

Summaries

Life Experience in Primal Christianity and Eschatological Time Martin Heidegger's Early Lecture Course on the Phenomenology of Religion

ISTVÁN M. FEHÉR

The turning away from theoretical comportment and the concurrent attempt to gain a new access to life as it is being pre-theoretically enacted and lived – the effort to go back to original experience and to find a conceptuality adequate to it – are parallel developments in German philosophy and theology at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In his effort to find a hermeneutic return to “life”, for the young Heidegger – as is shown by his lectures on the phenomenology of religion – primal Christianity appeared as a fundamental paradigm. It was by the hermeneutic transformation of Husserlian phenomenology that Heidegger attempted to make life accessible – life as it was experienced in primal Christianity and had been described in the Epistles of Paul. From this perspective, the religious-theological relevance of the interrelated structure of “Erlebnis”, “experience”, and “understanding” originates from the hermeneutic-phenomenological thematization of the believing comportment, of how the believer enacts his/her faith. The paper undertakes the attempt to reconstruct the young Heidegger's path of thinking with an eye to some major themes of the phenomenology of religion course, with special regard to the kairological conception of time elaborated in it.

In Defense of Historical Experience On Paul Ricœur's Debate with Hayden White

LÁSZLÓ TENGELYI

Paul Ricœur highly appreciates the “dynamic structuralism” of Hayden White. Yet, he enters into a debate with White's approach to history. The controversy revolves around the constitution of the historical field. White maintains that it is solely the *discourse of the historian* that constitutes the historical field; that is why the task of a metahistorical investigation consists in an analysis of the tropological structure and the explicative modes characteristic of this discourse. In contrast, Ricœur considers *life in history* as the very basis of all constitution of the historical field; that is why he tries to replace White's dynamic structuralism by a hermeneutic phenomenology of historical experience. However, due to the dynamic character of White's structuralism, even the metahistorical approach to history allows us to recognize, at least, some traces of historical experience. Indeed, several traces of this kind are to be discovered in the studies White consecrates to the great 19th-century historians and philosophers of history. Yet, this fact does not obfuscate the clear difference between the two thinkers. It is only Ricœur who assigns to historical experience a fundamental role in the very constitution of the historical field.

However, as far as the precise description of this role is concerned, there is also a certain difference between *Time and Narrative*, on the one hand, and *Memory, History, Oblivion*, on the other. In the first work, Ricœur emphasizes mainly the idea of a redescription or refiguration of reality by narratives. By contrast, in the second work, he arrives to make clear that a true reconstruction of the past does not depend solely upon a purely epistemological approach to history, but it requires also an ontological analysis of what may be designated as our “historical condition”. It is in this ontological analysis that memory and oblivion find their place – a place which reveals itself, by the way, to be a central one.

Unregulated Experience

Interpreting Experience in Gadamer and Adorno

CSABA OLAY

In my paper it is argued that non-standardised, unregulated experience has been discussed by both Gadamer and Adorno in an instructive way. Experience, as understood by these authors, refers to the appearance of something new, unexpected, and this might be called the event model of experience, as opposed to the regularity model of experience. Modern philosophy usually regards experience to be a set of regularities delivered by the senses, but I demonstrate that the regularity conception is not sensitive at all to the problem of experiencing something new. Gadamer’s hermeneutics can be globally taken as a description of not standardizable experiences, and his thorough account of the negativity of experience constitutes an important step in his theory. Adorno, on the other hand, set himself the elaboration of the significance of what he calls the non-identical as a basic philosophical task. Non-identical in his conception refers to the radically singular in its individuality that cannot be grasped by whatever conceptuality. Directed against the dominating character of every concept, Adorno tries to prepare for what is not identical. My paper gives an in-depth analysis of these two views, and also highlights their problematic aspects.

Perceptual Experience

KATALIN FARKAS

This is a partial defense of a certain theory of perceptual experiences. The characteristic feature of perceptual experiences is that they present an experience-independent world to the perceiver. According to the position defended here, in their original form, sensory experiences are mere modifications of consciousness: they lack any intentional, representational or presentational features. However, when sensory qualities are presented to subjects in a systematic, predictable, coherent and highly predictable manner, we have a tendency to locate the origin of these qualities in the experience-independent world. The paper illustrates with an example how such a process may endow an experience with an experience-independent object.

