

# The Phenomenology of Religious Life: From Primary Christianity to Eastern Christianity\*

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**Abstract:** In this paper I attempt a reading of Heidegger's interpretations of St. Paul's Epistles in light of the distinction between Eastern and Western thought. To this end, I suggest that Heidegger's recourse to the Paulinic texts represents his endeavor to gain access to the original structures of life by circumventing the metaphysical framework of Greek (Plato's and Aristotle's) thought. Thus, I argue that by doing this, Heidegger actually approaches the Eastern way of thinking, i.e. a non-metaphysical alternative. In order to better understand what defines Eastern thought, I discuss in some detail Zizioulas's interpretations of temporality in Eastern Christianity. Along the lines of this different understanding of temporality, the proximity of Heideggerian thought can be seen. Finally, I show that the importance of my argument lies in that it can open a possible research path for what Heidegger in his latter works calls "the other beginning."

**Keywords:** Martin Heidegger, Christianity, Eucharist, performativity, metaphysics, the other beginning

## 1. Introduction

One of the most powerful traits of Martin Heidegger's latter thought can be described as the desire to *overcome* metaphysics (*Überwindung der Metaphysik*). However this is not to be understood in the same way as, for example, Carnap's "elimination of metaphysics." The purpose of the *Überwindung* is rather a positive one, consisting in the pursuit of the "other beginning" (*der andere Anfang*) of thought. It is of utmost importance to note that we are not speaking about a "new" beginning, i.e. a break with the tradition and some sort of starting all over again from scratch. Moreover, between the classical metaphysical frame and the "other beginning" one cannot presume a relation of opposition. For the latter Heidegger, the paths that thinking takes do not go against or contradict each other; they rather complete themselves by offering thinking its full range and richness.

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Does all this belong exclusively to the thinking of the so-called Heidegger II? If we judge by the textual occurrences of these specific termini, then the answer is without a doubt affirmative. However, if we question this from a wider point of view, things could become problematic. First, it is not at all clear that Heidegger's *Kehre* – in which took place around the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s – means a repudiation of some sort of his earlier work. Second, Heidegger himself agreed with Richardson's distinction between a "Heidegger I" and a "Heidegger II" under the explicit proviso that "only by way of what [Heidegger] I has thought does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by [Heidegger] II. But the thought of [Heidegger] I becomes possible only if it is contained in [Heidegger] II" (Heidegger 2003, XXII). This "double implication" of Heidegger I and Heidegger II will constitute, in what follows, the main assumption of this paper. More precisely, the entire argument of my paper presupposes that, in order to better understand Heidegger II, one must first read Heidegger I, but in doing this, one should not neglect hearing possible "echoes" of that which in the chronological order of Heidegger's complete works is yet to come.

This paper focuses in fact on texts that constitute the so-called early period of Heideggerian thought, i.e. the first Freiburg courses. At the same time, the main hermeneutical hypothesis I develop is to a significant extent informed by elements to be found in latter Heideggerian thought, more precisely by those mentioned above: overcoming of metaphysics and the other beginning. In the center of my hermeneutical endeavor stands Heidegger's course *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* (*Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*, volume 60 of Heidegger's complete works), delivered in the winter semester of 1920–21. My intention is not to offer a complete reconstruction of Heidegger's account of the religious life, but rather to read his interpretations of the Pauline epistles from the viewpoint of a distinction regarding European thought, namely, the distinction between Eastern and Western thought – a distinction that is somewhat alien to Heidegger himself.

Although this separation does not appear *per se* in Heidegger's early work, I argue that such a reading can nevertheless be worthwhile. First, as I attempt to show, it can contribute to a wider understanding and contextualization of Heidegger's thought. Second, in the long run, it can prevent the further development of some already emerging misunderstandings of Heidegger's implicit relation regarding East and West. This type of misunderstanding can even be dangerous, in that it can lead to justifying more or less sound ideological, economic, or political claims starting from Heidegger's philosophy. However, in this paper I deal only with the first aspect, considering this one further only as a token of the importance of understanding Heidegger's connection with the (also political) distinction between East and West.

