint of religious *value-judgement*, these motivations are coarse and external, peripheral to true religious contents for the inwardly religious nature. And indeed, they are right. However, such merely ‘sociological’ work must *also* be carried out – as it has been done by some of the theologians themselves . . . It should surely be done best by the specialists, to whom we outsiders [i.e., sociologists] can just here and there offer possible *perspectives on the problem*, in our way and from our own viewpoint, whether they greet us with approval and interest or not. *This* was what I had hoped to achieve, and it is from quarters such as *these* [i.e., theology and theologians] that I expected fruitful and instructive criticism to come – not from part-timer, dilettante, bungling wranglers such as Rachfahl [one of his historian critics].” *The Protestant Ethic Debate: Max Weber’s Replies to His Critics, 1907–1910*, trans. A. Harrington and M. Shields (Liverpool: University Press, 2001), 118; 131–132, fn. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2004), 165.

incentives to remember that the informal logical fallacy, *argumentum ad verecundiam*,<sup>18</sup> is not simply a blanket condemnation of all arguments from authority, but rather of arguments appealing to illegitimate or inappropriate authority (i.e., argumentation posturing as authoritative; basing a conclusion *exclusively* and *only* on such authority without any due evidentiary support for logical inference).

Marion's rigorous criticism of Kantian metaphysics<sup>19</sup> does not silence the call for a certain logical deontology. There remains, nonetheless, a "duty to argue"<sup>20</sup> for the sake of religion since Marion believes religion "has to a large extent lost the battle of intelligence," because it waged "an intellectual battle without using intellectual means."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the vocation of the religious thinker (or simply, "the baptized") is to "convince argumentatively," transforming "the kerygma into arguments ... usable in public debate."<sup>22</sup> This includes, of course, the ruthless socio-political criticism of the history of ecumenical religion.<sup>23</sup> If Marion's philosophy does not seem *churchy* enough (or refraining from direct engagement with any systematic ecclesiology), it

<sup>18</sup> When Locke coins the name of this fallacy in Book 4, Chapter 17, ¶19 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he warns his readers against the mistake of presupposing the same degree of due deference, logical validity, or cognitive significance be necessarily given to the mere "opinions" of an expert or scholar whose "learning ... in some other cause [or field of study that] ... has gained a name, and settled their reputation in the common esteem" as that legitimately deserved be given to an "approved" "authority" of another cause or field of study in which the former is not truly trained or learned. In line with Locke, Marion is simply and similarly warning his readers against the mere opinions (i.e., of "physicists, astrophysicists, or biologists," though well-trained, learned, and authoritative in those fields) when they are uncritically presumed to carry the same authority or veracity in areas outside those fields and, in Locke's words, fallaciously "put ... in the [equal] balance against that of some learned doctor" (in, e.g., religious studies or theology), that ought "to be received with respect," when grappling with singular questions of god, grace, faith, etc. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Vol. 2 (New York: Dover 1959), 410; italics added.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Christina M. Geschwandtner, *Degrees of Givenness: On Saturation in Jean-Luc Marion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 24; 34–35; 71–73. Robyn Horner, *Jean-Luc Marion: A Theo-Logical Introduction* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 20; 113–114; 131–132; Jason Alvis, "Subject and Time: Jean-Luc Marion's Alteration of Kantian Subjectivity," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* 14, no. 1 (2014): 25–37.

<sup>20</sup> Marion, *Believing in Order to See*, 74 (perhaps akin to Robyn Horner's "Postmodern Imperatives," 35–46).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>23</sup> "There is certainly nothing scandalous," for Marion, "about criticizing the Church and every Christian can denounce the Church's sins." *Ibid.*, 70.

is perhaps simply because he believes that “the baptized do not think of the Church, [in its colloquial or ecclesial valences] because they [instead] live in it and, in this setting, see Christ.”<sup>24</sup> There is, perhaps, a crypto-pragmatism lurking within this phenomenological approach to thinking.

When grappling with a return of (or to) religion, one must keep in mind the kind of recourse to religiousness or religiosity that Marion overtly discourages. He is ever critical of metaphysical absolutism (and metaphysics, in general) and warns his readers of the “desperate ambition” behind the “*triumphant return of the preeminent metaphysical attempt at absolute knowledge, with all the illusions and dangers to which history so clearly attests,*” that might “be an *irrational exaltation ... reviving the fantasies of ... ‘mystical’ intuition.*”<sup>25</sup> For Marion, “we no longer belong to the dogmatic epoch of metaphysics; [rather,] we inhabit the era of nihilism ...”<sup>26</sup> Though he is not afraid to engage thinkers often considered to be mystics (e.g., Pseudo-Dionysus, Scotus, Bernard, etc.), he yet insists on the the dangerous illusions and fantasies of irrationality and mysticism.

It is in these ways that some aspects of Marion’s philosophy might be considered returns to religion. They endeavor to develop and improve upon some of philosophy’s perjuries, failures or subjugations. In doing so, Marion always endeavors to avoid any illusory irrationality of metaphysics, mysticisms, and dogmatisms. If such avoidance is possible, it must refuse attempting to complete or perfect philosophy’s failures by way of philosophy’s own delimited methods and adumbrated terms. One may never escape the irrational or mystical, if one claims, “to surpass and complete ... affirmative certainty by another affirmative, definitive, and dogmatic certainty.”<sup>27</sup> One alternative to this particular example, Marion develops as *negative certitude*, which he believes to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 70–71.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Negative Certainties*, trans. S. E. Lewis (Chicago: University Press, 2015), 5; italics added. Elsewhere, he writes, “The saturated phenomenon must not be understood as ... a ‘mystical’ case of phenomenality.” *The Visible and the Revealed*, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, 80. This alleged era of nihilism is perhaps a post-metaphysical one in which, in the words of Jan Patočka, ‘god’ is “no longer accepted as an explanatory concept.” *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*, trans. E. Abrams (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 6.

<sup>27</sup> Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 5.

be a path found within philosophy, itself, (though perhaps *subjugated* by it);<sup>28</sup> but can yet be discerned, specifically, in Descartes and Kant.

Although Marion emphasizes Descartes and Kant (and eventually Husserl) as the philosophical precursors of negative certitude, one can, arguably, trace a thread to them from Marion, himself, through valences of ‘nullity’ or ‘negativity’ in Heidegger; and, further, to the negation and negative dialectics of Hegel; and, still further, back to the *coincidentia oppositorum* of Nicholas and the birthpangs of *negative theology*<sup>29</sup> (e.g., learned ignorance). Though Heidegger is a primary interlocutor throughout Marion works, Hegel receives less direct attention. It is as if Marion almost sidesteps Hegel altogether by appealing directly to Nicholas, who *seems* to be (even if only unconsciously osmosed through Bruno)<sup>30</sup> one of Hegel’s under-appreciated intellectual precursors.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In the terms laid out a decade earlier in *The Visible and the Revealed* (as ‘religion.’)

<sup>29</sup> Marion “had been impressed for a long time by ... ‘negative theology’ especially since leading a seminar of *The Divine Names* at Montmartre. The conceptual possibilities, which one right away sensed to be powerful in it, intrigued [him] especially.” Jean-Luc Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, trans. C.M. Geschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 107.

<sup>30</sup> It is quite striking that Hegel never addresses Nicholas throughout the (otherwise) encyclopedic breadth of his writings and system. Yet, consider Hegel’s account of Giordano Bruno’s “unity of opposites” in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, *Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, trans. E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 135; [Pt. 2, §3.B.3.ε], keeping in mind Bruno’s confessed indebtedness to Nicholas in Dialogue 5 of *De la causa, principio e uno*: “Is there anything more opposite to a straight line than a curve? And yet, they coincide in the principle and the minimum, since (as *the Cusan*, *the inventor of geometry’s most beautiful secrets*, divinely pointed out) what difference could you find between the minimum and the minimum cord? ... We must, therefore, say and believe with absolute certainty that ... [t]he infinite straight line thus finally becomes the infinite circle.” *Cause, Principle and Unity and Essays on Magic*, trans. R.J. Blackwell (Cambridge: University Press), 96–7; italics added. Q.v., Leo Catana, “The Coincidence of Opposites: Cusanian and Non-Cusanian Interpretations in the Thought of Bruno,” *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 17, no. 2 (2011): 381–400.

<sup>31</sup> The Argentinian political philosopher, Ernesto Laclau, used to joke in his seminars that the dialectic had been discovered in Cusa a millennium before Hegel. He writes that a “discourse of radical emancipation emerged for the first time with Christianity ... a tradition which, passing through Northern mysticism, Nicholas Cusanus and Spinoza, would reach its highest point in Hegel and Marx.” *Emancipation(s)* (New York: Verso, 1996), 9. Although, like Hegel, he nearly never addresses Nicholas directly by name, Thomas J. J. Altizer repeatedly implies this legacy in innumerable discussions of *coincidentia oppositorum*, which he believes to be “unquestionably a primal ground of Western Christendom as a whole.” *History as Apocalypse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 63. Q.v., the compelling case offered by Thora I. Bayer, “Nicholas of Cusa’s Maximum as a Renaissance Precursor to Hegel’s True Infinity in Advance,” *Idealistic Studies* 45, no. 3 (2015): 339–354.

The alternative to metaphysical philosophy and mystical dogmatism (which would include fundamentalist religion) that Marion offers, then, would be a particular kind of *philosophy of religion* practiced as *phenomenology of religion* and, thereby, “a truly radical phenomenology.”<sup>52</sup> This is *not* because Marion presumes that “as if by right ... the phenomenological method [is] in any way particularly suitable for religion.”<sup>53</sup> Phenomenology seems no better suited to religion than to, say, probability statistics. But if philosophy’s most troublesome issues become sublimated or deferred to religion (wittingly or not), then religion “could offer a possible field for phenomenology,”<sup>54</sup> but *only if* phenomenology makes manifest phenomena that would have remained distorted, undiscovered, or ever missing without it. It is in this way that Marion allies himself with philosophy before religion and always seems to give philosophy – or, at least, phenomenology – the last word.<sup>55</sup> This focus upon the manifestations of phenomena discloses Marion’s philosophy to be, at its core, a philosophy of *revelation*, the hallmark of which is his singular phenomenological readings of pre-modern sources (pre-Kantian/pre-Husserlian) colloquially considered religious and, specifically, Christian: e.g., the gospels and Nicholas.

One of the primal ways by which philosophy approaches the themes of possibility and impossibility is when attesting to the epistemological limits of human understanding. The scope of human cognition and experience allows for a certain extent of knowability or knowledge of things and phenomena (as possible) while other things or phenomena are simply beyond the delimited capacity of human understanding and are, hence, categorized as impossible or impossibilities. There is almost nothing more signature for Enlightenment philosophy than to mark, attest, and grapple with what is impossible for humans to think, know, or experience. Be it by Descartes, Hume, Kant, or Husserl, philosophy ever acquiesces the limits of possibilities for human understanding. As canonical categories burrowed within epistemology, possibility and impossibility open themselves to new considerations, for

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<sup>52</sup> Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> E.g., he states that “the sacramentality of the sacrament, undoubtedly belongs first of all to theology.” But since “any sacrament ... is a matter of rendering visible ... invisible grace [... *then* ...] theological reflection cannot get by without a strictly phenomenological analysis.” Marion, *Believing in Order to See*, 102–103.

Marion, of revelation (or, perhaps what Heidegger calls, *Offenbarkeit*; ‘revealability’).

This is arguably an unlikely Lukan legacy. On this point, Marion’s phenomenological engagement with religion finds itself – almost by necessity – confronting “the difficult narrative of the Annunciation,”<sup>56</sup> in the same essay by which he, also, addresses an uncanny inversion of the ontological argument for the existence of god set in motion by Nicholas. *Mary proclaims precisely her epistemological limits* and, by consequence, a “factual impossibility,”<sup>57</sup> in confessing what she cannot and does not know to angelic authority. “*I know no man* [ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω; *andra ou ginōskō*]” (Luke 1:34).

Marion reads the angelic response as an assertion of “the principle of radical possibility.”<sup>58</sup> On god’s part “no word [or saying; *rhēma*] shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). To believe this word of radical possibility is to recognize the epistemological limitations and impossibilities of one’s human perspective “in order to pass over to”<sup>59</sup> the radical possibility of god’s perspective (for which nothing shall be impossible). Later in Luke, one reads, “What is impossible with men is possible with God” (18:27; cf. Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27).

Both philosophy – whether as metaphysics or epistemology – and even revealed religion eventually concede, in one way or another, that *the impossible* is “the concept above all concepts”<sup>40</sup> that determines what humans cannot know ... but which even philosophy, nevertheless, still calls – or names – ‘god.’<sup>41</sup> As such, impossibility “defines the proper place of the question of God.”<sup>42</sup> (This would be also the case for

<sup>56</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, “The Impossible for Man – God”, trans. A Davenport, in: *Transcendence and Beyond*, eds. J. D. Caputo and M. J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 35 [§8].

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 26; [§5].

<sup>41</sup> “Three standpoints ... – namely metaphysics, philosophy.. and Revelation – thus agree at least on this one point: The impossible ... designates what we know only by name – God.” Marion, *ibid.*, i.e., “that mystery we too casually call ‘God’”: Craig Keen, *After Crucifixion: The Promise of Theology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 20), 80. Cf. Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, trans. H. J. Stenning (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 206; *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. E. C. Hoskyns, sixth ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 44.

<sup>42</sup> Marion, “The Impossible for Man – God,” 26.

*unknowability*. Religious thinkers, therefore, are called and tasked to remain “guardians of the unknowable.”<sup>45</sup>

These lines from the gospel of Luke seem to motivate Nicholas to formulate one of Marion’s preferred paradoxes. Nicholas writes: “... as nothing is impossible with God, we must, by means of what is impossible in the world, raise ourselves to contemplate God, with whom *impossibility is necessity*.”<sup>44</sup> With a few theoretical gymnastics – which could perhaps only come about by *negative certitude* – Marion finds, here, in Nicholas *not* simply a straightforward ontological argument for the existence of god; e.g., the possibility of god’s existence (colloquially attributed to or associated with Anselm or Descartes). With textual motifs firmly rooted in all the synoptic gospels (as opposed to Aristotle, in which Hegel’s philosophy is determined and rooted), in proclaiming *impossibility as necessity*, Nicholas discovers and performs a kind of proto-phenomenological deduction (or “reduction,” *epokhê*)<sup>45</sup> centuries before its time. Nicholas not only anticipates the negative dialectics of Hegel, but the transcendental *deduction* of Kant and even the phenomenological *reduction* of Husserl. Such a genealogy is exemplary of the kind of incipient return of religion to which thinking must attend. Reduction and givenness go hand in hand and are indissociable from one another.<sup>46</sup>

In Cusa one finds ‘god’ to be *that to which there is no possibility of impossibility*. Nothing can make god, godself, impossible. It is upon human conception, alone, that the impossible can impose itself (i.e., on our faculties, hard-wiring, experiential data-collection, sensation, and understanding). This aspect of early ‘negative theology’ comes to further develop into what is often referred to as ‘dialectical theology’

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<sup>45</sup> Marion, *Believing in Order to See*, 85.

<sup>44</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, *Dialogus de possess, Werke*, Vol. 2, ed. P. Wilpert (Berlin, 1967), 66, quoted in Marion, “The Impossible for Man – God,” in *Transcendence and Beyond*, 40, fn. 26; italics added.

<sup>45</sup> “[T]he *reduction* consists in not taking everything I perceive for granted and in not receiving everything that happens to me with the same degree of evidence and thus of certainty but in each case to question what is actually given in order to distinguish it from what is only pieced together, inferred, or, so to say, acquired in a roundabout way, indirectly.” Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, 73–4. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Routledge Classics, 2012), 34; 59–63 [§18; §§32–33].

<sup>46</sup> The “second word that one must introduce together with ‘reduction,’ namely [is] that of ‘givenness’ [*donation*].” Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, 74.



(usually associated with Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Barth,<sup>47</sup> or Altizer), based on an infinite qualitative distinction between the eternal and time; god and humanity. Similarly, for Marion, “the grace of Christ ... will never be counted among worldly phenomena.”<sup>48</sup> To think grace, givenness, or god (all of which are entangled and may well be synonyms) as worldly phenomena suited to human reason and cognition becomes, for Marion, a practice of *idolatry*. Insisting on this kind of qualitative distinction would be another way by which Marion warns against certain metaphysical forms of religion in which it is either effaced or forgotten. He warns that “we must resist the illusion of the theologians and alleged Christian exegetes,”<sup>49</sup> if they believe humanity sets its itself up as the master of the gospel and the word of god as interpreter and judge.<sup>50</sup>

The difference between the possible and the impossible always already eliminates any possible categorical confusion between humanity and god. Further, this paradox of impossible necessity stands the stereotypical ontological argument on its head. Nicholas’ reading of the gospels “no longer proves God’s existence, but [rather] the impossibility of [god’s] impossibility”<sup>51</sup> and, thereby, god’s possibility. “The necessity of God’s possibility flows from the impossibility of his impossibility.”<sup>52</sup>

Any further inference of the existence of god (if there is such a thing) becomes an indirect or collateral epiphenomenon. It is not a primary concern. In fact, to forcefully insist that the category of existence be applicable to god may well be but an idolatrous illusion of onto-theologians, as put forth in Marion’s breakthrough text, *God without Being*. God cannot be conceptualized, as such, which is why Marion advocates a kind of *conceptual atheism*.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> With regard to Barth, cf. Marion, *Discours de réception de Jean-Luc Marion à l’Académie française et réponse de Mgr Claude Dagens* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2010), 39. Q.v., Marion’s discussion of the lack of such distinction in the critique of Feuerbach. *God without Being*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Marion, *Believing in Order to See*, 104–105.

<sup>49</sup> “...il faut résister à l’illusion des théologiens ou des exégètes supposés chrétiens.” Marion, *Discours de réception de Jean-Luc Marion*, 20; translation mine.

<sup>50</sup> This is Marion citing Jean-Larie Lustiger, French Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church and Archbishop of Paris (until 2005), with whom he is in agreement (on this particular point): “*hypothèse que le maître de l’Évangile, le maître de la Parole de Dieu n’[est] pas Dieu, mais l’homme s’érigeant en interprète, en juge ...*” Ibid., 21.

<sup>51</sup> Marion, “The Impossible for Man – God,” 28.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>53</sup> Marion, *God without Being*, 16.

Nicholas is iterating the principle of radical possibility that Marion finds the angel revealing to Mary. This would be one of the many points on which Marion resists Hegel through an appeal to Nicholas, and by doing so, further resists the temptation of ontotheology he suspects and detects in Hegel. He finds Hegel insisting on “the equivalence of thought and Being ... posited as a fundamental metaphysical thesis.”<sup>54</sup> This applies not only to the *cogito* or I (of ‘I think therefore I am’), but also to god.<sup>55</sup> This congenital Cartesian proclivity of ontotheology survives into Hegel’s system.<sup>56</sup>

The impossibility of god’s impossibility is indicative of the innumerable and immeasurable ways by which delimited human intuition and understanding is yet permeated, at all times, by an excess of *givenness*. Such occurrences, happenings, truths, or phenomena comprise the givenness in which the quotidian minutiae and banality of our everyday lives is “saturated,” (to use an almost clinical term of Marion; it is a “saturated phenomenon”). Givenness and reception go hand in hand, since there is no “greater crime for a phenomenologist than ... not accepting [or receiving] what one sees [or experiences].”<sup>57</sup> For Marion, “*givenness alone indicates that a phenomenon ensures in a single gesture both its visibility and the full right of that visibility, both its*

<sup>54</sup> Marion, *On Descartes’ Metaphysical Prism: The Contribution and Limits of Onto-Theology in Cartesian Thought* (trans. J. L. Kosky). Chicago: University Press, 1999, 206 [§16].

<sup>55</sup> Marion finds the “theoretical decision [by which Descartes] metaphysically institutes the *ego* [also] metaphysically enthrones god.” Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Marion finds Hegel complicit in at least “one of the two Cartesian onto-theologies [i.e., either of the *ego* or god] considered as an entity that thinks first of all itself before any other.” Marion, “Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theo-logy”, trans. B Gendreau, R. Rethy, and M. Sweeney, in *Mystics: Presence and Aporia*, eds. M. Kessler and C. Sheppard (Chicago: University Press, 2007), 41–42. Here, with the *ego/god* that first thinks itself before all others, one begins to appreciate the phenomenal importance of Marion’s interest in developing an experience of “auto-affection” *beyond* the ontotheology of either god or *ego thinking-itself*. If there is a point of contact between Hegel and Marion worth developing, it is perhaps on the phenomenon or experience of *recognition* (a word that means two very different things to these two very different thinkers). “Knowing without demoting into an object would imply knowing what no mind masters, organizes, or produces; cognizing without mistaking could be called *recognizing*. Recognizing a human feature that would not straightaway be subject to us ... but instead *received* it as a gift.” Marion, *Believing in Order to See*, 81; italics mine. Q.v., 84. Reception, as such, would be “when one recognizes [the saturated phenomenon] without confusing it with other phenomena.” Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 133.

*appearance and the reason for that appearance.*"<sup>58</sup> In this way a phenomenology of religion moves beyond the limits of vulgar empiricism and positivism and the phenomenological method becomes well-suited to religious thinking.<sup>59</sup>

Marion's understanding of givenness is rooted in Husserl's principle of principles: "*Everything that offers itself to us in originary 'intuition' ... must be received exactly as it gives itself out to be ...*"<sup>60</sup> Marion reads the principle as a givenness that revalues both reception and auto-affection.<sup>61</sup> It is not simply by active agency or agential volition that one comprehends or apprehends that which gives-itself. What gives-itself may be passively received, rather than actively taken. An *object* is "*actively constituted*" by human understanding as it is experienced, but an *event* is "*that which I can only receive.*"<sup>62</sup> It is because givenness gives, offers, and, as such, *auto-affects* itself that humans may receive it (and, as such, be *auto-affected*<sup>65</sup> by it) in the experience of one's own auto-affection.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 22; italics added.

<sup>59</sup> "[B]y playing on the limits of phenomenality, certain phenomena not only can appear at those limits, but *appear even better there*" Ibid., 25; italics added.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 202. Cf. Husserl, *Ideas*, 43–44 [§24].

<sup>61</sup> With regards to the vertiginous complexity of "auto-affection," as such, see Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. G. Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 186–191 [§24]. Q.v., Henry, *Philosophy and Phenomenology of the Body*, trans. G. Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 41; Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 109–110; Virgil W. Brower, "Jacques Derrida" in *Agamben's Philosophical Lineage*, eds. A. Kotsko and C. Salzani (Edinburgh: University Press, 2017), 254–257.

<sup>62</sup> Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 181; italics added.

<sup>65</sup> The difficulty (if not impossibility) of trying to attend to a simultaneous activity and passivity of one and the same phenomenon is expressed – however inadequate, awkward, or confusing – by emphasizing the "*auto-*" of the former and the "*-affection*" of the latter. An *Auto-affection* is *auto-affection* (which is why and how *auto-affection* makes possible hetero-*affection*[s]). This borrows from Heidegger's perhaps equally questionable style to express that an *abyss* (*Ab-grund*) is yet still a kind of grounding or *ground* (*Ab-grund*) when he writes, "*Der Ab-grund ist Ab-grund.*" Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. F. W. Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag, 1994), 379. Under comparable influence of Husserl's principle of principles, it is worth considering that Heidegger attempts to intimate these two distinct yet simultaneous valences of experience in his analysis of the epistles of Paul of Tarsus: "'Experience' designates: (1) the experiencing activity, (2) that which is experienced through this activity. However, *we use the word* ['experience'] *in its double sense*, because it is precisely the fact that the experiencing self and what is experienced are not torn apart like things [...] that expresses what is essential in factual life experience ... *It has both a passive and active sense.*" *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. M. F. and J. A. Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 7 [§ 3]; italics added.

It is because, on the one hand, [a] givenness (grace or god) is beyond human intuition (lacks and has no need for human intuition) and because [b] humans, on the other hand, experience only by virtue of their intuition, that Marion can claim: “nothing gives itself if not in or through intuition.”<sup>64</sup> This means that what impossibility, unknowability, givenness, and reception might teach human comprehension is: no givenness gives-itself (no god gods; no grace graces; no advent advenes; no revelation reveals) except to the experiences of humanity, despite their shortcomings. Humanity, as such, finds itself beyond objectification or thinghood. This makes possible what is arguably Marion’s reformulation of Husserl’s principle of principles into the language of affectivity: “*auto-affection alone makes possible hetero-affection.*”<sup>65</sup>

This is specifically formulated by Marion in his most poetic text, endeavoring to respond and attend to the dizzying phenomena of *love*. Love makes possible new kinds of knowledges. It would be because givenness gives-itself (activating affectivity) by which one may experience oneself in reception of it (as passive *auto-affection*) that one can, then (in and because of the experience of that very reception), experience others as hetero-affection (in ways that the ‘I,’ ego, or cogito could never accomplish, alone, of its own volition and thinking-itself). The givenness of such otherness would be discoverable and revealed in diffuse experiences; experiences of one’s neighbor, beloved, time, future, death, and even – perhaps, *only* – god, godself.

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<sup>64</sup> Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 205.

<sup>65</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. S. E. Lewis (Chicago: University Press, 2007), 114; italics added.

## RELIGIOUS LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING IN MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S THINKING\*

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, I would like to present three approaches to Heidegger's religiosity and religious thinking and underscore the importance of Heidegger's thinking in the 20th century philosophy of religion. I will highlight the parallel interpretations of the religious movements in the 19th–20th century and Heidegger's approach to religion as a fundamental methodological problem of phenomenology. Furthermore, I will examine the connection between the original methodological inquiries and the reflection on religiosity in the later writings of Heidegger on historical being.

### Key words

Religious Life; Facticity; Historical Phenomenon; Dasein; Beyng [*Seyn*]; Reality

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### 1. The Importance of the Religious Phenomenon in Heidegger's Thinking

In the early Freiburg lectures on the phenomenology of religious life, published as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger sought to interpret Christian life in phenomenological terms while also discussing the question whether Christianity should be construed as

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historically defined. Heidegger thus connected the philosophical discussion of religion as a phenomenon with the character of religious life taken in the context of factual life. According to Heidegger, every philosophical question originates from the latter, which determines such questions pre-theoretically, while the tradition of early Christianity can also only be understood historically in such terms.

Even though Heidegger's theological background and his Catholic origin remains important for him in the latest period of his thinking, too, and Heidegger also emphasized the importance of his theological studies for guiding the way to his philosophical thinking in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*,<sup>1</sup> his approach to the phenomenology of religion did not arise from a personal religious commitment. Although he had studied theology for two semesters, in his essay 'Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie', he noted not the importance of the theological studies *per se* but the importance of the inspiration of theological studies on his phenomenology. In this regard, it is worth paying attention to the biographical circumstances of the lectures about *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* for the wider interpretation of Heidegger's relationship to the phenomenology of religion.

