(Ir)Rationality and Religiosity During Pandemics: Phenomenological Criticism

Supplemental Research Webinar of the Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience

https://sophere.org/conferences/irrationality-religiosity-and-causality-during-pandemics-phenomenological-criticism/

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Hosted by the Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna, Austria

In the context of the current COVID 19-crisis, the vexed relationship between religion, intuition, discursive reason, and instrumental rationality has become ever more complicated. Given resurgent appeals to the transformative (purifying, redemptive, liberating, etc.) force of religious resources in times of crisis–both manipulating and hopeful—we invite papers which explicate the involved aspects of (ir)rationality, on a societal, social, communal, and personal scale. Our working hypothesis is that the by now apparent lapses and discontents of secular reason contributed, if not lead to, the COVID19 pandemics. With the toll of deaths exceeding 100,000 in mid-April 2020, and industrial countries such as the United States leading the numbers, what does it tell us about the status of knowledge, consciousness and its relationships with the power networks ? Given the astounding denials of both trivial-ontic-empirical and scientific facts of epidemics and the gripping realities of global misinformation, the relationship between the reason—in action, politics, press, local decision-making—and the subjective dimension of religiosity stand out in this new light, calling for phenomenological reporting and reflection, which must precede the care and the cure. While religious experience has been shown to have emancipatory value and enhance resilience and decrease stress, we'd like to clarify if this assessment still stands in this new situation.

We invite submissions of papers of about 3000 words, which would correspond to 20 min of reading maximum. Please also provide up to 300 words synopsis of your talk, in a separate Word document formatted for anonymous review. Please submit both to viennaweb2020@sophere.org . Deadline for submission is July 15, 2020, with notifications of acceptance by August 1. Best papers will be recommended for publication in a special topical issue of *Open Theology* (De Gruyter) Both workshop and the publication are offered free of charge, as a contribution to healing the pandemic.

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