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TOWARDS RECONSTRUCTING OUR THEOLOGICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

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Abstract

On the background of secularism and its alarming detrimental offshoots, this article opens up new avenues of understanding God, world and human beings. While it fundamentally reaffirms how far philosophy can aid to comprehend the theological truths, in line with Kantian notion of philosophy as the “maidservant,”¹ Heidegger’s and Rahnerian concepts are analyzed as a ‘single prototype’ in this regard. As a matter of fact, the primary concern in this paper is to reasonably present theological truths within a philosophical framework and thus creatively respond to the call of reading ‘the signs of the times’ in the contemporary secular context. The concluding considerations will concretely suggest grounds on which theology and philosophy can mutually contribute for an updated understanding of philosophical/theological viewpoints.

Keywords: Heidegger, Karl Rahner, Philosophy, Secularism, Theology

Introduction: Background, Objective and Method

Is religious praxis in the contemporary context outmoded? How can the Christian theological conceptions of God, world and human beings remain ‘up-to-date’ in this modern context? Does philosophy

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¹Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, ed. Klaus Reich, Hamburg, 1959, 21.

endow any role in this context, in reconstructing the way theological affirmations are made? In fact, the Catholic Church through the magisterial documents and theologians have ever emphasized the value of reading the 'the signs of the times.'² Of many signs which have been replacing traditional faith-praxis today (at least in the European context), secularism and its relatively detrimental offshoots such as atheism, religious indifference and inclusive/pluralistic ideologies deserve our special attention. Angelo Amato observes,

Secularism is a tendency that has been covering especially in the European society, culture and politics, is the profanation of human life, completely disregarding the role of the divine. Outwardly, it has an aversion towards all that are related to religion and is totally concerned with things of this world. While it rejects God's redemptive work accomplished through the person of Jesus Christ and the role played by the church in continuing this salvific mission, its extreme form can be considered as atheism.³

Indubitably, secularist upsurge has its significant impact upon recent perspectives on God, world and human being. Upon evaluating the merits and demerits of secularism, we should undoubtedly admit that a number of positive notes such as historical consciousness, scientific and technological advancements have punctuated their influence in the 'God-world-human' discourse, lending it an incipient plausibility and coherence. Men and women have also become all the more self-conscious of human power and capabilities. Now, while admitting the positive and negative repercussions of secularism, my primary concern in this paper is to reasonably present theological truths within a philosophical framework so as to understand it more coherently. In doing so, I creatively respond to the call of reading 'the signs of the times' in the contemporary secular context.

²Shinto Puthumattathil George, "Discerning Church: Retaining Relevance through an Affirmative Reading of the Signs of the Time," *Vidyajyothi Journal of Theological Reflection* 79, 10 & 11 (2015) 51-65 & 9-26; *Gaudium et spes*, § 4.

³Angelo Amato, "Catholicism and Secularism in Contemporary Europe," in *The 2008-2009 Terrence R. Keeley Visiting Vatican Lecture*, University of Notre Dame: Nanovic Institute for European Studies, 2009. Angelo Amato is the current prefect of the congregation for the causes of saints in the Catholic Church. When we present the necessity of mutual-giving of philosophy and theology in the background of 'secularism,' we acknowledge that there is a difference between 'secularism' and 'secularization.' But in either case, we cannot accept it as an emerging 'detraditionalisation' as expounded by Lieven Boeve, "Europe in Crisis: A Question of Belief or Unbelief? Perspectives from the Vatican," *Modern Theology* 23, 2 (2007) 222.

In my view point, human beings, world and God are the key concepts which correlate concerns of philosophy and theology. The contemporary context has a novel interpretation of these three concepts in either streams of thought. But the basic concepts of analysis still remain the same. In this paper, I will explain viewpoints of two thinkers on these key concepts, of whom one claims to be a philosopher and the other prefers to be addressed as a pastoral theologian. As a matter of fact, my search in this regard will individually focus on the concepts of human beings, world and God and their interrelationship in the thoughts of Martin Heidegger and Karl Rahner first and in the concluding considerations I suggest grounds on which theology and philosophy can mutually contribute for an updated understanding of philosophical/theological viewpoints. Basically I affirm the theological assumptions formulated on the basis of revelation as having traditional patterns of understanding the interrelation between God, world and human beings. However, I will argue, amalgamation of a Heideggerian philosophical perspective on God, world and human beings, with the so called traditional theological postulates, will not only help us to present them within the philosophical framework, but also to update them as relevant for the contemporary period.