Perceptual Error and Perceptual Qualities

ZOLTÁN JAKAB

The present paper examines the tenability of the primary-secondary quality distinction in light of some current theories of perception and relevant empirical data. It is argued that the distinction can be maintained, and we offer a more precise characterization of what the difference consists in. First we examine what revelation traditionally means in color perception, and then offer an alternative concept of revelation that we claim applies to visual perception of shape, but not to that of color. Then we suggest some differences in mental representation and perceptual processing that underlie the latter sort of revelation (which we call *conceptual revelation*). Comparing shape and color perception we argue that for conceptual revelation to obtain in a given perceptual modality, perceptual representations of particular stimuli need to be structured and veridical. Our visual perception of shape satisfies this criterion, whereas color perception does not. To spell out more exactly the veridicality criterion, we examine the different types of perceptual error, and argue that only one of the examined types affects conceptual revelation.

Privacy vs. Materialist Substance Monism

MÁRTON MIKLÓS – TÓZSÉR JÁNOS

We have several basic intuitions about our conscious experiences. One of them is the privacy thesis according to which a certain conscious experience cannot belong to more than one subject. That is, it is impossible that two or more subjects have the same conscious experience. In our paper we argue for the claim that this privacy thesis is inconsistent with any form of substance monism, including reductive and non-reductive physicalism, and property dualism. We present several thought experiments in which the following is the case: (1) Two persons have conscious experiences at the same time. (2) The physical entities responsible for the conscious experience are the same in the case of the two persons. Then we go through the most well-known substance monist theories (such as identity theory, local or global supervenience theory, property dualism), and show that none of them provides a basis for holding that the experiences of the two persons are numerically different. Our conclusion is that we must give up either materialist substance monism or the privacy thesis.

Empirical Knowledge and Physicalism

JENŐ PÖNTÖR

Physicalism maintains that everything is, in some sense, physical. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that physicalism is a contingent truth, if it is true at all. Hence physicalism certainly needs empirical support. The problem I shall discuss in this paper is the following: how can a universal metaphysical thesis concerning all types of entities be

empirically justified? After defining the main forms of physicalism, I argue that whereas several eliminative and reductive physicalist theories are (or at least in principle can be) empirically well-established, all forms of non-reductive physicalism are empirically unjustifiable hypotheses.

Why Magic Theories Cannot Be Falsified By Experiments?

BENEDEK LÁNG

Once we identified the collectors of medieval magic texts as learned monks, court intellectuals, and university masters, that is, intelligent individuals capable of reflection, it is rather obvious to inquire: how can we account for the fact that these persons were never faced with the problem that the methods they copied did not work in practice? Did they not see that the mechanisms of natural, talismanic and ritual magic are obviously false, and that this falsity can be easily shown with the help of simple experiments? Or should we rather suppose that the methods did actually work in their time?

While such questions about the past might seem somewhat present-minded and thus illegitimate, everyone dealing with medieval texts of magic will sooner or later ponder on them. In fact, it is not one single answer, what we are looking for to explain why the methods of magic could have been seen as applicable, but rather a group of interconnected answers. In this paper we enumerate several reasons why the methods of magic described in the handbooks could not be “falsified” ultimately, and even though we do not exclude that certain scepticism may have occurred in regard of certain methods, we will see in general that there is no reason to doubt that most of the sources were copied with a fairly strong conviction that the methods written in them were indeed applicable.

Lewis on the Plurality of Worlds

LÁSZLÓ KOCSIS–GÁBOR BÁCS

David Kellogg Lewis (1941–2001) published his masterpiece and best-known book, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, 25 years ago. In this work Lewis defends his thesis about the plurality of worlds and further elaborates it to the fullest detail. Gábor Bács and László Kocsis, who are currently translating Lewis’ book into Hungarian, present Lewis’ main arguments, basic motivations and some cardinal counter-arguments against his thesis. The paper consists of four parts: 1. Lewisian Modal Realism, 2. Modal Reductionism, 3. Lewisian Counterpart Theory and 4. Lewis’ defense of his Modal Realism.