Simultaneously with his lectures about the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger, in a letter to Engelbert Krebs, explained his disappointment in the Catholic Church but 'not in the metaphysics'<sup>2</sup>. This approach originated from the phenomenological interest in the problematics of historicity and religion that was typical of this time.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm von Hermann, HGA 12 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 91: 'Ohne diese theologische Herkunft wäre ich nie auf den Weg des Denkens gelangt. Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.' Cf. also Martin Heidegger, 'Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie,' in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm von Hermann, HGA 14 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 94: 'So trat die Spannung zwischen Ontologie und spekulativer Theologie als das Bauegefüge der Metaphysik in den Gesichtskreis meines Suchens.' Hereafter *Gesamtausgabe* will be cited as 'HGA,' followed by the volume number and the page number; page references in parentheses refer to translations.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Heidegger's letter to Engelbert Krebs on January 9, 1919: 'epistemological insights, extending as far as the theory of historical knowledge made the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable for me, but not Christianity and metaphysics (the later, to be sure, in a new sense).' The letter was first published by Bernhard Casper, 'Martin Heidegger und die Theologische Fakultät Freiburg 1909–1923,' in *Kirche am Oberrhein. Festschrift für Wolfgang Müller*, eds. Bäumler, Frank and Ott (Freiburg i. Br: Herder, 1980), 541.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Theodore Kisiel, 'The Religion Courses (1920–21),' in *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time*,' Theodore Kisiel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 149–220; Holger Zaborowski, "'Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.'" Anmerkungen

Heidegger's methodological inquiries are also revealed by the parallel interpretation of the historicity as a phenomenological problem and of the religious experiences influenced by Adolf Reinach's religious notes. The fact that in the 1910s religiosity stood precisely in the centre of the phenomenological interest is proved by the shared phenomenological reflections on Rudolf Otto's book *Das Heilige* and by the contemporary interest in Reinach's religious notes.<sup>4</sup> Heidegger's intention to investigate the methodology of the phenomenology rather than the theological origin of faith was influenced phenomenologically and stood at the centre of his interests in the 1920s. His phenomenological approach to religion is well documented in two letters to Karl Löwith written before the commencement of his course on the phenomenology of religion in 1920:

For, to be frank, all that would come of it is the kind of babble on the philosophy of religion that want to eliminate from philosophy, this talk about the religious that is familiar to us from the secondary literature (13. September 1920)<sup>5</sup>.

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zur religiösen und theologischen Dimension des Denkweges Martin Heideggers bis 1919,' in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, eds. Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch 1* (Freiburg: Alber, 2004), 125–58; Johannes Schaber, "Martin Heideggers 'Herkunft' im Spiegel der Theologie- und Kirchengeschichte des 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, 159–84; Philippe Capelle, "Katholizismus," "Protestantismus," "Christentum" und "Religion" im Denken Martin Heideggers: Tragweite und Abgrenzungen,' in *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, 346–71; István M. Fehér, '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,' *Research in Phenomenology* 39, no. 1 (2009): 99–151.

<sup>4</sup> Not just Husserl and Heidegger, but the phenomenological movement around Husserl in Göttingen found Otto's book phenomenologically relevant. Husserl mentioned the book in a letter to Heidegger in 1918, and this probably made the book important for Heidegger. Cf. *Husserliana Dokumente* III, no. IV, Die Freiburger Schüler: Husserl to Heidegger, September 10, 1918: 'Ich las übrigens, da ich den eigenen, allzuschwierigen Gedankenbildung fern bleiben musste, mit großem Interesse Ottos Buch über das Heilige in der That ein Versuch einer Phänomenologie des Gottesbewusstseins, kühn und was versprechend im Anfang, aber freilich bald enttäuschend. Schade, dass Sie nicht Zeit haben eine (sc. tiefe dringende) Kritik zu schreiben.' Heidegger prepared a review of Otto's book, but it was not published in that time: cf. the Appendix II of *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Fritsch and Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 251–252. However, Heidegger referred to Otto's book during his lectures: cf. *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Kiesel, 'Heidegger (1920–21) on Becoming a Christian: A Conceptual Picture Show,' in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thoughts*, eds. Theodore Kiesel and John van Buren (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 176.

The previous letter above shows Heidegger's attitude to the philosophy of religion and, to some extent, expresses his relationship with the temporary theologians. It will be clear from the second letter that he did not want to contribute to the contemporary philosophical concepts of religiosity but to extend the phenomenological methodology on the field of religiosity:

I would like to do away with 'talking' about the religious, but it is perhaps inevitable. It is also a false expectation regarding my lecture course, if anyone thinks that is what I plan to do. It is probably best to say so from the start (19. September 1920).<sup>6</sup>

In his early sketches for a lecture on Medieval Mysticism, Heidegger also emphasises: 'Our goal can never be to awaken religious life. That only [occurs] through such life itself.'<sup>7</sup> In the notes about Reinach's *Das Absolute*, which was published together with *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger pays attention not to the theological aspect of the religious phenomenon, but to the present realisation of the historical aspect of it. He relies on Reinach's thesis that religiosity is always inspired by the actual situation and that the phenomenon inspires the religious intention. Yet, the religious phenomenon transgresses the normal intentionality of the phenomenon in the way of its historical relation independent from the individual. It must have been important for Heidegger to explain the religious phenomenon through Reinach's interpretation. The popular teacher in Göttingen, Adolf Reinach, who died in World War I and left behind the important paper called *Notes [Aufzeichnungen]*, which was passed from hand to hand within the phenomenological movement after his death, and was interpreted as a religious contribution to the Husserlian methodology. Heidegger completes Reinach's thesis about the religious phenomenon with the statement that the religious phenomenon is constituted by its specific religious intention:

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<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism,' in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 232. (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens*, ed. Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly and Claudius Strube, no. 60 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 303.)



'The relation to God gives direction for our experimental comportment to him.'<sup>8</sup> What does 'relation to God' mean? Meaningfully and constitutedly, only to be formulated as a comportment of consciousness, not, for instance, ontologically, as being next to, or 'under', an (absolute) being. Rather, the opposite holds: our experiential comportment to God – the primary one, because welling up within us by grace – gives direction to the specifically religious constitution of 'God' as a 'phenomenological object'. (Reinach sees this also in a certain sense, but does not take it as a methodological principle of the phenomenology of religion).<sup>9</sup>

The letters above and Heidegger's notes to the contemporary discussion about the religious phenomenon prove that his thinking was not linked to the traditional theological context but rather to the problem of the phenomenological approach to religious life. In the phenomenon of religious life, which will be examined by him later in *Being and Time* as the pre-theoretical existential character of Dasein, Heidegger reveals the co-existence of historical and factual life in its real present at hand. In §43 of *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces the problem of reality by virtue of the notion of the present at hand, which does not just mean that Dasein exists in the spatial-temporal dimension, but that the spatial-temporal dimension is the existential givenness of Dasein, i.e. Dasein is present for himself in the position of being thrown into the world as a thing, while his historical life is realized in the concrete situation as a given relation of being.<sup>10</sup> The 'present-at-hand' position of Dasein means that Dasein cannot exist other than in being thrown into the world in the spatial-temporal dimension, i.e. his existence is determined for freedom exactly in this spatial-temporal dimension.

In being-ahead-of-oneself as the being toward one's ownmost potentiality-of-being lies the existential and ontological condition of the possibility of being free for authentic existentiell possibilities. It is the potentiality-for-being for the sake of which Da-sein always is as it

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Adolf Reinach, *Sämtliche Werke. Textkritische Ausgabe in 2 Bänden*, eds. Karl Schumann and Barry Smith, *Werke I* (Munich/Hamden/Wienna, 1989), 607.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 245.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §43, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University, 1996), 187: 'Therefore, not only the analytic of Da-sein, but the development of the question of the meaning of being in general must be wrested from a one-sided orientation toward being in the sense of reality. We must demonstrate that reality is not only *one* kind of being *among* others, but stands ontologically in a definite foundational context with Da-sein, world, and handiness.'

factually is. But since this being toward the potentiality-for-being is itself determined by freedom, Da-sein can also be related to its possibilities unwillingly, it can be inauthentic, and it is so factually initially and for the most part. The authentic for-the-sake-of-which remains ungrasped, the project of one's potentiality-of-being is left to be disposal of the they.<sup>11</sup>

The religious phenomenon disappears completely from the text of *Being and Time* and gives place to the temporally determined being revealed in the real existential life. This fact underlines my claim that Heidegger's phenomenological ambitions did not coincide with the philosophy of religion, even if in his early lectures the religious phenomenon originated from the factual experience of the everyday life and constituted the existential dimension of Dasein analogically to the bodily dimension. Heidegger's argumentation for the three-dimensional world in *Being and Time*, gains its relevance by the complicated relationship to being, and the historical form of it as beying.

The first introductory part of Heidegger's lecture course about the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* is followed in the second part (entitled 'Phenomenological Explication of real religious phenomena according to Paul's Letters') which is the practical investigation of specific historical phenomena in Saint Paul's Letters to the Galatians and the Thessalonians in the New Testament. According to Heidegger, only a formal expression of historical phenomena of religion is possible in the factual life. This raises the question of how the formation of historicity is to be interpreted in the context of factual life-experience: as an experience, i.e. as belonging to one's own religious life. For Heidegger, the various philosophical notions of the time convey a 'formal indication' of the historical meaning that pertains to religious life.<sup>12</sup> Through reflecting on the Letters of Saint Paul, Heidegger is able to investigate the real meaning of 'formal indication' against the background of early Christianity's reflections on its own historicity. Though the historical reflection on early Christianity is not guided simply by the theological or historical interest of Heidegger, the formal phenomena of the existential life originated from the early Christianity inspire the phenomenological constitution of being qua being.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §41, 180.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Theodore Kisiel, 'Die formale Anzeige: Die methodische Geheimwaffe des frühen Heideggers,' in *Heidegger – neu gelesen*, ed. Markus Happel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1997), 22–40.

## 2. The methodology of historicity along the problem of being

Heidegger's early lecture *The Idea of the Philosophy*<sup>15</sup> and his later lecture *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*<sup>14</sup> offer an elementary investigation of the question of historicity in terms of an account of the historicity of our life-experience. Based on Heidegger's claim in *Basic Problems of Philosophy* that historicity is fundamentally connected to the individual's world-experience, so that our life is pre-elementarily determined by the historical life, the question surfaces in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* as one about whether or not there is a historical a priori that determines the life-experience of Dasein. In this instance, the historical a priori will be revealed in factual life by those philosophical notions whose meanings have changed during the course of the history of philosophy, but whose core meaning nevertheless shows up in the interpretation of actual life. In this sense, the historical phenomenon, which, on the one hand, embraces our entire cultural life and, on the other, shows up in individual lives, has two sources: the formation of concepts within the tradition, and the expression of an actual life. Taking this historical meaning as his starting point, Heidegger raises the question of how the philosophy of religion is related to religion itself. Does this relationship derive from the meaning of religion, or is it the theme of religion that captures the interest of philosophy – and, if so, is the philosophical significance of this theme pre-religiously determined?

The primordially of religion's historicity will be articulated within Heidegger's phenomenological purview. It is not the historical meaning, or the history of Christianity, that opens up the core of the religious a priori, but rather factual life-experience, which exposes the historical meaning of religious life. The second chapter of the *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* elaborates on the meaning of the religious a priori as something that cannot be properly conceived as a mere legacy of theories of historicity, but rather only as given by facticity itself. To be able to reflect on the occurrence of religious phenomenon in the present, we must first arrive at some sort of primordial understanding

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, 'Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem,' in HGA 56/57; published in English as *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*, in *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (HGA 58; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

of religion. Based on Paul's Letter to the Galatians, the primordial understanding of the religious situation is founded on the life-situation of early Christianity. Paul's interpretation of Christianity is based on the developing emergence of Christian religiosity – an event that includes his own conversion as well.

In the letters to the Galatians, Paul is struggling with the Jews and the Jewish Christians. Thus we find the phenomenological situation of religious struggle and of struggle itself. In his struggle with his religious passion in his existence as an apostle, Paul must have seen the struggle between 'law' and 'faith.' This opposition is not a final one; it is rather a preliminary one. Faith and law are both special modes of the path of salvation. (GA 60, 68–9 [48])

The historical context of Paul's Letters to the Galatians is a period following soon after Christ, which raised serious questions regarding the practice of Christianity. The apostolic synod of 48–49 A.D., which accepted Paul's evangelical call, insisted on the distinction between ritual and moral laws. The Letters to the Galatians are thus situated in the middle of a specific hermeneutic situation: the Jewish Christian members would not accept the Galatians as Christians, unless the Galatians were prepared to abide by the ritual-related rules of the religion and agree to be circumcised. This criticism of the Galatians relates not only to the practice of Christianity but also to the validity of Paul's evangelism. Since Paul was not himself one of Jesus' disciples, and only converted to Christianity after Christ's departure, the authenticity of his evangelism depends on how we understand the very term 'Christianity'.

The phenomenon of the historical Jesus that is characterised in Paul's view as a historical phenomenon is the primordial understanding of Christianity and the core of 'formal indication'. In this sense, there is a double understanding within the Pauline interpretation: Paul's interpretation of the historical aspect of his religion and the explication of this interpretation. This double structure of religious-historical material is what makes up the historical phenomenon in factual life-experience – given to Paul himself on the one hand, and to us by Paul's own evangelical explication on the other hand. The historical Jesus-event, meanwhile, remains completely independent from our factual life: a closed body of historical material which we ourselves just observe impartially from within the context of our own lives. The objective observation of the historical event assumes a relation between factual life and the past event, but the past is not involved in the present situation.

The factual life-experience of the primordial form of Christianity is grounded in the historical phenomenon of Christianity and fulfilled at different stages of the latter's historicity. When the historical moment transpires within factual life itself, the historical understanding materializes as a situation of enactment (*Vollzug*). While in the early lectures of Heidegger the situation corresponds to the moment when the historicity of the object unites with factual experience during the course of one's comprehension, the lectures on the phenomenology of religious life emphasize the historical life-experience of the religion itself. The religious experience of being is a reflection of the historical situation of Paul but this same historical phenomenon receives its full meaning only in factual life.

Since the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's relationship to Christianity has been controversial. Though the theological origin of Heidegger's thinking cannot be denied, even in his later writings, his approaches to religion became increasingly aporetic with time. Remarkably, *Being and Time* opens with the metaphysical distinction between being and beings and claims that being reveals itself to Dasein in the ecstatic-existing. Regarding the factual situation as the constitutional form of being, Heidegger is faithful in *Being and Time* to his previous conception in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. But, what Heidegger reveals in these early lectures is that the historical being discloses itself in the actual situation which returns exactly in the thesis of the existential being of Dasein. Otherwise, the historical being loses the ontological formation of the religiosity, i.e. the religious phenomenon is not the fundamental-ontological connection to being anymore in *Being and Time*, but it reveals the past as the undisclosable phenomenon of being in elapsed past. This controversial relationship to the religion as historical being already appears in *Being and Time* at the interpretation of the role of the conscience in the structure of care.<sup>15</sup> Regarding the act of conscience, Heidegger definitely differentiates the original sin in the theological sense from its phenomenological interpretation. However, in both relationships, conscience is the call of care which discloses Dasein's original guiltiness. In phenomenological sense, conscience is the anticipatory resoluteness of Dasein, which, for him, discloses the authentic life and in this authenticity reveals the linearity of the self. § 62 of *Being*

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§ 55–60.

*and Time* emphasises the difference between the theological sense of the original guiltiness and its phenomenological interpretation as the freedom of Dasein for the possibility of being.

Resoluteness means: letting oneself be called forth to one's ownmost being-guilty. Being-guilty belongs to the being of Da-sein itself, which we defined primarily as potentiality-of-being. The statement that Dasein "is" constantly guilty can only mean that it always maintains itself in this being either as authentic or inauthentic existence. Being-guilty is not just a lasting quality of something constantly objectively present, but the existentiell possibility of being authentically or inauthentically guilty. 'Guilty' is always only in the actual factual potentiality-of-being. Thus, being-guilty must be conceived as a potentiality-for-being-guilty, because it belongs to the being of Da-sein.<sup>16</sup>

In this sense, guiltiness gains some independency from the original guilt. Since it means the potential faithfulness of thinking to the historical being, the possibility of thinking reveals itself in the inauthentic mode of the self. Though, thinking discloses the ontological difference between being and beings, it reveals it first in the event of the historical being, as beyng. The third interpretation of being as beyng brings the interpretation of the religious phenomenon as the phenomenon of the historical being to the end. The phenomenon of the religious life, in the sense of the interpretation of the early lectures, is no longer able to disclose the meaning of the event as beyng.

Heidegger's ontological achievements and the development of the ontological difference is regularly interpreted in parallel with his relationship to the Catholicism, i.e. the introduction of the notion of beyng fulfils at the same time as his establishment about the 'death of God'. Holger Zaborowski distinguishes three dimensions of Heidegger's relationship to Christianity in his essay about 'Metaphysics, Christianity, and the "Death of God" in Heidegger's *Black Notes* (1931–1941)'<sup>17</sup>. Both

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<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 62, 283.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Holger Zaborowski, 'Metaphysics, Christianity, and the "Death of God" in Heidegger's *Black Notes* (1931–1941),' in *Reading Heidegger's Black Notes 1931–1941*, eds. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, Mass. – London: MIT Press, 2016), 195–207, 200: According to Zaborowski, 'there is, first, a *philosophical* or, more specifically, a *being-historical* dimension – that is, it is a confirmation from within the framework of Heidegger's reading of the history of Western metaphysics as the history of the first beginning and of the forgetfulness of being. This means that the task of really understanding the meaning of Christianity is no longer left to theologians and religious people. Only being-historical is, according to Heidegger, able to make sense of Christianity and particularly of what he considers its crisis and death. There is no

Heidegger's Ereignis-Denken and the Nietzsche-Lectures contain the preliminary structure of the 'beginning of thinking' in *Black Notes*. In my interpretation, this continuous beginning of thinking characterised by *Black Notes* is able to reveal the presence of God's 'totally other' in the complicated present of being.<sup>18</sup> From another angle, but in the same sense, Jussi Backmann argues in his book *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being* that two keys elements characterise the trajectory of Heidegger's thought from *Being and Time* (1927) to *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936–1938): First, Heidegger's approach to his main topic undergoes a 'reversal' or turn (*Kehre*). This turn basically corresponds to a structural reversibility or reciprocity between the sense of being (being<sub>2</sub>) and Dasein in the later Heidegger's articulation of being (being<sub>3</sub>) as event (*Ereignis*). Second, a new, quadruple oppositional schema emerges, one that will ultimately become the figure of the fourfold (Geviert). This schema can be regarded as the later Heidegger's main attempt to schematize the relationship between being as meaningful presence (being<sub>1</sub>) and being as the background or meaning context of presence (being<sub>2</sub>) within the comprehensive articulation of being (being<sub>3</sub>) as ontological difference.<sup>19</sup>

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doubt, that there is also, second, an *autobiographical* and *personal* dimension to it. In the *Black Notes*, Heidegger is still – or, perhaps, again and more forcefully than ever – dealing with his own religious origins and his personal loss of faith in Christianity. He is now explaining it with respect to the general crisis, or “completion”, of Christianity due to the forgetfulness and withdrawal of being and against the background of his somewhat Gnostic talk of the “last” or “coming” God. There is, third, a *historical* and *cultural-critical* dimension, because when Heidegger talks about Christianity or Christian issues, he incorporates many references not only to concrete movements and tendencies within Christianity, but also to events and phenomena in the wider culture that he characterizes as the “age of utter questionlessness” and that he very closely relates to Christianity.’

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Zaborowski, ‘Metaphysics, Christianity, and the “Death of God” in Heidegger’s *Black Notes* (1931–1941)’, 198: ‘But it is not just Nietzsche who is important for Heidegger’s view of Christianity in the *Black Notebooks*. Even more important is Hölderlin’s poetic insight into the “absence” (Fehl) of Gods. When Heidegger writes that “we have already lived for a long time and will continue to live for a long time in the age of the departing God,” [“Jetzt kommt es an den Tag, dass wir seit langem schon und für lange im Weltalter der scheidender Götter leben”, Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, 167] he is clearly alluding to Hölderlin, whom he singles out for particular attention again and again. For the Hölderlinian absence or “refuge of the Gods,” he finds considerable evidence in the people “who turn ‘their’ faith into a movement,” in the movement of the “German Christians” and in tendencies to found a position on “godlessness” or even on indifference.’

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Jussi Backmann, *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being* (New York: Suny Press, 2015), 121.

### 3. The reality and its link to the religion's phenomenology

The previous analysis shows how the question of reality is connected in Heidegger's interpretation to religion's phenomenology. However, Heidegger's question of reality has a meaning in relation to the fundamental ontological question of being that is independent from the phenomenology of religion. Already in *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduced the ontological difference of being and beyng in the question on reality in § 43, and this difference is gradually deepened by the analysis of the relation between temporality and care. Even though the problem of being qua being, which is different from the human existence, discloses the existential relation to God in the historical being qua being, it also appears in different formations in the Heideggerian philosophy during the constitution of the hermeneutic-phenomenological understanding of being. There is a growing interest in the problem of reality in Heidegger's philosophy in a relation to the ontological difference in his thinking. Tobias Keiling interprets Heidegger's question about reality in *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus*<sup>20</sup> from the point of view of the debate on the idealism or realism of the Husserlian phenomenology's methodology. According to this argumentation, there is a parallel reflection on the reality synonymous to being and the opposite of the ideality as the mental constitution of the experienced thing, in Heidegger's thinking. In the work for habilitation, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, Heidegger phenomenologically analysed the relationship between the outside world, ideality, and reality, and he connected the problem of the reality to the scholastic problematic of being. The early essay from 1912, about *Das Realitätsproblem in der modernen Philosophie*, presents the first critical interpretation of Medieval Christian philosophy and through the notion of 'Lebensphilosophie', which was coined by Dilthey, interprets the fundamentally realistic position of philosophy via the phenomenological approach. According to Heidegger, 'Lebensphilosophie' has a direct relationship with life, i.e. it originates from life, and the philosophical understanding of life is grounded on the question of being. The statement that being is not an abstract logical structure of scholastic philosophy but originates from the factual life itself led Heidegger to

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<sup>20</sup> Tobias Keiling, *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).



break with 'the system of Catholicism' (1919) but not with metaphysics. Heidegger's avowal in the letter to Engelbert Krebs is put in a complex position by the progress of Heidegger's thinking. Since *Being and Time*, Heidegger has separated the traditional, dogmatical metaphysics (as he called it after his turn: ontotheology) from the post-metaphysical interpretation of being based on radical distinction between being and nothing. Both the lecture *What is Metaphysics?* and *Theology and Philosophy* are in this sense the first step to overcoming metaphysics in its traditional sense.

Even though Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics in *Being and Time* starts with the radical turn from traditional metaphysics<sup>21</sup>, his approach to the problem of being is influenced by his theological studies of the relationship between finitude and eternity. Both *Being and Time* and the lecture *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* demonstrate Heidegger's Christianity through the question on reality. However, the lecture about *The Basic Problems ...* is the first step from the unique notion of being to its fourfold notion which determined Heidegger's interpretation of being in the second stage of his thinking. Concerning the unity versus multiplicity of being, i.e. the fundamental ontology of being qua beyng, Backmann emphasises that Heidegger's *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* provides a specific discussion of the question about the unity and multiplicity of being, where it is designated as one of several basic ontological problems.<sup>22</sup> In recent studies, informed by the constantly growing amount of texts published in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, there is an increasing awareness of the complex, heterogeneous, and untraditional character of the Heideggerian 'ultimate unity'.<sup>23</sup> Even though the problem of reality already appears in the very first essays

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger opens *Being and Time* with the statement that we are not be able to say any more what being is. We must put the question again: 'This question has today been forgotten – although our time considers itself progressive in again affirming "metaphysics".' (Cf. *Being and Time*, § 1, 1).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Backmann, *Complicated Presence. Heidegger and the Postmetaphysical Unity of Being*, 4: 'We will see that the problem-horizon of the unity of being/presence will offer a new perspective on the unity of Heidegger's thinking itself. Heidegger has not often been read from this particular thematic perspective. Those who have touched upon the topic have mostly done so with a clear awareness of the central role of unity in traditional metaphysics. As a result, the vocabulary of unity, identity, and uniqueness in Heidegger's later work, culminating in the articulation of the fourfold as a *onefold* of multiplicity, has sometimes been suspected of being a traditionalism or an unquestioned metaphysical remnant.'

<sup>23</sup> Backmann, *Complicated Presence*, 6.

of Heidegger, it discloses a close relationship to the phenomenological interpretation of being in *Being and Time*. The phenomenological interpretation of the previous givenness of the outside world, i.e. the thesis that the outside world as a reality is the pre-condition of being-in-the-world, overcomes the theological sense of creation in *Being and Time* by the ecstatic existence of Dasein as thinking.

These inquiries, which take precedence over any possible ontological question about reality have been carried out in the foregoing existential analytic. Accordingly, cognition is a founded mood of access to what is real. The real is essentially accessible only as innerworldly beings. Every access to such beings is ontologically based on the fundamental constitution of Da-sein, on being-in-the-world. This has the primordial constitution of being-of-care (being-ahead-of-itself – already-being-in-a-world – as being together with innerworldly beings).<sup>24</sup>

In *Being and Time*, the scholastic sense of reality, according to which reality is equivocal with the outside world, turns from the question on reality into its phenomenological analysis. In this sense, the reality of the world is the pre-ontological requirement of being which is disclosed by the care (*Sorge*) as the ecstatic existence of Dasein. Due to the complexity of the interpretation of being in the 1930s, the problem of the reality constitutes a new level in Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger's lectures and essays from the beginning of the 1930s are gradually wrestling with the distinction between reality and materiality. During the Nietzsche-lectures at the end of the 1930s and in the lectures of this time, Heidegger begins to eliminate the three-dimensional structure of time constitution and construes the present which is being determined historically, being created by history and appearing in history. The most emblematic articulation of the reality conception versus materiality is expressed in the pages of *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, where Heidegger reflects on a new relationship to the historical being of Dasein explained in *Being and Time*. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger expresses a direct departure from the original concept of reality in the sense of being-in-the world and explains reality by virtue of the possibility of thinking about the historical dimension of being.

What remains incomparable, and can never be grasped in meta-physical concepts and modes of thought, is the projection of being as

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<sup>24</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 43, 188.

appropriation, a projection that experiences itself as thrown and that repudiates every appearance of having been fabricated. Here beyng reveals itself in that essential occurrence whose abyssal character is the reason the en-countering ones (gods and humans) and the conflictual ones (world and earth) attain their essence in their originary history between being and beings and admit the commonality in the naming of being and beings only as something most question-worthy and most separated.<sup>25</sup>

This complicatedly formed present, which includes the being of Dasein in a historical situation and in the historicity itself, transforms the traditional ontotheological metaphysics to the ontic-ontological problem of being. Reality is in this sense the event of beyng in the revelation of the present as the absence of the event. The event is the disclosing historical beyng in the present situation which is not any more the event of the past, but the uneventfulness of the present. 'Beyng as the innermost "between" is then akin to nothingness for this moment; the god overpowers the human being, and the latter surpasses the god – immediately, so to speak. Yet both are only in the event, and the truth of beyng itself is as this event.'<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 376.

<sup>26</sup> Heidegger, *Contributions*, 328.



**VARIA**

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**‘I DREAM OF A CHURCH ...’:  
CERTAIN PRINCIPLES FROM POPE FRANCIS  
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH\***

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JOSEF MIKULÁŠEK

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**ABSTRACT**

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* published in 2013, Pope Francis encourages all Christian communities toward missionary transformation. The transformation should lead to a genuine awareness and restoration of the missionary nature of the contemporary Church. The papal document has been quoted and commented on a number of times since its publication, as it bears enormous potential for transformation of the Catholic Church and for the mission of all Christians. The article presents an analysis of the four principles proposed by *Evangelii gaudium* in a section that focuses on the common good and social peace of humankind. The article acknowledges these principles as the axes of hypothesis that deals with reform of the Catholic Church as much as they contain important implications for a Christian theology of Revelation, for a theology of the act of faith and for a basic reflection on the structure of ecclesiastical communities. These elements are accepted as both an intrinsic condition and practical contribution for the Church’s missionary transformation.

**Key words**

*Evangelii Gaudium*; Fundamental theology; Missionary transformation of the Church; Structures of the Catholic Church; Church communities; Theology of revelation

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A few decades ago, the Canadian theologian Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984) called for a revision of transcultural categories in his book *Method in Theology*. These should enable making the core of Christianity and the principles of Christian existence more communicable to further generations in a new way.<sup>1</sup> Lonergan claims that the discovery of suitable categories can open up the heuristic potential of examined reality. '[R]eal objectivity', he adds, 'is the fruit of authentic subjectivity'.<sup>2</sup> That is why authentic subjectivity, which is the result of human conversion (simultaneously intellectual, moral, and religious), is able to see the examined reality in a new way and perceive its dynamic development.