Both Heidegger's and Rahner's corpus are vast indeed and I will make no attempt to treat them in its entirety here. In contrast, I will, by analyzing the authors' most relevant texts bring out the basic argument. When commenting on Heidegger and Rahner thematically and topically, I will use synchronic method in the analysis.

1. Concept of God

I will analyze Heidegger's God-concept under four parts, but within a mutually interrelated realm. With such a categorization, I intend to present the basic orientations in a condensed form. First, Heidegger's God-concept transcends all limiting boundaries; of any particular religion, caste, ethnicity or single individual tenet, which claims God subsists only in it. Whereas he detaches from a traditional God-concept and offers an open forum within the bounds of philosophy, he leaves a room for ambiguous interpretations too.⁴

⁴'Being,' one of the often quoted terminologies in his whole philosophy substitutes a traditional God-concept. While occasionally, 'Being' remains both in the divine and human realm simultaneously, at other times, 'Being' is neither God nor some ground of the world. At other times, 'Being' is neither God nor some ground of the world. Sometimes, God is 'being' and at other times God is 'Being.' Either view necessitates justification as he perceives human beings also in the similar terms. It can be understood as a 'philosophical mechanism' of 'both and.' One of the major criticisms

Second, Heidegger's God-concept is within the bounds of a humanly intelligible realm of historical mediation. To do so, he criticizes the supernatural God-concept, which presented a theoretical perspective of God: as a giver of norms and rules for human life, who enacted to be the 'judge' at human failures and in human being's observance of the prescribed codes. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he evaluates the traditional onto-theological concept of God as of "permanent presence" and a "standing now."⁵ Consequently, as he observes, omnipotence (unlimited power), omnipresence (present everywhere), omnibenevolence (perfect goodness) and omniscience (infinite knowledge) were considered to be the unavoidable essential attributes of a traditional God-concept. In contrast, Heidegger perceives Being as an event, who revealed his 'Beingness' through the medium of history.⁶ He states that Being is "the most unapparent of the apparent, the simplest of the simple, the nearest of the near, and the farthest of the far, in which we mortals have our temporal lives."⁷ The self-disclosure of Being takes place within the historical realm of humanity, through the medium of the temporality of Being. Temporality here would point to the fact that Being has adopted a humanly intelligible means to communicate the very 'Beingness.' Hence, Heidegger's concept of 'language' as the "house of Being,"⁸ unravels a possibility of Being's mutual relationship with beings. Language thus is the blossoming of the Being. Being is dynamically and temporally present in the beings, which remains not a static

on such a standpoint is that their perspectives are diluted, especially when they are interpreted. For example, Peter C. Hodgson notes, "Rahner's understanding of the conjunction of 'supernatural' and 'natural' existentials in the actualization of man's potency for God [as an anticipation of] Heidegger's view of the relation between Being and *Dasein* in the event of unconcealment." See, Peter C. Hodgson, "Heidegger, Revelation, and the Word of God," *The Journal of Religion* 49, 3 (1969) 246. At the outset, I am acknowledging my indebtedness to the journal article by Hodgson, "Heidegger, Revelation, and the Word of God," 228-252, which motivated me to think in this line, especially with regard to Heidegger's concept of God, world and human being.

⁵Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959, 180-182.

⁶In this analysis of Heidegger's concept of Being, the use of the masculine pronoun neither affirms that if at all Heidegger's 'Being' meant a God, it was a 'masculine God,' nor we intend to present God as a sexed Being. Rather it is only an easy linguistic expression.

⁷Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, Pfullingen: Neske, 1959, 258-295. Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1971, is the English translation of the same book.

