Heidegger in the Light of Tradition

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Abstrakt:

The thesis provides a comparative analysis of the work of Heidegger and Guénon on the subject of tradition. Although often ignored in scholarly research of Heidegger, it forms an essential component of his understanding of the nature of thinking, which he understands as a listening or hearkening to this tradition. In his thinking, history is understood on the basis of a fundamental occurrence, its destiny, and its completion in modernity. To hearken to the tradition, thus, means to listen to the occurrence that its thinkers express. In a reading of Heidegger's *The Principle of Reason*, the thesis attempts to unearth what this occurrence precisely is, and how Leibniz' *principium rationis* expresses it, according to Heidegger. Due to the close connection between the themes 'tradition' and 'history', Guénon's understanding of the history of modernity is also considered. In essence, many points that each author has discovered converge in significant ways, especially as regards the completion of modernity in the predominance of a calculative mindset. It is suggested that this allows us to complete Guénon's rather brief descriptions with Heidegger's more penetrating analyses. Finally, a reading of Derrida's *Of Spirit* allows me to interrogate Heidegger's neglect of the Christian tradition and to ask whether this marks a certain incompleteness in Heidegger's oeuvre. In an early text entitled *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger proposed as the task of the philosophy of religion to investigate religion in a religious way, which point of view I call an 'internal' one, as opposed to the extrinsic point of view that Heidegger expressly opposes in this text. It is suggested that Guénon's metaphysics represents a generalized internal point of view, and that, in this way, Heidegger can be said to be moving in the direction of a Traditionalist metaphysics. To what extent this can be said of the later Heidegger as well will also be duly considered.

Nyckelord: Heidegger, Guénon, Tradition, history, Christianity, spirit, language

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Content

Introduction

For the purposes of introducing this short study, in which I compare Guénon's and Heidegger's respective understandings of tradition and history, it is naturally more important to introduce the former, since he is still largely neglected in academic circles. René Guénon (1886-1951) is often cited as the founder of what is called the 'Traditionalist School' of metaphysics, although, for essential reasons, this is a rather confused and unhelpful nondescription. In order to guide the reader to a proper understanding of Guénon, the most appropriate way to proceed is to begin by providing a short description of the context out of which he rose to prominence. The significance of this context will become apparent once Guénon's doctrine is introduced. In conjunction with the latter, some introductory guidelines concerning the proper subject of the thesis will also be presented.

In his youth, Guénon was part of the broad and multi-faceted movement centered around a new-found interest in different 'spiritualities,' and ranging from the Theosophical Society of H. P. Blavatsky to the spiritist séances in vogue all across Europe and the United States, and finally, to the various occultist groups with pretenses to a 'Hermetic' or 'Rosicrucian' heritage. The latter often formed societies based on some modification of Masonic initiations, and it is in such an 'initiatic' context that Guénon first emerges on the stage of history. Although this movement is largely ignored today, it had a considerable influence on the French Symbolists and on abstract art more generally[1], and formed the necessary background for the emergence of New Age spirituality. In it, and in the intellectual culture of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century more broadly, a significant undercurrent of anti-rationalism existed, represented by such figures as Freud, Jung, Nietzsche, Bergson, Mallarmé and others. Beside them, there were also those who agreed with the critique of rationalism, but who were too sensitive to false alternatives to believe that opting for irrationality was inevitable.

One could write an entire history of modern philosophy on the basis of this crisis of rationalism, and in a certain sense, this is precisely what this thesis attempts to do. For in a certain sense the very driving force of 20th century philosophy has been the attempt to distance oneself from the 'systems' of post-Cartesian and post-Kantian philosophy, without simply adhering to whatever remains after one has abandoned them, for instance, irrationality. Thus, the program has been to try to move beyond them, requiring, first of all, that one is able to recognize their limits. The attempt to

[1] Bauduin, Tessel M. – "Abstract Art as 'By-Product of Astral Manifestation': The Influence of Theosophy on Modern Art in Europe", in *Handbook of the Theosophical Current*, Brill 2013, ed. by Olav Hammer & Mikael Rothstein, p. 429-451. Cf. also: Norton, Robert E. – *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle*, Cornell University Press 2018, p. 76. Although one cannot say that Guénon was a Theosophist at any point, nevertheless Theosophy itself was and is always essentially occultist in point of doctrine. Thus, a Theosophical influence on abstract art is occultist as such.

define the limits of modern philosophy, which in a sense defines the critical aspect of postmodern philosophy, also characterizes the works of the three most influential philosophers of the 20th century, namely, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Derrida. When Heidegger, thus, declares that "[the] time of 'systems' is over" (*CP*, 4)[2], he is simply reiterating a broadly held sentiment. For Guénon as well, the impotence of modern philosophy is intimately connected with its systematic form, for reasons that will be presented at the appropriate place. For both, the history of this philosophy is not only a collection of more or less unconnected sets of ideas, but it manifests a certain determined direction. Thus, progression along this direction can actually reach a completion, which is what Heidegger implies when he says that the time of 'systems' is over. This is what Guénon will call the 'crisis' of the modern world, of which the crisis in philosophy is only a particular manifestation.

For Guénon, as for Heidegger, the movement beyond modernity requires a new kind of thinking. It is also remarkable that both will formulate the matter in similar terms; for when Heidegger speaks of thinking as a listening, and Guénon speaks of 'intellectual intuition' as the 'method' of true metaphysics, they are both emphasizing the need for a *receptive* kind of thinking. It is at this precise juncture that 'tradition' enters our discussion. At first, it seems that Heidegger was not concerned with this notion at all, or that he in any case never made it a subject of thematic exposition or analysis, but this opinion is falsified on closer inspection. In fact, Heidegger even develops a very rich concept of tradition that is immediately connected with his notion of thinking as listening, which closely parallels Guénon's conception of tradition. This will become apparent in our reading of the pertinent passages in *The Principle of Reason*. Furthermore, the notion of 'spirit' that is central in this regard for Guénon, has also been shown to be far from a peripheral concern of Heidegger's. Rather, what Derrida demonstrates in his *Of Spirit*, is that Heidegger reappropriates the word *Geist* into his own enterprise in a way that decisively delimits itself against the subjectivist conception of spirit as an 'interior' part of the body. Although it perhaps constitutes a more scholarly endeavor than one might wish, we will attempt to present a thorough reading of Derrida's text, due to its importance in this regard. As concerns Guénon's doctrine, its exposition will be deferred to the appropriate place, and due to the relative obscurity in which it is shrouded, I take the occasion to present it thoroughly. Therefore, an introduction at this stage, beyond the comparative points mentioned above, seems superfluous.

As the point of departure for the entire discussion, I have chosen to present a certain thought from one of the earliest of Heidegger's published lecture courses, namely, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. The text is interesting for a number of reasons that will be considered at the appropriate places; suffice it for the present to say that its interest lies mainly in the

[2] *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, Indiana University Press 1999, tr. by Parvis Emad

fact that Heidegger here speaks as a Christian, and makes a point of doing so as a matter of principle. It is unfortunate that Derrida seems completely unaware of this text, but we will consider the problem that it marks for Heidegger's oeuvre, and thus, complete some of Derrida's observations. In the first instance, however, we will focus on the observation made by Heidegger at the very outset of the lecture course, namely, that our historical epoch is characterized by what he calls its 'historical consciousness', by which he means the particular disturbance caused by the awareness of other historical or cultural forms than our own.

Opening our discussion with this text is appropriate, not only due to the intrinsic connection between this historical consciousness and the crisis of modernity, but also due to the fact that Heidegger here diagnoses the 'theoretical attitude' (attitude = *Einstellung*) toward these historical forms in a manner that allows itself to be complemented by the thinking of the later Heidegger. In fact, as we will see, the idea of the 'age of the world-picture' (*die Zeit des Weltbildes*) is already beginning to germinate in these early ruminations. In contrast, he formulates the task of what we will call an 'internal point of view', and which finds a striking resemblance in Guénon's understanding of metaphysics, although the latter, in a sense, constitutes a generalized form of this internal point of view. In this way, and with reference to Heidegger's openings toward Eastern traditions, we will attempt to demonstrate that there is in Heidegger's works a clear direction toward 'Traditionalism', understood with reference to this fundamental idea of metaphysics as formulated by Guénon. The encounter between Heidegger and Guénon is, thus, not only timely as a matter of shedding light on ignored possibilities, but necessary as a matter of principle. This is all the truer in regard to the mentioned historical consciousness, for as the crisis of modernity is central to both Guénon and Heidegger, and as the presence of other historical forms is constitutive of this consciousness as such, so the encounter with other cultures is not merely accidental, but essential to Heidegger's enterprise. Thus, it is important to complete Heidegger's path in this direction with methodological parameters – which he lacked – found in Guénon and the Traditionalists.

If in this way Traditionalism completes Heidegger essentially and necessarily, it is no less true that Heidegger affords insights that are quite important from a Traditionalist point of view. For as such, and as we will see, Guénon's meditations on the history of modern philosophy are quite incomplete, affording us nothing but a general statement on its origins in the tendency he calls 'individualism', and a rather schematic outline of the stages of its development. We will see that Heidegger provides us with a wealth of material for completing this outline, as well as a firm foundation for Guénon's observations, going all the way back to ancient Greek philosophy.

A. Heidegger's Christian phenomenology and the concept of spirit

In an early lecture course entitled *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*[3], Heidegger attempted to formulate a phenomenology of religious life from a religious point of view. The attempt is essentially connected to a certain conception of the then current theories of historical and cultural forms, against which Heidegger proposes an understanding of history from what we will call an 'internal point of view', that is, one grounded in the experience lying at the basis of our historical development. In this part of our study, we will merely delineate Heidegger's discussion of these theories of history, postponing the task of discussing his understanding of Christianity for later. Secondly, in this part, we will discuss Derrida's *Of Spirit*, since it is the most significant discussion of the topic of *Geist* in Heidegger's works to date.

1. The problem of the historical in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*

To understand what we mean by the 'problem' of the historical in the present context, and thus to be able to understand the 'solutions' that correspond to it, we need first to grasp how Heidegger conceives of philosophy in this early lecture course delivered well before *Being and Time*. He begins by stating that there is an essential difference between scientific and philosophical concepts. Scientific concepts arise out of dealing and busying with beings in the actual context of the regions they inhabit, or, as Heidegger expresses it: "In the specific scientific disciplines, concepts are determined through their integration into a material [*Sach*-] complex." (*PRL*, 3) Heidegger rejects the notion that philosophy is distinguished from science simply by a greater generality, and the corresponding notion of the history of philosophy according to which sciences are merely particularized branches of a 'universal science', namely, philosophy itself. Heidegger speaks of this as a "prejudice on the part of current philosophy that is projected back into history" (ibid., 5).

The question he proceeds to pose is how we can arrive at the self-understanding of philosophy *qua* philosophy, which is to say, "not by philosophy's integration into a universal, objectively formed material complex [*Sachzusammenhang*]". Then, he proceeds to decry the fact that the problem of the self-understanding of philosophy "has always been taken too lightly", and states, *a priori*, that a radical solution of this problem "finds that philosophy arises from factical life experience" (ibid., 6). It is out of 'factical life experience' that a genuine grasp of phenomena *qua* phenomena arises, and thus, according to Heidegger's conception, philosophy itself *is* phenomenology (ibid., 16). Factical life experience by the same token affords us all genuine philosophical motivations including the problem of the historical, insofar as it is derived from concrete experience. In our era this experience takes on a special significance, for, as Heidegger points

[3] *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, tr. by Matthias Fritsch and Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, Indiana University Press 2010

out, "'[historical] consciousness' is said to distinguish our present culture from others" (ibid., 23). The problem, then, is one of 'cultural pathology' posed in terms of 'factical life experience', and hence, in the context of history as a living phenomenon in the midst of our *Dasein*. History disturbs us and oppresses us, and the development of different disciplines for studying history, and especially of different theories of history are responses to this disturbance. This observation constitutes the threshold for a problematic that is characteristically Heideggerian: what is the origin of this historical consciousness' *theoretical* attitude toward history, by which history is presented as an object over and against a subject? For this consciousness, as itself historical, is a part of the living history of a period marked by certain tendencies, as distinguished from the tendencies of other periods, also considered in their living history. The links between these periods can then be considered genealogically, should one be able to demonstrate how the experience of one period could plausibly develop from that of another. This, however, is not Heidegger's primary concern in this lecture course, but the observation is relevant in the sense that the actual development of Heidegger's philosophy of history moves precisely in this 'genealogical' direction.

What he is primarily interested in are the different ways in which the theories of history in vogue at the time 'secured a position vis-à-vis history'. Hence, the first way, termed 'Platonic', in which the extra-temporal realm of ideas is the guarantee of the validity of theoretical knowledge of any domain, including the historical, secures itself against the mutability of temporal things by referring them to the extra-temporal (ibid., 27). The second way, which Heidegger (or the translators) call(s) the way of 'radical self-extradition', views all history as a product of 'freely formative subjectivity', in the sense that, although historical meaning is dependent upon the reality of certain occurrences, their becoming meaningful is a result of *interest*. The latter depends upon a point of view out of which historical meaning emerges in conjunction with historical events. This, according to Heidegger, is the *epistemology* of history as presented by Georg Simmel (ibid., 23). Spengler adopts this epistemology and solves its nagging problem of subjectivity by subsuming it into a morphology of the objective process of history. The "security of the present against history is [thus] reached in that the present itself is seen as historical", in a 'becoming' in which "Being…rests in its midst" (ibid., 30). Heidegger does not clearly explain how this must be thought, but apparently 'Being' is here equivalent to the 'soul' of a culture (in the Spenglerian terminology) (cf., ibid.), which is the measure of the historical process itself. Since all of history is but the expression of the soul of a culture, each instance of history is referred to it. In other words, subjectivity does not relativize the meaning of events in history, which would be the case in the strictly Simmelian understanding of history. Rather, subjectivity (or 'interest') itself is capable of being objectively evaluated, when measured in view of the soul of the culture.

The third way is a compromise between these positions, and for Heidegger, it represents a bastardization of the entire problematic, which is in accordance with Heidegger's general aversion toward positions of compromise. One can certainly understand this attitude, since philosophical compromises can be produced with complete thoughtlessness and through sheer computation, of which this third way represents a clear example. For, in order precisely to avoid what is problematic in the prior positions, and instead of going back to the problem that is their proper origin, the third way simply combines them in maintaining that history "is a permanent actualization of *values*, which, however, can never be *fully* actualized" (ibid.)

