Phenomenology of Religious Experience III: Visuality, Imagination, and the Lifeworld

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Transforming Representation: Jacques Derrida and the End of Christianity

Abstract: The central question of this paper revolves around the problem of representation. Following Jacques Derrida and his critique of representation, this paper will interconnect two, at first sight distinct, topics: Christianity and the world of media. For Derrida, Christianity stands behind our common understanding of representation, whereas the media are the major driving force of any representation today. The central argument of this paper is to unfold this link between Christianity and representation and thus to elaborate on the idea of representation in relation to the end of Christianity announced by Derrida. Firstly, I will review Derrida's account on the logic of representation. Derrida deems Christianity to be responsible for the logic of representation discernible in today's media world and offers a devastating critique of the concept. Secondly, I will contextualize Derrida's approach by pointing out the tension between the modern and postmodern perspectives on representation. Thirdly, I will return to a close reading of Derrida. Fourthly, I will offer a critique of Derrida's critique and will look further at the possible meanings of 'the end of Christianity.'

The central problem of this paper is the crisis of representation. This crisis can take many forms and the concept of representation as such can be used in various contexts. For example, the recent special issue of the *Journal for Religion and Transformation* dedicated to the theme mainly focusses on its political-theological relevance.[1] I suggest a different path. Following Jacques Derrida and his critique of representation, this paper will interconnect two, at first sight distinct, topics: Christianity and the world of media. For Derrida, Christianity stands behind our common understanding of representation, whereas the media are the major driving force of any representation today.

Derrida's main charge against representation is his concern that it destroys the event. Something ungraspable, something that resists mastery is suddenly reduced to a piece of information. Christianity represents God, that is, makes him visible and thus fails to bear justice to him. The media report on events and turn them into present-at-hand objective information. How are these two things—religion and media representation—connected? And what role does the end of Christianity play in our problem? Perhaps an example will help us answer these initial questions.

Lena Maier and Catherine Gerszik, two young artists and designers, presented a provocative visualisation entitled 'Last SMS'.[2] In their stylization of Leonardo da Vinci's motif of the Last Supper, they portray the gathering as follows: Jesus is sitting in the middle of the table and he is the only one who is not occupied with some means of modern communication. In contrast, each of the twelve apostles either stares at the laptop, has a tablet in hands or holds a smartphone—the symbol *par excellence* of the digital

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1 Appel and Raschke (eds.), "Crisis of Representation."
2 The image was presented within the framework of the Munich Creative Business Week in 2017 as a part of the project *Smart Revolution*. The picture is accessible online: https://lenamaier.de/portfolio/fotografie/

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revolution of our time. The German theologian Engelbert Groß interprets the scene of the 'Last SMS' as an apt representation of the signs of the time.[3] Nevertheless, his evaluation is severely negative. Groß claims that contemporary media culture distorts religious experience. Instead of sharing the moment of presence with Jesus and participating in the event of the Last Supper, the apostles seem to be somewhere else. Technology draws them out of 'here' to an imaginary 'there' of the artificial digital world. Even worse, it seems that they are more interested in representing the event taking place in the upper room than in the actual happening, as if the media images mattered more than reality. The judgement is resolute: the media culture of representation means the end of Christianity.

In my view, Groß's conservative take on 'the signs of the time' is apparently close to the postmodern mind of Jacques Derrida. Derrida scrupulously explores the link between Christianity and representation by referring to the world of media. The central argument of this paper is to unfold this link between Christianity and representation and thus to elaborate on the idea of representation in relation to the end of Christianity announced by Derrida. In the first section, I will review Derrida's account on the logic of representation. Derrida deems Christianity to be responsible for this general logic of the media world and offers a devastating critique of the concept of representation. Secondly, I will contextualize Derrida's approach by pointing out the tension between the modern and postmodern perspectives on representation. In the third section, I will return to a close reading of Derrida. Fourthly, I will offer a critique of Derrida's critique and will look further at the possible meanings of 'the end of Christianity.' The aim of this paper is to argue that the logic of representation is difficult to overcome, if it is possible at all. At the same time, I want to raise a question whether, despite Derrida's criticism, the deconstruction of representation is desirable. Hence, the main interest of this paper is not to overcome the Christian logic of representation and simply reiterate Derrida's argument. Rather, starting from Derrida's argument, I will explore the logic of transformation which takes place in representation.