In the first part of my paper, I sketch the relevant aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of the Pauline letters. I also argue that Heidegger's interest in primary Christianity can be seen as an attempt to find an alternative access to

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the basic structures of life, other than that offered by Greek metaphysical thought. In short, I argue that, already in these lectures, the *overcoming of metaphysics* is at work. In the second part, I expand my argument by showing that this alternative to metaphysical thought took Heidegger in the proximity of what we call Eastern tradition. To this end, I take up a series of accounts concerning Patristic and Orthodox literature, and also Zizioulas's description of Eastern Christianity's understanding of *time* in the Holy Liturgy. Moreover, the distinction between Eastern and Western thought will also become clearer throughout this endeavor. In the third and last part, I attempt to show that the common ground of Heideggerian and Eastern thought can be expanded towards a discussion about what we could call the *performativity* of discourse. Following the extensive considerations in Antonio Cimino's book *Phänomenologie und Vollzug* on the performativity of phenomenology, I intend to show that understanding it in the horizon of Eastern thought can shed more light on something that might be later called *the other beginning*.

### **2. Theory and Scholasticism. The Context of Heidegger's Interpretation of Pauline Epistles**

Let us begin with a short overview of Heidegger's aims in his first lectures after the First World War. Heidegger's entire thinking path between 1919 and 1923 can be viewed as a laborious battle with theory, theorization and objectification. This is explicitly taken up in his dispute with the Neo-Kantian School (Natorp, Rickert, Windelband) concerning the problem of value. Heidegger's view is that the source and starting point of philosophical (phenomenological) thought should be exclusively lived experience, and not a derived attitude such as the theoretical one. That is, our usual dealings, our day to day behavior in our world, the way in which we understand things as valuable in the context of our dealings with them, the way in which we meet the other in our daily trade within the frames of the with-world (*Mitwelt*) – all these should be the spring of philosophical knowledge.

Still, how is it that the main attitude of our cultural tradition is the theoretical one? From Heidegger's considerations – which stretch over more than one lecture – we can see that he is already beginning to form his thesis about metaphysics as the product of theoretical thought. Heidegger finds the origins of this attitude not in some mistaken philosophical view or agenda, but rather in a basic tendency of life itself. At the same time, however, he shows that the Greeks, mainly Plato and Aristotle, were dominated by this tendency and thus determined the course of the history of Western metaphysics as theory. Again, this is not to say that Plato and Aristotle were wrong, or that all they did was metaphysics, but that some basic traits of their thought, of vital importance for the history of philosophy, can be traced back to the derived attitude of theorizing.

Now, if philosophy is determined by a derivative attitude, and its access to the original structures of life is to a significant extent banned, how are we then to proceed? Besides Heidegger's criticism of theory, he develops at the same time something that could save phenomenology from falling prey to theoretical influences. In his scarce methodological considerations, Heidegger talks about the so-called *formal indication*. This should be the way in which phenomenological discourse proceeds, radically different from the classical one, i.e. without objectification or theorization. How is this "methodological principle" to be understood? Attempting to answer this question we arrive in the proximity of the lecture concerning the phenomenology of religious life. In this course, Heidegger opened his considerations with extensive remarks concerning formal indication, and only later did he arrive to the explication of concrete religious phenomena starting from the epistles of St Paul.

The fact that the most extensive discussion about formal indication is to be found in the beginning of a series of lectures concerning the phenomenology of religious life is of great importance. By developing the formal-indicative methodology of phenomenological discourse, Heidegger brings to light an alternative to metaphysics. Reading the history of philosophy in a formal-indicative manner would mean to be aware of the specific attitude at work in it, which would be the theoretical one, for the most part. Moreover, it would also mean becoming aware of one's own attitude towards matters at hand, and engaging in a *performative* unfolding of what is thought. That means taking on your own the task of thinking, following and reenacting (*vollziehen*) the thought that is disclosed in the philosophical text. More precisely, this task presupposes that there is something like a *basic life experience* from which thought emerged, and toward which discourse indicates by its formal-indicative termini.

This can now be better understood in connection with the phenomenology of religious life because, as we shall see, the specific attitude of primary Christianity is one that resists theorization, and the way in which the letters function is different from the simple communication or sharing of an abstract, theoretical argument. My thesis is that by performing a formal-indicative reading of St Paul's epistles, Heidegger is led precisely towards seeing "formal indication" at work. This is not at all a vicious circularity; it is rather an expression of the fact that formal indication is not something like an exterior methodological part to some system of phenomenology. In other words, it is an excellent example of the hermeneutical circle: At the "core" of formal indication lies the idea that it is not something already determined, but that it is of a processual nature, determining itself again and again (as "method") as well as its termini, starting from and returning to that basic life experience that the text (in our case the epistles) allows to be seen.