In essence, Heidegger then proceeds to develop a 'fourth way'. However, this one proceeds from a complete revision of the problematic itself, starting from the observation that these theories themselves, as 'theories', must be referred to the living reality of historical consciousness. The task that Heidegger sets himself is one of understanding history from out of this living reality. At the appropriate place, we will see just how this is to be thought, but not before we have treated our proper topic. In any case, for the present it suffices to point out that this task, according to him, requires thinking through Christianity in a Christian way, which amounts to a considerably different solution than the one Heidegger will pose in his later career, as we will see. What this means from the point of view of tradition and history will be considered later. In the next section, we turn to Derrida's *Of Spirit*[4], in order to build an understanding of Heidegger's notion of *Geist*. This will be important for the subsequent discussion, where the subject of tradition proper is presented, as understood by Heidegger and Guénon respectively.

2. Derrida's *Of Spirit*

The question Derrida poses at the outset of his study concerns the word *Geist* and its transformations in Heidegger's oeuvre. In broad outline, the use of this word undergoes the following changes: first, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger stipulates that it is to be avoided (*vermeiden*), although he grants a certain value to it by using it in quotation marks. This strategy Derrida finds highly significant, for reasons that will become apparent as the reading progresses. Second, in the *Rectorship Address* and the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger proceeds to 'celebrate' (Derrida's word) spirit (*Geist*), and finally, in his 1953 text on Trakl – and, thus, over two decades after *Being and Time* – he will try to appropriate it into a specifically *German* canon, outside of and exceeding the bounds of 'Latinity'

[4] *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, tr. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, University of Chicago Press 1989

(as Derrida would call it[5]). Derrida also registers a further rather subtle nuance that he deems significant, which is that what is celebrated 'of spirit' in the writings of the 1930's is *geistigkeit*, whereas in the 1950's, this word will suddenly designate the *destitute* forms of spirit opposed to *geistlichkeit*. The latter, in turn, now signifies the more authentic form of spirituality. Thus, Derrida asks: "[What] has happened? What of this meantime?" (*Of Spirit*, 1).

The implication, which is made explicit more than once throughout the lecture course, is that there is a certain internal necessity to these transformations, one that is governed by the 'axiomatic' of the Heideggerian oeuvre, by its logic and its inherent limits. The first sign of this is the already mentioned 'strategy' (Derrida's word) of quotation marks, which implies a certain ambiguity with respect to the distinction made in speech-act theory between 'mention' and 'use'. For in *Being and Time*, Heidegger will, strictly speaking, neither simply mention, nor simply use, the word *Geist*, but will circumscribe it in an operation that is more complex. For it certainly allows the possibility of its *use*, supposing this use be strictly delimited from another, illegitimate one. Thus, this whole strategy is embedded in an act of delimitation against a certain use, which can only be *mentioned* for the sake of this delimitation itself (ibid., 29-30). Moreover, as we will demonstrate, this other, illegitimate use, belongs to the very center of the great tradition of metaphysics that, in one way or another, will be the focus of Heidegger's whole career, insofar as it is characterized by the endeavor to deconstruct the history of metaphysics. In this way, it is already becoming evident that *Geist* is not, as many have thought, a peripheral concern for Heidegger, but a central one.

The decisive context in *Being and Time* is the existential analysis of Dasein's spatiality and temporality. This context is also preeminently one of delimitation, against Descartes in regard to the question of space, and against Hegel in regard to the question of time. In both cases, 'spirit' plays a central part, these thinkers being viewed as representatives of a long and practically ubiquitous tradition of what, for the sake of brevity, could be called 'reification'. The basic shortcoming attributed to them, and by implication, to all who have partaken of this tradition, is the incapacity to conceive of spirit as *essentially* and *originarily*[6] spatial/temporal. For Descartes, the spirit[7] is a 'thinking thing' (*res cogitans*) and the body is an 'extended thing' (*res extensa*). The former shares no attributes with the latter, and yet, forms its interior part in the human compound, which, as has often been noted, therefore becomes an unaccountable mystery. Similarly, in Hegel, the spirit is at

[5] The word is not used in *Of Spirit*, but the concept, nevertheless, has a significant presence in the text.

[6] We intentionally insist on using the word 'originarily' as opposed to 'originally', since the latter word is incapable of designating the deeper sense implied by the former, which properly signifies "in a manner pertaining to the origin", inasmuch as 'originary' means "pertaining to the origin". Although the word is somewhat rare, perhaps even obsolete, it is frequently seen in translations of Heidegger, whenever the latter has used the word *ursprünglich*.

[7] Descartes makes no distinction between 'spirit' and 'soul', as was customary prior to him. No doubt, the loss of this distinction is in no small part due to the influence of Cartesian dualism.

first conceived as external to time. However, insofar as its essence is the negation of negation, it is structurally identical to time, the essence of which it, in a certain way, fulfills. For as history unfolds as the I's grasping of the non-I, which is simultaneously the grasping of the non-I's process of becoming known in and for the I, the non-I is, ultimately, incorporated into the I, thus negating its negation of the I. In this way, spirit can be said to "fall into time", since it initiates and completes its very process, thus being integral to its very essence (ibid., 25-30)

By speaking of the spatiality and temporality of *Dasein*, Heidegger is implying that there belongs a *specific mode* of both to Dasein, that is, one that is different from the spatiality and temporality of *nichtdaseinsmässige Seienden*. For Derrida, this is very important to keep in mind, because it not only allows Heidegger to take a step away from the post-Cartesian heritage in a purely negative sense, but it, furthermore, allows him to say that Dasein is temporal and spatial *because* it is spiritual, which would be inconceivable from the Cartesian point of view (ibid., 25). Unfortunately, we will not be able to compare the Heideggerian understanding of space and time to Guénon's, although this would be an interesting topic for study in its own right. At this juncture, it suffices to emphasize the fact that, if Heidegger concedes a certain value to the concept of 'spirit', it is not as an interiority that is externalized, but as one that is always already intrinsically 'external', supposing these words have any identifiable meaning after these remarks have been effectively understood. In *Being and Time*, it is doubtless the term 'care' (*die Sorge*) that is given the task of shouldering the burden of this new signification by indicating the sense of spirit's externality as intrinsically spatial and temporal, insofar as this term neatly suggests a being-given-over to beings in the midst of the same. For our purposes, these brief remarks will suffice for the points made later in this thesis and in respect of our topic proper, which is *tradition* as understood by Heidegger and Guénon. Indeed, it is primarily the later Heidegger that interests us, for reasons that will become amply clear later. For this reason, also, we will not treat the *Rectorship Address* or the *Introduction*, or the 1930's period of Heidegger's thought in general, to any greater extent than is strictly necessary. We will, therefore, read this part of Derrida's treatment more rapidly, focusing on a few details.

Dasein, understood now as, not only "caring", but as identical with care in the sense outlined above, is also essentially defined by a questioning intrinsic to its very being. As given over to beings, it is also called to maintain itself within an understanding of them that shows them forth in their being, and this act of maintaining is questioning, or *Fragen*. Heidegger will be remarkably consistent throughout his career – spanning all of the works mentioned previously in addition to the *Nietzsche*-lectures, his later writings on language and on the world as *Weltbild* – in opposing such authentic questioning to the sham questioning of the universities, where philosophy becomes a mere functionary of culture or science expected to produce a 'worldview', that is, a *Weltbild*, precisely

(ibid., 42). This questioning can be conceived as an *intrinsically intellectual aspect of care*, by which being-given-over to beings is not to comport to some alleged 'brute matter', but to beings *as* the beings they in each case are: a house *as* house, a tree *as* tree, and similarly for all other beings. This is what Heidegger's 1926 *Logic* calls the 'as-structure'[8]. Essentially, it is identical with what Heidegger will call *Sagen*, in connection with the Old Norse *saga*, which means 'to show' (*OWL*, 93)[9]. This, in turn, is a translation of the Greek *logos*. Heidegger will maintain that the Greek *zoon logon ekhon* expresses something essentially different from the Latin *animal rationale*, which is signaled by the *ekhein* ('having'), which, according to him, does not primarily signify 'possession', but rather, precisely this relation of 'maintaining'[10]. Thus, from *Being and Time* and its groundbreaking discovery of care, through its intrinsic connection to questioning as a structural possibility of Dasein itself, we are quickly led to the very center of our concerns in studying *tradition*, since *Sagen* will, in the later Heidegger, have an essential connection to *Zusage*, and hence, a certain 'gratuitous' aspect of man's comportment to beings, signaled by the *Zu*. *Zusage*, however, is also connected to a certain overdetermination of the concept of 'thinking' in the later Heidegger, marked by the network of terms employed to characterize it, namely, *Gedächtnis*, *Andacht*, *Danken*, among others. However, these connections do not concern us now.

We intend to skip Derrida's treatment of animality, and simply note that the entire structure delineated above is what, for Heidegger, marks the difference between the human being and animals. Thus, in a familiar and oft-cited thought, Heidegger meditates on the lizard creeping on the rock, and basking in the sun. While it does have a certain relation to these things, which distinguishes it from what we would call 'inanimate objects', it nevertheless does not relate to the object as this

[8] It is not fortuitous that the 'as-structure' is explicated in a work entitled *Logic*, since it is here not a matter of the academic discipline of logic *per se*, but of its origination in the Greek *logos*. For more information on this work, cf. *Logic: The Question of Truth*, Indiana University Press 2010, tr. by Thomas Sheehan.

[9] "The Nature of Language" in *On the Way to Language*, HarperCollins Publishers 1971, tr. by Peter D. Hertz

[10] *Aristotle's* Metaphysics *Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, Indiana University Press 1995, tr. by Walter Brogan & Peter Warnek; cf. especially ch. 2, §13. Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to enter into this discussion in any more detail, since this is one of Heidegger's most intricate and meticulous studies. Some brief remarks are, nonetheless, in order. Heidegger here translates *logos* as *Kundschaft*, referring to the manifold ways of making notice of things, including not only statements of discourse but prayer and wishing as well. Man, it is said, is distinguished by having *Kundschaft* at his disposal. The rather crude formulation presented above is formulated in the following way by Heidegger: "When we speak of the besouled being who has λόγος, we do not mean that λόγος, conversance [*Kundschaft*] (discourse), is merely added on; rather, this ἔχειν, having, has the meaning of being. It means that humans conduct themselves, carry themselves, and comport themselves in the way they do on the basis of this having." (p. 108) Although Heidegger does not, in this connection, discuss whether man can in some way 'lose' this *logos*, nevertheless its *Zweideutigkeit* as both 'conversance' in this still very existential-phenomenological sense and 'reason' in the sense of 'animal rationale' clearly indicates the possibility of somehow losing one's way, which is apparent also from the *Rektoratsrede*. In this way, the sense of 'maintaining' as discussed in the present context in immediate connection to the distinction between questioning and 'sham questioning' is still justified.

object. In other words, its relation to beings is devoid of the *logos* in its as-structure (cf. *Of Spirit*, 51-52). What it also lacks, thereby, is *world* and *spirit*, and this is where our analysis will resume.

Being given over to beings in the manner of Dasein means having a world, which is to be related to beings in the mode of questioning and maintaining oneself in the as-structure of the *logos*. This is what determines spiritual force. In the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger will speak of the 'destitution' of this force, in consequence of which there occurs a 'darkening of the world' – *Weltverdüsterung* (ibid., 58-59). At this point, it behooves us to note that *Being and Time* contains no thematic analysis of 'world'. Throughout his remaining career, Heidegger will on multiple occasions attempt to fill this void, which accounts for his excursions on godhood, poetry, the Fourfold, and other themes that could be said to make up his 'cosmology'. Most of the similarities between Heidegger and Guénon (and the other Traditionalists) have to do with such 'cosmological' matters. Furthermore, when Heidegger speaks of the destitution of spirit, he will point to the same phenomena as signs of this destitution as do the Traditionalists. Moreover, it is striking that both Guénon and Heidegger attach an inherent meaning to space, which modernity, according to them both, will abolish, so that Heidegger will be able to speak of a "worldless 'world-space'" in "The Nature of Language". Where Guénon will see this meaninglessness of space manifested in the lack of significance accorded to orientation, Heidegger will see it in the lack of significance accorded to distance. Both Guénon and Heidegger understand world as *prior to* space, whereas modernity tends to see the world as emerging from space or as being 'in space'. Guénon expresses the relation in the following way: space is an existential condition of this world, and therefore, the essence of the world determines the very existence of space as such.

According to Derrida, this discourse on the destitution of spirit is *not* a discourse on 'crisis', in spite of the fact that it "appeals to a historial [not 'historical'] *decision* supposing the experience of a *krinein*", that Heidegger "wants to awaken Europe and philosophy to their responsibility before the task of the question", and finally, that "he is suspicious… that a certain techno-scientific objectivity represses and forgets the question" (ibid., 60). Apparently, Derrida makes this negative claim on the basis that such discourses remain within the Cartesian heritage that is responsible for what, for Heidegger, would constitute a 'crisis' in the first place. It seems to me that Derrida makes an overhasty judgment on this question, and does not even consider the possibility that, if Husserl and Valéry speak of crisis while remaining in the Cartesian or post-Cartesian fold, they might simply have a false or superficial notion of the what the real crisis of Europe is. Here, Derrida might have had use for another 'discourse on crisis' aside from Husserl's *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* and Valéry's *The Crisis of Spirit*, namely, Guénon's *The Crisis of the Modern World*. Later, in our comparative analysis of Heidegger's and Guénon's

'histories of the modernity', we will see that Heidegger can, indeed, be said to be involved in a discourse on crisis.

At this juncture, it behooves us to draw Heidegger and Guénon closer in a preliminary way, inasmuch as this opportunity is afforded by our reading of Derrida. In essential connection to the question of 'crisis' and the destitution of spirit, Derrida mentions *die Sprache* and the *Zusage* forming its nucleus. On account of this gratuitous dimension of language, as understood by Heidegger, Paul de Man can reformulate the latter's famous formula as "*Die Sprache verspricht*", that is, "language *promises*" instead of "language *speaks*". What Derrida has to say on this promise is worth quoting, even if it be to some length:

> It remains to find out whether this *Versprechen* is not the promise which, opening every speaking, *makes possible the very question and therefore precedes it without belonging to it*… The call of Being – every question already responds to it, the promise has already taken place wherever language comes [I would prefer to say 'occurs', that is, in and as part of discourse]. […] This would also be a promise *of spirit*.
>
> […] That a promise announce or salute what has taken place "before" the *previously* [of linear-calculable time] – that is the style of temporality or historiality, that is a coming of the event, *Ereignis* or *Geschehen*, which we must think in order to approach the spiritual, the *Geistliche* hidden under the Christian or Platonic representation. (ibid., 94, Derrida's italics, except "makes possible…" etc.)