1 The crisis of representation: From 'Here-and-Now' to 'There-and-Again'

No-one would deny that we find ourselves in the situation where everything is connected by means of sophisticated technical systems of communication, transmitting information and producing complex images of reality. One can without hesitation say that contemporary mass media *present* images which give rise to an impression that these images *represent,* more or less, complete imprints based on cognitive evidence of observed objects. Hi-tech systems of mediation have become natural components of our world and it is neither realistic nor desirable to undo this development. However, there is another aspect that should attract our attention and that calls for reflection. As the presence of media is self-evident, it seems as if our faith in seeing images represented before our sight is evident too. This problem stands at the center of Derrida's critique of representation.

Images represented in media equal objects grasped in and controlled by knowledge. In consequence, mediated images cease to be perceived as particular perspectives. Instead, they represent a specific kind of objective vision, that is, a bird's-eye point of view on what-is-as-it-is. This vision is detached from its original temporal embeddedness because it can be represented again at any time and any place. The here-and-now of a particular experience is replaced with the always repeatable there-and-again.

What enables the above-mentioned shift? The answer is belief in the represented as the real. We believe in what we see. 'We believe' in the mediated. Obviously, this faith says nothing about correctness because the original can be mispresented. Nevertheless, the issue at stake is faith in media representation as 'letting us know' and 'showing facts.' Whether we evaluate the represented images as false or true, this is only the result of subsequent reflection.

Jacques Derrida describes the dynamic of representation under the rubric of the transformation of *the event* into *information.* Interestingly, the example he uses to explain the logic behind this shift does

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3 Groß, "Zeichen der Zeit im Abendmahlsaal."

not refer to anything related to hi-tech media but comes from the sphere of religion. Derrida focuses on the story of Abraham's sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac in Genesis 22, the perennial *locus* of philosophical investigations. How does the event essential for all Abrahamic faiths relate to the world of media and the logic of representation?

For Derrida, the shortest and also the most accurate description of what happened between God and Abraham on Mount Moria is expressed in the exclamation: "Above all, no journalists."[4]

Derrida interprets the ambiguous and by all means equivocal demand of the sacrifice of Isaac as the unconditionally private affair between God and Abraham, that is, as something singular, invisible and unrepresentable; in one word: *secret*. The first implication of Derrida's provocative interpretation concerns its theological aspect: God's demand is primarily not one of forcing Abraham to kill his son but rather inviting him to a unique and irreplaceable relationship with God. The second implication applies to the context of media representation and claims that God's demand is veiled with a secret. In this sense, the representation—journalism—is a betrayal of this demand. Reporting breaks the nature of the unspeakable, the impossible and the unrepresentable event, because it is mediatized, archived and represented. The event becomes a piece of information.

Derrida's cry repeats itself: "Above all, no journalists." The French philosopher wants to say that we have become accustomed to the idea that our access to events is only possible through media images which represent 'what happened' at a particular here-and-now as an always new there-and-again. However, for good or ill, the rapid development of media and techniques of representation does not only increase the complexity of the mediated information, but rather the technology of mediation informs the means of thinking about the meaning of the represented.

As Marian Hobson explains: "In representation, the presentation comes back as a double, a copy, and the idea as a picture of the thing which is at our disposal."[5] For Derrida, the crisis of representation manifests the need to deconstruct a naïve faith in the represented, the faith which originates in Christianity and is enforced in mass media culture. Defined positively, Derrida's aim is to save the promise of the event of the unrepresentable. One can even say that Derrida provokes to save the event of Christianity from itself. In other words, the end of Christianity and the deconstruction of the logic of representation (in media) proclaims the ban on reporting non-representable secrets. Shall we then move from modernity as the epoch of representation to the postmodern fragmentation?

2 From modern representation to postmodern fragmentation

The tension between the modern and the postmodern is certainly in the background of the debate on the crisis of representation. Modernity is generally perceived as the epoch of increasing faith and trust in technology, including the systems of mediation. The progress of technical images, for example, radio broadcasting and television, generate new forms of approaching reality. Nevertheless, the issue at stake is not only more sophisticated methods of mediation that are faster than ever before and seem to offer a more accurate description of reality. Different means of mediation result in different means of thinking about the represented. The doyen of media theory, Marshall McLuhan, used to claim that "the medium is the message."[6] It says that the means of mediation is not irrelevant and detached from the image it produces. To put it simply, the media we use affect the way we think. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that our dispositions are contingent on technological development but rather that the increasing use of sophisticated technological systems of communication, transmission of ideas, producing images, etc., correlate with the modalities of thinking. In other words, understanding the meaning of the mediated, that is, images in one's mind, is not dissociable from the manner of mediation of these images that supposedly bear witness to reality.