⁸Martin Heidegger, *Über den Humanismus*, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1947, 5, 22.

presence, but truly a dynamic presence. Even when Heidegger admittedly portrays 'Being-beings interrelationship' within the bounds of human temporality, those standpoints neither connote a theistic trend nor an atheistic trend in his philosophical arguments. It means that he presents God neither in a transcendent nor in a finite realm. Third, in spite of a 'philosophically devised God-concept' in one of the interviews, he admits, "only a god can save us."⁹ Even when he admits the incapability of philosophy to save the world, and the capability of god, his god-concept still remains not to be a 'God' of a particular religion. There are instances when Heidegger gives us the impression that he is referring to a super power and at different times to a heroic person. Fourth, his random thoughts of a 'power beyond' evoke certain ambiguities and inherent views on God, for he even refers to Nietzsche's 'death of God.' Although these views could be considered as metaphysical concepts of God, the metaphysical God too is not a divine God for him.¹⁰

Karl Rahner, who admits that his views owe much to his teacher's (Heidegger) philosophical affirmations, at least in the subsequent reviews, if not in the envisioned originals, portrays a visible God concept. One can easily delineate these influences from following four examples: a) Rahner's version of human being's natural existential being endowed with 'supernatural existential' resembles much Heidegger's concept of relation between Being and *Dasein*; b) Rahner's concept of God's self-communication in word is similar to Heidegger's 'Being as event of unconcealment;' c) Rahner's notion of the supernatural existential parallels *Dasein*'s existentials of speech and understanding, and d) Rahner's word of God as an event "unexacted gift" coincides with Heidegger's human being at the disposal of the Being-event. Although there are notional similarities, it serves rather a contrasting purpose in Rahner's perspectives. Within the transcendental experience, a notion which embeds Rahner's diverse viewpoints under the single nucleus, he conceives that revelation, "is the supreme instance of the truth that God in [God's] free relation to [God's] creation [affirms that God] is not a "second" cause side by side with others in the world... but the living perpetual transcendent ground of the world's own movement."¹¹ Our

⁹Martin Heidegger, "Nur noch ein Gott kann Uns Retten," *Der Spiegel* 30 (1976) 193-219. See, <http://www.ditext.com/heidegger/interview.html> (accessed on 7 January, 2019).

¹⁰George Kovacs, *The Question of God in Heidegger's Phenomenology*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1990, 33.

¹¹Karl Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology* 3 ed., London: Burns and Oates Limited, 1970, s.v. "Revelation," 348. In his writings, Rahner uses

unfolding argument of ‘contrasted objective’ is very much evident when Rahner’s ‘anthropos’ *essentially* requires ‘divinitas.’¹² A very brief analysis of those anthropological affirmations will testify to such a viewpoint.

A) *Vorgriff* (pre-apprehension) and *übernatürliche Existential* (Supernatural Existential): Rahner explicates that there is an unthematic and innate *Vorgriff* of Being in every act of knowing, which is *Bedingung der Möglichkeit* (the condition of possibility) for all *Begriff* (concepts).¹³ On account of this *Vorgriff*, human beings are spirits in the world, though limited by space, time and history. The supernatural existential refers to human being’s ‘elevated status’ having been created in God’s own image and likeness. It is on account of human being’s free response to this given “inwardly determined... supernatural existential,”¹⁴ divine mysteries are revealed to them. Rahner states, “[t]his self-communication by God – offered to all and fulfilled in the highest way in Christ – constitutes the goal of all creation and (since God’s word and will effect what they say) stamps and determines man’s nature and lends it a character which we can call a ‘supernatural existential’ – even before man freely takes up an attitude towards it.”¹⁵

B) *Geist in Welt* (Spirit in the World) and *Hörer des Wortes* (Hearer of the Word): Rahner’s *spirit-in-the world* conceives human persons as the *divine-human being* with a given potential for self-experience within the bounds of God-human-world relationship. Rahner states, “... [human beings] encounters [themselves] when [they find themselves] in the world and when [they ask] about God; and when [they ask] about [their] essence, [they] always [find themselves] already in the world and on the way to God. [They are] both of these at once, and cannot be one without the other.”¹⁶ Rahner’s concept of the ‘hearer of the word’ points to an essential possibility/potential in

the masculine pronoun to designate both God and human person. We do not intend to brand Rahner’s usage of the same as non-inclusive or as gender-discriminating. While we understand it as peculiar to the German semantics in which he originally wrote, we employ inclusive language when we quote him and in our analysis.