The later Heidegger will, indeed, speak of an affirmation prior to the question, which is the *responsive* or *receptive* aspect of thinking. According to Heidegger, thinking can respond in two ways to the call of Being. On the one hand, it can proceed directly from the call to tread whatever path it finds open with respect to beings, or on the other hand, it can hearken to Being as said in the call and attempt to bring it into view. In a sense, then, every question does respond to the call, as Derrida has said, but this is still a rather ambiguous statement; for there are questions that hearken to the mystery of Being in the call, and there are questions that are closed to this mystery and simply have a view toward beings, proceeding to them immediately from the call of Being. All of this still sounds quite mysterious and, perhaps, impenetrable, but we will attempt a more thoroughgoing analysis of these matters in our discussion of the Heideggerian notion of tradition in *The Principle of Reason*. In this work, Heidegger attempts to listen to the call of Being in Leibniz' famous 'principle of reason' and to see how the modern world responds to this call by obeying the demand resounding in this principle.

As Derrida indicates, the call of Being is essentially connected to the Heideggerian notion of *Geschichte*. Indeed, this call *is* the occurrence (*Geschehen*) that founds every historial epoch, and that is *destined* (*Geschick* = destiny) to come to expression in certain ways and to find

completion through these expressions. Such a 'destined occurrence of the call of Being in being said and coming to language' is what Heidegger calls *Geschichte*. For present purposes, it suffices to indicate this fact, which will have greater significance in the second part of this study. Before we proceed, however, we should note the difference between speaking of the *gift* and of the *promise*. Although at first, it would seem that *die Sprache* cannot be both simultaneously, since a promise refers to something in the future, whereas the gift refers to something present; nevertheless, due to the twofold nature of the response to the call, the latter can be thought of in a twofold way. On the one hand, to the extent that Being itself is not heard in the call, it makes more sense to speak of a promise, since there is something yet to be realized in respect to the call. However, on the other hand, since there occurs a response to this call, Being is nevertheless present in all that proceeds from this response. Being is, thus, given in this response, or contained as a gift in this response, even despite the fact that it remains in withdrawal. *Being is, essentially, the gift in withdrawal*; and this is why it is also a promise. This is essentially connected to the distinction Heidegger makes between the spoken and the unspoken or the thought and the unthought, which will be explored in the second part of our study, since it is immediately connected to the idea of tradition.

Derrida also notes, perhaps rather enigmatically, that this would be "a promise of spirit". Although Derrida does not say it expressly, it appears that Heidegger comes very close to identifying Being and spirit. However, considering the matter further, we find that even such an expression makes very little sense in the context of a path of thinking that consistently attempts to rethink the concept of 'identity', shifting the focus from the mathematical notion of 'equivalence' (*das Gleiche*) to the more enigmatic and much less controllable notion of 'the Same' (*das Selbe*). Indeed, from this point of view there can be no question about it: for Heidegger, *Sein* and *Geist* say the Same (thing).

Derrida also briefly remarks on the notion of 'soul' in Heidegger's oeuvre, as it appears in the latter's discussions of Hölderlin's and Trakl's poetry. The appearance of this notion in his works certainly strikes one as rather surprising. However, it would not be any more surprising than the appearance of the term *Geist*, and for the same reason. For ever since at least Descartes, the 'soul' has been represented as a 'thing' or 'substance' separate from the body. In the crudest form, the soul would be a kind of vaporous or ethereal body within the body. For Heidegger, however, *psyche* never denoted any such imaginary entity, but something that is intrinsically defined by its relation to beings and that is sustained in being by such relatedness. Clearly, he is thereby trying to demonstrate a connection between the ancient Greek notion of *psyche* and his own existential analytic of Dasein, particularly, as regards the latter's spatiality and temporality[11]. Everything that the destruction or

[11] Again, the central text in this context would be *Aristotle's* Metaphysics *Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*.

deconstruction of the history of metaphysics implicates in its critique would, thus, be suspected of a Cartesian or at least a proto-Cartesian gesture, signaled by the translation of *psyche* with *anima*.

As an attempted, or at least, implied and suggested, rebuttal of a supposedly 'Latin' heritage, this is hardly convincing. In fact, it is not difficult to see that, in terms of the substance of the terms, nothing at all occurs in the translation of *psyche* with *anima*, which is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the latter was, prior to Descartes, always understood in the Aristotelian sense. According to Aristotle, the different types of soul –the nutritive, the sensitive, and the rational – are distinguished by their *relation to beings*, which is clear from these very attributes designating the types themselves. To make the matter even more obvious, we should recall that, in essence, Heidegger himself attempts to revivify this tradition when he conceives of the animal as poor-in-the-world and man as 'world-forming' or *weltbildend*. No doubt, the relations are not the same, but in both cases, there is an attempt to construct a typology on the basis of a constitutive relation to beings. Moreover, Heidegger himself does not stop at what he calls the 'organismic level', namely, in the purely and exclusively corporeal sense of the word but wants to reach the level of the animal's '*capability for…*' (*Fähigsein*) that this organismic level as such points toward. The very meaning of the word soul, for Heidegger, would be decided by the fact that the "*organismic character* [of the animal] *itself points back toward a more originary structure of animality*" (*FCM*, 234)[12], determined by 'capability for…' rather than corporeality; hence, by a constitutive relatedness precisely. In the case of man, the unity of this structure – once the structural conception of the soul has been properly grounded[13] - would be constituted by the fact that he 'has' (*ekhein*) the *logos*, or that he is 'world-forming' (the two attributes being equivalent to one another).

With this in mind, we will now attempt to focus our attention on the topic of 'tradition', specifically, in regard to the question of the status of Christianity, which, after all, cannot be neglected when tradition is spoken of in a Western context. What is particularly problematic about this question for Heidegger is the fact that he plainly contradicts himself, when he in his *Phenomenology of Religious Life* demonstrates that St. Paul is innocent of any 'Hellenistic' dichotomization of the 'pneumatic' and the 'psychic' (*PRL*, 88), and then, over thirty years later in his *Gespräch* with Trakl, accuses Christianity and Platonism – in a "crudely typecast form", as Derrida points out (*Of Spirit*,

[12] *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, Indiana University Press 1995, tr. by William McNeill & Nicholas Walker

[13] I add this qualification, since Heidegger's attempts, although fascinating and much more profound than is commonly admitted, nevertheless remain tentative and quite preliminary. A full discussion of Heidegger's understanding of 'soul' has never to my knowledge been attempted, because one tends to ignore his lectures on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. To do so properly would require an extensive reading of *Being and Time*, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (or its second part, to be precise), and this latter lecture course. Furthermore, it is to be noted that Heidegger himself does not attempt to link his meditations on 'soul' in Hölderlin's and Trakl's poetry with his lectures on animality.

95) - of conceiving of the soul as a prisoner in the body, which amounts to the same thing. Moreover, in the former work, he even develops a concept of Pauline spirituality that stresses its 'enactmental'[14] sense, demonstrating that this sense forms the very nucleus of what later doctrinal or dogmatic developments will call 'Pauline theology'. Heidegger even makes the claim that a purely doctrinal-theoretical attitude toward St. Paul falsifies the very sense of his spirituality, which is grounded in the *anguish* of Christian *life*. For St. Paul, acceptance of the Gospel "consists in entering oneself into the anguish of life" (*PRL*, 66), by which one is able to renew oneself by enacting the life that one has entered. Christian life, then, does not consist in severing one's relation to the world and devoting oneself to the spirit, but on the contrary, it means allowing this relation to be transformed *in order to* devote oneself to the Spirit. One maintains oneself in the Spirit only by maintaining oneself in a proper relation to the world, and thus, Christian life allows the world to be perceived in its proper significance and proportions. It is striking that Heidegger will, in his brief discussion of the Spirit, emphasize the very same word that he finds decisive in the context of the Greek *zoon logon ekhon*, namely, the sense of this 'having', *ekhein* (*PRL*, 88).

What is most astonishing about this contradiction is that Heidegger will even claim that *only* the German *Geist* can allow us to think of 'spirit' as 'flame', whereas *pneuma* and *spiritus* are both connected to the idea of 'breath'. Furthermore, he claims that the latter meaning is dependent on the meaning of *Geist* in its etymological origination in *gheis*, which signifies "to be thrown… [or] transported… outside of itself" (Heidegger quoted in *Of Spirit*, 98). In fact, however, this meaning is no less originally present in the idea of 'breath', which does not suggest only a 'motive' aspect, as when the spirit is compared to a wind. Rather, the latter aspect is itself dependent on a going outside of oneself on the part of God, just as, on the part of man, the Spirit is the cause of ecstasy, as is clear from St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I-II, Q. 28, Art. 3. In fact, the relation of dependence seems to be the very reverse of what Heidegger claims on the basis of very flimsy evidence (or none at all), for it is, precisely, on account of the first 'ecstatic' influence of the Spirit that man starts to burn in love of God and his neighbor. This is the anguish that enables one to speak of God as a 'consuming fire'.

Finally, and to close the reflections of this first part, we note that Heidegger addresses our topic – tradition – in a decisive way in this early text. Heidegger uses the term 'tradition' or 'traditions' in sense that is anchored to his 'factical-hermeneutic' or 'phenomenological' understanding of the situation of Pauline theology, which is the anguish of Christian life. Consequently, he does not speak of 'knowing' tradition, but of *experiencing* it (*PRL*, 82). One could elaborate on the eminent legitimacy of such an expression, noting how, in the history of Israel, the traditions were constantly concretized by situations in which they, therefore, became living and

[14] This term is the translators'.

assumed a continuing significance for the new generation. Life not only assumes its proper proportions through these traditions, but the overcoming of its difficulties is made possible by the fact that they have been there before, guiding people through similar situations. Thus, Heidegger concludes: "That is why… Paul says only: stand firm and master the traditions that you have experienced." (ibid.) Let us also add to this his statements of the task of philosophy, which concludes the entire lecture course, for it is of equal importance:

> Real philosophy of religion arises not from preconceived concepts of philosophy and religion. Rather, the possibility of its philosophical understanding arises out of a certain religiosity – *for us, the Christian religiosity*. […] The task is to gain a real and original relationship to history, which is to be explicated from out of our own historical situation and facticity. At issue is what the sense of history can signify for us, so that the "objectivity" of the historical "in itself" disappears. History exists only from out of a present. Only thus can the possibility of a philosophy of religion be begun. (ibid., 89, my italics)

It hardly needs to be remarked upon, how exceedingly rare such a statement is, coming from Heidegger. He is here speaking of Christianity *as a Christian*, making it clear that this 'positioning' (to put it briefly) is *necessary* for a proper understanding of history, which has reality only from out of a present. The present *situates* history, allowing it to come into its proper domain. However, we cannot revise history, but must understand it as it is, which is possible only through our being properly incorporated into the traditions that have determined history. In this way, we can see how Heidegger calls for a complete reformulation of the problem of the historical, which had been understood too lightly by those schools of the philosophy of history that Heidegger mentions in the beginning of his lecture course, and that we have also briefly presented above.

B. The philosophy of history in Heidegger and Guénon

3. Heidegger on tradition

At this point, we are prompted to ask what the Heideggerian understanding of tradition is. Certainly, there is no strict definition of the term in his works, but one can nonetheless glean certain fundamental traits of its nature through a thorough reading of what he says on the subject in *The Principle of Reason* (*Der Satz vom Grund*). In fact, it is brought up surprisingly often and with some regularity in the process of his prolonged meditations on Leibniz' 'principle of reason', being interwoven in the very rhythm of these meditations, and for essential reasons. They are not simply meditations on a "thought" that the person Gottfried Leibniz happened to have, but on the *tradition* in which this thought occurs as an essential Saying. Hence, the concern is primarily with this tradition, and the thought itself is understood as belonging – in the first hand – to this tradition and not to Leibniz, who merely, as it were, "ventriloquizes" it, to borrow an expression of Derrida's. The occurrence of this principle in the tradition is destined by the tradition itself, such 'destined occurrence' being the very meaning of the term *Geschichte*. Tradition, then, is a *central* concern of Heidegger's thinking, insofar as it is a 'being-historical' (*seynsgeschichtliche*) thinking.

For Heidegger, such thinking is essentially characterized by a 'leap'. Such leaping occurs when one hearkens to what is said in the tradition as a Saying of Being, and thus, to another dimension or 'tonality' (*Tonart*) of what is said. In this way, one begins to hear Being itself 'proffering itself' (*sich zuschicken*) to us. In such proffering, the past takes on a new light as something that is not merely accidental in a stream of equally accidental and incoherent thoughts, but as something that has a certain necessity in view of the present and that is 'vouchsafed' (*gewährt*) and lasting by way of this necessity (*PR*, 60)[15]. In leaping, thinking does not merely abandon the 'realm from which it leaps' (*Absprungsbereich*), "rather, the realm… first becomes surveyable when one makes the leap – surveyable in a different way than before" (ibid.) In other words, the leap accomplishes a 'bringing into view' (to bring into view = *erblicken*) of what the realm configures, in accordance with the basic features of the realm itself. Thus, Heidegger can offer this definition of thinking: "Thinking is a listening [*Erhören*] that brings something to view." (ibid., 47) Such listening is required because the different statements made in the course of the life of the tradition – be it what Plato said with the allegory of the cave, or what Kant said in stating that being is not a real predicate – remain silent about what they say, even in saying it. Heidegger brings this listening to bear on the very essence of the human being: "To hear what is silent requires a hearing that each of us has and no one uses correctly. This hearing [*Gehör*] has something to do not only with the ear, but also with a human's

[15] *The Principle of Reason*, Indiana University Press 1996, tr. by Reginald Lilly

belonging [*Zugehörigkeit*] to what its essence is attuned to." (ibid., 50) Belonging in the occurrence of the destiny of Being means to be able to hear the 'voice' (*Stimme*) to which we are 'attuned' (*gestimmt*) by being 'determined' (*bestimmt*) by it (ibid., 50).