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4 Derrida, "Above All, No Journalists!"
5 Hobson, *Derrida and Representation*, 149.
6 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7.

Modernity, in line with its Enlightenment heritage, promotes still more lucid visions of the representation of the real. Based on faith in the rational capability of modern 'subject' to think the world in its totality, the media representation is taken as the effect of the auto-transparency of reason.[7] Therefore, it is not by accident that Heidegger describes modernity as the age of the world picture.[8]

The picture or image Heidegger thinks of is not just an imitation of the world. Rather, the image of the world represents the world as an object before the sight. Consequently, one can say, for example, I am in the picture about the Last Supper; I read the news, I saw the post on my timeline, I got the SMS.

To have the picture of something means to lay down (*stellen*) the essence of this thing as it is. And to 'be in the picture' about something, for Heidegger, equals with the posture of being ready to cope with the object before the eyes. "Hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture."[9] In other words, the image of the world represents the world and makes it controllable for those who 'get the picture.' And to get the picture means to master the totality of being regarding the thing.

Paradoxically, when a total disclosure of the world by means of media seems to be technically possible, when the total representation by means of technical images becomes real and seemingly nothing can prevent us from mastering the thing, the world and the totality of being as it is, the opposite seems to be the case. The intensification of media does not create more transparent communication and even less a more enlightened society (not to mention the ethical category of responsibility). The result is a rather more chaotic and blurred image of the world.[10] The more representation we have, the more mess we get. Representation turns into fragmentation. Modernity turns into postmodernity.

The world of media is probably the best mirror of the various postmodern tendencies that introduced, for example, Jean-François Lyotard.[11] If modernity was characterised by great ideas (in the field of politics, philosophy, economy, etc.) leading to certain goals and thus creating a complete image of reality as it ought to be, postmodernity should be experienced as the interaction of partial interpretations without the absolute claim on one, definitive completion and, therefore, as fragmented perspectives. However, what seems like the distortion of the modern ideal of emancipation from unknowing and the fall into relativism can be turned into the emancipation from modern objectivism. The postmodern 'media chaos' reveals the illusion of any objective facticity. The postmodern consciousness 'knows' the truth that all reality is always symbolically mediated and that reality is construed by the interplay of diverse images and interpretations. Or as Derrida explains: "[s]igns represent the present in its absence; they take the place of the present."[12] In short, fragmentation brings redemption from the idolatry of representation.

In this respect, Derrida's *différence* and Lyotard's *differend* comes close to each other: The plurality of images shows the intrinsic complexity of life-world and the impossibility of ultimate representation. There is always the possibility that a new image will arise, a possibility which, for Lyotard, becomes a necessity, and which will manifest itself as the intrusion of the otherness that transcends that which seems to be permanent, unmoving and universal. In this sense, one can read Heidegger's reference to the redemption for the age of the world picture, which is coming from the sphere of art—the other of reason—as the pre-text to the postmodern criticism.

The crisis of representation announced in postmodern theory can be read as a double movement: first, as a category of interpretation; second, as a critical instrument.[13] Approaching the crisis of representation through the prism of interpretation reveals the shift from modernity to postmodernity. This means the awareness of the shift from the logic of here-and-now—there-and-again as the representation of the real

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7 Bystricky, "Techno-imagination and Implicit Knowledge," 22-28.

8 Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture."

9 Ibid., 129.

10 This is the overall argument of Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*.

11 My previous researched developed the link between Lyotard, religion and the postmodern context. Anonymised, "Fighting Hegenomy, Saving the Event."

12 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 138.

13 I draw this interpretation from Lehmann, "Becoming Real," 333-334.

to the sign of the real that can always be alternated. To put it simply, the crisis of representation as the category of interpretation enforces the question: do we really see what appears to us?

Reading the crisis of representation through the lens of critical instrument points to the postmodern deconstruction of logocentrism and the metaphysics of presence. It also reveals the process of mediation as a never-ending process that breaks with the supposition that an event, which happened in its unique here-and-now, could be represented there-and-again.

To sum up, the postmodern critique of representation reveals that the problem at stake is ontological, something that Derrida makes clear in his writings. In what follows, I will turn back to Derrida in order to discuss the link between representation and Christianity.