Heidegger's discontent with theoretical thought is also to be seen in his dispute with the *theology* and *philosophy of religion*. The specifics of this dispute are relevant to our main topic because they reveal a similarity with Eastern

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thought: the necessity of an underlying basic experience as source of discourse. Precisely this focus on the basic lived experience is what constitutes in my view the early Heidegger's attempt of overcoming metaphysics. In the course that preceded *Introduction..., Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression (Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*, volume 59 of Heidegger's complete works), Heidegger stresses the *necessity* of a confrontation with Greek philosophy in order to gain access to the authentic understanding of Christian theology:

There is the necessity of a fundamental confrontation with Greek philosophy and its disfiguration of Christian existence. The true idea of Christian philosophy; Christian not a label for a bad and epigonal Greek one. The way to a primordial Christian – Greek-free [griechentumfreien] – theology (Heidegger 2010, 72).

The deformations that Greek thought is guilty of, in Heidegger's view, have to do with the fact that Greek thought determined the specific systematic way of understanding the soul, the faith, and other religious phenomena by objectification. According to Capelle, this is precisely what Heidegger thinks it's the case with the system of Catholicism:

[...] Catholicism excludes an original and authentic religious experience not mediated by the philosophical and dogmatic edifice. This predominance of the theoretical in Catholic tradition originates, after Heidegger, in Medieval Scholastic (itself heir of the Aristotelian transfer of the metaphysics of being over the categories of sciences of nature) which, in its turn, gravely endangered, in the bosom of the Medieval Christian world, the *immediacy* of religious life (Capelle 1998).

It must be noted that Capelle develops this reading in discussing the notes Heidegger made for a projected lecture series between June and October 1918 on the medieval mystic. Although the lectures were never delivered in front of an audience, Capelle stresses their importance in showing Heidegger's own distancing from the Catholic Church. The reasons for this can also be found, although in a shorter and unclear form, in Heidegger's letter to Engelbert Krebs. In short, it is clear that Heidegger, in the period following the First World War, after returning from the war front, grew more and more aware of the inauthenticity of theoretical, systematic approaches that were prevalent in Catholic oriented philosophy of religion and even inside the Catholic Church.

In the lectures from 1919 and until his departure from Freiburg, Heidegger developed the idea of phenomenology in a tight connection with the task of an authentic consideration of religion and its basic life structures. In doing this, besides developing tools like "destruction," or the formal indication, Heidegger brings to light from a new perspective one of the main themes of his first magnum opus, Being and Time, namely *historicity*:

[o]ne of the most meaningful, *founding* elements of meaning in religious experience is the *historical*. However, that which gives the specifically religious

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meaning is already found in experience. The religious world of experience is centralized in its originality – not in its theoretical-theological separateness – into one great unique historical form (personally affecting fullness of life). The constitutive character of the concepts of revelation and tradition in the essence of religion is connected to this (Heidegger 2004, 244).

Or, historicity constitutes one of the basic concepts for the understanding of the overcoming of metaphysics, which is developed in the writings of later Heidegger in the wide frames of the *history of being*.

### **3. Eastern and Western Thought in Their Essential Connection with Christianity**

In this section I develop the argument that Heidegger's recourse to the Pauline epistles as an attempt to overcome metaphysical thought brings him in the proximity of what could be called *Eastern thought*. The importance of this argument can be stressed in a twofold manner: First, it can be seen as a *hypocritical* gesture, weakening the rather harsh distinction between East and West. Heidegger, a Western thinker, schooled in the scholastic-metaphysical tradition of Catholicism, becomes aware of his own cultural determinations and engages on a thinking path which, stemming from the core of Western thought, leads him in the vicinity of Eastern thought. In my opinion, this can be understood as a clue for the inner connection between what may seem at first to be just terms of a radical antagonism. Second, following closely the previous statements, my argument can bring more clarity to some contemporary debates concerning the often problematic and antagonistic relation between East and West. This clarification can offer a better identification of the ideological traits that permeate contemporary discourse and vitiate the dialogue.