At this point, one might raise an objection that has the appearance of being justified. Does not Heidegger here speak of things that the philosophers themselves have never actually intended by their sayings? Therefore, would it not be a more appropriate method to simply read the philosophers in the context of their own works, and in this way assert the most probable interpretation of their words? After all, we are in each case dealing with a particular philosopher with a particular way of understanding matters, and with a particular terminology. Certainly, this is all correct. Indeed, Heidegger himself was exceedingly meticulous in his manner of close-reading, as is evident from his *Nietzsche*-lectures and from his readings of Hegel, to cite only the most prominent examples. Nevertheless, he maintains, "it [is] possible to run awry despite correctly ascertaining something" (ibid., 45). This is because "[seeing] something and expressly bringing into view what is seen are not the same thing". He explains: "Here, bringing into view [*er-blicken*] means to see into [*ein-blicken*] that which genuinely looks [*anblickt*] at us from out of what is seen – which means, what looks at us in terms of what is most proper to it" (ibid., 46). To apply this to the present objection, the important thing to note is that the intention of the philosopher is itself inscribed into a tradition that he or she does not master, and the Saying of which he or she brings to bear on his or her own thoughts in his or her own unique way, even when he or she does not expressly intend to do this. What Heidegger's thinking intends to unearth in the thinking of his forebears is not their express opinions *per se*, but what they leave unsaid in their explicit formulations due to their particular manner of inheriting the tradition. In other words, he seeks the unthought in the thought. This can only come about through a radical rethinking of the tradition, by which we are allowed to actually encounter it in a living way by being incorporated into it. Such incorporation can happen only when our thinking acquires the kind of necessity that all thinking possesses when its communication with the tradition is essential, that is to say, when it is genuine communication and genuine thinking to begin with.

What in Heidegger's thinking succeeds in acquiring such a necessity is the formulation of the nature of this necessity itself as a 'being-historical' necessity. This marks a peculiar state of affairs that needs to be considered carefully, for in this way, Heidegger not merely represents the tradition he speaks of, but he exceeds its very boundaries and inaugurates a new epoch of thinking that decisively distances itself from the tradition. This is the other aspect of the leap, the first aspect of which is to bring the tradition into view. It is not fortuitous, from our point of view, that it should be Guénon who can help us in formulating more precisely what is occurring in this juncture. I am alluding to Guénon's definition of 'crisis', which will help us bring more clarity to Heidegger's

understanding of the leap. Earlier, we noted that, according to Derrida, Heidegger's thinking is not a 'discourse on crisis', the reason being that such discourse remains in the Cartesian or post-Cartesian tradition. Derrida only forgot to prove this assertion, which seems to me quite unjustified. *A priori*, one might even assert the exact contrary and say that, should such discourse actually be able to point to a crisis in this tradition, supposing it does so in a decisive way, it would by dint of this very fact already have distanced itself from the latter. In fact, we will see that this is precisely the case with Heidegger and Guénon.

In defining the term 'crisis', Guénon begins by highlighting the common notion of the same as that stage of a development in which "a more or less complete transformation is imminent" (*CMW*, 2)[16]. He adds to this the equally decisive meaning that, at this stage, it becomes possible to judge the preceding epoch in its results (ibid., 3). The connection between the two meanings is obvious: in order for the said transformation to be able to occur, the judgment must first be in place and take root. This judgment, however, cannot be just any haphazard notion of the situation, but must be measured according to the situation as it truly is and be appropriate to it. Therefore, it must be able to perceive this development in a broader way than has heretofore been customary, or even possible, because the basic presuppositions underlying this development have been taken for granted. Once the development has reached a certain stage, the presuppositions stand out in a new light, and it can be seen for what it is. The basic traits of the epoch are manifested with greater clarity once the results of its development are seen from a general point of view. The connection between the results and these basic traits are then understood to be generative, the former being, in a sense, derived from the latter, as well as being necessary at a certain stage of the development. Everything now assumes the character of being necessary and of having a certain assignable place within the architecture of the present. When such a perspective becomes necessary, one has reached a stage that can justifiably be called *critical*. Having said this, we are now prepared to analyze Guénon's and Heidegger's understandings of the history of the modern world; accordingly, this forms the subject of the next section.

[16] *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Sophia Perennis 2004, tr. by Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne & Richard C. Nicholson

4. Heidegger and Guénon on the history of the modern world

Our task is complicated to some extent by the fact that Heidegger presents his understanding of history on multiple occasions, and with different points of departure. For the purpose of allowing greater light to be shed on points of comparison, we begin with presenting his meditations on the Cartesian *cogito* in the fourth volume of his *Nietzsche*-lectures[17]. From the very outset, points of comparison are likely to occur, since Heidegger links the certitude that Descartes sought to ground to the certitude of 'doctrinality' known during the medieval period (*Nietzsche, Vol. IV*, 88). In Descartes, the will to secure knowledge for oneself and to stake out the path for such securing is opposed to the claims of revelation. The security of certitude found in tradition is opposed to the security of certitude found in method (cf. ibid., 89). Thus, Descartes lays claim to a new freedom: "To be free now means that, in place of the certitude of salvation, which was the standard for all truth, man posits the kind of certitude by virtue of which and in which he becomes certain of himself as the being that thus founds itself on itself." (ibid., 97) Grounding himself on this standard of *certitudo*, of absolutely secure truth, man sets himself the task of securing truth by himself, not knowing what the outcome will be. Nevertheless, even if he should fail, it will have been true that it was he himself that failed, such that, even prior to this endeavor itself, he will already in advance have secured the certainty of himself as the one doing the attempt. Thus, Heidegger is correct in saying that this freedom of man occurs through him "founding himself on himself". How exactly does this appear in Descartes?

Heidegger presents a thoroughgoing and extensive meditation on the *cogito sum*, which showcases him at his brilliant best. He begins by taking issue with the translation of *cogitatio* with 'thinking'. Apparently, this is only a minor detail, but Heidegger shows it to be of some significance. He starts by noting that *cogitatio* is often used synonymously with *perceptio*, which serves to indicate that the entire enterprise is grounded in the domain of *certitudo*, inasmuch as *per-capio* denotes a certain 'taking possession of' (ibid., 104-105). This becomes clearer when we note that, for Descartes, "every *cogito* is a *cogito* me *cogitare*" (ibid., 106), that is, a representation in which the 'ego' or the 'I' is co-represented. In a lecture entitled "Envoi", Derrida formulates the same matter in the following terms: the subject, in the modern age, is not only the one having representations, but as such, is himself a 'representative' (*Psyche, Vol. I*, 107)[18]. He adds an important remark, namely, that it would constitute a fatal misunderstanding to think that representation as such is a "recent phenomenon" (that is, would coincide with Descartes), concluding that "what would be characteristic

[17] *Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism*, HarperCollins Publishers 1982, tr. by David Farrell Krell

[18] *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, Volume I, Stanford University Press 2007, ed. by Peggy Kamuf & Elizabeth Rottenberg

of this [post-Cartesian] epoch is rather the authority, the dominant generality of representation" (ibid.) While certainly true, even this statement requires some amendment, for as we have already seen, the authority of representation is already present in the doctrinal authority of the Church. The modern breakthrough would consist in the establishment of an authority of representation other than that of the Church. Such an attempt already presupposes a distinctly reductive notion of the real authority of the Church, which, as spiritual, is more than simply doctrinal[19]. Derrida describes the modern authority of representation as grounded in the subject himself, namely, insofar as his representations are either adequate or inadequate with respect to their object. The question of the value of representation, in terms of such adequation, is the '*matrix question*' of the epoch of representation (ibid., 107-108).

According to Heidegger – this time in *The Principle of Reason* – the origin of this reign of representation is to be sought in the translation of the Greek *logos* with the Latin *ratio*. Now, *logos* comes from *legein*, meaning both 'to gather' and 'to say'. The unity of the two meanings can be gleaned from what 'saying' properly is for the ancient Greeks. According to Heidegger, they understood 'saying' as 'showing', which is to "let something appear in its look" (*PR*, 107). Such letting, however, is allowing what already lies present to shine forth, this being something that comes to presence on its own out of itself. Having established this, Heidegger proceeds to a statement appearing as the conclusion of a demonstration: "*Logos* as *legomenon* simultaneously means that-which-has-been-said, which means, what-has-been-shown, which means… what comes to presence in its presencing [*Anwesen*]. We say: beings in their being. *Logos* names being." This bears an intrinsic connection to the major theme of the lecture course, namely *Ground*, which he proceeds to demonstrate (still on the same page) in an analogous way: "But as that which lies present, as what presents itself, *logos* is simultaneously that upon which something else lies and is based. We say: the footing, the ground. *Logos* names the ground." (ibid.)

Ratio names something related, but nevertheless different. In the context of production, whatever brings something about has the character of being the *ratio* of what has been brought about, and as such, it is called *causa* (ibid., 99). The verb *reor*, to which *ratio* is related, signifies placing something under something else by taking the one for the other, which thus, allows one to "take one's bearings" (ibid., 100) from the one in respect of the other. A matter is, thus, reckoned with by aid of

[19] No doubt, there has been a tendency, especially in the Catholic Church due to the centrality of the magisterium, to overemphasize the doctrinal nature of ecclesial authority. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that even this doctrinal authority itself is essentially spiritual in nature. For although, outwardly speaking, it consists in articulating and defining the faith, the latter is itself a spiritual reality in that it defines our relationship with God. As we have seen, Heidegger himself – in his *Phenomenology of Religious Life* – has given us resources for understanding doctrinal authority as spiritual, for indeed, what he unearths in St. Paul is the essential dependency of the doctrinal portion of his epistles to the spiritual reality of the anguish of Christian life, through which the doctrinal content acquires its very significance.

another and by attending to the latter, so that the intended effect is brought about. *Ratio* has the sense of *reckoning* (*rechnen*) or *calculation* within the domain of production (ibid.) *Repraesentatio* is completely dominated by this concept of *ratio*, which thereby becomes destined to be the guiding word for the 'systematization' of philosophy through the mathematical method. Indeed, to take one's bearings on one thing with the aid of another, and thus, to represent the one by means of the other, is the pre-eminent prerogative of the 'mathematical' as such. Heidegger himself, in another context, shows how Descartes initiated the modern extension of the mathematical method to the domain of philosophy, and how this is connected with the original Greek sense of the 'mathematical'. Since this is clearly of central importance for a proper understanding of Heidegger's 'history of philosophy' (to put it briefly), it will not be fortuitous to consider his discussion of the topic in the lecture course entitled *Being and Truth*. We propose to discuss the topic together with the topic of the 'principle of reason', in order to be able to draw some general conclusions concerning the modern understanding of *ratio* or reason. There is also a natural segue from the question of the status of the mathematical method to that of the nature of the principle of reason, which makes this manner of proceeding even more appropriate.

5. *Ratio*, the mathematical method, and the principle of reason

In *Being and Truth*, Heidegger takes a very important step toward his later insights on the reign of the epoch of *repraesentatio*. He sets out to demonstrate how the 'methodological' and the 'mathematical' are intrinsically connected in the ancient Greek understanding of *ta mathemata*, and what the significance of this connection is to the modern concept of method in philosophy. The mathematical, as understood today, as having to do with quantity and with quantitative relations, is actually a derivative concept owing its determination to something prior, of which such things are the preeminent instance. *Ta mathemata* refers to the 'teachable' in the sense of what can be communicated and received in a preeminent way. Such communication and reception have their own particular mode in the domain of mathematics, distinguished by the fact that they require no prior dealings with things in order to occur. Rather, whatever is communicated can only be received if the one being taught communicates the matter to himself, in each instance of the learning procedure and with each new item of knowledge. Thus, Heidegger concludes with the following words, in which the connection to method is demonstrated as well:

> The mathematical is what can be taught and learned in a preeminent sense. It *begins* with *principles* that everyone can attain on his own; it *develops* into *inferences* whose progression also unfolds in itself. The mathematical bears within it the beginning,

> progression, and goal of an activity that is contained within itself; that is, it is in itself… a *method*. (*BT*, 26)[20]

Heidegger proceeds to demonstrate that this conception concurs precisely with that held by Descartes, whose main contribution to philosophy was to introduce the mathematical method. From the present point of view, that is, in regard to our comparative task, it is also highly significant that the two components of the method as envisaged by Descartes are called *intuitus* and *deductio* (ibid., 27), for as the knowledge established by its means was to be all-embracing, it follows that Descartes excludes the possibility of a non-mathematical intuition. With this, he breaks radically from Scholasticism, and in particular, from St. Thomas Aquinas.

Although we must return to the subject at a later point, we should briefly elucidate this point at present, since it has been introduced. For St. Thomas, the proper operation of the intellect is vision, and its proper object is 'what a thing is', the apprehension of which is, therefore, called 'intellectual vision' and is understood to constitute the perfection of the intellect. The word *intuitus* comes from *intueri*, which is often rendered in English as 'beholding', and thus, precisely this operation of the intellect. Furthermore, the ultimate framework of this operation is, according to St. Thomas, not merely 'information' as a set of detached and scattered items of knowledge, but the very perfection of man himself, which consists in the vision of God attained through salvation. Ultimately, the *certitudo* of the medieval world is not that of 'doctrinality', as Heidegger maintains, but that of the vision of God[21]. In fact, Heidegger himself must have understood this state of affairs earlier in his career, when – in his *Habilitationsschrift* of 1915 (13 years before *Being and Time*) on an author falsely thought to be Duns Scotus – he says that the common notion of the medieval worldview as split between the opposites of Scholasticism and mysticism must be denounced as false. In an obvious contrast to his later writings, where he seems to opt for this common notion, he concludes with a startling insight: "In the medieval world-view, scholasticism and mysticism belong essentially together."[22] These points are important for us to keep in mind, since the Traditionalists have attempted to rehabilitate this ancient notion of intellectual intuition, which also has a particular meaning for Guénon as regards the more specifically 'initiatic' point of view. For the present, however, we confine ourselves to these preliminary remarks.

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[20] *Being and Truth*, Indiana University Press 2010, tr. by Gregory Fried & Richard Polt

[21] Again, we see how Heidegger, later in his career, took a much more reductive stance toward Christianity than he had done previously. This Thomist understanding of the perfection of the intellect goes to show just how true it is to say what we already said in a previous footnote, namely, that for the medieval world, doctrinality is subordinated to spirituality.

[22] What is said here of the *Habilitationsschrift* is taken from John D. Caputo's *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, Ohio University Press 1984, p. 7. The quote from Heidegger appears on the same page. In addition, we must again draw attention to the fact that doctrinality is here conceived as subordinated to spirituality, and what Heidegger here says merely reiterates the same point from a slightly different point of view.

Important to note is that, whereas intellectual intuition in St. Thomas certainly requires the correlation of a 'subject' and an 'object', nevertheless one cannot justifiably speak of the 'subject-object relation' in the modern sense in his work. In the latter, one must take an irreducible intervening principle into consideration, which is precisely the method itself. In some enigmatic way, then, it seems that 'method' secretly determines the very nature of the correlation between subject and object in the modern sense. One should, therefore, ask how it could acquire such power that it was ultimately able to determine our very experience of ourselves vis-à-vis objects. For modernity, the subject is the one positing himself over and against objects in positing objects over and against himself, which self-determination proceeds from the freedom he assumes in attempting to obtain certitude for himself and by himself alone. What reigns prior to method is, thus, *representation*. In fact, method is what allows man to find self-assurance in embarking on this project of obtaining certitude, and thus answers a need that looms in the background of this freedom.