3 From representation to the transcendental illusion

The best way to understand Derrida's argument is to briefly return to the instance of God's demand on Abraham to sacrifice his son (as already mentioned above). Derrida portrays the scene as follows:

> I want to see if, even in the most extreme ordeal, the possible (demanded) death of your favorite son, you will be able to keep secret the absolutely invisible, singular, unique relation that you are to have with me.[14]

From a theological perspective, the meaning of the event is not the test of obedience but its eventful character and whether Abraham (and his followers) is able to keep it without archiving and representing it as a piece of information. Now, from the perspective of representation, the event is commemorated and mediated. However, the means of mediation, and thus of representation, differ from one tradition of Abrahamic faith to another. Whereas Judaism and Islam, in Derrida's opinion, are perpetually deciphering the enigmatic trace of the most radical demand of the sovereign God, Christianity passes over the representation of the event itself. What happened in a particular moment (here-and-now) is represented there-and-again. Moreover, the secret is removed by representing the singular event experienced by Abraham and his son as the pre-figuration of the sacrifice of God's son alone. Therefore, we are confronted with two fundamentally different modes of approaching the event.

Derrida argues that the difference is best captured in the way Abrahamic faiths use the media for proclaiming their respective messages. Christianity shows the event, whereas Judaism and Islam proclaim teaching. Whereas Jewish and Muslim broadcasting is predominantly oriented to the spoken word (lectures, sermons, commentaries, etc.), the Christian media often show liturgy and prayer. For example, 'live' broadcasting of holy mass represents a sacred event. Those who partake in the liturgy and those who follow it, for instance, on the TV screens, witness the same thing (though differently), that is, the transubstantiation of the host and thus the representation of Christ's sacrifice on the Calvary.

For Derrida, the foundation of the history of 'real presence' and the very logic of representation finds its roots in the doctrine of the incarnation.[15] Faith in the incarnation conveys the message that God has become visible. Applied to the example of the sceneless scene from Mount Moria that it is prohibited to portray—represent—in Judaism and Islam, Christianity understands it as the pre-figuration of Christ (the One who represents God and makes him visible).

Now, regardless whether we find Derrida's point of view correct or untenable from a theological point of view, the lesson from the French thinker is the following one: Apart from affirming the Christian origin of concepts such as the Enlightenment, secularisation and globalisation, Derrida argues that the concept of representation as we generally understand it also derives from Christianity.[16] Or, to reverse the order, the age of media as we experience it is conceivable only against the background of the Christian religion.

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14 Derrida, "Above All, No Journalist!", 57.
15 Ibid., 58.
16 Ibid.

> Today there is a *religion of the media,* and it is for the moment, precisely *the religion of the media:* there is the religion *of the* media, which is to say, the religion that the media represent, incarnate, reveal.[17]

For Derrida, the very notion of media implies a message that is neither private nor secret. It is expected to show and thus to see the thing itself. In the Christian vocabulary, one engages with the real presence, the transubstantiation and the incarnation: "deictic and sensible *immediacy* of the mediator, here and now, in the *this*, the making present of mediation[.]"[18] The use of Christian vocabulary in Derrida is quite deliberate because when one says *religion*, one speaks Latin and to speak Latin, at this particular time, equals supposing the Christian origin and meaning of the concept.[19] Thus, it seems to me that the concept of globalatinization introduced by Derrida is not so much the outcome of the period of representation—modernity—as certain studies in the field suggest.[20] Rather, globalatinization is the spread of the logic of representation.

According to Derrida, at the heart of representation stands the concept of the fiduciary, a category introduced in his essay on the return of the religious "Faith and Knowledge". The fiduciary stands for faith, the demand to 'believe me.' This moment is of great importance because, as Derrida argues at length, faith is a common source of religion and knowledge.[21] The confession "I believe you", or the demand to "believe me" is the condition of any symbolic mediation.

However, the current situation radicalises this foundation of media and transposes the appeal to faith to the moment of "letting know." Derrida has in mind technically sophisticated processes of representation, such as visualization, that claim to represent the virtuality of the real, that is, to place the thing itself before sight.[22] What happens can thus be re-narrated as the demand on believing that faith is no longer necessary because one is confronted with the image of the thing itself. Analogously to what happens in the Eucharist, the image becomes the real itself, though it still appears as an image. Again, we hear the echo of the real presence, the representation of here-and-now as there-and-again, and the transformation of the event into information. However, this type of information is much more powerful than a mere piece of something that is 'known.' To know this kind of information means to possess the power to perform and to let things happen, that is, to let the originary event be represented. Derrida summarizes as follows:

> There is no need to believe; one believes; no effort is necessary because no doubt is possible. Like the ten thousand persons in the auditorium, one is confronted with the thing itself.[23]

And he continues, "on the soil of this bare faith, media construct themselves."[24] The logic of representation wins the game. The event is turned into a piece of information. Irreplaceable here-and-now is represented there-and-again. Hence, Derrida concludes that media exploit the moment of faith and create the transcendental illusion of media.[25]

Although the moment of representation is a typical characteristic of techno-scientific modernity, Derrida makes clear the logic of representation as such is impossible to disconnect from Christianity. Even more radically, modern mass media and technologically developed means of communication intrinsically belong to the Christian heritage. The same can be said about the postmodern version of the mediatized existence marked by almost uninterrupted representation of particular events on social media. The essence remains the same and concerns *representing* a particular here-and-now as there-and-again. The fact that the

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17 Ibid., 69.
18 Ibid., 62.
19 Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," 64.
20 Alvis, "Phenomenology's Rejects."
21 Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," 77-82.
22 Derrida, "Above All, No Journalist!", 63.
23 Ibid., 64.
24 Ibid., 65.
25 Interestingly, one of the most apt examples of this logic of mediation is an unexpected media star of the day: the Pope. Obviously, Derrida refers to John Paul II. However, this trend has not vanished. Both successors of John Paul II enjoy unprecedented presence in the media and both master media too.

subject—the I—experiences something here-and-now is not enough. To tell the story, to share the memory, or simply to bear the event in mind—to remember—is insufficient. The experience must be represented, posted, and only this transformation of the event into a sharable information (displayed there-and-again) makes the experience complete. Returning to the particular example of the 'Last SMS', representing the experience of the last supper is not simply the extension of this experience (journalism). The process of representation is a part of the experience itself.

4 The end of Christianity and the iconic representation

Derrida makes clear that the logic of representation is understandable only when one takes into account its Christian origin. To put it more bluntly, the prevailing media representation is a specific Christian phenomenon. However, at the same time, this phenomenon manifests itself as the end of Christianity.

> The religious affinity between the Christian religion and what is happening today passes indubitably via the kenosis and the death of God, via a certain 'atheism', but this also means via Christianity as the end of Christianity.[26]

There are two ways to understand the proposition that Christianity is ending. The first, rather obviously, reads the end of Christianity as a natural consequence of the age of media. Christianity has ceased to be the interpretative framework of culture and society and its place has been taken by the media. From now on, the media function as a new integrating principle that constructs identity, influences relations, and determines culture. The media have become a new *religio*.[27] In contrast to this rather simplistic understanding, there is the second way to read the end of Christianity. Although Derrida persuasively argues that Christianity bears the responsibility for the logic of media representation, at the same time, the above cited text indicates that it is via Christianity that this logic is interrupted. What does this mean?

The previous section established a link between the doctrine of the incarnation and the logic of representation. At this point, the death of God and kenosis enters the discussion. From a theological perspective, these two events are in fact two sides of one and the same event. The Incarnation (the visible and the representable) and kenosis (the dark and unrepresentable) are intrinsically conjoined. The latter presupposes the former, as John Manoussakis argues in his essay, "The Revelation according to Jacques Derrida."[28]

Manoussakis elaborates upon the Christian *shibboleth* introduced in Derrida's later works. Christianity parts way with the other Abrahamic monotheisms over the question of the death of God. "For Islam and Judaism there is no 'death of God' because it is prohibited to depict God." [29] The link between the possibility of representing the divine and the kenosis of God sheds light on different uses of the media by the respective monotheistic religions. As noted before, Christianity represents the image of the event, whereas Judaism and Islam prefer to broadcast teaching and words. The reason for this is a radical otherness of God in Judaism and Islam. To put it the other way round, the reason for the Christian practice is the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Derrida finds a direct correlation between globalatinization, that is, the logic of representation and the doctrine of the Incarnation. Similarly, the Incarnation is the foundation of what Derrida calls the transcendental illusion of media. The here-and-now is represented as there-and-again because God has become visible.

Nevertheless, Manoussakis does not share Derrida's perspective. Just as the Incarnation is not the representation of the thing itself, the Eucharist is not the representation of the event which happened here-and-now as there-and-again. "The consecrated bread and the incarnate God are actually the very opposite: screens for protecting against the terrifying reality of the Real."[30] Manoussakis concludes that Derrida

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26 Derrida, "Above All, No Journalist!", 69.
27 This oppinion is expressed in Halik, *Patience with God*.
28 Manoussakis, "Revelation," 316.
29 Ibid., 318.
30 Ibid., 320.

does not fully appreciate the iconic element in representation.[31] In other words, Derrida prefers the voice (Judaism and Islam) over the body (Christianity).