So far, it can be seen that the link between Heidegger and Eastern thought is primary Christianity, i.e. as it expresses itself in St. Paul's epistles. However, in order to fully clarify this statement, one ought to show the connection between *Eastern thought* (Orthodox Church) and *primary Christianity*. By doing this, we also gain a better understanding of that which until now remained to some extent unclear: Eastern thought.

#### **3.1. The Meaning of the East: Theology and the Experience of *Theosis***

What is Eastern thought and how does it relate to primary Christianity? The straightforward answer identifies Eastern thought by referring to what is known as the Schism of 1054 or the East-West Schism between the Byzantine and the Roman Church. The institutional and dogmatic disputes, as well as the history of the schism, are widely known and studied. Therefore, we will not dwell further on this aspect. More relevant to the task at hand is another kind of answer, which goes beyond institutions and dogmatic quarrels, and which offers an account of the peculiar traits and genealogy of the basic structures and ideas that constitute the so-called *Eastern thought paradigm*. Moreover, this second answer avoids

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assuming an opposition from the start, *i.e.* a sort of negativity or conflict through which and in which Eastern thought would be understood.

Eastern thought can be seen as originating from the early writings of the Cappadocian Fathers of the Church and remaining close to its origin: primary Christianity. The closeness to primary Christianity is clear in the writings of the Holy Fathers, namely in their insistence on the inseparability of *teaching* (theology) and *life*:

One of the basic concerns of the Orthodox Church, as well as of primary Christianity, is that of not allowing, on the one hand theology (as teaching of the Church) and on the other hand the Christian's life to move in different directions (Larentzakis 2003, 107).

What Larentzakis stresses here is the *positive* formulation of what Heidegger, as we previously saw, criticizes: *the theoretical approach*. Keeping together life and teaching (*theology*) means nothing else than *resisting* theorization. As Larentzakis further argues in his work *Theology and Life in the Orthodox Church*:

Theology refers directly to Christian life [...], and must not transform itself into rational-philosophical, theoretical-cognitive speculation, detached from concrete life and perceived as an alien body in Church's organism, and, on this ground, rejected (Larentzakis 2003, 107).

We observe the same notes that constitute Heidegger's leitmotif. Concrete life means, in this context, factual, day by day life, and not the special moments of one's life, e.g. Sunday in Church. By following Meyendorff, Larentzakis further explains the Christian's life in its connection with the dogmata of the Church by showing that

the duty of the Christian is not just the reading of Christ's Gospel or the simple knowledge of dogmata, but the living of one's life unto Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Larentzakis 2003, 108).

In Heidegger's interpretation of the Pauline epistles, the problem of dogma is explicitly taken up in connection with the so-called context of enactment (*Vollzugszusammenhang*). Here, Heidegger stresses the lack of a theoretically or dogmatically colored content, and gives the following explanation:

The dogma as detached content of doctrine in an objective, epistemological emphasis could never have been guiding for Christian religiosity. On the contrary, the genesis of dogma can only be understood from out of the enactment of Christian life experience (Heidegger 2004, 79).

How does dogma come to be? Larentzakis explains this by showing that, in the beginnings of the Christian communities, their new way of life was constantly being endangered by different kinds of heresy. This is why the Church had to respond with an "official" doctrine,

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[...] to show the Christians in what to believe and how to live. [...] Thus dogmatizations are concrete actions of the Church in a certain time and in a certain and concrete historical and cultural context (Larentzakis 2003, 109).

Following the role of the dogma in Eastern thought leads us to another key point of proximity between Orthodox Church, primary Christianity, and Heidegger's interpretations, namely the role of *experience* (*Erlebnis*) and its connection with *discourse*. If, as we have seen, dogmatization represents an action that is asked for in a certain context, what kind of *truth* does it hold? Larentzakis mentions that at stake here is the divine truth, conserving at the same time the "human" character of the expression. This amounts to a weakening of the power of words, and to an indication of something that remains behind the text as it is, i.e. to a certain kind of *experience*. Speaking about the function of words and language as it is understood in Patristic literature, Romanides shows what is the *origin*, the *inspiration* of the holy texts of Christian tradition:

And when and if he will reach theosis, then he will know from the experience of theosis itself what the words signify and the meanings he encounters in the Holy Scripture. [...] words and meanings used in the Holy Scripture by the ones who are deified and wrote the Holy Scripture, as well as the words and meanings used in the writings of the Holy Fathers of the Church and of the Saints are *inspired by God*. That means that each of them either had the experience of illumination, either of theosis, and they wrote what they wrote on its ground (Romanides 2011, 104).