In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger will further elucidate the connections in the framework of the epoch of *repraesentatio*. If method is what empowers man to embark on the journey of obtaining certitude, one might still ask what exactly is empowering in it. Certainly, this empowering character must consist in its actually having a relation to certitude, and in thus being able to promise its being attained by it. In representing, the subject attempts to grasp the object in such a way that the object itself assumes its proper stance in such grasping and is, therefore, truly apprehended in it. This is what is expressed in Leibniz' 'principle of reason': *Nihil est sine ratione*, "nothing is without reason". In its strict formulation, it is called the *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis*, or "the fundamental principle of rendering sufficient reasons" (cf. *PR*, 33). For Heidegger, the most decisive word in this formulation is the *reddendae*, since it alludes to what Heidegger calls the 'demand-character' of the principle. As a principle that demands or that has a claim[23] on man as subject, it is a principle of cognition (*Erkennen*), and of what distinguishes adequate from inadequate cognition. Only the cognition that can account for the positing of an object in a manner that is sufficient in respect of the object itself is adequate, and therein it fulfills the demand of the principle of reason in accordance with its strict formulation (ibid., 23).

The above considerations are intrinsically connected to the theme of 'power'. Heidegger at length considers why Leibniz thought of the principle of reason as a 'mighty' (*mächtig, grossmächtig*) principle. If it were solely concerned with cognition in isolation from beings, in other words, as a psychological fact, such a characterization would appear rather exaggerated. Neither, however, is it mighty solely in respect of the fact that it is valid for all being of whatever domain or region of beings, although this is the first feature singled out by Heidegger (ibid., 26). As such,

[23] 'Demand' is Reginald Lilly's translation of *Anspruch*, which also means 'claim'.

however, this would only manifest the "scope of its jurisdiction" (ibid.) The 'might' (*Macht*) of the principle is manifested by the fact that, as a *fundamental* principle of cognition, it *grounds* the latter in its power with respect to beings. In subordinating itself to the demand to render reasons, such that it itself demands reasons to be always rendered back to it, cognition projects this demand out unto beings, and allows them to take a stance over and against itself only on condition that they are sufficiently grounded in their reasons (ibid., 27). Only through the completeness of the account of the determinations of the object is the latter allowed to assume its stance amidst beings, this completeness being that of the object itself, its *perfectio*. Only such an account is sufficient (cf. ibid., 33).

In giving expression to the principle of reason, Leibniz was hearkening to a claim that resounds in all intrinsically modern activities. This principle is the word that empowers modernity as such to be true to itself in attempting to ground man on himself. By hearkening to its claim consistently, he gives way to the 'reign of method'[24] by which the epoch of representation is consolidated. Modernity has made itself ubiquitous, such that one can in fact speak of modernity as constituting the very essence of our world, which can, therefore, be called the *modern* world. The possibility of such a consolidation depends on the configuration by which method is allowed to reign. Heidegger never gave a single systematic account of this configuration, but there are plenty of indications in his works that what he calls the reign of 'planetary calculation' – which is simply the 'reign of method' considered in its real scope – depends on the confluence of certain phenomena that together bring this state of affairs about. In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger makes particular reference to modern science and the modern university. The latter is, naturally, the abode in which the former is established in its societal status, and in and through which its work takes place. This science, Heidegger says, "understands itself as the exemplary mode of the founding representation of objects" (ibid., 28), and is, therefore, founded on the principle of reason. While the university, for its part, is certainly important in establishing the reign of method, it is itself only a part of the broader publishing industry, which Heidegger deems especially significant as a peculiar sign of the times. In order to understand how this is so, the following passage – from the "Age of the World-Picture"-essay – deserves to be quoted at some length:

> The growing importance of the publishing business is not based merely on the fact that publishers… come to have the best ear for the needs of the public or that they are better businessmen than are authors. Rather their peculiar work takes the form of a procedure that plans and that establishes itself with a view to the way in which, through the prearranged and limited publication of books and periodicals, they are to bring the world into the picture for the public and confirm it publicly. The preponderance of collections,

[24] This expression appears in *On the Way to Language*, in the lecture "The Nature of Language".

> of sets of books, of series and pocket editions, is already a consequence of this work on the part of publishers, which in turn coincides with the aims of researchers, since the latter not only are acknowledged and given consideration more easily and more rapidly through collections and sets, but, reaching a wider public, they immediately achieve their intended effect. (quoted in "Envoi", *Psyche, Vol. I*, 104)

Instead of philosophers producing 'systems' for a limited audience, as in times prior to the era of planetary calculation and of the 'world-picture', we now witness a ubiquitous public space, in which the world appears through the lens of the modern publishing industry, to which we must also add the modern media industry. Technology engineers modern man so that he will be able to serve it and to subject himself to its demands (cf. *Nietzsche Vol. IV*, 117). Indeed, the existence of the modern world as such would be inconceivable without the existence of modern man, and the development of modernity itself has occurred through a certain mutual reinforcement between the one and the other.

Having now, in broad outline, characterized the history of metaphysics according to Heidegger – its point of departure in the *logos* of the Greeks, the translation of the latter by *ratio* and the consequent predominance of *repraesentatio*, consolidated by the introduction of the mathematical method, and finally, the establishing of the reign of method as a ubiquitous reign of planetary calculation through the institutionalization of modern science in the modern university, and the dissemination of its world-picture through the publishing industry and modern media – we turn to Guénon. In the following section, we will present his understanding of tradition, after which we proceed to his understanding of the history of the modern world.

We conclude the present section with a final remark worth emphasizing. An effective critique of representation must first of all recognize the fact that it is not affirmed as simply as any other mundane state of affairs. In this case, one is not innocent of what one is critiquing, and one cannot, therefore, simply move beyond representation. Moreover, the statement that we are already affected by what we are critiquing should not be made as blithely as the analogous one so often heard in the human sciences, namely, that we are "always a part of our culture". Rather, we should understand – in a concrete way – that this embeddedness affects *a priori* the very conception of the work of critique, insofar as one still understands it as a matter of 'philosophy' as opposed to other 'academic disciplines'. Such a demarcation would already occur and be determined by representation, which suggests that a proper 'critique' (if this is still the right word) necessarily affects *all disciplines*. That is, it must – by its very nature – be as ubiquitous and unlimited in its range as modernity itself is. This consideration must already be firmly established and rooted in one's consciousness when one

proceeds to utter what Derrida – in another context[25] – calls a 'matrix statement', namely, that "the essence of representation … is not representable…" (*Psyche, Vol. I*, 111) That is, it can no longer be a matter of representing the development of the theme of 'representation' in philosophy, and then imputing to philosophy some kind of generative role in the birth of the modern world. Rather, what is of central and irreducible importance is the *experience* that the world in which we live and of which we partake responds to a certain call, and indeed, that it would not exist to begin with if it did not do so. The role of philosophy is not in fact generative, but consists in bringing this response to expression and of allowing it to be said, and thus, to be shown. The language that philosophy speaks is spoken everywhere, but it can perhaps be heard – in its proper essence – more sharply in philosophy. The experience alluded to above is, essentially, an experience of language, and the fact that Heidegger's *thinking* (not 'philosophy') is concerned with such an experience can be gleaned from a central text of the later Heidegger, namely, "The Nature of Language", in which the whole endeavor is an attempt "to bring us face to face with a possibility of undergoing an experience with language" (*OWL*, 57). It is to be hoped, then, that the results of this 'comparative analysis' will not simply conform to what this trite designation ('comparative analysis') might suggest, but that it might contribute to making such an experience possible. Therefore, it will be important, from the outset, to consider Guénon's work in view of its broader claims and not impose any unnecessary restrictions on our endeavor.

6. Guénon on tradition

What we will say next necessarily transgresses 'philosophy' in its academic form, even more so than the above considerations relating to Heidegger, for although a proper appreciation of the latter's work cannot fail to place philosophy as an academic discipline in its proper proportions, nevertheless he belongs – as a matter of purely contingent circumstances – to the 'corpus' of the history of philosophy, whereas Guénon does not. Certainly, there is nothing about this that is particularly offensive, for it lies in the very nature of Guénon's work that the 'modern university' – to borrow Heidegger's expression – could not find any particular use for his work, since it so radically undermines its very status. However, one could well argue that the supposedly obvious place of Heidegger in the philosophical corpus of the modern university marks an internal crisis within it, insofar as its radical appreciation would call for a restructuring of the academic disciplines as such, belonging as they do to the epoch of representation.

[25] In *Of Spirit*, Derrida mentions the statement that "the essence of technology is not itself technological", and calls it a 'matrix statement' (*Of Spirit*, 10). The intrinsic connection between technology and representation makes it justifiable to apply this term ('matrix statement') here.

We have deliberately postponed introducing Guénon's work, which we proceed to do at this juncture, since one must be mindful of the very nature of this work, if one is to avoid certain rather elementary misunderstandings. This is all the more important due to the fact that the modern man will easily find plenty of things to be offended by therein, even to the extent that he might consider it quite distasteful and excessively polemical. Now, the most fundamental consideration one can make by way of introduction is that Guénon's work is, first and foremost, a theoretical preliminary for those entering on the spiritual path, and in particular, on the initiatic path of esoteric traditions. Thus, it is, naturally, concerned with the nature of tradition and of initiation, but it also contains as one of its essential elements a critique of the modern world. Many view this as an unnecessary extension of Guénon's enterprise, and it certainly cannot be denied that it makes the scope of his claims unusually broad, even to the point of alienating many who would, perhaps, otherwise be sympathetic to the purely doctrinal and metaphysical aspect of his work. However, such an attitude betrays an incomprehension of what was just noted, since this critical aspect functions as a necessary complement to the doctrinal aspect of his work, insofar as it must both lead to the traditional and initiatic path, while guarding against the falsifications and dangers presented by modernity. What must appear most shocking, however, to those who are inclined to defend modernity, is the categorical assertion that the modern spirit is fundamentally at odds with any true spirituality, and that, therefore, one must make no compromises to it if one is actually resolved to follow the spiritual path. As remarkable as such an assertion must appear, it is worth considering why one would expect otherwise from an epoch whose very origins lie in an uncompromising negation of traditional authority and of any claims that cannot be neatly fitted into purely human proportions, whether it be a matter of rationality or sentimentality; or why, conversely, one would then expect the other side to make any compromises, when it is their turn to respond. Furthermore, even aside from the question of the truth of Guénon's claims, one could well argue for the benefit of having received such a plain and open declaration of the fundamental incompatibility of the modern and the traditional spirit, insofar as these represent the profane and the sacred, respectively.

What, however, does Guénon mean by tradition? Naturally, he discusses the topic – at varying length – in all of his works, but his most general discussion of it appears in his first work, entitled *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrine*[26]. He begins by discussing the three largest Eastern civilizations, namely, the Near-Eastern or Islamic one, the Middle-Eastern or Hindu one, and the Far-Eastern one, where Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism are the most dominant traditions. When it comes to defining 'tradition', he notes, first, that this latter discussion has tended to emphasize the traditional character of the civilizations in question, and second, that this emphasis is

[26] *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrine*, Luzac & Co. 1945, tr. by Marco Pallis

absolutely inevitable (*ISHD*, 87). The reason for this is that every branch of these civilizations is attached to a doctrine as to a principle of which it is an application in a determined field, and on which it, therefore, is wholly dependent (ibid., 89). Thus, it is fundamentally true that the essence of tradition, understood in this way, is the traditional doctrine, which also lends the civilization its peculiar character, or in other words, its *spirit*. To understand a civilization is to understand its spirit, and it is impossible to understand its spirit without understanding its doctrine. Another significant consequence of this is that Guénon understands tradition in a much broader sense than does Heidegger, for whom the concept most often referred to the purely theoretical domain.

We proceed to discuss Guénon's understanding of metaphysics, which is essentially connected with the previous discussion, insofar as he wants to contest the Western notion of metaphysics as propounded in modern philosophy, and point to the true character of metaphysics such as it appears in Sufism, Taoism, and the *Vedanta*. At this point, Guénon's remarks are formal in character, but we find it important to dwell on them nonetheless for the indications they make in the direction of the content of metaphysics. Metaphysics, according to Guénon, is "the knowledge of principles belonging to the universal order" (ibid., 110), this universality being the most fundamental aspect of metaphysics. Now, this universality entails, as an immediate consequence, its utter illimitability, since if it were limited, the conditions restricting it would necessarily possess a greater universality than it. With this said, we can perhaps understand the following definition of metaphysics, presented in another context: "[Indeed,] true metaphysics is none other than the complete synthesis of certain and immutable knowledge, which stands apart from and transcends everything contingent and variable; consequently, we cannot consider metaphysical truth to be anything other than axiomatic in its principles and theorematic in its deductions, and therefore just as rigorous as mathematical truth, of which it is the unlimited prolongation." (*SFC*, 2)[27]

Such a definition, obviously, invites certain objections. The immediately apparent one concerns the multiplicity of philosophical doctrines calling themselves metaphysical, as opposed to the unity and clarity of mathematics. This objection, however, is based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the comparison. For Guénon, it is precisely the immediate clarity of metaphysics that justifies the comparison, the difficulty consisting in the assumption that, where there is clarity, it must necessarily be of the same type. At this precise juncture, however, Guénon makes the claim that goes most deeply against the grain of modern philosophy, and which is that the clarity of metaphysical ideas pertains to the intellect as distinguished from reason. The comparison to mathematics is important from our point of view in another sense as well, since we have already seen that the

[27] "Scientific Ideas and the Masonic Ideal", in *Studies in Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, Sophia Perennis 2004, tr. by Henry D. Fohr, Cecil Bethell & Michael Allen

introduction of the mathematical method into philosophy constituted the very inauguration of modern philosophy as such. In this way, the idea of rational clarity is deeply entrenched in philosophy, and the notion of another form of clarity appears alien.

The difference between these forms of clarity can perhaps best be expressed by saying that the clarity of metaphysics is a clarity of ideas, whereas the clarity of mathematics is a clarity of concepts. The latter form of clarity does not necessarily have anything to do with the former, and mathematical notation is, indeed, sometimes taken to be purely conventional, the operation or function of the concepts being what their 'mathematical' character then consists in, as understood in the sense of the Greek *ta mathemata* (cf. *MPIC*, 4)[28]. Rational clarity is, thus, the kind of clarity that pertains to concepts in their use and in their relation to other concepts, whereas intellectual clarity pertains to ideas of whatever order whenever they are properly understood. Metaphysics is, thus, coextensive with reality in an unconditional and absolute sense.

