



THE ACCELERATED LATE-MODERN WAY OF LIFE: PRAYER AS A COUNTER-ALIENATION PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Hartmut Rosa's diagnosis of the contemporary world focuses on late modernity, social acceleration, and the concept of resonance. He argues that the norms of our social world are increasingly shaped by the accelerating pace of life, leading to alienation from space, time, others, and even ourselves. While Rosa sees little hope of reversing these processes, this contribution aims to extend his critical analysis by proposing prayer as a potential practice of deceleration and resistance to alienation. By integrating the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory (to which Rosa belongs) with the study of religious experience (Otto, James...), I argue that the simple act of prayer, approached at a trans-confessional level, should be reconsidered in contemporary philosophical debates on achieving a good life. Prayer, in fact, could be considered a counter-alienation practice, for it provides a pause amid social chaos: rooted in the hope for a divine response, it offers a moment of stillness and reflection, counteracting alienation in the tumult of modern life.

Keywords: Critical Theory; Religion; Prayer; Hartmut Rosa; Acceleration.

RESUMEN

El diagnóstico que Hartmut Rosa ofrece del mundo contemporáneo se centra en la modernidad tardía, la aceleración social y el concepto de resonancia. Rosa sostiene que las normas de nuestro mundo social están cada vez más determinadas por el ritmo acelerado de la vida, lo que conduce a una alienación respecto del espacio, del tiempo, de los otros e incluso de nosotros mismos. Si bien Rosa ve pocas posibilidades de revertir estos procesos, esta contribución busca ampliar su análisis crítico proponiendo la oración como una posible práctica de desaceleración y de resistencia frente a la alienación. Al integrar la Teoría Crítica de la Escuela de Frankfurt - a la que Rosa pertenece - con el estudio de la experiencia religiosa - Otto, James, entre otros -, sostengo que el simple acto de orar, entendido en un nivel transconfesional, debería ser reconsiderado en los debates filosóficos contemporáneos sobre la posibilidad de alcanzar una vida buena. En efecto, la oración podría ser considerada una práctica contra la alienación, en la medida en que ofrece una pausa en medio del caos social: arraigada en la esperanza de una respuesta divina, proporciona un momento de quietud y reflexión que contrarresta la alienación propia del tumulto de la vida moderna.

Palabras clave: Teoría Crítica; Religión; Oración; Hartmut Rosa; Aceleración.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Classical social theorists such as Simmel (2002), Weber (1950), and Durkheim (1960) described processes that later scholarship would interpret as precursors of social acceleration, including the intensification of urban experience, rationalization, social differentiation, and the increasing density of social interactions. Building on these earlier analyses of modernity, more recent sociological and philosophical scholarship has identified the acceleration of social life as a distinctive feature of modern societies and has explicitly theorized social acceleration as a defining characteristic of modernity. In particular, Hartmut Rosa has developed a specific and systematic theory on the *social acceleration* of what he calls *late-modernity*. Drawing on the tradition of Critical Theory that emerged from the Frankfurt School (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, etc.), his effort is to identify the contradictions of capitalism in order to point towards a renewed way of living, devoid of the false promises and hidden inconsistencies that cause alienation. *Alienation*, in fact, is the key concept of Rosa's intellectual effort: by revisiting this Marxian idea, he highlights its relevance for today's world. To identify what alienation is according to his theory, Hartmut Rosa begins by identifying actual forms of human suffering in contemporary societies (cfr. Rosa 2010). Then, by linking alienation to acceleration, he opens new avenues for understanding our lives, particularly regarding what we consider a *good life* and the possibilities of pursuing it.

Rosa says that we live at the intersection of three phenomena: technological acceleration, acceleration of social change, and acceleration of the "pace of life" (cfr. Rosa 2003), a situation that leaves us little or no time to do what we would most like to do, hence not permitting us to realize ourselves. Social acceleration has become "a new form of Totalitarianism" (cfr. Rosa 2010, chap. 9), ending up "undermin[ing] the promise of autonomy" (Ibid, 295) that was proper to modernity, i.e., *ethical self-determination*. More importantly, the ever-increasing time speed *leads nowhere*, it is devoid of meaning and direction—which is the specific feature of late-modernity in opposition to modernity and to its traditional idea of progress. Now, the question is this: is it possible to decelerate and devote more time to one's family, dreams or passions? This issue lies at the heart of Rosa's effort to revive the idea of a life worth living, thereby overcoming alienation.

