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The Divine in Husserl and Other Explorations

by

Angela Ales Bello

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THE DIVINE IN HUSSERL AND OTHER EXPLORATIONS

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To
Domenico A. Conci
In memoria

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PART III SOME EXPLORATIONS IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I owe a debt of warm gratitude to Professor Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka for her presence and attention along my research path in the phenomenology of religion, the fruit of which is this work, and for having accepted to publish it in the prestigious series “Analecta Husserliana”, which she created and edits. Heart-filled thanks also go to Prof. Antonio Calcagno (King’s University College, UWO) for his translation of this work. Thanks to his deep knowledge of the phenomenological questions treated herein, the translation of this book was executed with great care and attention.

INTRODUCTION

Reading the phenomenological analyses of Husserl in a theo-logical fashion, understood in the etymological sense of a discourse about God, signifies taking up a challenge and exploring a new territory. Husserl perhaps never would have wanted this theme, which was marginally treated in his work, to become a proper object of specific research precisely on account of its marginality.

I had already taken up the challenge in the 80s when I collected and considered Husserl's arguments on the topic in my book, *Husserl—On the Problem of God*,[1] and I have continued to focus on this theme because, first, I am interested in it as a theoretical argument. Secondly, having chosen as the focus of my research an investigation of the contributions of phenomenology to questions related to history, science, and anthropology, [2] it seemed necessary to ask about the nature of phenomenology's relationship to "God". I place the word "God" in quotation marks because divinity is spoken of in many ways. I propose to investigate whether phenomenology is able to clarify the modalities of the human being's approach to God.

I would like to individuate three of these modalities: the first is related to a philosophical position; the second to religious experience; and the third is related to mysticism. One must not forget that the theological point of view is delineated within these modalities, including a "scientific" viewpoint that is interested in sacred things. Also, there are sociological and psychological viewpoints that treat belief in God and its instantiations on the personal level.

In the first part of the text that follows I fix my attention primarily on two modalities, namely, the philosophical and religious ones. In fact, a reading of Husserl's writings on these arguments compels us to examine his very own personality. Being a philosopher, how did he confront the question of God from a purely theoretical perspective? Secondly, being a believer reflecting on his faith and the object of his faith, how did he view his personal relationship with God? Furthermore, within the context of the religious dimension, what is the value of the two attitudes that seem so opposed to one another, namely, that of mystical experience and that of rational inquiry of a theological nature? Also, other questions can be asked that stem from his research: being interested in cultural problems, how does he interpret Christianity to which he

finds himself bound, as well as other religions? Ultimately, we must ask: what is religion for Husserl?

In the present study, the above-mentioned problems are all grouped under two headings. The first concentrates on various philosophical perspectives while the other focuses on religious perspectives. *Thinking and believing*, understood as human possibilities, are distinguishable dimensions that are at the same time strictly interwoven with one another. They are not opposed to one another as is sometimes maintained insofar as the former is related to rationality while the latter is viewed as completely irrational. Belief has its own reasons, even if it configures itself within its own peculiarity. Thought proceeds with arguments, whereas belief is characterized by its openness and faith. But, faith is not blind; it always has a motivation and it involves all of the human being, including reason. One or the other may prevail, but the two are always present, at least at the level of potential.

Moving from these two preliminary distinctions, the aim here is to establish their connections within the analyses of Husserl. Also, I wish to understand in a more comprehensive way, especially through Husserl, their characteristics. I will treat two perspectives that illumine the dimension of human existence, demonstrating therein the complexity that manifests itself in a plurality of derivative expressions stemming from one sole root.

Edmund Husserl's research methodology is very peculiar; his analyses are carried out with acuity and seriousness, but they require great patience on the part of the reader for two reasons. First, they are "difficult", as Husserl himself admits, insofar as they are developed in an original way with respect to the history of Western philosophy and, therefore, require a shift in perspective that one does not wish to undertake or is unable to undertake. This shift requires one to put to one side the entirety of what one knows in order to begin anew. Second, these analyses are also "slow". In fact, results are reached after a long and torturous path—a path that belongs to the person that does not wish to explore quickly and immediately his or her own opinions or personal ideas. Rather, this kind of path belongs to the person that wishes to follow paths that are, in fact, navigable by the human being through theoretical and practical research, always with the hope of disclosing the meaning of reality.

Husserl seeks to navigate such pathways in the most objective of manners. He is very much like an explorer, and more will be said about this later, who has difficulties orienting himself because the real is complex. The ways in which he expresses his conclusions, even from a linguistic perspective, are very "technical" and they require effort in order to be understood. In the course of the pages that follow I also seek to make a great effort, a

great effort of "mediation", in the attempt to render more comprehensible the content of Husserl's analyses. It will be necessary to use technical terms, but I will try and explain their meanings through the use of other words and expressions. Making clear Husserl's trajectory of thought is an operation that requires dedication, but it can be realized. I am comforted in this task by the example of Edith Stein, a disciple of Husserl, who knew in many cases how to demonstrate her teacher's method and the results of his analyses in a form that is more easily accessible, even for those unfamiliar with the language of phenomenology.

Indeed, it is necessary to clarify the treatment of the meaning of God, not isolating it from other questions that Husserl dealt with. Above all, it is necessary to examine the general lines of his method. This implies recognizing the fundamental stages of his ample and expansive research, which his analytic style renders complex because of the numerous turns in which it articulates itself. As we will see, there are many occasions in which the investigations of Husserl touch upon the question of God; they are never treated, however, in an isolated and specific way. This forces us to follow patiently the turns of his research.

The second part of this study, *Believing in God*, begins with an investigation that takes shape in the wake of Husserlian phenomenology. It deals with the phenomenology of religion. The intent is to describe an interesting development in this field as first proposed by Gerardus van der Leeuw, but I do not strictly limit my investigation to his work.

Husserl's conclusions, especially those drawn from his "archeological excavations" within human subjectivity and intersubjective relations, allow us to treat the meaning of sacral and religious manifestations that characterize human beings.

In the third part of this book I propose, as an application of his method, "incursions" into some sacral-religious phenomena that stretch from archaic cultures to contemporary ones. Certainly, this is not an exhaustive study; rather, I focus on examples that are significant for understanding the communal characteristics of religious experience and, at the same time, their diversity.

Husserl, as I will show in detail, already opened up a path in this direction, but it is up to us to continue to follow this path. This path, in fact, shows itself as very effective for exploring certain human expressions, which I define as religious and which cannot be ignored or dismissed as having no meaning. On the contrary, they can serve to individuate the specifically human and they can aid us to understand the fundamental characteristics of diverse cultures.

NOTES

[1] A. Ales Bello, *Husserl sul problema di Dio (Husserl on the Problem of God)* (Rome: Studium, 1985).

[2] A. Ales Bello, *Husserl e la storia (Husserl and History)* (Parma: Nuovi Quaderni, 1972); See also my *Husserl e le scienze (Husserl and the Sciences)* (Rome: La Goliardica, 1986[2]); *L'oggettività come pregiudizio—Analisi inediti husserliani sulla scienza (Objectivity as Prejudice—An Analysis of Unpublished Husserlian Texts on Science)* (Rome: La Goliardica, 1982); *L'universo nella coscienza—Introduzione alla fenomenologia di Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein e Hedwig Conrad-Martius (The Universe in Consciousness—Introduction to the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein and Hedwig Conrad-Martius)* (Pisa: ETS, 2007[2]).

PART I
THINKING GOD

CHAPTER 1

PHENOMENOLOGY AS PHILOSOPHY *SUI GENERIS*

The phenomenology of Edmund Husserl presents itself as theoretical research, which resides both in an out of the realm of Western philosophy. Husserl himself is aware of this, for, on one hand, he is firmly inserted within the tradition of Western philosophy, but, on the other hand, he criticizes this very same tradition because he believes that it has not fulfilled its own profound intention first brought to light by Greek philosophers. This intention concerned the discovery of a radical point of departure, a new beginning for the reflective and theoretical conquest of the meaning of reality.[1] In principle, philosophy does not accept moving itself toward that which it defines as "the natural level". It wishes to change its attitude in order to move profoundly forward, responding to questions concerning the meaning of the "things themselves", that is, all the theoretical, practical and cultural layers that characterize the human being in his/her attempt to orient him/herself in the world. It is necessary for this reason to undertake the work of mining, a return to the search for a "territory" that, as Husserl defines it, can be considered an explicative terrain. Along the pathway of his philosophical investigations he sought, individuated and described such a territory, which permits one to enter into the complexity of the real: human being, nature and God. According to his argument, one is not able to tackle questions concerning the meaning of such realities unless one asks about the "who" that carries out this search for meaning.

If the goal is to understand the meaning of reality, this means that this is always a reality for human beings, who must possess the instruments that permit them to understand it. In this way, the primacy of the question of knowledge is delineated, not because all can be resolved by knowledge, but because knowledge is the fundamental instrument that allows us to understand how things are made.

Husserl adds to this conviction, which he sees as concomitant with the prevalent arguments of modern philosophy, in a particular way, especially in terms of the then-nascent psychology. His formation as a mathematician leads him to ask about the epistemic value and genesis of that very same mathematical knowledge, and he realizes that he has to return to the operations that constitute it. He first retains that psychology is able to give an answer to

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his question. In fact, his first work, *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*, deals with the question by following Franz Brentano's interpretation of the psyche.

Having followed Brentano's lectures in Vienna between 1884 and 1886, Husserl investigates the genesis of number, arguing that it ultimately can be traced back to the operation of a "collective connection" that is an exquisite psychological operation. In this way, he investigates the constitutive sources, which concern the subject, and, therefore, he enters into a territory that he still cannot see but which he continues to seek after, pushed by his dissatisfaction with both psychology and logic. He was pushed to logic in order to understand mathematics after the harsh book-review of his work by the logician and mathematician Gottlob Frege.

In 1907, Husserl, in his *Idea of Phenomenology*,[2] is finally able to present the results of his first theoretical work, announcing that his research is configured as a phenomeno-logy, that is, a description of and reflection on phenomena that present themselves to human subjectivity and, above all, phenomena constituted by acts of consciousness. This is made possible through the psychology of Brentano, whose research investigates the meaning of psychic acts by not utilizing positivist, psychophysical arguments as those of, for example, Wilhelm Wundt, thereby allowing a type of qualitative analysis to enter into the domain of psychological research.

Psychology and logic prepared the way for the individuation of the new territory. At this point, it would be opportune to trace analytically Husserl's chosen path because the result arrived at is central for successive developments of his thought.

I. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

In order to reach this territory, Husserl followed many pathways. Employing images relative to human movements in space, one can say that Husserl combines two types of research, namely, those of the archeologist and the explorer. In fact, these two activities are used only as a metaphor, but they are also authentic comparisons insofar as the element that makes them similar, namely, their unitary style, is represented by the fact that they are attitudes that aim to reach a goal that characterizes each human life. This goal always has a direction, even if it not clearly delineated or not achieved. When a human life has failed one can say, for example, that it possessed no valid goal.

The new beginning that individuates a new sphere of being, as Husserl describes it in the first volume of the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy*,[3] can be traced through

many ways, which Husserl calls "pathways of reduction". Here, the term reduction means eliminating that which is superfluous to achieving the goal. And while one can follow the pathways, many things are set aside; the elimination is not a destruction. Rather, it is a storing away and non-utilization. Husserl, being a mathematician, proceeds by employing mathematical calculation, that is, the placing in parentheses, but that which is bracketed continues to live, even if it is not activated.

Preliminarily, we must proceed to clear the terrain of attitudes of research prevalent in all of Europe in the 1800s, which were very present in Germany. We refer primarily to positivism, which claimed in the name of experimental research the primacy of that which is concrete or capable of being experienced and factually ascertainable. According to the positivist mind-set, the "fact" constituted the initial point of departure for any research and this also constituted a valid beginning. One thinks of the importance attributed to the document in historiography as the concrete fact from which one begins one's research. But, if the fact is considered a point of departure for philosophy, the significance of philosophical research, which always had as its aim the meaning of the fact and not the very realization of the fact itself, is betrayed.

The novelty, from Husserl's and his numerous disciples' points of view, can be clarified by referring to the then rampant positivist mentality. The phenomenologists attempted to counter this mentality by being faithful to the true aim of philosophical research, thereby following an uninterrupted tradition of philosophy that Husserl knew through Franz Brentano. Brentano studied Aristotle and metaphysical questions like that of the nature of being in addition to his interest in the new science of psychology. The philosophical tradition, indeed, has investigated the meaning of "fact", going beyond all cultural formations that often limit themselves to the superficial borders of reality.

According to Husserl, the first reduction brackets all that hinders the making evident of that which is essential. This is why every material, intellectual or spiritual "thing" has an essence that offers itself to our vision, to the very collection of intellectual intuition. Certainly, the things of the physical world do not offer themselves immediately and in their totality to such an intuition, because they are seized through adumbrations from one side to the next and, therefore, it is necessary to proceed by approximations. This does not mean, however, that they are unable to be understood. In fact, even if the vision is adequate or inadequate, it can be transformed into an eidetic seeing that is being offered by intuition—Husserl uses the Greek term *eidos* to indicate essence and he also employs the German terms *Wesen* and *Essenz*.

On the positivist view of philosophy, Husserl's project was naturally considered to be a return to the past, to an uncritically accepted form of Platonism. Husserl maintains that the essences or ideas he speaks about are not objects in a metaphysical sense; rather, they are objects in a logico-epistemological sense that are used by the same sciences—one thinks of mathematics, for example—which serve as the foundation of logical forms, especially in formal logic.

Here, Husserl tackles the question by moving to a process of intellectually elaborating the theoretical and practical sciences, which characterize Western culture and which the positivists highly esteem. He writes, "In this sense, the tone-quality *c*, which is a numerically unique member of the tonal scale, the number two in the series of the cardinal numbers, the figure in the ideal world of geometrical constructs, and any proposition in the "world" of propositions—in short, many different ideal affairs—are "objects".[4] He adds that he did not invent the general concept of object, which all people employ; those who deny this are blind—their blindness is a "blindness of soul" because they do not wish to admit that there exist essences and intuition of essences.

Again, this does not represent a novelty in the philosophical tradition. Behind the eidetic reduction one catches a glimpse of figures like Plato and Aristotle. For Husserl, who was not formed in any one specific line of thought, as he was self-taught in philosophy, this is seen more as a rediscovery than a mere repetition. The rejection of an essential knowledge on the part of the positivists is affirmed on a philosophical level but rejected on the scientific level. This is the case because the same natural sciences need mathematics, be it "material" mathematics like geometry or "formal" ones, that is, pure logic as arithmetic and mathematical analysis; all these disciplines are not empirical. This all can be shown with evidence and, therefore, it is possible, according to Husserl, to articulate a fundamental principle, "*the principle of all principles*: *that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition*, that *everything originarily* (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) *offered* to us *in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being,* but also *only within the limits in which it is presented there*".[5]

This rule being established, it is possible to proceed to the essential description of all that presents itself with more or less certain, valid results. This is the case because if theoretically all is reducible to an essence, an immediate essential knowledge of all of reality and, above all, of a natural reality, is not possible. As was said before, this is the case because otherwise the research would have no reason to exist. It is necessary to note, however,

that there still remain unexplored territories; they are not only to be found in the reality in which we are immersed but they may also be found in relation to the human being who searches. Usually, one counter-distinguishes or establishes a relation between the I and the world as did modern philosophers. The crux of the problem is this: how to arrive authentically at this correlation? If one remains in what Husserl defines as the natural attitude, which consists in retaining reality as existing and assuming it as such, one does not succeed in truly understanding the connection that one is seeking and one is constantly assailed by doubts concerning the validity of knowledge. It is at this point that Husserl refers to Descartes, employing his profound insight but also the making manifest the limits of his position. The "thesis" of the natural attitude, that is "positing" the world as existing cannot be reversed by an antithesis, that is, the negation of the world, which, according to Husserl, always emerges in universal Cartesian doubt. It is more about employing again the operation of placing in parentheses in order to change attitudes; Husserl defines such an operation as the *epoché*. This is done in an attempt to make originality stand out. Husserl says, "If I do that, as I can with complete freedom, then I am *not negating* this world as though I were a sophist; I am *not doubting its factual* being as though I were a skeptic; rather, I am exercising the 'phenomenological *epoché*' which also *completely shuts me off from any judgment about spatiotemporal factual being*".[6] This concerns the non-retention of the world of our experience or that described by the sciences as the ultimate terrain of knowledge. And, in this operation there are involved not only prejudices but also sciences that have been already constituted, certain philosophical theories, and even ourselves. The radical nature of such an operation allows doubt of a skeptical kind to arise. Husserl, however, insists in underlining that the placing out of the circuit does not concern the world as *eidos*; rather, it concerns only actuality, that is, existence not understood in the metaphysical sense, but factual existence as understood in the positivist sense. This permits the conquering of "*a new region of being never before delimited in its own peculiarity*".[7]

We come closer to this sphere through the realization of presence that is already revealed at the level of the natural attitude of the I, of the lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*) of consciousness. In fact, each one of us, every I, lives a series of acts that are always mutable and continuous, of which the I has awareness.[8] With respect to this conscious sphere of lived-acts it is possible to proceed to an essential analysis in order to gather its meaning. The bracketing of the world does not touch this sphere, and neither does the bracketing of the concrete, empirical I that exists in a psychological sense. It remains as the ultimate terrain, which one begins to climb through after

having analyzed it, arriving at the existential and empirical concreteness of the factual world that receives in this way its proper meaning.

The operation of the uncovering of a sphere that is always sought but never truly reached by philosophers can be considered a pathway to the "transcendental" dimension. Husserl is aware that the use of certain key-terms in his research can serve as a trap for the reader, who may associate them with other philosophical positions from which they derive. He underlines, however, that they "must be understood exclusively in the sense that *our* exposition prescribe for them and not by any others' histories or the terminological habits of the reader".[9]

This is a crucial point for the understanding of phenomenological analysis, which was not always practiced according to the intentions of its initiator. Many misunderstandings can be verified, many betrayals with reference to the instructions of the teacher.

Let us examine the configuration of this territory in order to understand the use of certain terms like I, consciousness, lived-experience and transcendental.

This new territory can be understood through the image of a pane of glass on which we fix that which we live in a continuous flow of inscriptions. I use the term glass pane to indicate that such a sphere exists, but it is not easily individuated. In fact, because of its transparency it always eludes researchers, even if it is always present. On the surface of the glass pane the "finished" products are first given, that is, one finds the lived-acts already configured, but they are the fruit of a genetic process that must be studied through archeological excavation. We are aware of the configured lived experiences and this justifies the term "consciousness", which does not refer to a second-grade consciousness, that is, reflection. The being-conscious-of-oneself, to employ a beautiful expression of Edith Stein, presents itself as a light that accompanies the flow of lived experiences and which illumines it in order to make it present. Reflection founds itself in "originary consciousness" that makes possible the understanding of consciousness that accompanies lived experiences.[10] Consciousness is not a box that contains lived experiences; rather, it is the modality that characterizes the glass pane upon which the lived-acts in their purity progressively inscribe themselves. They point back to concrete human acts, but on the glass pane they appear in their essential structure as lived experiences on diverse levels and in various modalities of the I, which can be examined in a structural and essential mode as present in every concrete I. The glass pane, however, has a "transcendental" structure because it is the place that allows for the revelation of meaning from the viewpoint of the understanding. It does not create anything; it registers and this recording has a universal value. It happens in all human beings and

transcends the singular experience, but it permits knowledge of the singular. This is the Kantian use of the term, which, however, designates a territory that is much different than the one individuated by Kant, and even different from the "I think" of Descartes.

In delineating this territory Husserl explicitly refers to the philosophers of the modern age, including Kant and Descartes. He realizes that he is very close to them, but he knows that they were unsuccessful in individuating this territory in a full and decisive way. For this reason he describes his itinerary, as has already been noted, as a "Cartesian way", that is, that pathway that enters into the human subject. It seeks to reach the deepest layers in order to acquire a point of departure that is not properly subjective, but which, even from the subjective side, permits one to understand how both subject and object are made. This pathway is also a kind of intermediary third moment. It serves to join both subject and object, but it also seeks to overcome the traditional opposition between subject and object.

Such a path is the "master" path examined by Husserl. He carries himself like an explorer that has found the sure, direct path and he arrives at his destination, to his place, which he must analyze through excavation; it is for this reason that he becomes an archeologist. Before beginning this excavation it should be noted that other "paths" exist, which he travels in order to arrive at his destination. In his *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl reprimands himself for having proposed the Cartesian way, which he believes is much "too hasty" a way. It has compromised the understanding of the novelty of his achievement, which has been assimilated and confused with ideas of the past.[11]

The longest and most torturous paths, which are also the most convincing precisely because they are long and torturous and because they challenge the skeptics who doubt the very possibility of delineating this very path, this met-hod that leads by way of a road, a path, according to the etymology of the Greek expression *meta-odon*, are those that do not move from direct experience. Rather, they are motivated by the justification of cultural structures already sedimented like the sciences that configured themselves in modernity, the very sciences that Husserl defines as positive ontologies. Certain interpreters, including Iso Kern and Rudolf Boehm,[12] have already pointed this out. Particularly important in this context is psychology, which was truly prior to the Cartesian way because it gave Husserl the most direct way to his line of thought. It seems opportune, then, on the basis of these Husserlian texts, to point out another way, one that moves from intersubjectivity in order to reach the "terrain" individuated by phenomenological analysis.[13]

The work of recognizing the ways of reduction is not a goal in itself. In fact, it serves not only to individuate the "sphere of being" described above but also, given that such a sphere is a source in an epistemological sense, it permits a justification of human knowledge with regard to reality. And, in particular, with regard to the topic being investigated here, it justifies the modes through which the human being places himself or herself in contact with ultimate reality, namely, God. I already remarked in my *Husserl—Sul problema di Dio* [Husserl—On the Problem of God] that every way of reduction flows into a series of observations on the "metaphysical" problem, to borrow a traditional expression, of an ultimate reality, that is, a divine reality. The *medium* is always represented from the sphere of the being of lived experiences; it is necessary, then, to follow patiently the pathways proposed by Husserl in order to arrive at lived experiences, moving from them in order to understand how that reality is configured.

II. THE ANALYSIS OF LIVED EXPERIENCES: IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

In order to understand what lived experiences are it is necessary to give certain examples. In the natural attitude we have experiences that begin with perception. If we essentially isolate our way of living these experiences, parenthesizing all the contingent elements, all that remains for us is pure perceiving as an act that was lived through by us and the act that all possibly live through. To seize the act in its purity means examining it as an act of lived experience, just as if it were recorded on the glass pane, accompanied by the consciousness of the act itself.

The perceptual lived-experience, like other lived experiences that can be isolated in analysis, including remembering, imagining and judging, presents itself as a lived experience characterized by a being conscious of, that is, by being intentionally turned to something that is seized. "Something" to which one is directed may be immanent, as in the case the internal perception, or it may be transcendent, as in the case of the external things. The relation to the external thing is particularly significant because while the perceptual lived experience is immanent, even if it is directed in a transcendent fashion, the thing (for example, Husserl speaks of the perceived piece of paper) is transcendent and is seized through the relation between perceiving-perceived that is immanent.[14] Drawing from the ancient Greek, but in a new way, Husserl calls this relation *noesis-noema*. It must be noted that immanence

and transcendence continually displace themselves, following the flow of the analytic process. Lived experiences as such are all immanent; they can be directed in an immanent way when they have other lived experiences as their objects or they can be directed in a transcendent way when they refer to external objects, which, in turn, are transcendent. But, the object separates itself into an existing transcendent object or an immanent one insofar as it is present in consciousness as a noema, that is, it is perceived, remembered, and so on.

Thus far, we have spoken of intentional lived experiences, but it is good to recall that not all parts of lived experiences are intentional. There are those that Husserl calls "effective moments present within the flow of lived experiences" that do not possess any intentional characteristics, that is, they are not conscious of something. If one perceives a white sheet of paper, the white of the sheet is not consciousness of something even if it presents itself as the *bearer* of intentionality insofar as it is the content that presents the white of the paper.

All that has been said up until this point concerning lived experiences was made possible thanks to a particular lived experience that is specifically human, namely, the lived experience of reflection, for which every lived-experience can become, as we have already seen, an object of an internal perception and an object of theoretical or value-giving reflection. The lived experiences reflect all of the operations, all of the experiences, the whole constitution of the human subject and natural reality, but the connections of meanings or sense happen only through the lived experiences themselves. Being as reality and being as consciousness are correlated but distinct.

Natural things are given to us always according to perceptual approaches and, therefore, by virtue of "adumbrations", but the lived experience that reveals all this is the perceptual lived experience that is clearly in itself a lived experience. It certainly does not adumbrate itself because it is part of the essence of the spatial thing that gives itself in adumbrations. But, this is excluded for the lived experience. This is why lived experiences offer themselves to the gaze of internal perception and reflection as evident and indubitable, whereas external things are always graspable with difficulty and they require a series of approaches. Notwithstanding this difficulty, Husserl insists on saying that the spatial thing, even in its transcendence, is known as being present in its "personal" actuality. There is no symbolic or signing mediation that can substitute for the thing. Sign and symbol correspond to particular modalities represented by the corresponding lived experiences.

III. PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTIONS: THE CARTESIAN WAY AND THE WAY OF PSYCHOLOGY

The results of our investigation achieved thus far come to bear on the so-called "Cartesian way". They stem more from Husserl's contact with Brentano in his early formation than from his contact with the modern philosophies of Descartes or Kant as was said above. One must not underestimate the fact that Freud also attended Brentano's lectures.[15] The new science of the psyche had isolated a part of the soul that, even though it had been known since antiquity, was not the object of specific research. Brentano was the first to individuate, against a psychophysics of a naturalistic and positivist bent, a type of research that attempted to make evident the qualitative peculiarities of psychic acts. He tried to enter into subjectivity in order to understand the significance of these acts. Husserl thought that he could use such individuations in order to resolve his epistemological problems, which dealt with the formation of arithmetic, as we have already said. The result was not convincing, but he nevertheless entered a territory, namely, that of psychology, from which he could no longer exit even if it was a territory that he did not seek. And, he did not exit "from it" in a double sense. First, through this pathway he reached the realm of being he sought, which was not that of the psychic acts, but that of lived experiences, and this is a very important distinction. Second, he maintained that such a sphere could be useful to resolve not only problems linked to the knowledge of nature but also those linked to the knowledge of the soul, containing the sphere and supplying in such a way a solid terrain to this very psychology as science. This project, which was followed up on by his student Edith Stein,[16] accompanied Husserl throughout the course of his investigations, including his last work *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*; indeed it concludes with a paragraph dedicated to phenomenological psychology.[17]

The relationship between psychology and phenomenology is tight because if the new sphere of being, that is, the new territory constituted by lived experiences of which we are aware, clearly distinguishes itself from those of psychic acts, one discovers an extraordinary correspondence between the psychic dimension and the transcendental one. This is the case because "becoming aware", even if it does not coincide with the psyche, is found on the side of the psyche.[18] Husserl underscores the fact that the individual psychic life in its core, which can be intuitively demonstrated by its originality, presents itself as being identical with transcendental consciousness. In fact, if one examines the psychic life in its purity, one discovers that it is the same as the transcendental life.[19] In this sense, one can establish the primacy of the psychic over, for example, that which is corporeal.

It is necessary to make precise the value of this coincidence. If it is true that the study of the psychic dimension is different from psychology as science—not only from the point of view of a naturalistic psychology but also from that of Brentano, who gave us a description of psychic acts, but not an essential one, thus allowing us to develop an eidetic psychology. It would seem that at a certain moment in Husserl's analysis psychology coincides with the transcendental phenomenological description. This, however, would create a short circuit because a simple essential analysis of psychic acts would always remain a psychology in Brentano's sense, even if it were deepened; it is not a transcendental phenomenology. Husserl, later,[20] clearly distinguishes eidetic psychology from the phenomenological description of subjectivity. A psychic act, insofar as it is an act, is lived-through in a concrete, limited, experiential way, but how can it be truly understood? Its essential description is insufficient in order to get to the depths of the matter. The reduction to psychic interiority is not still transcendentality. Only if the lived experiences are consciously registered do they acquire a value of universality because their structure is grasped, and one can see that this is an extremely important point in order to understand the meaning of intersubjectivity too.

The psychic realm, like that of nature, can be essentially described by eidetic science, but the transcendental dimension is a third dimension that, even though it is pushed toward the psychic, distinguishes itself from the other two. The oscillations present in Husserl's texts that concern the relationship between psychology and phenomenology demonstrate the effort to individuate this new territory, which finds and does not find itself *a parte subjecti*. One can find it *a parte subjecti* because it is a structure of subjectivity; it does not find itself entirely *a parte subjecti* because it does not coincide with all of human interiority.

For this reason, from *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*[21] to *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology* to the *Amsterdam Lectures*[22] to the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, citing only the major works most relevant here, the relationship between psychology and phenomenology can be viewed as tight. Leaving behind the sphere of concrete, empirical, existential, psychic experience in order to access the sphere of pure lived experiences does not mean "evading" concreteness. Rather, it means finding a secure basis to describe convincingly how the human being presents herself. The Cartesian way and the way of psychology are sufficient in order to state how the human being is constituted.

Before proceeding in the direction of an anthropology grounded in a phenomenological foundation, I would like to underline a few outcomes of the Cartesian path. It attempts to make evident the new territory in its autonomy

to the point of underlining paradoxically that it can exist without the world, and in this sense it posits itself as an "absolute" because all existing things are referred to consciousness and this must be understood in an epistemological sense and not a metaphysical one. This has provoked many perplexities for interpreters, and Husserl himself spoke of this in the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, as was already noted, when he regretted that he made his Cartesian leap, albeit he never radically refuted the Cartesian way.

This reference to Descartes is important for Husserl as is evidenced by his 1929 Paris lectures in which the discussion with Descartes is taken up once again, resulting in one of his most significant works, *Cartesian Meditations*.[23] The importance of this path consists in delineating the relationship between the immanence of the sphere of lived experiences and transcendence, be it of the world or the human subject understood in its concreteness. Descartes already did this with reference to the world, but he did not succeed, according to Husserl, in actualizing it with reference to the I. In fact, he only isolates thinking, that is, *cogitare*, and he then immediately substantializes the I itself, considering it a *res cogitans*. The "intermediary" way escapes Descartes, that is, the way of lived experiences understood in their fullness, which, briefly explained, proceed from the perceptual lived experiences to the psychic and spiritual ones. Thinking is found amongst these latter experiences.

In this regard the second volume of the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology,* transcribed by Edith Stein during her collaboration with Husserl while in Freiburg im Breisgau, is significant as a new approach to anthropology. This description is also important in order to understand in which way the human being is able to place himself or herself in contact with and "access" to the divine.

IV. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ANTHROPOLOGY

The term "anthropology" recently entered philosophic discussion to indicate an investigation of human being. It was first used by the human sciences; in particular, psychology, cultural anthropology and natural sciences made use of it. This corresponded to the attempt to isolate the human dimension in philosophical research in order to make it an area of investigation that could be subjected to scientific criteria according to positivist teaching.

Becoming aware of such a situation is opportune not only for historical reasons but also for theoretical ones, and it leads us to reflect upon the fact that meanings can be attributed to a term, which can vary according to the intentions of those who employ them. It also teaches us to look for simple associations with presumed or prevalent content for us and it makes

us recognize the necessity of a continuous re-semantification that does not merely follow the trends of the day. It seeks, rather, to procure for us criteria useful for orientation, yielding useful distinctions.

The use of the word "anthropology" is particularly significant for phenomenology because of the struggle that ensued from it against the positivist mentality, which ultimately ended up favoring the autonomous and foundational role of philosophy vis-à-vis the human sciences. Around this term various contrasts and confrontations are localized: the position of Husserl and that of nascent psychology, on one hand, and the philosophy of life proposed by Dilthey, on the other hand. It is interesting to note that Husserl and Heidegger exchange charges of "anthropologism", that is, an absolutization of the theme of the human understood within a naturalistic or scientistic vision.

In this confusing situation a clarifying reflection can be found in Edith Stein's text consisting of her lectures on the philosophy of pedagogy, *The Structure of the Human Person*.[24] These lectures can serve as a theoretical conduit for our investigation. In 1932, Stein was called to teach the philosophy of pedagogy at the Higher Pedagogical Institute at Münster. She covers the various speculative steps that lead her to retrace the fundamental moments of Western philosophy. She begins this after her conversion to Roman Catholicism through the study of Saint Thomas Aquinas and through her translation of his *Questions on Truth*. She is reading the major medieval thinkers and returning to the sources of Western philosophy, namely, Plato and Aristotle. It is clear at this point that a series of philosophical investigations on human being, which are fundamental for pedagogy, are necessary for her professional work. She begins, therefore, to introduce the term anthropology in a philosophical sense with a positive meaning, thereby establishing the difference between anthropology, understood as cultural or as a natural science, and philosophical anthropology. The latter is delineated according to a two-pronged program. The first makes use of the essential analysis carried out from a phenomenological point of view. The second is an integration operated on by the substantialization of the concept of soul in the Thomistic vein. She sees the possibility of agreement between and even integration of the two positions, and she thinks that by using these two streams she can delineate the fundamentals of a philosophical anthropology.[25]

I do not wish to focus on Stein's anthropology, but her analyses can help us understand several positions of other phenomenologists, including Husserl, Heidegger, Max Scheler, and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Given that she treated these figures, one can read Stein in order to understand these thinkers' intentions and, therefore, we must take into account her observations.

In the above-mentioned book on the person she tackles in a very original way the results of phenomenological investigations on human being in the metaphysical tradition and these were arrived at while adhering to the results of Husserl's own investigations. These are every important for understanding Husserl's own anthropology.

In every case, for Husserl, the term "anthropology" is to be considered in a negative way. This can be seen explicitly in his lecture, *Phenomenology and Anthropology*, which he delivered to the Kant Society in Frankfurt, Berlin and Halle in 1931.[26] Since Husserl expresses and exposes synthetically the essential lines of his thought in these lectures, they present certain advantages and disadvantages for the understanding of his philosophical position in its totality. On one hand, they are useful for understanding certain core-concepts. On the other hand, perhaps because of their excessive schematization, they do not allow one to exhaust all the aspects present in the investigations of a philosopher.

At the beginning of his lecture Husserl recognizes that in the generation following his own there is an interest for philosophical anthropology, but this interest stems from the "philosophy of life" of Dilthey. Husserl attacked this view in his *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science* (1910–11), accusing it of relativism. And, he even notes that Dilthey's influence is present even in younger phenomenologists. Perhaps he is even explicitly referring to Heidegger's appeal to Dilthey in *Being and Time?*[27] This seems to be confirmed because, according to Husserl, phenomenology was born in opposition to anthropologism and psychologism, whereas it would seem that the opposite is true according to Heidegger, that is, "phenomenological philosophy must be completely constructed from *menschlichen Dasein*, human being-there".[28] We see through this very affirmation the reason behind the sharp contrast and rupture of the human and intellectual relationship between the two philosophers. As noted above, the interesting thing is that Heidegger already made the accusation of anthropologism of Husserl.

Further clarification is needed. In the aforementioned lecture Husserl contrasts philosophical anthropology with that which he attacked previously as anthropologism and psychologism. The –ism endings indicate an arbitrary absolutization and, therefore, a deviation from a proper investigation. If the polemic here is against Heidegger, one must also note that the argument is also turned toward, as in the case of *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, opposing the temptation to examine human being from a psychological perspective. In opposition to this Husserl posits research in philosophy that has as its core and center the transcendental dimension.

Given the context of his lecture, one could interpret the use of the term "transcendental" as Kantian. He is, however, referring more to Descartes, for whom he feels a simultaneous affinity and distance. As was already noted, his relationship to Descartes has been constant since the first volume of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology* in 1913. It continues in his *Paris Lectures* and in his *Cartesian Meditations* of 1929. One even sees it again in his lectures in Vienna and Prague in 1934, which form the core of his *Crisis of the European Sciences*. It should be noted that I am only citing well-known published works.

Descartes is seen as the initiator of the turn of modern philosophy, which seeks to establish subjectivity or the egological sphere as the new point of departure for philosophy. Numerous are the distinctions proposed by Husserl with regard to the Cartesian analysis of the ego. If they share a common point of departure, one can equally maintain that neither the process followed to arrive at the ego nor the results achieved by the French philosopher are accepted by Husserl.[29] The *epoché* is only a change of attitude, which, from the naïveté of the natural acceptance of all that one encounters, leads to a turning of perspective characterized by the theoretical approach of Western philosophy. That which remains is not human being in its solitude, but the solitude of the transcendental ego that is quickly filled, as is made evident in the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, by the presence of the alter-ego.

What, then, is the transcendental ego? According to Husserl, the transcendental ego is such that it overcomes the radical objection consistent with saying that if the I, "this human being is he who carries out the method of assuming the transcendental position, he who in such a manner returns to his pure ego, then the I is nothing other than an abstract level of concrete human being, its pure spirit; the body is abstract" — this is what Descartes maintained. In fact, "[c]ertainly, one who speaks in this way falls into a naïve and natural attitude; his thought moves within the terrain of a pre-given world instead of within the domain of the *epoché*. To consider oneself as a human being, it is in this that the presupposition of the validity of the world consists. Through the *epoché* it becomes clear that it is the ego, in whose life the apperception human being is maintained within the universal apperception of the sense of the being of the world".[30]

The question, then, consists in asking whether the reduction to the ego eliminates, together with human being, the world as well. Husserl hastens to underline in the lecture we are examining that the world remains a fundamental theme and is not eliminated. Rather, it is subtracted from the "naïveté" of daily consciousness. In this text Husserl works hard to guarantee more the possibility of justifying the correlation between the world and the subject

than analyzing the structure of human being, which emerges by deepening our investigation of the transcendental dimension. This theme was already developed emblematically in the second volume of the *Ideas*, transcribed by Edith Stein, and it is necessary to refer to it. Of all Husserl's edited works, it is, in fact, the most emblematic text for the delineation of a philosophical and phenomenological anthropology.

After transcendental analysis has individuated consciousness as the locus where all the dimensions of the subject are mirrored, it is possible to describe essentially a series of lived experiences of consciousness itself, which refer back to the "real" structures of the human being. The first and second volumes of the *Ideas* are connected in this fashion and must be read within the framework of this connection. If the first volume is set to give the connotations of the method within the domain of analysis, namely, the transcendental dimension as the locus of the disclosure of sense of the reality *quoad nos*, the second volume aims at bringing to light the constitution of material nature, to which the body belongs, animal nature that is characterized by a psychic reality, and the world of spirit, to which the personal I belongs.

It is interesting to note that, after having parenthesized all of the traditional doctrines regarding human being, one is faced with the analysis of the human being; this is done in an original way and not in a deductive way—this is done in an ostensive fashion. In doing this, one recuperates and gives value to the tripartite division of body, psyche and spirit, which refers back, employing the language of Edith Stein, to a religious and particularly Christian interpretation. In any case, the analysis follows rigorous philosophical paths, which, in this case, are covered synthetically.

The structure of the human being can be shown by starting with the examination of the body, *Leib*, which is not in itself a starting point, but can be traced in its characteristics through the presence of perceptions as lived-acts of consciousness. If "perceptual apprehension presupposes sensations-contents, which play their necessary role for the constitution of schemata and, so, for the constitution of the appearances of real things themselves" this means "*that in all perception and perceptual exhibition (experience), the Body is involved as freely moved sense organ, as freely moved totality of sense organs*, and hence there is also given the fact that, on this original foundation, all that is thingly-real in the surrounding world of the Ego has its relation to the Body".[31]

Once the body itself is found one would not expect to find a return, as Husserl does, to the theme of consciousness through the pure I, but he proceeds in this manner in order to recall that his essential descriptions are possible because of this very capacity of the human being, which is discovered through

a reflection that focuses on them. This I is neither mysterious nor mystical in the sense of something not being able to be justified. "I take myself as the pure Ego insofar as I take myself purely as that which in perception, is directed to the perceived, in knowing to the known, in phantasizing to the phantasized, in logical thinking to the thought (. . .) To speak more precisely, the pure Ego is further related to pure Objects in very different modes, according to the type of act accomplished".[32]

Such acts can include acts of desire, love, hate, attraction and repulsion, decision in action, that is the act of a *fiat*, voluntary acts, theoretical acts that delineate a thematic context, establishing relations, positing a subject and predicate, and drawing consequences. A transcendental structure *sui generis* can be traced in this way, which allows one to pass to the investigation of human being understood as nature—the body proper as bearer of localized sensations—or even the body proper as a site of feelings of pleasure, pain, well-being or dis-ease, all constituting the material basis, the hyletic basis for the formation of values, which we shall discuss later. Intentional functions are connected to this layer and the materials assume a spiritual function.

Through this layer of "real" qualities, "real" insofar as they are constituted by virtue of a relation in real circumstances within the domain of the real, the body proper weaves itself with the psyche. One can affirm that the psyche and the psychic I "have" a body. Therefore, there exists a material thing of such a nature that it is not merely a material thing; rather, it is the body. It is characterized by being a "localization field for sensation and for stirrings of feelings, as complex of sense organs, and as phenomenal partner and counterpart of all perceptions of things". Body, then, is a "fundamental component of the real givenness of the soul and the Ego".[33]

We have moved to another level that is qualitatively different than the material thing, namely, the psyche, but the body proper or the lived-body is the weaving together of these two moments.

We saw earlier that the pure I is linked also to acts that are different from tensions, impulses or reactions, that is, voluntary, valuing and theoretical acts that constitute the human person. One enters the spiritual I, and the life of the spirit is in no way "determined"; it is "motivated". It is the seat of free acts and rational taking on of certain positions. Passivity and activity are interwoven; the activity distinguished human being as awake, present to himself or herself both ethically and theoretically.

One can read the following passage in order to understand the subjective and intersubjective meaning of the person in relation to the surrounding world: ". . .the personal Ego 'relates' to this world in acts upon which it can reflect, as in the case, for example, when it takes notice of itself as personal Ego, just

as any other person can reflect on these same acts, even if in a corresponding modified way (reflection in empathy), when the other grasps these acts as acts of the person in question, for instance, whenever the other speaks with clear understanding of that person precisely as a person".[34] One can form a definition: "the person is precisely a person who represents, feels, evaluates, strives, and acts, and who, in every such personal act stands in relation to something, to objects of his *surrounding world*".[35]

Assuming a personalistic attitude with regard to the surrounding world means assuming a valuing and ethical attitude. This is the true and proper "natural" attitude, not an artificial one.[36] This is one of the few places where the term "natural" is used in a positive way. Usually, Husserl assimilates it with "naturalism" in the positivistic sense. This is why he uses the term "essence" and not "nature", which in the Scholastic tradition is equivalent to "substance" and to "essence". It is Edith Stein, who in her re-appropriation of the Scholastics, makes note of the possible equivalence between "nature" and "essence".

Certainly, Husserl's position is not one of the substantialist. All of this is far from his mental horizon for a variety of reasons, including his scientific formation, his personal approach to philosophy, his belonging to a Protestant cultural world that was at odds with medieval philosophy, and his rejection of modern rationalist metaphysics. Nevertheless he was introduced to philosophy by Brentano, an ex-Catholic priest who was an heir of the mediaeval tradition in an Austrian area that remained faithful to the Church of Rome; he was a believer in a rigorous philosophy even though he was open to new developments in psychology. Stein affirms that this is not merely secondary to understand the "essential" description of human being proposed by Husserl. There is an essentiality that does not have a metaphysical background, but it nevertheless permits one to delineate human being in its proper characteristics. The result, after the *epoché* of all interpretations already given, turns out to be the recuperation of the Western, Greco-Roman tradition: phenomenology insofar as it is a phenomenological philosophy yields a description that confirms the tradition, but it does so through a new pathway.

In Husserlian philosophical anthropology, and we can use this expression, a great amount of space is dedicated to the ethico-religious dimension. The epistemological aspect of Husserl's work is known and, certainly, this is important as a way to solve all problems, but he has not put to the side, especially in his private research, "the ultimate and highest problems" that he defines as "metaphysical" in his *Cartesian Meditations*.[37] The ethico-religious question is linked to the question of God dealt with by numerous points in his work, as will be seen. It seems important to cite these aspects of his

anthropology. Here there emerges a human being that is examined in all his or her potentialities; s/he is not reduced to only a few of her or his qualities and s/he is open to others. One thinks of Husserl's analyses of intersubjectivity, but we can even add on the basis of what has been said earlier that he was concerned with interpersonality. He is open to the Other as a final justification of his existence.[38]

The Husserlian position on anthropology was addressed, as was mentioned above, by the same objections of Heidegger to Husserl and even to Scheler. Husserl, however, becomes the main target of Heidegger's critique. In Section 10 of *Being and Time* he criticizes the interpretation of the human being as a corporeal soul-spirit unity, as given by Husserl and Scheler. Heidegger adds in a that their position is connected with the orientation of Greco-Christian anthropology, which joined the definition of the human being as rational animal to "being" and "essence", understood from the Christian theological perspective.[39]

We cannot develop here what Heidegger argues, but it is sufficient to underline that his accusation reveals itself as the basic sense upon which Husserl's anthropology is founded.

NOTES

[1] This position is synthetically developed by Husserl in one of his last writings from 1936–37, Ms. Trans. K III 28 and K III 29: *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte* in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband. Texte aus dem Nachlass 1934–1937*, herausgegeben von Reinhold. N. Smid, Husserliana vol. XXIX (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993) which is now translated in Italian as *Edmund Husserl—La storia della filosofia e la sua finalità (The History of Philosophy and its Teleology)* in *Autori moderni per il terzo millennio*. Translated with an Introduction by Nicoletta Ghigi, Preface by Angela Ales Bello (Rome: Città Nuova, 2004).

[2] E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology.* Translated with an Introduction by G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Kluwer, 1973). As an introduction to Husserl's phenomenology please see: A. Ales Bello, *The Generative Principles of Phenomenology, Their Genesis, Development and Early Expansion*, in *Phenomenology World-Wide. Foundations — Expanding Dynamics — Life-Engagement. A Guide for Research and Study,* ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Analecta Husserliana* vol. LXXX (The Hague: Kluwer, 2002), pp. 29–61.

[3] E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology. Translated by Fred Kersten (The Hague: Kluwer, 1982). Cited hereafter as *Ideas I.*

[4] *Ideas I*, p. 41.

[5] Ibid., p. 44.

[6] Ibid., p. 61.

[7] Ibid., p. 63.

[8] It is difficult to translate the German *Erlebnis* in English. The best translation is "lived experience" because the German literally means "something that is lived through by me; the

act that I am currently living". The "lived" is in the grammatical form of the past, but it refers to something that I live through in the present as it appears to me.

[9] *Ideas I*, p. 66.

[10] E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, vol. 8, ed. Claudia Mariéle Wulf (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), p. 106. As an introduction to Edith Stein please see: A. Ales Bello, *Edith Stein's Contribution to Phenomenology*, in *Phenomenology World-Wide*, pp. 232–240.

[11] E. Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology — An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Translated by David Carr (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970) Section 43. Henceforth cited as *Crisis*.

[12] R. Boehm individuates five pathways of reduction present in Husserl's *Erste Philosophie (First Philosophy) (1923–1924)* in *Husserliana* vol. VIII, herausgegeben von Rudolf Boehm (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959). In the Introduction of the second volume Boehm indicates: (1) The reduction that passes through the critique of the sciences; (2) the Cartesian way; (3) the way that places the mytho-poetic vision of the world counter to theoretical interests; (4) the path that goes beyond positive ontologies to universal ontology; (5) the way through psychology.
Iso Kern in his article *"Die drei Wege zur tranzendental-phänomenologischen Reduktion in der Philosophie Edmund Husserl" (The Three Ways of the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl)* in *Tijdschrift voor filosofie* n. 2, 1962, simplifies the five ways to only three ways: (1) the Cartesian way; (2) the way through intentional psychology; (3) and the way that goes beyond positive ontologies.

[13] I already indicated this way in my *Husserl—Sul problema di Dio* (*Husserl—On the Problem of God*), pp. 35ff.

[14] *Ideas I*, Section 35.

[15] Please see B. M. d'Ippolito, *La cattedrale sommersa — Fenomenologia e psicopatologia in Ludwig Binswanger (The submerged Cathedral — Phenomenology and Psychopathology in Ludwig Binswanger)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2004).

[16] E. Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities.* Translated by Mary Catherine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000).

[17] *Crisis*, Section 72 "The relation between transcendental psychology and transcendental phenomenology, which grants specific access to pure self-consciousness".

[18] E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität* in *Husserliana* vol. XV ed. Iso Kern (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 543–545. Henceforth cited as *Intersubjektivität III*.

[19] Ibid., p. 543.

[20] *Ideas I*, Appendix IX, 1929.

[21] E. Husserl, *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*. Translated by Q. Lauer (San Francisco: Harper Torchbooks, 1965).

[22] E. Husserl, *Phenomenological Psychology.* Translated by John Scanlon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968).

[23] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations.* Translated by Dorion Cairns (Boston: Kluwer, 1977).

[24] E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person — Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA, vol. 14 (Freiburg: Herder, 2004).

[25] See A.M. Pezzella, *L'antropologia filosofica di Edith Stein—Indagine fenemenologica della persona umana (Edith Stein's philosophical Anthropology — Phenomenological Inquiry on the Human Person)* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2003).

[26] E. Husserl, *Phänomenologie und Anthropologie* in *Aufsätze und Vorträge* (1922–1937), herausgegeben von Thomas Nenon und Hans Rainer Sepp, *Husserliana* vol. XXVII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989).

[27] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time.* Translated by E. Robinson and J. Macquarrie (Toronto: Harper-Collins, 1969) Chapter 1, Section 77.
[28] E. Husserl, *Phänomenologie und Anthropologie*, p. 164.
[29] *Ideas I*, Section 31.
[30] E. Husserl, *Phänomenologie und Anthropologie*, p. 173.
[31] *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution.* Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 61. (Hereafter *Ideas II*).
[32] Ibid., pp. 103–104.
[33] Ibid., p. 165.
[34] Ibid., p. 195.
[35] Ibid., p. 195.
[36] Ibid., p. 193.
[37] For a further discussion of this theme I refer the reader to my *Fenomenologia e metafisica (Phenomenology and Metaphysics)* in "Seconda Navigazione: Annuario di Filosofia 2000", *Corpo e anima—Necessità della metafisica (Body and Soul — The Necessity of Metaphysics)* (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), pp. 171–219.
[38] See my *La questione di Dio nella prospettiva fenomenologica (The Theme of God from the Phenomenological Perspective)* in *Dio e il senso dell'esistenza umana (God and the Meaning of Human Existence)*, ed. Luis Romera (Rome: Armando, 1999), pp. 101–134.
[39] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time.* Translated by E. Robinson and J. Macquarrie (Toronto: Harper-Collins, 1969), Section 77.

CHAPTER 2

HUSSERL'S QUESTION OF GOD AS A PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION

I. THE OBJECTIVE WAY TO GOD

As was seen previously with the Cartesian path, Husserl sketches out a region of pure consciousness, understood in its proper sense as existing without any foreign elements. He carries out a series of "reductions" on the sciences, including the natural ones and the co-called "sciences of the spirit" or *Gesiteswissenschaften*. He parenthesizes logic as *mathesis universalis*, the notions of thing, spatial figure, person, and the psyche. He also carries out other reductions, including a reduction of eidetic-material sciences, which are focused on the essences of existing things like geometry and the essence of formal space but also history and the essence of all human expression, etc. This reduction includes all theories related to the pure I that exceed every lived experience insofar as it is unmixed with the empirical or pure. It should be noted that all that transcends the immanent dimension of the pure I is parenthesized. The transcendence of God is included among these types of reduced transcendence.