From this, we can also more easily understand Guénon's discussion concerning the distinction between metaphysics and philosophy. As regards form, he states that the 'systematic' character of (modern) philosophy is altogether incompatible with metaphysics, due to the latter's illimitability (*ISHD*, 147). A system is, essentially, a conception defined by its very limitations, as appears from the very names of such systems; thus, 'empiricism' reduces knowledge to the domain of empirical science, whereas 'rationalism' reduces it to the domain of reason alone; 'idealism' reduces reality to the 'ideal', whereas 'materialism' reduces it to 'matter'. In this connection, Guénon makes the important observation that most of the problems of modern philosophy revolve around the duality 'spirit-matter', and that these problems have arisen only because the duality has been understood as irreducible (ibid., 151). In other words, philosophy has operated on a basis that is decidedly rational in its origin, the basis in reality of this distinction having never been properly expressed.

This observation has tended to be confirmed by the deconstructionist vein of postmodern philosophy, although the latter would probably not consider a single such dichotomy as primary. In any case, Guénon is certainly right in maintaining that, in one form or other, this or some analogous dichotomy (for instance, the one between the 'ideal' and the 'real') has given rise to a host of others, around which many pseudo-problems have been constructed. Thus, one could cite the following dichotomies: mind-body, ideal-real, transcendence-immanence, sensible-intelligible, natural-supernatural, empirical-rational, etc. If dualism[29] is, thus, seen to haunt the history of

[28] *The Metaphysical Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, Sophia Perennis 2004, tr. by Michael Allen & Henry D. Fohr.
[29] It is not enough, to constitute dualism, that there be a duality or an opposition between two terms (that is, a dichotomy), but it is, moreover, necessary that the opposition be treated as irreducible.

philosophy, this is no less true when one attempts to reconcile the opposition through a monistic solution. The problem with monism, whether it be spiritualistic or materialistic, is that it fails to realize that the opposition, even if not valid in an absolute sense, nevertheless has a certain validity in a restricted sense; thus, Guénon concludes: "[Here] once again it is the exclusiveness of the system which is responsible for its principal defect" (ibid., 153)[30]. The problem, again, is that one tends to operate on mere rational constructions, instead of attempting to comprehend the reality of these ideas in their proper limitations. He concludes his observations by stating that the difference between philosophy and metaphysics is expressed in understanding metaphysics as 'non-dualism', or "the doctrine of non-duality". In this way, it becomes apparent that Guénon's understanding of metaphysics is essentially related to the *Vedanta*, the doctrine of which is centered around the concept of *advaita*, meaning precisely 'non-duality' (ibid., 154). It is precisely the explosion of these false dichotomies, through the proper delimitation of their relative validity, which allows us to think of Guénon as essentially non-modernist, and therefore, to associate him with figures like Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Derrida.

This allows us to attain an insight into the critical aspect of the Traditionalist or perennialist enterprise. One can specify it by referring to the distinction Guénon makes between 'false notions' and merely 'incorrect notions', stating that the former correspond to no reality whatsoever, in that they contain a contradiction, whereas the latter only correspond to reality inadequately; from which he draws the important conclusion that "an 'incorrect notion' can be rectified, but a 'false notion' can only be rejected altogether" (*MPIC*, 11)[31]. Negatively, this critical aspect, thus, consists in the refutation of false notions, and positively, it consists in the rectification of incorrect ones. The latter is more interesting from our point of view, since it gives us an indication of the content of metaphysics, in implying a hierarchization of orders of possibility in accordance with the conditions defining the same. In noting this, one must also observe that for Guénon, the distinction often made between the possible and the real is, strictly speaking, invalid, "for every possible is real in its way, according to the mode befitting its own nature" (*MSB*, 17)[32]. To this he adds: "[If] it were otherwise there would be possibles that were nothing, and to say that a possible is nothing is a contradiction pure and simple… [It] is the impossible, and the impossible alone, that is a pure nothing."[33] (ibid.)

[30] It is quite striking that Guénon here independently comes to conclusions that are analogous to those Schelling made in his *Über die Natur der Philosophie als Wissenschaft*. A comparison between the two in respect of the question of the nature of metaphysics would be quite illuminating, but it remains outside the scope of this thesis.

[31] This appears in the text as footnote #7.

[32] *The Multiple States of the Being*, Sophia Perennis 2004, tr. by Henry D. Fohr

[33] Now, if on the one hand, someone should object that this appears to give too much concession to phantasy, one can reply by noting that imaginary entities also have their proper order of reality, which, however, is confined to the minds of their inventors. If, on the other hand, Guénon seems to be attempting to furnish sacred doctrines with an *a priori* justification and thereby trying to undermine its critics, it suffices to point out that, for Guénon, the critical aspect of his

The universality of metaphysics as conceived by Guénon comprehends all possibility and is, thus, equivalent to what constitutes the "most primordial notion of all" for him, that is, 'Infinity' (ibid., 7). The latter is to be understood as that which is not limited in any way whatsoever, and which, therefore, forms a whole out of everything that has any degree of reality in whatever sense. As such, Infinity is Universal Possibility and Universal Whole (cf. ibid., 9-10).

When applied to sacred doctrines, or indeed doctrines of any sort, even philosophical, metaphysics allows us to 'situate' the content of the doctrine properly. That is, it constitutes – in its critical aspect – a distinctly 'positive' critique[34]. Such a critique assumes an internal point of view in which the construction of a discursive system can be traced by way of reconstituting the steps of the construction itself. The difference lies in the motivation for the endeavor: while the systematic philosopher attempts to frame reality through his system, the critical metaphysician assumes the point of view of the systematic philosopher only to trace the limits of his endeavor, knowing that reality – as illimitable – cannot be so framed. As regards sacred doctrine, however, the task of metaphysics can only be purely preparatory. At least, this is true as long as we persist in affirming a distinction between the two, in which case it would be precisely this critical aspect of metaphysics that we have in mind. From this point of view, metaphysics consists in situating the terms of the doctrine, which can be helpful in delineating the nature, scope, and possibilities of its spirituality, that is, when one considers the doctrine from an 'operative' point of view. From another point of view, however, the doctrine itself is properly metaphysical even in its operative aspect. This is inevitably so if it is a matter of properly 'realizing' the doctrine, instead of merely reporting its content in a purely extrinsic way. In fact, Guénon not only says that metaphysics is properly intellectual in nature, but that it is, therefore, also essentially realizational in its true significance. This observation follows from what we already noted earlier in our discussion of the Thomist notion of the intellect. For if the proper operation of the intellect is intuition, the realizational character of metaphysics necessarily follows from its intellectual essence, insofar as intuition itself is properly realizational. After this brief survey, we can proceed to consider Guénon's understanding of the history of the West, and in particular, of its intellectual development. This will furnish us with several points of comparison with Heidegger.

enterprise is complemented by an expository one, which does not consist solely – or even essentially – in expounding sacred doctrine as such. Rather, its essential moment consists in translating sacred doctrines into a metaphysical language that reveals their true significance. Thus, the central part of Guénon's (and the Traditionalists') enterprise is metaphysics itself, and sacred doctrine insofar as it expresses metaphysical truths in symbolic form. Guénon could not have had any interest in sacred doctrines unless their metaphysical significance and their metaphysical unity were demonstrable.

[34] The word 'positive critique' is also used by Heidegger in the *Zollikon Seminars*. Moreover, it certainly constitutes the dominant mode of all deconstruction, insofar as the latter attempts, through close-reading, to trace the construction of a discursive enterprise.

Most importantly, we will ultimately come to see how Heidegger himself came to envisage such an 'internal point of view' as has been described above, but without properly generalizing his findings.

7. Guénon and Heidegger on the history of modernity

According to Guénon, the first seeds of the development of the modern world were planted by what he calls 'individualism', to which he gives the following definition: "By individualism we mean the negation of any principle higher than individuality, and the consequent reduction of civilization, in all its branches, to purely human elements; fundamentally, therefore, individualism amounts to the same thing as what, at the time of the Renaissance, was called 'humanism'." (*CM*, 55) We have already seen how, in Descartes, the term 'intuition' was relegated to the domain of philosophical knowledge conceived according to the model of mathematics, and how, therefore, its deeper significance was lost. Indeed, for Guénon, the denial of intellectual intuition constitutes one of the essential features of individualism (ibid., 56), and thus, Cartesian rationalism is simply one of its earliest forms, and probably, one of its most influential ones. It is no coincidence that, after Descartes, 'intellect' and 'reason' have increasingly tended to be viewed as synonymous terms, although originally, they properly signified distinct operations that could even be applied to wholly different levels, as is clear from the medieval understanding of angels as 'intellectual beings' knowing all things immediately in their principles, without the discursive process characterizing the human mind (cf. *ST*, I, Q. 58, Art. 3).

Guénon closely associates this restriction of knowledge to strictly human proportions with the systematic form of modern philosophy. For indeed, inasmuch as the discursive process is in each case attributed to an individual, the principle from which the philosophical discourse is drawn will vary according to the mental tendencies of the philosophers themselves. Modern philosophy has largely consisted in the attempt to rid philosophy of 'presuppositions', which has only resulted in the introduction of more covert presuppositions. The idea of the 'presuppositionless' being nothing but an illusion, the proper method would consist in evaluating a system by its presuppositions and allowing it to possess its own validity within these limits. That is, it is not a matter of declaring a system true or false, but of seeing the element of truth it contains, and to affirm it to the precise extent that it possesses truth. However, Guénon adds, "it is in the systematic form itself that the radical falsity of the conception taken as a whole is inherent" (*ISHD*, 147), insofar as it thereby claims to reduce reality to a preconceived notion of it, instead of assigning things their proper reality according to their proper essence, which is the task of intellectual intuition. At this juncture, Guénon cites Leibniz' dictum that "every system is true in what it affirms but false in what it denies" (ibid.), to the effect that "its falsity is the greater in proportion as it is more narrowly limited" (ibid., 148), which

inevitably leads to the conclusion that only metaphysics itself, conceived in its unlimited universality, can be said to contain no falsity at all. For by way of intellectual intuition, metaphysics consists in assigning each thing its proper place according to its proper essence and mode.

After assigning individualism as the 'determining cause' of the intellectual decline of the West, Guénon proceeds to consider the stages of its development. As the negation of metaphysics and the intellectuality properly belonging to it, individualism necessarily entails naturalism, since the individuality as such is confined to the domain of nature and is unable to transcend it (ibid., 57). Thus, the process of the intellectual development of modernity inevitably leads to an ever-greater focus on the practical aspect of reason (ibid.), inasmuch as reason confined to itself alone can have nothing but a purely representative value. Finally, modernity enters the stage where it becomes aware of this fact, and despairs over ever being able to fully comprehend the world in its becoming. To this stage, Guénon assigns Bergsonian intuitionism (ibid., 58), and one should add Nietzschean aestheticism, as well as all the 'philosophies of life' more or less dependent on these. Nietzsche himself expresses this final stage of reason, in its purely representative form, in the following words: "Thinking is for us a means not of 'knowing' but of describing an event, ordering it, making it available for our use: that is what we think today about thinking…" (*Will to Power*, quoted in *Nietzsche, Vol. IV*, 130) This stage is, thus, that of what Heidegger has called 'planetary calculation', where things appear as valuable only to the extent that they allow man to cultivate himself. Modern technology is the necessary superstructure for modern man who has become fixated with the idea of 'personal growth', since it makes things available for his use and affords him the leisure by which he can actually put them to use. This is merely to develop what we noted earlier, namely, that modernity as a state of the world proceeds from a correlation between modern man and the modern world. In this correlation, we can now state, man appears as the one who orders things, and the world itself thereby becomes something that is, in a special sense, available for use in his personal growth. In connection to pragmatism, Guénon also mentions the modern development of the concept of the 'unconscious', to which the whole of religious experience was at one time relegated. This is quite significant from our point of view, and it bears comparison with Nietzschean aestheticism, insofar as the development of the person for him is centered on the life of instinct. For modern man, the world is what provides him with 'experiences' for his personal growth or his development of who he is, or who he feels he is. In all of this, there is no reference to transcendence in a sense that would bear any decisive significance for the conception of the person, and the final jurisdiction is basically that of man's sentimental life, which is why the philosophies of life, the theories of the unconscious, and especially Jungian theories of personality, have had such an enormous influence in the modern world.

Both Guénon and Heidegger agree on the point that there is an occurrence in the history of the West, designated with the term 'modernity', which the philosophers have not invented but only given expression. Thus, these philosophers have been able to indicate the stage at which modernity in each case finds itself. With pragmatism, Bergsonian intuitionism, Nietzschean aestheticism, psychoanalysis, and other tendencies belonging to the most recent form of modernity prior to what could be called postmodernity, philosophy in one way or another expressed the completion of modernity, and on this point, the differences between Guénon and Heidegger are quite negligible. Both agree that modernity has reached a conclusion, and the differences concern points of emphasis, which depend on what they take as their point of departure. No doubt, Heidegger's point of view is deeper and more intricate, due to his discoveries relating to the ancient Greeks and their understanding of *logos* as opposed to the Latin understanding of *ratio*. The breadth of his enterprise has allowed him to conclude on what the completion of modernity really consists in, which we have outlined above. In the following, we will recapitulate these observations, and bring our above considerations to bear on them.

Modernity is the epoch in which man hearkens to the demand to render reasons, and in which he assumes the freedom to do so independently of traditional authority, thus grounding himself on himself as the one hearing the call of the principle of reason. This project was bound to fail, inasmuch as man, thus, attempts to confine reality to the limits of his own conceptions. When he, finally, begins to reflect on this peculiar circumstance, he concludes that the faculty with which he has conducted his independent thinking or research – that is, reason – merely has a representative value. In this way, although this entails a certain disempowerment, nevertheless the element of power still reigns in the ability to order things and make them available for use. Thus, the only value that remains for modernity is that of 'power', and it is up to each person to assert his or her own power for him- or herself through that which is empowering for him or her, thus allowing him or her to attain his or her personal growth. Media and the publishing industry have the task of making the world available in a manner that allows each one to confine it into a picture for him- or herself, and to assert him- or herself with the aid of this picture. Such self-assertion is, precisely, personal growth as the cultivation of 'experiences' in the world made available for use. In the final section before the "Conclusions", we will consider what Heidegger's neglect of Christian spirituality amounts to in the terms that have been developed, and thus, we return to his early lecture course *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. We will see that these early insights into St. Paul mark a looming problem in his mature works.