¹²We would mean *Anthropos* as ‘human person’ and ‘*Divinitas*’ as ‘divinity’ here.

¹³It is a phrase he borrows from Immanuel Kant.

¹⁴Karl Rahner, “Questions of Controversial Theology on Justification,” in *Theological Investigations*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966, 200.

¹⁵Karl Rahner, “Anonymous Christians,” in *Theological Investigations*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969, 393.

¹⁶Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. W. Dych, New York: Herder and Herder, 1957 and 1963, 406.

human beings, for the realization of divine-human encounter in history.¹⁷

2. Concept of World

Heidegger holds a vibrant 'world concept' as he perceives world as the arena for Being's self-disclosure. William Blattner understands the Heideggerian concept of world as "the social context or existential milieu in terms of which we understand both ourselves and the paraphernalia around us [or it can be also understood as] the system of things, the aggregate of objects around us."¹⁸ The self-disclosure of Being takes place within the four walls of the world i.e., four regions, namely, earth and heaven, divinities and mortals.¹⁹ Each of these regions is mutually complementing in the process of self-disclosure. As Herman Philipse notes, for later Heidegger, world is an existential, which means 'the openness of Being' into which Being is thrown.²⁰ World is also identified with *Lichtung* (clearing) and *Wahrheit* (truth). World in itself is the finite transcendence, the platform where human beings project their existence. As Lee Braver understands, 'being-in-the-world' in Heidegger's view is 'being-amidst the world,' encountering the "environment" (*Umwelt*) by means of participating in relevant activities of the world.²¹ It is in the world, human person has the subjective experience of one's being and of other beings. With such a viewpoint, Heidegger's world is a 'socio-cultural' world than a scientific world, a world where beings share their subjective experience and a world where human beings have shared norms and practices. Heidegger states, "[the] world as a totality of useful things at hand is spatialized to become a connection of extended things which are merely objectively present."²² As a matter of fact, he observes world as the "inconspicuous web-work of *interconnections* that are unified in an overarching goal, like lines of longitude meeting at the poles of globe."²³ There is also a shift of understanding from a traditional religious orthodoxy, which considered flight from the world as the primary requirement for

¹⁷Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, trans. M. Richards, New York: Herder and Herder, 1969, 141.

¹⁸ William Blattner, *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide*, London: Continuum, 2006, 65.

¹⁹Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, II ed., Pfullingen: Neske, 1967, 23-25.

²⁰Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt Ltd., 1999, 221.

²¹Lee Braver, *Heidegger: Thinking of Being*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014, 30.

²²Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996, 104.

²³Braver, *Heidegger: Thinking of Being*, 38. *Italic mine.*

salvation. The 'Being-event' transcends the world, but at the same time Being is immanent in the world. As immanent, it is in closer contact with human history for its self-expression. And at the same time human being cannot withstand apart from the Being. The constituent element of human person's 'Being-in-the-world' does not mean that they have any claim on its disclosure. Heidegger points out the disclosive nature of the word, and World as the condition of possibility for Word's disclosing.²⁴ To sum up Heidegger's world concept, his *Being and Time* in its second and third sections of chapter three expounds world as a condition of possibility for *all experiences*; scientific, non-scientific and of everyday experiences, as Braver puts it.²⁵ Thus world is the *Summum bonum*, where the self and relational experience of Being is actualized.

Rahner's world concept subsists within his mystical dimension, according to which world just as human persons is a concrete realm designed by God, where the transcendent God unveils God's supernatural existence by entering into the history of human beings, enabling them to have concrete experience of the divine.²⁶ While this 'concrete experience' is actualized through each of those aforementioned anthropological nuances, 'spirit in the world' particularly confirms this possible experience as the one which is realized *in the world*. For Rahner says, "[human being] is the midpoint suspended between the world and God, between time and eternity and this boundary line is the point of [one's] definition and [one's] destiny: as a certain horizon and border between the corporeal and incorporeal."²⁷ In the world, "transformed by the light of spirit and [in] the world in which [human being] sees [themselves],"²⁸ the real divine-human encounter takes place. The presence of 'spirits' deifies the world, with a possibility for transcendental experience. Christ event offers the pinnacle of human possibility, being the 'spirit in the world,' a challenge to transcend the history of this world.

