

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN HEBBEL'S DRAMAS (§ 1)

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Abstract

The text seeks to define the term “lived experience of God” and delineate the scope of investigating this concept in the context of Friedrich Hebbel’s dramas. The meaning of the lived experience of God is established through the lens of intentionality. In a narrow sense, lived experiences of God are those experiences, in which God is the direct and proper intentional object. In a broader sense, lived experiences of God include experiences whose intentional object is not God, but is nonetheless related

to God. The experience of God is studied both in its noetic as well as its noematic character.

Keywords: lived experience of God, intentionality, Friedrich Hebbel, noematic investigation, psychology.

Doživljanje Boga v Hebblovih dramah (§ 1)

Povzetek

Besedilo skuša opredeliti t rmin »doživljanje Boga« in obmejiti domet raziskave tega pojma v kontekstu dram Friedricha Hebbela. Avtor skuša pomen doživljanja Boga dolo iti skoz prizmo intencionalnosti. V o jem smislu so doživljaji Boga tista izkustva, pri katerih je Bog neposreden in svojski intencionalni predmet. V  ir em smislu doživljaji Boga vklju ujejo tudi izkustva, pri katerih intencionalni predmet ni Bog, a se vendar nekako nana a na Boga. Izkustvo Boga avtor obravnava tako v njegovem noeti nem kot v njegovem noemati nem zna aju.

Ključne besede: doživljanje Boga, intencionalnost, Friedrich Hebbel, noematska raziskava, psihologija.

[| 1]¹ § 1. The problem

The problem, to which this work is dedicated, was formulated in the introduction as follows: What kinds of lived experience of God [*Gotteserlebnisses*] do we find in Hebbel's dramas? The following remarks are intended to explain briefly the meaning of this question, without raising the problems of philosophy of religion in all their breadth and depth.

It is a generally recognized fact in psychology that psychic lived experiences are characterized by a constitutive feature called "intentionality." This means that all psychic lived experiences have [*innewohnt*] an inherent intention toward something, namely toward their intentional object. In presentation, something is presented; in judgment, something is affirmed or rejected; in love, something is loved; in hatred, something is hated; in desire, something is desired, etc. Therefore, in every psychic lived experience there is an inherent direction toward a certain object, a kind of immanent reference to an object of one kind and no other. God can also be the intentional object of psychic lived experiences. He can be presented by us; we can formulate judgments about him, believe in him or doubt him; we can love, fear, or hate him, etc. Among the variety of psychic lived experiences, those just mentioned deserve the name of "lived experiences of God" in the first place. "Lived experiences of God" in the narrower sense of the word are, therefore, all psychic lived experiences whose intention is directed toward God as their intentional object. Lived experiences of God in the broader sense of the word, however, are also all those, the intentional object of which is not God, but which bear some other relationship to God. For example, when we wish for something from God, reproach him,

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1 [This translation indicates original pagination directly in the text in square brackets; all page numbers refer to: Blaustein, Leopold. 1929. *Das Gotteserlebnis in Hebbels Dramen*. Berlin: Verlag Reuther & Reichard.]

ask him for something, repent, confess to him, etc. If we want to get to know the lived experiences of God as experienced by Hebbel's dramatic characters, we must examine the way they present him, how they judge him, whether they believe in him or doubt in his existence, whether they honor, love, fear, or hate him, but also what they wish and demand from him, etc. The study of the lived experience of God is followed by the consideration of its intentional object as such. The aim of this noematic² investigation is knowledge of God as he is grasped and understood in individual lived experiences of God, knowledge of the attributes and the functions that are attributed to God (or gods) in individual religious lived experiences. For we are only interested in how God is thought about, not how he really is—whether one believes in him or doubts in his existence, but not whether he exists or not. All of this is almost always done through metaphorical [| 2] comparisons that are understood more or less literally by the figures in question. We must also pay attention to these images—especially natural and anthropomorphic analogies. This noematic study deepens that of the lived experiences themselves. For it is precisely the way, in which the objective presents itself in the subjective, the way, in which God is reflected in the individual, that gives rise to the differences between the lived experiences of God. Subsequently, all psychophysical functions, in which the experience of God finds its expression, must be examined—in other words, prayer and all relevant acts of worship. For these are also typical of the lived experience of God. It is even more important to recognize the significance of the lived experience of God in the entire spiritual life [*Seelenleben*] of the individual dramatic characters. They can possess a kind of hegemony that can increase to sole dominance or play a completely secondary, insignificant role. In order to properly assess their power and depth, the actions that are motivated by them must also be explored. For, like all lived experiences, religious lived experiences can also become motivating forces for action, especially because they are closely related to a person's ethical attitude. Thus, repentance, penance, etc., become religious experiences. Finally, specifically religious experiences, such as visions, revelations, etc., if they occur anywhere, must also be explored.

The disposition (the ability) of a human being to have a lived experience

2 "Noema" here means the intentional object as such.

of God in the narrower and broader sense can be called, in short, one's "lived experience of God (singular)." This terminology creates an ambiguity that is insignificant, as the meaning is always clearly determined by the context of a sentence. In order to remedy this problem even more radically, I will use the singular form of this noun to designate this psychic disposition, where possible, and the plural form to refer to the actual psychic phenomena [*Erscheinungen*]. One's lived experience of God can remain roughly the same throughout one's life, but it can also change. These changes may follow one another in stages or occur suddenly. In the first case, we speak of one's religious development, in the second of a religious rebirth, whereby only changes in a positive direction are meant. However, one's lived experience of God can also die off slowly or suddenly. Related to this is the question of how the experience of God came about. It can be inherent in one's life from childhood or it can appear for the first time at a mature age. We must pose all these questions of the lived experiences of God in relation to Hebbel's dramatic characters, if we want to come to know them.

Before we proceed, we must note one more thing. We are only interested in the denominational differences of the individual figures, studied insofar as they have had an influence on the shaping of the individual lived experience of God. For psychic individuals are the subject matter of our study, and not religions. Considerations of the history of religion are completely out of its scope.



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