The operation of bracketing or parenthesizing does not eliminate all that is in parentheses. It is only a momentary suspension that has a certain end, namely, the clarification of pure consciousness with its lived experiences. Every "placing out of circulation" does not avoid, however, a description of what has been suspended; it is for this reason that the notion of God can be treated with great depth, providing the fundamental lines of inquiry to be followed when confronting the philosophical question of God from an Husserlian perspective.

He first observes that the pure I, when examined in itself and not related to lived experiences, even if it is in an immediate relation with reduced consciousness, is transcendent. This is why the pure I must be placed in parentheses too. Second, the same must be done to the world, whose transcendence presents itself with complete transparency. But, opposite to the pole of the world one finds a third transcendence, which is known in a different way, namely, the transcendence of God.

Husserl shows himself to be an adherent of the Western philosophical tradition, which delineates three distinct but related realities: I, world, and

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God. This appears to be the case in classical Greek thought as well as in the medieval and modern worlds, especially with Descartes and Kant.[1] Husserl's position differs from others with regard to the modality of the approach to these realities and their justification, because it is by moving from the sphere of lived experience that one discovers the possibility of knowing these very experiences. In delineating a modality for the transcendence of God one begins to understand further the function carried out by these lived experiences. In fact, on first observation, one sees evidence that within lived experience certain aspects are established that correspond to the "factual concatenations of mental processes of consciousness of certain kinds with distinctive regular orders in which a *morphologically ordered* world in the sphere of empirical intuition becomes constituted as their intentional correlate".[2] These make possible the establishment of a world ordered according to forms made evident by the physical sciences. In other words, it is possible to delineate exact, natural laws because the world has a rational structure. Also, such rationality is seen to have a scope. A concept emerges here that will be fundamental for the interpretation of many aspects of reality, including the divine reality, namely, teleology. According to Husserl, some examples of teleology can be found in the natural world with "the *factual* evolution of a series of organisms, including human beings;" one also finds examples in the human world as with "the growth of culture with its spiritual treasures".[3] The sciences, both the human and the spiritual ones, study the modality of the connections that present themselves in corresponding facts. Husserl asks why we are not satisfied by such explanations. His response is: "The transition to pure consciousness by the method of transcendental reduction leads necessarily to the question about the ground for the now-emerging facticity of the corresponding constitutive consciousness".[4] He raises again the anti-positivist objection: "Not the fact as such, but the fact as the source of the rise of endlessly increasing value-possibilities, and as the source of value-actualities, this forces the question about the 'ground', which naturally is not the same as reasons rooted in physical causality".[5] In other words, it is necessary to ask about the meaning of the fact, and the response cannot reside in another fact, in a natural cause; rather, it must reside in a rational ground. In this case, rational means that we face an intellectual constraint given by evidence, which speaks in favor of "'believing in' the existence of an extra-worldly 'divine' being" and "this being would obviously transcend not merely the world but 'absolute' consciousness. It would, therefore, be *an 'absolute' in a sense totally different from that in which consciousness is* an 'absolute', just as it would be *something transcendent in a sense totally different* from that in which the world is something transcendent".[6]

Many observations can be drawn from reading this text found in Section 58 of *Ideas I*, which is so important in order to understand Husserl's position. First, there is the question of language, that is, the double use of the term "absolute". If consciousness presents itself as an absolute, such an absolute is to be understood as *quoad nos*. For us, for us human beings the dimension of lived experiences is the absolute point of departure, the radical beginning with regard to our knowledge of reality. This does not concern an absolute reality, but absoluteness insofar as it is that which is uniquely given to us from the standpoint of internal reality that moves outward. Human beings are this way because they have consciousness of "things"; this distinguishes them from other animals even though they are linked to the animal world by their very psychophysical nature, as Husserl admits, accepting the hypothesis of the evolution of physical and psychic worlds.

Consciousness is the live registering of that which presents itself; it pushes us to search after its meaning. That which is immanently registered points to transcendence and there are various types of transcendence, but the transcendence of all transcendences is a divine being that is truly absolute in the etymological sense insofar as its existence is free from any outside determination.

Second, the proposed arguments lead back to a tradition that is connected to medieval thought, but which also has its roots in Greek thought. I am thinking of the arguments regarding Aristotle's pure act and the five ways of Thomas Aquinas. Even if there is no explicit reference to past thinkers, Husserl follows certain well-trodden paths in order to justify the human knowledge of God from a philosophical point of view. The inspirational thinkers to whom he is closest include Descartes, Leibniz and, as we shall soon see, Kant. In them we find arguments concerning the objective way that leads to God, a way that traverses the causality of the physical world, but which surpasses it insofar as it postulates causality of a metaphysical order—it grounds itself in final causes, i.e., the fifth way of Thomas, which Kant takes up again in his *Critique of Judgment.* Certainly, for Kant, the physico-teleological argument leads to Theo-logy, that is, a rational discourse about God, even if it advances doubts concerning the possibility of reaching a sufficiently determined concept of originary being. One finds further justification for this originary being in Kant's moral philosophy, which coincides with a moral teleology that is no less solid than the physical one because it enjoys the privilege of resting on a priori principles that are inseparable from our reason. In Kant, the primacy of the moral is established, a way that is also followed by Husserl, who, on the contrary, maintains that moral teleology has the same value as physical or natural teleology.

In the text we are examining, Husserl does not make any pronouncements regarding the function of God with respect to the world; he only says that "it would be external". But, the expression "would" is ambiguous. It is, therefore, necessary to examine other places in Husserl's research to establish whether there exist other useful indications that can specify what Husserl means. Concerning this hypothetical expression, Husserl's intention was probably to insist on the fact that if he were to conduct a precise and full analysis, one would obtain the results here indicated in this summary way. At this point, such an analysis cannot be fully carried out: "Naturally we extend the phenomenological reduction to include this 'absolute' and 'transcendent' thing. It shall remain excluded from the new field of research that is to be provided, since this shall be the field of pure consciousness".[7] Husserl's objective is to flesh out the possibilities of pure consciousness, which include an opening onto God; this theme, however, is not dominant. Interestingly, he feels the theoretical need to discuss it at the end of the undertaken analysis, albeit in an incomplete fashion.

II. THE SUBJECTIVE WAY TO GOD

Section 58 of *Ideas I*, which I commented upon earlier, reveals Husserl's concern with the objective way that leads to a divine being, but this is not the only place in the work that refers to God. In fact, Section 51 is followed by an extremely important annotation that demonstrates that each time Husserl reflects deeply on the reduction that he is carrying out and the residue of such a reduction, that is the "sphere of lived experiences as absolute essentiality", his thought runs to all that such a sphere mirrors and transcends, that is, first, the world and, second, God. Since the world, even though it is transcendent, reflects itself in consciousness, so it must be the case for God, if one should choose to speak about God. The world reflects itself in consciousness as a teleologically structured world. Even if there is no clear reference to the reasoning proposed by Kant, which consists in asking what the foundation of such an order might be, one could reasonably assume that it might be a *teleological principle.*

Deepening the meaning of such a principle, he maintains that, first, it must not be confused with the world that is ordered by it. Second, this principle must be found within the absolute that is ordered by it, that is, consciousness, but it cannot be confused with lived experiences, which demonstrate an order and connection that transcend them. This is so because in both the first and second cases one would lapse into a logical absurdity. Husserl strongly believed this argument.

If all this is valid because it is "reasonable" and coherent, "there must be, therefore, within the absolute stream of consciousness and in its infinites, modes in which transcendencies are made known other than the constituting of physical realities as unities of harmonious appearances".[8] That which is reconfigured on "the glass pane", to use the image already mentioned, through lived experiences is not chaotic; the experience has a style, as Husserl indicates in other places in his work, but the recognition of this fact occurs because other modes of transcendence are present and registered in consciousness. "... [A]nd ultimately there would also have to be intuitional manifestations to which a theoretical thinking might conform, so that, by following them rationally, it might make intelligible the unitary rule of the supposed theological principle".[9]

Intuitional manifestations seem particularly important to me because they demonstrate the presence of God in consciousness, and the fact that one is able to speak about them derives from God's presence in us. The objective way is possible and is justifiable because, as Augustine points out, we already know that it exists and we also know—another important point to which we shall return later—that it is a unifying power. And this cannot be revealed "neither by flesh nor blood", as the Gospels indicate, but by God Himself. Here, we are dealing with a "natural" revelation that is like an "inscription" in consciousness of a power that is seized without mediation, "intuitively", and, therefore, possessed and not conquered, announced by peculiar modes by the "current of consciousness" that can be made manifest, explained, demonstrated by theoretical thought that is made adequate to it; it adapts, "following" and "not constructing". We have already cited Augustine but also we may here cite Anselm.

Certainly, the theme of God's existence does not occupy the foreground of Husserl's thought as is the case with Anselm. Husserl does not intend, as we saw previously, to "demonstrate" the existence of God; he speaks of it as a reality that is not an object of discussion, whose presence can be "shown" by a consciousness that is woven throughout with lived experiences. Phenomenological reflection on this argument tells us how it is received on the level of human experience. This is an experience *sui generis* that consists of an "announcing of an intuitive level", where the announcement indicates a presence that is not willed or sought after, but it is observed as such and the intuitive order indicates the immediate seizing and knowledge of this presence.

In order to better situate these characteristics it is necessary that such an experience becomes an object of a speculative investigation properly undertaken under the rubric of theoretical thought. It is the focal point to which one

must return to find the ultimate root of all so-called "proofs" for the existence of God that have been delineated in Western thought.

Recalling the comparison with Anselm's argument, the affinity of Husserl's argument is truly surprising. On my view, Anselm, owing much to Augustine because he showed that human beings could intuit the presence of God in the soul, shows the aforementioned ultimate root and employs it to move his argument forward. Husserl, as was noted previously, does not cite any past thinkers concerning this problem, but it is possible to establish a parallel with the *Proslogion* of Anselm with regard to the unfolding of his argument, which actually begins with an epoché. In fact, Anselm first recommends eliminating all that which can disturb or distract in order to return to the self. Certainly, the Husserlian epoché indicates in a stronger fashion a more immediately theoretical attitude, but the "reductions", even if they concentrate on questions of culture and themes focused more on knowledge than existence, still point to a return to subjectivity.

Having withdrawn into the self, Anselm begins to concentrate on God; Husserl exhorts us to concentrate on conscious lived experiences. Anselm says: "Enter in to the chamber of your mind (Matthew 6:6), shut out everything but God and whatever helps you to seek him, and seek him 'behind closed doors' (Matthew 6:6). Speak now, my whole heart: say to God, 'I seek your face, Lord, do I seek' (Psalm 28:8)".[10] Husserl writes: "There must be, therefore, within the absolute stream of consciousness and in its infinites, modes in which transcendencies are made known".[11] That which is contained in human subjectivity is reflected upon the glass pane of consciousness. The mind that Anselm speaks about splits in the reading proposed by Husserl. Reason alone (*sola ratio*), which Husserl employs as an instrument of consciousness, demonstrates such a split. On one hand, there is the mind in its concreteness, and, on the other hand, the sphere of the being of the lived experiences, which, once isolated, allows us to understand through lived experiences of an intellectual character the meaning of the mind itself with its continual, reciprocal, back and forth references. The "other modes" registered by the flow of lived experiences, which are found within the "infinite" series of lived experiences, infinite in the sense of their inexhaustibility during one's search, allow us to reach that which transcends human existence; they lead us back to something immanent intuited through "present" lived experiences but which is also transcendent. This refers to a third level, namely, the presence of a reality announced by the flow of lived experiences and investigated by the lived experiences proper to reflective activity.

The "presence" of something that transcends us registers itself on the sphere of lived experiences. In this way, one can understand "the announcing of an intuitive order" that is contemporaneously felt as presence and seized by our minds—it is the lived experience of reflection, that is, it is theoretical thought that thematizes all this. The first two moments are present in every human being; the third is present potentially, but it only actualizes itself in philosophical research. Reason alone (*sola ratio*) and theoretical thought along with their activation render both Anselm and Husserl "philosophers". They work at the theoretical level to indicate to others that which happens to human beings. Anselm's monastic brothers insisted upon him to write that which he had taught them.

"I acknowledge, Lord, and I thank you, that you created me this image of you so that I may remember you, think of you, and love you", writes Anselm.[12] This is the moment of invocation, as Paul Ricoeur points out.[13] God is present in His image through human beings. To employ Husserl's words, this is done in the announcing of the unitary power of the theological principle. Anselm continues, "...so that I am able to remember you, and in doing so I am able to think about you and love you". He does not say that the human being is the image of God, as the Bible says; rather, the trace of God is in the human being. In fact, God cannot be present in His fullness and totality, but only through something that allows Him to be "remembered", thought and loved. And, if such a presence is evident, this means that it is given by Someone that can give it, Someone who exists.

Husserl's frames the argument in other terms, always following the logical route eminently traveled by Anselm, "It is likewise evident, then, that this power cannot be taken to be 'causal' in the sense determined by the concept of causality as obtaining in Nature, a concept attuned to realities and the functional interdependencies proper to their particular essence".[14] Employing a language that could apparently refer back more to Thomas than Anselm, he speaks not of a final cause with respect to the other causes, according to the natural concept of causality, but of an extraordinary "unitary power", different from the modes in which thingly realities announce themselves. Here, there seems to be a true distance from Thomas even if Thomas maintains that the final cause is qualitatively different with respect to natural causality. It was as if Husserl was working hard to distinguish the qualitative difference between the two orders, namely, the natural and the divine.

One can ask whether Husserl's theological principle is at the origin of everything, that is, the principle from which everything originates. Even if we do not ask the question in an existential fashion, Husserl works from a logical point of view on the difference between limitation and the insufficiency of

things of nature and the foundation of order that is the theological principle. Things are justified precisely because of that announcement that is already given to and present in us. One could say that just as the transcendence of the world is the transcendence of something that "exists" as the world, so too the transcendence of God is like the transcendence of something that "exists" as God. In fact, we know in another text that Husserl does not only speak of a God who "supports" the world but also a God who "creates" the world.[15] For Husserl, one can affirm, therefore, seizing his global intention, that a theological principle exists that is the reason for everything else's existence. One can add that things manifest themselves as limited because one knows that such a principle exists and that it is unlimited.

Anselm, being a great logician, already advanced his tight argumentation in the explicit direction of existence. "So even the fool must admit that something than which nothing greater can be thought exits at least in his understanding, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood exists in the understanding".[16] The fool (*insipiens*) knows that there is something powerful. One could say that even the atheist has a notion of God whose existence s/he wishes to deny, and, if s/he knows it, s/he knows that the power that transcends the intellect cannot be solely contained in the intellect. It is in the intellect because it is a reflection of that which truly exists in and of itself. "For if it exists only in the understanding, it can be thought to exist in reality as well, which is greater".[17] The demonstration arises from a rebuttal: "So if that than greater cannot be thought exists only in the understanding, then that which a greater *cannot* be thought is that than which a greater *can* be thought. But that is clearly impossible. Therefore, there is no doubt that something than which a greater cannot be thought exists both in the understanding and in reality".[18]

Husserl's objective is not to respond to the fool. He does not take into account the possibility of atheism, but, reflecting upon himself, he discovers the presence of Power. He does not thematize the connection between the "what it is", namely, Power, and its existence; rather, he discounts it. Using the terms of a long philosophical tradition, that is, essence and existence, Husserl aligns himself with Anselm because his argument passes from essence to existence not in a non-arbitrary way, according to the objection of Thomas as presented by Etienne Gilson,[19] but, as Edith Stein indicates, the "originary" thought made evident by Anselm is an attempt to seize deeply the reason why it is possible to say, as does Thomas, that essence and existence coincide in God.[20]

In other words, the problem is: how can we affirm this from the perspective of the human being, who separates essence from existence? The human being enacts such a separation because s/he is not capable of "understanding" the

coincidence through his or her intellect. In any case, the person is capable of "intuiting" the profound unity of the "what it is" and the "that it is" of God, the profound and proper moment, as Stein notes, where "*quid*, essence and being" are not distinguishable in God. If one were to take away being, nothing would remain. For this reason she says with Anselm that it is impossible to think the First Being without being. She recognizes the human difficulty of seizing this "thought" with clarity. If we were able to understand it, we would go "beyond" the proof of Anselm; we would give the ultimate justification of that proof, which would not really be a "proof", but only the "conceptual formalization" of that originary thought. One could say that Anselm tried to conceptualize that intuition by logically working out the relationship between essence and existence, thereby drawing closer to originary thought, which in Husserlian terms can be understood as the "announcing of an intuitive order".

Stein, however, reads Anselm's proof in a phenomenological way insofar as she maintains that the attempt to explain rationally this principle never finds rational "fulfillment". The human being never succeeds to make it really explicit. But, on her view, even the aposteriori proofs, for example, that of Thomas, do not succeed in proving God. Faith is that movement of trusting in the divine reality on the part of human being, who seeks to elicit the same experience in the fool by showing him how to place oneself in greater contact than what reason is able to do. In Anselm's discussion one can note that the moment of trust and the rational are interwoven. We know that, according to Stein, the unique human possibility of better understanding God, even if only partially, resides in mystical experience, which is only offered to the very few.[21]

The "presence" that was spoken of earlier is first received by religious experience and is "lived-through" as such. There is, then, the human attempt to understand it rationally. This is explicit in Anselm but also in Thomas and in the medieval philosophers in general. This is also found in Husserl when he affirms that "religious consciousness, is able, as a rationally grounding motive, to lead to the same principle".[22] Certainly, theorizing about the relations between religion and reason is explicit in Anselm, whereas in Husserl this is only seen in passing in the above-mentioned texts. I shall deal more explicitly with this extremely important aspect in the second part.

III. THE INTERSUBJECTIVE WAY TO GOD

Returning to the Anthropological Theme

The Cartesian reduction leads Husserl to the analysis of subjectivity in which he discovered the dimension of lived experiences. Here, the work of

describing their internal connections and their relations with either internal or external transcendent realities began. From the beginning, he asked whether his analysis ran the risk of solipsism. In other words, he wondered whether his analysis could account for the fact that every human being in his or her concreteness is in relation with other human beings. Already in 1905 he individuated among acts of lived experience, including perception, memory, imagination, etc., a peculiar act he called *Einfühlung*. This term has been translated as empathy. Edith Stein in her doctoral dissertation, *On the Problem of Empathy*, examined this act.[23]

The individuation of the lived experience of empathy is particularly important because it is the first of Husserl's discoveries that in the 20s he retrospectively calls the first true transcendence, transcendence in its proper sense. It is connected with the external body, moving from the living body, understood as the body originally given to me, i.e., the *Urleib*; it is the body that I apperceive through my capacity to have perceptions, investigating the ways in which the perceptions pass through my corporeity.[24] The body of the other is understood as a living body. One is witness to a double movement. Through the lived experience of empathy my consciousness goes beyond itself and discovers another consciousness, but through this other consciousness one can delineate the psychic and spiritual life of the other, who places himself or herself in relation to others through consciousness. Already in 1910/11 in a text entitled "The Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology", Husserl indicated the connection and detachment between consciousnesses. He spoke of a "double reduction". The first individuates the lived experience of empathy in my sphere of consciousness. The second, again through this lived experience, brings into relief the consciousness of the other obtained through a further phenomenological reduction insofar as empathy is an experience of an empathized consciousness. He discovers a law whereby the data received by empathy cannot be identical with the data being empathized. The justification for such a law is based on temporal observation. In fact, because these belong to the same "now", they cannot possibly belong to the same consciousness.[25] That which is an object of empathy is not learned as something that is directly experienced by me; rather, it is a sort of representation that resembles in its structure memory even though it has different characteristics. Husserl gives an example: If I remember "Roons"—a restaurant in Freiburg—I presentify it or make it present again as a fact of the past, which is now present. But, if I understand someone empathically, from a temporal point of view the past has nothing to do with the understanding itself that occurs in the present.

Paralleling the Cartesian reduction, one finds here both the risk and overcoming of solipsism, because, for Husserl, the latter is a "camouflage"

insofar as it is only by remaining closed in the psychic sphere that the human being can fear not being able to go outside of him/herself. Immanence in a psychological sense is, as we have seen, very different than immanence in the phenomenological sense.[26] This reveals a sphere of being, a so-called "neutral" sphere that is present in every human being. Husserl insists that the "primordial" reduction, which leads to the sphere of lived experiences, is diverse from the psychological reduction understood as a movement of closure of the psyche onto itself; this allows us to realize a reduction that may result in intersubjectivity. "All phenomenological being reduces to my phenomenological I, which is marked as perceiving, remembering, empathizing, and is, therefore, phenomenologically reducing, and to others placed in empathy, and placed as intuiting Is, remembering Is, and eventually as empathizing Is".[27] This is why the new individuated territory ("all phenomenological being"), namely, that of lived experiences present in every human being, has much in common with the specifically human territory.

The theme of empathy can be found in Husserl's investigations right through to the end of his life; it constantly undergoes refinements and attunements. In 1908, when Husserl is elaborating the phenomenologico-transcendental reduction, as testified by his lectures on *The Idea of Phenomenology*, his investigations of the other's consciousness leads him to meditate on the all-understanding consciousness of God. This will be discussed later.

In the 1920s, one sees in Husserl the use of a type of phenomenological description that will later be defined as "static". This can be understood in the following way: through the Cartesian and psychological reductions he individuates, what I call the "glass pane" represented by the dimension of lived experiences. But, he contemporaneously notices that lived experiences themselves make evident an internal movement that can be lead to the sphere of temporality and they, in turn, are products of profound association that must be studied genetically. Husserl calls this "genetic" or "explicative" phenomenology. Even the theme of intersubjectivity assumes a different configuration within genetic phenomenology, but this does mean that there is a change of perspective. Rather, there is a deepening that penetrates into the stratifications. It is within this context that one raises the question of the monad and the problem of the divinity of the Highest Monad.

The Intersubjective Opening unto God From Empathy to God

We learned earlier that Husserl develops the theme of intersubjectivity from 1905 forward; in a text dedicated to the delineation of individuality, Husserl

asks how distinctions in points of view are possible, including those distinctions regarding one's positions in space. Seeing others I realize that they have their phenomena, their proper manifestations, which cannot be mine even though I have experiences in common with them. From these apparently simple observations the problem of intersubjective relations is born. Husserl discovers the conscious dimension of lived acts that present themselves, on one hand, as something that human beings essentially have in common, that is, the authentic terrain of reciprocal relation. On the other hand, they are linked to subjectivity proper. It was noted that the instrument employed to exit from one's proper subjectivity is the lived experience of empathy, already analyzed in certain texts from 1905. One of these texts, written in 1908, "Empathy of the Foreign Consciousness and Divine All-Knowing Consciousness" is particularly important for Husserl's research.

The manuscript opens with an authoritative affirmation that could be considered the point of arrival of a long preliminary investigation. "I understand the foreign consciousness on the basis of empathy".[28] One must, however, specify what such a lived experience is, what are its essential characteristics, and how is it distinguished from other lived experiences. As we saw earlier, the manifestations of others are collected in their structure when they present themselves as similar to mine. If I perceive, I become aware of the fact that the other perceives. The other may perceive different objects, but the act of perceiving, as will be seen shortly, is a parallel lived act. We are led to maintain the presence of an analogical process. Moreover, we are led to believe that my empathic act finds its completion in the perceptions of the lived experience of the other as happens in the perception of an image that has its fulfillment when I see the thing itself and I recognize it as that which was reconfigured within the imagination.

The comparison, however, is revealed as imprecise because a profound difference exists between the knowledge and representation of a concrete thing and the knowledge of a human being. But, this is only the case if one remains on the perceptual plain and if one establishes a parallel between two analogous situations. I see my hand and I have a representation relative to the fact that it is touched; the sensation of touch, then, belongs to the point touched, but if I see the touched hand of the other I represent "imaginatively" to myself its sensation. Husserl corrects himself and becomes more precise. In this case, one is not dealing with imagination, but with presentification (literally, a making present again in consciousness). I make present to myself in an originary way a sensation that I do not live in an originary way as when I feel my hand being touched. I added to the text the specification of originariness (*Originarität*) or non-originariness (*Nicht-Originarität*) because

Husserl speaks of it in other places and because Edith Stein explicates this in a very clear manner.[29]

Presentification does not consist in living directly the experience that the other is living. Rather, in every case one understands in an intuitive way that which is happening in the other because it is similar to what is happening in me, but not in an originary experience. A direct confirmation, understood as the originariness of the experience of the other on my part, is never given. At this point, it is good to make evident the limits and possibilities of empathy, which reveal that contact is established with others on the cognitive, psychic and spiritual levels but also that an absolute identity is impossible, thus, "saving" the individuality of each person. Following this line of reasoning, one can begin to understand why Husserl begins with the theme of individuality.