Human being is spirit *in the world*, but is beyond the world. The fact that human being is in the world does not permit one to live

²⁴Joeri Schrijvers, "Marion, Levinas and Heidegger on the Question Concerning Ontotheology," *Contemporary Philosophy Review* 43 (2010) 233.

²⁵Braver, *Heidegger: Thinking of Being*, 38.

²⁶See such an observation also in John Gibson, "Mysticism in Karl Rahner: Some Considerations of His World View, the Ordinariness of the 'Extraordinary' and a Christological Reflection," 5, https://www.academia.edu/852344/Mysticism_in_Karl_Rahner_Some_Considerations_of_his_World_View_the_Ordinariness_of_the_Extraordinary_and_a_Christological_Reflection (accessed 20 July, 2019).

²⁷Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 407.

²⁸Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 406.

apart from one's orientation towards the eternal end. They have to respond to the very inner call by transcending the world. Spirit in the world, corresponding to the transcendental openness, accelerates the way to receive the self-revelation of God. Rahner notes that, "God himself is the sustaining ground, the ultimate perspective and orientation for the total movement of [human being] throughout history."²⁹ So, human person has to fulfil his vocation of spirit-*in the world*, not apart from his corporeal existence. All these confirm the fact that it is in the world that the human beings become aware of their 'finite being' in relation to the 'Infinite Being.'³⁰ Human knowledge of the world takes place in two phases: of sensibility and intellect, namely, a moment where one becomes the other to know it and a moment of being with one's self.³¹ It involves a leap from the phase of sensibility to the phase of intellect. Knowledge thus is the end product of two complementary acts, namely, a subjective act of entering to other's horizon and an objective act of returning to one's own self. Ultimately, in Rahner's view, world has relevance in so far as it is interconnected to the 'spirit and divine,' as the midpoint between human being and God.

3. Concept of a Human Being

Heidegger's anthropology can be understood in four dimensions. Primarily, his notions of human being entail an infrequent orientation. He views 'being in the world' as the basic existential of *Dasein*.³² Human beings are mortals as they are prone to death. But his concept of human beings as 'Being in the World' and mortals in the world is not similar to that of any traditional Christian thoughts although he stresses the transcendent divine action and presence of the divine in history. The Christian testimonies, as Heidegger observes, portray human beings as having turned astray from God and incapable of transcendence.³³ In contrast, Heidegger perceives human being as a historical being, thrown into the world, capable of self-transcendence. Historical being does not refer only to the past but, history means a unified structure of past, present and future.

²⁹Karl Rahner, "The Function of the Church as a Critic of the Society," in *Theological Investigations*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974, 239.

³⁰Thomas Sheehan reads Rahner in a Heideggerian perspective. Thomas Sheehan, *Karl Rahner: The Philosophical Foundations*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1987, 204.

³¹Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 118-119 echoes further Hegelian influence.

³²Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Bros, 1962, 78 ff.

³³Heidegger, *Über den Humanismus*, 16, 35, 42.

Secondly, his anthropology is closely associated with his affirmation of the unique role of language. There is a distinction between language and speech according to Heidegger. The essence of human being rests on his capability to express through language. It is through the medium of language the real unfolding of Being takes place. Heidegger views human being as “that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse [ability to speak].”³⁴ Both hearing and speaking are expressions of language. The interrelationship between language and speech is similar to that of a stream and its bank.³⁵ In his comparative analysis of Heidegger’s concept of language with that of Emmanuel Levinas, Joeri Schrijvers observes that, for Heidegger, through human language, specifically when a person names or speaks about something, it is a self-disclosure of Being.³⁶ It is in the language of a historical human being, the real disclosure of Being takes place. Heidegger conceives human being as a speaker without body. He states, “[man] acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.”³⁷ So language is capable of disclosing one’s true self.