Among the various forms of social deceleration, some are based on the physiological limits of material reality, while others are accidental (dysfunctional) restrictions that must be overcome. He also lists *intentional decelerations*, which take two forms: on the one hand, there are the “slowdown efforts aimed at maintaining or even promoting functional and accelerative capabilities” (Ibid, 85), which Rosa considers strategies generated by the system in order to perpetuate itself. On the other hand, there are ideological forms of resistance, often associated with radical, reactionary, or fundamentalist movements, which are always doomed to fail. None of these strategies effectively counteracts the acceleration of social life or provides a permanent slowdown in the overall situation we are experiencing.

The present contribution proposes *prayer* as a potential counter-practice for decelerating social life and counteracting alienation, not in a definitive way but certainly in a constant, circumstantial, and effective way—a way that opens up the conditions for a real good life in a setting (late-modernity) that is certainly neither optimal nor favorable to it. It goes without saying that I am not talking about a specific wording or a particular confession: prayer is widely present across religious traditions. So, far from favoring one creed over another, my intention is to address people who are already believers within any religion and to revalue an ancient gesture in a situation as modern as ours, reintroducing it into contemporary philosophical debate as an often-forgotten possibility for overcoming alienation and living a truly autonomous life.

2. ACCELERATION, NOISE, *DIVERTISSEMENT*

Prayer is a practice found across religious traditions. Praying involves turning to the Divine and being still. It is not necessary to ask for something, even though petitionary prayer is one of the most common forms. In his masterpiece *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), William James describes this state as “a willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God” (James 2002, 42). In prayer, the Divine is present, *but only* if we are able and willing to be silent. In fact, as long as we do not break the silence by asserting our own presence, it becomes possible—at least for the religious person—to experience something different from oneself. Rudolf Otto calls it *the Holy*, the *Numinous*, or the *Sacred*, which “cannot be strictly defined” (Otto 1924, 7). He adds: “There is no religion in which it does not live as the real innermost core, and without it no religion would be worthy of the name” (Ibid, 6). In line with Otto’s understanding, Mircea Eliade describes the Sacred as “pre-eminently the real”

(Eliade 1959, 95). However, since this is not a paper on the philosophy of religion, I will refrain from addressing this topic directly and instead focus on the simple act of praying.

Numerous studies have been devoted to the secular age in which we live: religions are being pushed out of the public sphere and into the private one, as the quest for tolerance has transformed into a quest for neutrality, which, in turn, leads to indifference and even hostility toward religion as a whole (cfr. Taylor 2018). Hartmut Rosa's diagnosis adds a chapter to this same narrative: the very fact that time is accelerating, or that we perceive it as doing so, leaves little or no room for cultivating a spiritual life, insofar as it requires forms of attention and receptivity that conflict with contemporary imperatives such as production, competition, and efficiency.

What is more, acceleration results in *noise*. We are too caught up in so many things, too confused by too many inputs, and too outward-looking to be able even to think clearly and properly. As early as the end of the 17th century, Blaise Pascal was writing in the *Pensées* that "I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber" (Pascal 1910, 39). He argues:

Hence it comes that play and the society of women, war, and high posts, are so sought after. Not that there is in fact any happiness in them, or that men imagine true bliss to consist in money won at play, or in the hare which they hunt; we would not take these as a gift. We do not seek that easy and peaceful lot which permits us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the labour of office, but the bustle which averts these thoughts of ours, and amuses us. [...] Hence it comes that men so much love noise and stir; hence it comes that the prison is so horrible a punishment; hence it comes that the pleasure of solitude is a thing incomprehensible. And it is in fact the greatest source of happiness in the condition of kings, that men try incessantly to divert them, and to procure for them all kinds of pleasures. (Ibid, 40).