The text of the manuscript continues with a further comparison between the human being and God, which Husserl interprets under the profile of a consciousness that understands everything as consciousness of everything. In the marginalia of his text he wonders if this is even thinkable, but in any case he proceeds to establish the relation between consciousness that is found in humans and the divine. On his view, it is clear that God does not need empathy to understand human beings in order to penetrate their consciousness. It is not a contradiction for God as it would be for us to have direct experience of what the other is feeling. God can have it insofar as God does not need sensory mediation as we do. God does not have a field of vision through which God could have complete visual experience of everyone; God works on the level of "absolute" consciousness, understood in the above-indicated sense of the absoluteness of consciousness *quoad nos*.[30]

The analyses of the field of vision with which Husserl began his investigation (I see my hand touched and the hand of the other touched) push him to ask what happens intersubjectively in the vision of a physical thing. We know that physical things can be seen, according to Husserl, through perspectival adumbrations. This is why each human being collects them from his or her point of view, from his or her field of vision, linked to his or her corporeity; but, all of this does not lead to a relativism because, first, it is always possible to individuate them more and more through a series of movements and, second, because in the coordination of diverse Is the same things appear. That it is the same thing is guaranteed by the fact that we know the other perceives, for example, the same thing that I perceive through the apperception based on empathy. In this case, therefore, one is dealing with a perspectival view of things, but at the same time there is a common world even within the varieties of adumbrations. The comparison with God continues

in the manuscript we are examining, because if God is an all-encompassing consciousness, it is clear that God sees things with my consciousness and with that of the other. God identifies the two apperceptions, which we are unable to do. The difference between our world of consciousness and that which we are able to attribute to God consists in the fact that the latter is not characterized by temporal succession. God does not seize the two apperceptions one after the other, but rather God seizes them immediately as when we observe something in a mirror. Husserl maintains, however, that even this attempt to penetrate the divine modality of knowing is insufficient because in reality a relation of coordination according to a certain regularity is established. Here, we can speak of a "law of coordination", which places in relation the flows of diverse finite consciousnesses.

The argument proposed by Husserl does not concern a divine creative process. Even in this case the action of God consists in a coordination of limited realities that need to find their possibility of living together in a higher principle. Furthermore, the comparison with God is interesting because it indicates, first, that the human being knows her or his proper experiential limits, for s/he has the capacity to confront a perfect reality that goes beyond these very limits. Here, one can make the same observation that was made earlier concerning the subjective way to God, even if Husserl does not do so explicitly. One can ask: From where does the evidence for the divine characteristics, which are rationally traceable, derive? Similar arguments are found in other thinkers, who do not explicitly use these arguments to demonstrate the existence of God. I think of Kant, who in his *Critique of Pure Reason* speaks of divine intuitive knowledge, or Leibniz when he theorizes about the Highest Monad. In reality, Husserl is close to the above-mentioned thinkers. The reference to the second author is more explicit as Husserl deliberately appropriates the Leibnizian concept of the monad.

From the Monad to the Highest or Greatest Monad If the study of the monad seems to become a characteristic theme after the 1920s, in reality, however, already in 1908, Husserl writes a text entitled, *Monadology*. As already mentioned, Husserl is drawing closer to a more subtle delineation of the flow of consciousness, asking about the relation that ensues with the body. The result, here only alluded to and which will later be made more explicit, is that corporeity is constituted in the flow of lived experiences. At this point, it seems necessary to clarify what Husserl means by constitution. He begins his treatment: "A world of things exists and among these there exist animal and human bodies, a world of physical things and of persons (who possess body and soul) and to this world also belongs a variety of consciousnesses that flow rapidly, judging experiencing, desiring and wanting,

etc."[31] The objective world is delineated through the apperceptive process of consciousness that is linked to the body. At this point, Husserl asks what the relation between consciousness and the body is. He wants to clarify how it is that, starting from consciousness, the rules of organization of corporeity through their manifestations and their possible perceptions are made evident. But, is the opposite true as well? How is a dependence of consciousness on the body possible? Consciousness depends on the body because I am unable to have sensation, to remember or to think without my body fulfilling certain conditions. If I see a color, this means that there is an eye, which carries out its function as a condition for sensation as well as the perception of color.

This means that the connection between consciousness and corporeity, with the spirit and with the psyche, is tight. Also, this means that the concept of the monad requires a "concrete" structure. Certainly, such a notion derives from Leibniz's monadology. As with the positions of Descartes and Kant, Husserl thoroughly reexamines Leibniz's position, maintaining, for example, that the monads have windows.

The reflection on the monad is one of the central threads of Husserl's analysis. The theorizing, which develops in the 1920s through further investigation, moves in a genetic direction. The analysis of the monad acquires an important thickness both in terms of the description of the human being as well as in terms of intersubjectivity, which is transformed into an intermonadology.

To achieve the results mentioned above, it is useful to examine certain significant texts. First, there is a return to the phenomenological reduction, which Husserl never abandoned; in fact, it was always being re-proposed by Husserl until the end of his life as is evidenced by his last words of remorse for no longer having the possibility of continuing his exploration now that he understood the direction of his research even though he was just a beginner.

If we stick more to his manuscripts than to his basic works, manuscripts which have already in large part been published but which also continue to be edited and published, we can grasp Husserl's thought more synthetically and immediately. We can follow the analytical deepening of the concept of the monad in certain pages written in 1921 dedicated to the "Monad in its General Structure".[32] Husserl synthetically affirms, "The monad, therefore, in its general structure is not so easily known".[33] This testifies to Husserl's perennial dissatisfaction because the phenomenological territory that he is analyzing, namely, that relative to the human being, far from showing itself as unified, simple, or dualistic as is the case of body and soul, shows itself as always more complex and stratified. It can be approached from one side or

another; many are the points of access, many are the results that reciprocally refer back to one another. In any case, the map is intensely delineated.

Through the reduction one finds: The relation of I, consciousness and objectivity, in which the concept of objectivity manifests itself as problematic. It is to be understood amply and concerns itself with that which is immanent and transcendent. In other words, it concerns internal and external sensation. The internal is connected to the data of internal sensation that Husserl designates as hyletic, using an ancient word to which he gives new meaning. Here he is referring to the data of internal sensation. For example, the meaning of well-being or being unwell, relaxation and so on. The external ones include, for example, the visual data of color, and tactile sensations like smoothness, roughness, etc. Such data constitute a togetherness that is always consciously known, but they are "external" to the I, and those externals function as "adumbrations" for the consciousness of things in the physical sense; the world in its transcendence is constituted in such a manner.

The I has, in turn, a double configuration. First, it is a functional center, a pole that controls all the material indicated, a center of acts and affections, the subject of intentional lived experiences, aware even of a layer of "passive" motivations linked to the rules of reproduction, association, the sedimentation of past experiences, which are lived in the present. In this sense, it is a monad with its own individuality. The sphere of passivity that Husserl is progressively discovering, and which represents a novelty charged with further developments, as will be seen later, can be considered first as the unconscious sphere precisely because its characteristics can be made evident; it re-enters, even in an indirect fashion, the awareness of the I. Passivity or the unconscious remain such insofar as they fall under the domain of the I, maintaining their autonomy and irreducibility.

Second, the important result is that not all of the monad is an I. In fact, in the "undressed" and "confused" monad the I is only potential. But, when it is active, the I collects itself in its objectivity through reflection. The I we are here speaking about, on account of its concreteness and individuality, is diverse from the pure I that represents the universality of a structure, which it cannot make or suffer, as Edith Stein also notes.[34] We have seen, however, that Husserl does not stop at the individuation of the pure I because the I as the center of function that he speaks about in relation to the monad is the structural aspect of a monadic reality that possesses the concreteness proper to life with all of its stratifications, including the passive ones.

It is right within this sphere of passivity that alterity announces itself. Alterity concerns itself with the things of the physical world seized through

the data of external sensations, hyletic data, and through the bodies of animals and human beings. At first, hyletic data seem similar to physical objects, but they are discovered to be animate and, therefore, not reducible to them. Here the theme of analogy rises once again. Husserl writes in a 1922 text dedicated to distinguishing the transcendence of the alter ego from the transcendence of things: "I have the experience of a living body that is over there, and together with this experience and the analogy motivated by own body I re-present to myself (in consciousness) a second monad".[35] The "solitary" point of departure is only apparent; in reality the non-I is contained in the I, that is, the other monad is contained in the monad. I have experience of the other monad through the lived experience of empathy. Empathy and analogy remain central, but Husserl specifies how through corporeity one first reaches the other on the passive level. But, the other signifies others: "I have a monad in relation to other monads; I have other monads linked or capable of being linked through empathy to the first monad. I have, therefore, a multiplicity of monads in real or possible communication that are also in relation with an identical and intersubjective nature".[36] This totality of monads, which every natural possible world presupposes in an epistemological sense, constitutes an absolute that can be added to the absolute of consciousness, demonstrating that the concept of the absolute depends, for Husserl, on the assumed perspective. In fact, there exists a third absolute as was already seen in the objective way: "From this absolute there must be, therefore, a way that leads to the ultimate absolute in another sense; from this system of 'substances' 'in the true sense' (as beings that do not presuppose any constituting being) there must be a way to the absolute substance in the ultimate sense".[37] The absolute, understood in this ultimate sense, is definitive. It is understood as "substance" and certainly recalls the position of Leibniz. In this case, Husserl does not name this substance God, but he is decidedly taking up a metaphysical stance.

More explicit is the 1922 text entitled, "The Possibility of the Fusion of Monads; The Possibility of the Highest (Divine) Monad".[38] The concept of the monad, understood in the Leibnizian sense, is independent and is an absolute unity, but Husserl seeks a possible correlation that surpasses this autonomy, allowing one to individuate windows, namely, connections or fusions, to borrow from Husserl's terminology. He seeks a common territory where individuals can configure themselves, for example, in the case where one part of affective force is found in one monad and another part in another monad. This is problematic. Husserl admits that he has not analyzed well the matter at hand, and he asks if this common phenomenological territory is thinkable as an I that grasps all other Is in itself, a territory that encloses in its life all that is temporally constituted and, therefore, all the Is that are also

constituted as unities. “Is there an I that experiences nature and the world, constituted in common in all finite Is, with the eyes of these Is, that has in itself all their thoughts, that acts within all as an I, that ‘creates’ nature and the world in the sense of “the idea of the good?”[39]

It is not easy to understand Husserl’s intention in this passage. The context seems, as already mentioned, to be firmly rooted in the thought of Leibniz, but properly Husserlian is the centrality attributed to the I. The I is the aware part of the monad. If, therefore, a coordination of monads is possible and the correlation is already something in which monads find themselves, such a correlation can be established only by an I that not only organizes and coordinates but also creates in the Leibnizian sense; it creates the best of possible worlds, according to the criteria of the “good”, which allows us to have an optimistic vision of this world or, at least, as something basic to which to aspire.

This is the first time that we explicitly encounter the word “creation”. This may seem to be a temporary conclusion, but it is an emblematic vision of the divine; it is the explicit personal vision that is at the basis of the Judaeo-Christian vision of God, albeit philosophically understood. This allows us to refute two possible objections that can be made against Husserl. These concern the idea of a divinity that only organizes reality in a Kantian sense or that pantheistically coincides with such an idea, because it seems to “utilize” single Is like instruments of its actions.[40] The concept of creation introduces a divine context, valorizing that idea of transcendence already expressed in other moments of Husserl’s project. Given Husserl’s interest in Fichte, one can ask if this idea of the I has anything to do with Fichte himself, but here we are only dealing with an hypothesis.

The Leibnizian motivation behind Husserl’s thought is confirmed by numerous texts, but in this case we are specifically interested in the argument concerning God, for which Husserl’s 1930s reflections on the “Monadology” are particularly interesting.[41] Here, one can trace the style of the arguments already advanced. The question of God is always raised at the end of a certain philosophical trajectory, which begins with data related to the human being or the world and which slowly acquire higher and further significance; they allow us to ascend from a tight and coherent reflection to a principle of all.

The text we are examining begins with an analysis of waking consciousness; the term “waking” recalls certain fragments of Heraclitus. Human beings are described differently while sleeping and awake. Intellectual attention and moral vigilance characterize the latter state; these are lacking in the sleeping state. Different grades of attention and vigilance are distinguished.

Generally, the human being lives in a situation that Husserl defines as pre-scientific; the height of the human life of consciousness is marked by scientific research. Here, the word "science" must be understood etymologically as the desire to know in the broadest and deepest sense. The condition of being consciously awake is only one condition among others. Husserl asks whether one could justify "the unconscious, the sedimented ground of consciousness, sleep without dreams be it in the form in which subjectivity is born, be it in its problematic being prior to its birth, in death and that which "comes after death?"[42]

Here, questions are asked concerning human existence in its complex stratification, which includes the unconscious and passive depths, as was seen above. Questions are also asked about its genesis, the fact of birth that presents itself just as problematically as death. Death raises the question of what happens after death. Existential themes of great depth are not ignored by Husserl, and not only in this text. Rather, they are approached with great gravity in other places of his research. I say this in order to debunk the image of Husserl's research being exclusively concerned with abstract questions of logic and knowledge. It is important to note that even existential questions, according to Husserl, require a rigorous foundation to be understood, and one cannot abandon oneself to an analysis of life that does not have serious theoretical foundations. More generally, this justifies his polemic with the "philosophy of life" that was flourishing in his own time. One thinks of Wilhelm Dilthey, who according to Husserl did not find a stable terrain upon which to ground his work even though Dilthey had the great merit of opposing positivism.[43]

The text we are analyzing does not only refer to questions perennially relevant for human beings; the text raises such questions with great engagement. At some points, even with Husserl's technical and complex language, there are great lyrical moments.

Husserl finely executes his analyses of life and death. The importance of human beings arises in their awareness of their perennial natures: "Monads can neither begin nor end".[44] Their emergence in life comes through a process that moves form latency to being fully explicit, a process that has a long history insofar as it is possible to go back to the unconscious from consciousness in the reconstruction of ourselves. This leads to an understanding of the deeper structures of our physical world: "…and so are we not pushed backwards from our human being to animals, plants, to the more basic forms of life, to the constitution of atoms of the new physics—to a total consideration of the world constituted in a wakeful manner; and moving from it, to a transcendental subjective consideration, which by reconstruction turns back to the essence of

the subject that is formed of different grades with an instinctual consciousness and communication, monadic communication in an exchange of monads?"[45]

It is true that all this was already stated by Leibniz, but Husserl thinks he goes beyond him though an intentional and systematically founded phenomenology that, as we have already seen, traces the path of development of reality, moving from the most basic forms of life to the human being, who is conscious of such a path and knows how to examine it. Husserl seems to accept the fact that all of reality, including natural reality, is constituted by monads. These monads can live in an instinctual way with hidden stories, which is a universal story; there are also those that can be distinguished as "awake" and those that communicate among themselves, even if at different levels. "The whole process that expresses phylogenetic development is sedimented in every germinating cell of monads that comes to birth".[46] And, each has its place. The death of human monads, for example, is not a separation, but a return to eternal sleep; they live at a diverse level. One can never, therefore, speak of immortality as a continual waking, but it does not mean that they completely disappear.

An "originary force" of monads exists that allows for an ascending development. Even from this point of view the teleological process is observed and confirmed: "The totality of monads, a total monadic unity, is an infinite process of elevation and this is necessarily a constant process in the development of sleeping monads into waking ones; and it is a development toward a world that constitutes itself always again in monads such that those that constitute them insofar as they are awake are not all of them. But, the totality is always involved as foundational. And this constitution of the world is the constitution of an always higher superior humanity, which is aware of its proper and true being; it assumes the form of a whole that freely constitutes itself, having as its scope the knowledge and form of its perfection".[47]

Husserl displays great faith on the part of humanity to elevate itself, to realize itself freely, according to a rational project. Rationality is not to be understood as rationalism, but as the capacity to pre-fix valid aims and to follow them as correlates of a theoretical moment; rationality makes such aims evident and the practical moment of such a moment actualizes them. Such faith is constant in Husserl's vision of the world and history notwithstanding certain foreseen and actual failures, including the death of his son in World War I, Nazism, and the persecution he experienced by being expelled from the University. One can interpret Husserl's position by referring to a dictum of Heraclitus: "He who does not hope in the un-hopeable will not find it as it is not able to be explored and it remains inaccessible".[48] This dictum does not implore a naïve faith. Rather, it urges the overcoming of the negative

with the awareness of the possibility offered to human beings of acting in the direction of the realization of the good.

Behind all this there is also a great ethico-religious effort, as we shall see, but already in this text the ultimate justification remains in the fact that the originary force of monads finds its basis in God: "God is not simply the totality of monads but also the entelechy that finds itself in the totum as the idea of the telos of infinite development, that is, the idea of humanity as absolute reason, understood as that which necessarily regulates monadic being and does so according to a free decision. Insofar as this is intersubjective, this process is necessarily expansive; without it, notwithstanding episodes of decadence, universal being could not exist, etc".[49]

The conception of divine entelechy is certainly suggested by the idea of Leibnizian "force", and Husserl enthusiastically accepts it because the finality present in the spiritual world, as this text suggests, refers back to an origin of such finality. Here, the Kant of the *Critique of Judgment* is present, but one could also say that Thomas and Aristotle are present as well. The whole is not without sense; it has its ultimate meaning in God. Divinity seems to be understood as both immanent and transcendent, for it has the immanent function of guiding the process of development and it is transcendent "because God is not simply the totality of monads".

Concerning this proposition, a great problem of metaphysical importance presents itself, namely, that of the relation between God and the world. The solutions that have been offered throughout the course of philosophy have been, simply put, either theistic or pantheistic. They seem to posit themselves in very contradictory ways when confronted with one another: absolute transcendence or absolute immanence. If we analyze them, we find that they absolutize two aspects of divinity that are strictly connected, that is, the contemporaneous immanence and transcendence of God. We also notice that the theists speak of a providential presence or the grace of God in the world—and this is immanence—whereas the pantheists tend to differentiate the natural from the divine from a qualitative perspective, establishing in this way a sort of qualitative transcendence.

According to Husserl, the presence of the divine is witnessed by the very presence of the human being, which manifests its own peculiar immortality, understood as the "process of the process of realization of the divine itself".[50] One could refer at this juncture to Thomas' notion of *causa secunda*, which indicates the function of the cooperation of the human being with God in history. Certainly, the problem of evil and the negative exists. Neither Thomas nor Husserl are naïve enough to not know this. But, even if the negative is a threat, this does not constitute the elimination of the positive. Husserl writes

concerning the human being: "Its continual action is immortal in all that is genuine and good. [The human being] is also immortal insofar as the entire legacy of every spiritual acquisition remains closed in its monad; it remains latently and exercises certain functions, albeit not with full awareness. It makes possible the identification of oneself with previous generations in the harmony of the divine world".[51]

Another Leibnizian idea, namely, the "harmony of monads", is also put forth by Husserl not so much as to resolve a metaphysical question, which nonetheless endures, but to justify the spiritual and ethical relation between humans.

In conclusion, one can affirm that Leibniz was the thinker that most inspired Husserl's research on divinity. Leibniz, having underlined the dynamic and constructive aspect of reality, knew how to comprehend the basic lines and tendencies of spiritual and natural processes. He resolved the problem of the great question of unity and multiplicity through the making evident of monads that are revealed as a compact totality formed by singular and autonomous entities.

IV. HYLE AND TELOS: THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH THE HYLETIC

What is Hyletic Phenomenology?

If the individuation of lived experiences constitutes Husserl's insightful discovery and if it characterizes his investigations, the analysis of lived experiences makes evident the doubleness of the noetic intentional moment and the hyletic material moment. The description of this doubleness, already contained in *Ideas I*, is deepened in the second volume in correlation with the analysis of the living body (*Leib*), which is not only localized in sense perceptions that have a constitutive function for objects appearing in space but also for sensations of different groups. Husserl, for example, refers to sensory sentiments, to the sensations of pain and pleasure, bodily well-being or dis-ease deriving from being indisposed in one's body. This is a particularly important point.

This argument continues to be present in Husserl's work as evidenced by a conspicuous number of C and D manuscripts from the 1930s in which the two moments mentioned above are present. In particular, in Ms. C 10, without title and dating from 1931, one sees the connection between hyletic unity and affectivity, because even if the hyletic universe is a non-egological universe, insofar as it constitutes itself without the intervention of the I, the I is always present as the locus of affectivity and it is always active.

One sees an important example of this direction in a text where one would never suspect finding such an argument, *The Structure of the Human Person*—this is the text of lectures given by Edith Stein in the winter semester of 1932–33 at the Institute of Scientific Pedagogy at Münster. Reflecting on the theme of spirit (*Geist*), Stein affirms that the world of spirit embraces the entire created world.

In order to demonstrate this, Stein examines a block of granite. Indubitably, on her view, this block is a material formation that reveals a sense or meaning; it is full of sense because even if we do not perceive a personal spirituality, this formation is constituted according to its own structural principle, in which its specific weight, its consistency, its hardness, its mass, the fact that it presents itself in enormous blocks and not in granules or shards, all of these are essential parts.[52] What is important for us and what is valid on the plane of affectivity that Husserl speaks about is the fact that this block "calls our attention in a singular way". In fact, its undeniable consistency and its mass are not only subject to our senses and reason, which allows us to experience it as real. Our senses and reason are struck from within. In them something is revealed to us. In this reality we read something. The "something" that is individuated is not only a meaning, which is also present, but also here the hyletic moment of lived experiences emerges, because the block speaks to us of an imperturbable stability and a certain trustworthiness as a quality that belongs to it. Yielding a sense of well-being or dis-ease, imperturbability, stability, and trustworthiness resonate internally. Husserl describes these when he discusses the hyletic aspect of lived experience—a sense that is not the same and that cannot be given by clay or sand.

In order to understand further Husserl's analysis, it is necessary to examine some passages from the above-mentioned Ms. C 10. This text deals with references to those groups of localized material sensations that play an analogous role to primary sensations of intentionally lived acts, including hardness, whiteness, etc. According to Husserl, insofar as they are localized, these groups of sensations have an immediate somatic localization. This is the case insofar as every human being regards his or her body in an immediately intuitive way as a living body (*Leib*); it is his or her own body, a subjective objectivity that is distinguished from the purely material thing, that is, the "living body", through the layer of localized sensations.[53] Difficult to analyze and illustrate, these, says Husserl, form the basis of the life of desire, of the will, feelings of tension and relaxation of energy, sensations of internal inhibition, paralysis, and release.[54] Intentional functions, however, are connected with this layer. Matter assumes a spiritual function as is the case with primary sensations that are part of perceptions, which are the basis

of perceptual judgments, etc.[55] Two factors contribute to this stratification. On the level of cognition, stratification is formed by primary sensations, perceptions, and perceptual judgments. There is a second factor that is psycho-reactive, which is formed by sentiments that are felt in the senses and various kinds of evaluation or bestowing of values. The perceptual, judging and evaluative levels are all part of the noetic.

The relation between the hyletic and the noetic is clearly delineated, but the hyletic moment seems to drag along the noetic. Husserl affirms, "...a human being's total consciousness is in a certain sense, by means of its hyletic substrate, bound to the Body".[56] Here, the doubleness is not eliminated. In fact, intentional lived acts are not localized and do not constitute a layer of the body proper. The autonomy of the spiritual moment with respect to the material one, which also allows for its manifestation, is confirmed. Perception, insofar as it is a tactile seizing of the form, is not in the finger that touches; tactile sensations are localized in it. Thought is not truly and intuitively localized in the head as the localized sensation of tension.[57] Husserl observes that often we express ourselves in this way, and we could ask why this happens. One could respond by saying that the attracting force of the hyletic localization focuses attention on the body proper, where the hyletic term does not indicate the material, understood in the traditional sense, but a new type of materiality already proposed by Husserl in section 85 of *Ideas I.* Clearly, Husserl is seeking a new kind of term and he believes that he could find it in the Greek word *hyle*. He is trying to individuate a primal dimension that is never well delineated. Words capable of expressing this reality are lacking.

The Hyletic and Teleology

If the hyletic pre-eminently appears in the realm of knowledge, numerous clues indicate that Husserl ascribes to it a larger function. The hyletic first involves, as we have seen, the affective and impulsive sphere that is at the base of noetic evaluation. In this sense, one can speak of *hyle*, that is, matter. Analyzing human acts in their stratification, Husserl affirms that there is a "blind" and "organic" entelechy that is present in them; it acts on the impulse level, becoming explicit at the level of the will, passing from an impulsive intentionality to one that is aware. Following the path of practical ethical comportment and not purely the path of knowledge, it is possible to arrive at a deeper understanding of entelechy in its teleological meaning.

Certainly, Husserl's insistence on the teleology of history is well known; it is to be understood as the discovery of an immanent goal in history and as the ethical appeal to realize this very goal. But, the ultimate reasons of the existence of this dimension are traceable in that which he defines as

the necessary "return to the originary facts of hyle",[58] which would seem incomprehensible if intentionality were not present at the level of impulses. Here, there is the return, always actualized by Husserl, from the sphere of awareness, both cognitive and ethical, which he defines as categorial, to the pre-categorial sphere. He indicates that it is the way on the path of logic that moves from formal to transcendental logic (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*). In terms of knowledge, there is a move from consciousness to passive synthesis (*Lectures on Passive Synthesis*), which are, as we shall see, at the basis of the formation of every knowing in the interweaving of subject and object before these two moments become actually distinct.

In an appendix to his *Lectures on Passive Synthesis* one finds preliminary considerations on the lectures in transcendental logic. Through a genetic analysis Husserl begins to discuss the formation of sense (*Sinn*) in order to arrive at the most hidden grades of passivity. This path is what Husserl calls "a questioning that tends backwards", a regression that is difficult to make operative because humans live at the periphery of the process where results are already given. This is the pre-scientific life and in order to "melt away" such results and understand their genesis it is necessary to have an attentive gaze that is "scientifically" aware. Here one cannot take a constructivist scientific approach. One needs a deconstructive type, not because one needs to renounce the search for sense, but because one needs to dig to find further senses or meanings.

The hyletic dimension most suits this digging. Whereas cultural sedimentations, understood as noetic products, present themselves as well as being structured in a definitive manner, continuing to grow through further stratifications, the genetic way that leads to the sphere of passivity remains ignored for two reasons. First, one who lives at the pre-scientific level, which Husserl calls in the 30s the life-world, is not aware of the genetic process presupposed by every consciousness and every result obtained at the level of practice. Second, one who lives at the scientific level, always because of the greater specialization of knowledge, its ramifications and complexity, believes that he or she can justify everything through this type of knowledge; one forgets the very same question of the genesis of one's knowledge. Here, of course, Husserl is referring to Western culture. It is in this context that philosophy since the Greeks has assumed a critical role, but it has not yet succeeded, according to Husserl, to uncover the origin of the sedimentations.[59]

Husserlian phenomenology was born with the intent of uncovering such an origin, and to this extent has examined mathematics, the physical sciences, and the human sciences, which at that time were called sciences of the spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Next and inside these are the problems of logic, that

is, the organization of thought that assumed, for Husserl, an increasingly important role that was sedimented in formal logic (most certainly of an Aristotelian origin), but was always more refined and made abstract as the neo-positivists had shown. Husserl agrees that this type of logic can be a useful instrument in our elaboration of the sciences, but the problem shifts: how have these sciences and this very same formal logic been elaborated?