It is thus not a revealed language, but an *experience*. Accordingly, a theologian is no longer like a scientist, an expert in Biblical texts, ancient languages, and so forth. He is someone who in speaking relates constantly to a lived experience. Moreover, Romanides quotes St. Gregory the Theologian on the forbiddance of theologizing by those who are not at least illuminated:

Not to every one, my friends, does it belong to philosophize about God; not to every one; the Subject is not so cheap and low; and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits. Not to all men, because it is permitted only to those who have been examined, and are passed masters in meditation, and who have been previously purified in soul and body, or at the very least are being purified. For the impure to touch the pure is, we may safely say, not safe, just as it is unsafe to fix weak eyes upon the sun's rays.

The access to the "thing itself" of the discourse is that which actually allows the discourse to be. Without the guiding basic experience it would not be safe. The danger stems from the fact that here we are no longer having to deal with a universal truth, obtainable by means of reason and rules of logic. However, as Heidegger also noted in other regards, it would be completely false to interpret St. Gregory's forbiddance in terms of the irrational and illogical. More precisely, the danger, in my interpretation, is not that of irrationality, but that of falling into heresy. The weakness of the eyes upon the sun's rays echoes, to some



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extent, the Platonic situation of the one who exists in the cave. The difference, however, is that the light does not belong to something similar to an *idea*, and the weakness is not that of an untrained, constantly deceived intellect. This touch of the impure could “apotropically” begin forging conceptual idols, representations, coining terms that would *define* God, etc. The impure touch could end up somewhere just South of heaven.

Theology, thus, differs in the Eastern thought from its understanding in the West precisely by being essentially dependent on a basic experience of divinity. Still, this experience does not seem to say a lot about the life of Christians, since not every Christian is illuminated or deified. If the vital recourse to experience applies just to the special case of revelation, then it would mean that we are dealing with something entirely different than in Heidegger’s case. As we have discussed in the first part of this paper, Heidegger thinks of phenomenological discourse as always relating to a basic *life* experience, i.e. something that each and one of us can experience in facticity, not in an ultimate, rare experience.

However, I argue that it is not the case that in this respect Heidegger cannot come to terms with Eastern thought. Cleansing, illumination, and theosis are, for the Orthodox Tradition, the ultimate goal. The entire Orthodox Tradition, as understood by the Holy Fathers, is a *method of therapy*, of leading the Christian on the way to spiritual health. This implies that the entire life is projected unto the horizon of theosis, and thus that the experience is a continuous one. One cannot speak about an experience of theosis without having had the experience of cleansing and illumination, i.e. of Christian life. The Orthodox “therapy”

is not a simple transfer of knowledge from books, but a transfer and succession in *experience*, in the experience of illumination and in the experience of theosis (Romanidis 2011, 62).

Knowing of God, as the ultimate goal of Christian life, begins, in the first place, with the acceptance (*Annehmen*) of tradition, which, in its turn, is nothing else than the knowing of God by those who experienced theosis. In short, the experience of theosis is based on an entire life process, and is meant to *communicate* through words the revealed truths in order for the other, in their turn, to be able to reach theosis. Tradition understood in this way has a pronounced character of enactment (*Vollzug*).

### 3.2. Proclamation, History and Temporality: The Novelty of the Holy Eucharist

Let us not forget that St. Paul himself is one of those “snatched up to the heavens,” who have experienced theosis and is now

aware that his mission’s success, and his very salvation, are bound up with the faithfulness to the gospel that the Thessalonians will preserve till the parousia (Vattimo 2002, 129).

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In this condensed expression of Heidegger's view, Vattimo captures the relation of St. Paul with the Thessalonians and, at the same time, the relation with the basic event of Christian life: *parousia*.

The problem of communication, as we have provisionally named it, is tackled by Heidegger in the interpretation of *euaggélion*, *proclamation* (*Verkündigung*). This particular phenomenon is to be further singled out from the context of which it is part of – *calling, proclamation, doctrine, warning* –, because, Heidegger argues,

in it the immediate life-relation of the world of self of Paul to the surrounding world and to the communal world of the community is able to be comprehended. It is thus a central phenomenon (Heidegger 2011, 55–56).