It must be noted that, when discussing *divertissement* (diversion), Pascal was referring to a specific feature of human nature that drives individuals of all ages to be distracted from what really matters: one's own soul². In

² "Man is obviously made to think. It is his whole dignity and his whole merit; and his whole duty is to think as he ought. Now, the order of thought is to begin with self, and with its Author and its end. Now, of what does the world think? Never of this, but of dancing, playing the lute, singing, making verses, running at the ring, etc., fighting, making oneself king, without thinking what it is to be a king and what to be a man" (Pascal 1910, 45).

other words, Pascal was not writing a sociological analysis of modern times but rather a sketch of philosophical anthropology. Nonetheless, today this very feature of *divertissement* has been institutionalized and has become entrenched in the entire social system: social media, smartphones, TV shows, podcasts, and omnipresent pop music—all these things constantly distract us, and the insatiable search for news has become a relentless and exhausting activity. We no longer get bored and are unable to cultivate a way of thinking that is calm, reflective, independent, and thoughtful. In this context, prayer is not only discouraged but even made (almost) impossible. The noise is too great. And in order to pray, it is necessary to first sit quietly and listen to the silence. Is this still possible in today's world? Surely, it is an action that requires true autonomy—and I am using this term in the etymological sense (*autós*: “self”, *nomos*: “law”, “norm”)—that is to say, the decision must come from within, since the external world discourages it.

Romano Guardini has written that “[e]specially in our modern world, man loves to think of himself as active, a fighter, a creator, but in this he is only half right. It would be equally correct, or even more so, if he were to describe himself as restless, incapable of pausing and delving deeper; like someone who needs countless people, things, thoughts, and words, yet remains forever dissatisfied; someone who long ago lost touch with his inner center and, despite all his knowledge and abilities, remains at the mercy of chance” (Guardini 2022, 18). Guardini's observations are very close to Rosa's: he says that

[i]t is the doctors who point out to us that a man who lives solely focused outward, tossed from one impression to another, speaks, strives, works, fights, and ultimately wears himself out both physically and intellectually. To prevent this from happening, there must also be an opposite movement in life, from the outside to the inside; life needs to renew itself from its roots, gather energy, and regain its breath” (Ibid, 12)

To counter the distraction caused by accelerated social life we need *inner recollection*, a tranquility of mind that serves as an effective countermeasure to external dispersion. And, as Guardini says, “recollection is already prayer” (Ibid, 23). To be silent and to seek silence around oneself is very difficult nowadays, but this is the very definition of prayer, as Kierkegaard underlines: “[T]o pray is not to listen to oneself speak, but is to come to keep silent, and to continue keeping silent, to wait, until the person who prays hears God. [...] [W]hen prayer has properly become prayer, it has become silence” (Kierkegaard 2016, 19-20). In this condition, the possibility of

a word from outside—i.e., a revelation—emerges as a possibility, but not, obviously, as a certainty.

3. SOMETHING IN COMMON AMONG ALL RELIGIONS

In the hyper-speed of late modernity, religious people find it harder than ever to set aside a moment for prayer. Still, they do it. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and people belonging to many different religious traditions pray, meditate, contemplate, and find a pause from the chaotic world that urges them to work, to move, and to rush. Sunday mass for Catholics, *ṣalāt* for Muslims, *tefillah* for Jews, a number of other practices and formulas are integral parts of those beliefs and form one of their practical dimensions. Every day, many believers pause, turn away from profit and the functioning of the social machine, retreat into silence (even if only an inner silence), and free themselves from all worries, deadlines, and tasks. Prayer is common across many religious traditions, to the point that William James says that “the prayer-instinct is [independent] of usual doctrinal complications” (James 2002, 360)—and this is because it is an actual *instinct*, as he calls it, which stems from certain drives that human beings experience. Taken as such, prayer is a universal action that can be considered independently of the “over-beliefs” (Ibid, 334) of each theology, which are then eventually associated with it in order to shape and define the particular form that prayer assumes.

In a recent study, Christoffel Lombaard has raised some questions regarding Hartmut Rosa’s paradigm in relation to spirituality, specifically asking whether “the placement of religion within a deceleration category [is] faithful to all forms of faith” (Lombaard 2018, 6). In doing so, he particularly refers to Protestantism, which, in light of Max Weber’s insights, played a role—especially through early Calvinism—in the emergence of capitalism. Lombaard then mentions the sense of fulfillment often associated with an active spiritual life, and writes:

[W]ould such a positive orientation as just indicated not privilege yet again Protestant expressions of Christianity above other forms of Christianity in particular, and above other forms of religiosity in general? [...] Would [this], as a corollary, not in turn sideline the more quietist, reflective, meditative, symbolic and traditionalist spiritualities, as found in, for instance, Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox traditions, Buddhism and some primary religions? (Ibid).