This question has always been part of Husserl's project, and following the line of his logical works—a line of work that is most important because it borders with mathematics, which influenced him significantly—this question does not only appear on the logical terrain but also on the deeper one of the genesis of logical operations within the transcendental structure of lived experiences. The two most significant writings on this score are *Formal and Transcendental Logic*[60] and *Experience and Judgment.*[61] The former moves within the terrain already constituted by formal logic to go back to operations and acts; even if such acts are not all cognitive, they must be studied from a cognitive aspect. The latter moves first from the perceptual understanding of things to the level of judgment. Here, there is a double movement of ascent and descent that is correlatively carried out. It has the great capacity of going from already-constituted formations to their genesis and vice versa of moving from the first constitutive operations of the process to reaching its highest levels.

In this work of excavation one can insert the *Lectures on Passive Synthesis*,[62] which study preliminary operations traceable through the formation of conceptual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is not the first grade of knowledge; rather, it is already the result of an anterior process essentially based on association, that is, on the primitive operations, which through contrast, succession, and coexistence allow one to define perceptual fields. In this phase subject and object are still indistinct; the distinction only comes at the perceptual level.

Against this perspective, the problems of "sensation" and its origin as well as the relation between intentional noesis and hyle, that is, the material that presents itself, are revisited. It is, therefore, possible to trace two ways of speaking about this particular material of internal and external sensation that Husserl calls *hyle*. According to the static analysis of the *Ideas*, hyle is the material to which noesis gives sense. It becomes, therefore, material for further operations, for example, the pleasure given by vision of a color pushes me to choose that color, to evaluate it positively, thereby becoming the "material" of a judgment. From the genetic perspective, which, on the contrary, makes evident the passive sphere, hyle already posses an intentional structure that allows it to present itself in a configured way.

Generally, the "archeological" excavation that is being attempted here by moving from the sparse analyses of Husserl serves to help us discover "ultimate reasons", which join with primary or more evident reasons. In order to understand such an excavation, one must examine a text from 1931 entitled, "Teleology",[63] which includes all the elements already discussed but also new unpublished ones. The subtitle, "Implications of the Eidos: Transcendental Intersubjectivity in the Eidos: the Transcendental I", seems to return to the anthropological theme discussed above, but here it is treated more deeply, and in relation to it there is the question of teleology that, as we have already seen, represents one of the major threads of Husserl's research.

The manuscript begins with a tension at the transcendental level; this tension concerns the human being's orientation toward perfection, self-preservation, and the presence of always-new contradictions. The idea of perfection, however, presents itself, according to Husserl, as a guiding idea in an ethical sense. Here, there is a pre-ontological "notion" that is present right from the beginning. One can easily call to mind in this regard the relation between Husserl and Anselm. This notion acquires ontological value through reflection and can assume a concomitant value for the will, "which has, in this way, its explicit end and the explicit configuration of the goal of the totality of all individual and super-individual (i.e., intersubjective insofar as we can refer to humanity) perspectives".[64] Here, one finds the theme of history and its meaning; one must remember that for Husserl history has both sense and an end; a "metaphysical" will runs through it, which produces an infinite or infinitely tending process. Every finite element, even in its obscurity, lives in the form of infinity. Infinity in temporal moments appears as the temporal succession of finite moments. Its ultimate true nature, however, is that of the *nunc stans* (the now standing/existing). Here, eternity is qualitatively different from temporality.

All of Husserl's discourse revolves around a profound reality that leads history, manifesting itself as an infinite will that justifies different grades of will. In fact, every human being first senses an obscure will to live; s/he then tends toward ways of perfecting this even though s/he may never fully realize such perfection. In other words, drawing from Husserlian texts devoted to ethics, why do human beings recognize good and evil? Is this the case because the human being has nostalgia for a better situation than that which he or she is constrained to live? Here, Husserl hypothesizes about a situation of collective understanding of what is good and positive, and he asks himself what would happen if all subjects could be awakened ethically to understand that which is positive or good. Furthermore, he asks how can a dissemination of that which was genuinely seized by someone be transmitted. He refers to

the role of some communities, for example, the Churches, underlining their role in spreading the good. He also asks from an ethico-religious perspective how this is possible, especially when one thinks about missionary activity or *imitatio*, which one could assume refers to the imitation of Christ.

In addition to the ethico-religious level there are also pedagogical and ethico-political levels. All of these dimensions tend toward an end and they try to establish why they are connected by a unifying subterranean element that constitutes the "form of all forms". All levels of human achievement along the path of history find their justification in God. Husserl writes, "The absolute universal will that lives in all transcendental subjectivities and which makes possible the individual-concrete being of the total transcendental subjectivity is the divine will; this divine will presupposes all of intersubjectivity not because it precedes the first intersubjectivity and would not be possible without it (not even in the sense that the soul presupposes the body), but rather because there is a structural strata without which this will could not become concrete".[65] A profound relationship between human beings and the divine is established, which does not present itself as distant and foreign; rather it is close and active.

The abovementioned text is particularly significant because once again there is a meditation on the relation with the existential human dimension, the human capacity of understanding that which is essential to and individuating in the transcendental sphere, the "glass pane", as we said earlier, upon which lived experiences imprint themselves in a continuous process of backward reference. Husserl observes that it is possible in general to understand the essential moment or eidos of any reality separate from the being or non-being of the actualization of essential moments. In the case of human beings, however, "the eidos[,] the transcendental I, is unthinkable without the transcendental I as a fact".[66] This means that a correlation between mundane ontology and absolute ontology establishes itself, that is, a relation between the essential structures of the world and the essential ones. The correlation finds its core in the human being.

It is right at the level of the transcendental sphere that the structure of "fact" clarifies itself. The "fact" of being human is individuated through reductive research and in originary structures that are configured in a primal moment at the hyletic level. Originary hyle presents itself with kinesthesia, that is, with originary movements, originary sentiments, with originary instincts. All this originary material is found in a unified form, which is the primal essential form of worldliness. This is immediately demonstrable in human beings insofar as the constitution of the whole world already appears at the level of "instinct", which is contained in its "essential grammar", its essential alphabet in the

deep levels of the human being; that which is indicated is not only a passive, unconscious, instinctually unifying structure but it also possesses its own finality. Teleology manifests itself at the transcendental level, but it has its origin in the facts of the hyle that are "originary" (in the widest sense); without these no world and no total transcendental subjectivity would be possible. Things being what they are, can one say that this teleology, with its originary facticity, has its foundation in God? "We come to the ultimate "questions of fact"—to the questions of originary fact, to the ultimate necessities, the originary necessities".[67]

The way proposed here to reach God is rather original in the sense that, grounding it once again in the theme of final ends, Husserl understands it as the deep, potent structure of all reality. It is as if he was revisiting the fifth way of Thomas Aquinas, giving to it a specific content. One does not only generically say that all things have an end, but one also equally examines the stratification of reality through the stratification present in the human being in order to reach a conclusion, according to which not only do cultural or spiritual works characterize human beings but also voluntary processes. Not only is the examination of organisms and their levels of development and perfection meaningful, as we see in the text cited from the *Ideas*, but also meaningful is that obscure world of originary instincts, sentiments, and our unconscious physical and psychic movements. Sense and end, formal and final cause, to borrow from Aristotle, are correlative, and this is why teleology is defined as "the form of all forms"; in fact, it operates at all grades of reality.

If all the works of the spirit, including those considered chaotic, magma-like, or irrational, have a meaning, and not only at rational levels, one cannot do otherwise than attribute the origin of this meaning to God. Husserl more often than not calls this principle of all things, the foundation of sense, God. Even though his argument moves on a philosophical plane, Husserl does not fear pronouncing this word that has profound religious meaning.

It was already noted, but is worth repeating that Husserl's intention was never to "demonstrate" the existence of God. The individuation of a foundation, a principle of all things, arises as a consequence of his research. His argumentation requires completion; an ultimate justification is necessary or else everything would be without sense. On this hyletic path, one begins with lived experience, but one exits this because the "ultimate reasons", even on the hyletic plane, are grounded in the fact that nothing is "by chance". On the contrary, it is necessary to trace the profound dimensions of "teleology", the final end. The reference back to an "originary facticity", therefore, can be understood deeply, if we observe that it has its foundation in God.[68]

In wider terms, one can note that the metaphysical problem is resolved through the epistemological, but it still maintains its autonomy. Moving in the last instance from the subject, who asks questions linked to consciousness, the investigation becomes broader in the attempt to understand the structure of reality in its ultimate dimensions.

V. THE ETHICAL WAY

Next to the theoretical ways already examined, and often within them, another path can also be delineated, which privileges ethics. There are some texts in which such a path is more clearly indicated, but often, as in the case of the above-mentioned manuscript on "Teleology", a final end contemporaneously assumes value in reference not only to development of natural and cultural realities but also to moral reality.

The theme of the will, already discussed with reference to human and divine wills, is connected to the realization of the good. Here, the reflection on morality arises, which expresses itself through analyzable value judgments, always under a logical profile, that parallels those that concern the knowledge of things. In a text found in *Erste Philosophie* Husserl examines the difference between things, values, goods and related logics.[69] If one considers value propositions, which divide into desiring and volitional propositions, concepts of truth are delineated. Insofar as these are practical truths, they can be placed next to theoretical truths. All this can be studied by formal logic because it is interested in judgments in their generality. Such logic permits one to distinguish the formal idea of something as the substrate of judgment concerning the being of a thing, including its value, good and scope. "Formal logic amplifies itself…into a logic, and this formal logic, be it with value propositions or with truths of value, etc., restricts itself in a certain sense. From the viewpoint of the logic of judgments, the propositions that enter into the sphere of values are material "particularities"".[70] The term "material" indicates that one refers always to states of facts that are universalizable through evaluation. The judging subjectivity exerts itself on the dimension of desire and the will. If one wishes to examine all this from a formal perspective, formal logic assumes an extraordinary breadth. One can work, therefore, on the formal idea of something of the evaluation or, generally, on value, the good, the scope, etc.

One knows, however, that the formal moment is always grounded on something individual, pre-evaluative and pre-practical, which could be considered in its universality as a thing in its eidetic singularity; we, therefore,

come to formal logic, which is interested, in this way, in individuality. This is why there is a logic of real values.

The reflection on values would remain abstract if there were no reference to human beings. One could ask, in fact, for whom is this a value. We already examined the study that Husserl carried out with regard to the relation between human subjects in the question of intersubjectivity, but this is only the base for a further analysis of the modalities in which human associations present themselves. In the writings of 1918–1919 dedicated to community Husserl reflects on particular forms of association, placing great value on the association that is community. This theme is also present in the second volume of the *Ideas* transcribed by Edith Stein, who makes community a central theme of investigation in her work "Individual and Community", the second half of her book, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*.

Husserl's concept of community emphasizes the centrality of a possible association of human lives, making evident beyond all other forms of association, i.e., society, for example, the spiritual link that is at the basis of the ethical life. One notes here that it is characteristic of German culture to indicate the centrality of communal dimension and to move one's investigations from this point rather than moving from the centrality of the individual understood in his or her singularity. If one compares this with Latin culture, one remarks that individualism is stronger than a communal emphasis. One could think of this German desire for community as the residue of an associative vision of a tribal-feudal nature. One notes, however, that already in the idealism of Hegel and Fichte the moment of community assumes value in relation to the spiritual moment that characterizes it.

On the phenomenological view, all of this is examined in an essential form, delineating the apriori of the personal community. Where spiritual activity is present, the person is also present. It is possible to establish, therefore, final ends and forms of production, which have value and which can become objects of absolute duty relative to the determined forms of life of single persons and communities. Ethics and culture can be studied in a logical universal form and one could add the ways in which humanity could succeed in maturing ethically through ideal norms that allow it to reach that grade of perfection that Husserl calls "authenticity".

So that ethics is not based exclusively on a rationally recognizable duty, one must take into account demands of love. Love, which does not have a rational basis, but which nonetheless imposes a duty on the part of the lover for the beloved, cannot be surpassed. Husserl does not see a contradiction between love and reason. Rather, Husserl is against an interpretation of ethics based only on reason. He asks: "Can I not love a domain of value in such a

way that is not identical with valuing and such that one can enjoy the value that one possesses?"[71]

Husserl maintains that the ethical life does not exclude sentiments as evidenced by his distancing himself from Kant; it must embrace sentiments. Husserl goes beyond Kant in the sense that there can be joy that is born from "a value of beauty" activated by being in front of qualitative content like ideas, in particular, the idea of a human being individually considered; in this case the I becomes a pure source of value. Here, there is a sort of interior call toward an absolute duty that arises on the basis of love. This call is delineated within the depths of each person and must be responded to through the taking on of a rational position. The idea of a community of love is concomitant with the ideal of a "rational" humanity, that is, a humanity that is aware of its own ethical task.

Because the spiritual life is the distinguishing element of humanity, all universal investigation re-enters into that territory that can be defined as properly belonging to the sciences of the spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*), which when analyzed in their formal structure, constitute an apriori. Husserl asks whether, beyond such an apriori, there is another: "At this point, one could ask only the metaphysical question".[72] Such a question articulates itself with reference to the problem of sense of the world linked to its final end; here he returns to the theme of teleology.

A radical objection arises: "Could there not be a world, could there perchance be a world, without a truth in itself?"[73] The response to such an objection is given within the ethical domain. Every human being is subject to an absolute duty that is connected to valuing, even if the realization of such a duty does not always find an adequate correspondence in the world. Here, there is the Kantian echo of the auspicious correspondence between virtue and happiness. There may even be failures because one does not succeed in obtaining that which one is pursuing. Despite efforts and commitment, "life in its totality assumes the task of finding its completion in the good in an absolute fashion".[74] All this happens because the world is not left to itself, to its destiny, one has a glimpse into it—a providential project. "There is no blind fate; God 'regulates' the world. The world 'aspires to' absolute paths, to values; God prepares in the heart of human beings the way to such paths. Humans could realize a divine world in the freedom that one finds in the world…"[75] Because God regulates the world, it is possible to justify the presence of ends and the human freedom to realize them, but the divine world, realized in liberty, cannot only be the fruit of human action; human freedom needs divine support, namely, grace. "Freely and most properly with divine grace, humans must be motivated to strive toward that scope with the

highest awareness and strength of will".[76] Ethics refers back to metaphysics, but in order understand deeply the sense or meaning of the world they both need religion.

Ulrich Melle, who examines the role of love in Husserl's ethical writings, maintains that, "The irrational supposition of love and destiny can be reconciled for Husserl only by the rational faith in the order of a divine world".[77] He cites a passage from Ms. A V 21: "I can be happy only if in every pain, in every unfortunate situation, in the irrationality of the surrounding world, I believe God exists, that this world is the world of God and that I remain faithful with all my strength of my soul to absolute duty; and this is an absolute willing. This is why I have to believe absolutely that He exists; faith is the absolute highest exigency".[78] As we shall see, however, this faith is not only a "rational" faith, as suggested by Melle; rather, the motivation for ethical love finds its ground in Jesus Christ.

NOTES

[1] One thinks of the three ideas: I, world, and God, as employed by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He does not refute this division, but proposes particular modes to approach these realities as demonstrated by the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*. See my essay, *Husserl interprete di Kant (Husserl as Interpreter of Kant)*, "Aquinas", 1-2, Rome, 2005, pp.135–164.

[2] *Ideas I*, p. 134.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] *Ideas I*, p. 145.

[8] *Ideas I*, p. 117.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Anselm of Aosta, *Proslogion*, in *Monologion and Proslogion.* Translated with Introduction and notes by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), p. 97.

[11] *Ideas I*, p. 117.

[12] *Proslogion*, p. 99.

[13] In 1990, a volume of "Archivio di Filosofia" (Padua: CEDAM) was dedicated to the ontological argument. It contained the proceedings of the congress organized by Marco Maria Olivetti. Notable were the two contributions offered by Paul Ricoeur and Giulio D'Onofrio. The unifying thread of their arguments is the impossibility of defining the argument as "deductive reasoning", which is a widely held argument made by other philosophers, including Etienne Gilson. (See his book *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin 1932[2]), Chapter II, "*L'être et sa nécessité*".) Paul Ricoeur's contribution, *Fides quaerens intellectum—Antécédents bibliques?* in *L'argomento ontologico,* "Archivio di Filosofia — Archives of Philosophy", n. 1–3, (Padua: CEDAM, 1990), pp. 19–42), seeks the Jewish roots of

Anselm's type of argument with the intent of showing that one finds oneself confronted with a way of arguing different from the Greek way. Anselm's insistence on the invocation is indicative of a peculiar path, because it is at the invocation of Moses that God gives to Himself the name "I am". God does not affirm His existence. Rather, the expression "I am" becomes the subject of a proposal: "Here is the way you will refer to me to the children of Israel, "I am sent me to you" (Ex. 3, 14). Ricoeur continues by saying that the Aristotelico-Thomistic interpretation is one possible interpretation that takes from the Jewish expression the concept of the existence of God. On the contrary, the ontological argument of Anselm does not extract being from the I am, but uses the second person in order to begin a dialogue with God similar to that of Moses. "Now, we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought" (*Proslogion*, p. 99). While Ricoeur works on the use of the verb to be and the theme of invocation, D'Onofrio maintains that the *argumentum* is not a "demonstration", but *unum argumentum* that expresses itself in the *quo maius cogitari nequi*, that is, a simple formulation of the mind, "the making explicit of a primordial intuition that is possible for any rationality operating in act". *Chi è l'insipiens? (Who is the insipiens?*) (Ibid., p. 103). And, examining the sources of dialectic to which Anselm aspires, he maintains that the contrast with the fool has a logical character, but it has a logic that reaches "the primal nature of the mind where the *res* signified by the *vox* "*quo maius cogitari nequit*" is awoken. (Ibid., p. 104) This argument indicates "the direct passage of one significance to another that is completely different from it but also follows without the necessity of mediation". (Ibid.) This represents the base that one could define as axiomatic, as is the case in geometry, for further deductive arguments for the nature of God.

Confirmation of this interpretation is also found in Edith Stein's "proofs" for the existence of God. Dealing with the arguments of medieval thinkers, she shows a particular resonance with Anselm's thought. She maintains that the argument is not really a proof because when one says that one cannot think God without being and that God is necessary, this is not the "conclusion" of reasoning, but this is only the "giving of a diverse form" to originary thought. What does Stein intend by "originary thought"? We understand this when in a few lines after her question she observes that whatever expression about God, whatever determination, including the one where both essence and being coincide in God, is insufficient. We truly reach God "owing to the fact that our intellect aims beyond everything finite — and is induced by the finite itself to aim beyond it. Our intellect aims at something which comprises in itself everything finite without exhausting itself in it". (*Finite and Eternal Being*, Translated by Kurt F. Reinhardt (Washington, D. C.: ICS Publications, 2002), p. 110). The expression "aims" demonstrates the spontaneous openness to something superior that can never be reached in one's earthly existence, its presence, in its core, that is, in the most profound part of the human being, as she writes in her other works, where the tension between finitude and infinity manifests itself. She observes: "This paradox of the human intellect — its being distended between finitude and infinity — seems to account for the peculiar fate of the ontological proof of God's existence: Its defenders and its adversaries return again and again in the history of Christian theology and philosophy". (Ibid.). The tension indicated by Stein perhaps constitutes the most significant aspect of the structure of human existence; this is the case even when one examines the question of atheism, as we shall see later. Stein and D'Onofrio seek the origin and ultimate justification of God in an openness toward transcendence, namely, that of the human spirit.

[14] *Ideas I*, p. 117.

[15] See *Möglichkeit der Verschmelzung von Monaden. Möglichkeit einer (göttlichen) Übermonade (The Possibility of a Fusion of Monads. The Possibility of a (godly) Super-Monad)* in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität II, Husserliana* vol. XIV, herausgegeben von Iso Kern (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), Appendix XLI, pp. 300–302 (hereafter *Intersubjek-*

tivität II). I shall refer to this in what follows when I speak of creation of the world and nature by God.

[16] Anselm of Aosta, *Proslogion*, p. 100.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See Gilson's Chapters three and four dedicated to the "Existence of God" in *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, cit.

[20] E. Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 109.

[21] E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*. Translated by Josephine Koeppel OCD (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002).

[22] *Ideas I*, p. 134.

[23] The term empathy is now used in psychology in a way different than that of classic phenomenology, that is, the former tries to bring one person into the psyche of the other through sympathy and disposition. This does not coincide with empathy, understood as the recognition of the other, which can be defined as "neutral"; empathy in the phenomenological sense is accompanied by certain lived experiences of acceptance or refusal. Understanding the joy of the other, says Stein, does not simply mean sharing the other's joy. Hence, the term *entropatia* instead of *empatia* is sometimes used in Italian to distinguish the phenomenological from the psychological meaning of the term.

[24] *Intersubjektiviät II*, p. 8.

[25] *Intersubjektiviät I*, p. 185.

[26] *Intersubjektiviät II*, Appendix LIII, pp. 441–442.

[27] *Intersubjektiviät I*, p. 190.

[28] Ibid., p. 8.

[29] "In my non-primordial experience I feel, as it were, led by a primordial one not experienced by me but still there, manifesting itself in my non-primordial experience. Thus empathy is a kind of act of perceiving [*eine Art erfahrender Akte*] *sui generis*". Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*. Translated by Waltraut Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS, 1989), p. 11.

[30] *Intersubjektiviät I*, p. 9.

[31] Ibid., *Monadologie* (1908), Appendix III, p. 5.

[32] *Intersubjektivität II, Die Monade in ihrer Allgemeinstruktur (June 1921)*, Appendix IV, p. 50.

[33] Ibid., p. 53.

[34] E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, p. 132.

[35] *Intersubjektivität II*, p. 263.

[36] Ibid., p. 265.

[37] Ibid., p. 266.

[38] Ibid., Appendix XLI, pp. 300–302.

[39] Ibid., p. 302.

[40] Concerning Husserl's position with respect to pantheism and theism, there are many contrasting interpretations. Husserl's own collaborators dealt with these positions. Ludwig Landgrebe maintains a pantheistic reading in his work, *Phänomenologie und Metaphysik (Phenomenology and Metaphysics)* (Hamburg 1949). Stephan Strasser holds that the notion of God for Husserl refers back to God's transcendence (*Das Gottesproblem in der Spätphilosophie Edmund Husserls* in "Philosophisches Jahrbuch", n. 67, 1958). Xavier Tillette upholds the importance of Husserl's position for the renewal of theology *(Breve introduzione alla fenomenologia di Husserl (Brief Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology)*, ed. Enrico Garulli (Lanciano 1983). For a more ample discussion on the argument refer to my *Husserl—Sul problema di Dio* cited above and my contribution, "*Il teismo nella fenomenologia: Edmund Husserl e Edith Stein a confronto*" in *Pensare Dio a Gerusalemme—Filosofia e monoteismi a confronto (Theism in*

Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein) in *Thinking God in Jerusalem: Philosophy Confronting Monotheism*, ed. Angela Ales Bello (Rome: PUL-Mursia, 2000).

41 E. Husserl, *Monadologie, Intersubjektivität III*, Appendix XLVI, pp. 608–610.

42 Ibid., p. 608.

43 The reference to Dilthey in Husserl's essay, *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, and the discussions of both Dilthey and Husserl in Italian translation, which form the Appendix (pp. 173–185) of Bianca Maria d'Ippolito's book, *Il sogno del filosofo—Su Dilthey e Husserl (The Philosopher's Dream: Dilthey and Husserl)* (Naples: Morano, 1987), demonstrate, on one hand, Husserl's attention to the relation between philosophy and life and his esteem for Dilthey's antipositivist line as evidenced by the concomitant roles of the human and natural sciences. On the other hand, there is also a contrast in terms of the meanings of philosophy. Husserl aspired to a certain rigor, which drew him closer to the classical tradition in the history of philosophy and which could be called *philosophia perennis*. Dilthey, on the contrary, had a historicist vision of philosophical thought linked to the historical moment in which it was being elaborated.

44 *Intersubjektivität III*, p. 609.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p. 610.

48 Heraclitus, Fragment B 18 from H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokraticher*, Berlin 1951–1952.

49 *Intersubjektivität III*, p. 610.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, p. 147.

53 *Ideas II*, p. 160.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., p.161.

58 *Intersubjektivität III*, p. 386.

59 See Husserl's *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte*, in Husserliana XXIX, n. 32.

60 Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic.* Translated by Dorion Cairns (The Hauge: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).

61 Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil (Experience and Judgment)* (Hamburg: Classen Verlag, 1948).

62 Edmund Husserl, *Analyses concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Trascendental Logic.* Translated by Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).

63 *Intersubjektivität III, Teleologie. Die Implikation des Eidos transzendentale Intersubjektivität im Eidos transzendentales Ich* (November 1921), n. 22.

64 Ibid., p. 379.

65 Ibid., p. 381.

66 Ibid., p. 385.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 E. Husserl, *Versuch einer Scheidung der Stadien auf dem Weg zu einer Wissenschaft von der transzendentalen Subjektivität (An Attempt at Distinguishing the Stages on the Way to a Science of Transcendental Subjectivity)* in *Erste Philosophie 1923/24*, vol. II, Husserliana VII, herausgegeben von R. Boehm (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 251–58.

70 Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 256.