Such a challenge to personal and collective conversion is also typical of Pope Francis and his 'program statement' *Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World Evangelii Gaudium* from 24 November 2013.<sup>3</sup> This document has certainly been commented on and analysed from various angles in relation to Francis' pontificate.<sup>4</sup> However, only limited attention has been paid to a short section of this document, the third part of the fourth chapter of the exhortation called 'The Common Good and Peace in Society' (n. 217–237). In its centre, there is an analysis of four principles that 'can guide the development of life in society and the building of a people' and about which the Pope is convinced that 'their application can be a genuine path to peace within (...) the entire world'.<sup>5</sup> Francis' introduction may indicate that these are the principles of the social doctrine of the Church. The perimeter of those principles, however, provides a much wider view. In concrete, the four principles will be interpreted in order to show a way which would lead to accepting these principles as supporting pillars of fundamental-theological reflections on God's revelation and the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University Press, 2007), 281–293.

<sup>2</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 292.

<sup>3</sup> Franciscus, *Adhortatio apostolica de Evangelio Nuntiando nostra aetate Evangelii Gaudium*, 23. November 2013, *AAS* 105 (2013), 1019–1137. Used further in the text as *EG*.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. D. Dormor and A. Harris (eds.), *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, and the Renewal of the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2017); K. Kramer and K. Vellguth, *Evangelii gaudium: Stimmen der Weltkirche* (Freiburg im B.: Herder, 2015); H. M. Yanez (ed.), *Evangelii gaudium: il testo ci interroga: chiavi di lettura, testimonianze e prospettive* (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> *EG*, 221.



The article will, in its structure, develop a *relecture* and further theological application of the above-mentioned principles. After exploring the origin of those categories in the thinking of the current Pope (1), I will focus on the principles: ‘time is greater than space’ (2), ‘unity prevails over conflict’ (3), ‘realities are more important than ideas’ (4) ‘the whole is greater than the part’ (5). They will be approached through a three-step scheme (description of the principle – application of the principle in the thinking of J. M. Bergoglio – its fundamental-theological application).

## 1. The Pope ‘from the other End of the World’

The exhortation of Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* offers dynamism within which our four principles have an essential role. This is also proclaimed by the title of the first chapter of this document: ‘Missionary Transformation of the Church’ (EG 19–49). The main idea of the entire text, and also of its individual parts, is searching for a new *form* of life of the Church.<sup>6</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium* is becoming a program statement through which Bergoglio continues working on the results of the Vatican Council II, in an effort to outline a new *ad intra* view of the Church<sup>7</sup> that will reveal the new *ad extra* mission of the Church.<sup>8</sup> The fact that this is not merely a cosmetic adaptation of a secondary phenomenon can be detected when we think of the following statement: ‘becoming a people demands (...) an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part’.<sup>9</sup> It is not hard to ascertain that the task of ‘becoming people (of God)’ is the primary theme of Pope Bergoglio as concerns the self-awareness of Christians. In this way, he strives for the revitalisation of an important category drafted in the conciliar constitution *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On the category of form as ‘symmetrical composition of parts’, see W. Tatarkiewicz, ‘Form: History of One Term and Five Concepts’, in *A History of Six Ideas: an Essay in Aesthetics* (Warszawa: M. Nijhoff, 1980), 220–243.

<sup>7</sup> Vatican Council II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen gentium*, 21 November 1964, in *AAS* 57 (1965), 5–67. Used further in the text as *LG*.

<sup>8</sup> Vatican Council II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965, in *AAS* 58 (1966), 1025–1120.

<sup>9</sup> *EG*, 220.

<sup>10</sup> ‘God (...) does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals (...) rather has it pleased Him to bring men *together as one people*, a people who acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.’ *LG*, 9.

Before we turn our attention to the particular principles, let us explore the sources from which J.M. Bergoglio draws on the individuation of these principles.<sup>11</sup> We have no information concerning the testimony of Pope Francis himself as to when he started thinking of these principles. It is apparent, however, that they have been on his mind at least since the beginning of the 1970s. Evidence of such a claim can be found in Bergoglio's speech that he delivered as the provincial of the Jesuit Order during the provincial congregation of Argentinian Jesuits on 18 February 1974. Bergoglio mentioned three of these principles as supporting points on which it was possible to construct the life of the Jesuit province.<sup>12</sup>

The crucial turn in the crystallisation of these principles can be spotted during a short period of time when Bergoglio stayed in Germany in 1986. It was the time when he began working on his unfinished dissertation on Roman Guardini's work on philosophical anthropology *Der Gegensatz*.<sup>13</sup> As the subtitle of the book, *Versuche zu Einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*, indicates, the work is focused on the real-life experience of a man, on his life in tension between the opposites that are the accompanying key points on the way to the Mystery.<sup>14</sup> These opposites enact the dynamism of human life in its *bipolar tension*, in attention, courage, and openness. This dynamic vision of history, the dialogical character of human existence, and the need for *discernment* plays a fundamental role in Bergoglio's thinking. Because, if this Pope is looking at history in a dynamic way, it is based on the appropriation of Guardini's thinking, not on Hegelian dialectics. A *bipolar tension* in human existence is not a philosophically solvable riddle or an expectation of the possible third step of dialectics, a synthesis.<sup>15</sup>

A 'mature' application of these principles can be found in the speech of Archbishop Bergoglio delivered on 16 October 2010 during the XIII

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<sup>11</sup> See J. C. Scannone, 'Pope Francis and the Theology of the People', *Theological Studies* 77 (2016): 118–135, here 128, doi: 10.1177/0040563915621141.

<sup>12</sup> Bergoglio's speech where he mentions the principles with the exception of 'the reality is more important than an idea' can be found in: J. M. Bergoglio, *Meditaciones para religiosos* (Buenos Aires: Diego de Torres, 1982), 49–50.

<sup>13</sup> R. Guardini, *Gegensatz: Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Guardini uses a German term *Gegensatz* (an expression of the opposite of concepts, that is a polar contradiction), not the term *Widerspruch* (in the sense of divergence, a contradiction that would require dialectical dealing with).

<sup>15</sup> 'The nature of contradiction originates in two moments when each of them is unmistakable, not deductible, definite, but they are also inseparably connected one to another and they are only conceivable through one another.' Guardini, *Gegensatz*, 41.

Annual Archdiocesan Meeting of Social Teaching and Pastoral Ministry in Buenos Aires.<sup>16</sup> Bergoglio’s speech is called *Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo* (*We as citizens, we as people*). The meeting took place in a year when the Argentinian nation celebrated the anniversary of two hundred years since the liberation from Spanish colonialism. Bergoglio wanted to arouse the awareness of his Argentinian listeners that it is not enough to be *citizens* with guaranteed rights and obligations but that it is important to become involved and co-responsible as a *people*, therefore a nation:

*Citizens* is a logical category. *The people* is a historical and mythical category. (...). *The people* cannot be explained purely in a logical way. (...) The challenge of being a citizen includes living and understanding oneself in the two categories of belonging: belonging to *society* and belonging to a *people*. A man lives in a society, however; his origin is in people.<sup>17</sup>

This horizon of Bergoglio’s speech from 2010 enables us to see a framework in which Pope Francis plans to address God’s people through the exhortation of *Evangelii Gaudium*. He wants to awaken the awareness of Christians to participate in the transformation of the Church, to move from a Christian life defined by rights and obligations to forming a responsible people of God, where everyone is baptised by the Holy Spirit, ‘consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood’<sup>18</sup> and called to holiness. According to the Pope’s argumentation, this is ‘a Church which goes forth’,<sup>19</sup> a Church that will seize responsibility in fulfilling its missionary nature.

## 2. Is Time Superior to Space?

The principle ‘time is greater than space’ is mentioned in *Evangelii Gaudium* as the first one.<sup>20</sup>

(a) A closer study of the history of this principle brings us into the field of Greek philosophy, to Heraclites of Ephesus and to his statement

<sup>16</sup> J. M. Bergoglio, ‘Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo’, last modified 16 October 2010, accessed 28 September 2018, <http://www.pastoralsocialbue.org.ar/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Nosotros-como-Ciudadanos-Nosotros-como-Pueblo.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> J. M. Bergoglio, ‘Nosotros como ciudadanos’, 7.

<sup>18</sup> *LG*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *EG*, 20–24.

<sup>20</sup> *EG*, 222–225.

‘everything flows’. In contrast to a person of today, the ancient person of Hellenistic culture lives within a *cyclical* conception of time and also in a fascination with *space*. The entire reflection, mainly under the influence of Plato’s philosophy, is attracted towards unifying the transcendent *Unum* to which the hierarchical-spatial organisation of society and authority corresponds. Thanks to the works *De coelesti hierarchia* and *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (5–6 AD), the thought of priority of space becomes a leading idea of Christian ecclesiology of the second millennium. It gets its specific declaration through the so-called ‘Gregorian form’ of the Church<sup>21</sup> and places an emphasis on a developed pastoral administration structured through (socially determinate and legally enforceable) *adherence to Christian faith*.

Such a transfer should be, however, assessed *negatively* on the level of Christian epistemology. The accent on *time* is disappearing from the symbolism of the Christian life. For example, the first few verses of the book of Genesis do not present the *where* narration, but the *when* as God’s story with people taking place is important: ‘*In the beginning when God created ...*’ (Gn 1:1). Biblical narration is a story about *promises* and *expectations*; it is thus a story about *time*.

The principle ‘time is superior to space’ can be examined even closer thanks to the epistemology provided by the book *The Practice of Everyday Life* by the French author Michel de Certeau (1922–1986). In his analysis of the social behaviour of humans, he distinguishes between ‘strategy’ and ‘tactics’. Such a distinction, in fact, identifies the two different *logics* of practice. Strategy is a hegemonically oriented *structure* characterised by a clearly given subject defined on the basis of *space*; it is thus definable through power.<sup>22</sup> The logic of tactics, by contrast, is conducted through the axis of time. As time becomes the power of the weak, it is an advantage of independence on space (*no-place*) which enables the development and use of the advantages of new conditions.<sup>23</sup> Accord-

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. G. Lafont, *Immaginare la Chiesa cattolica. Linee e approfondimenti per un nuovo dire e un nuovo fare della comunità cristiana* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1998), 39–56.

<sup>22</sup> ‘I call a “strategy” the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (...) can be isolated from an “environment”. A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper.’ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xix.

<sup>23</sup> ‘I call a “tactic” (...) a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (...), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other.’ *Ibid.*

ing to de Certeau, this logic is the logic of everyday social practice: it is governed by unforeseen creativity and the unpredictability that changes *consumers into producers*.<sup>24</sup>

(b) Taking into consideration the fact that the Pope acknowledges the French Jesuit Michel de Certeau as one of his intellectual mentors, it is apparent how Certeau’s preferences for social *tactics* are updated in Bergoglio’s reflections. The Church has to learn to redeploy its focus from the sphere of *strategies* to the logic of *tactic*. It needs to execute the Abrahamian ‘going out’: to break the logic of spaces, subjects, power, and courageously become the Church that gives priority to time, ‘being concerned about *initiating processes rather than possessing spaces*.’<sup>25</sup>

As said above, Francis’ reformatory effort is led by an attempt of creating God’s people. This creating is, basically, a question of time,<sup>26</sup> a priority of *processes*, modifications, and possibly taking steps that will later prove to be blind alleys. To give priority to time means to legitimate *consumers* into becoming *producers*, making their lives *participate actively* on the growth of the Church. The principle of the priority of time thus enables them ‘to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results’.<sup>27</sup>

(c) The third moment of reflection of the first principle is an attempt to outline its theological interpretation.

This principle provides us with a basic frame of interpretation of the theology of Revelation. One should recall that the twentieth century stands for the rediscovery of the *prophetic* dimension of the Church and for an awareness of the *non-saturation* of its present form. The self-awareness of the Church must serve to perceive clear signals: our lookout on God’s Revelation from the *gnoseological* subtraction to *ontological* and *metaphysical* excess, a *surplus*. ‘[T]he Lord himself, during his earthly life, often warned his disciples that there were things they could not yet understand and that they would have to await the Holy Spirit’;<sup>28</sup> he thus leads us to the *fullness* of realisation (cf. John 16:12–13).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, XII–XIII.

<sup>25</sup> *EG*, 223.

<sup>26</sup> The Pope criticises a contradictory tendency: ‘Giving priority to space means madly attempting to keep everything together in the present, trying to possess all the spaces of power and of self-assertion.’ *EG*, 223.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *EG*, 225.

This insight provides a new glimpse of the discussed theme of the Tradition of the Church and its development. Tradition fulfils the basis of its life only when it becomes a *dynamic orthodoxy* that ‘derives its capacity for self-renewal from its beliefs in the presence of a hidden reality, of which current (form of the tradition, *author’s note*) is one aspect, while other aspects of it are to be revealed by future discoveries.’<sup>29</sup> *Hidden, not yet revealed*, reality becomes a challenge for the mission of the Church.

I believe that the epistemological inquiry performed by Michael Polanyi (1891–1976), a philosopher of science, could be very useful at this point. The author encourages the community of scientific researchers to wisely distinguish between the ‘focal awareness’ of their research and actions, i.e. *processes* that require the investment of time and energy, and to support such processes by a knowledge of the community, of its life, of that which forms its ‘subsidiary awareness’, its tradition.<sup>30</sup> Such an awareness of Christian fellowship helps to reassess the topic of a *perimeter of the Church*. The past centuries of Modernity in particular have led to a problematic definition of the Church and to the delimitation of the *social field* of the Church. Its *symbolic capital*<sup>31</sup> was more of a reason to differentiate from the world. The missionary transformation of the Church leads us towards a serious consideration of the potential of Christian *symbolic capital*, the richness of the doctrine, and the life of the Church as a way of service in favour of *humanum*.<sup>32</sup>

Christian communities have been focused on the principle of *space* and *identity* for centuries. If they are to overcome such boundaries and restrictions, where can new inspiration for the influence of the Church towards *place* and *time* be found? The answer lies within the *transformative* processes towards all members of Christian communities. They should be aware of their co-responsibility for the missionary work of the Church. We are fluctuating in the order of *tactics*; they are an *investment* into the future of the Church within people in the contexts of their lives. The task is to form and educate Christians and also - or *just*

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<sup>29</sup> M. Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 82.

<sup>30</sup> M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge. Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge&Kegan, 1958), 57–59.

<sup>31</sup> See the description of a *social field* which is characterized by *symbolic capital*: P. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47–52.

<sup>32</sup> ‘The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.’ *LG*, 1.

*through* their formation and education – to emphasise the *meaning* of their Christian practice. These kinds of tactics cannot be quantified; it is important to search for new possibilities, new ways, and believe in the work of the Holy Spirit in time because this will lead us towards long-term results.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. Unity Prevails over Conflict

The principle ‘unity prevails over conflict’<sup>54</sup> is a practical verification of the principle analysed above as it is only possible to resolve this tension of opposites (unity vs. conflict) through the dimension of time. The question is how to achieve a final unity since the history of any human society (either the Church or humankind) is rather a history of conflicts and the polarisation of opinion.

(a) In order to *reconcile* the tension between the unity and conflict of partial groups, it is possible to use the thinking of M. Polanyi as an epistemological tool. This author offers the perspective of a *stratified universe* through the hierarchy of levels of being in his book *Tacit Dimension*.<sup>55</sup> Polanyi asks how is it possible that a machine, designed by people (who respected physical and chemical laws), is not determined and comprehensible through these sciences. It is, therefore, necessary to look for its *meaning* at ‘a higher level’ of being. ‘Lower levels’ of being are in their whole only understandable through what Polanyi calls ‘boundary control’ that is performed by the higher level. Thus ‘the logical structure of the hierarchy implies that a higher level can come into existence only through a process not manifest in the lower level, a process which thus qualifies as an emergence.’<sup>56</sup> Polanyi claims that in such a hierarchy of being ‘no level [of reality] can gain control over its own boundary conditions and hence cannot bring into existence a higher level, the operations of which would consist of controlling these boundary conditions’.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The project of ‘parish evangelisation cells’ can be mentioned as an example of these *processes*. The European origin of this project is in the parish of St. Eustorgio in Milan, Italy.

<sup>54</sup> *EG*, 226–230.

<sup>55</sup> Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 50–52.

<sup>56</sup> Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 45.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

In even more detail, these Polanyi's thoughts can be found in a trans-disciplinary study of so-called *complex systems*. These systems are not analysable through the reduction of the whole into a 'uniting element', which is provided by one of the scientific disciplines. The adjective *complex* is not to be understood as a synonym for the word *complicated*, but 'the etymology of the term originates from the Latin word *complexus*, to "net together". It indicates a link of parts or elementary components in a physiological or biological system'.<sup>58</sup> One of the important principles of the epistemology of complexity is the principle of the self-organisation of complex systems, which existence develops in a 'chaordic structure'.<sup>59</sup> The structure of organisation is able to securely absorb and arrange elements in its core throughout time that would represent chaos itself. Such a mode of existence does not endanger chaordic systems, but on the contrary, the combination of order and chaos provides an opportunity for new learning, innovation, and therefore a new development of the system.<sup>40</sup>

(b) When we turn our attention to the work of Pope Francis, an analogical thought can be found. During his conference *Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo* in 2010, Bergoglio emphasised the sterility of a willingness to avoid conflicts, ignore them, and thus not to be able to transform them into a new functioning of the entire system. Bergoglio later updated this vision in *Evangelii Gaudium*, where he rejected two destructive approaches to conflict situations.<sup>41</sup> As a solution, he suggests the following: 'the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process'.<sup>42</sup> Bergoglio gives us the task to form unity: a unity consisting of the conviction that the uniting power of humankind is the work of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, as in the case of the other three principles, it is possible to notice the great confidence which Pope Francis places in the pneumatological dimension of the mission of the Church in the history of humankind.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> R. Benkirane, *La teoria della complessità* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2007), 9.

<sup>59</sup> A neologism compounded from the terms *chaos* and *order*, expressing the bipolarity of the tension of the system. See D. Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> A synonym for *chaordic structure*, used in science today, is the term *emergent structure*.

<sup>41</sup> 1. 'when conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go their way as if nothing happened.' 2. 'Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings, (...) and thus make unity impossible.' *EG*, 227.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> See *EG*, 230.



(c) There are two areas in the life of Christian communities that uncover the actual applicability of Bergoglio’s principle. It is the ecumenical question as well as the question of the theological pluralism itself.

The efforts for ecumenical unity have been of profound significance in the agenda of Christian denominations during the last century.<sup>44</sup> The reality of the actual separation of Christians leads to a question that begins with and from this phenomenon: Can we perceive the history of the separation of Christians as the possibility for a new apprenticeship that aims at a higher *unity in difference*?

If we allow ourselves to be inspired by the epistemology of complex systems, our thoughts can be heading in this direction. Such an approach, then, prevents us from every attempt at *reductive synthesis*. When considering *boundary conditions*, the meaning of the system which seems from the point of view of each of the phenomena incompatible can be accepted and perceived only once we reach the ‘higher level’ of our recognition. This is the reason why it is important to continue in the ecumenical solidarity that has been developed over recent years and called *receptive ecumenism*.<sup>45</sup> It is an approach in the ecumenical effort whose cognitive requirement is not the question of ‘what can the other Christians learn from our Church tradition?’, but it is the search for ‘what can our tradition learn from the life of others?’ Such an explicit emphasis was also pronounced by Pope Bergoglio in *Evangelii Gaudium*. He encourages us to ‘reap what the Spirit has sown in them (Christians of other confessions, *author’s note*), which is also meant as a gift for us’.<sup>46</sup>

This tension can also be found in relation with another question that fundamentally belongs to the Christian self-awareness. This is the question of legitimate theological pluralism in Christian theology. An attentive diachronic insight can clarify how it is possible that theological pluralism (perceived for long centuries as a creative tool of

<sup>44</sup> We can remind you of the words of John Paul II. in *Ut unum sint*, art. 5: ‘At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself *irrevocably* to following the path of the ecumenical venture.’ Ioannes Paulus II, *Littera encyclica de Oecumenico Officio Ut unum sint*, 25 May 1995, *AAS* 87 (1995), 921–982.

<sup>45</sup> An introduction to ‘receptive ecumenism’ provided by: P. D. Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism* (Oxford: University Press, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> *EG*, 246. This postulate suggests a development of a specific pneumatological dimension of ecumenism that will open the way to Christian unity for spiritual dynamics. See R. Svatoň, *Duchovní cesty českého ekumenismu: Minulost, přítomnost a perspektivy* (Olomouc: Refugium, 2014), 78–82.

Christian reflection) became in the Catholic *social field*, at certain time, a guest that is more *tolerated* than *welcomed*. It is the ignorance of the historical development of the *Magisterium* (especially in its form) that leads towards absolutisation of this institute that immanently belongs to the existence of the Church. For instance, a view of the history of the theological reflection can remind us that the theological method of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) – that has been presented as a *prototype* of all future generations of Catholic theologians<sup>47</sup> for centuries – provoked at the time of its origin considerable astonishment and incomprehension due to its innovative approach. It managed, however, to find its way through the background of criticism of some parts of Aristotle's teaching in 1277.<sup>48</sup> The close connection between the thought of Aquinas and Aristotle was unproblematic for the continuity of the Tradition of the Church at that time. Why is it then that the same connections were denounced in the case of the modern philosophical origins for innovative theological methods?

The existence of the Magisterium is not the question, but it is *quomodo?*, the manner of its execution. When considering this question, the Magisterium finds itself at a crossroads of two antagonistic ways marked by historical epochs. Does this mean that the Magisterium should go along the path of toughening centralisation and thus follow the ideal of Modernity (heading towards the *Unum*) or should it choose the path of positively accepting a postmodern call to dialogue and differentiation, with *alterity* becoming a significant characteristic of the development of the Tradition of the Church in the direction of theological pluralism?

A promising future can be expected from the way reflected in the studies of complex systems. Its principle of self-organisation can convince us that *unity in diversity* is not only present in Jesus' command directed at his disciples, but also that it is a credible principle from the field of the social organisations. If we admit the superiority of time over space and the superiority of unity over conflict, we can rely on the field of theological pluralism as on the manifestation of the governance of the Holy Spirit, on the phenomenon of *consensus*, and thus on an acceptance or a denial of a certain teaching method within

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<sup>47</sup> See Leo XIII, *Epistola encyclica Aeterni Patris*, 4. August 1879, *ASS* 12 (1879), 97–115.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. G. F. Vescovini, 'L'aristotelismo latino', in *Storia della teologia nel Medioevo* III, ed. G. D'Onofrio (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1996), 227–271.

a community of theologians concerning the horizon of *time* (e.g. the Gamaliel’s speech in Act 5:34–39). Is it not possible to change the approach of the Authority of the Church towards ‘inspection’ of works of individual Catholic theologians and theological approaches? Is not this way one of the possibilities how to begin approaching the Magisterium more as a *process* that helps the Church focus on its completeness?

#### 4. Reality is more Important than an Idea

The third principle listed in *Evangelii Gaudium* is an articulation of the second case of tension that is mentioned by Bergoglio: a bipolar tension between reality and an idea.<sup>49</sup>

(a) Paying attention to the history of this tension in human thinking would require a voluminous work that would far exceed the framework of this article. The time of ancient philosophy (the opposing resolutions of Plato and Aristotle), medieval education (a contradiction between realism and nominalism) as well as the modern enlightened man (Descartes, Kant), are important historical examples of dealing with this tension. The loss of contact with reality has affected the modern history of Euro-American civilisation. This is a loss whose roots can be found in nominalist disembedding of bonding in view of the unifying world-view. Since the beginning of modern history, this has been enhanced by Descartes’ scepticism of objectivity that was later fulfilled by the approach of Immanuel Kant, that is by epistemological approaches which gradually crown the ‘great disembedding’<sup>50</sup> of an individual into the social bonds of modern historical society. The reality of *every-body’s* life is marginalised by systemic structures, and the dignity of human life is trampled on.

(b) Such an experience of totalitarian ideologies in the historical context of Latin America in the twentieth century has certainly influenced the thinking of Pope Bergoglio as he warns against veiling a reality with an excessive rhetorised truth.<sup>51</sup> It is the current Pope who comes from the gigantic megapolis of Buenos Aires and speaks of poverty and of the difference between living in the *centre* and in the *periphery*; he experienced it as someone who lived in a great agglomeration.

<sup>49</sup> *EG*, 231–235.

<sup>50</sup> See also the phenomenal work by C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> *EG*, 231: ‘It is dangerous to dwell in the realm of words alone, of images and rhetoric.’

He thus knows that ‘realities simply are’ while ‘ideas are worked out’.<sup>52</sup> Francis seeks out the systematic development of pastoral care that will be based on an unambiguous starting point: *an option for the poor and for the vulnerable*. Those people, the poor and the vulnerable, are the *reality of life*. An *option for the poor* is the motive for Bergoglio’s statement that ‘ideas – conceptual elaborations – are at the service of communication, understanding, and praxis’.<sup>53</sup>

(c) A Christian reflection about being and thinking cannot find a more expressive principle of *realism* than the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. God does not live in the world of ideas, neither is he *Deus absconditus*, but he ‘dashed himself, he become a servant, he became one of us’ in his Son (Phil. 2:6–8). When Christians fought fiercely for the dogmatisation of the full humankind of Jesus Christ, the result of this effort was a developed knowledge of the sacramentality of the universe, the presence and (inner) accompanying of reality by Christ. He is the one who turns through incarnation from *universale* to *concretum*. He enters the reality of life of all people in their singularity so that their *concretum* can be significant in God’s *universum*. This point of view suggests a question of *alterity* as an utterly theological impulse. This is the perspective that enables the existence of a human individual *locus theologicus*, whose theme is the redemptive presence of God in the life of each and every individual. Therefore, the ‘objectivity of Revelation is not identical with the objectivity of a *thing* or a *data file*, but it comes “objectively” in a believing subject’.<sup>54</sup>

The superiority of reality does not stop only in the case of individual existence, but it significantly influences the future reflection of the Church. The Church is, thanks to the Second Vatican Council, on the path to transformation towards a more realistic (and humbler) frame. Entering into the view of the Church ‘from below’ has become the main leading line in a category that was established in the program of the Second Vatican Council<sup>55</sup> but was rejected later.<sup>56</sup> It has been reg-

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> EG, 232.

<sup>54</sup> Ch. Theobald, *La Rivelazione* (Bologna: EDB, 2006), 52.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. LG, 9–17.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Synodus Episcoporum, ‘Relatio finalis Synodi piscoporum *Exeunte coetu secundo: Ecclesia sub Verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi*’, in *Enchiridion del Sinodo dei Vescovi I* (Bologna: EDB, 2005), 2351. The document marginalises the category of *God’s people* and begins to claim that ‘the ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of documents of the Council.’

ularly repeated, however, since the first day of the pontificate of Jorge Mario Bergoglio: The Church can be understood in its mystery in the historical development and historical function only as a ‘holy faithful People of God’. Such a view, apart from any other, encourages the present theology to search for a deeper *place* of all forms of *ministries* in the life of the Church and to strengthen the *form* of their execution.

*Sensus fidei*, a supernatural sense of believers for faith,<sup>57</sup> is a specific topic that has been ‘popular’ in the Catholic Church since the beginning of Francis’ pontificate. It will be a task for the following years to be able to structurally implement *sensus fidei* as a place of ‘bottom-up’ *causality* that opens the future of Church communities. Only the knowledge of co-responsibility – *actuosa participatio* – in the community of believers is a way to become a true *people* instead of *citizens*. Only the growth of an awareness of this source of life of the Church, i.e. of the pneumatological dimension, functions as a permanent impulse for the development of prophetic and, therefore, the missionary role of the Church.

## 5. The Whole is Greater than the Part

The last principle which the current Pope mentions in the chapter IV of *Evangelii Gaudium* is the principle of ‘the whole is greater than the part’.<sup>58</sup> This principle covers all the principles above. It can, therefore, become a means of generating Church action in change to structures in the Catholic Church.