Thirdly, Heidegger does not admittedly state anything on the relation between human being and God. He leaves such a question unanswered and open for discussion. He states, “[through] the ontological interpretation of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-World, there is neither a positive nor a negative resolution of a possible-Being-towards God.”³⁸ The meaning of Being as said by Heidegger, can be fully understood only in existential terms of human being’s transcendental openness to Being as *Dasein*.³⁹ There is a foundational and inescapable interrelationship between human persons and being. Human persons are existentially open to Being and presence of Being in them depends upon their response to Being. Heidegger notes, “[human being] obviously is a being... belongs to the totality of Being... open to Being... face to face with Being... referred to Being... [and] essentially... responding to Being [and on account of their

³⁴Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1962, 47.

³⁵Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 255.

³⁶Schrijvers, “Marion, Levinas and Heidegger on the Question Concerning Ontotheology,” 233.

³⁷Manfred Stassen, ed., *Philosophical and Political Writings: Martin Heidegger*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2003, 267.

³⁸Heidegger, *Über den Humanismus*, 36.

³⁹William Kangas, “In the Proximity of Guilt and Danger: Karl Rahner as Heidegger’s Other,” *Philosophy Today* 44, 3 (Fall 2000) 261.

openness, human being] lets Being arrive as presence.”⁴⁰ Fourthly, human beings are endowed with ‘facticity’ and ‘possibility.’ Facticity means everything given and surrounds human persons in their particular life situations. He considers ‘being-in-the-world’ as a horizon, where human beings have to encounter other persons and objects on the earth.⁴¹ Possibility means the open future, where human being has to exercise his ‘beingness.’ When human persons fail to respond to their possibilities, by neither upholding their root nor foreseeing the necessary future orientation, in reality, they disregard their vocation and potential.⁴² Both facticity and possibility have special relation to time: past, present and future. Nevertheless, Heidegger finds death as the reality over which human facticity or possibility do not have any super power. According to David Farrel Krell, Heidegger views death as the “possibility that invades [one’s] present, truncates [one’s] future, and monumentalizes [one’s] past.”⁴³ Such a perspective is very much evident when Heidegger states, “[as] potentially for Being, Dasein cannot surmount the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the unqualified impossibility of Dasein. Death thus reveals itself as the most proper, nonrelational, insurmountable possibility.”⁴⁴

Rahner conceives the knowledge that man/woman receives as *Beisich-selbst-Sein* (being-with-itself).⁴⁵ It means for Rahner, being and

⁴⁰Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1969, 31. See similar thoughts of Heidegger in his David Farrel Krell, ed., *Basic Writings*, San Francisco: Harper, 1993, 217, Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, San Francisco verify please: Harper Torchbooks, 1966, 84 and Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, 169.

⁴¹Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 78.

⁴²Peter Critchley, “Martin Heidegger: Ontology and Ecology,” https://www.academia.edu/705387/Martin_Heidegger_Ontology_and_Ecology (accessed 20 July, 2019).

⁴³David Farrell Krell, “General Introduction: The Question of Being,” in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*, London: Routledge, 1978, 22.

⁴⁴Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 12th, unaltered ed., Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1972,, section 50, p. 250.

⁴⁵It echoes the influence of the Heideggerian metaphysics on Rahner. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 45-46. Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, also brings forward a similar discussion. On page 79, he states “[i]f... only that which the knower itself is, is known as proper object, and if, nevertheless, there is to be a knowledge in which this known as proper object is the other, then both of these can be understood as simultaneously possible only by the fact that *the knower itself is the being of the other.*” Critiques often complain that Rahner’s ‘supernatural existential’ which adopts Heideggerian terminology; ‘existential’ of ‘Dasein,’ lacks proper foundations. See, Gerald A. McCool, ed., *A Rahner Reader*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975, 185.