[71] E. Husserl, Ms. F I 40, p. 131b, cited by Ullrich Melle, *Husserls personalistische Ethik (Husserl's Personalist Ethics)* in *Fenomenologia della ragione pratica—L'etica di Edmund Husserl (Phenomenology of the Pratical Reason — Edmund Husserl's Ethics)*, eds. Beatrice Centi and Gianna Gigliotti (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2004), p. 351.
[72] E. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 285.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] E. Husserl, Ms. Trans. A V 21, *Ethisches Leben, Theologie, Wissenschaft (Ethical Life, Theology, Science)*, 1924, p. 16.
[78] U. Melle, *Husserls personalistische Ethik*, p. 353.

PART II
BELIEVING IN GOD

CHAPTER 1

THE HUSSERLIAN APPROACH TO RELIGION

I. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Husserl does not explicitly take up the relation between philosophy and religion, at least not in the texts that I could consult, but he is aware of a religious dimension as testified by numerous observations in his writings; his existential experiences also demonstrate a concern for the religious. Before turning to such experiences, let us examine some texts, which were already cited in the first part of this work dedicated to the philosophical question of God. These texts contain references useful for understanding Husserl's views on religious experience.

The discussion above attempted to establish a link between the thought of Anselm of Aosta and Husserl. I underlined that the privileged point of departure for Husserl was interiority. In fact, consciousness in its infinite flow registers, as one reads in the annotation to Section 51 of *Ideas I*, "... modes in which transcendencies are made known other than the constituting of physical realities as unities of harmonious appearances".[1] Among these modes Husserl individuates various "intuitional manifestations" that theoretical thought "follows". It seems, then, that theoretical thought adapts to these intuitional manifestations; it draws from this intuitive order and reflects upon it, especially because it has its own peculiar consistency. In Section 58, already cited above, there is an explicit reference to religious consciousness: "Whatever we are able to pass over, from the point of view of religious consciousness, is able, as a rationally grounding motive, to lead to the same principle", that is, to the ultimate foundation, understood as the "divine" being external to the world and to absolute consciousness; religious consciousness leads to such a foundation "as a rationally grounding motive".[2] This expression could be seen as obscure if one does not keep in mind what Husserl writes about it in the first part of the book, here cited, which deals with the "phenomenology of reason". According to Husserl, that which manifests itself in itself gives itself, posits itself, so to speak, in its "bodily" actuality, employing an English expression that translates the German "*leibhaft;*" this is to be understood as that which shows itself in a living way, authentically without mediation. When this happens the thing that manifests itself is one with that manifesting, "it is one with it in a peculiar manner: it is '*motivated*'

A-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), Analecta Husserliana XCVIII, 65–79.
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by the 'appearing' and, again, not just in some obscure way but as 'rationally motivated'. That is to say, position has its *original legitimizing basis* rooted in originary givenness".[3] Here, the term "rational" has the sense of something that is given in itself in an unequivocal way and, therefore, in an evident way. This is why "rational", "evident" and "originary" are substantially equivalent.

In Section 58, which refers to the transcendence of God, Husserl maintains that religious consciousness is founded on a rationally grounded motive; here he wishes to affirm evidence that does not require mediation. Consciousness is immediately aware of the fact that there is a transcendent, absolute being; this is inscribed in consciousness itself. Consciousness knows this and this particular consciousness is religious insofar as the awareness is an awareness of the presence of God, which is simultaneously not reducible to consciousness itself. God's self-presenting as "Other" is based on the recognition of His presence-absence.

We find this in Augustine and Anselm, and I cite these two Christian philosophers directly in reference to their way of understanding the relation between religious experience and theoretical reflection. I do this because the latter, that is, theoretical reflection, seems to rely on the former, the religious experience, and presents a sort of rational validation, but not as an absolute *primum.* Likewise, this appears in Husserl in the above-cited words when he maintains that theoretical thought must "adapt itself" to the announcement, understood in an intuitive way, of a unitary power of the teleological principle, following it rationally in order to make it intelligible.

A few observations can be made here. First, religious experience gives itself in an immediate and intuitive way. Second, it is relative to something "potent" and "unifying". Third, theoretical reflection follows and makes explicit the content of such an experience. Regarding this third point, one can affirm, in fact, that believing in God precedes thinking God; this is true even if Husserl, being a philosopher, tries to establish more of a parallel between religion and philosophy than a subordination, especially when he maintains that these concern different modes of the infinite flow of consciousness. But, he also affirms that theoretical thought "recognizes" the value of such experience, thereby establishing a correlation. Concerning the second point, there is an attempt to give a certain connotation to the absolute principle, and particularly important is Husserl's definition regarding a "unitary" and "potent" principle. As we shall see, this allows for an examination of religious experience as such, beyond the ties with positive religion, which for Husserl is indubitably the religion of the Christian tradition. Nonetheless, this is useful for tracing the essential significance of the experience that is at the foundation of structures that he assumes are historical. Concerning the first

point, religious consciousness is a particular specification of consciousness itself. It is not optional; rather, it is constitutive. The above observations are important for the analyses that follow.

II. A "MYSTICAL" WAY?

In the critical literature on Husserl very few commentators, as noted above, have examined the question of God. Notable among these is James Hart. His edited volume, *Essay in Phenomenological Theology*, was published in 1986,[4] one year after my *Husserl—Sul problema di Dio* (*Husserl—On the Problem of God*). I only discovered this author after my own work was published and his research very much relates to my own, not only in regard to that which I wrote in 1985 but also in relation to my successive writing, which elaborates further Husserl's analyses regarding the argument developed here in this book.

Hart maintains that the notion of God, to use a broad term, is present in one's interiority and it is understood consciously. The I appropriates it, moving from exteriority, but living it in itself. He distinguishes two aspects that were previously noted by me with respect to this notion, namely, the *quoad nos* and the *in se*. I prefer to say "*in itself*", where the *itself* is God Himself, who is present in consciousness but who also transcends it. According to Husserl, if the world is transcendent with respect to the human being, so much more is God!

As noted above, immanence and transcendence are absolutely correlative moments that do not exclude one another. The finite human being would never know God if he or she did not have a trace of God's presence. This same finitude, however, impedes thinking that the notion of God can exhaust the reality of God. All this can be valuable in an eventual discussion of atheism, but for now another significant aspect must be underlined that is related to the question of the presence of God in the soul. Hart affirms that because of the influence of Plotinus and Augustine, Husserl's position is the same as that found in Western mysticism. "Here, the divine is the center of all conscious centers, the soul of souls, and at the same time the horizon of all utopian projects and those focused on happiness".[5] Hart's observation, which intends to establish an affinity of perspectives rather than affirm that Husserl is speaking about a mystical dimension, leads to a questioning about Husserl's position on mysticism and whether or not Husserl ever made references to it.

My studies of those exponents of Husserl's school of thought have led me to a particularly significant text. At this point, a certain premise is necessary. Edith Stein is well known as one of Husserl's disciples, but she became

interested in mysticism after her departure from Husserl.[6] Another less known disciple, Gerda Walther, wrote in 1923 a book entitled *Phenomenology of the Mystical*,[7] which naturally came to her teacher's attention. She received a lengthy reply to her letter dated May 18, 1920; here one could indeed speak of a small essay. The text is some seven pages long; it is a draft, as defined by Husserl, dedicated to a deeper exploration of the relation between the passivity and activity of consciousness, and the gradual passage from the actuality of consciousness to non-actuality, which preserves and maintains that which is known. Furthermore, Husserl establishes a graduated scale that moves from that which is perceived and apperceived passively and the capacity to judge and will actively. In this context, it is a sort of preamble to the general theme of the process of human cognition; a few final conclusions are drawn that allude to an excavation of the depths of human interiority. On one hand, Husserl observes that one notices a typicality of experience, a *habitus* that is similar in every subject in a structural sense. The subject possesses in every case its own particular world with its own particular depths. On the other hand, he hypothesizes a fullness of possible experiences that open new paths and perspectives, establishing a double movement of descent into "deep profundity" and an ascent from that which is deep, "...that moves in deep profundity, but which comes from the profoundest profundity".[8]

One could rightly ask if this has anything to do with mystical experience. Gerda Walther, however, in her introduction to the new 1956 edition of the *Phenomenology of the Mystical* recalls Husserl's opinion of her work and on mysticism in general, claiming that mysticism, according to Husserl, concerns "ideal possibilities" and that the sole real thing is the experience of the mystical; one cannot, however, establish the reality of the "object" of which one had an experience. Husserl, therefore, could not discuss the subjective aspect of mystical experience, but he doubts that one really places oneself in relation with a divinity.

Whereas the experience of the world is a certain experience as is the experience of God that is grasped through the ways of religion and understood by the way of philosophy, one can doubt the validity of the contact with the divine that comes about in mystical union.

On the contrary, the two phenomenologists Gerda Walther and Edith Stein, and one could even here add Hedwig Conrad Martius,[9] who encouraged Walther to republish her analyses of mysticism, are convinced of the objective validity of this type of experience and its specificity in relation to other experiences and knowledge. The first two affirm that they are not describing their own mystical experiences; rather, the witnessing of mystics attracts them. They are first attracted by Carmelite mysticism and, above all, by Teresa of

Avila, who was considered by both as a primary source. Meister Eckhart also attracts them. Martin Buber proves interesting for Walther as does Saint John of the Cross for Stein.

Their intention is to analyze the writings of the mystics in order to understand the subjective and objective sides of this particular type of vision. Whoever claims to have had such an experience describes it as interpersonal. It is necessary to understand the locus and the modalities of the experience. The analyses of interiority demonstrate that this is not a projection on the part of the human subject; rather, it is an extraordinary "invasion" of its personal territory by a "power" that overcomes it. Even if one is not sure about this extraordinary experience, as Husserl maintained and as I have shown above, there must be streams of lived experience, different from those that consent one to know the physical world and that characterize the religious dimension. One must individuate, then, such streams and see them at work in order that an absolute Alterity, which in some measure dwells in human beings, can break in with all of its fullness. Husserl does not exclude such a possibility, even if he is not disposed to having it re-enter his own analyses. Nonetheless he treats them seriously because the "possibility" is important for phenomenology insofar as it may reveal an essential structure, even if it is not concretely delineated. He seems to distinguish, then, the mystic from "mysticism", a term that he employs sometimes to mean something that presents itself in a vague manner, that is, only presupposed and not validly grounded.

III. CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY

When Husserl speaks about God he seems to refer to that notion received in and elaborated by Western culture. In Husserl's age, unlike today, there was not as much awareness of the plurality of religions or approaches to the divine. Certainly, from a philosophical perspective the notion of the divine goes beyond all religious specifications, but when one enters the phenomenological territory of religion it is necessary to give an account of the particular notion of divinity that distinguishes the various religions. It will be shown that Husserl deals with this argument by referring to cultural anthropology; this was inspired by his reading of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. His position opened up an interesting area of investigation relevant for a phenomenology of the sacred and the religious. Before taking up this investigation it would be opportune to get a deeper sense of Husserl's personal religiosity by digging into his religious experience. In order to do this one must examine his spiritual

biography, which runs parallel to his intellectual biography and which was largely already sketched in broad strokes.

Husserl's Conversion

The encounter with Christ for human beings is a fact that is verified through an occasion, an historical contingency. This can be linked to a familiar environment or even a particular event in the course of one's own life, for example, a meeting with a person, the reading of a book. One could have been educated in a Christian family and could have also been distanced from God. One could also have been raised in a different religion and later become attracted to Christ, usually always through some concrete witness. This happened to Husserl. He was born in 1859 at Prossnitz in Moravia. He was of a Jewish family, which was largely indifferent to religion. In 1886, at the age of 27, he was baptized in the Lutheran Church in predominantly Catholic Vienna. The young scholar, who graduated from Berlin in mathematics with Weierstrasse, discovered philosophy listening to the lectures of Brentano at Vienna. Here, while consolidating his philosophical vocation, he found himself attracted to Christ after reading the New Testament in 1882.

In the case of conversions like this it is clear that the call, having a purely religious significance and, therefore, a specific significance, is made to a person that seeks the truth, even under an intellectual profile. One could also say that under such a prevalent profile one seeks possibly to obscure complex exigencies that must be satisfied. One thinks of the conversion of Saint Augustine that can be defined as "philosophico-religious", which came about after hearing the learned preaching of Saint Ambrose at Milan, or Edith Stein, who was defined by her reading of the autobiography of Saint Teresa of Avila. In what way does Christ not only satisfy a demand of faith but also pay back the profound desire to search intellectually for truth? Also, given the fact that Christ's legacy became divided in modern Europe with diverse churches, why choose to follow Him in one church rather than in another?

These questions are asked each time one finds oneself facing a conversion to Christianity in the modern and contemporary world in Western culture.

In Husserl's case, one can attempt to respond to the abovementioned questions by examining his writings, his testimonials, always with great caution. One must also keep in mind that one has the great advantage of reading often very private texts where one can suppose that sincerity is discounted. If one feels embarrassed about invading such a personal territory, namely, that presented in his manuscripts, which were not always destined by him to be published, one is repaid at the other end by the genuine content of thought expressed in them.

In order to deal with the first question concerning the passage from a religious context to another, it is important to distinguish Husserl's interest in Christianity, examining it under two corresponding aspects. On one side, there is the examination conducted from the aspect of the history of religion. On the other side, there is the meditation on Christ and the validity of His message from the ethico-religious aspect.

Christianity in the History of Religion

Regarding the first aspect, that which probably concerned the young philosopher and which was explicitly declared in some of his manuscripts from 1930s was the universalism of Christianity vis-à-vis other religions. When he refers to universalism he does so by establishing a connection between the religious moment and the philosophical one.

Significant in this regard is the excursus present in Ms. A VII 9 of 1933, entitled *Horizon*. After observing that philosophy strives toward a universal consciousness and that the philosophical community is the bearer of a universal interest, Husserl asks if there is some other "intention" that aims at universality. He responds by observing that this happens when a universal religion in which there is one God manifests itself in humanity or in a particular people. This God is held to be the creator of the world and is known through revelation. He does not refer to a divinity linked to an ethnic group, but to all of humanity, and this monotheistic expression of religion, beyond the empirical configurations it can assume, seems to represent an overcoming of other types of religions, including polytheistic ones that are largely connected at certain moments and in particular aspects to single human groups.

The proposed reflections are carried out from a viewpoint that is defined as "substantial" insofar as in reality religious experience is always linked for every human being to the surrounding cultural milieu. This is why it is necessary to distinguish, for example, ancient Judaism from modern Judaism and Christianity, which are present in the European historical context; they, therefore, constitute an example of the monotheistic religions mentioned above.

In Ms. E III 7 of 1934, *The Destiny of the Human Being, Religion and Science*, Husserl deals with the same argument, reversing the relation between philosophy and religion. In fact, he moves from the significance of various religious experiences in order to trace the way in which philosophy is born, which characterizes Western civilization.

Through an historical analysis he makes evident right from the start the existence of religions strongly linked to various ethnic groups. He then

discusses an encounter with these and the progressive reciprocal assimilation of diverse elements, which is due to the battles that ensue between peoples and to the process of colonization that was particularly carried out by the Greeks. The assumption of a critical stance regarding religion is stimulated by the confrontation with other religions and by the demand of establishing univocal, written laws, separating, therefore, the political from the religious. This leads to an overcoming of particular perspectives and to the birth of rational inquiry that tends to the universal. *Theory* is configured in such a manner; it is proper to mathematics and philosophy.

Universality, however, is not only characterized by rational research; as already indicated in Ms. A VII 9, it is present in Christianity. On the religious plane, Christianity realizes the overcoming of polytheistic positions, expressions of ethnic diversity, in favor of a religion without confines and spatio-temporal limits. For Husserl, the fundamental characteristic of Western civilization is the aspiration to universality within the confluence of religion and philosophy.

What can be deduced, then, from a similar interpretation concerning Husserl's text on the passage from Judaism to Christianity? Probably, and this is only a supposition, the person who considers philosophical research as a search within a universal dimension and who is not satisfied with partial responses, this person maintains that he or she can realize better his or her aspiration when he or she finds himself or herself facing a Revelation, which is not only geared toward a particular people, but toward all of humanity. This appears in the message of Christ and constitutes an amplification of Judaism linked solely to an ethnic dimension.

The same motivation could have been the ground for the conversion of other intellectuals, for example, Edith Stein to Christianity. It has already been noted that Husserl distinguishes ancient Judaism from its present form in the modern Western world. In fact, these conversions take place in a context in which Western culture has a universal Greco-Christian imprint that simultaneously does not underestimate the value of its Jewish roots. In the West, one speaks of a religious context that is prevalently Judaeo-Christian. The intellectual world in which both Husserl and Stein move is not a world exclusively influenced by Judaism. They do not live in a defined community. On the contrary, they attend universities and cultural circles in which there is a union between Greek philosophy and the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The confrontation with his student Edith Stein leads us to the second aspect of the question asked above. Why does Husserl choose Lutheran Christianity and Stein Roman Catholicism?

In the case of Husserl, the response can be found in a series of articles that he wrote for the Japanese journal *Kaizo*. In particular, the article dedicated to the *Formal Types of Culture in the Development of Humanity* from 1922–23 deals with, among other things, the question of the role of religion in culture, ethics and human freedom. A particularly important point emerges that enables us to understand Husserl's distance from Judaism. Husserl observes that a hierarchically-organized culture, like the Babylonian or Jewish cultures, refers to a non-free religious disposition.[10] He criticizes the constraints present in these cultures and exalts personal freedom as the source of freedom of choice. This does not mean that Husserl lapses into relativism. In fact, Husserlian ethics, as we shall see, is strongly linked to universal norms and values, but these must be freely chosen and appropriated. For Husserl, it seems that Christianity offers this possibility, especially in the message of Christ.

The message of Jesus has been interpreted in diverse ways throughout history. In the middle ages, there is an important encounter between Greek thought and Christian doctrine; a dogmatic theology is elaborated, to which a hierarchically-oriented society corresponds. The later Protestant reform brought Christianity back to its origins, rediscovering the freedom present in the message of Christ and underlining the freedom of individual conscience.

From these brief observations Husserl's position becomes evidently clear. He shares the Lutheran conviction regarding the middles ages and the Church of Rome—a completely negative view because he sees it constraining human freedom insofar as it elaborates only one theology.[11] Even if Husserl is not implicated in the question that is raised in the French milieu regarding the role of philosophy in the middle ages—a controversy that gave birth to a theoretical elaboration of a Christian philosophy in the works of Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain—he seems to line up on the side of those whom, like Emile Brehier, negate the presence of a Christian philosophy in the middle ages that is distinguishable from theology. If, on one hand, Husserl validly understands the relation between reason and faith in the Middle Ages and, on the other hand, he maintains that their encounter created only a theology of a confessional type, which, as he will underline in other manuscripts, has nothing to do with an autonomous philosophy, medieval thought is, therefore, only theological and not philosophical.[12]

This argument is well connected to Husserl's affirmation that he chose to do philosophy in an a-theistic way. This term is not employed in the contemporary sense; rather, it refers to a way of researching truth that separates itself from the dimension of faith: "...a knowing that does not know any revelation or that does not recognize it as an already given fact (even to transform it later in a cognitive manner) is a-theistic".[13] Husserl adds that he knowingly

supports the paradox according to which even "…if such knowledge should lead to God, this way would be an atheistic way". This is what Edith Stein calls pure philosophy, distinguishing it from Christian philosophy; this way is not to be identified with theology, but with the inspiration and the opening of horizons that faith enacts in the mind of the Christian philosopher.[14] She understands both Husserl and medieval philosophy in this light. The medieval philosophers, on her view, are not only theologians, as demonstrated by Thomas, whose philosophical research is, of course, woven with faith, but not completely subject to it. In fact, his philosophy can be employed to learn that which can be understood. This is developed in her essay, "The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas", in which she compares and contrasts the views of both Husserl and Thomas.[15]

Husserl sides with those who separate and distinguish between faith and reason, accepting both as two diverse orders of knowledge. But, their point of encounter, notwithstanding the theoretical premises recalled up until now, manifests itself, on his view, in ethics. This is so because if it is possible to describe ethics in a "rational" way, the culmination of moral life is given in deep accord with the religious, which offers further avenues of research. The theme of liberty constitutes the bridge between the two dimensions. Christ truly liberates those whom adhere to Him.

Christ as the Source of Ethical Love

Let us begin with the observation concerning Husserl's meditation on the figure of Christ, moving from the analysis of texts where Husserl's position becomes explicit. If Christ's presence is actual but mediated through Christianity's doctrine, we now confront the hard core of Christianity itself that is linked to the teaching of Christ. We do this under the profile of love, but a love that has profound reflections in the domain of human behavior and, therefore, in that original synthesis of ethics and love. Husserl refers to *ethical love.*

The treatment contained in text number 9, published in the second volume of *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*,[16] starts with love, understood as linking human beings. Husserl observes that the connection of love is characterized by a deep connection with the other constituted by a "living spiritualized corporeity". In order to understand this expression it is necessary to refer to the anthropology delineated by Husserl in his analyses. In particular, one must refer to those contained in the second volume of the *Ideas*, which we commented upon earlier.

As already indicated, the human being is formed by a psycho-physical core whose corporeity is manifested as a living corporeity. There is also a spirituality, understood as the seat of intellectual and valuing acts and, therefore, it is the seat of ethical choices.

This dimension is not proposed as a locus of cold, rational choice. The rationality that always accompanies ethical choices, however, does not separate itself from the sphere of affects and sentiments and, above all, from the two fundamental feelings of love and hate. Also, the ethical dimension needs strong support from the religious sphere. Husserl evokes this when he treats ethical love, which he proposes as the ethical way to God. This is not only about attraction, an impulse. Even if this is present, authentic love manifests itself in a reciprocal assumption of responsibility and is characterized by the desire to share in the life of the beloved. This is why one can maintain that those who love do not live one beside the other; rather, one lives in the other, and not only when they carry out communal actions but also when they seem autonomous in their activities. Because of the strict connection between love and responsibility one can note, as does Ulrich Melle, that the feeling itself assumes here the character of willing or choosing certain values that become morally potent, and this is why one can speak of an "absolute duty".[17]

All of this can remain purely on the human level in which chosen affinities and blood relations can play an important role. There exists, however, a special, particular condition that overcomes such a disposition. This consists in being bound in such a way that one takes on the sin and guilt of the other. Here, the ethical dimension takes on a religious connotation on which Husserl pauses in order to indicate that in the love of Christ one finds the prototypical ethical love. The purely human links, namely, those that are established between parents and children or between friends, do not have such a characteristic. Only by imitating Christ can one reach love in its highest expression, understood as love for one's enemy. This is love *par excellence*, and it is distinguished from the purely human community of love. If it is truly the ground of a community of love, this love expands to comprise all of humanity; with this we cannot establish a personal link, understood as a direct link, even if we enter into relation with all human beings in order to make them open to themselves so as to disclose them to ourselves. There are no limits: I will the good of all others without limitation.

These reflections encapsulate all the teachings contained in the Gospel, culminating in the love for the sinner or for the enemy, as mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew (5, 43–48). Ethical love, which the Christian must live in the imitation of Christ, overcomes the friend-enemy dichotomy, ethnic links,

spontaneous affinities or ideological choices; it expands to comprise all of humanity.

Again, we are pushed to the question of universalism. Thanks to the teachings of Christ, the Christian religion overcomes every barrier that is presented to the human being.

The text examined excavates inside the message of Christ and his prophetic actions, but it is not the only text that analyzes the link between love and the good as an ethical ideal linked to Christ. Another text, *Religious Actions of Legends and Poetic Figures*,[18] deals with many questions that arise from an examination of the Gospels. Here, the centrality of the figure of Christ as the historical realization of an ethical ideal becomes prominent. Here, we have the realization of the good in the purest dimension of love.

Admitting that the Gospels can be understood as legends, a concession made by Husserl on the hypothetical level with regard to those who maintain this position, he declares that Christ defines himself with such great power that he influences deeply the behavior of the believer. The believer is pushed by the ethical ideal and sees the concretion of such an ideal in an historical figure, whose existence is not only that of a Jew but also that of God. Jewish monotheism prolongs itself, as already indicated by Psalmists like David and the prophets and their discussion of Father-Son and, therefore, God-Man.

Husserl takes on a position, personally declaring that he shares a faith in Christ as the prototypical idea of the God-Man. If this figure entirely fulfills religious experience under the aspect of an intuitive disposition, philosophical comportment, which characterizes Husserlian reflection, seizes that which has happened above and leads him to analyze religion according to a double meaning. First, there is an immediate adhesion and, second, there is a "metaphysics of religion", understood as a normative science, which sets rules for the symbolic that is intuitively mythical. Religion, ethics and metaphysics find in this way their connection within the sphere of universality in which Husserl remains firmly anchored.

IV. THEOLOGY AND FAITH

In the above-cited transcribed manuscript A V 21, Husserl decisively deals with the question of the relation between *Ethical Life, Theology and Science*, and he first begins to examine the distinction that arises within a consolidated tradition, namely, the relation between a purely scientific and a purely rational theology founded upon the natural light of the intellect that tackles the problem of God in a philosophical way, and a theology that arises from "non-humanly rational" sources, namely, those offered by the supernatural

light of revelation. From a cognitive perspective, this distinction refers to the foundation of judgments, to their qualities. It has already been said that for Husserl philosophy follows a specific methodology, which is affirmed in the manuscript we are examining. It presents itself as science, that is, as radical knowledge that finds its first formulations in the thought of Plato, Aristotle, followed by the Stoics, and the anti-Scholasticism of modernity, which has as its subject of investigation the world and its beings, employing the instruments of experience and evidence.

For Husserl, theology, properly understood in Thomas Aquinas' sense as "*sacra doctrina*", is founded on supernatural light, and natural light penetrates it only insofar as the latter concords with the former, drawing from it its justifying force. In this sense, it is a science, but its sources are religious, coming from Christianity.