(a) The topics of globalisation in its cultural, political, and economic sense as well as the loosening of coherent social relations according to local citizenship have been popular with a number of authors in recent decades.<sup>59</sup> A negative prognosis of globalisation as a dictation of homogenisation, however, covers up the versatility of this process. Roland Robertson (born 1938) provides a broader view, theorising in his search about the possibilities of perceiving globalisation as

<sup>57</sup> International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, last modified 3 May 2018, accessed 28 September 2018, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_sinodalita\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html).

<sup>58</sup> *EG*, 234–237.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. e.g. A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), chapter II.

‘glocalisation’.<sup>60</sup> With reference to the rise of national states, the author demonstrates that the establishment of national states (one of the paradigmatic phenomena of the *particularity* of a society in modern history) happened on the background of an increase in *universality*, that is a development of international relations and processes (cultural, economic, and political). Therefore, topics such as ‘home’, ‘community’, and ‘locality’ are internally bound and reflected parallelly with the process of globalisation.

The epistemology of complex systems can once again become a tool for grasping this current phenomenon. *Dual causality* is a principle that considers both the *local* and *global* level of social phenomena as active subjects. Complex systems are not reducible only to a unidirectional way of management. Researchers in the field of the social organisations emphasise that it is essential to give space to the autonomous development of local units for the success and development of organisations. This will also help capture creativity and innovation that can come from the individual units of the system. Every core management knows that, to perceive the given social system as an *emergent structure*, the development of the whole (global level) is possible only through the development of individual units (the local level). In this perspective, the theory of complex systems mentions a *fractal system* that the whole comprises. Every fractal mirrors and embodies *pars pro toto* – the whole of the organisation based on the *holographic principle* of organisation. Every fractal is a distinctively ‘locating’ system that has co-responsibility not only for *actions* (power of directives) but also for *thinking* and thus *innovating* of a specific fractal in benefit of the whole. The development of a complex system as an *emergent structure*, is thus a gamble on *time* (processes developing over time) and also a gamble on *participants* (the active subjects of the development). It is only by means of cooperation of the fractal system in time that could later reveal that the whole is ‘something more than only a sum of parts as it enables bringing forth such qualities that would have never existed without such inner organization’.<sup>61</sup>

(b) The appropriation of this principle in the thinking of Bergoglio is apparent. The tension between particularity and universality was

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. R. Robertson, ‘Glocalization: Time-space and Homogeneity-heterogeneity’, in *Global Modernities*, ed. M. Featherstone (London: SAGE, 2002), 25–44.

<sup>61</sup> E. Morin, ‘Le vie della complessità’, in *La sfida della complessità*, ed. G. Bocchi and M. Ceruti (Milano: Mondadori, 2007), 27.

accepted by *Papa* Francis in a unique way in the issue of the terminology characterising his mission. He refers to himself almost exclusively as a ‘Roman Bishop’.<sup>62</sup> Francis is trying to decentralise the character of the Roman bishop and add to it a new balance in the sense of the relationship between the Roman bishop and the collegium of bishops. Such decentralisation is at the background of thought that Francis develops in *Evangelii Gaudium*. The model of reality is in the shape of a *polyhedron*, not a round shape. A polyhedron provides a credible approach to reality through a formal analogy and ‘reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness’, from which pastoral activity ‘seeks to gather in this polyhedron the best of each’.<sup>63</sup>

This idea of polyhedron is complemented by the Pope’s attempt to carry out the missionary transformation of the Church and, mainly, in its double causality. Since the beginning of his pontificate, he has been trying to approach reform *in corde* of the Catholic Church through concrete steps in the matter of the Roman curia. This involves the establishment of a *serving* position on the part of the Roman curia towards singular dioceses and also a preference of a Church as a *community of churches*. At the same time, Pope Francis is aware of the fact that the *up-bottom* impulses of change are not enough but that it is essential to allow the Holy Spirit to work through his inspiration and help in order that ‘the People of God is incarnate in the peoples of the earth, each of which has its own culture’.<sup>64</sup> There also needs to be a change directed ‘bottom-up’, a change where every diocese has its own unique function and becomes an enrichment and impulse of the whole: ‘the whole is (...) greater than the sum of its parts’.<sup>65</sup>

(c) Francis’ last principle seems extremely important for the course of restructuring the Catholic Church in the future.

Here, we are opening the question of *representation* in the Catholic Church. If we accept the credibility of the principle of double causality, the question is how it is possible to legitimise the current process of the selection of the episcopate according to this principle as it is a process

<sup>62</sup> See *Annuario Pontificio* 2013, Francesco is referred to in this document as only a “Roman bishop”, see p. 23. All other titles are not annulled but are listed on p. 24. Therefore, not in direct connection with the name ‘Francesco’. *Annuario Pontificio* 2013 (Città del Vaticano: LEV, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> *EG*, 236.

<sup>64</sup> *EG*, 115.

<sup>65</sup> *EG*, 235.

that a priori *excludes* the synodal structures of individual dioceses. The question is even more pressing when we realise that the *practice of election* in the Catholic Church is a *regular process of choosing superiors* in the field of religious congregations.<sup>66</sup> A change in this particularly sensitive point, along with a new evaluation of the question of the sacramentality of the episcopate, would certainly help. As once expressed by the German theologian Karl Rahner, we should stop looking at the episcopate as if it were the *senior management of the Church*. They are therefore, not (up-bottom) appointed *superiors* of dioceses but (bottom-up) constituent *servants* (in the fullness of priesthood accepted in bishops' ordination) and *patres* of their dioceses.

A very present and still delicate question is also the 'middle level' of the Church, the level of episcopal conferences of individual states or regions of states (continents). Those episcopal conferences, restored by the Second Vatican Council according to the model of ancient patriarchal and metropolitan sees,<sup>67</sup> are still living in a vacuum of their own *doctrinal authority* and have not yet had *vere et realiter* entrusted. It was actually blocked in the 1990s, in connection with the efforts to restore the 'communion ecclesiology' and strengthen the centralism of the Catholic Church.<sup>68</sup> The only way to overcome the universalistic vision of the Church is to strengthen the authority and preference of the middle level. This involves an acceptance of the need to *contextualise* the life of the Church in individual regions on the *doctrinal* level.

Strengthening the authority of ecclesiastical conferences goes hand in hand with the establishment of a collegial authority whose members can be chairmen of ecclesiastical conferences (of continents or other specified regions). They would periodically gather around the Roman bishop and would be able to work at resolving their common issues together. This authority would not only have an advisory vote, but could also have a decision-making vote which, however, would not suppress the position of the authority of the bishop residing in Rome, the successor of the Apostle Peter. The vision of such collegial authority (uniting the heads of contemporary patriarchates) is not only fictional.

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<sup>66</sup> See CIC, canons 624–625.

<sup>67</sup> *LG*, 23; cf. also *EG*, 32.

<sup>68</sup> Ioannes Paulus II, *Motu proprio de theologica et iuridica natura Conferentiarum Episcoporum Apostolos suos*, 21. May 1998, *AAS* 90 (1998), 641–658. Of particular interest is art. 21 which established radically restrictive conditions for the performance of the authentic Magisterium: 'unanimous approval', '*recognitio* of the Apostolic See'.



The journey was initiated by the establishment of ‘C9’, a council of nine cardinals from all continents that the Pope chose as his advisory authority while conducting the Catholic Church. Is it really unthinkable that this ‘working team’ could turn into a permanent council that would become a very important stage on the path towards the ecumenical unity of all Christians even when confessional dissimilarities would remain in place?

## Conclusion

In this article, I have analysed four principles offered up by Pope Francis in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, specifically in a section entitled ‘The Common Good and Peace in Society’. I was searching for their possible interpretation as the leading principles of a fundamental-theological reflection for the current Catholic Church. The analysis of these principles from the philosophical-historical point of view and from the position of the genealogy of thinking by Jorge Mario Bergoglio displayed the epistemological variety hidden in them. These principles and the entire text of *Evangelii Gaudium* can be only perceived as an immense liberty. It is a liberty of a prophetic voice that resonates in the Catholic Church through Pope Francis who embraced it in the symbolism of the name he chose for himself: Francis. It is a name that enlivens the imprint of a man who revealed a new dimension in the life of the Church: St. Francis of Assisi. This involves not only the dimension of simplicity but, above all, fidelity to God, openness to people, courage, and joy as a demonstration of the Holy Spirit, who is *Spiritus inspirans et movens*:

Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> EG, 33.



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## JOHN, THE TALKING BABY OF LUKE 1:64

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A D A M S A B I R

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to review the age-old assumption of who may be the object of the miraculous speech in Lk 1:64, without eliminating the traditional interpretation of Zachary as both loosing and receiving back his speech in conjunction with the events surrounding the birth of John. The thesis of the article is that the orator of Lk 1:64 is most probably the newborn baby John. The argument is a cumulative one and builds upon observations of grammatical, contextual and genre-specific nature. The last point is underscored by incorporating 2 (Slavonic) Enoch into the discussion.

### Key words

Birth narrative miracles; John the Baptist; Talking babies; Narrative accounts; Zachary; Melchisedech; Miracles; Book of Enoch; Gospel of Luke

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**I**n Luke 1:64 the Gospel writer relates a peculiar incident taking place within the birth narrative of John the Baptist. Since John's father Zachariah had lost his speech earlier in the account, many commentators have been eager to interpret this verse as the moment where Zachariah's confirmation of John as the child's name is rewarded with the restoration of his speech.<sup>1</sup> The parallel between the loss of speech

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<sup>1</sup> A variety of scholars have reached the same conclusion; see J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997), 110; D. L. Bock, *Luke* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 48–53; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 179–180; F. Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 70–71; E. Schweizer, *The Good News*

and its restoration seems to be enough to motivate a link between these passages. However, Zachariah's restored speech could just as well be seen in verse 67 of the same chapter. Logically speaking, either both passages refer to the restoration of Zachariah's speech or merely one of them. The question the interpreter is faced with in the first alternative is what would motivate the Gospel writer to restate in two rather closely occurring passages that Zachariah once again was able to speak. If we pose the question of when Zachariah's speech was restored instead, the answer would be either in verse 64 or in verse 67. However, does the text allow another possible interpretation of Luke 1:64 that would make sense in the closer context without necessarily challenging the traditional interpretation of Zachariah, whose speech had been restored at the moment John the Baptist is named?

In this paper, I investigate the possibility of interpreting verse 64 to mean that the speaker is none other than the infant John the Baptist himself. The discussion in this paper is divided into five parts. First, it will be argued that the grammatical structure does not exclude this possibility (negative argument); second, the context would be argued to suggest that this is the preferable interpretation (positive argument); third, it will be illustrated how verse 67 accounts for the traditional understanding; fourth, parallel mythological traditions of speaking babies, will be shown to account for a cultural possibility of such a thesis (without thereby necessitating Luke to be influenced by such accounts); and fifth, this new interpretation has philosophical implications, which will be briefly discussed.

## 1. The Grammatical Possibility

<sup>63</sup>καὶ αἰτήσας πινακίδιον ἔγραψεν λέγων, Ἰωάννης ἐστὶν ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐθαύμασαν πάντες. <sup>64</sup>ἀνερχθῆ δὲ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ παραχρῆμα καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλάλει εὐλογῶν τὸν θεόν.

The question here is whether the referent of the τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ could be only Zachariah, or whether there is also another possibility. Luke does not give us a name but only a masculine pronoun. In the

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*According to Luke* (London: SPCK, 1984), 37–39; W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), 60–61; R. B. Vinson, *Luke* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2009), 46–47.

preceding context, it has two possible referent points. If it does not refer to Zachariah, it refers to John. The genitive αὐτοῦ certainly identifies that the mouth opened for the speech is proper to the one speaking. On the other hand, the passive aorist ἀνεώχθη suggests that this opening of the mouth is miraculous. Rather than the speaker opening his mouth to speak, his mouth is opened and his tongue is loosed. This would imply that the speaker needed to have his mouth opened, most probably either because the speaker was unable to speak or not confident enough to do it.

God is most probably the one opening the mouth, and he is also the object for the subsequent eulogy. Hence, whoever the person whose mouth is opened and whose tongue loosened is and whatever reason stands behind it, the one performing this action is none other than God. Therefore, the event in this account is a miraculous one in the sense that it involves direct Divine intervention. The one whose mouth is opened is also the subject of the ἐλάλει εὐλογῶν τὸν θεόν, a eulogy with a content not further elaborated in the text; therefore, there are no further clues for the identity of the one giving the praise. Certainly, the αὐτοῦ could have its referent either in the preceding τῷ πατρὶ of verse 62, and hence, may refer to Zachariah, the father of the child. A second possibility is that τῷ πατρὶ could refer to the αὐτοῦ of the closer expression in verse 63, or Zachariah's son, Ἰωάννης. There does not seem to be any immediate reason for preferring one referent above the other. Both a speech-deprived adult and a babe at his name giving could be a possible candidate for a miraculous speech. Certainly neither could be excluded on grammatical grounds. The referent of αὐτοῦ is hence not determinable on face value since both John and Zachariah would match the criteria of being unable to speak. Yet, equally true is the statement that none of the candidates is excluded by the description. But even though the referent of the αὐτοῦ in verse 64 could not grammatically be limited to Zachariah, one cannot necessarily infer that the babe is the one delivering the eulogy. For our purposes, however, it is enough to determine that our further investigation is not halted by grammatical impossibilities. The quest for the referent and thus the speaker must hence proceed to the immediate context of the narrative.

## 2. The Reaction of the Onlookers within the Immediate Context

The reaction of the witnesses to the event is certainly striking and worth noting for several important reasons. In the immediate context of the event, they are said to be astonished with what has happened:

<sup>65</sup>καὶ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πάντας φόβος τοὺς περιοικοῦντας αὐτοῦς, καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ὀρεινῇ τῆς Ἰουδαίας διελαλεῖτο πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, <sup>66</sup>καὶ ἔθεντο πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν, λέγοντες, Τί ἄρα τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο ἔσται; καὶ γὰρ χεῖρ κυρίου ἦν μετ’ αὐτοῦ.

In verse 65, we see that fear (φόβος) comes over all people present who witnessed the events. Fear occurs at least 20 times in Luke, more than in any other Gospel, and is often a reaction to something extraordinary happening.<sup>2</sup> Most often, the object of fear is God, God's power or approaching judgment. In some cases Luke stresses what the object of fear should not be, namely men or the peaceful presence of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it is not altogether implausible that a miraculous event immediately triggered the fear. To hear Zachariah, the high priest of God, speak and praise God – despite the fact that he had lost his speech – would not seem to be such a miraculous event to generate emotions of fear among those standing nearby. Indeed, for all they knew, Zachariah suddenly stopped speaking for unclear reasons, and his speaking again simply does not adequately explain the fear falling upon those present. Neither would the people present conclude from such an event that a miracle had occurred. However, for the babe to speak would

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<sup>2</sup> See Luke 1:12, 15, 30, 50, 65, 74; 2:9–10; 4:36; 5:10, 26; 7:16; 8:37, 50; 12:5, 7; 18:2, 4; 19:21; 20:19; 21:26; 22:2; 23:4; 24:36.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in Luke 8:50 Jesus encourages Jairus not to fear because of what has happened to his daughter. In 12:5 on the other hand, the particular emphasis is on whom people should fear, namely ὑποδείξω δὲ ὑμῖν τίνα φοβήθητε· φοβήθητε τὸν μετὰ τὸ ἀποκτεῖναι ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν. ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, τοῦτον φοβήθητε. The fear of God seems most often to be associated with God's power. When the object seems to be to stress the *potency* of God's force or its *approaching* manifestation, fear seems to be encouraged (12:32; 21:26). When the selfsame power is *manifested* or could be identified as such, fear seems to be the immediate reaction (1:12–13; 1:30; 2:9–10). The miraculous seems to be associated with divine power and sparks fear (4:36; 5:26; 7:16). This was not a new concept with Luke: See the use of  $\alpha\tau\gamma$  in Ex. 14:31; Is. 25:3; Jer. 5:22,24; 10:6–12; and the use of  $\tau\eta\sigma$  to mark terror in face of God's judgements in 1QS 10:34; 4:2, 94. It is worth noting that in Josephus Antiquities 1:113–114, Nimrod is described as aspiring to bring people from the fear of God by denegrating the power of God and creating greater dependence upon himself.

obviously be an extraordinary miraculous sign. A child born to aging parents who under strange circumstances receives a name uncommon to the family does appear to be an odd event, but would not in of itself motivate fear as a talking babe would. The eulogy if attributed to the babe, on the other hand, would be precisely such a strange event for which those present could clearly identify the Divine at work. Such an event would be unexpected and extraordinary and, hence, would need no further evidence of being a strange occurrence than the immediate gut reaction.

The expression τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα has in its function an explanatory force. Something is broadcasted around Judea. However, whether τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα refers to the eulogy itself and/or the miraculous event is not grammatically certain. If it were the eulogy, then the broadcast would be motivated somehow by the content of the speech. In that case, the speech would have had to be of such an interest to be worth notice and spread. The argument that τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα refers to the fact that Zachariah's speech was restored seems weak because why would a subsequent rumour arise about a priest praising God? After all, if we assume that a miraculous event triggered the rumour, a priest who actually worships God does not seem to constitute such a miraculous event. However, a third possibility may better explain the subsequent events.

### 2.1 ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πάντας φόβος

In the proximate context following the opening of the mouth and the eulogy, several things should be noticed: first, the onlookers' reactions and, second, Zachariah's reaction.

<sup>65</sup>καὶ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πάντας φόβος τοὺς περιοικοῦντας αὐτοῦς, καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ὀρεινῇ τῆς Ἰουδαίας διελαλεῖτο πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, <sup>66</sup>καὶ ἔθεντο πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν, λέγοντες, Τί ἄρα τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο ἔσται; καὶ γὰρ χεὶρ κυρίου ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ. <sup>67</sup>Καὶ Ζαχαρίας ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἐπροφήτευσεν λέγων, <sup>68</sup>Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ

First, the narrative relates that ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πάντας φόβος, which would be a natural reaction to any miraculous or unpredictable event. If we assume the narrative has a basic coherency, the event immediately preceding such a reaction must have been powerful enough to spark the reaction. However, a priest's sudden praise does not appear

to be something that would trigger fear or even astonishment among onlookers. Indeed, for all they knew, Zachariah had been able to speak before – now he speaks again. Even assuming that something out of the ordinary had happened, neither such an event nor the choice of John as a name would seem to be powerful enough to explain a fearful reaction among the onlookers.

Indeed the word φόβος, which is translated as the fearful reaction of the eye-witnesses, is not an altogether infrequent term in Luke. On the contrary, the term distinguishes the Lukan accounts in many ways, not only because of its frequency with about 20 occurrences, but also because of the context in which it occurs. With the possible exceptions of 1:74 and 8:50, φόβος seems almost exclusively to be how Luke describes natural reactions to the miraculous.<sup>4</sup> People react with fear, although they sometimes are urged not to fear or to redirect their fears. In Luke 7:16 φόβος is triggered among those who witnessed Jesus resurrecting the young man, and interestingly enough, is followed by the conclusion that a great prophet has arisen among the people. This incident illustrates that the miraculous fear-triggering event also could serve as a mark of identity once it became evident in whom the power of God resided. Even considering the first chapter alone, one can find almost a third of the occurrences of φόβος in Luke.

Upon closer look, the interplay between both Zachariah's and Mary's fearful reactions to a heavenly manifestation and the heavenly being's subsequent calming of them (1:13 and 1:30) reflects precisely the general use of fear in Luke. Hence, the mere use of the term in the context of the infancy narrative of John seems indeed to support that something undeniably miraculous took place. Since a priestly eulogy, even if preceded by an unexplainable silence, would not constitute an undeniable miracle, a better grammatical alternative to fit this forceful response would be a talking babe. Indeed a newborn opening his mouth in praise of the Divine would be clearly a more recognizable and undeniable miraculous event, better suited to explain the initial fearful reactions of those present. This does of course not negate that Zachariah's healing would not be miraculous. Here we are only dealing with what the onlookers could identify as such and what actually would trigger their reactions.

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<sup>4</sup> Miraculous here applies to any type of manifestation of Divine power, whether the manifestation of angels, healings, exorcisms, divine intervention, or natural miracles. For more examples, see note 5.



However, in this case, no heavenly body calms the witnesses' fears, unlike in the other accounts of the miraculous in the same chapter.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that every fearful reaction to any divine intervention would require calming.<sup>6</sup> Rather, calm reassurance seems to be a question of whether or not the fear is motivated. In Luke 7:16 the reaction to a miracle seems to be that ἔλαβεν δὲ φόβος πάντας καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες ὅτι προφήτης μέγας ἠγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. The fear is not redirected or calmed within the narrative of this fearful response to the miraculous perhaps because the fearful reaction is indeed motivated and desirable, at least in the narrator's mind. Calming seems to be expected only when the reaction is not primarily intended. The reaction in Luke 1:65–66 parallels the one in Luke 7:16 in the sense that the fear leads to the intended conclusion that a prophet has arisen and God is visiting the people. Similarly, in the first chapter, the same reaction may be intended and, therefore, divine calming is not necessary. Rather, attention is given to the infant John and a conclusion is drawn regarding his future authority.

To recapitulate, the most plausible explanation for the magnitude of the witnesses' fearful reaction is that the newborn baby John, and not Zachariah, was the one praising God, which would constitute the identifiable miracle.

## 2.2 τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα

One more thing is worth noting: the subsequent spreading of the word. The τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα could possibly refer to what happened (the miraculous event in its entirety) or specifically to the content of the eulogy. Although we do not know the content of the eulogy, it does not seem that a priestly eulogy would receive such an extensive popular referral or notoriety as this notice seems to indicate, nor would the singular event of Zachariah's having his speech restored after losing it for a short time. On the other hand, the reaction would be completely in

<sup>5</sup> The angelic being quickly calms Zachariah's and Mary's fears, triggered by the miraculous apparitions of 1:13 and 1:30. The pattern is repeated in 2:10, whereas in 5:10, Jesus calms Simon after the fishing miracle.

<sup>6</sup> Reactions of fear in light of the miraculous that are not followed by a calming are also found in 4:36, 5:26 and 8:37. In contrast to 24:36., in which Jesus appears to his disciples and calms them, these passages leave witnesses entangled by fear. In 4:36 and 7:16, the onlookers draw conclusions about the authority of Jesus.

line with what would be expected if indeed the story retold the miraculous event of a eulogising infant. Both the event and its contents would be the subject for fear, astonishment, and intensive rumours.

Something else that should be taken into account is that the words spoken, the event, or both left a lasting impact upon those present, which is indicated by ἔθεντο πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν. Even if the heart frequently appears in the language of the Gospel literature, only this passage in Luke uses the more precise expression of ‘keeping in the heart’. Moreover, this expression occurs only in a few places in Luke, namely 1:66, 2:19 and 2:51. Could these other passages give us a hint about how to interpret 1:66? The immediate difference between the expressions in chapter two and in 1:66 is that, in the former, Mary is the one keeping the words in her heart, and Jesus is directly or immediately the source of the comments of the words kept. The context of 2:51 is the child Jesus and his speech in the temple, and 2:19 is the account of the testimony concerning the child.

Indeed, as described in the discussions above, both the words *of or about* baby John are plausible interpretations of τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, although the former is preferred. Even if the events in Jesus’s childhood perhaps were not miraculous, this account of the infant John can be interpreted as a miraculous narration for two reasons. First, although we can see that the account of Jesus in 2:19 and Simeon’s statements share some similarities with John in 1:65 and Zachariah’s speech (both infants receive a weighty testimony from well-known characters), Zachariah’s predictions are about God and not the child John. In other words, Simeon says something about the future of the child (Jesus), but Zachariah praises God without mentioning the child (John). Therefore, to say that those present understood Zachariah’s eulogy to concern John’s future would need to be explained by its proponents. If indeed the onlookers’ reaction happened with regard to Zachariah speaking rather than to what happens with his son, and furthermore, if what Zachariah eulogizes in 1:68–79 does not concern John, why would the onlookers’ statements refer to the child rather than the father? Such an explanation has not been given in any commentary up to date. But as will be argued in the following, the reason for why the onlookers conclude something about the future greatness of the child is most easily explained by that it is the babe that is the object of the miracle in 1:64.

### 2.3 Τί ἄρα τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο ἔσται

The statement of the onlookers τί ἄρα τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο ἔσται; καὶ γὰρ χεὶρ κυρίου ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ is perhaps the firmest testimony about what happens at the story level. The words are those of the people present whose attention is directed not towards Zachariah – which would be expected if he were the main object of the miracle or the one performing it – but rather towards the infant. Both the τί ἄρα τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο ἔσται, which points to the child as the object of astonishment, and the conclusion of χεὶρ κυρίου ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ, namely that God's hand was with this child, do not seem to give the required attention to Zachariah that interpretive tradition requires. The onlookers do not respond to anything that has happened to Zachariah or by Zachariah, nor do they seem to conclude from the father's eulogy that God's hand was with the child and that something special would come from him rather than the father.

The most plausible explanation seems to be that the public responded to something extraordinary that happened involving the child, and I suggest this response was the so-called natural reaction to a eulogy from the child and not the father. Such an interpretation would explain why the public reacted as they did, why they kept these words in their hearts, why the words were subsequently spread, and why they concluded that God's hand indeed was with this child and that something astonishing would come from him. The traditional explanation – Zachariah, as a eulogising priest and the immediate source of the public reaction – does not seem to account for all these aspects and simply fails to explain why the child receives attention in immediate conjunction to verse 64 and why conclusions are drawn about him. In addition, the traditional view of verse 64 makes it puzzling to explain why the public would keep a priestly eulogy in their hearts and spread such a rumour across the land because a priest would rather be assumed to offer praises to God. The conclusions therefore follows, that the object of the miracle in verse 64 was John and not his father Zachariah. Does such a conclusion negate the traditional belief in that Zachariah had his speech restored at the event of naming of John the Baptist? In the following lines it will be argued that verse 67 is the proper loci encapsulating the restoration of Zachariah's speech.

### 3. When was Zachariah's Speech Restored?

Certainly, an element of the story seems already to establish John's importance – the age of his parents at his birth. This element has connotations with other special children who were born late in their parents' lives, such as Isaac and Samson. However, this notion should not be overplayed because the characters in the story give no attention to these parallels, and moreover, to see John as another Isaac or Samson would require viewing Zachariah as another Abraham, something that is not indicated in the story or in his being punished for lack of belief in 1.20. However, if verse 64 is attributed to the infant John, would it challenge the traditional notion that Zachariah received back his speech and is the originator of the benedictions of vv. 68–79? By no means. In the preamble to this article, we posed the question when Zachariah's speech was restored. The answer seems to be found in verses 67 and 68 which state:

<sup>67</sup>Καὶ Ζαχαρίας ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἐπροφήτευσεν λέγων, <sup>68</sup>Εὐλόγητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ.

Hence, in this instance, it can be said that Zachariah is certainly the speaker. Worth noting is the expression that he became ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου. The divine touch upon Zachariah in verse 67 is actually the moment when his speech is miraculously restored, rather than in the earlier instance (1:64). There is no reason to propose that Zachariah would have his speech miraculously restored twice or be 'filled with' ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου a second time after the miracle of having his tongue already loosed. Here it seems the traditional account of the miraculous unbinding of Zachariah's tongue is vindicated, and forcing it earlier in the narrative (1:64) is therefore unnecessary.

