

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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