Reason in its pure use, according to Husserl, is the search for the meaning or sense of the "state of things", the mode in which reality presents itself; it is certainly unstable and can be doubted, but the human being seeks in an immediate or mediated way that which can make reality known in a very stable fashion. "Seeing" in the perceptual and intellectual senses at their very base give one the capacity to judge "how things are", as Husserl's famous motto reminds us; the term "thing" must be understood in the ample sense of a state of affairs.

Philosophy operates on the plane of human capacities to perceive, intuit intellectually, and carry out rational discourse, searching for the motivation behind the connections that can be established. In acts of judgment, such motivations are absent. Husserl does not miss the opportunity to value the contributions of rationalism and empiricism that are present in the philosophical tradition, ultimately attempting their reconciliation. Only phenomenology brings to completion the analysis of experience and the intellectual dimension. In the case of theology, which is founded on supernatural light, he maintains that it formulates judgments, but of a wholly different kind, without the motivations proper to philosophical inquiry.

The non-rational nature of the sources of theology, understood as "*sacra doctrina*", is, therefore, confirmed because of the presence of religious faith; it is founded on a tradition and is linked to a historical becoming. Here, one can suppose that Husserl is referring to Christianity. The force of every overcoming of doubt unchains it from tradition. Because it presents itself as indubitable, one can distinguish it from rational research; the affirmation of its non-rational nature is very strong. "This religious faith directly counters every consciousness of a rational foundation".[19] Its demand for an absolute definitiveness cannot be justified by perceptual and intellectual seeing; it

expresses judgments, but the quality of its judgments is commensurate with the fact that the negation of faith does not lead to falsity, but to sin. Falsity derives from sin and does not have its own theoretical autonomy. The true and the false substantially resolve themselves in good and evil.

In this radical position that distinguishes faith form reason the Lutheran religious experience of Husserl has a definitive influence. Moreover, he maintained just ten years before that religious experience had its own rationally grounded motivations, but the ground of these motivations within consciousness concerned religious experience insofar as it was conscious and grounded in a stream of consciousness. One could say that these concerned a natural or rational theology. Here, however, he is analyzing Revelation in a specific way, and he maintains that it delivers definitiveness like no knowledge obtained through human capacities could give. At certain moments, the supernatural seems to be understood as a-rationality or extra-rationality. Is this the obscure faith of the intellect that Edith Stein speaks about? The word of God that calls for the "outside" seems to impose itself with such force that the experience of conversion lived through by both philosophers leads them perhaps to underestimate that the belief in Revelation cannot be a purely non-rational fact. It is precisely to make rational this experience that Thomas posits his so-called proofs for the existence of God within his theological reflections of the *Summa theologiae*. Even Stein attempts a rational account of the knowledge offered by religious experience, for example, in her philosophical meditation on the angels.[20]

Husserl, in another section of manuscript A V 21 refers once again to believing (*glauben*) in God. This is necessary to justify what is non-rational in the world and he maintains that one can be happy only if he or she believes that God exists and that this world is God's world; this implies an absolute duty and willing, given that faith is the highest and most absolute demand. Here, the suspicion arises that we are dealing with a purely rational faith, different from religious faith, and that the two adjectives, rational and religious, are important for precisely connoting different acts of faith, according to the observations of Melle mentioned above.[21] But, what are the motivations that sustain a non-rational faith? One can ask whether rational faith is nothing other than the intellectual awareness of the demand of religious experience. The word "demand" insistently comes up again and again in this manuscript.[22]

NOTES

[1] *Ideas I*, p. 117.
[2] Ibid., p. 134.

[3] *Ideas I*, p. 328.

[4] J. Hart, "*A Précis of an Husserlian Philosophical Theology*" in *Essays in Phenomenological Theology* (eds.) S. W. Laycock and J.G. Hart (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986).

[5] Ibid., p. 142.

[6] Edith Stein's most significant texts on this argument are: *The Interior Castle* in *Finite and Eternal Being*. Translation by Kurt F. Reinhardt (Washington: ICS Publications, 2002) and *The Science of the Cross*.

[7] *Phänomenologie der Mystik*, Halle a.S., 1923.

[8] E. Husserl, *Entwurf eines Briefes als Antwort gedacht an Frl. Walther (Sketch for a letter to Miss. Walther)* Ms. trans. A V 21, p. 7.

[9] Belonged to the School of Phenomenology. Edith Stein's Godmother, biologist and philosopher, author of numerous books, she was a lecturer after WWII at the University of Munich. For more bio-bibliographical information as well as salient points concerning her work please refer to my essay: *Hedwig Conrad-Martius and the Phenomenology of Nature*, in *Phenomenology World-Wide. Foundations*, pp. 210–232.

[10] E. Husserl, *Formale Typen der Kultur in der Menschheitsentwicklung (Formal Types of Culture in the Development of Humanity)* (1922–23), I. *Stufe der religiöse Kultur (Levels of Religious Culture)* in *Aufsätze und Vorträge*, Husserliana vol. XXVII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989).

[11] Husserl maintains that the Protestant Reformation represents an authentic movement of liberation from medieval dogmatism (cf. *Kirche und christliche Wissenschaft* (1922–23) (*Church and Christian Science*), Appendix V of the above-cited volume, pp. 103–105).

[12] See point C of the essay *Formale Typen*, etc., especially the text dedicated to the *Die Entwicklung der philosophischen Kulturgestalt im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit (Development of the Cultural Philosophical Form in the Middle Ages and Modernity)*, pp. 89–93.

[13] E. Husserl, Ms. trans. A VII 9, *Horizont* (*Horizon*), 1933, p. 21.

[14] See *The Meaning and Possibility of a Christian Philosophy*, Section 4 of the *Introduction* to *Finite and Eternal Being*.

[15] E. Stein, *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des heiligen Thomas von Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenübersellung*, in Festschrift Edmunds Husserl zum 70. Geburtstag Ergänzungsband zum "Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung", (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1929), pp. 315–387. English translation: *Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison*, in E. Stein, *Knowledge and Faith*, translated by Walther Redmond (Washington, DC: ICS, 2000). For Stein's inquiry on religion, please see: A. Ales Bello, *Edith Stein: the State and Religious Commitment*, in *Phenomenology World-Wide.*

[16] *Intersubjektivität II*. Text Nr. 9: Section 5, *Die Liebe (The Love)*; Section 6, *Die ethische Liebe;* Section 7, *Liebe und Liebesgemeinschaft*, (1922), pp. 172–175.

[17] U. Melle, *Husserls personalistiche Ethik* (*Husserl's Personalistic Ethics*), in *Fenomenologia della ragion pratica (Phenomenology of Practical Reason)*, p. 349.

[18] *Die religiöse Wirkung von Legenden, dichterischen Gebilden* (*The Religious Effect of Legends, Poetical Figures*) (1922/23), Appendix IV of the essay *Formale Typen etc.*

[19] E. Husserl, Ms. trans. A V 21, *Ethisches Leben, Theologie, Wissenschaft (Ethical Life, Theology, Science)*, 1924, p. 4.

[20] See the analysis of the doctrine of the angels contained in *Finite and Eternal Being*, Chapter 8, Section 5.

[21] U. Melle, *Husserls personalistische Ethik*, p. 353.

[22] E. Husserl, Ms. A V 21, *Ethisches Leben, etc.*, p. 16.

CHAPTER 2

RELIGION AS THE OBJECT OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Even if religion is not a central theme in Husserl's work, his analyses allow us to deal deeply and broadly with the question of religious experience. On my view, profundity and breadth typify Husserl's research. There is profundity because he excavates human interiority in order to understand its roots, the sources of the human being's openness to divinity. Breadth is present because he examines the expressions and human configurations of religious experience. Husserl had already carried out such work when he indicated "where" one must trace the sources of religiosity present within the human being, which are known through the recording or registering of lived experience. This work had also begun when Husserl undertook questions in the wake of historical investigations and the cultural anthropology of religious phenomena, which were the public and collective expressions of the religious dimension.

It is possible to find in the private papers of Husserl a series of spontaneous reflections carried out in such a way that he does not feel the need to catalogue them under precise areas of research. This is the case of the texts on ethical love cited above in which one finds a response to the ethical question concerning the religious terrain; here, the authentic and profound meaning of the communal life diffuses itself through the love of Christ to comprise all of humanity.

The importance of the religious dimension for Husserl is also confirmed in other places where one finds clues about the meaning of religious experience. They can be seen, for example, in letters to Erich Przywara and Rudolf Otto.[1]

Otto and Przywara represent two schools within the study of religious phenomena. The former is connected to the historical manifestation of such phenomena; he also attempts to investigate religious consciousness and its correlates. The latter is interested in examining religious experience from philosophical and theological perspectives. With respect to these two figures, Husserl seems to suggest the necessity of reentering religious consciousness in order to analyze the sources of the phenomenon itself, to understand it in its proper structure and essence. In reality, these two thinkers had already oriented themselves on this path, and Husserl makes evident, in fact, their affinity

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with his method by showing various similarities. He shows, however, how the former lacks a proper phenomenological method, as Husserl understands it, whereas the latter seems to be orienting himself in a valid way.

That religious experience has a specific connotation is confirmed during a conversation with Eugen Fink on November 24, 1921, which was reported by Dorion Cairns.[2] Given that all sciences not "reduced" to the phenomenological terrain are considered "abstract", Husserl, by pointing out the meaning of the phenomenological attitude, proposes various examples drawn from knowledge of the physical world. "What is a table?" And, from the human world, "What is a human being?" From these questions he leads us back to an analysis of acts of perception, fantasy, memory, etc., which are at the base of knowledge about tables and humans; he concludes that the intentional structure of acts in the two cases is the same, but he also recognizes that in reality the ontic nucleus "human being" is more complicated than that of the table. At this point, the conversation moves to religious questions and this is not arbitrary because this concerns "ultimate questions". Husserl remembers that at the age of 13 or 14 he was deeply interested in the problem of the existence of God in a non-confessional way. In order to understand this we must not forget his conversion from Judaism to Christianity and his often-expressed desire[3] to go beyond confessional questions—a desire, however, that does not impede Husserl from personally taking on certain positions, as was already mentioned and as will be explained later.

Moreover, Husserl follows up his analysis by addressing the question concerning religious experience understood in terms of the historical expression of religions. He observes that there is a progressive movement from many gods to one God, who becomes always more "tenuous" and is conceived as "being outside" this world.[4] But, he maintains that the concepts "inside" and "outside" are always worldly concepts that are relative to a natural and naïve attitude and, therefore, are not phenomenological. Even God, understood as the principle of the good, is still essentially "of this world".[5] He affirms that only when one understands the nature of transcendental consciousness, then can one understand the transcendence of God. All religions, then, are naïve and unintelligible, but if they are grounded phenomenologically, one discovers their validity. He concludes that ethico-religious questions are, in the last analysis, questions concerning phenomenological constitution.[6]

The first approach, namely, that relative to the investigation of religious consciousness, represents an authentic revolution within philosophical studies of the religious phenomenon undertaken by Husserl and continued on his path by Max Scheler.[7] This is understood as an analysis of religious acts that reveals the deep meaning of such acts and declares their essential value,

their universality. The second gave rise to a rethinking of the meaning of "religions", research that demonstrates their centrality for understanding human cultural and social life. It is clear that it is now no longer possible, at least in the analyses that have largely felt the influence of phenomenology, not to take into account the necessary correlation between the two aspects. If one moves from human religious expressions, which were traditionally studied by history of religions, one recognizes the exigency of investigating the same religious phenomenon, the manifestations of which are described. If, however, such a phenomenon is studied as being deeply rooted within human interiority, one recognizes that it does not remain confined within it, but it expands and manifests itself in precise cultural forms. The direction in which Husserl always worked, from the ground up, as he used to say, serves to clarify the phenomena that present themselves. Many ramifications, however, arise explicitly or in a subterranean fashion from the investigations proposed by Husserl on religious experiences, even giving rise to new disciplines, including "the phenomenology of religion" and "the archeological phenomenology" of religious experience. I shall briefly deal with these developments in the pages that follow.

I. ANALYSIS OF THE RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON

What is Phenomenology of Religion?

The phenomenology of religion presents itself as a new discipline situated on the border between the history of religion and phenomenological philosophy. I consider Gerardus van der Leeuw as the founder of this type of research; his genius is evidenced in his work, *The Phenomenology of Religion.*[8] His work demonstrates an extraordinary and profitable balance between a knowledge of a vast continent of "religions", to borrow an expression from Ugo Bianchi,[9] and the individuation of a nucleus present in all of these, a common denominator that permits us to affirm that these are in fact religions. In order to reach this goal Van der Leeuw traces in phenomenology an efficient method, i.e., that proposed by Husserl, which moves from the "thing", that is, in this case, the religious phenomenon in its historical concretion, ultimately examining it for its essential characteristics. The last part of the abovementioned work, the *Epilogue*, dedicated explicitly to the method followed to obtain the said results,[10] is particularly significant. Here, the author lays out with great acuity the fundamental lines of the Husserlian method, applying it to the phenomenon of the religious and maintaining the paradoxical nature of

such a phenomenon. As a phenomenon, it is both obscure and clear, in need of being understood and, at the same time, it is relatively transparent such that it can be individuated.

One knows, then, what a phenomenon and what a religious phenomenon are, but one also does not know. This is why the research is necessary and even possible in the sense that it leads to convincing results insofar as they refer directly to all religious experiences. The terrain upon which this analysis is carried out is the human subject, who is characterized by this experience. He explores the terrain of human interiority as the fundamental terrain.

Not being a trained philosopher, and employing expressions and images that also reveal a poetic sensibility, van der Leeuw individuates the fundamental nucleus of human existence in its openness to religion, in that horizontal search that is the desire and the capacity on the part of humans to grow, produce and know. This is what he calls the search for *power* and the encounter with a Power, which fills one's waiting and invocation; it is the religious experience of all peoples and human beings, even that of the fool who affirms that God does not exist. The beautiful pages on atheism as a "religion of flight"[11] serve as an effective proof for the essential nature of religious experience for everyone. It is not something that one adds to different attitudes that the human being can assume like ethical, religious and aesthetic attitudes, etc.; rather, it constitutes him or her in the profundity of human existence.

The human being who seeks *power* finds it in Something which or Someone who, depending on the religions, one encounters along the way; this leads that person into strange territory. This Something or Someone is essentially foreign; it is not dependent on the person's desire or intellect because it is something that is evidently present. In every case, one truly feels this Something or Someone, even if the person does not want to see or accept it.

All this emerges not only with an analysis of historical religions linked to a precise idea of God or with an opening toward something indefinable. One thinks here of the "Nothing" of Buddhism. It also emerges with archaic religions as evidenced by Van der Leeuw's research in *Primitive Man and Religion.*[12]

The research of the Dutch phenomenologist opens the way to an investigation that moves from historical data in order to reenter the collective and singular interiority of human beings. He seeks to reexamine Husserlian phenomenology in order to find in it some further assistance in his excavation of religious experience. Husserl himself, however, examined this territory in many points of his research, as I have sought to show.

With the guidance of these two philosophers it is possible now to examine religious experience regarding us as *quoad nos* and how it presents itself *in se*.

Phenomenology of Religion Between the Noetic and the Hyletic

We underlined earlier that Husserl's originality consists in having individuated the stream of lived experiences in consciousness that constitute a unified terrain. It is useful here to take up once again this argument to study in which way it is possible, moving from the dimension of lived experience, to interpret the distinctions within religious manifestations.

We can remember once again that in *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Husserl distinguishes between lived experiences that can be indicated as primary content and those that carry within themselves specific intentionality. The former are constituted by contents of sensation such as data of color, sound, touch; they are also constituted by sense impressions deriving from drives, including pleasure, pain and sensations of tickling.[13] Husserl maintains, as has been underlined earlier, that a new terminology is necessary to delineate them. He proposes the expression material or hyletic data. That which transforms the "materials" into intentional lived acts is the moment of consciousness, which can be expressed by the term *noesis*. Among its most eminent meanings one finds the term "sense". Husserl argues that the two-fold nature and unity of that which he defines, always borrowing from the Greek, as sentient *hyle* and intentional *noesis* dominate the phenomenological sphere, especially given that sense data offer themselves as material for intentional formations and significations. He holds that one can study the two fields separately and, hence, a field of study configures itself, which Husserl calls pure hyletics; it stands next to noetics. Certainly, on his view, the richest analyses are found within noetics.

That this last affirmation can be put into question is demonstrated from the study of lived experiences present in "other" cultures with respect to Western culture, be they ancient or contemporary. Using the hyletic-noetic relationship, one can observe that in certain cultures the hyletic moment has an extraordinary, "attractive" function.[14]

The "things" that Husserl speaks about in this case must not be understood as "simple" things of the physical world; they must not be considered in a physicalist or empiricist fashion; rather, they are animated presences in a non-objectivated sense. That which is lacking with respect to our Western vision of reality is the process of objectivation and ideation, which is at the basis of philosophical and scientific theory.[15] Moreover, such cultures lead us to materiality: sounds, colors, and visions have a function of attraction and they are tinged with affectivity and significations. These significations lead us back to the noetic component, which is always present even if it does not possess a primary function as can be observed in cultures that we can define as "complex", including our own. Here, "complex" refers to the strong

presence of the noetic component, which leads to the possibility of critique and universalization. "Complex" is not be understood as a value judgment that treats complex cultures as more important than archaic ones. The term signals the diversity of lived acts of consciousness that characterize diverse cultures within phenomenological descriptions. In this sense, my position is different than Husserl's, which tended to hold Western culture in higher regard. I shall return to this argument later. This does not mean that in archaic cultures the noetic moment is not active, on the contrary, it is necessary to activate the belief in the existence of that which reveals itself as sacred.

Within the sacred the world is populated by entities that are believed to be real, that are not to be considered as "objects" insofar as they remain far from the process of objectivation as has already been indicated. The distinction between nature and spirit is not valid here. Nor is the distinction between action and contemplation. This is the case because the elementary lived experiences are very much linked to kinesthetic structures, i.e., the movements of corporeity and, therefore, highly connoted by kinesthetic hyle; all is movement, action.

One can see, therefore, in this context the central role of the living body, phenomenologically reduced, that is, understood through lived experiences. The hyletic moments, traceable through analysis and constituted by material plexi, refer back to either external movements or internal movements of the body proper; the body in this case becomes the interpretative thread of reality. Here, we are definitely not dealing with a "naturalistic" type of perspective on corporeity. On the contrary, that which re-presents itself with insistence and in a diffusive manner and, therefore, pervasively and repeatedly, is at its root the belief in *power*. The term power, already used above by G. van der Leeuw, expresses well the reference to that which is external; at the same time, however, it "completes" the human tension, moving toward its "totality"—an ultimate dynamism that leads back to the sacred and religious dimensions. Power is such because it maintains everything in life; it is the source and regeneration of life when death threatens it. One cannot distinguish the "thing" from power; a thing, if it is powerful, is power insofar as its presents itself manifestly as power itself. One can affirm synthetically that the sacred is a "presence" whose nucleus is hyletic.

II. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ARCHEOLOGY OF THE SACRED

This brief phenomenological discussion is necessary to understand how the meaning of the sacred and/or the religious[16] dimension can lead to the complexity of the lived experiences that express this dimension. In this

sense, one can justify the reductive work carried out by the phenomenologist when s/he excavates the inside of human consciousness to understand the cultural manifestations that characterize it. The term "consciousness" is used here not in the sense of a "reflexive" awareness, but in the sense of that interior structure of singularity and collectivity. These two, from time to time, coincide with one another, not only with respect to their structures but also in terms of the content of their lived experiences as happens in archaic cultures. Sometimes they are distinct or sometimes they are in conflict as happens in Western culture. Examining the interior structure, it appears that the dimension that we can define as sacral or religious manifests itself with such amplitude that it constitutes the background of all consciousness, which can be more or less manifest and aware. In order to reach such a result it is necessary to execute an operation of making something evident [*Evidenz*, understood in a phenomenological sense], which requires in the first place a radical epoché such that it peels away the cultural sedimentations, leading them back to their ultimate roots.

We can follow Husserl in this direction by consulting Manuscript C 16 IV entitled, *Phenomenological Archeology*. It consists of a work of excavation carried out upon the constitutive elements constructed by apperception, which offers us the world of experience already laid out and structured.[17] The reductive question works on the single operations directed to determine the sense of something such that it leads us back to the originary sources, to the matrices, to the *archai*. In such a way, it is possible to climb up once again to unities, understood in an obvious sense, which found the validity of the being of the world with a new awareness. Precisely because we are dealing with a work of excavation, one can employ the comparison with the archeologist, who proceeds in a zigzag pattern to trace, reconstruct, and recover the path by which material has sedimented. The residue of such a dig is for Husserl an ego-centered nucleus. It happens, however, that the awareness of such centrality can be more or less explicit in diverse cultures in the sense that the I, which is always present at the structural-potential level, becomes in cultures that define themselves as "more advanced", as is the case of Western culture, the object of an auto-reflexive activity. This activity more often than not accompanies the human being in his or her existence, whereas for other cultural dimensions such an awareness is less explicit because it is not solicited from a context that pushes to make itself evident, as is the case in our cultural environment. This is why in those cultures the experiential nucleus presents itself as impersonal and collective. The "we" pervades, but even this is not explicit in the auto-reflexive sense. We can, therefore, say that the noetic dimension manifests itself as less powerful.

The results of such an archeological investigation are confirmed by observing the necessary reduction to the hyletic dimension, which we have already described and which permits us to clarify the significance of certain operations that have lost their reason for existing. This is the case in the sense that we Westerners do not live through them in their original state. And, if they exist, they appear as cultural relics, which seem to contrast with the predominant vision of the world. It is clear that this deals with a dialogue between us "Copernicans", to borrow an expression from Husserl, and "others" who have remained "Ptolemaic" and display traces, which are more conspicuous than one could suppose, of a vision that could be defined as "archaic", but which is partially active for us as cultural relic. Here, again, one must not read this as a value judgment. We are trying to understand the differences between cultures without trying to establish whether the Copernicans know more or better than the Ptolemaics.

The history of religions furnishes us with a vast panorama, be it in a diachronic sense or a synchronic one, of religious experiences. It is not always easy within this panorama to orient oneself. The sacred and religious are often counter-positioned one against the other. One could say that the rediscovery of the sacred in our day is often used in a polemical way with regard to positive religions. The usefulness of recovering the historical path and reemploying archaic expressions of the sacred can therefore clarify the structures of religions closest to us and can also make us conscious of the phenomenon of the actual taking up once again of the theme of the sacred.

The history of religions indubitably carries out excellent research, but it also finds itself confronting theoretical questions that are oriented toward objects of investigation that constrain the scholar of this discipline to poach from other domains, including philosophy, as indicated previously. However, archaic expressions, or so-called "primitive ones" as it used to be said in the first phase of research in cultural anthropology, have become fields of investigation in such disciplines. This demonstrates that the phenomenon of the sacred is a terrain that contains diverse approaches, not least of which that of the phenomenology of religion.

In the fields of the studies on religion, one finds also the phenomenology of "religions" (plural). Indubitably, this kind of description has contributed significantly to the examination of so-called primitive cultural expressions, underlining the pervasiveness of the sacred in them. Cultural anthropology has confirmed the same thing from its perspective by analyzing cultural phenomena as social phenomena. But both phenomenology of religions and cultural anthropology do not succeed in entering into the intimate structure of the phenomenon of the sacred, which remains uninvestigated. This is why

I re-propose with urgency a rethinking of the question of method; this is not a secondary question.

On the part of the phenomenology, there directly arises a not unimportant suggestion to deal with the question of method again, going beyond all the research that till now configures itself as "phenomenology of religions" or "phenomenology of religion", even that one performed by van der Leeuw.

The path to follow in order to understand the possible connection between the *iter* of Husserlian research and the theme that interests us here requires patient analysis. On one hand, we must examine certain aspects that are less known in his analyses, such as the investigations on hyletics. On the other hand, we must excavate directly from his method directions for applying it to the field of the sacred, completing an extension in the double direction that has been indicated, namely, with respect to the object of investigation and with respect to the approach taken to it. Here, one confirms what Husserl meant when he said that his method articulated itself from "things themselves".

On the basis of available Husserlian manuscripts, be it in the edited works or in the unedited ones, there appears the phenomenologist's interest for religious questions that are linked above all to Christian-Jewish experience, as was examined above, but there is no specific analysis of the sacred.

The sacred is recoverable, however, from another point of view, namely, that of cultural anthropology, especially concerning the ideas that came to Husserl from the works of Lévy-Bruhl that focused on so-called primitive cultures. Husserl's interest in this argument is demonstrated by a letter he wrote to the French scholar dated March 1935; this letter was motivated in part by Lévy-Bruhl's having sent Husserl his book *La mythologie primitive.* It is clear that his point of view is not that of a cultural anthropologist; on the contrary, he wishes to draw out valid observations in order to have an understanding of the human being that focuses on comparing the different modes of thinking, the diverse "logics", that are at the base of the vision of the world of Western humanity and other expressions of cultures. In this investigation, of which one finds traces in some manuscripts of the 30s, Husserl dedicates himself to the question of the incidence of the religious moment and he deals with the centrality and importance of this moment for understanding diverse cultures, but his research does not go beyond a generic account of polytheistic and animistic religions.

Important in certain Husserlian manuscripts is the insistence upon the diversity of logical and epistemological structures, as suggested by Lévy-Bruhl's thesis, which affirms and then shows the "pre-logical" attitude of archaic peoples. Husserl, in fact, is more interested in clarifying Western thought, especially in his attempt to understand the significant structures of

theories; above all, he is interested in scientific theories and philosophical systems. Concerning these theories and structures, he delineated an analysis that even had a genetic-reductive character, as he demonstrated in his essay on the origin of geometry.[18]

In this direction he proposes a work of excavation, an *archeology* that recovers beyond sedimentations the path completed by Western culture, even in its confrontation with "diverse" cultures.[19] This deals with examining the genesis of cultural formations within that which Husserl defines as "the life-world", moving from that which is closest in order to climb up to the sources of the same cultural process.