8. Heidegger, Christianity, and the East

Before we proceed, we must recall the stakes of the present discussion. In speaking of the Christian tradition and of Heidegger's neglect of it, we are concerned with the crisis of the modern world, and with the judgment that must be in place in order for the leap of thinking to be able to sow the seeds of a new epoch. In the leap of thinking, we recall, the tradition stands out in the light of the necessity of the stages of its development, in view of the latter's completion. In order for this to be possible, the tradition must first be understood in accordance with a genuine retrieval of its roots. With regard to the Christian tradition, it seems to me that Heidegger never attempted this more radically than in his *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, his other works containing no more than passing references that hardly penetrate into the substance of Christianity, and that are, as Derrida also observes, 'crudely typecast'.

In regard to this attempted retrieval on the part of Heidegger, we have already explained all of his most significant findings in the first part of this study. We have seen how these findings falsify his later notion that a supposedly German tradition has claim to a more original concept of 'spirit' in the form of *Geist*, whereas in fact, the signification of the latter is completely comprehended in the Latin *spiritus* and the Greek *pneuma*, with the added benefit that the latter are, in Pauline theology, situated in the context of spiritual life as a life of anguish and spiritual growth. I agree with Heidegger that the proper task of a philosophy of religion can only be to "gain a real and original relationship to history", and that a true philosophical understanding can only "[arise] out of a certain religiosity", which in this case is Christian religiosity. However, with what we have said concerning tradition, it must now be noted that the 'mastering of the traditions' that this implies now entails much more than mere understanding of the content of the faith. Tradition, as Guénon has shown, also consists of institutional, ritual, and social realities, and in fact, it constitutes an all-embracing whole. St. Paul himself suggests as much, when he says that God has gathered all things in heaven and on earth in Christ (Eph. 1:10)[35].

There is, however, something that really must be said on the topic of 'gathering', and this concerns the Heideggerian notion of the *polis*. This word, according to Heidegger, recalls the

[35] We are not able here to further elucidate the applications of this passage, especially as regards its connection with the cross. The latter connection is suggested by another Pauline passage, where he speaks of the knowledge of the saints in terms of breadth, depth, length and height (Eph. 3:18), which indeed amounts to a three-dimensional cross. This connection can also be seen in the Eastern liturgy, where the priest makes the sign of the cross with his fingers positioned to resemble the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek, ICXC. The Name of God, that is, God Himself (for the Jews, Ha-shem is a term denoting God, although, literally, it simply means 'the Name') in this way blesses all things, while the cross itself represents God's gathering of all things to Himself. Another important symbolic item in this connection would be the Sacred Heart, especially in connection to the Precious Blood and the flesh of Christ (cf. Heb 10:20), but this would require very long considerations that cannot be presented here. Moreover, all of this is connected with the idea of the Body of Christ, which in turn is connected with the icons and the position of the iconostasis in the Church. Certainly, one could write a whole volume on these connections.

'pole', which he regards as a site of gathering of the *Volk*, having the function of the center around which such gathering occurs (cf. *Parmenides*, 96)[36]. It is not fortuitous, in this connection, to recall that Islamic theology designates Moses with the term *al-Qutb*, meaning precisely 'pole', for Moses was the site of the appearance of the Torah to Israel. In the same way, for Heidegger, the *polis* would be the site of the occurrence of the Saying of a people, wherein, therefore, the people would be gathered as the people they essentially are. Conversely, the outward expansion of the people would occur through this site, by application of the Saying to the areas in which they come to settle. This would, thus, be an occurrence of the tradition (or 'traditioning') of this Saying. Everything would uphold, carry, and maintain the Word – maintaining *itself* in and by the Word – and would, therefore, constitute the very body of the Word.

This allusion to the Christian concept of the Body of Christ goes to the very heart of the present discussion. It would be necessary, at this juncture, to review the resurgence of the theme of 'community' in current theological discourse, particularly as presented in the seminal work of John D. Zizioulas. Furthermore, we recall the pathbreaking work of Robert W. Jenson, who has decisively questioned the notion that the 'Body of Christ' is simply a 'metaphor'. We can perhaps circumvent this necessity, and leave the matter as it appears in the above considerations, where it is at least made clear in what sense the concept can be connected to Heideggerian philosophy. What bears emphasizing is the fact that tradition in Guénon's sense, as an all-embracing reality proceeding from a doctrine, can be applied to Christianity.

If presently we turn to the subject that opened this thesis, namely, the 'historical consciousness' of late modernity, it is because we can now bring the previous considerations to bear on this topic. During the period in which Heidegger presented his thoughts on the phenomenology of religious life, history seemed to possess a disturbing presence causing distress in man's Dasein. To a greater extent than before, Western man became aware of the variety of historical forms, and of the peculiarity of the modern civilization in comparison to other historical civilizations. In face of this, there appeared the necessity to account for such historical forms in a general way, thus allowing us to secure a position vis-à-vis history, including the peculiarity of the modern world. In this connection, Heidegger speaks of a widespread 'theoretical attitude' against which his attempt to "gain a real and original relationship to history" is contrasted. Sadly, the English rendering of the word *Einstellung* as 'attitude' is wholly inadequate, even to the point of making certain sentences almost completely unintelligible. It must be understood that Heidegger is already making his first attempts to formulate the problem of *repraesentatio*, and it is quite astonishing that he should already in this early text be so sensitive to the business of collecting and classifying material into archives and

[36] *Parmenides*, Indiana University Press 1998, tr. by Richard Rojcewicz

making them available for study. Certainly, as a literal translation 'attitude' is quite correct, but one must heed the intrinsic connection that Heidegger attempts to establish between the term *Sachbereiche* (rendered 'material complexes' in English) and *Einstellung*, through which it becomes clear that Heidegger is referring to the research procedures of academic scholarship. The word properly refers to the wholly external point of view that is maintained through the extrinsic organization of materials in archives.

From the point of view of Heidegger's later writings, it becomes possible to complete the observations that he makes on this *Einstellung*. The classification of materials occurs through the joint work of the media, the publishing industry, and the modern university. Together, they allow the public to form the world into a picture, and to install themselves in the midst of beings in accordance with this picture and how it presents the world. Against this tendency, and in a manner closely resembling Guénon, Heidegger calls for an internal point of view on historical forms. In this way, the matter would be allowed to take its true shape from out of itself, once it has been related to a decisive experience of its fundamental reality. Indeed, this is precisely what Heidegger attempts to do in his readings of St. Paul. Moreover, he appears to be saying something analogous when he makes the following remark in "The Nature of Language", on the translation of the word *Tao*:

> The word "way" probably is an ancient primary word that speaks to the reflective mind of man. The key word in Laotse's poetic thinking is *Tao*, which "properly speaking" means way. But because we are prone to think of "way" superficially, as a stretch connecting two places, our word "way" has all too often rashly been considered unfit to name what *Tao* says. *Tao* is then translated as reason, mind, *raison*, meaning, *logos*.
>
> Yet *Tao* could be the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think what reason, mind, meaning, *logos* properly mean to say – properly, by their proper nature. Perhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful Saying conceals itself in the word "way," *Tao*, if only we will let these names return to what they leave unspoken, if only we are capable of this, to allow them to do so. (*OWL*, 92)

Heidegger leaves things rather open as regards the sense in which one can allow names to return to what they leave unspoken, but it should be recalled that this is a recurring theme in Heidegger's later writings. Thus, we have already discussed his understanding of the peculiar listening involved in true thinking, in which matters are not merely stated correctly, but what is seen is expressly brought into view. In this way, what is said expresses what is left unsaid. Such listening is what Heidegger attempted in his discussion of the principle of reason.

Ultimately, the listening accompanying such an attempt is founded upon a conception of language that markedly differs from the naïve understanding of language as a system of signifiers. For Heidegger, language itself, in its essence, is what allows the unsaid to reveal itself. In language, there occurs a beckoning of the 'enigma', or indeed, the 'mystery'. Concerning this, Heidegger expresses himself in a manner that resembles Guénon quite markedly:

> We regard explaining and understanding as opposite in essence. To explain means to bring back to what is commonplace and familiar to us, to fit it back into this. Where something has been explained, there is nothing more to be understood; everything already has the semblance[37] of being understood. Explaining is the corrupted essence of understanding. Understanding the enigma, therefore, is not equivalent to solving it, but means precisely holding fast to that which is inexplicable and thus attaining a manner of authentic knowing. (*HHGR*, 225)[38]

For Guénon as well, genuine knowledge is what he calls 'metaphysical realization', in which the distinction between subject and object no longer subsists, since the latter only pertains to the rational and sensory orders. In this connection, we recall that Guénon's work itself was always conceived as having a merely theoretical value, which as such, was purely preparatory. However, the affirmation of the status of intellectual intuition, as the only means to knowledge in the true sense, has an even more radical consequence, which is that *all* knowledge belonging to the rational and sensory orders can only have a preparatory value, aside from which its value is strictly null (cf. *ISHD*, 168-170). In view of this affirmation, the moment anything enters language, its sole purpose can only be to support contemplation, in which subject and object are merged. Explanation, viewed as an end in itself, can therefore be nothing but the corrupted essence of understanding, and it should be noted that the Latin *intellego*, from which the word 'intellect' derives, means precisely to 'understand'. We also noted earlier that the subject-object relation is applicable to the Scholastic notion of intellectual intuition, but that the modern notion of this relation considers it in tandem with an irreducible intervening principle, which is that of method. In modernity, therefore, the subject-object relation becomes irreducible, due to the reign of method through which explanation is consolidated in its status as an end in itself. In fact, knowledge itself is conceived as dependent upon the subject's positing itself over and against objects and positing objects over and against itself, for only in this way can a firm

[37] In regard to this notion of semblance, we recall the 'representative' value of reason, which is ultimately what is at stake in this distinction between understanding and explanation, and which coincides with the 'preparatory' value of the latter.

[38] *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine"*, tr. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland, Indiana University Press 2014

grasp of objects be obtained by way of allowing them to take their true stance with respect to the subject.

A few remarks are in order concerning Heidegger's readings of Trakl and Hölderlin, since this is also connected to the idea of thinking as 'listening' and the related concept of language. In these readings, the methodological insistence on the inadequacy of scholarly readings makes it possible for Heidegger to save them from the most obvious 'Platonic-Christian' readings, often through an etymological reference to the Old High German roots of key words, which authorizes him to suggest a better interpretation (cf. *Of Spirit*, 87). As we have already had occasion to observe, however, the contrast that Heidegger hereby wants to maintain, and which he understands to be irreducible, is entirely grounded on a false assumption concerning Christianity, and one could say, of Platonism as well. This assumption is, ultimately, dependent on another one that is more primary, and which concerns the scope of Heideggerian deconstruction as inaugurated in *Being and Time*. As was remarked in the first part of this study, in the latter, Heidegger already insisted on avoiding the term 'spirit' due to the subjectivist connotations it harbored through centuries of philosophical usage. Later, in the *Rektoratsrede* and in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (as well as *Being and Truth*), spirit is now said to bear a certain ambiguity or duplicity – *Zweideutigkeit* – in consequence of which it can be interpreted in a subjectivist way as opposed to a more primary way that situates it within the context of the questioning essence of Dasein, which *is* in maintaining itself in the *logos* as the as-structure of beings (cf. ibid., 41).

The mistake that Heidegger commits in this respect is that of thinking that the scope of his deconstruction ranges over Christianity as well. However, Heidegger's scattered and extrinsic remarks on Christianity could in no way adduce any decisive proof on this point, and ultimately, they amount to the assumption that Scholastic philosophy represents the whole of Christianity, whereas it does not even represent the whole of medieval Christianity, nor does it, therefore, come even close to representing the entirety of Catholicism, not to mention the fact that Heidegger never makes the slightest remarks on Eastern Orthodoxy. One can, thus, safely conclude that the early Heidegger was more reasonable in his philosophical attitude toward Christianity, and possessed a more nuanced understanding of medieval Christianity, as his remarks on Scholasticism and mysticism demonstrate.

Can we conclude from the above considerations that what Heidegger attempts with Trakl and Hölderlin is analogous to what he attempts with St. Paul in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*? As concerns the anti-scholarly attitude present in both, the answer is without a doubt affirmative. However, the analogy can be drawn further. For in the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger is, as a matter of principle, speaking as a Christian concerning the philosophy of religion, whereas in his *Gespräch*, he

is speaking as a German concerning the German spirit as represented by Trakl. Heidegger's Germanness is as essential here as is his Christianity in the *Phenomenology*, for in both instances, the thinker's identity is what allows him to hearken to the essential content of the matter at hand. In both, the internal point of view is fundamental for the possibility of the undertaking as such. This is important to note from the point of view of our comparative analysis, since for Guénon, the critical part of metaphysics is opposed to that of modern philosophy precisely by the fact that it adopts an internal point of view and attempts thereby to discover the limits of a given set of ideas. In itself it is illimitable, since it, on the contrary, is what assigns to each such set its limits. The difference between Heidegger and Guénon, in this respect, is that the latter has more consciously assimilated such a point of view, to the point of generalizing it as a matter of principle.

The fundamental problem, and the one that radically undermines Heidegger's whole endeavor, is that whatever German tradition he has supposedly been able to hear resound in the poetry of Hölderlin and Trakl, it remains incontestably dead. His constant recourse to etymology proves this beyond doubt, since it shows that the deeper sense of the language is not spontaneously present. There is no *Volk* that would be spontaneously attuned to this sense – not even an elite within the *Volk*. In the final analysis, there appears to be a catastrophic absence of methodological parameters on the part of Heidegger, who forgets to ask the most elementary questions concerning what he is attempting to unearth. For even supposing that there is some interest in what he has discovered in Hölderlin and Trakl – and there certainly is – we must still ask what status must be assigned to the whole formed out of them. For as such, his discoveries concern only the etymology of certain words, which are contextualized by these poets. Moreover, it appears that the originator of whatever interpretations result is Heidegger himself, and although it might seem an obvious point, it is worth emphasizing because it completely undermines the notion of their 'German' provenance. Certainly, the etymologies are German, but the use made of them are Heideggerian.