knowing are two inseparable realities in the human person. But, he makes a distinction between the knowledge of God and of man: God knows things other than Godself, through *Godself*; but the object of human receptive knowledge is the *other*.⁴⁶ That human being is spirit with essential relation to the absolute further contributes to similar thoughts on Being in Heidegger. In relation to the absolute, one gains knowledge of the finite things in the world. Rahner understands this 'journey from the finite to the infinite' as a transcending spiritual experience of the finite in relation to the infinite.⁴⁷ This foreground, of one's being and of God serves the foundation for all our knowledge. But Rahner maintains a thorough distinction between the 'fore-knowledge' (*Vorgriff auf esse*) as a condition of possibility to receive revelation and the 'later-knowledge' of finite things conceptualized in the verbal form.⁴⁸ Evidently, whole speculations of Rahner were traditionally been considered as having its locus in the theological anthropology. However, with those anthropological notions that we have already explained and the purpose they serve in his entire theologizing, it is possible to affirm that they in reality back up his theology of revelation: the way he understands the divine-human encounter. His definition of revelation confirms such a viewpoint. In his *Bemerkungen zum Begriff der Offenbarung*, Rahner designates: Revelation is "the *historical self-unfolding* in predicamental terms, or, even more simply and correctly, the history of that transcendental relation between God and man which is constituted by God's *self-communication*, of a supernatural kind, made to every mind and grace, but *inescapably and always*, and which in itself can rightly be termed revelation."⁴⁹ Hence Rahner's human person has a 'singled out

⁴⁶Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962, 16 states a similar perspective of the concept of the receptive knowledge as we observe in Rahner. See such an observation also in Karen Kilby, *Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 2004, 17-18.

⁴⁷Karl Rahner, *Einübung Priestlicher Existenz*, Freiburg: Herder, 1970, 41-42.

⁴⁸Both *Spirit in the world* and *Hearer of the Word* include ample evidences on Rahner's notion of *Vorgriff auf esse*. Though the basics of the notion as a condition of possibility remain the same in his early and later thoughts, one can also notice a broadening of its horizon from knowing to willing in his later writings. See such an observation also in Kilby, *Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy*, 21-22.

⁴⁹Karl Rahner, "Observations on the Concept of Revelation," in *Revelation and Tradition*, London: Burns and Oates, 1966, 13. Italics are mine. See also in, s.v. "Sacramentum Mundi," 349. Rahner's theology of revelation cannot be properly understood, in the absence of a basic recourse into his perspective of "uncreated grace" and "supernatural existential." Though he admits the former as an adoption from the scholastic theology, he does not state the same for the latter. See Karl Rahner, "Relationship between Nature and Grace," in *Theological Investigations*,

beingness' on account of their 'inescapableness and alwaysness' to the self-communicating God.

Some Concluding Considerations

In the light of the study of the notions of God, world and human being in Heidegger and Rahner, let us now assess how they can comparatively contribute for an updated theologizing and philosophizing in the contemporary secular backdrop.

1) Rahner's anthropological notions at the service of his theology of revelation and his notion of 'anonymous Christians'⁵⁰ (though we have not referred to it previously) confirm that his God-concept also can be considered as the one which transcends all boundaries, just as that of Heidegger. Rahner also conceptualizes a God who intervened in the history of human beings. But on account of Rahner's 'theologically meant' and 'divine-human' God concept, his God-concept does not leave any room for ambiguities, even when they are philosophically rooted. Hence, for Rahner, 'God concept' is foundational to the world and human beings. Heidegger's God concept, on par with the 'temporal being' not only depreciates the relevance of any supernatural power and so religion in the human life. The secular context today, as self-explanatory, has abstained even from a temporal concept of God, enacting itself with an impaired value system. Only a non-temporal God, a personalistic God, as Alfred North Whitehead would admit, can transform the situation.⁵¹ In accomplishing such a task, both philosophy and

London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974, 297-298. See also Ronald Raymond Burke, "Rahner and Revelation," Unpublished Dissertation, Yale University, 1944, 47. "*die geschichtliche kategoriale Selbstausslegung oder, fast noch einfacher und richtiger, als die Geschichte desjenigen transzendenten Verhältnisses zwischen Mensch und Gott, das durch die allem Geist gnadenhaft, aber unausweichlich und immer eingestiftete Selbstmitteilung Gottes übernatürlicher Art gegeben ist und auch schon an sich mit Recht Offenbarung genannt werden muß.*" Karl Rahner, "Bemerkungen zum Begriff der Offenbarung," in *Offenbarung und Überlieferung*, Freiburg: Herder, 1965, 14.