I would respond that focusing on spiritual well-being and personal fulfillment as they derive from religious life in general is not at all the same as

justifying a given social order. Moreover, emphasizing prayer rather than a specific doctrine allows us to appreciate precisely those religious attitudes that are quietist and contemplative, rather than activist and energetic. And this is exactly what our hyper-accelerated society needs today.

In many of his writings, Hartmut Rosa insists on some pathologies typical of our time, such as depression and burnout. These issues stem from the current state of social acceleration: “Those who derive their autonomy claims from the ideal that is typical of classical modernity tend to suffer from having to set aside their personal aspirations in order to satisfy the institutional demands. This is likely to induce personal crises such as identity conflicts or stress-induced illnesses such as burnout” (Börner, Petersen, Rosa, Stiegel 2020, 14). In order to overcome the distorted way of relating to the world in late modernity, Rosa introduces a concept that embodies the opposite of exploiting the world: *resonance*. Given the current conditions of speed, exploitation, utilitarianism, and efficiency nowadays, “we do not experience the full phenomenological complexity of things, but only those aspects of them that we have made controllable conceptually, economically, and technologically” (Rosa 2020, 100). Hence it is challenging to prioritize deeper reflection and meaningful experiences, which are increasingly fading. Rosa is convinced that “the ‘silencing’ of the world, the ‘deafness’ in the relationship between self and world is the most persistent and most threatening concern in all the diagnoses of ‘pathology’ that we find in critical social analyses of modernity” (Rosa 2010, 100). He adds that “[s]o far, in the history of occidental human history, there appear to be two great cultural forms, or systems, to make the world ‘responsive’: *Religion*, which allows for one or many responsive Gods out there, and *Art*—poetry and, first of all, music—which, as the Romantics put it, awakens the world to respond with song” (*Ibid*). More recently, in 2022, Rosa delivered a lecture titled *Democracy Needs Religion*, which was later published under the same title. In this work, he outlines the idea that religion—every religion—promises “another possible way of relating to the world, a way that is not growth-oriented or intent on controlling things [...] [where] we switch from a mode of *agency*—active behavior—to a mode of *patiency*: a mode of receptiveness and perception” (Rosa 2024, 54).

Now, Rosa’s argument about religion as a way to make the world “responsive” is not the same as the one I am trying to make here. Indeed, prayer is something more specific and less encompassing at the same time: on the one hand, it is not the entirety of religion (although it requires religious belief), and on the other, it is not primarily intended to transform the way we

experience the world, especially because it is oriented toward the supernatural and not toward this-world. Framed in this way, prayer alone (rather than religion as a whole) serves as a practice to counter burnout, depression and the pace of late-modern life. It does so *not* by generating a renewed, deeper, and more intimate way of experiencing the world—which is Rosa’s argument about religion in general—but by offering a moment of suspension, pause, reflection, and respite from the chaos of accelerated social life. This does not mean that prayer cannot generate resonance, but only that its primary function, as understood here, is not to establish a new relationship with the world but to interrupt temporarily the heteronomous demands imposed by it. Prayer is a way to regain a sense of control in the midst of chaos and to recollect oneself. In order for someone to pray, they must generate silence around themselves and remain still, untouched by the tumult of late-modern life.

Even before characterizing prayer in religious terms, Simone Weil wrote in 1942 that “prayer consists of attention” (Weil 1973, 105). She then added: “Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object; it means holding in our minds, within reach of this thought, but on a lower level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of” (Ibid, 111). And also: “Above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that is to penetrate it” (Ibid, 112). If prayer is attention, and attention is the suspension of thought, then it means two things: first, the individual remains open to any possible revelation from the Divine, as there is a subtle difference between “hearing” and “listening”: during prayer, one may not hear anything, but one remains attentive and ready to listen, whereas in the outer world, one may hear many sounds and noises but often fails to truly listen to anyone. Second, the external world temporarily loses part of its hold on attention. In this suspension, there occurs an abolition of any false absolute and of the dominion of “temporal heteronomy” (Rosa 2013, 173).