If the above points seem too simple to be worth emphasizing, I reply that they are made in order for us to be able briefly to consider the mentioned 'methodological parameters', which appear in Guénon's and the Traditionalists' works. One such parameter is the distinction between a living and a dead tradition, and in the case of the latter one must still distinguish between an intact and a lost tradition. In the case of living traditions, one must distinguish between different levels of accessibility, depending on various circumstances that are not presently relevant. These remarks allow us to conclude that the direction of the Heideggerian enterprise is none other than Traditionalism itself. With these parameters, Heidegger could have opened up his enterprise to traditions that he flatly neglected, and in a way that would have recognized the limits of our understanding of these traditions in respect of their accessibility. Derrida has already pointed out that

Heidegger's thinking often assumes that the history unfolding between Greek, Latin, and German culture is closed, which amounts to denying the importance of Hebrew culture in this connection (*Of Spirit*, 100).

Furthermore, his opening to Taoism and Japanese culture signals another problem, which concerns the status of cultures that are relatively distant from this history. This opening, moreover, cannot be considered fortuitous or negligible, but must be understood as the necessary complement to his investigations of the Western tradition, insofar as the latter has reached a critical stage. It is a necessary aspect of our historical consciousness, insofar as modernity comes to reflect upon itself and its own state in the encounter with other civilizations, and insofar as its peculiar character comes to stand out more clearly through this contrast. Hence, it would have been advisable to give due consideration to some methodological problems prior to embarking on such a journey of discovery. After all, Heidegger gives absolutely no reason for singling out Taoism, the most likely explanation being that he thought it was more immediately intelligible to him than, say, Sufism, Hinduism, Native American culture, or the like. In this, he fails completely to ask whether there are any authentic representatives of this tradition, and whether, therefore, his impressionistically made interpretations have any value at all, or whether they are no more than his personal impressions.

In contrast, the Traditionalists have formulated a coherent solution to the crisis of modernity that takes the 'intra-Western' and the 'extra-Western' moments of the movement of our historical consciousness into account. This solution consists in an exchange between cultures that is duly conscious of the differences between them. Such an exchange understands itself as an occasion for mutual enrichment, in which we are able to unlock forgotten aspects of our own tradition, so that we may effectively encounter the crisis of modernity from a more comprehensive point of view. This solution, moreover, firmly rests on the spiritual nature of such an exchange, in which it is hoped that the riches of Christian contemplation will once again be discovered. It is quite remarkable that Jung, who naturally wrote from a very different point of view, should also emphasize the great weight of this exchange for the future of psychology (cf. *PKY*, 47)[39], and that he should even come to suggest that "in the course of the centuries the West will produce its own yoga, and it will be on the basis laid down by Christianity" (ibid., 29)[40]. One could respond by asking: does not Christianity have its own yoga? As long as we are speaking of something that is still specifically Christian, it remains true that mysticism is the equivalent of yoga. This is why we spoke of this exchange as affording us the possibility of rediscovering something in our own tradition, that is, once we come to realize *what we*

[39] *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*, Princeton University Press 1999, ed. by Sonu Shamdasani

[40] This is a quote from another text, "Yoga and the West", in *CW*, vol. 11, appearing in the "Introduction" of *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*

are lacking. Nevertheless, Jung's remarks here remain pertinent and quite insightful, and what he says concerning psychology can equally be applied to metaphysics. For indeed, once spirituality is brought into the picture, one cannot even properly speak of psychology anymore, but one has irremediably entered the domain of metaphysics; not to mention the fact that yoga, as Vedantic in essence, really is nothing but applied metaphysics. With this reservation in mind, and exchanging the word 'psychology' for 'metaphysics', we can approvingly end by citing Jung himself: "The knowledge of Eastern [metaphysics] namely forms the indispensable basis for a critique and an objective consideration of Western [metaphysics]." (ibid., 46)

Conclusion

For both Guénon and Heidegger, each in their own way, the human being finds its fulfillment in knowledge. He finds himself among beings, maintaining himself in the *logos*, which allows him to maintain himself in their midst. The force of the question, understood as spiritual force itself, is the force of the enigma or mystery of Being, which speaks in language. There would be much to say, in this connection, concerning the idea of 'blood' that Heidegger alludes to in his *Rektoratsrede* (*Of Spirit*, 35), but we must be content with noting that it symbolizes 'memory' understood as a vital component of the constitution of man. George Seferis has used this symbol in the same sense and in the same connection, and in his exchange with Philip Sherrard (who is often counted among the Traditionalists), they speak of the necessity of a 'creative memory', which is not only a "descent into the abyss of history", but at the same time a "search to unite man to his spiritual depths"[41]. The immediate link that is, thus, established between spirituality, history, and tradition – through the symbolism of blood – clearly reverberates in the thought of Guénon and Heidegger.

The internal point of view necessitated by the projects of each of these thinkers is clear enough in the case of the philosophical systems. Thus, in order to understand the validity of these systems, in the relative degree that they are valid, one must think them through using their own points of departure, and only in this way can one learn to comprehend their limitations. In the same way, one can only understand a religion from a religious point of view. However, the question remains whether one can generalize this beyond the examples just mentioned? Insofar as everything occurs within language understood in the Heideggerian sense of *die Sprache*, which consequently leaves nothing outside of itself, one not only can do so, but one is forced to. In fact, even if we are uneasy about admitting this in the case of 'science', nevertheless, Heidegger's unearthing of the history of the epoch of *repraesentatio* clearly makes this step necessary, as we have seen, due to the global scope of this epoch understood as 'planetary calculation'. Making this step, however, does not mean abandoning this epoch completely, but rather, requires us to hearken to it in a different way. Essentially, this entails a consistent mindfulness of the consequence of the affirmation of intellectual intuition as the source of true knowledge, or in Heideggerian terms, of the unassailable difference between 'understanding' and 'explanation,' once the latter is conceived as the 'corrupted essence' of the former. For the explanatory mindset, discourse is the source and proper domain of truth, which as such, is fully contained within itself, whereas for the intellectual mindset, discourse merely has a preparatory value, as such functioning as support for contemplation.

[41] *This Dialectic of Blood and Light: George Seferis – Philip Sherrard, An Exchange: 1947-1971*, Denise Harvey (Publisher) 2015, ed. by Denise Sherrard. The allusion is to Sherrard's essay, appearing in the volume, entitled "An Approach to the Poetry of Seferis". The quote is found on p. 66.

The crisis of the modern world ultimately consists in its pretense to self-sufficiency or to being able to close reality within the totality of its discourse. However, by attempting to form a sufficient picture of the world in this way, it can only manifest ever more loudly the word to which it hearkens, and which is itself outside of the limits it establishes. If Heidegger is necessary for a proper appreciation of Guénon, in the sense that he complements the latter's observations and allows them to attain a 'genealogical' foundation, we have also seen that Heidegger himself failed to conceive of a proper solution to the crisis of modernity, ending up with a system of his own invention, centered around an imaginary Germanness. This disaster, however, marks a direction in the Heideggerian enterprise, for which he lacked the proper methodological parameters, in consequence of which he was unable to truly initiate an encounter with Eastern traditions. The comparison between Heidegger and Traditionalism is, therefore, not only appropriate, but even in a sense inevitable.

These concluding remarks would be incomplete if we did not address at least some of the loose ends that have necessarily accompanied us in our thinking. One of these is the question concerning the 'fourth way' of 'securing a position vis-à-vis history' that Heidegger's thinking calls for. In fact, however, as has become abundantly clear, the reformulation of the problem of history that he initiates in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* makes it impossible to use this phrase in any meaningful sense, for Heidegger's point of view, as an internal one, calls for experience rather than theory. The possibility of undergoing an experience with language, in turn, requires precisely the kind of deep immersion into history that was mentioned above in connection with Seferis and Sherrard, and that Heidegger exemplifies in his thinking in a preeminent way. This experience is that of the call of Being, which we had occasion to call a 'gift in withdrawal'. In the same connection, we noted the identity of Being and spirit in Heidegger's work, and this is another loose end, which has a close affinity with the previous one. Guénon, in turn, associates the spirit of a tradition with its doctrine, understood in its fundamental essence. Here, then, we discover 'word' and 'spirit' in the most intimate proximity, such that the darkening of the latter must necessarily depend on the ignorance of the former. For both, the centrality of tradition in this connection is based on the 'gratuitous' nature of the word, wherefore it calls for a *receptive* rather than a *discursive* or *productive* faculty, which Heidegger calls simply 'thinking'[42] and Guénon calls 'intellectual intuition'. Under this aspect of the 'gratuitous', the word is called *Zusage*; thus, 'word', *Zusage*, 'Being' and 'spirit' all say the Same. More precisely, they indicate or suggest the Same in diverse ways. As 'gratuitous', Being is not a 'universal', but belongs in the inception of Western metaphysics as the Saying of the Greeks. Being is, thus, for Western metaphysics what 'God' is for theology; but also, what *Brahma* is for Hinduism or *Tao* is for Taoism.

[42] We recall the overdetermination of *Denken* in its intrinsic connection to *Danken*, *Gedächtnis*, and *Andacht*.

To understand history, it must first properly be delimited according to the spiritual or traditional context one is treating. In light of this context, one is then able to evaluate anything that occurs in history to the degree that it accords with or deviates from this context. In this way, do we not see the Spenglerian 'soul' reappearing, but in a decisively more developed and intricate form? The difference between Heidegger's and Spengler's approach would, thus, only consist in the nature of their points of view, the former being – at least in intention – internal, while the latter is completely extrinsic and excessively theoretical. There is no doubt that the Traditionalists have close affinities with a Spenglerian approach to history. If Heidegger, thus, can be seen to complement Spengler with the proper 'approach' to the subject matter, nevertheless, the perfection of this approach is found in Guénon, since he generalizes the internal point of view.

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Sammanfattning på svenska
René Guénon var upphovsmannen till den så kallade traditionalistiska skolbildningen inom metafysik. I sin ungdom var han aktiv inom den franska ockultismen, som haft ett anmärkningsvärt inflytande på senare former av nyandlighet, samt abstrakt konst. Han tog dock tidigt distans från rörelsen, och formulerade en uppfattning av andlighet som starkt understryker människans behov av tillhörighet till en traditionell organisation, som kan garantera en hälsosam och säker utveckling av det andliga livet. Tillika presenterade han en analys av traditionella civilisationer, där han framhävde hur dessa civilisationer – däribland framför allt den hinduiska, den kinesiska och den islamiska civilisationen – genomsyras av en traditionell karaktär grundad i dessa civilisationers respektive *doktriner*. Doktrinens syfte i en traditionell civilisation är att ge stabilitet till samhällets institutioner, genom att låta dem ta del av själva doktrinens oföränderlighet. Doktrinen sätter således sin prägel på all mänsklig aktivitet.

För att doktrinen själv ska kunna legitimt anses oföränderlig, bör dess innehåll likväl vara oföränderligt. För Guénon innebär det att detta innehåll behöver vara metafysiskt till sin karaktär, emedan metafysiken enligt honom är inbegreppet av oföränderlig och obetingad sanning. För att förstå vad detta betyder, är det på sin plats att betrakta hans uppfattning om kontrasten mellan metafysik och filosofi. Den senare karaktäriseras av en ”systematisk” karaktär, vilket i princip betyder att dess utgångspunkt är helt och hållet begreppslig, och hela dess utveckling är likaså uteslutande begreppslig. Guénon härleder denna begreppsliga tendens till vad han kallar ”individualism”, vilket

syftar på förnekandet av alla principer som ligger bortom ”individualiteten”, och som därmed berättigat kan anses universella. Detta innebär också ett förnekande av det som i forna tider – bland annat hos skolastikerna och i antikens Grekland – kallades för ”intellektuell intuition”, som består i skådandet av universella idéer.

Avhandlingen jämför Guénons metafysik med Heideggers filosofi, speciellt med avseende på den senares uppfattning om tradition. Heidegger uppfattar tänkarens uppgift att vara ett lyssnande till traditionen för att därmed komma till insikt om dess grundstenar. Detta innebär en avgörande överskridning av de individuella filosofernas tankar som sådana, eftersom de nu införlivas i en historia vars utvecklingsskeden de representerar. Denna historia är grundad i ett anspråk som människan har hört och som hon svarar på genom att agera enligt det. Heidegger menar att detta anspråk starkast kommer till uttryck i Leibniz *principium rationis*, enligt vilken allting har sin förnuftsprincip eller grund. Den moderna människan är kallad att begrunda allting i dess förnuftsprincip och att låta allting framstå som objekt mot sig själv som subjekt. Heidegger härleder denna tendens till en slags inneboende begränsning i det latinska språket, som markeras av det grekiska *logos* översättning till *ratio*. Medan *logos* nämner varelsers varande och människans närhet till detta varande, nämner *ratio* – genom det besläktade *reor* – människans kalkylerande förmåga, varigenom ting förstås helt och hållet genom representationer som de hänvisas till, och därmed inte utifrån sig själva. I och med det latinska språkets övergrepp av filosofin, börjar således representationens tidsålder, som når sin fullbordning i och med den senmoderna tiden. Denna tidsålder karaktäriseras av vad Heidegger kallat ”planetär kalkyl”, och på samma sätt uppfattar Guénon modernitetens fullbordning som bestående i ”kvantitetens dominans” (*the reign of quantity*).

Heidegger och Guénon påvisar alltså tydliga åsiktslikheter vad gäller modernitetens väsen samt dess historia, men där Guénons presentation är kortfattad och aningen schematisk, är Heideggers däremot genomgående och omfattande. Följaktligen kan vi använda Heideggers filosofi att på denna punkt fullkomliggöra Guénons. Detsamma kan vi dock tillika göra omvänt, emedan Heideggers filosofi på en annan punkt är klart ofullkomlig. I sin tidiga föreläsningskurs om religionsfenomenologi, presenterar han en uppfattning om religionsfilosofins uppgift som går stick i stäv med den rådande akademiska kulturen, som på ett avgjort sätt intar den utomståendes synvinkel. För Heidegger, däremot, måste religionen förstås utifrån sig själv, vilket nödvändiggör en intern synvinkel. En liknande uppfattning gör sig också gällande i Heideggers senare filosofi i tillämpning på Trakls och Hölderlins poesi, samt taoismen. Däremot påvisar Heidegger vid detta skede en reduktionistisk uppfattning om kristendomen, som tydligt kontrasterar mot hans tidigare tolkningar av Paulus i den nämnda religionsfenomenologin. För övrigt väcker hans öppning mot taoismen en annan fråga, nämligen gällande andra kulturers och traditioners status. Vad skulle ett lyssnande

tänkande i Heideggers bemärkelse innebära om den vore generaliserad och mer inkluderande? Detta problem visar sig finna en lösning i traditionalismen och Guénons metafysik, som innebär exakt en generaliserad intern synvinkel, där den intellektuella intuitionens ställning är just att låta allting framstå i sina egentliga och legitima gränser. Slutsatsen blir härmed att Guénons och Heideggers filosofi är ömsesidigt kompletterande.