The life-relation is determined by the precise situation in which Paul writes the letter, as von Herrmann puts it:

Paul *experiences* the *Thessalonians* in their 'having become (genēthēnai) *as his and the Lord's followers*, and by this he *also experiences* that the Thessalonians who follow him 'have a knowledge of their having-become' (von Herrmann 2007, 25-26).

This "having-become," in Heidegger's view, is nothing else than having already accepted the proclamation. This, in turn, means that the *being* of the Thessalonians is precisely this "having-become." The "knowing" of which Paul is aware is not of the sort of theoretical knowledge, rather it refers to the fact that their behavior in their factual lives has now changed, *i.e.* they have turned from the idols towards God.

Here lies a special understanding of temporality, which Heidegger will later identify as the authentic manner in which Christianity lives temporality. Namely, a non-sequential, intensional temporality. In this case, the Thessalonians hear from St. Paul what they in fact *already know*. Vattimo rejects the reading that would imply a sort of "textual" knowledge of what St. Paul earlier said:

To reduce *egeneto* to the recent memory of Paul's preaching implies a literal reading that Paul himself refutes (and that we, as interpreters, cannot ignore), since his first preaching to the Thessalonians is the announcement of what they already are by virtue of Christ's redemption (Vattimo 2002, 127).

Thus, in the phenomenon of proclamation, the *historicity* of factual life as such appears: not in the sense that each proclamation is a lecture on history, but that the proclamation itself is accessible and is being enacted in the context of already having accepted the word of God.

At the same time, and on the other hand, St. Paul also follows his calling, in that he proclaims the word of God to the Thessalonians and to the others. He becomes what he is only in that *they* steer their lives accordingly. Moreover, a particular meaning of theology, which is close to the Eastern one, surfaces here. The fact that they *know* about their becoming

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is the starting point and the origin of theology. In the explication of this knowledge and its conceptual form of expression the sense of a theological conceptual formation arises. The *déchesthai* is characterized in its how as an *en thlípsei* (in despair). The acceptance consists in experiencing the anguish of life. A joy is bound up therewith, one which comes from the Holy Spirit and is incomprehensible to life (Heidegger 2011, 66).

This is, in Heidegger's view, the original, authentic source of theology, i.e. the context of Christian facticity.

The central themes of the Eastern Church upon which we have come so far – *experience, tradition, history, and temporality* – can further be explained in their proximity with Heideggerian thought by following certain observations of Ioannis Zizioulas on the *Divine Eucharist* and its role in the life of Christians. I hope here to show that the way in which Heidegger understands the life of the primary Christianity comes very close to the one peculiar to Eastern thought.

In the center of our argument lies the different understanding of *temporality* that defines the Eastern tradition of the Church:

The Eucharist is not a repetition or continuation of the past, or just one event amongst others, but it is the penetration of the future into time. The Eucharist is entirely live, and utterly new; there is no element of the past about it (Zizioulas 2008, 155).

We are not presented here with a denial of the past. The character of being utterly new of the Eucharist is not something like the everyday novelty that in passing by catches one's eye: a new gadget, a new car, a new commercial, etc. The new, in the context of the Eucharist, depends entirely on the intensity with which the event is lived, and on the authentic appropriation of an essential past. In other words, it is new insofar as it does not constitute a simple remembering of what has been, in a historical manner, utterly exterior; it is new because the present is understood as *being* at the same time past. This is why we could say, using Heidegger's term from *Being and Time*, that we are dealing with an *essential past*, and not with a past understood merely in a chronological (Aristotelian) manner as *that which no longer is*.

This temporality, I argue, is the same as that which Heidegger formally identifies as the one lived by primary Christianity: "Christian religiosity lives temporality" (Heidegger 2011, 73). It is a temporality, Heidegger continues, that cannot be encountered *objectively*, or determined by a certain concept of time, that lacks order (*Ordnung*) and demarcations (*feste Stellen*).

'Now is the judgment of the world' (John 12.31). This 'now' of the Fourth Gospel refers to the Eucharist, in which all these events represent themselves immediately to us, without any gaps of history between them (Zizioulas 2008, 155).