The end of Christianity could then be taken as the awareness of the transcendental illusion of media. The modern objective representation is, indeed, in crisis and in need of deconstruction. However, from a theological perspective, the goal is not necessarily to overcome a situation that we *believe* we *know* what we *see* in representation. The crux of *krisis* is an engaged decision-making and the intellectual awareness of the limits of representation. But is this something new? Hasn't the majority of Christian history been about balancing between representation and the iconic presentation of the divine? Wouldn't this conclusion appear too simple in the face of Derrida's critique of Christianity, which theology is obliged to take seriously?

5 Conclusion: Towards fragmented representation

Derrida claims that representation in the Christian narrative betrays the eventful character of the event by turning it into information. In the wake of globalatinization, which means the ever present media, "no critique can penetrate or dissipate this structure illusion."[32] Although everyone knows that the represented image, for example, by means of television, is a particular interpretation—a perspective from somewhere— it still makes an appeal to faith that the image represents the real. Derrida's solution is not a radical iconoclasm—the end of Christianity *en tout*. Rather, the French philosopher parts ways with Christianity in preference for the Judeo-Islamic way. In other words, here Derrida chooses the hermeneutics of the voice over the hermeneutics of the image.

Yet at the same time, it is not possible to give up representation as something that obfuscates the seen. Representation is the condition of the possibility of seeing. Indeed, the category of seeing or vision is crucial for the Christian tradition. "The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory" (John 1, 14). The Christian life strives for salvation, the state of being which is often reported as a beatific vision. The words proclaimed during the celebration of the Eucharist read: "Behold, this is the Lamb of God." All in all, Christianity emphasizes the visibility of images and this emphasis, according to Derrida, has been recuperated in contemporary media and their logic of mediation as visible representation.

It is clear that Derrida's intention is not to render representation inoperative. It would be a sheer illusion. However, it is also clear that the logic of representation is somewhat problematic in its nature. The question is whether Derrida's deconstructive insight can be turned into a constructive, positive program. In this line, I propose to reinterpret Derrida's prophecy about the end of Christianity through the notion of *fragmented representation*.

The concept of fragmented representation tries to connect the modern striving to represent reality and the postmodern consciousness of a fragmented world. Moreover, I believe that Christianity, because of its tension between the Incarnation and kenosis, is the carrier of fragmented representation. One of Derrida's main objections is that the logic of representation distorts the event and deprives it of its eventful character. What might be to a certain extent true for modernity cannot be fully applied to Christianity. The Christian representation is never the representation of the event which occurred in a particular here-and-now simply as there-and-again. The Christian representation is not replication. The Christian representation is always fragmented because it represents the difference between the event and the represented. If we take the example of the Eucharist or the Incarnation, Christianity represents what is not representable. Nevertheless, the representation is operative. The representation does not produce a quasi-objective image of reality. Rather, it is the human way of dealing with reality. It seems to me that such a perspective is not totally alien to Derrida's *différence*. However, the French thinker is not explicit enough in this respect. Perhaps Derrida is not radical enough to see the radical nature of Christianity. The challenge of representation is not to overcome it, or to unveil its transcendental illusion. The challenge is to discover the moment of transformation within the fragmented representation.

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31 Ibid., 318.
32 Derrida, "Above All, No Journalists!", 85.

The end of Christianity is then the redirection of attention from the object which is being represented to the world as such. The end of Christianity means emancipation from the frozen gaze on the object (idol) and turning to the appearing of phenomena as such (which are always mediated). The starting point is the astonishment with seeing things themselves—the world—which is based on a natural faith that we really see things as they give themselves. However, in this approach, there is always something excessive, something which transcends the represented images. In the wake of this approach of mediation, the event might be recognized as an event, not simply a piece of information. To put it simply, the end of Christianity is the reconsideration of the moment of transformation within the framework of representation. However, this notion of transcendence does not primarily refer to an object which transcends other objects but points out that representation is not the end in itself, but, on the contrary, introduces the end of exhaustive representation in order to open up for the eventful aspect of mediation. The end of Christianity does not happen. The end of Christianity is happening via embracing representation (including the most advanced means of communication and the media) as the condition of living and experiencing.

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