The context of Zachariah's praise is also interesting. He prophesies about God having visited and redeemed his people and raised a horn of salvation (v.69), and he prophesies directly about the child John (v.76). However, this statement follows only *after* the sequence in the narrative in which the onlookers have drawn their conclusions, and it would be anachronistic to conclude that Zachariah's prophecy

is the source for the witnesses' earlier reaction to the child's future importance.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Early Jewish Traditions about Speaking Baby Prophets

The notion of speaking infants is not unprecedented in Jewish tradition.<sup>8</sup> When the Gospel of Luke was written, several such traditions were in existence. Luke does not need to be influenced by such traditions and we do not here argue any literary dependency on the parallel

<sup>7</sup> A challenge to this conclusion would be proof that Zachariah's prophecy actually preceded the onlookers' reaction. This proof would mean that this section should follow v. 64, or conversely that verses 65 and 66 should sequentially follow Zachariah's prophecy, which should not be excluded, but would nevertheless require firm argumentation. Such a move also would require that verse 80 sequentially remain in its current position.

<sup>8</sup> In the following, references are made to *1 Enoch*, *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* and to the *Exaltation of Melchizedek*. The latter is usually believed to be a part of the longer ending of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*, and therefore, both are either attributed to a Jewish author from first-century Alexandria or are considered latter works from the third century. The two incomplete manuscripts from the 13th century have been the subject of intense debates. However, this article's working premise is that both accounts reflect earlier traditions, whether they are considered conjointly or not. More detailed discussions may be found in J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (London: SCM, 1981). For a review of some major questions regarding *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*, refer especially to pp. 316–317 in J. H. Charlesworth, 'The SNTS Pseudepigrapha Seminars at Tübingen and Paris on the Books of Enoch', *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979): 315–323. For a general introduction to the relationship between Enochic and Lukan material, see S. Aalen, 'St. Luke's Gospel and the last chapters of *1 Enoch*', *NTS* 13 (1966): 1–15. For practical reasons, the account from the *Exaltation of Melchizedek* is referred to here as a separate account. However, the dating of this work is immediately connected to discussions about whether it is part of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*. The first critical edition of *2 Enoch* argued against this proposition; see A. Vaillant, *Le Livre des Secrets d'Enoch, Texte Slave et Traduction Française* (Paris: 1952), 5. For more recent debates concerning *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* 71.1–73.9, see A. A. Orlov, 'Melchizedek legend of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 51 (2000): 25–38; 'On the polemical nature of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*: A reply to C. Böttrich', *JSJ* 34 (2003): 274–304 and C. Böttrich, 'The Melchizedek story of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*: A reaction to A. Orlov', *JSJ* 32 (2002): 445–470. Böttrich convincingly argued for the longer ending of *2 Enoch* as more archaic, especially regarding observations about continued centralized sacrificial practices and in particular the 'cult-foundation festival' of *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* 68:5–69:11. See C. Böttrich, 'Melchizedek story, 447–449, 451; *Weltweisheit – Menschheitsethik – Urkult, Studien zum slavischen Henochbuch, WUNT 2/50* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 781; *Das slavische Henochbuch* (Gutersloh: Gutersloher Verlagshaus, 1995). The force of Böttrich's argument is that *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* not only precedes 70 AD, but also is highly unlikely to be a latter Christian fabrication. The fear that the birth of Melchizedek would disturbingly parallel the Jesus accounts lacks substance. For further investigation, consult the most recently published synopsis of existing textual evidences for *2 Enoch* by G. Macaskill, *The Slavonic Texts of 2 Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

accounts. Rather, their existence merely proves that the interpretation proposed in this paper is in line with what already was culturally tangible. Although the existence of these stories is not a definitive proof that John's birth narrative should be read in similar terms, it does place the burden of proof on those critics who would suggest that talking infants are an absurd suggestion of a miracle and an unlikely interpretation of the events.

Indeed, there are several early Christian accounts of the miracles and deeds of Jesus as a child, such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas.<sup>9</sup> Many of these and other traditions were later edited into the Quran. However, these miraculous events are mainly ascribed to Jesus, and to my knowledge there is only one parallel account of a miraculous cradle speech of John the Baptist.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.1 Noah's Birth

There are, however, Jewish precedents even before these narratives. The first one is the account of Noah's birth in 1 Enoch, which most scholars believe to be a first-century composition. This post-exilic apocrypha records that Methuselah took a wife to his son Lamech.

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the various infancy narratives, see J. K. Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); S. Davies and A. E. Sicienski, *The Infancy Gospels of Jesus: Apocryphal Tales from the Childhoods of Mary and Jesus – Annotated & Explained* (Woodstock: SkyLight Paths, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> In *The Arabic Infancy Gospel*, 1, Jesus announces his divinity from the cradle: 'Jesus spoke, and, indeed, when He was lying in His cradle said to Mary His Mother: I am Jesus, the Son of God, the Logos, whom thou hast brought forth, as the Angel Gabriel announced to thee; and my Father has sent me for the salvation of the world'. The tradition of a speaking baby Jesus is recycled in the Qu'ran, first in Sura 3.46, which referring to Issa (Islamic Jesus) says that 'He shall preach to men in his cradle and in the prime of manhood, and shall lead a righteous life'. The content of this cradle speech is also recorded in Sura 19.28–34 in which the spoken message almost seems deliberately to be the opposite of the one in *The Arabic Infancy Gospel*: 'O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a wicked man nor was thy mother a harlot'. Then she pointed to him. They said: 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' He said: 'I am indeed a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and has made me a prophet. And has made me blessed wheresoever I may be and has enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive. And (has made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest. Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!' Such was Jesus, son of Mary: (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. A similar parallel is found in *The Arabic Infancy Narrative*, 36 and Suras 3.49 and 5.110 concerning giving life to clay birds. Both texts appear rather late in history, the earlier *Arabic Infancy Gospel* is dated somewhere between the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., if it is taken to build upon a Syriac archetype; see J. K. Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 100–107.

Noah, the son born of this union, is described in 106:2b–3 to be both strange in appearance and conduct:<sup>11</sup>

And his body was white as snow and red as a rose; the hair of his head as white as wool and his *demdema* beautiful; and as for his eyes when he opened them the whole house glowed like the sun – (rather) the whole house glowed even more exceedingly. And when he arose from the hands of the midwife, he opened his mouth and spoke to the Lord with righteousness.<sup>12</sup>

Although nothing in the account of the birth of John the Baptist suggests that he had a striking appearance, this tradition illustrates that at least to some contemporary minds, talking newborns were not an unprecedented phenomena and were a theme used to underline the importance of the hero character.<sup>15</sup> In conjunction with this tradition, several things should be noted in the story of the speaking baby Noah: 1) his father’s reaction, 2) the content of Noah’s miraculous speech and 3) how Enoch interprets this sign.

First, Lamech’s immediate reaction when his luminous son ‘spoke to the Lord’ is the one of fright and flight (1 Enoch 106:4). He retells what has happened to his father Methuselah, who in turn is petitioned to learn the truth of this matter from Enoch. In Methuselah’s report to Enoch the luminous appearance of baby Noah is emphasised, and to this is once again added that he ‘rose up in the hands of the midwife, he opened his mouth and blessed the Lord of heaven’ (106:11). In the story, Lamech fears that Noah is a descendant of the fallen angels:

<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from the Enochic literature are found in F. I. Andersen ‘2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,’ *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985), i.91–221. For issues surrounding dating, consult pp. 6–7 in the same.

<sup>12</sup> Some variant translations read ‘to the Lord of righteousness’ and others, ‘he blessed the Lord’. For additional references, consult Andersen, ‘2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,’ 1.139.

<sup>15</sup> The importance of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Luke is underscored in several ways. That John is in no way a lesser prophet than any other in Israel’s history is perhaps most clear in Luke 7:28, which declares John the Baptist the greatest of the prophets born amongst women. See B. Viviano, ‘The least in the kingdom: Matthew 11:11; Its parallel in Luke 7:28 (Q), and Daniel 4:14’, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, 1 (2000): 41–54.

Then his father Lamech became afraid and fled, and he did not believe that he (the child) was of him but of the image of the angels of heaven. And behold, I have come to you in order that you may make me know the real truth (106:12a).

Enoch reaffirms both that Noah is Lamech's son and the tradition of fallen angels' giving birth to physical giants whose evils merit the subsequent destruction of the earth. The one who will be saved together with his three sons is Noah:

There shall be a great destruction upon the earth; and there shall be a deluge and a great destruction for one year. And this son who has been born unto you shall be left upon the earth; and his three sons shall be saved when they who are upon the earth are dead.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the obvious parallels between these Enochic traditions and John the Baptist, such as foreseeing an approaching punishment, the most striking similarities of these birth stories are a) the miraculous speech of the child, b) in the form of a eulogy towards God, c) which triggers a fearful reaction, and d) concludes with a prediction about the child's eschatological importance.

#### 4.2 *Melchizedek's Birth*

The second tradition is found in the so-called *Exaltation of Melchizedek* from the first century BC.<sup>15</sup> In this document, the fabulous account of the birth of Melchizedek supposedly precedes the deluge by 40 years.<sup>16</sup> Nir is Noah's brother and the husband of the aged Sopanim. Not unlike Elizabeth in the Lukan account, Sopanim is of a mature age and barren when she becomes pregnant. Another similarity with the Lukan narratives is the appearance of the archangel Gabriel in this account.<sup>17</sup> Sopanim also resembles Elizabeth in that she keeps herself away from the public during her pregnancy (2 Enoch 71:3), and Nir resembles Zachariah in that he has a priestly role because 'the Lord had

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Enoch 106.15–16.

<sup>15</sup> The *Exaltation of Melchizedek* belongs to the longer recension of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch and consists of 71.1–73.9. See note 8 for additional details.

<sup>16</sup> F. I. Andersen, '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch', *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985 (1985)), 1.91–97.

<sup>17</sup> Some believe this to be a later addition. See *ibid.*, 1.206.



appointed him to conduct the liturgy in front of the face of the people' (2 Enoch 71:2b).

Striking dissimilarities in the accounts can also be noted. Enoch emphasises that Nir had no relations with his wife during his priestly service and had no part in Melchizedek's miraculous conception (2 Enoch 71:2a). Also, Sopanim gives birth to the child Melchizedek only after her death (2 Enoch 71:9,17). While Noah and Nir supposedly are planning to bury her corpse in haste out of cognisance of the people, the account relates:

And a child came out from the dead Sopanim, and they saw the child sitting beside the dead Sopanim, and wiping his clothing. And Noe and Nir were very terrified with a great fear, because the child was fully developed physically, like a three-year-old. And he spoke with his lips, and he blessed the Lord.<sup>18</sup>

Like Noah, the newborn Melchizedek in this account opens his mouth for speech in the form of a eulogy towards God. As in the accounts of Noah and John the Baptist, the child's speech triggers immediate fear among those present, Nir and Noah. Nir inquires with the Lord about the child, and becomes aware of the child's priestly dignity and future salvation from the deluge (2 Enoch 71:26–29). Similar to the Lukan account, the story proceeds with a eulogy and prophecy from Nir about the child (2 Enoch 71:30–31), and as in the story of Noah's birth, this story includes a warning of impending doom (2 Enoch 71:26; 72:1). However, Melchizedek will be saved from the deluge – not on the ark, but by being transferred by the angel Michael to Eden from which he later will appear to re-establish the priesthood with a second Melchizedek called the great Igumen (2 Enoch 72:5–11). Therefore, all three accounts show similar patterns of speaking prophetic infants imbued with future historical importance.

To recapitulate, at the time the Lukan account was written, several traditions existed that attached miraculous 'from-the-crib-eulogies' to characters famous in the people's traditions. Whatever else the function of these narratives may have been, they seem at least partly to have emphasised the importance of the characters (eulogising infants) as chosen by God in a time of apostasy. The birth accounts of Samson,

<sup>18</sup> 2 (Slavonic) Enoch 71:17–18.

Moses, Samuel, and Jesus also illustrate the importance of grounding a particular character's chosen-ness and significance from infancy. In the light of such traditions, accounts of talking babies seem to further emphasise the importance and role of the chosen character. In these three examples, several themes recur: a) the miraculous event surrounding the birth of a prophet, b) the speech of the prophetic child, c) the reactions of fear and astonishment, and d) the child's impending importance in an upcoming cataclysmic event. These recurring themes add plausibility to the earlier exegetical remarks upon the Lukan account's narrative of the miracle in 1.64. Therefore, the narrative about John the Baptist seems to illustrate the wide held belief of the importance and chosen-ness that this character enjoyed when the Gospel of Luke was composed and a possible reason for the respect he enjoyed during his ministry. Indeed, Jesus's remarks that John the Baptist is the greatest among the prophets and among those born by women (Luke 7.28) would not necessitate such an account but make it plausible in light of some of the traditions surrounding the miraculous birth of earlier prophets.

## 5. Some Final Remarks

What has hindered this interpretation from being advanced earlier? For one, studies of New Testament exegesis for much of the early modern period have sought to reconcile accounts of the miraculous in the Gospels to a post-enlightenment paradigm in which miracles are no longer taken for granted. Whether any historical examination of miracles is refuted or whether the miraculous is reinterpreted or denied altogether, these miraculous accounts are subject to intense debate. In such a climate, commentators on either side of the argument may not be eager to see more battlefields emerge from the texts. However, this article points out good reasons to accept that the birth of John – which already is described as the result of divine intervention – just may have an additional layer of the miraculous.

Discovery of such an additional miraculous element has some further implications. First, it emphasises the place and role of the miraculous in the Gospel of Luke. If anything, the narratives are more flavoured with this element than previously estimated. This stresses the need to discuss the gap between modern readers and ancient writers from the standpoint of what is incongruous in their world-views. In

other words, in a closed and self-explanatory thought-world following modern assumptions of the noninterference of any extra natural force, the miraculous event is not seen to be possible and therefore is also overlooked in the claims of ancient texts. The latter, on the other hand, are often open to divine intervention. In the view of the ancient penmen, such interventions are not infrequently seen as a guarantee for the content of the message they tried to establish. Bridging this gap is necessary to come closer to the motives and beliefs of the ancient penmen. Second, the birth narrative of John the Baptist seems to underline his important role in early Christianity. To speak in infancy was a contemporary way to ascribe and emphasise the election and special role of a prophet in the approaching events of significant magnitude. By using this framework to portray John the Baptist, the writer prompts re-evaluation of John's importance and the possible traditions behind his contemporary popularity and following. In the Gospels, Jesus seems to emphasise the important role John the Baptist plays, and the narrators are eager to describe him as a prophet among the people, respected even among governmental authorities. Earlier accounts of chosen prophets are consistent with what is proposed in this article and could partially explain John the Baptist's contemporary popularity. In other words, John established his authority as the unique voice crying in the wilderness by already speaking in his infancy.

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## HUMAN WORDS REACHING UP TO HEAVEN: THE THEME OF PRAYER IN THE DIALOGUE WITH C. S. LEWIS\*

BARBORA ŠMEJDOVÁ

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to investigate the theme of words in prayer. In the dialogue with the work of C. S. Lewis, we ask how it is possible to overcome the limits of our words in order to reach God and reality. At first, we point to several possible ways in which our language is limited. After that we focus on the process of ‘gaining faces’, which is the main concept of Lewis’s novel *Till We Have Faces* but which can be complemented by the reading of his *Great Divorce*. This process is also demonstrated in the story of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. Last but not least, the article shows that the idea of overcoming the limits of words in our prayer cannot be separated from everyday life and that the principle of prayer should thus become the mode of Christian living.

### Key words

Language; Prayer; C. S. Lewis; *Till We Have Faces*; *Great Divorce*; Samaritan woman

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‘[H]uman speech is like a cracked kettle on which we tap crude rhythms for bears to dance to, while we long to make music that will melt the stars’,<sup>1</sup> notes Gustav Flaubert in his famous novel *Madame Bovary*. Although this quotation refers to the language of love, it summarises a wider human experience as we often struggle to express what we want to say, finding out that the words we use do not finally gain a corresponding response or the comprehension of the person we

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (New York: Book of the Month Club, 1992), 216.

communicate with. It seems as if our words are under a strange spell which makes them unable to reach the goal they are designed for. In theology, this experience necessarily enters into a reflection on the theme of prayer as it is, in its narrow sense, a conversation with God. The moment of prayer is a perfect example for testing the possibilities of our words since our communication counterpart cannot be blamed of miscomprehension or an inability to hear. The process of communication between two humans is significantly influenced by these limits; once we speak about God, each limit is on our side and God is prepared to overcome these limits by his grace if it does not go against our freedom, which he fully respects. It is thus the theme of human words in prayer which this article focuses on. Is there any possibility of overcoming the limitations of language or are our words condemned to roll in the mud in spite of our wish to lift them up to heaven? If it is possible to overcome these limits, how can we do it? The aim of this article is to investigate these questions with regard to the work of C. S. Lewis, for whom the ability of words for getting in touch with reality was of primary concern both in theory and in practice.

## 1. Words and their Essential Limitations

What is wrong with our words? Why are they unable to reach higher reality (or very often any reality) and why are they often spoken in vain? These are the questions Lewis had to ask as a literary scholar, Christian apologist, and ordinary believer, who raised his voice in prayer to God.

As a literary scholar he was deeply aware of the meaning shift which words undergo during a longer time period. His detailed handbook *Studies in Words* shows how some of the words which we take for granted today bore a significantly different meaning in the past. Analysing seemingly clear expressions like ‘nature’, ‘free’, ‘simple’, or ‘life’, C. S. Lewis warns his students to pay attention to the fact that they cannot interpret medieval and early modern poems in light of their present understanding of these expressions. His study is, nevertheless, eye-opening not only for those interested in old texts, as he testifies in the introduction to this book:

After hearing one chapter of this book when it was still a lecture, a man remarked to me ‘You have made me afraid to say anything at all’. I know

what he meant. Prolonged thought *about* the words which we ordinarily use to think *with* can produce a momentary aphasia. I think it is to be welcomed. It is well we should become aware of what we are doing when we speak, of the ancient, fragile, and (well used) immensely potent instruments that words are.<sup>2</sup>

Simply speaking, the detailed study of words leads to humility; it makes one aware of the boundaries which words impose and of the difficulty to overcome these limits at least partly.

As an apologist, C. S. Lewis pays attention to the fact that the words he uses to describe his religious experience do not have to mean the same for his readers and listeners. The above described difficulty speakers have to face is thus not relevant only for reading old texts, but it needs to be taken into account also when both communication partners are native speakers of the same language in the same time and place. In his apologetics, C. S. Lewis struggles to translate the ideas from his English to the English of common, uneducated people and unbelievers. Lewis describes this problem in his essay ‘Christian Apologetics’, where he also offers a short list of words inherent to religious vocabulary and adds a short explanation of how they are understood by common people:

ATONEMENT. Does not really exist in a spoken modern English, though it would be recognized as ‘a religious word’. In so far as it conveys any meaning to the uneducated I think it means *compensation*. No one word will express to them what Christians mean by *Atonement*: you must paraphrase.

BEING. (noun) Never means merely ‘entity’ in popular speech. Often means what we should call a ‘personal being’ (e.g., a man said to me ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost but I don’t think He is a being’).

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CHARITY. Means (a) alms (b) a ‘charitable organization’ (c) much more rarely – indulgence (i.e., a ‘charitable’ attitude towards a man is conceived as one that denies or condones his sins, not as one that loves the sinner in spite of them).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: University Press, 2013), 6.

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Undeceptions: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971), 71.

According to Lewis's own experience, it is vital to adopt the attitude of kenosis towards unbelievers, less educated people, or towards children since it is the only way how to communicate the desired content. In his apologetics, Lewis does not presuppose that his readers should be familiar with religious language in order to be able to reach God. He chooses to be a translator who presents the Christian message in the language which is approachable and, not less importantly, enjoyable for most people.

Finally, Lewis struggles with the limitations given by words also in his own personal life of prayer, which undoubtedly is reflected in his own literary style. In this regard, he is aware of two kinds of danger: the human tendency to neglect the critical attitude towards the words of daily use and the tendency to hide concrete meaning by abstract words.

As concerns the first danger, Lewis acknowledges the traditional, unchallenged view that our speaking about God is always metaphorical, which means that God does not match our anthropocentric categories, and everything that we say about him is rather dissimilar than similar to who God is in reality. In addition to this, Lewis emphasises the fact that such limitations of human language are not only related to our speaking about God, but they concern human language as a whole. In other words, all human language is metaphorical, and the idea that we are able to speak literarily is an illusion, which makes our communication only more complicated.<sup>4</sup> The lack of critical approach towards our own words in everyday experience can lead also to an uncritical approach in prayer and spiritual life. It is thus the advantage of each believer to realise that metaphoricity is contained in the simplest words, including, for instance, also the pronoun 'my'. This example is used in *The Screwtape Letters*, where the demon provides his diabolical advice:

We teach them not to notice the different senses of the possessive pronoun – the finely graded differences that run from 'my boots' through 'my dog', 'my servant', 'my wife', 'my father', 'my master' and 'my country', to 'my God'. They can be taught to reduce all these senses to that of 'my boots', the 'my' of ownership. Even in the nursery a child can be taught to mean by 'my Teddy-bear' not the old imagined recipient of affection to whom it

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<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Selected literary essays* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 251–265. It is worth mentioning that such an attitude is largely reflected by cognitive linguistics. See, for example, Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2006).



stands in a special relation (for that is what the Enemy will teach them to mean if we are not careful) but ‘the bear I can pull to pieces if I like’. And at the other end of the scale, we have taught men to say ‘My God’ in a sense not really very different from ‘My boots’, meaning ‘The God on whom I have a claim for my distinguished services and whom I exploit from the pulpit – the God I have done a corner in’.<sup>5</sup>

As Lewis demonstrates, the word ‘my’ is used for the description of various kinds of relations between a person and another person or a thing. The original (let us say non-metaphorical) meaning of ‘my’ determines something (or somebody) entirely belonging to me and being at my disposal. It is appropriate to thing like that about the articles of daily use, for instance. Even the expression ‘my toy’ has a different meaning as children learn to treat toys with more respect than a hat, for example. As it comes to other people or even God, we should pay special attention to the fact that, in these cases, the pronoun ‘my’ is linked with its original meaning only metaphorically. God is not mine in the same sense as a hat or shoes. To be aware of the metaphorical nature of language can thus prevent serious misinterpretations and misconceptions.

The words we use in prayer are the subject of a similar temptation to be taken literally rather than metaphorically. Cognitive linguistics teaches us that words do not carry meanings *per se*, but they are dependent on the way we contextualise them. A dictionary entry cannot be considered a sufficient tool for understanding a word as it is always determined by the context it appears in and presupposes a wider knowledge of the speaker. For instance, the linguist John R. Taylor names the word *bachelor*, which cannot be understood without the background knowledge of the culturally shaped notion of being married. In the same way, the word *cup* can be understood only against the cultural habit of drinking hot liquids.<sup>6</sup> In prayer, we use words, which we contextualise according to our ordinary, human experience. Paradoxically, the same words are intended to aim at God, who escapes all our attempts to fix him in our categories. If, for example, the common pronoun ‘my’ can cause so much trouble, how complicated it is then

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<sup>5</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1959), 109.

<sup>6</sup> John R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 84.

to distinguish between respective meanings of the word ‘love’. Is there any way to escape this trap?

Secondly, Lewis underlines that ‘[h]uman intellect is incurably abstract. Pure mathematics is the type of successful thought. Yet the only realities we experience are concrete – this pain, this pleasure, this dog, this man.’<sup>7</sup> Our prayer can thus become trapped in the abstract very easily, especially if our intellect is used to constructing abstract ideas. However, the mind of the person who stands before God should not operate in the abstract or hypothetical mode: ‘do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own’ (Matt. 6:34). Similarly, the Lord’s Prayer teaches us to say ‘give us this day our daily bread’, that is, that only the concrete present moment is relevant; tomorrow’s events and abstract ideas become the subject of a prayer as soon as they gain their concrete form as man can always remain in God’s transformative presence. In the same line, when Lewis thinks about the prayer as worship or adoration, his imagination is directed towards the most concrete object:

[t]hat cushiony moss, that coldness and sound and dancing light were no doubt very minor blessings compared with ‘the means of grace and the hope of glory.’ But then they were manifest. So far as they were concerned, sight had replaced faith. They were not the hope of glory, they were exposition of the glory itself.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, as we can see, even the simplest words can be misleading. Although our words are as concrete as possible, we can never be sure that they will touch reality as we do not know to what extent our minds are open to reality; how can man stand before God if his view is full of biases? How can we talk with God if we wear a mask which prevents our words from reaching further than to our own self? How can we talk to God and how can we talk meaningfully at all till we have faces?

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<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Undeceptions*, 41.

<sup>8</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Mariner Books, 2012), 88–89.

## 2. Till We Have Faces

In his work, Lewis often draws a distinction between the full, tangible, and vivid reality and the one which is shadowy, misty, and indefinite. The former moves in the logic of grace; the latter refers to the life of sin. Most transparently, it is described in his book *The Great Divorce*. The reality of heaven is depicted as bright, fresh, and colourful with singing birds, blooming flowers, and dancing leaves. In contrast, the hell of this narrative is a vast, ghostly city at dusk with people moving further and further away from their neighbours. In both worlds, the inhabitants of hell experience pain. In hell, it is a pain of depreciated egoists, whose greedy selfishness can never reach satisfaction. When the same characters are confronted with the concreteness of heaven, they experience a different kind of pain: the pain of reality. They are too shadowy, their senses are too weak, and their minds are too shaky so that each contact with anything real causes unbearable suffering. What is more, they are unable to use real objects since reality is too hard and tough for them:

I bent down and tried to pluck a daisy which was growing at my feet. The stalk wouldn't break. I tried to twist it, but it wouldn't twist. I tugged till the sweat stood out on my forehead and I had lost most of the skin off my hands. The little flower was hard, not like wood or even like iron, but like diamond.<sup>9</sup>

The visible reality of Lewis's allegorical narrative is, however, mainly the demonstration of what is happening inside the minds of the characters, which is reflected in the language they use. The language of the inhabitants of heaven is straightforward, meaningful, and resonant. In their speech, there is no fear, no tendency to hide anything, and no hint of false compassion. Contrastingly, the speech of those coming from hell is full of self-pity, selfishness, and self-deception. For example, the Lady living in heaven says to her small, crooked companion: 'What needs could I have ... now that I have all? I am full now, not empty. I am in Love Himself, not lonely. Strong, not weak. You shall be the same. Come and see.'<sup>10</sup> However, the ghost of a man called the Tragedian

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<sup>9</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (London: Collins, 2012), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 126.

responds to this invitation in these words: ‘She needs me no more – no more. ... [W]ould to God I had seen her lying dead at my feet before I heard those words. Lying dead at my feet.’<sup>11</sup>

For those living in the grace of God, reality is not only acceptable, but they can live in it, use it, and feel it. Their words are articulate, loud, and clear, but it is not because they would be capable of overcoming the above described limits. Their words become resonant because they stop being the first words which are pronounced. The words which are full of selfishness are absolutely autonomous; they do not accept any limitation, any modification, or shaping. They follow the famous declaration from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: ‘Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.’ In this case, the limitations of words described in the first chapter are fatal. Their inability to be in touch with reality cannot be overcome; the tower of Babel will never be finished.

In contrast, those who decide to take off their masks and veils and let themselves be transformed by God perceive all their words as a response to the eternal Word, which was in the beginning (John 1:1) and which will never pass away (Matt 24:35). Regarding this theme, the Swiss mystic Adrienne von Speyr says:

Every saint runs up against this limit; every disciple and everyone who genuinely prays must meet up with his inability even in those moments when he is not preoccupied with his own concerns, because the word is so strong within him that it graciously, so to say, wipes away his human limitations. The word is so alive that it can carry in itself as living what is dead in the sinner.<sup>12</sup>

Simply speaking, the limits given by our human condition can be overcome only when we move within the space of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Let us, for instance, remember the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman. He says to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water’ (John 4:10). The response of the woman is very simple, following common human logic: ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep’ (John 4:11). Jesus does not tend to be

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<sup>11</sup> Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> Adrienne von Speyr, *Man Before God* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 66.

ted by this logic. There is no tendency to explain to the woman that he is talking in different terms and that what she says actually does not make sense in relation to the idea of water he has in mind. He simply continues: 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst' (John 4:13–14). The woman is still not able to give up her limited perspective: 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water' (John 4:15). Without being aware of it, the woman is actually praying; she asks Jesus for something which transcends her thinking. The way she uses the word *water* is limited, closed, and imprecise. Yet, the Lord accepts these terms; what is more, he slowly leads the woman from her logic to his logic when standing at a simple, material well and asking for ordinary water to drink.