4. INTERRELIGIOSITY AND CRITICAL THEORY

The conclusion we can draw from the above is that religious people possess this very resource—prayer—that shields them from the harmful consequences of the hyper-accelerated late-modern world, allowing them to decelerate, at least occasionally but consistently, and, consequently, to counteract alienation. It is not (yet) a matter of salvation or meaning: discussing prayer at this level places the conversation in a space that precedes these

questions—which are more closely connected to religion as a complete doctrine of salvation or liberation. Valuing prayer in this way means highlighting a common aspect of religions and demonstrating their usefulness (if it can be called that) in a world increasingly indifferent or hostile to them. In fact, religions are not entirely functional within the heteronomous social mechanism. The simple act of praying stands in contrast to the demands of efficiency, production, and consumption. All world religions may recognize this common element, which, stripped of doctrinal determinations, reveals a potentially critical universality in times like ours.

Even though, as mentioned above, it is becoming increasingly difficult to carve out a moment for prayer in one's life—silence is avoided, everything is saturated, and globalization has made communication immediate—religious people still pray with varying frequency, as some statistics show (cfr. Pew Research Center 2014). The simple fact that they do so is significant, and in this light, it is a finding that should be viewed positively. It means that there is a space that at least religious people preserve, a silence that is actively sought despite difficulties and commitments. This fact cannot be ignored by social research.

It is possible to draw a parallel with the first generation of Critical Theory, and in particular with Max Horkheimer, the founder of the Frankfurt School. Throughout his career, but especially at the end of his life (cfr. Horkheimer 1970), Horkheimer revalued the role of religion in contemporary societies. From a post-Marxian perspective, he progressively came to see religion as a positive experience, for it contains “the impulse for change, the desire that the spell be broken, that things take the right turn” (Horkheimer 1978, 163). Although formally Jewish, he was never a religious person, and he shifted from cautious atheism to an agnostic position. In his opinion, we must adopt an undecided approach toward the “wholly Other”, as he calls the Divine: only in this way does the Divine retain its revolutionary capacity against a reality that is complicit in the domination of human beings over things and over other human beings. In this sense, my thesis aligns with Horkheimer's because I neither affirm nor deny God but recognize that the tension toward Him, and especially the silence necessary to reach Him, already constitutes a positive contribution to a good life, while also contributing to a true and effective Critical Theory.

Most importantly, Horkheimer says that the wholly Other cannot be named, as “It” is unspeakable in any way: “The lie [...] lives in the ontological concept of transcendence” (Horkheimer 1970, 163), he writes. It is impossible to have a clear concept of what Rudolf Otto calls the *Numen*. Hence, in the prohibition against naming this Other (a distinctly Jewish prohibition),

the only permissible attitude, strictly speaking, remains *silence*. Horkheimer adds: "To the extent that philosophy wants to be more than directions that can be confirmed, i.e. science, it disregards speaker and listener and posits itself as absolute. Language in the emphatic sense, language which wants to be truth, is chattering silence" (Ibid, 178). Now, silence is a form of passivity: one *remains* silent, one *does not* speak. But there is also an active counterpart to silence: *listening*. If, in the act of directing oneself toward the wholly Other, the human being remains in silence, they are simultaneously open to listening to this Other. And it is a peculiar kind of listening, characterized by paying attention to something that does not originate from human being but is offered to them. One could then say, with great caution, that the spiritual disposition of the later Horkheimer is marked by an openness to revelation, by a willingness to allow something Other to break the dialectic of Enlightenment. Being silent and listening constitute the expectation of a word that does not belong to human reason. And, in its strictest sense, this is already prayer.