⁵⁰Basically Rahner's 'anonymous Christians' is rooted on the Biblical verse "...God our saviour... desires everyone to be saved..." (1 Tim 2:3-4). In his personal interpretation of this biblical notion, Rahner emphasized God's saving grace working anonymously. Accordingly, people who are ignorant of the gospel message, with no fault of their own, will be saved through Christ. For details of Rahner's 'anonymous Christians,' see, Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," 390-398, Rahner, "History of the World and Salvation History," 97-114, Karl Rahner, "Christianity and Non-Christian Religions," 115-134, Karl Rahner, "Atheism and Implicit Christianity," 145-164, Karl Rahner, "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church," 161-178 etc. in his *Theological Investigations*.

⁵¹Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1960, 90, 100-158.

theology together need to undergo a process of recontextualization: a recontextualization that equally values the 'history and truth.'⁵²

2) When Heidegger presents an 'opportune world' of various possibilities, both of horizontal and vertical experiences, Rahner's experience of the world is bound only within the vertical dimension.⁵³ On account of this single dimension, world has only a relative importance in Rahner's perspectives. Heidegger does not specify experience in the world as typically a divine experience, as some religions would explicate, but he mentions that it is in the world that the disclosure of the word takes place. What is important for him is the place where human being experiences one's own being and other's being. Thus, world actualizes human being's vocation of inter-subjectivity. Philosophy and theology together has a significant role to play in the secular context. At the same time philosophy equally upholds the aforementioned experiences, which could be materialized in the world, it is necessary to define the horizontal and the vertical individually. Theology need to 'unlearn and relearn' the world concept not on account of its relative importance, but on account of its creative importance.⁵⁴

3) Heidegger's anthropology receives more relevance in the modern secular context, as he stresses human capability for self-transcendence. While he consciously disregards divine orientation in human beings, which is basic to all required *humane dimensions* on this earthly life, for Rahner there is only one dimension: human beings are created for the "one self-communication of God."⁵⁵ An alternative approach that acknowledges equal importance of the divine dimension and the human capabilities can not only alter the philosophical-theological facets, but also broaden their possibilities.

⁵²When we suggest 'recontextualisation' as the necessary 'reconstructing criteria' which theology and philosophy has to mutually undergo in this secular context, our argument is only partially in line with Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context*, Leuven: Peeters Press, 2003, chapter 1, as we specify more on a process of 'relearning' from history and truth. Whereas the relearning from history points to a 'reconstructing methodology' which calls for an internalization of sacred-religious history, the relearning from truth insists upon philosophizing from a theistic focal point and theologizing upon a philosophical basis.

⁵³Horizontal and vertical dimension mean interpersonal and divine orientations respectively.

⁵⁴Unlearning and relearning here mean setting apart the so called *fuga mundi* spirituality and recognizing the creative goodness of the world (Gen 1: 1-28) respectively.

⁵⁵Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel, London: Burns and Oates, 1970, 84-85.

Nevertheless, it is impossible without a 'reconstructive methodology' in either discipline.

4) Rahner being the forerunner of many progressive theological reflections of the contemporary period could already foresee the challenges to do theology with the advancement of time. Thus for him, theology is not just faith seeking understanding, rather, it should present the revealed mystery to be ever relevant, reading the signs of the times. In this regard, he accentuates the role of philosophy in theological education, considering it as the tool for comprehending and demonstrating theology rationally and logically.⁵⁶ However for Heidegger, while theology is an ontic science, philosophy is the ontological science. He understands theology as a positive science, which is absolutely different from philosophy. Heidegger thus considers theology as the sole ontological science as it is evident in his "Phenomenology and Theology," a lecture first given in Tübingen in 1927 and later published in 1964.

⁵⁶Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*. New York: Seabury, 1978, 10, 24.