Jesus' answer to this prayer goes, however, in an unexpected direction: 'Go, call your husband and come back' (John 4:16). Instead of asking for the water Jesus promised before and instead of trying to pretend that she is worthy of such a gift as she is a respectable married woman, she answers, 'I have no husband' (John 4:17). The Lord replies, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true' (John 4:17–18). That moment is essential because it shows that Jesus does not speak to a mask or to a veiled face. The woman is standing before him, honest, fragile, and sincere. Her words about water were limited, from the point of view of educated theologians even childlike; yet, the Lord decides to lift them up to the sphere into which no education can lead us. The prayer of 'give me this water so that I won't get thirsty' is heard as Jesus discloses his identity and invites the woman to his companionship by saying, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am he' (John 4:26).

Similarly, in prayer, we should not suppose that our words are just ours. The words should be sacrificed, given, and open to any interpretation which God will like. The answers to our petitions might be unexpected. Prayer is no substitute for a magic wishing apple. The limits of our words can be overcome, but the sphere they reach goes beyond our comprehension and beyond our control. It is a sphere of absolute blindness, which can be endured only thanks to the infused virtues of faith, hope, and love.

The transformation from self-deception towards this kind of spiritual openness is described in Lewis's novel *Till We Have Faces*. Orual, the

heroine of the story, is a strong queen who is used to having everything under her control. The world is organised according to her own wishes. Once someone around her wants to escape her control and selfish love, she has the authority to prevent them from doing so. Orual is able to rule like this all the time, yet with one exception – her beloved sister Psyche, who is sacrificed to the God of the Mountain. Orual is prepared to rescue her or to mourn and pity her. The situation escapes Orual's control once she finds out that Psyche does not need to be rescued, but that she is happily married to the unknown and unseen god. That is why she forces Psyche to go against her husband's prohibition and look at his face in the light of a lamp. Orual hopes to have the opportunity to comfort desperate Psyche and prove that she is the true friend. Nevertheless, after doing so, Psyche loses her happiness, and Orual cannot see her again. Orual cries out to the gods, but they remain silent.<sup>15</sup> Only after having discovered her selfishness, she is able to see the story in its real meaning. Through this painful process, her heart is purified and able to face God directly: 'I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away.'<sup>14</sup> All previous words of her self-defense as well as her accusations of gods were spoken in vain. Once she surrendered to the mystery and stopped fighting for her rights, she became able to listen, her words gained meaning and, finally, she was able to enter a space where words were not necessary any more – a space beyond human words.

### 3. Prayer as a Mode of Living

From the abovementioned ideas, we can infer that prayer cannot be easily limited to a single moment of repeating learned words before going to sleep or before starting our meals. Prayer, if it becomes genuine, enters into all aspects of life; in other words, prayer becomes the mode of living. Openness towards God's will accompanied with the ability to overcome the temptation to have everything under control is not

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<sup>15</sup> More precisely, Orual formulates the accusation of the gods, which forms the first part of the novel. For a summary of this accusation see Doris T. Myers, *Bareface: A Guide to C. S. Lewis's Last Novel* (University of Missouri Press, 2004), 113.

<sup>14</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1956), 308. See also Peter J. Schakel, *Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study of Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 69–86.

only the basic presupposition of good prayer, but it concerns everyday human action.

Our actions should be like our words in prayer. They should be aimed at God even though we do not see their immediate benefits and even though they might be foolish and illogical from the point of view of the world. The word of God is a gift for us; however, this gift is often wasted and often left without any response. In order to be similar to God, we should not be afraid of wasting our words and energy, and struggle every day in spite of the fact that no one can see it, no one might appreciate us, or we receive no response. In the logic of God, the smile without reaction, the gift without gratefulness, and the help without profit are much more worthy than their more visible and graspable counterparts:

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret (Matt 6:2–4).

When we pray, we do not know in which way the Lord transfers our words; in the same way, we should not care what God uses our action for. Only such words and such deeds can touch reality because they are open to be transformed to do so. God is the Word; man is not a word but a response. If our words and deeds were the first, we could become disappointed and discouraged if they did not receive a real response; if we change our perspective and perceive our words and deeds as a response to the word of God, who invites us with the risk of being refused, we can do the same with freedom and happiness. Then we can receive an unexpected blessing, as Lewis formulates in his *Letters to Malcolm*:

I am beginning to feel that we need a preliminary act of submission not only towards possible future afflictions but also towards possible future blessings. I know it sounds fantastic; but think it over. It seems to me that we often, almost sulkily, reject the good that God offers us because at that moment we expected some other good.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 26.

Although we have now elaborated Lewis's views a little beyond the scope of his work, in his essay 'Christianity and Literature' he follows a very similar direction. He focuses his attention to the problem of whether art is the expression of the author's personality or if it should be a mimesis of outer reality. While spontaneity, freedom from rules, and creativity are important values of modern literary criticism, C. S. Lewis highlights that the work of Christian artists should not be the expression of their genuine creativeness, but it should reflect higher beauty and higher reality. The task of Christian authors is not to express themselves but to imitate God. For our discussion, it is important that Lewis supports this argument by his study of the New Testament, which does not talk about literature but deals with the problem of whether the life of a person should be the expression of his or her personality or if it has a different goal.

Referring to the theology of St Paul as well as the Fourth Gospel, Lewis arrives at the following conclusion: "[o]riginality" in the New Testament is quite plainly the prerogative of God alone; even within the triune God it seems to be confined to the Father.<sup>16</sup> He continues in the line of St Augustine's thinking and adds that 'pride does not only go before a fall but is a fall – a fall of the creature's attention from what is better, God, to what is worse, itself'.<sup>17</sup> When he applies this principle to literature, he shows that this attitude leads to greater freedom since Christian authors are not limited by their quest for original expression and for acceptance by critics.

If we apply this principle to Christian life in general, Scripture asks us to give up our struggle to become 'ourselves' as our task is to surrender and imitate Jesus Christ. The dynamics of expression and mimesis is not, however, that simple. At first, Lewis refuses expression in favour of mimesis, but it simultaneously means that we should not imitate anyone other than the Son of God, the Word, according to whom everything was created and who is the principle of the whole universe. Nevertheless, the movement is not complete. Once we turn our perspective outside of ourselves, our perspective is transformed even if it still remains ours. Thus, it can be assumed that we are more 'ourselves' than we were before. The reason is that relationship is a necessary element of human beings, and paradoxically, when we turn ourselves

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<sup>16</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections* (London: HarperCollins, 1980), 8.

<sup>17</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 9.



towards someone else, we do not lose but we gain. Thanks to the grace of God, we can overcome not only the limits of our words in prayer but also the limits of our human existence in general. In this way, we can escape our shadowy and fragile way of being and enter into the realm of the real.

## Conclusion

In this article we have tried to answer the question of whether and how our words are able to participate in a higher reality when we pray. Thanks to our dialogue with the work of C. S. Lewis, we were able to describe the basic restrictions which our language has. As a literary scholar and apologist, he proved to be a skilful translator not only from one language to another but also from his English to the English of his readers and listeners. Nevertheless, being aware of the difficulties connected with language, he approaches his own language with humility and does not regard himself as being always in a superior position. In the face of God's mystery, he finds out that it is not only him who translates, but that he is also in need of having his own words translated, as he expresses through the mouth of his autobiographical character John in *The Pilgrim's Regress*:

And all men are idolators, crying unheard  
To a deaf idol, if Thou take them at their word.  
Take not, oh Lord, our literal sense. Lord, in Thy great,  
Unbroken speech our limping metaphor translate.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that God is willing to work as a translator of our speech was demonstrated in Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman. The same example, however, showed that what God requires is not the exactness of expression and conceptual precision but an open heart without any mask or veil. That is why we should struggle to avoid the temptation to create God in our own image, but we should be open to become the image of God.

This is what C. S. Lewis teaches his readers either explicitly or implicitly. The theme of prayer as reflected through the perspective of

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<sup>18</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1983), 183.

language shows that Lewis's legacy is very profound and up to date. His ideas about language can be discussed in relation to contemporary reflections on language, and his perspective on prayer is able to find its echo in the writings of great Christian mystics. For instance, Adrienne von Speyr underlines that words in prayer 'live from the Son's substance, ... filling them with life above and beyond their earthly capacity and temporality. Their limitations are suspended because each word is freighted with a heavenly content which, from the outset, directs it towards God.'<sup>19</sup> C. S. Lewis's ideas on prayer are directly in line with such view. This example shows that C. S. Lewis can be regarded not only as an English literature scholar, apologist, and populariser of Christianity; he is also an inspiring spiritual author, who is able to present his profound ideas in an approachable and concrete way.

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<sup>19</sup> Adrienne von Speyr, *The World of Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 135.

## BONAVETURA DA BAGNOREGIO – UNA TEOLOGIA AFFETTIVA O SAPIENZIALE?

CTIRAD V. POSPÍŠIL

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### ABSTRACT

#### **Bonaventure of Bagnoregio: an Affective, or Sapiential Theology?**

The author in this study responds to the ambiguity about the concept of the theology of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, specifically the expression that refers to “affective theology”. Based on the source texts, he proves that Bonaventure’s theology is sapiential, not just emotional and devotional. The term “affective” is necessary to understand as a synecdochical expression of the sapiential character of Bonaventure’s theology. In the introduction to the Bonaventure’s Commentary of the Sentences the author discovers a text in which Bonaventure portrays theology as wisdom in the middle of an imaginary cross with axes: intellect – affection, and contemplation – practice. This fact is up-to-date as the International Theological Commission, in one of its latest papers, encourages today’s theologians not to forgo the sapiential dimension of their work.

#### **Key words**

Theology; Anthropology; Spirituality; Scholastic method in theology

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**N**ella letteratura contemporanea dedicata all’interpretazione del pensiero bonaventuriano s’incontra spesso la valutazione, secondo la quale stiamo di fronte ad una teologia “affettiva”. Il problema sta soprattutto nel vero significato della *potenza affettiva* nelle opere del nostro maestro. Chi non è informato, legge l’espressione appena menzionata in modo poco preciso e di conseguenza non prende sufficientemente in considerazione la componente intellettuale della

teologia e della filosofia di Bonaventura. Non pochi poi sottovalutano il messaggio bonaventuriano, considerandolo come espressione di quasi pura devozionalità affettiva. Tutta l'esposizione analitica seguente viene, perciò, motivata dal desiderio di far fronte a questo malinteso poco felice e di chiarire la vera impostazione della teologia bonaventuriana.

Dato che l'affetto bonaventuriano, legato evidentemente ai sentimenti e alla volontà, di solito nella sua ricerca non viene staccato dall'intelletto,<sup>1</sup> si può facilmente intuire che rappresenta una componente movente dell'atto dell'intera mente umana, la quale abbraccia l'immagine psicologica della Trinità nella forma della memoria (il Padre), dell'intelletto (il Figlio) e della volontà in quanto la capacità dell'amare (lo Spirito Santo). Siccome la mente rappresenta la sede della sapienza, l'affetto bonaventuriano non dovrebbe essere preso come una semplice sentimentalità devota, ma piuttosto come la forza movente della sapienza. Nel primo paragrafo di questo studio perciò brevemente ricordiamo il significato della parola *sapientia* nel pensiero del Serafico. Nel secondo punto poi vogliamo analizzare un testo chiave,<sup>2</sup> nel quale Bonaventura spiega la sua concezione della teologia. Nella conclusione mettiamo in luce l'attualità del modo di concepire la teologia secondo Bonaventura.

## 1. La sapienza e la mente umana

Il testo chiave che ci permette di penetrare più a fondo nel significato assai complesso della parola *mens* nell'accezione bonaventuriana si trova nel famoso scritto *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Tutto il terzo capitolo dell'*Itinerarium* è dedicato alla contemplazione di Dio – Trinità mediante la sua immagine, che s'identifica secondo Bonaventura con la *mens*.<sup>5</sup> Il punto di partenza della riflessione consiste nell'affermazione che a Dio, che è lo spirito più perfetto, dobbiamo ascrivere le capacità della memoria, dell'intelletto e della volontà. Questa distinzione delle singole facoltà riflette in un certo senso il mistero della Trinità

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Marianne Schlosser, "Affectio," in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano. Filosofia – Teologia – Spiritualità*, ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padova: Editrici Francescane, 2008), 150–156. Il fatto che in questo dizionario manca la voce *Sapientia*, pare abbastanza strano.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, p. 13; in S. Bonaventurae, *Opera Omnia I–IX*, Studio et cura PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventurae, I–X, Quaracchi – Florentia 1882–1902.

<sup>5</sup> "... ubi ad modum candelabri relucet lux veritatis in facie nostrae mentis, in qua scilicet resplendet imago beatissimae Trinitatis." *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, III, 1; *Opera Omnia V*, 303ab.

immanente, cioè i rapporti tra il Padre, il Figlio e lo Spirito Santo.<sup>4</sup> La natura divina, in quanto puro spirito, può essere denominata pure la *mens* perfetta.<sup>5</sup> Le facoltà della mente umana, cioè la memoria, l'intelletto e la volontà, insieme riflettono il mistero della Santissima Trinità.<sup>6</sup> La mente umana, perciò, in un certo senso corrisponde all'unica natura divina,<sup>7</sup> la sua memoria rimanda alla persona del Padre, il suo intelletto alla persona del Figlio, la sua volontà, infine, alla persona dello Spirito Santo.

<sup>4</sup> “Si igitur Deus perfectus est spiritus, habet memoriam, intelligentiam et voluntatem, habet et Verbum genitum et Amorem spiratum, qui necessario distinguuntur, cum unus ab altero producatur, non essentialiter, non accidentaliter, ergo personaliter.” *Itin.*, III, 5; V, 305ab.

Va ricordato, che l'identificazione dell'immagine di Dio con la *mens* deriva direttamente da Agostino e che la teologia cattolica odierna critica questa posizione, perché implica una certa inclinazione al dualismo. Cf. CTI, *Comunione e servizio: La persona umana creata a immagine di Dio*, documento dal 25 luglio 2004, n. 28, n. 29; reperibile a [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va). Sembra che l'immagine di Dio vada identificata piuttosto con il concetto della persona, che designa sia la relazione dell'essere umano, in primo luogo con Dio, sia la sua unità consistente dello strato spirituale e di quello corporale.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, coll. XI, 4; *Opera Omnia* V, p. 380b; *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, 8; V, 322ab.

<sup>6</sup> “Intra igitur ad te et vide, quoniam mens tua amat ferventissime semetipsam; nec se posset amare, nisi se nosset; nec se nosset, nisi sui meminisset, quia nihil capimus per intelligentiam, quod non sit praesens apud nostram memoriam; et ex hoc advertis, animam tuam triplicem habere potentiam, non oculo carnis, sed oculo rationis.” *Itin.*, III, 1; V, 303b.

Si tratta della cosiddetta teoria, o analogia psicologica trinitaria usata soprattutto da Agostino. Cf. ad esempio L. Karfíková, “Lidská mysl jako model Trojice podle Augustinova spisu *De Trinitate* IX, X a XV”, in *Studie z patristiky a scholastiky*, L. Karfíková (Praha: Oikumene, 1997), 62–108. La teologia trinitaria contemporanea prende una posizione piuttosto critica nei confronti di questa via, perché essa suscita inevitabilmente l'impressione che Dio sia un “supersoggetto” e che il Padre, il Figlio e lo Spirito Santo siano soltanto singole facoltà o funzioni di questa in realtà unica super-persona divina. Non è fuori luogo vedervi un implicito sabellianesimo, tipico della teologia trinitaria occidentale da Agostino in poi. Va notato, però, che il Dottore Serafico usa questa analogia piuttosto nell'ambito antropologico, mentre nella sua teologia trinitaria viene posto l'accento soprattutto sulla teoria delle relazioni ipostatiche, altra teoria di Agostino che oggi riscuote molto successo, e sul primato assoluto della persona del Padre, ispirazione proveniente piuttosto dalla teologia dell'Oriente cristiano. Cf. C. V. Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi tak i na zemi. Náčrt trinitární teologie*, 3. ed. (Praha – Kostelní Vydří: Krystal o.p. – Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2017), 323–363; 386–391.

<sup>7</sup> “San Agustín asume en su teología de la imagen un vocabulario estoico, que revela una concepción jerarquizada del alma en cuyo vértice está la *mens* y crea un lenguaje que acaba siendo aceptado en todo Occidente medieval. De acuerdo con este vocabulario se hace una lectura de Gén 1,26: Dios ha creado a la *mens* a su imagen.” F. C. Blanco, *Imago Dei – Aproximación a la antropología teológica de san Buenaventura* (Murcia: Espigas, 1995), 68.

Il concetto della *mens* assume, quindi, nel pensiero bonaventuriano un significato pluridimensionale, che sorpassa quello della parola “mente” così come si usa correntemente oggi, dove con la parola “mente” si designa piuttosto la capacità razionale della persona umana.<sup>8</sup> La mente che ricorda, conosce e ama è capace pure d’ammirazione e di desiderio, vale a dire degli atti affettivi. Tutti questi elementi fanno parte dell’esperienza spirituale completa, che può essere definita anche come contemplazione intuitiva.<sup>9</sup>

Negli scritti del Dottore Serafico troviamo relativamente spesso la parola *cor*,<sup>10</sup> che funge da sinonimo della parola *mens*. Ne deriva il fatto che la mente rappresenta pure un centro unificante della personalità umana.<sup>11</sup> La teologia fatta da una mente completa deve essere sia intellettuale che affettiva. Gli atti della conoscenza sono portati avanti dal desiderio della volontà, dal desiderio di arrivare più vicino al vedere e gustare quello che viene abbracciato dall’intelletto. Inoltre va notato che la concezione della mente fa della gnoseologia bonaventuriana formalmente un’applicazione del mistero trinitario. Non vale che l’amore fa l’amante più simile all’Amato? Infine va notato che la teologia fatta con tutta la mente potrebbe essere designata anche come una teologia del cuore. Data la complementarità tra l’intelletto e la volontà (affetto), sembra giusto affermare che l’espressione “teologia affettiva” va presa come una sineddoche, nella quale con la parte movente dell’attività della mente si vuole designare la realtà molto complessa della teologia presa come sapienza.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. CH. N. Foshee, “St. Bonaventure and Augustinian Concept of *Mens*,” *Franciscan Studies* 27 (1967): 163–175, qui p. 168; E. Cousins, “Introduction”, in *Bonaventure. The Soul’s Journey into God. The Tree of Life. The Life of Saint Francis*, E. Cousins (New York – Ramsey – Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), 1–57, qui p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Itin.*, VI, 5; V, p. 311b; *Itin.*, II, 5; V, p. 300b; *Itin.*, prol. 4; V, 296ab.

<sup>10</sup> “... nullus potest effici beatus, nisi supra semetipsum ascendat, non ascensu corporali, sed cordiali.” *Itin.*, I, 1; V, 296b.

Lo stesso uso scambievole delle parole *cor* e *mens* incontriamo pure nelle opere di Tommaso d’Aquino. Cf. O. H. Pesch, *Tommaso d’Aquino. Limiti e grandezza della teologia medioevale. Una introduzione* (Brescia: Queriniana, 1994), 127.

<sup>11</sup> La personalità, l’esperienza psichica del proprio io e delle sue facoltà conoscitive, volitive e affettive, non va scambiata per persona. Se la persona significa l’identità che non cambia, la personalità cresce, si edifica o decade, e pertanto non è senza cambiamenti. Le opinioni differenti degli interpreti dimostrano come è difficile cogliere il rapporto esatto tra le categorie della mente e della persona: “*Mens* reclama al espíritu humano en su totalidad o la función más eminente de éste.” F. C. Blanco, *Imago Dei*, 68; cf. E. Cousins, “Introduction,” 21; Secondo G. Iammarrone, “Il posto e la funzione di Gesù Cristo nell’ascesa dell’uomo a Dio,” *Studi Francescani* 85 (1988), p. 286, il concetto di mente s’identifica con l’io umano: “Il soggetto dell’ascesa (pellegrinaggio, transito) è uno e il medesimo, l’anima, ovvero, in termini moderni, l’io umano...”

La sapienza secondo Bonaventura prima di tutto orienta tutte le cose verso la fine ultima, verso Dio. In questo senso poi non è tanto difficile identificare la sapienza con la funzione salvifica della croce che riconduce tutto al Padre.

Sapientia est habitus nobilissimus mentis quo sublevatur anima rationalis ad comprehendendum alta, ad speculandum arcana, ad degustandum suavia, ad complexandum aeterna. Apostolus hoc videtur innuere cum dicit: *Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis quae sit latitudo et longitudo et sublimitas et profundum, scire etiam supereminentem* etc. Si igitur haec est vera definitio sapientiae et lignum crucis est lignum per quod deducimur ad comprehendendum alta, ad speculandum arcana etc., lignum crucis est lignum sapientiae et ideo summe amandum est. Et hoc habetur in Apocalypsi: *Beati qui lavant stolas suas in sanguine Agni, qui habent potestatem in ligno vitae ut sic per portas ingrediantur civitatem.*<sup>12</sup>

Le parole *comprehendere* e *speculandum* indicano la conoscenza, e perciò rappresentano la potenza intellettuale della mente, invece le parole *degustandum* e *complexandum* si delineano con il desiderio della volontà. La sapienza cioè dice sia l'affetto che l'intelletto, come dimostra la seguente citazione: "... et hic habitus dicitur sapientia, quae simul dicit cognitionem et affectum: *Sapientia enim doctrinae est secundum nomen eius*, Ecclesiastici sexto."<sup>15</sup>

Adesso bisogna trovare un testo dove il nostro maestro confermerebbe quello che abbiamo visto finora, più precisamente un testo in cui il Serafico direbbe espressamente che la teologia è fondamentalmente una sapienza, cioè l'attività sia dell'intelletto che della volontà in forma dell'affetto.

## **2. La teologia come sapienza della croce (Sent. I, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13)**

Tale testo si trova in un altro punto cruciale dell'opera bonaventuriana, cioè nell'introduzione a tutto il monumentale *Commento alle Sentenze*. Proprio nella terza questione della parte introduttiva Bonaventura si domanda se la teologia è piuttosto una scienza speculativa oppure pratica.

<sup>12</sup> De S. Andrea *Sermo I Coll.*, ed. J. G. Bougerol, *Sermons De diversis* (Paris: Cerf 1993), n. 34, 5; p. 451; *Op. Om.* IX, pp. 468b-469a. Il testo nelle due edizioni critiche è identico.

<sup>15</sup> *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13b.

La paternità bonaventuriana dell'introduzione a tutto il *Commento alle Sentenze* è un dato sicuro e indiscusso.<sup>14</sup> Siccome la più lunga redazione, edita nell'*Opera Omnia* I,<sup>15</sup> potrebbe rappresentare un emendamento della prima redazione, edita da Delorme,<sup>16</sup> nel corso del nostro lavoro diamo preferenza alla prima versione menzionata. Inoltre va notato che l'introduzione stessa, che precede le questioni introduttive, rappresenta soltanto il contesto prossimo dell'oggetto diretto del nostro interesse il quale è appunto il *respondeo* della terza questione introduttiva, edito esclusivamente nell'*Opera Omnia* I.

Le numerose osservazioni riguardanti l'incarnazione, la croce e il mistero della redenzione fanno capire che questa introduzione è stata scritta, con molta probabilità, dopo la conclusione della stesura del terzo libro,<sup>17</sup> cioè alla fine di tutto il lavoro sul *Commento alle Sentenze* nell'anno 1252.<sup>18</sup> Inoltre, la prima parte dell'introduzione porta i tratti evidenti del sermone universitario, e perciò appare come programma di un teologo che, dopo aver concluso la sua formazione scientifica, sta per diventare maestro all'università.<sup>19</sup>

Nella terza questione il Dottore Serafico cerca di rispondere alla domanda se lo scopo della teologia sia quello teorico (*contemplationis gratia*) oppure quello pratico (*ut boni fiamus*).<sup>20</sup> La risposta offerta da Bonaventura non è proprio di facile interpretazione, perché nel testo incontriamo un'inclinazione a comunicare un senso nascosto tra le righe, che consiste nell'uso implicito del paradigma della cosiddetta croce intelligibile.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. B. Distelbrink, *Bonaventurae scripta: authentica dubbia vel spuri* (Roma: Istituto Storico Cappucini 1975, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13ab.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. S. Bonaventurae, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, ed. F. Delorme (Firenze: Quaracchi, 1934), 279–285.

<sup>17</sup> Bonaventura ha commentato i singoli libri nell'ordine seguente: I, IV, II, III. Cf. I. Brady, *The Edition of the "Opera omnia" of Saint Bonaventure (1882–1902)* (Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 1977), 135–134. Nel lavoro citato Brady ha precisato l'opinione precedente, secondo la quale i libri dovrebbero essere commentati nell'ordine: I, II, IV, III. Cf. B. Distelbrink, "De ordine chronologico *IV Librorum Commentarii in Sententias S. Bonaventurae*," *Collectanea Franciscana* 41 (1971): 288–314. In ogni caso, gli esperti concordano sul fatto che il terzo libro è stato commentato per ultimo.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. B. Distelbrink, *Bonaventurae scr.*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Ménard, "Une leçon inaugurale de Bonaventure. Le prooemium du Livre des Sentences," *Études Franciscaines* 21 (1971): 275–289.

<sup>20</sup> "Tertio quaeritur de causa finali. Et cum dictum sit, quod liber iste est ad revelandum abscondita, quaeritur, utrum opus hoc sit contemplationis gratia, vel ut boni fiamus." *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III; I, p. 12a.

<sup>21</sup> La croce intelligibile rappresenta un paradigma geometrico che permette a Bonaventura di chiarire certi aspetti del mistero. Cf. C. V. Pospíšil, *La salvezza*



Nel titolo, preposto dagli editori al *respondeo*, la teologia viene designata come un abito affettivo.<sup>22</sup> Proprio qui, a nostro avviso, si trova una delle sorgenti del malinteso da parte di coloro che non comprendono bene il complesso significato della parola “affetto” nel pensiero bonaventuriano, come abbiamo detto sopra. Il Dottore Serafico stesso, però, dice con tanta chiarezza che la teologia è soprattutto la sapienza, che possiede sia la dimensione intellettuale, che quella affettiva, come abbiamo visto nella citazione esposta sopra.<sup>23</sup>

Bonaventura non può non mettere in rilievo la dimensione intellettuale della teologia,<sup>24</sup> perché altrimenti tutto l'enorme sforzo intellettuale del commentatore delle *Sentenze* non avrebbe nessun senso. Dato che la teologia appartiene alle scienze, perché altrimenti non potrebbe essere insegnata all'università, bisogna cominciare proprio dall'intelletto che viene perfezionato mediante lo sforzo del ricercatore.<sup>25</sup>

Nam si consideremus intellectum in se, sic est proprie speculativus et perficitur ab habitu, qui est contemplationis gratia, qui dicitur scientia speculativa. Si autem consideremus ipsum ut natum extendi ad opus, sic perficitur ab habitu, qui est ut boni fiamus; et hic est scientia practica sive moralis. Si autem medio modo consideretur ut natus extendi ad affectum, sic perficitur ab habitu medio inter pure speculativum et practicum, qui complectitur utrumque; et hic habitus dicitur sapientia, quae simul dicit cognitionem et affectum.<sup>26</sup>

Siccome l'intelletto viene perfezionato da tre abiti diversi e si protende nelle tre direzioni corrispondenti, e siccome una di queste direzioni si trova in mezzo alle altre due, non sembra affatto fuori luogo ricostruire lo schema geometrico implicito al pensiero del Dottore Serafico. Dato che la contemplazione ha nel periodo parigino dell'opera del nostro autore sempre la connotazione di ascesa, essa dovrebbe portare l'intelletto in alto. L'abito pratico dell'agire morale si protende

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*dell'uomo e la teologia della croce di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Udine: Paolo Gasprari editore, 2010), 167–190.

