

Heidegger's Path to the Sacred. Two Avenues of Inquiry

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Heidegger's path to the sacred takes a detour around the metaphysical tradition of theology, in order to complement the elliptical arc of his own inquiry into being. While this claim may appear self-evident, the difficulty lies in outlining the twists and turns, the confluence of issues, which shape this hermeneutical path of inquiry. In this essay, I will mark the intersection of two different avenues of investigation. How we can address the Divine without privileging it as the supreme entity, on the one hand, and, on the other, rediscover the sacred albeit as refracted through its potential to remain absent as well as become present, mirrors the hermeneutic strategy which Heidegger first practices as the task of destructive-retrieval. Conversely, we can pick up the textual pathmarks (or clues) of this task, not in abstraction, but by outlining the challenge by which Heidegger marks an important crossroad of his own inquiry into being, namely, the enigmatic link between "temporality and the ontological difference" (as broached at the conclusion of his lecture-course from the Summer Semester of 1927, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*).¹ In this problematic we will uncover a hermeneutic guideline by which to explore the emergence of the sacred in Heidegger's thought.

In the course of this essay, we will discover that Heidegger's attempt to forge a language of being also entails intermittent pauses, in order to consider how the sacred can be addressed beyond its determination by onto-theo-logy.² He does not then provide a substitute for the metaphysical concept of God, but instead shows how the deconstruction thereof yields formal indicators for how to develop a "transformed saying" of being,³ e. g., through the dynamic of gifting-refusing. Our investigation will proceed in four stages. First (I.) we will consider the methodological requirement by which Heidegger separates the concern for the sacred from the metaphysical tradition of onto-theo-logy. Second (II.) we will recast the "God-question" in a historical light as traversing the gulf of nihilism and the absconding of the gods. Third

¹ Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), pp. 452–455. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 318–320.

² Heidegger, "Die onto-theologische Verfassung der Metaphysik (1956–1957)", in: *Identität und Differenz*, GA 11 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), pp. 62–67.

³ See Parvis Emad, *On the Way to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 4–12.