As a final remark, it is significant to recall what Paul Ricoeur once said to Hans Küng in a brilliant debate on the 1993 *Declaration Towards a Global Ethic*, signed by members of the Parliament of the World's Religions, a global interfaith forum. Ricoeur said that in spite of a common declaration, a serious dialogue among religions would lead to a "shared silence on what cannot be said" (Küng, Ricoeur 2015, 38). And he added: "We must find in the extreme difference the point of silence and the point of unity that is no longer at the verbal level of a Declaration" (Ibid, 40). This means that what is truly common among religions—and what can paradoxically be found at the end of a sincere exchange—is not pronounceable (just like Max Horkheimer's wholly Other) but approaches silence, dwells in silence, and ultimately is silence itself. The final point of a laborious search, then, seems to be, upon closer inspection, the very beginning of religion, of any religion, namely, the contemplative silence of prayer.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to describe prayer as a practice of counter-alienation, given Hartmut Rosa's definition of alienation as a state in which individuals pursue goals and follow practices that, on the one hand, no external actor or factor forces them to pursue, but which, on the other hand, they neither truly want nor support (cfr. Rosa 2010, chap. 13). The heteronomy of hyper-accelerated time dismantles the promise of autonomy that was typical of modernity, leaving the individual at the mercy of external directives

justified as structural needs of late-modern society. Temporal norms are experienced as laws of nature to which one must necessarily respond, out of a sense of duty rather than as a result of external coercion. The internalization of the functional commands of contemporary capitalist society is, according to Rosa, a source of alienation. Thus, the system perpetuates itself, presenting itself as an inevitable and necessary organism, fundamentally unchangeable. In this sense Rosa writes that alienation is “expressed, for instance, in the growing feeling of not having any time (for that which is “genuinely” important) even though more and more time resources are being saved by means of technological acceleration” (Rosa 2013, 286).

Framing prayer in this way is a means of reintroducing it into contemporary philosophical debates on how to achieve a good life. There are numerous studies and considerable evidence indicating that prayer may have a beneficial effect on the physical and psychological health of an individual (cfr. Breslin and Lewis 2008; Duckro and Magaletta 1994; Kiyani, Mohammadi and Pourahmad 2011; O’Hara 2002; Lewis, Breslin and Dein 2008; Ai, Peterson, Tice, Huang, Rodgers and Bolling 2007; McCaffrey, Eisenberg, Legedza, Davis and Phillips 2004; Anderson and Nunnelley 2016; Simão, Caldeira and Campos de Carvalho 2016; van Nieuw Amerongen-Meeuse, Braam, Anbeek and Schaap-Jonker 2020). This long list of recent papers is indicative of the potentially therapeutic dimension associated with prayer—sometimes based on perceived rather than clinically measurable effects, as may occur in palliative care, but still meaningful for those who experience them. However, since this paper is not a work of medical research, I have framed prayer within the context of a specific philosophical and sociological framework, focusing on its possible ethical consequences. Hence, my interest was not in physical or mental health, but rather in what prayer can contribute to the redefinition of a good life in today’s world.

Comparing the medical benefits of prayer with Hartmut Rosa’s critical reading of late-capitalist society is, at the very least, valuable for examining this practice in a new light, independent of any confessional considerations (which would open the study to the discipline of theology) and thus free from the complications that generally surround religious themes. Seen in this light, prayer is not about surrendering to a higher power and feeling completely guided from the outside—an interpretation that is often imposed through an excessive prejudice against religion as such. Rather, it is about *reclaiming a degree of control over one’s life* by detaching oneself from the heteronomy of social directives that are facilitated by late-modern acceleration. In short, it is about distancing oneself from the world without fleeing from it, taking a leave of absence (even if only for a short time, that is,

during the act of prayer) from society in order to relativize it; that is, to remove the illusory character of absoluteness and immutability that we mistakenly attribute to it. The practice of prayer serves this purpose: *to regain individual autonomy* and to free oneself from the pressures of an increasingly oppressive reality that literally leaves us no time to devote ourselves to what we deem good and right.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the present paper aligns with the negative theology of Horkheimer and Adorno (cfr. Gur-Ze'ev 2010), as well as with the post-metaphysical approach of Jürgen Habermas (cfr. Habermas 1992), all of whom belong to the tradition of the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory: no positive knowledge is asserted about God, while religion is approached without presupposing the validity of specific metaphysical or theological doctrines.

In conclusion, a structured and systematic philosophy of prayer in late-modernity remains to be developed, but I hope to have outlined a path forward with this brief essay.

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