What does the lack of history mean here? More precisely, the lacking of the historical *gap*? The so-called historical gap or gaps of history presuppose a sequential time, a continual flow of the *nows*. The distance between this *now* and

another, regardless of how small, constitutes such a gap or interval. The *waiting* as we understand it today is configured as a being situated in the interval: we are oriented toward a *now*, toward a moment that is on its way here, which will come. Being situated in this interval means the *passing* of time, and it is often attuned by *boredom*. The endless passing of consecutive moments determines the approaching of the future as well as the distancing of the past. The more something gets closer, the more real it seems to us, and the more something sinks into the mists of the past, the more unreal it becomes, as though it never existed; it is effaced by oblivion.

Now, the lack of a historical gap does not mean *simultaneity*, as if every time the events would occur concomitantly. Rather, the absence of historical gaps shows the unmediated presence in the life of the Christian of something that in our everyday understanding can seem a simple historical fact, that took place long ago and of which, maybe, the believers are ought to be remembered from time to time. We are not dealing, thus, with a *lack* of history, better yet, with a *privation* of history, or with an ahistoricism, but with the outmost authentic retrieval and appropriation of history itself. History is no longer seen as something having to do with that which has happened and passed, but as something that in an essential manner determines our lives. It is in this way, precisely, that we can read Heidegger's sentence: "The character of 'having been' arises, in a certain way, from the future" (Heidegger 1962, 373). In the context of the present interpretation, this means the same as "the penetration of the future into time." The "Now" of which Apostle John spoke is a radically different one than Aristotle's. The judgment of the world that takes place now, or the *parusia* that already took place, takes place, and will happen, are to be understood in the manner of intensional or kairological temporality.

For Zizioulas, this understanding of time and Eucharist is specific to the Eastern tradition of Orthodoxy. In that which concerns the Western thought, he identifies, as Heidegger also did, its historicist tendency: the chronological understanding of time from the perspective of the subject:

The whole force of the Western intellectual tradition attempts to separate history and eschatology and fit Christian doctrine into its historicist and immanent mentality. Either the end of times is a separate chapter that will take place 'afterwards,' or it is the charismatic experience of a select few, set apart from the historical community. However, the eschaton means the end of all separate, disconnected times, the reconnection and reconciliation of our separate histories and the arrival of their future and fulfilment (Zizioulas 2008, 155).

#### **4. Performativity of Phenomenological Discourse and the Way Towards the Other Beginning. Concluding Remarks**

In this final section, let us return to the more general context of this paper, namely the overcoming of metaphysics, the other beginning, and the new

research direction into the performativity of phenomenological discourse. We set out to show that Heidegger's interpretations of St Paul's epistles represented the alternative to Greek metaphysical thought. Moreover, I tried to prove that in doing this, Heidegger's way of thinking converges with the Eastern Orthodox one. This proximity became manifest in some of the common pillars of these two manners of thought: understanding of history, time, life, experience and discourse.

However inciting this vicinity may be in itself, it remains of course still problematic and insufficiently elaborated and nuanced, the task stretching way beyond the scope of this paper. Still, although fundamentally incomplete, the present attempt could prove deficient if we were to resume ourselves to the simple observation of two ways of thought. What these final remarks thus support to show is how the possibility of philosophy stemming from primary Christianity (Eastern thought) is, in fact, a figure of *the other beginning*. Moreover, one of its essential traits is the so-called *performativity*.

Performativity is a concept that has a significant career in the 20<sup>th</sup> century analytical philosophy. Following the publication of Heidegger's early Freiburg Lectures, however, the idea of performativity entered, by means of the excellent contributions of Antonio Cimino, into the frames of phenomenology. Performativity, as it is presented in Cimino 2013, and as we will further understand it, would have never been of such great importance if it was not for Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity. As Cimino's book proves it, the discussion about performativity in Heidegger's works is complex. Still, I should try to sketch the basic ideas behind it that are also in direct connection with our previous analysis.