<sup>22</sup> “Scientia theologica est habitus affectivus ...” *Sent. I*, prooem, q. III; I, 13a.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13b.

<sup>24</sup> Il fatto che Bonaventura certamente non sottovaluta il lato intellettuale del lavoro teologico viene documentato dal seguente pensiero: “Ex praedictis ergo apparet, quo ordine et quo auctore pervenitur ad sapientiam. Ordo enim est, ut inchoetur a stabilitate fidei et procedatur per serenitatem rationis, ut perveniatur ad suavitatem contemplationis ...” *Sermo Christus unus omnium magister*, 15; V, 571b.

<sup>25</sup> “Ad intelligentiam praedictorum notandum est, quod perfectibile a scientia est intellectus noster.” *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13a.

<sup>26</sup> *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13ab.

verso il mondo esteriore in cui viviamo, quindi verso il basso. In mezzo a queste due direzioni si trova quella orizzontale, che si potrebbe dire linea dell'interiorità della vita psichica, linea che porta l'intelletto verso l'affetto. Esattamente nel punto centrale dell'asse orizzontale si trova la sapienza, che abbraccia sia l'intelletto che l'affetto e, nello stesso tempo, costituisce pure il centro dell'asse verticale, perché rappresenta la mediazione tra la "*contemplationis gratia*", la teoria, l'intravedere le idee, l'ascesa mistica da una parte e l'"*ut boni fiamus*", cioè il giudizio morale e pratico, il nostro modo di agire dall'altra. La sapienza, trovandosi nel punto centrale della croce intelligibile, vale a dire nell'intersezione dell'asse orizzontale con quello verticale,<sup>27</sup> unifica e armonizza i quattro elementi costitutivi del corretto pensare e vivere teologico; nello stesso tempo, essendo un dono divino, li sorpassa e corona dando loro il senso trascendente, che consiste nel rapporto diretto con il fine ultimo della vita umana e di tutto il mondo creato. Per tutti questi motivi dovrebbe essere chiaro perché il secondo nome della dottrina trasmessa nel libro delle *Sentenze* è proprio "la Sapienza".

Un argomento a favore di questa nostra interpretazione consiste nel fatto che la teologia e la Sacra Scrittura erano per Bonaventura, soprattutto negli ultimi anni del suo lavoro all'università parigina, i due concetti che, avendo la stessa funzione, cioè di far entrare il Verbo divino nella mente umana, si potevano reciprocamente scambiare. Se nel prologo al *Breviloquium* la croce intelligibile rappresenta l'unica vera chiave ermeneutica, non dovrebbe allora lo stesso valere pure per la dottrina contenuta nel suo *Commento alle Sentenze*? La teologia, dovendo servire all'autodonazione divina all'uomo, non dovrebbe essere un'icona del Crocifisso? Alla domanda il Dottore Serafico risponde richiamando espressamente la morte di Cristo:

Talis est cognitio tradita in hoc libro. Nam cognitio haec iuvat fidem, et fides sic est in intellectu, ut, quantum est de sui ratione, nata sit movere affectum. Et hoc patet. Nam haec cognitio, quod Christus pro nobis mortuus, et consimiles, nisi sit homo peccator et durus, movet ad amorem ...<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Questa collocazione della sapienza nel centro della croce intelligibile corrisponde esattamente a quello che abbiamo visto durante la nostra analisi di questo paradigma nella prima conferenza dell'*Hexaëmeron*. Cf. *Hex.*, coll. I, n. 24; V, 353b.

<sup>28</sup> *Sent. I*, prooem., q. III, resp.; I, 13b.

La scelta dell'esempio usato non sembra affatto casuale, perché nell'introduzione al terzo libro del *Commento alle Sentenze* leggiamo che tutta la dottrina trasmessa nei quattro libri delle *Sentenze* tratta principalmente del mistero della nostra redenzione.<sup>29</sup> Ne deriva che il mistero della redenzione rappresenta per il Dottore Serafico pure un principio architettonico, cioè quello centrale e unificante di tutta la sua riflessione teologica. La teologia in quanto la partecipazione della nostra mente alla Sapienza di Dio assume, quindi, una forma della croce e persino del Crocifisso.

Siccome questa nostra interpretazione della terza questione introduttiva al *Commento alle Sentenze* è completamente nuova e siccome essa ci permette di vedere tutto il pensiero teologico del Dottore Serafico in una luce nuova, cioè come una teologia sapienziale della croce, conviene offrire ancora un argomento a suo favore, che consiste nel passo biblico richiamato da Bonaventura nel brano che stiamo esaminando, perché il versetto Sir 6, 23 si trova in un altro testo, ben noto a Bonaventura, e forse anche ai suoi studenti, che il nostro autore cita in altra opera:

Dico quod in ligno crucis Christi possumus invenire, primo, sapientiam salutarem ad nos illuminandum et docendum ... Vae illis qui toto tempore vitae suae student in logica, physica, vel in decretis, et nihil saporis in ista scientia inveniunt. Si in ligno crucis Christi studerent, scientiam salutarem ibi invenirent. ... Ista disponit hominem ad intelligentiam, conservat in eo memoriam, ordinat ad vitam aeternam. Ideo beatus Bernardus<sup>50</sup> de hoc ligno ita ait: *Cum sapientia secundum nomen suum dicta sit saporosa scientia, in ligno crucis stude, si vis hunc saporem sentire; dat enim visum caecis, sanitatem infirmis, vitam mortuis.*<sup>51</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "Nam in primo libro agitur de reparationis auctore, utpote de beata Trinitate. In secundo vero agitur de ipso reparabili, utpote de homine cadente a statu conditionis innocentiae. In tertio agitur de persona Redemptoris, utpote de Christo, Deo et homine. In quarto vero agitur de hominis reparati salute, quae quidem consistit in expiatione culpae et amotione omnis miseriae. Et sic patet, quomodo iste totalis liber versatur circa nostrae reparationis mysterium explicandum ..." *Sent. III*, prooem.; III, p. 1b-2a. L'espressione *Totalis liber* significa tutto il *Commento alle Sentenze*. D'altronde entrambe le introduzioni, cioè quella al terzo libro e quella al primo libro devono essere state scritte in un breve arco di tempo, perché le introduzioni si scrivono quando tutto il resto del libro già esiste e perché Bonaventura ha commentato il terzo libro per ultimo.

<sup>50</sup> In realtà si tratta piuttosto di un pensiero proveniente da Cassiodoro.

<sup>51</sup> *Dom. II post Pascha Sermo V*, Bougerol, *DeDiv*, n. 24, 7; 337-358; *Op. Om.* IX, p. 304b. Il testo nelle diverse edizioni critiche sostanzialmente corrisponde. Per quanto riguarda

Non solo la citazione di Bernardo, o piuttosto Cassiodoro, legata al versetto Sir 6, 23, bensì le parole di Bonaventura dicono chiaramente che la teologia vera deve essere sapienza della croce, e perciò non si può più dubitare circa il senso contenuto nella conclusione della terza questione introduttiva al *Commento alle Sentenze*. Infatti, la croce è la sorgente di ogni vera sapienza proveniente da Dio.<sup>52</sup>

Alla domanda, per quale motivo Bonaventura non sia stato più esplicito proprio in questo passo così importante, si può rispondere assai facilmente. Infatti, il nascondersi della Sapienza divina sotto l'involucro del senso letterario apparente a tutti è una caratteristica del Verbo, sia nella Sacra Scrittura che nell'evento dell'incarnazione;<sup>53</sup> il Dottore Serafico, nella sua ricerca appassionata della vera Sapienza divina, ha cercato di imitarla perfino nel modo di esprimere i suoi misteri, perché colui che porterà sempre nel cuore il ricordo della passione del Signore sicuramente saprà scendere nelle profondità dell'intelligenza nascosta e porterà alla luce quello che voleva comunicargli velatamente il grande maestro della sapienza della croce. Questa sapienza della croce, però, deve rimanere chiusa a coloro, che s'interessano solo della raccolta d'informazioni.<sup>54</sup> Si vede che Bonaventura non andrebbe sicuramente d'accordo con una teologia puramente intellettualistica staccata dall'impegno spirituale ed esistenziale.

### 5. Attualità della concezione bonaventuriana della teologia

Innanzitutto la teologia "affettiva" di Bonaventura va presentata come una teologia sapienziale, una teologia del cuore, perché coinvolge non solo l'intelletto, ma pure le forze affettive della persona umana. *L'espressione "una teologia affettiva" va presa come una sineddoche, la quale designa attraverso movente affettivo dell'attività sapienziale.*

La teologia intesa come puro sforzo razionale, la teologia secondo le misure della cosiddetta scientometria che oggi regge l'attività di molti universitari, purtroppo pure di tanti colleghi dalle facoltà teologiche nella Repubblica Ceca, rischia di non essere conforme allo spirito della

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alcuni dettagli, abbiamo dato precedenza all'edizione nell'*Opera Omnia* perché questa versione ci pare più logica.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *De S. Andrea Sermo I coll.*, Bougerol, *DeDiv*, n. 54, 5; 451; *Op. Om.* IX, 468b-469a.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Breviloquium.*, prol., § 4; V, p. 206b.

<sup>54</sup> In questo senso dobbiamo, purtroppo, valutare l'interpretazione contenuta in: I. Biffi, *Figure medievali della teologia* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1992), 97-98.

rivelazione, la quale non è soltanto un'informazione, ma l'autodonzione di Dio con lo scopo della nostra profonda trasformazione. Un altro rischio riguarda la sempre più stretta specializzazione che perde di vista l'insieme della teologia e soprattutto il suo scopo primariamente salvifico. Per questo motivo la Commissione Teologica Internazionale nel suo documento "Theology Today" ammonisce tutti noi, affinché non perdiamo di vista la dimensione sapienziale del nostro sforzo.<sup>55</sup> A questa voce dal punto di vista professionale autorevole si aggiunge anche il nostro sforzo presentato in questo articolo. La teologia deve essere sicuramente scientifica, ma non andare oltre significherebbe restare a metà strada. La teologia vera, la teologia come aiuto, come indicazione della strada che porta verso la salvezza,<sup>56</sup> non può essere fatta senza il cuore, senza l'affetto, senza l'aspirazione di comunicare in qualche modo la propria esperienza spirituale.

Infine, ripensando la figura della teologia bonaventuriana espressa nella terza questione dell'introduzione al *Commento alle Sentenze*, ci rendiamo conto che *lo scopo di tutto lo sforzo di un dogmatico deve mirare alla prassi (ut boni fiamus), apportando i motivi teoretici e offrendo il perché di queste esigenze del Vangelo*. Il senso ultimo di tutti i dogmi non è semplicemente una dottrina, ma la vita. Se lo studente capisce il significato del dogma nella propria vita spirituale, comprende il vero senso dell'enunciato dogmatico; comprende che questa verità è la nostra vita espressa nei termini a prima vista teorici. In questo modo avviene una spirituale quasiverificazione, dalla quale può scaturire una teologia come testimonianza.

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Commissione Teologica Internazionale, *Theology Today*, documento dall'anno 2012, in *Dokumenty Mezinárodní teologické komise 1969–2017 a některé další texty Papežské biblické komise a Kongregace pro nauku víry*, eds. C. V. Pospíšil – E. Krumpolc (Olomouc: Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého, 2017), 879–931; qui n. 60, 909–910; n. 67, 913; n. 82, 921.

<sup>56</sup> Non dimentichiamo che il compito principale di tutta la teologia consiste nel condurci "all'albero della vita," per usare le parole del Dottore Serafico. Cf. *Hex.*, coll. I, 38; V, p. 335; *Hex.*, coll. XIX, 1; V, p. 420; *Hex.*, coll. XXIII, 31; V, 449b.



## SOUKROMÍ V LATINSKÝCH A ČESKÝCH BIBLICKÝCH TEXTECH\*

JOSEF ŠIMANDL

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### ABSTRACT

#### Privacy in Czech and Latin biblical texts

This paper ponders whether the notion of privacy should be seen as not biblical or not Catholic. Several Catholic encyclopedias were skimmed; the increasing interest in this topic is evident, although the prevailing point of view belongs not to theology or biblical studies, but to (ecclesiastical) law. In the following section of the paper, Czech words for privacy/private (*soukromí/soukromý*) in the Czech Ecumenical Translation and in the most notable older translation (Bible kralická) are examined and compared with their counterparts in Latin and Greek Bibles. The Old-Czech word *súkromí* with its strictly local sense is mentioned as well. To sum up: The examined words are plausibly used in the translation; the notion belongs to the biblical world and is worth of further research.

### Keywords

Notion of privacy; Czech words for privacy; Biblical studies

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**M**otivací k práci na příspěvku byl studentova námitka o nebibličnosti představy soukromí a soukromého, sdělená poté, co jsme se v biblickém překladu z 20. století setkali s užitím adjektiva *soukromý*. Je pravda, že zejména texty evangelíí obsahují výzvu oprostít se od soukromého majetku: nejvýrazněji v Ježíšově radě *prodej, co máš*,

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\* Příspěvek vyšel z referátu předneseného 1. června 2018 na konferenci *Jazyk a styl biblického překladu: česká a polská perspektiva*, oddělení starých jazyků Katedry biblických věd KTF UK.

*a rozdej chudým* (Mt 19,21); nemáme také shromažďovat poklady na zemi, ale v nebi (Mt 6,19–20); i Ježíšovi učedníci jsou vysláni v krajní skromnosti (Mk 6,8–10). Přitom však Ježíšovo působení má nejen rozměr veřejný, jímž je vyučování v synagoze nebo promluvy k zástupům, které se kvůli Ježíšovi shromáždily, ale jeho integrální složkou jsou i návštěvy v soukromých domácnostech a setkávání s jednotlivci; vyprávění o uzdravení hluchoněmého (Mk 7,33) začíná slovy *vzal si ho stranou*, takže zázrak je vykonán v soukromí; Ježíš nás také nabádá, abychom s Bohem komunikovali prostřednictvím modlitby, půstu aj. nikoli tak, aby nás lidé viděli, ale v skrytu neboli v soukromí (o modlitbě Mt 6,6; o půstu Mt 6,18).

Tím se otevírá celý komplex otázek, z nichž vybíráme:

A. Patří představa soukromého k biblickému světu a ke katolické víře? Figuruje pojem soukromého/soukromí v katolických encyklopediích?

B. Co v latinském, popř. v novozákonním řeckém textu Bible odpovídá novočeským výrazům *soukromý/soukromí*? V čem se liší situace ve staročeských textech?

Existenci představy soukromého je z Bible jako celku doložena do té míry, že bez této představy by byla kompendiem jiné náboženské nauky a jiného pojmání světa. V úhelném kameni direktiv pro život člověka, v mojžíšském Desateru, máme příkázání *Nepokradeš*, které by bez existence soukromého vlastnictví nedávalo smysl. Osobní soukromí by bylo narušeno například „odkrytím nahoty“ (Gn 9,22; Lv 18,7–9). Komunikace v soukromí, nikoli na veřejnosti, tzn. vzít si někoho stranou a tam s ním promluvit (Sk 23,19; Mt 18,15),<sup>2</sup> se na řadě míst doporučuje nebo provádí jako vhodnější. Že i do soukromí mířila Ježíšova praxe a také jeho výzvy, to jsme už připomněli. Představa soukromého se tedy dotýká různých situací a tím je dána poměrně široká paleta vyjadřovacích možností, které bychom v úplnosti ani nemohli sledovat.

Katolické encyklopedie podávají dvojí svědectví: jednak že to či ono odedávna bylo soukromé, jednak že celkové uchopení pojmu soukromého je poměrně mladá záležitost. Tak například *New Catholic Encyclopedia*,<sup>3</sup> která má pět svazků a tři série dodatků, uvádí ve svém rejstříku jen filozofický pojem *Privation* a heslo *Private chapels*. Podobně

<sup>2</sup> Mt 18,15 podle ČEP: *Když tvůj bratr zhřeší, jdi a pokárej ho mezi čtyřma očima*. To má být první pokus řešení, a teprve selže-li, mají následovat pokusy „oficiálnější“ neboli (1) *příber k sobě ještě jednoho nebo dva* a zejména (2) *oznam to církvi*.

<sup>3</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2003–2011).



*Encyklopedia Katolicka*,<sup>4</sup> přestože její vydávání trvalo 41 let a odehrály se během něho zásadní proměny společnosti i věroučných akcentů, má jen hesla *prywatne kościoły, prywatne objawienia*.<sup>5</sup>

Nepoměrně širší zpracování představuje *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (1957–1967),<sup>6</sup> jehož dodatky zpracovávají nauku 2. vatikánského koncilu. Najdeme v něm podle rejstříku (tučně jsou uvedena samostatná hesla): **Privat-** *-buße, -eigentum, -exorcismus, -geheimnis, -gelübde, Privation, -kapelle, -kapital(ismus), Privatklage, -messe, -offenbarung, -schulen, -versicherung* a nádavkem *Privattempelwesen* jako germánské historické podloží pro *Eigenkirche = ecclesia propria*, srov. výše *private chapels* a *prywatne kościoły*. Jsou tu tedy popsány také nebiblické až moderní jevy ze života církve (nejen katolické) ve světě. Týž slovník ve svém revidovaném vydání (2009)<sup>7</sup> má už komplexní heslo *Privatsphäre*, kde je v odkazech i monografie *Kirche u. Datenschutz* (Th. Hoeren; Essen 1986).<sup>8</sup> Táž encyklopedie také připomíná, že podle pietistů nebo osvícenců je veškerý náboženský život soukromá záležitost. Podstatnější je, že až na heslo *Privatsphäre* se encyklopedická hesla zabývají soukromím ve smyslu (církevně)právním – nikoli ve smyslu teologickém, ba ani biblistickém.

Novočeské adjektivum *soukromý* má podle SSJČ<sup>9</sup> poměrně široké použití:

**soukromý** (†soukromní Tyl, †soukromný Lum.) příd. *privátní* (op. *veřejný*) **1. jsoucí v majetku, péči, službách jednotlivce, nikoli veřejnosti, jednotlivce se týkající**: s-é vlastnictví (výrobních prostředků); s-é firmy; s. sektor; s-é budovy, zahrady; s-á škola; s. ústav; s-é hodiny (vyučovací); s. učitel; s. pacient; s. učenec; s. podnikatel; s-é podnikání; s-á iniciativa; veř. spr. (dř.) s. zaměstnanec; práv. (dř.) s-é právo; s-á žaloba; s. žalobce; s. majetek; škol. (dř.) s. docent *kt. není*

<sup>4</sup> *Encyklopedia Katolicka* (Lublin: KUL, 1975–2014).

<sup>5</sup> Soukromá zjevení, tj. zjevení církví (zatím) neuznávaná, představují takovou dimenzi soukromého, která je stavěna do protikladu vůči obecně sdílené katolické víře.

<sup>6</sup> Buchberger et al., *Lexikon für Theologie u. Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1957–1967).

<sup>7</sup> *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, durchgesehene Ausgabe „Sonderausgabe“*, ed. W. Kasper (Freiburg: Herder, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> V době konání konference (viz pozn. 1) vrcholily mediální i institucionální aktivity spojené se zaváděním GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) v Evropské unii, a tedy i v České republice. Stáří/zastaralost Hoerenovy monografie z předinternetové éry by bylo třeba zvážit; její existence však svědčí o tom, že postojí církve k ochraně dat jako k formě ochrany soukromí byla věnována pozornost už před třemi desetiletími.

<sup>9</sup> *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (Praha: Academia, 1960–1971).

*zaměstnancem vysoké školy; úč. (dř.) s. účet osobní účet podnikatele n. společníka ve vlastním podniku 2. dějící se, konaný s vyloučením veřejnosti; osobní 4: s-é záležitosti; s-é listiny; s-é zájmy; úzce s. život intimní; s. rozhovor; s-á korespondence; s. telefonní hovor; to je moje s-é mínění; s. tisk (dř.) vydaný jednotlivcem pro omezený počet čtenářů; jaz. s. projev neoficiální, neveřejný; ... (následují příhruždovaná slova)*

Tento přes půl století starý popis sice omezuje význam ‚neoficiální‘ (v soukromém rozhovoru přiznal, že ...) jen na sféru jazykovědy. Přesto lze významy adjektiva v zásadě shrnout do dvou vzájemně souvisejících významových okruhů: *týkající se jedince* a *vylučující veřejnost*; jejich vymezení se děje na základě akcentu položeného na jeden z komplementárních prvků významu.

Výskyt řetězce *soukrom* v Českém ekumenickém překladu Bible (dále ČEP) jsme vyšetřili podle internetového zdroje.<sup>10</sup> Našlo se 7 míst, která lze podle významu adjektiva roztrždit takto:

- protikladný/komplementární k tomu, co se týká celé obce: 2 doklady, Mac;
- chránící intimitu: 1 doklad, Sir;
- pojmenovávající soukromé bydlení: 1 doklad, Act;
- vyjadřující situaci „zvlášť od ostatních“ (může se týkat menší skupiny): 3 doklady, Mt, Mk, Ga.

Tato místa představíme nyní podrobněji, provnáme je se zněním ve Vulgátě<sup>11</sup> (popř. také se zněním řeckým) a v Bibli kralické<sup>12</sup> (dále BK).

Význam PROTIKLADNÝ/KOMPLEMENTÁRNÍ K TOMU, CO SE TÝKÁ CELÉ OBCE má jednak 2Mak 4,5: *vypravil se ke králi. Nechtěl na občany žalovat, ale měl na zřeteli **prospěch obecný i soukromý** všeho lidu*. Poněkud obtížněji srozumitelné vyjádření (soukromý prospěch všeho lidu?) má pandán ve Vulgátě *communem utilitatem apud semet ipsum universae multitudinis considerans*, který vychází z jiného znění/chápání

<sup>10</sup> Bible – český ekumenický překlad (60.–70. léta 20. století s pozdějšími dodatky). Prohledáváno na adrese <https://www.bibleserver.com/search/CEP/soukrom/1> v květnu 2018. – Zvolený způsob vyhledávání pokrývá adjektivum *soukromý* a pokryl by také adverbium *soukromě* i substantivum *soukromí*, dále slova *soukromník*, *soukromnice*, *soukromničit*, *soukromoprávní*. V ČEP se našlo jen adjektivum *soukromý*.

<sup>11</sup> *Vulgata*: znění podle Vulgata Clementina, dostupné na <http://cz.bibleserver.com>; ověřeno 15. 10. 2018.

<sup>12</sup> *Bible kralická*: znění podle *Česká synoptická Bible* (ČEP a BK) (Praha: ČBS, 2008)

tohoto místa: výraz pro soukromé *apud semet ipsum* se logičtěji pojí s participiem *considerans* než s bezprostředně předcházejícím slovem *utilitatem*. BK má toto řešení: *vypravil se k králi. Ne že by chtěl na měšťany žalovati, ale užitek obecný i obzvláštní (...) všeho množství opatruje*. Vyjádření *obzvláštní užitek* je zavádějící a signalizuje překladatelský problém. V řeckém textu podle Septuaginty<sup>15</sup> najdeme k onomu *obecný i obzvláštní* BK předlohu ve formulaci/figuře *κοινῆ καὶ κατ' ἰδίαν*, která se zajisté užívala i o obecném a zvláštním, zde je však spíše užita o dobrodiních prokázaných obci i jednotlivcům.

Druhý doklad je 2Mak 9,26. ČEP má: *Žádám vás tedy a prosím, abyste pamatovali na **dobrodiní, obecná i soukromá**, a zachovávali dosavadní náklonnost ke mně i k mému synovi*. Vulgata na tomto místě má *memores beneficiorum publice et privatim*, takže pro označení soukromého užila slovo formálně asi nejbližší dnešnímu chápání. V BK stojí: *Protož prosím vás i napomínám, abyšte pamatujete na ta dobrodiní, vůbec i obzvláštně, jedenkaždý tu přítomnou přívětivost ke mně i k synu zachovali*. Tento překlad tedy opět uhýbá z dimenze veřejný × soukromý k dimenzi obecné × zvláštní – anebo, chcete-li, zpět k řeckému *κοινῆ καὶ κατ' ἰδίαν*, které je tu stejné jako v 2Mak 4,5 (a je navíc stejné i v Mk 4,34 – viz níže). Na obou místech ze 2Mak pokročil ČEP od doslovnosti k interpretaci.

Význam CHRÁNÍCÍ INTIMITU má Sír 29,21: *Hlavní věc pro život je voda, chléb a oděv, i dům, který poskytuje soukromí*. Vulgata toto místo podává takto: *initium vitae aqua et panis et vestimentum et domus protegens turpitudinem*, kde především obydlí příkryvá/ochraňuje mrzkost, přičemž vazba na substantivum *vestimentum* ‚oděv‘ je slabší, pokud ji vůbec uznáme; české vyjádření *poskytuje soukromí* lze v obou případech chápat jako eufemismus. BK má stejné místo označené jako 29,25 a textuje takto: *Počátek života lidského jest voda a chléb, dům a oděv, kterýž příkryvá hanbu*; tady je zakrývací funkce vztažena jen k oděvu, pokud odmítneme hypotézu neobratného překladu; soukromím se neoperuje, české vyjádření tu doslovně odpovídá latinskému *protegens turpitudinem*. V řeckém Ἀρχὴ ζωῆς ὕδωρ καὶ ἄρτος καὶ ἰμάτιον καὶ οἶκος καλύπτων ἀσχημοσύνην se participium jednoznačně vztahuje jen k příbytku díky tomu, že řecké participium καλύπτων má na rozdíl od latinského *protegens* tvary rozlišené rodem; nezapomeňme také na

<sup>15</sup> *Septuaginta*, citováno podle <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/>, ověřeno 15. 10. 2018.

pořadí substantiv, které si BK upravila. Navíc protože funkci ochraňovat soukromí má spíš dům než oděv, zasluhuje způsob, jak se tu vyhnout slovu *hanba/mrzkost* ap., pochvalu.

Pojmenování SOUKROMÉHO BYDLENÍ nalézáme také ve Sk 28,16. Toto místo zní v ČEP takto: *Když jsme přišli do Říma, dostal Pavel dovolení, že může bydlet v soukromém bytě s vojákem, který ho bude hlídat.* Vulgata má: *permissum est Paulo manere sibimet cum custodiente eum milite.* Takovému znění odpovídá i řecký text Septuaginty ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ. Zájmeno sám stačilo také překladatelům BK: *Když jsme přišli do Říma, setník dal vězně v moc hejtmanu vojska, ale Pavlovi dopuštěno, aby sám bydlil s žoldněrem, kterýž ho ostríhal.* Řešení ČEP je tedy spíš výkladem než překladem a dosazuje znalost reálií, kterou sám překládaný text neobsahuje (soukromé bydlení důstojníků).

Na třech novozákonních místech se zkoumaný výraz vyskytuje ve významu ZVLÁŠTĚ OD OSTATNÍCH.<sup>14</sup> První je Mt 10,27: *Co vám říkám ve tmě, povězte na světle; a co slyšíte v soukromí, hlásejte ze střeš.* Druhá část má ve Vulgatě podobu *quod in aure auditis praedicate super tecta*, Novum Testamentum Graece<sup>15</sup> má odpovídající ὁ εἰς τὸ οὐρανὸν ἀκούετε, κηρύξατε ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων. BK překládala: *Což vám pravím ve tmách, pravte na světle, a co v uši slyšíte, hlásejte na domích.* Na tomto místě udělal ČEP krok od metonymického vyjádření pomocí částí těla k pojmenování prostředí, které bylo soukromé.