Heidegger noted that the center of Christian life experience is the world of the self as a distinct feature of the Christian life. The original structure of the life-world, developed in extenso in the course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (*Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, volume 58 of Heidegger's complete works) comprises the with-world (*Mitwelt*), surrounding world (*Umwelt*), and world of the self (*Selbstwelt*). Coextensive to this distinction, Heidegger also describes the threefold sense structure of factual life: content sense (*Gehaltssinn*), relational sense (*Bezugssinn*) and sense of enactment (*Vollzugssinn*). These formal divisions presented by Heidegger are not valuable in themselves, as coined terms. They are meant to help directing the phenomenological gaze toward that which is *original* (*ursprünglich*). Metaphysics, in this context, can be understood as being the fruit of a precise relational sense, namely the theoretical attitude, and a favoring of the content sense, the *what* (*Was*) of the considered object.

According to this Heideggerian interpretation of the theoretical attitude, the self-world withdraws in focusing itself on the *whatness* of the object, on the content of experience, analyzing, ordering, etc. Thus the detached subject of modern metaphysics, in Heidegger's view, is possible. Now, in saying that Christian life is centered in the self-world and that here we have to deal with an

“intensification of facticity,” Heidegger identifies pre-theoretical experience as the *locus* of original attitude and authentic thought, and institutes phenomenology, in its attempt to access this original sphere, as a performative *science* because “[t]o a thematic originality must also correspond a methodological originality” (Cimino 2013, 162). According to Cimino, performativity is to be understood under three further determinations: 1) as originality (*Ursprünglichkeit*), 2) validity (*Echtheit*), and 3) authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*). All of these presuppose phenomenology as a way of life:

The phenomenological life form is more original, as it is more performative, i.e. as it is more capable of expressing the performative dynamic of the factual life. (Cimino 2013)

Therefore, phenomenology as a performative discourse is no longer a theoretical description of phenomena. Its central impetus is the *enactment* of an original life experience. In other words, phenomenology becomes hermeneutics of facticity: interpreting the everyday life as a basic experience of life. This also means total involvement from the phenomenologist, assuming the first-person perspective. The performative discourse as discourse of the first-person is clearly connected with its centering in the self-world. The reenactment of the context of experience presupposes something like *transposing* (*Sichversetzen*) oneself into history, i.e. directing one’s attention towards the *way in which* (*Wie*) experience is enacted, being in the situation. In our present context, this would be the situation of the Christian. This situation Heidegger did not at all exhaust, as he did not offer a systematic overview of the Christian life; instead, he offered basic indications which allow the reader to gain as authentic an access as one can, i.e. knowing how to behave in relation to one’s own surrounding world, with-world, and self-world.

Heidegger’s interpretations of St. Paul’s epistles are indeed such performative endeavors. At the same time, they contribute to the development of the enactment-oriented phenomenological method itself. Its importance for philosophy can be seen from this observation of von Herrmann:

And now comes the most important indication, that only out of this temporalizing contexts of enactment of Christian factual Life, ‘the meaning of the Being of God’ (117) can be *philosophically* determined (von Herrmann 2007, 29).

This is where the connection of performativity and *the other beginning* is to be found. Heidegger’s thesis concerning the medieval philosophy, but also scholastic and modern metaphysics, is that it can be called *onto-theology*. This means that each of them needs a *concept* of the transcendent God in order to function as a system, without having an authentic understanding of His being or at least understanding this as a problem. Not only does Heidegger identify this problem stretching throughout the history of philosophy, but in this lecture we find a certain indication of a path, which heads out from the basic everyday life

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context of primary Christianity. On this path, the problem of the overcoming of metaphysics may indeed develop as the overcoming of onto-theology, avoiding the fusion of Greek and Christian thought that ultimately led, as Vattimo shows, to

[...] a history in the course of which the authenticity of the Christian message has been misunderstood, and that runs parallel to the history of the metaphysical forgetting of Being (perhaps not so much parallel to as intertwined with it; by the same token, onto-theology is only another name for metaphysics) (Vattimo 2002,132).

The other beginning could mean overcoming of theory, preserving the vitality of life and of thought, remodeling of discourse according to the desideration of performativity. All these would not entail going beyond ourselves, or jumping over our own shadow, but coming closer to our innermost possibilities as Europeans: understanding the original unity between the East and West, between life and theory. As I have tried to show, in the *overcoming of metaphysics* there is no talk of abandoning our heritage. Rather, we can now see that it offers the key to regain it by accessing the original life contexts from which it stems. Finally, our question could very well be one concerning the possibility of *the other beginning*: Can *theory* lead back into life, and not be just its opposite?

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