Druhé místo je Mk 4,34: *Bez podobenství k nim nemluvil, ale v soukromí svým učedníkům všechno vykládal.* Setkáváme se tu s povážlivou, ale v evangeliích opakovaně poznamenanou skutečností jedné, méně jasné, náznakové nebo obrazné věrouky pro veřejnost a druhé s výkladem pro učedníky. Citovaný verš zní ve Vulgatě *sine parabola autem non loquebatur eis, seorsum autem discipulis suis disserebat omnia*; to odpovídá i znění v Septuagintě χωρὶς δὲ παραβολῆς οὐκ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς, κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς ἐπέλευν πάντα. Pozoruhodné je podání BK: *Bez podobenství pak nemluvil jim, ale učedníkům svým soukromí vykládal všechno*; výraz *soukromí* je tu – odchylně od dnešní

<sup>14</sup> Tomuto významu by se dalo podřadit i *soukromé bydlení*, ale kvůli odlišné situaci v textu jsme je vydělili zvlášť.

<sup>15</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graece*: ed. Nestle – Aland 28, dostupná v digitální podobě na <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/novum-testamentum-graece-na-28>; ověřeno 15. 10. 2018.

češtiny – adverbium, které znamená ‚soukromě, v soukromí‘, jak odpovídá staročeskému stavu; viz o něm níže.

Třetí takové místo je Ga 2,2: *Šel jsem tam na Boží pokyn a těm, kteří jsou ve zvláštní vážnosti, jsem v soukromí předložil evangelium, které zvěstuji pohanům, aby snad moje nynější i dřívější úsilí nebylo nadarmo.* Vyjadřuje se tu jednota obojího (soukromého i veřejného) znění evangelia, jak ho podával sv. Pavel. Onomu místu odpovídá ve Vulgátě *Ascendi autem secundum revelationem, et contuli cum illis Evangelium, quod praedico in gentibus, seorsum autem iis qui videbantur aliquid esse : ne forte in vacuum currerem, aut cucurrissem* a v Novum Testamentum Graece ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν· καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κατ’ ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, μὴ πῶς εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον; místa nejsou s ČEP v konfliktu.

Než přikročíme k závěrům, věnujme pozornost výskytu řetězce *súkrom-* v excerpce, podle které se zpracovával Staročeský slovník. Výraz *súkromie* s platností příslovce – viz výše o Mk 4,34 v BK – má řadu výskytů ve staročeských biblích i v různých dobových výkladech biblického textu; kladl se nejčastěji na místa, kde bylo latinské *seorsum*,<sup>16</sup> méně často za *privatim*,<sup>17</sup> příležitostně se jím vyjádří to, co odpovídá latinskému slovesu *recludere* ‚zavřít odděleně‘,<sup>18</sup> nebo co odpovídá latinskému *in conclavi* ‚v pokoji, v obydlí pod uzavřením‘, jemuž odpovídá i náš významový okruh SOUKROMÉ BYDLENÍ.<sup>19</sup> Několik dokladů ze 16. století má *soukromnosti* ‚tajnosti, tajnůstky‘, např. *slepé oko soukromností pokoutních hledí a temností*.<sup>20</sup>

Je tedy zřejmé, že staročeský úzus slova *soukromí* byl jiný než novočeský a pravděpodobně ještě jiné významové spektrum měly takové

<sup>16</sup> Takové je mj. Mt 17,1 o vzetí učedníků na horu *y wede gye na horu wisoku* *súkromie* (Nový zákon Kořečkův).

<sup>17</sup> Jde o již představené místo Ga 2,2 *kazi (=kází) lidem mezi pohaní a súkromie tiem, ge[ſ]to se nyeczo zdachu abich snad darmo bil nebiehal nebo nebiezal* (excerptum z nejasně datovaného spisu).

<sup>18</sup> Lv 13,21: (kněz) *zavřet jej* (malomocného) *súkromie za sedm dní / recludet eum septem diebus* (Bible pražská).

<sup>19</sup> Reg 4,7: (Isbosech) *ſpa[ſ]ſe na ſwem lozzy* *súkromie / ille dormiebat super lectum suum in conclavi* (Bible olomoucká).

<sup>20</sup> Doklady z tzv. doby střední jsou teprve ve zpracování, přičemž mnohdy jde o texty dosud nevydané, přístupné jen na technických nosičích; proto nejsou citovány s pramennými údaji.

výrazy v době střední. Odlišnost osvětluje v hesle *soukromí* Machkův etymologický slovník:<sup>21</sup>

V starší době bylo *soukromí* = oddělené místo, samota (a adv. *soukromí, -í* jako v *potají*) a *soukromý; -ní* (odtud *soukromník, -ice*); nč. *soukromý* je mladší.

Závěrem shrňme: Dnešní chápání slov *soukromí, soukromý* se nekryje se staročeským a některá místa BK,<sup>22</sup> přeložené v době střední, dokládají nechuť (i za cenu oslabení srozumitelnosti) užít slovo, jehož starý význam už nebyl jasný a nový význam, pokud se v té době vůbec objevoval, ještě nebyl pevný. Představa soukromí však není nic nekompatibilního ani s Pismem, ani se životem katolické církve v uplynulých dvou tisíciletích. Výrazy se v ČEP plauzibilně objevují

- jako ekvivalent seorsum ‚stranou‘ (nejčastěji a tradičně);
- jako ekvivalent privatim ‚odděleně‘;
- při náhradě konkrétních chápáních spíš obrazně (BK: co v uši slyšíte);
- jako eufemismus (o přikrývání nahoty).

Představa soukromého jednak ve vztahu k Bibli, jednak ve vztahu k historii i současnému životu církve patří (zdá se)<sup>25</sup> mezi poměrně málo prozkoumaná témata, která zasluhují pozornost a také si ji postupně dobývají: viz exkurz o katolických encyklopediích. Z dalších zatím nevytěžených témat srov. Bartoň (2018).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Machek, Václav: *Etymologický slovník jazyka českého* (Praha: Academia, 1971).

<sup>22</sup> Jde zejména o obě místa z knih Makabejských: 2Mak 4,5 a 9,26.

<sup>25</sup> To nejobvyklejší v dnešních časech, totiž internetové vyhledávání publikací o soukromém/soukromí v Bibli, naráží na vážný problém v tom, že kde která stránka obsahující texty z Bible nebo o Bibli obsahuje také ustanovení o síťové ochraně soukromí zvané zpravidla Privacy Policy. Najdou se internetové texty na sledované téma, namnoze vyvolané potřebou vyrovnat se s GDPR (srov. pozn. 8), např. <https://www.quora.com/What-does-the-Bible-say-in-regards-to-privacy-and-privacy-rights> (navštíveno 15. 10. 2018) – ale to nejsou teologické studie.

<sup>24</sup> Josef Bartoň, „Tekst biblijny i sprawy ‚zbyt powszednie‘? Na marginesie kwestii tabu językowego w tradycji czeskiego przekładu biblijnego,“ *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Językoznawcza* 25, č.1 (2018), s. 11–32.

## **REVIEWS & NEWS**

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**Michele Cassese. *Martin Lutero e la sua riforma liturgica. Il percorso storico-teologico di un culto rinnovato*. Venezia: ISE San Bernardino 2017, 182 p. Suppl. al n. 1-2 del 2017 della rivista *Studi Ecumenici*, ISSN 0393-3687**

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LUBOMIR ŽAK - NICO DE MICO

Il giubileo dei cinquecento anni dall'inizio della Riforma (1517-2017) ha offerto agli studiosi di storia e di teologia l'occasione di elaborare nuovi interessanti approfondimenti riguardanti la persona e la teologia di Martin Lutero. Il volume dell'italiano Michele Cassese, già docente di storia moderna all'Università degli Studi di Trieste e attualmente docente di storia del protestantesimo e di spiritualità ecumenica presso l'Istituto di Studi Ecumenici "S. Bernardino" di Venezia, ne è una dimostrazione tra le più riuscite. In primo luogo, per la scelta del tema: nella produzione italiana non esistono, infatti, monografie esaustive - e soprattutto libere da pregiudizi confessionali - sulla riforma liturgica del dottore di Wittenberg, nonostante si tratti di un aspetto fondamentale non solo del suo movimento, ma anche della vita ecclesiale che ne è scaturita. In secondo luogo, per aver elaborato uno studio che, di fatto, permette di entrare nel cuore delle originarie intenzioni riformatrici di Lutero e che, perciò, è da considerare una specie di originale introduzione al suo pensiero. Ciò per una precisa scelta dell'Autore: «portare all'attenzione del lettore il contesto storico religioso cinquecentesco, necessitato di riforme nella vita della chiesa e nella pietà dei credenti, e la risposta di Lutero a quella specifica esigenza»; e pertanto: «far cogliere la conseguente azione di guida pastorale di Lutero, effettuata soprattutto mediante i suoi scritti, ed esaminare la teologia sulla chiesa e sui sacramenti, per poter poi affrontare adeguatamente l'analisi delle riforme da lui apportate in campo liturgico, limitatamente alla teologia del culto, alla celebrazione della predicazione della Parola e a quella della messa» (p. 8).

La trattazione di Cassese è strutturata in un modo che non solo permette al lettore, anche non specialista in materia, di entrare con facilità nel cuore del tema centrale del volume (la riforma liturgica di Lutero, appunto), ma rende altresì conto dello sviluppo delle principali intuizioni riformatrici del dottore di Wittenberg, prendendo in considerazione la specificità del contesto in cui egli visse e operò, unitamente a quegli eventi e situazioni che, nel bene o nel male, influirono sulle sue decisioni. Soprattutto il primo capitolo (*Martin Lutero nel dibattito sulla riforma della chiesa agli inizi del Cinquecento*) è, da questo punto

di vista, illuminante e utile, dato che riferisce con chiarezza e oggettività come la chiesa dei secoli XV-XVI, versando in uno stato di diffusa e scandalosa corruzione, fosse appassionatamente interpellata dalle numerose voci di quanti vollero richiamarla alla conversione: Niccolò Cusano, Egidio da Viterbo, Pietro Quirini, Paolo Giustiniani, papa Adriano VI e altri. Conferma, dunque, che l'idea della riforma di Lutero non fu una sua isolata e soggettiva invenzione, ma nacque da un'intenzione condivisa, purtroppo mai portata ad effetto, tanto che pressanti denunce della grave situazione morale e pastorale della chiesa continuavano a farsi sentire persino dopo la definitiva separazione tra Wittenberg e Roma. Cassese, tuttavia, doverosamente rileva che la proposta di Lutero va annoverata tra quelle che, diversamente dalle mozioni mirate a ripristinare la fedeltà alle norme canonistiche e a disciplinare la gestione delle strutture e degli incarichi ecclesiastici, puntavano *in primis* al rinnovamento spirituale, avendo come ideale la vita della chiesa delle origini e come guida la Parola di Dio scritta e predicata.

Il tema del secondo capitolo (*Martin Lutero pastore e organizzatore della chiesa*) è una logica continuazione del primo, in una scelta strutturale che vede i singoli capitoli fluire nei successivi per essere rielaborati e approfonditi. L'Autore mostra bene che è dalla specificità della proposta di riforma di Lutero che scaturisce la particolarità della sua azione di pastore, unitamente alla peculiarità della sua teologia pastorale e delle sue idee di riorganizzazione ministeriale e liturgica della vita ecclesiale. Nel frattempo fa capire che nel cuore di tali singolarità abitano una puntuale ecclesiologia e una precisa idea della Bibbia e del catechismo quali strumenti accessibili a tutti i battezzati – e quindi da rendere disponibili in lingua volgare –, necessari per entrare in contatto con la Parola di Dio e favorirne l'annuncio e la diffusione. Come l'ambito liturgico venisse compreso da Lutero quale luogo a ciò riservato è il tema del terzo capitolo (*Martin Lutero e i nuovi ordinamenti per la liturgia*). Cassese innanzitutto ricorda che una delle necessità più vitali per le comunità aderenti alla Riforma fu l'elaborazione di un ordine liturgico rinnovato, adeguato e rispondente cioè al risveglio dell'esperienza di fede proposta da Lutero. E soprattutto sottolinea che la creazione dei *nuovi ordini* – con funzione di celebrare il culto, in particolare la Cena e i riti del Battesimo, della Confessione e del Matrimonio – si realizzò a tappe, nell'intento di rispettare la tradizione.

In concreto, come viene spiegato nel quarto capitolo (*Martin Lutero e la teologia sacramentale*), tale progetto di rinnovamento fu sostenuto e animato da una specifica teologia sacramentale, che però conteneva elementi di rottura e di novità, tanto da potersi parlare – a parere di Cassese – di «una visione dei sacramenti radicalmente diversa» rispetto a quella della teologia di scuola di quell'epoca; diversa cioè perché «fondata nella Sacra Scrittura e collegata strettamente alla dottrina della giustificazione per fede» (p. 85). Tuttavia, la causa della diversità della teologia sacramentale di Lutero non è univoca. L'Autore spiega infatti che, volendo «prendere le distanze dal criterio di dipendenza dei sacramenti dalla chiesa, per riportarli direttamente a Cristo» (p. 88),

il riformatore ne elaborò una concezione squisitamente cristologica. Sia perché divenne determinante la questione della loro istituzione da parte di Cristo; sia perché egli vide nella persona di Cristo il sacramento originario e unico. Nel senso che per lui era Cristo ad agire «nell'amministrazione dei segni sacramentali», e perciò valeva che «tutto ciò che avviene nell'azione sacramentale fa riferimento a Lui e ne dipende» (p. 91), essendo solo Lui, «con il Suo spirito, l'agente principale nel sacramento» (p. 94). In questa prospettiva l'Autore presenta tutti i tratti principali della concezione luterana del Battesimo, della S. Cena e del sacramento di Penitenza (la confessione).

Per completare tale quadro tematico e interpretativo, Cassese introduce, nel quinto capitolo (*Il "precipuo culto divino": la predica*), una breve ma interessante riflessione sulla concezione del culto in Lutero. Ne rinviene l'elemento caratterizzante nell'idea del dialogo: «A Dio che parla risponde la comunità» (p. 122). Un dialogo, però, che Lutero intende in sintonia con le sue più profonde intuizioni teologiche; è per questo che preferisce utilizzare il termine tedesco *Gottesdienst*. Il culto, cioè, è un dialogo, da intendersi come “servizio di Dio”, da un triplice punto di vista: (a) il vero protagonista del culto è Dio; è Lui a compiere tale azione, a chiamare e a servire la comunità con la Parola, essendo Egli «un Dio misericordioso che dona se stesso agli uomini» (p. 4); (b) il culto è anche un servizio dell'uomo a Dio e ciò sia mediante l'atteggiamento di fede/fiducia in Lui sia tramite la propria vita cristiana; (c) nel culto questo dialogo si attua quando «all'annuncio della Parola di salvezza e all'offerta del proprio corpo e sangue da parte di Cristo segue la risposta della comunità con «l'offerta di se stessi, con la preghiera e il canto di lode a Dio» (p. 126). Si comprende perché, accanto alla domenicale celebrazione della S. Cena, Lutero abbia introdotto la celebrazione del culto quale *Predigtgottesdienst*. Si trattò di un arricchimento e di un ampliamento – e non di una sostituzione della Cena – della vita culturale della comunità, introdotti per rinforzare il suo salvifico dialogo con Dio.

Ebbene, solo se inserita in questa ampia cornice esplicativa la teologia di Lutero della S. Cena – concretizzatasi nella creazione dei due ordini (*Formula missae*, del 1525; *Messa tedesca*, del 1526) – riesce a mostrare la propria profondità, il suo orientamento prospettico e le sue intuizioni di fondo. Ciò è di fondamentale importanza per un'interpretazione corretta, che non fraintenda la feroce critica della “messa” da parte del riformatore. Che con essa egli non intendesse eliminare la celebrazione eucaristica è un dato di fatto che emerge da sé in tutte le riflessioni di Cassese; che però vi fossero numerosi e seri motivi – attestati e descritti da autorevoli contemporanei di Lutero – che suscitarono e alimentarono tale critica è ben illustrato nel sesto capitolo (*La messa o Santa Cena*), ove si parla degli abusi ed eccessi che inquinarono gravemente il nome di questo sacramento. La soluzione proposta dal wittenberghese si concretizzò nella creazione dei due ordini, dei quali in particolare quello della *Messa tedesca* espresse in pieno l'idea del culto come *Gottesdienst*. Infatti, essendo celebrata in lingua tedesca, la *Messa tedesca* metteva il popolo di Dio

nella condizione di poter non solo capire lo svolgimento della celebrazione, ma altresì viverla come dialogo tra Dio e la Sua comunità. In sintesi, Cassese puntualizza che con «le sue due formule della messa, Lutero voleva rimanere nella linea della tradizione, sia pur “purificando la celebrazione con aggiunte importanti della dottrina evangelica”. Perciò i cambiamenti apportati non costituiscono certamente una *rivoluzione* della liturgia tradizionale (...)» (p. 155). Lo stesso concetto torna anche nelle *Conclusioni* del volume.

La monografia di Cassese ha molti pregi, tra cui quello di offrire una riflessione teologicamente ed ecumenicamente equilibrata, che aiuta a trovare una risposta a molte delle perplessità che spesso vengono sollecitate da una lettura confessionalista – di stampo vuoi cattolico vuoi ortodosso – degli scritti di Lutero sui sacramenti e sulla messa: da quelle riguardanti la presunta demolizione della celebrazione/pietà eucaristica da parte del riformatore a quelle che vedono in lui l'arbitrario inventore di un culto contrario alla tradizione, ridotto alla sola predicazione.

In forza di un riferimento diretto alle opere del dottore di Wittenberg e di un'ottima conoscenza della bibliografia secondaria, l'Autore risulta convincente nelle interpretazioni e nelle conclusioni, provando che un non-protestante può essere perfettamente in grado di dare un valido contributo alla *Lutherforschung*. Ci si augura che un tale lodevole sforzo possa essere apprezzato da tutti i lettori, in particolare da quelli di confessione romano-cattolica.

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**Gabriela Ivana Vlková a Jana Plátová, *Izaiáš. Komentovaný překlad řecké septuagintní verze*, Praha: Vyšehrad, 2018. ISBN 978-80-7429-987-2**

JÚLIUS PAVELČÍK

Z pohledu izaiášovských studií byl rok 2018 v českém biblistickém prostředí zcela výjimečný, byly totiž vydány dvě monografie s překladem knihy starozákonního proroka Izaiáše. První z nich, připravená péčí Josefa Hřebíka ve spolupráci s Jaroslavem Brožem a Pavlem Jartymem,<sup>1</sup> obsahuje revidovaný překlad Václava Bognera doprovázený výkladovými poznámkami a svým pojetím je určena širší čtenářské obci zajímající se o tento prorocký spis. Ve druhé monografii se českému čtenáři po dvou letech dostává do rukou další svazek *edice Septuaginta*, český překlad septuagintní verze knihy proroka Izaiáše avizovaný už v první publikaci této edice věnované knize Ester.<sup>2</sup> Už samotná jména autorek působících na katedře biblických věd Cyrilometodějské teologické fakulty v Olomouci dávají tušit, že kvalita knihy bude více než standardní. Gabriela Ivana Vlková se dlouhodobě a na vysoké odborné úrovni věnuje proroku Izaiášovi<sup>3</sup> a Jana Plátová potvrzuje svou nespornou jazykovou erudici především (ale nejen) jako jedna z hlavních osobností překládajících dílo Klementa Alexandrijského.<sup>4</sup>

Úvodní části obsahují podrobné, praktické a pro čtenáře zcela nezbytné informace o charakteristikách řeckého překladu knihy proroka Izaiáše (Iz LXX) a o způsobu práce jeho autora. Taktéž nás seznamují se způsobem a důvody, na základě kterých autorky pojaly své dílo jako „komentovaný ‘překlad překladu’“ (s. 20), jehož prostřednictvím nám chtějí přiblížit problémy, se kterými se musel starověký překladatel do řečtiny potýkat. Proto také uvádějí paralelně s překladem Iz LXX překlad hebrejského masoretského textu Izaiáše, přičemž oba překlady se snaží především respektovat specifický charakter svých předloh, což ve výsledku sice může někdy působit až kostrbatě, je to však záměr, „aby formulace, někdy i slovosled obou nabídnutých překladů umožnily co nejvíce nahlédnout, jak řecký překladatel mohl vnímat svou předlohu“

<sup>1</sup> Josef Hřebík, *Izaiáš*. Praha: Česká biblická společnost, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Kniha Ester v řeckých verzích (Septuaginta a alfa-textu)*, Vyšehrad, Praha 2016, 128 s.; přel. V. Černušková, úvod a komentář P. Chalupa (viz recenzi dostupnou online na <[http://revue.theofil.cz/revue-clanek.php?clanek=2577#\\_ftn2](http://revue.theofil.cz/revue-clanek.php?clanek=2577#_ftn2)> [4. 4. 2019]).

<sup>3</sup> Viz její bibliografii dostupnou na <<https://www.cmtf.upol.cz/katedry-a-instituty/katedry/zivotopis/vlkova-ivana/>> [4. 4. 2019].

<sup>4</sup> Viz její bibliografii dostupnou na <<https://www.cmtf.upol.cz/katedry-a-instituty/katedry/zivotopis/platova-jana/>> [4. 4. 2019].

(s. 20). Tomuto účelu, tedy objasňování vztahu mezi řeckým a hebrejským textem slouží pak i komentářové poznámky v hlavní části knihy. Jejich cílem tedy není výklad obsahu řecké verze, nejedná se o „typický“ výkladový komentář biblického textu, s jakým se setkáváme např. v komentářích řady *Český ekumenický komentář ke Starému zákonu*. Na druhou stranu i tento typ poznámek lze v mnoha případech využít k hlubšímu pochopení příslušné biblické pasáže. Překladová rozhodnutí autorek na s. 22–25 jak v oblasti sémantické, tak i syntaktické jsou jakýmsi předznamenáním, které nám ve stručnosti přibližuje charakter a způsob jejich překládání. Samotné kontinuální čtení hlavní části, tedy obou překladů a příslušných poznámek je velmi nesnadné a vyžaduje vysokou míru soustředění, aby z něho čtenář měl náležitý užitek. Ten, kdo publikaci využije především jako příručku k příležitostné konzultaci, zcela jistě ocení intratextové odkazy, které usnadňují orientaci a vnímání vzájemných textových a překladových souvislostí. Ačkoli text monografie byl připravován s velkou pečlivostí, není zcela zbaven některých menších nedostatků na úrovni překlepů,<sup>5</sup> gramatických omylů,<sup>6</sup> nesrovnalostí mezi překladem v textu a v odpovídající poznámce<sup>7</sup> a jiných.<sup>8</sup>

V závěrečné části nechybí shrnutí základních charakteristik řeckého překladu Izaiášova spisu: byl vytvořen pro potřeby synagogy židovské komunity v Egyptě ve 2. st. př. Kr. Jeho autor, který patřil k její intelektuální elitě, chtěl

<sup>5</sup> Např.: s. 60: *ditto* (má být *ditto*, viz s. 383); s. 72 (ad 7,13): „podceňujte i Boha“ (má být spíš „podceňujete“); s. 90: „slovu ‚hnev‘ (...) odpovídá v hůl (...)“; s. 93: „mávat třepetat“; s. 96: „termonologii“; s. 98: „překadatel“; s. 101: „oproti tomo“; s. 146: „vělekněžského“; s. 148: „Fénicie“; s. 158: „viz pozn. k 13,22–22“; s. 159: „ka-ždé“; s. 168: „*halpleg*“; s. 176: „snad je vytavěn jako interpretační vsuvka“; s. 180: „volný předvod“; s. 180: „s tím to lidem“; s. 206: „uvažovat i o volném převodu vycházejícího ze čtení“; s. 211: „na tom to místě“; „slovesná tvar“; s. 213: „poka-ždé“; s. 220: „než jinou hebr. předloha“; s. 229: „a já] utěšen“ (před „a“ chybí levá závorka); s. 235: „nebe pídí *změříř*“; s. 240: „překladová“, ve verši 20 slovo „zároveň“ nenajdeme; s. 241: „dvojici, v nichž“; s. 242: „uchopil svou spravedlivou pravici“; s. 244: „nám“ (*ήμῶν*)“ (uvozovky navíc); s. 248: „A nové zvěstují já, dříve vzejdou, vám dám...“; s. 250: „v MT se pf. *וַיִּלֶּךְ* se týká“; s. 269: part. prezentu; s. 277: „ten, kdo tě vytrhl/vyrval – chybí koncové uvozovky; s. 288: ka-ždou; s. 293: upřednotnění; s. 293–294: Kdo se mnou chce přít?; s. 333: izajášovským (čekali bychom „izaiášovským“ dle úzu v monografii); s. 345 (ad 61,5): za „...už ve 3,20“ chybí pravá závorka; s. 350: **62,7** (sedmička má být tučně); s. 360: „ponížít náš až tak moc“; s. 371: „převedono“; s. 372: (*θυσία*)“ (uvozovky navíc).

<sup>6</sup> Např.: s. 71: „LXX<sup>zi</sup>, jehož v čtení přijímáme (...) má...“ (chybí čárka); s. 128: „všechny zvířata“.

<sup>7</sup> Např.: s. 29: „dal jim vyrůst“ vs. „dal jim vzrůst“; s. 121: „Iazéru“ vs. „Jazéru“; s. 243: „také“ vs. „zároveň“.

<sup>8</sup> Např.: bez dalšího zdůvodnění je stejný řecký tvar, na který se explicitně odkazuje, překládán odlišně: 60,4: „jsou neseny na ramenou“ vs. 66,12: „budou nošeny na ramenou“; termín *γραμματικοί* se nenachází v Iz 33,1 LXX (jak je uvedeno na s. 374), ale v Iz 33,18 LXX; s. 384: v bibliografickém údaji u zkratky SD chybí uvedení vydavatele (srov. u SD<sup>k</sup>); dílo Beentjes, 1997, na které se odkazuje na s. 39 ad 2,6 nenajdeme v seznamu bibliografie; poznámky ad 4,1 a 5,1 se nachází „odskočené“ o jednu stranu, resp. až o dvě strany doleva, než by měly být.

svým řecky mluvícím současníkům poskytnout „věrný“ překlad spisu z doby minulé“, který však „byl koncipován jako text veskrze ‚aktuální‘, nakolik jeho formulace prozrazují cit k soudobé helénistické kultuře a snaží se být srozumitelné svým adresátům“ (s. 376). Tímto svým počinem také přispěl k upevnění židovské identity v prostředí helénské diaspory.

Publikace je na konci doplněna o rozdílné varianty ve dvou používaných edicích (LXX<sup>Zi</sup> a LXX<sup>Ra</sup>), stručný seznam použitých odborných termínů, obligátní seznamy zkratk a literatury a rejstřík odkazů na biblické a další starověké spisy.

Při čtení této knihy si mnohem jasněji a konkrétněji uvědomujeme, jak složitě je překládání starověkých textů a s jakými různými problémy je spojeno. I tak kvalitní překlad, jaký máme před sebou, je koneckonců volbou a jedním z možných překladů. To zvlášt vnímáme na těch místech, kde autorky upozorňují i na jiné překladové alternativy příslušných míst, pro které se nerozhodly. Tato jejich důslednost, poctivost a profesní „upřímnost“ je taktéž jedním z velkých pozitiv publikace.

Svou intencí a svým zpracováním tato monografie přibližuje české septuagintní bádání „velkým“ světovým projektům podobného druhu.<sup>9</sup> Je sice svým charakterem určena především zainteresované odborné obci, ale užitečná je samozřejmě pro všechny, kdo se zajímají o knihu proroka Izaiáše, zvlášt o její textové a překladové tradice. Můžeme s čistým svědomím říct, že se od nynějška jedná o zcela nepostradatelnou příručku pro každého vážného českého zájemce o hlubší a komplexnější pochopení díla proroka Izaiáše.

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<sup>9</sup> *Septuaginta Deutsch; New English Translation of the Septuagint; La Bible d'Alexandrie.*

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