Husserl has given only some indications relative to such a reductive path. One in particular possesses primary importance and is relative to the choice of orientation that one is to take, namely, the phenomenological one.

The reductive path, in fact, can be of an historical and sociological nature; it can utilize the suggestions of the disciplines, which we alluded to earlier, already configured within Western culture. In this case, however, we do not follow the first Husserlian step, namely, the one relative to a radical beginning; he demands that we bracket our already-constituted knowledge. It is necessary, therefore, to excavate deeper in order to search for roots, a non-relative starting point that permits the analysis to be rigorous.

The Husserlian phenomenological reduction leads, as has been pointed out many times, to that wide and unexplored terrain that is constituted by the lived experiences of consciousness, which are the ultimate terrain of a reductive question. The philosopher Husserl collected the conscious pagination of lived experiences. He saw them as operating with a subjectivity that represents the speculative point of arrival of intellectual research, and he was capable of doing this by moving the philosophical investigation within Western culture always more strongly toward the subjective terrain that possesses a universal structure. The universality of such a structure allows one to collect its presence at the intersubjective level. The awareness of the centrality of the human subject was even made evident in Western culture through a continual appeal for Western culture to reflect upon itself; this subjectivity has its origins in Greek and Christian cultures. The question that arises at this point is: if in the "logics" of other cultures there is present the self-consciousness of the subject and its capacity to be critical, then what is the role of the intersubjective dimension for them? Husserl asked himself this very question in a 1933 manuscript entitled *Horizon*.[20]

One notes that the lack of self-consciousness of the human being does not prove that the investigation of subjectivity performed by Husserl is false or insufficient; rather, it shows that at the level of lived experiences various

planes present themselves. Accentuations of some aspects occur as does the non-activation of reflective capacities that could lead to self-consciousness. This is the terrain of the life-world indicated by Husserl, which allows one to understand a variety of cultural manifestations, ultimately reducing them back to the sphere of lived experiences with their different combinations, namely, the prevailing of hyletic and the noetic attitude. The life-world can be examined, then, according to Husserl, as a transcendental phenomenon that can be led back to through the lived experiences that constitute it. In this way, we can study it structurally in order to examine the life of human subjects, "of communities of subjects, which function in all this, with regard to the essential ego-forms belonging to them".[21]

III. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ARCHEOLOGY OF THE RELIGIOUS

If we shift our attention to the phenomena that are chronologically closest to us and that we can rightly call religious, one notes that this historical investigation shows us their variety and even their diversity with respect to that comportment that we defined above as sacred. One could affirm that the example furthest removed from the archaic sacred is that of the great monotheistic religions that present characteristics opposite to those mentioned above. First, there is a sharp distinction between spiritual and material, body and soul. Second, there is an accentuation of the subjective dimension through individual consciousness and, therefore, an insistence on interiority. Third, precisely concerning the preceding points, there is the importance attributed to the noetic moment and, hence, intentionality. One could also trace the line of thought that links the sacred and the religious, and this is why the latter can be considered, in its turn, a "complex" sacred.

It is necessary to observe that the religious dimension is understandable in contemporary Western culture only comparatively with other dimensions and expressions; in particular, with philosophical and scientific ones. It distinguishes itself from a rational comportment that characterizes those fields of research and, in doing so, it maintains links with the sacred, even if it is has a different connotation.

If we not only restrict the field of inquiry to monotheistic religions and, in particular, Christianity, which Husserl favored in his considerations, examining it under the light of the sacred indicated above, one can note the continuity and the diversity between the sacred and religious. In fact, the hyletic moments have not disappeared. Concerning signs that characterize the figure of Christ as the initiator of the new exodus, one returns to *water*, which will eventually lead to a life that knows no death. In other places,

there is *bread* that will sustain anyone who is nourished by it, even in death. There is also *light*, which liberates people from slavery. These motifs, already present in the Old Testament, find in Jesus a new meaning insofar as He himself is drink, food, temple, law, rite and enduring. There is no reference to anything else. One can note that the hyletic moment is so important that it does not "symbolize" the divine reality; rather, the divine reality is "present" in it.

In order to understand why, for Husserl, the most important analyses are on the noetic side, it is opportune to recall the interpretation that he gave of the figure of Christ from the ethical point of view with reference to the spiritual aspect of his message. Husserl's choice to convert to Lutheran Christianity also reveals his way of understanding religion and Christianity. The distinguishing element between the Catholic reading of Christianity and the so-called Protestant one resides in the mode of understanding the sacramental dimension, which manifests most intensely the hyletic moment. In particular, this emerges in the sacrament of the Eucharist in which Christ is present as food and drink in the totality of his divinity and humanity, as the manifestation of the entirety of all human dimensions: body, psyche and spirit.

One could say that the religious experience consists in the movement that initiates from the "trace" left by God in the deepest part of the nucleus of human subjectivity—and here we are following the footsteps of Edith Stein, who speaks of the "soul of the soul"[22]—passing through the impulse of the psyche's trust, which then causes an adhesion to affectivity, feeling, and the intellect to ensue. This trajectory can realize itself positively and negatively; it can lead to divinity but it can also be interrupted at the psychic level when repulsion toward the trace actualizes itself; this may also occur at the spiritual level, when one theorizes about the non-existence of the trace itself. Here human freedom manifests itself. Religiosity and a-religiosity are the two possible directions of the trajectory, two faces of the same coin.

The trajectory here described is not directly indicated by Husserl, but he laid the foundations for it by applying his analyses to the religious dimension, which cannot be reduced solely to a cognitive perspective; rather this dimension existentially involves the whole human being, including his or her affectivity and will. This demonstrates that the final end is "salvation", that is, the realization and maintenance of the human being in the totality of his or her aspects in a life that absorbs and overcomes his/her temporally lived through life. One thinks of the acceptance of the resurrection of bodies and eternal life with which the Christian profession of faith concludes. Moreover, it was already indicated that Husserl meditates on such fundamental questions

and he has given us important suggestions on how to understand the constitution and role of corporeity.

Involved here is the dimension of corporeity, which does not mean physicality in the naturalistic sense; rather, it refers to an experience that moves from sensation and sensory feelings to the profound connection with the psychic. The whole theme of the body of Christ in his passion, death and resurrection is involved, as he is involved in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This does not mean that we stop at this dimension, but that the spiritual element is strongly linked with the psychic and corporeal one.

Edith Stein, reflecting on the analyses carried out by Husserl in Volume II of the *Ideas* and Thomas Aquinas' perspective on the unity of the human being, writes: "The discussion of the relation between the living body and the soul has been going on for centuries. If this is understood as a form of parallelism or interaction…it seems to me that the whole articulation of the problem rests on a false presupposition, that is, on the assumption that in the human being there are two reciprocally linked substances. In effect, the human body as an autonomous corporeal substance is not thinkable without the soul. This is why one cannot think of any material event within the human body that is not in some way connected with the soul. And, one must not understand a purely spiritual event that recalls external drives as an event of the body (as the movement of a ball through a push by another ball that causes it to move). The *spiritual* process, if it is a psychic process (that is, it actualizes itself in human beings, not in a spirit deprived of body), is a psycho-physical process that must materially develop in a physical form".[23]

This anthropological vision, which justifies the profound significance of the religious dimension and permits one to articulate it in the unity of its aspects, is confirmed directly by Christ's teaching. In this regard, one text seems particularly significant, namely, Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman.

This encounter has resulted in various readings, in particular, one concerning the significance and object of religion. This leads to the possibility of the reception of the human being, his or her structure, and his or her comportment concerning those that live other religious realities and, therefore, in more modern terms we can speak of an inter-religious dialogue.

The encounter begins with the theme of water, a fundamental element for the corporeal life, but in the words of Jesus "living" water serves the life of the spirit. On a certain reading, which keeps in mind the anthropological structure of the human being, the body manifests itself solely as a dimension that borders with the spiritual: "Whoever drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but he who drinks of the water that I give will never thirst again; for

the water I will give will become in him a spring of water that gushes forth eternal life". (Jn 4: 13–14) At this point, the meeting seems to touch upon practical and personal questions. The woman thinks of miraculous water that will relieve her of daily burdens, and Jesus shows that he knows in detail her everyday life. These moments elicit in her an awareness of finding herself in front of someone who has the gift of prophecy and she takes advantage of the situation in order to ask for a deeper teaching concerning the object of religious experience and that which will make understandable the difference between Jews and Samaritans on religious matters. "Our fathers have adored God on this mount and you say Jerusalem is the place in which one must adore". (Jn 4: 20) Jesus, revealing that salvation comes from the Jews, goes beyond this; he declares that neither of the contenders are right because "the true adorers will adore the Father in spirit and truth". (Jn 4: 23) The place, as a physical and concrete element, is overcome in such a way. It does not serve as the localization of divinity. This is an extremely important point; it is revolutionary with respect to a wide religious comportment that needs a sensory reference. It is the overcoming of spaces and a broadening of confines. The woman still does not trust Jesus, maintaining that all will be clear when the Messiah comes. Jesus then reveals himself to her, saying "It is I that speak to you". (Jn 4: 26)

The corporeal element moves from the traditional plane of physicality—God worshipped in a specific place—to the plane of the person of Christ that includes his corporeity. The presence of divinity is tangible, even to the extent that the apostle Thomas can touch the wounds of Christ and the woman of Samaria can see and speak to Christ. And, those that can neither see nor touch him will be blessed because they will be able to eat his body. The corporeal dimension through the hyletic *medium* is the pathway to the spirit. Whoever adores God in spirit and truth does not need a place, but s/he needs a body because whoever lives does so on account of his or her corporeity.

Corporeity is also the vehicle used to reach the soul of the soul and to elicit the impulse for that which is present as trace, including its recognition. Hearing in this case is central: "And when the Samaritans reached him, they begged him to stay with them and he stayed two days. Many more believed in his words and they said to the woman: It is no longer because of your word that we believe, but we believe because we ourselves have heard and we know that this is truly the savior of the world". (Jn 4: 41)

Direct contact with the divine involves the whole human being. It is possible, then, to understand the profound significance of mystical experience in which the divine presence offers itself without mediation, invading the human being and moving from the point where one finds its trace.[24] We

have noted that Husserl was perplexed in front of such evidence, but he, being a phenomenologist, has not radically eliminated the possibility of mystical experience, following the second golden rule of phenomenology, namely, that of "possibility", which borders on the first rule, the "principle of all principles". Therefore, that which "gives itself", as the first principle maintains, cannot only be experienced on the level of sensation but also shows itself as "possible" when it is in agreement with all that we know and it is, therefore, non-contradictory.

IV. RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

Husserl initiated an intercultural analysis, seeking on the level of lived experiences the fundamental structures of the life-world. He also initiated a comparison among various religions not only from a descriptive point of view but also from a valuative one. We see this when he expresses a negative judgment on the Judaism, that according to him, was still linked up to the "Babylonian" period of the history of the Jewish religion, justifying in such a way his decision to convert to Christianity. He more amply noted, however, the presence of many religions that base themselves on a revelation and he asked himself if they were all equal. He did not offer a precise response to this question, but he noted that he made a personal choice in favor of one religion, namely, Christianity. In any case, he re-vindicated the autonomous character of the religious life with respect to the dimension of intellectual inquiry as well as that of art. Ms. E III 10, which takes up this theme, concludes with a rhetorical question to which one must anticipate an affirmative answer: "In a certain sense, is not the religious life autonomous?"[25]

The re-vindication of such autonomy is very important because it allows for the proper establishment of religion, not reducing it to other dimensions, namely, the psychological and social dimensions. Also, one does not want to eliminate religion by confining it to a purely intellectual level. The phenomenological terrain allows one to deal with the question of the plurality of religions, linking it with the plurality of cultures but also establishing a hierarchy. This is so because culture and religion do not border on one another; rather, they are subordinated to one another in the sense that religion, offering the more ample and total vision of the world, is at the basis of cultural perspectives, and this is also valid in the case of laicized cultures. This is so because even the distancing from the religious dimension is a choice that refers to the very same dimension it refuses. Whoever declares him- or herself as secular does so by referring to the non-accepted possibility of being religious.

Phenomenological archeology was proposed as the most ideal instrument to excavate within cultures and religions. I underlined, however, the primary role played by religion concerning culture itself. It is now opportune to demonstrate how a phenomenological investigation can establish the connection between diverse cultural-religious expressions, and how this can be useful for a concrete and living human encounter.

Understanding among cultures and religions may happen on two levels. On one hand, residue of mental organizations, which are proper to archaic religions and even contemporary ones, still find themselves in complex cultures and religions that have seemed to have forgotten or overcome them. On the other hand, and it is in this that our proposed theoretical reflection properly consists, it is possible to take some distance from, performing epochés, personal feelings to investigate the structure of lived experiences; here phenomenological analyses takes shape. One must individuate the nucleus or core of sense that characterize cultural-religious phenomena in order to trace the dimension of lived experiences present in all human beings. A common humanity cannot be denied if we follow the playing out of empathy as the recognition of the same structure present in every human being. Such an investigation permits us to find a common terrain in order to become aware of the existing affinities and differences without entering into the value of the culture or religion as more or less true.

In this way, difference does not exclude unity. Certainly, it is not about sustaining neither the predominance of a totalizing reason nor the primacy of one culture, namely, Western culture that has absolutized reason. This deals more with tracing at the anthropological level the "minimal" structures that permit one to individuate a common humanity. The basic elements, as phenomenological analysis teaches us, are represented by lived experiences, and their structure and combination can also vary, given the locus and the great diversity of cultural forms. The possibility of reciprocally entering in the forms of others and, therefore, of understanding the other without annihilating differences, maintains them without absolutizing them. Their absolutization contradicts understanding. Certainly, such comprehension requires a double effort. First, there is a theoretical one, which consists in finding the ideal modes and justifications for a real accord, developing deeply and philosophically this largely epistemological theme. The second effort is ethical, which seeks to accomplish the first, always engaging the practical.

The phenomenological point of view, with its theoretical contribution but also with its implications of an ethical order, is important and preliminary, and from it an opening may arise with "other" religions that permits one to assume a practical position of welcome with regard to other religions.

It is clear that, once the connection between unity and diversity is understood, it is possible to take on a position that ascribes value. In fact, every human being, even s/he that cultivates a phenomenological attitude of the "disinterested spectator", belongs to his or her life-world, a cultural dimension, which furnishes us with evaluative criteria.

Every religion and culture has always considered itself as the true religion and the best culture. It is good that it do so if it wishes to remain in "good faith", but in the face of such an affirmation one can take on two attitudes. First, there is the attitude of absolutization of one's own point of view that condemns and deprecates that which is "different". Second, one can have a welcoming attitude.

The criterion of welcoming is not widespread in all religions and certainly not across all cultures, but the more frequent contact between them is such that from the last decades of the 1900s, especially in the West, the question of inter-religious and intercultural relations is now able to be asked more so than in past epochs. Given that nothing is guaranteed by the historical process and given that the risk of regression is always present, a theoretical investigation has the task of sustaining the weight of the investigation on difference in order not to absolutize it but also not to eliminate it.[26]

NOTES

[1] Letter to Rudolf Otto from 5.3.1919; the letter to Erich Przywara is from 15.7.1932.

[2] D. Cairns, *Conversations with Husserl and Fink*, Phaenomenologica 66, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976) p. 46.

[3] Letter to Rudolf Otto cited above.

[4] D. Cairns, *Conversations etc.* p. 46.

[5] Ibid., p. 47.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Max Scheler, *Vom Ewigen in Menschen*, (Bern: A. Franke A. G. Verlag, 1968).

[8] G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956).

[9] U. Bianchi, *Il metodo della storia delle religioni (Method of the History of Religions)*, in *Le metodologie della ricerca religiosa (The Methodologies of Religious Research)*, ed. Aniceto Molinaro (Rome: Herder-Università Lateranense, 1983).

[10] G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, as cited in Epilogue.

[11] Ibid., Chapter 5, Section 90.

[12] G. van der Leeuw, *De primitieve mensch en de religie (The Primitive Man in Religion)*, (Groningen: J.B. Wolters' Uitgevers-Maatschappij, 1937).

[13] *Ideas I*, Section 85.

[14] D. A. Conci and A. Ales Bello, *Phenomenology as Semiotics of Archaic or "Different" Life Experiences — Toward an Analysis of the Sacred*, in *Analecta Husserliana* vol. XLIII, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994).

[15] A. Ales Bello, *Culture e religioni — Una lettura fenomenologica (Cultures and Religions — A Phenomenological Approach)* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1997).
[16] Ibid., Chapter V, Sections 1 and 2.
[17] E. Husserl, Ms. Trans. C 16 IV,*Phänomenologische Archeologie (Phenomenological Archeology)*, May 1932.
[18] E. Husserl, *Crisis*, Appendix III.
[19] E. Husserl, Ms. Trans. C 16 IV.
[20] E. Husserl, Ms. Trans. C 16 IV.
[21] E. Husserl, *Crisis*, p. 174.
[22] E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, p. 129.
[23] Ibid., p. 105.
[24] A. Ales Bello, *Per un recupero della mistica nell'ambito fenomenologico: Gerda Walther e Edith Stein*, *(Mysticism in Phenomenology: Gerda Walther and Edith Stein)* in AA.VV., *Esperienza mistica e pensiero filosofico (Mystical Experience and Philosophical Thought)*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003).
[25] E. Husserl, Ms. Trans. E III 10, *Vorgegebene Welt, Historizität, Trieb, Instinkt (Pre-Given World, Historicity, Drive, Instinct)*, January 1930.
[26] I have dealt with the theme of difference in relation to this argument in my *L'altro, il diverso, l'estraneo. La differenza nell'antropologia fenomenologica: oltre Edmund Husserl (The Other, the Different, the Stranger: Difference in Phenomenological Anthropology: Beyond Edmund Husserl)*, in *Le figure dell'altro (Figures of the Other)*, ed. Angela Ales Bello (Turin: Effetà Editrice, 2001).

PART III

SOME EXPLORATIONS IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION

CHAPTER 1

EXAMPLES OF ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Proceeding in the direction that Husserl indicated, which dealt with the comparison of various cultures and the analysis of their lived experiences, it is possible to examine the significance and structure of cultural expressions different from ours, that is, from Western *logos.* Paradoxically, phenomenology, through its radical project, which would seem to locate itself within the tradition of *logos*, presents itself capable of giving reasons for its formation that are remote from it. In fact, the "principle of all principles", accepting that which gives itself as it gives itself in the limits within which it gives itself—the hinge of the phenomenological method according to Husserl—makes well evident the structure of a particular mentality. This mentality is different from ours, where the real does not "refer" to other than itself; it configures itself in the multiplicity of forms that it assumes in all of its pregnant meaning.

Cultural anthropology and the history of mythologies furnish us with a plethora of material that is often read by the same anthropologists in an evolutionary fashion. One thinks of Claude Lévi-Strauss as pre-announcing an approach that later configures itself as scientific, namely, that of Western thought.[1]

One finds oneself in front of leaps that inspire great transformations. So-called "primitive" or archaic culture leaves its signs, which, if analyzed adequately, reveal certain fundamental characteristics: the indistinguishable difference between subject and object, sign and a being, body and psyche, being and appearing, and this is truly "opposed" to Western thinking as Domenico A. Conci has maintained.[2] Moreover, it is impossible to distinguish in those cultures, notwithstanding the efforts of anthropologists, that which is religious and that which is not. Every human activity, even the most simple or quotidian and, therefore, for us neutral, is pervaded by a feeling of the sacred, of presence. One could say that it is fully avoided as a presence of which one is fully aware, but this is not retained as "other" or added to by something powerful.[3]

It is correctly maintained that for an archaic mentality not only is human action made sacred but also nature; this mind-set is seen as not making the distinction between spirit (mind) and nature.

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Let us examine, then, the signs that these cultures have left us. Our excavation moves from that which we possess and this is indubitably due to the credit of certain disciplines, including cultural anthropology, history of religions, and the history of prehistoric art. These disciplines have, in great part, limited themselves to these signs without giving a satisfying means to read them or they seek to interpret them by comparing them with more complex cultural formations, often underlining in these so-called cultures the lack of…, the insufficiency of…, or the not yet…

Lévy-Bruhl, in effect, tried to show the operation of "diverse logics", and in wake of this Husserl repeated this trajectory, but how does one give content to this? Always following Husserl's method, which is not very often taken into consideration, if we examine the lived experiences that are at the base of myths, we observe concerning their structure a presence of a hyletic and noetic[4] moment. We note that it is the first more than the second that guides and leads the organization of reality. The myths that we here refer to are not the more complicated myths that we are used to considering, but the archaic ones that we find in the reports of cultural anthropologists and in the analysis of signs inspired by the remains of the first human graphic expressions or handmade artifacts.

The power of the elements and the forms of nature, the colors that determine the magical world, populated by forces that are not "seen" (if you examine them with our eyes accustomed to distinguishing between that which is capable of being experienced from that which is not, but which are highly evident for the archaic person), these elements indicate how the hyletic moments drag everything along with suggestive force without stopping to distinguish that which is interior and exterior. The human being is in this world and it makes no sense to detach oneself from it just as it makes no sense to distinguish oneself as personally individuated against the group.

The archaic person's very corporeity, however, is like a leader that drags everybody along; one is led by one's corporeity. Husserl already saw the connection between kinesthetics and *hyle*, as was said many times before.[5] A deepening of the understanding of one's corporeity leads to a better understanding of the relation between rite and myth, which has elicited many contrasting interpretations. If the elementary lived experience—thus defined to distinguish it from that of later cultures—is lived through action, myths are events of action ritually reactivated; this is difficult for us to understand insofar as we distinguish recounting a story or myth from action.

In order to make more concrete these brief remarks it is necessary to analyze the field, examining the vast material offered by explorations in

diverse cultural domains, be it in the diachronic or synchronic sense. In this capacity it is only possible to do this by referring to two signs that appear as fundamental for the comprehension of archaic peoples: those represented by their handiwork and those linked to their oral traditions. The importance of the latter is well noted for pre-alphabet cultures, but the former retain for us a significance of a non-secondary nature.

I. RITUAL OBJECTS IN ARCHAIC SACRALITY

For anthropologists the Australian continent reveals itself as a rich mine, which they have excavated, given their tools, in order to uncover those populations "frozen in time" of the Neolithic age. In particular, Claude Lévi-Strauss has used many studies in the field concerning the Australian continent in order to develop his structural anthropology. Two examples examined by him that are related to the cultural world of central Australia can serve as material for a phenomenological reading carried out according to the criteria mentioned above.[6]

In the commemorative and funeral rites of the Aranda one notes the presence of objects made from rock or wood called *churinga* that are bordered by carved symbolic signs. Each one of these represents the physical body of a determined ancestor and is attributed from generation to generation to the living person that is believed to be the reincarnation of this ancestor. Lévi-Strauss, in his attempt to interpret this usage, compares the *churinga* to an historical archive in which the past is stored, underlying needs of the indigenous people through these objects. They do this in order to overcome diachrony through synchrony, or better, to annihilate the temporal distinction.

In the commentary of the anthropologist one can construct, on one hand, the attempt to enter into the archaic mentality and, on the other hand, there is the attempt to assimilate it to our own mentality. The comparison with an archive must remain just that because in the case of that handiwork one is not treating a "document". The piece of wood or stone "is" the ancestor, or better, constitutes—according to Lévi Strauss—the tangible proof that the ancestor and his or her living descendent are one flesh.[7] This shows that the material hyletic moment incorporates into itself a reality that is "other" to us, namely, the ancestor. The object does not elicit a memory or alludes to…; it is that reality. In phenomenological terms, one can say that the hyletic moment drags with itself the intentional noetic moment of a specific memory, and memory itself, along with affectivity and meaning, without proceeding to distinguish between being and appearing, sign and entity.

Even temporality assumes a particular configuration. The past and the present do not represent two distinct moments of a linear process. The past is a sedimentation that can be "reactivated" and lived through in its actual presence. Returning to the analysis of Lévi-Strauss, diachrony and synchrony are understandable only if they lead back to a lived-through temporality and, hence, to the lived experiences that are at the base of such lived experiences. Such lived experiences are linked with a conception of time whose scansions are very different from our way of understanding temporal succession.

Concerning the sacredness of these objects—in fact, for the Aranda these are sacred—Lévi-Strauss' discussion, which runs counter Durkheim's interpretation, is interesting. Many of the *churinga* are carvings that refer to the totem of the deceased, and for this reason, according to Durkheim, they are sacred. Lévi-Strauss objects that the sacredness belongs directly to the object itself and not because of the carvings. The proof of this can be found in the fact that many of them are not carved; they are simple pieces of wood or stone and yet they are held to be quite precious. A certain specific fact remains important for the phenomenologist, namely, the fact that even the most simple are often painted in a red-ochre color, confirming the importance of color, and a particular color, red; this color is fundamental and recurring in the expression of archaic cultures, confirming the primary role played by the hyletic. One can observe that sacredness is not an element "added" to the object, it is not a "sign" of the sacred. It does not appear in a certain mode, referring to something other. It does not recall that which is numinous; rather, it is numinous in itself, to employ the expression that is dear to Rudolf Otto.

Hyletics, noetics and the sacred, which I have distinguished in the foregoing analysis, configure themselves in a particular way in the archaic mentality. They are understandable in their reference to lived experiences that are at the base of those cultural expressions. This is amply confirmed by the perspective in which one inserts every object of culture and nature. Lévi-Strauss refers to a significant passage of *Aranda Traditions* written by T.G.H. Strehlow: "Mountains and creeks and springs and water-holes are, to him [the native] not merely interesting or beautiful scenic features…, they are the handiwork of ancestors from whom he himself has descended. He sees recorded in the surrounding landscape the ancient story of the lives and the deeds of the immortal beings whom he reverts: beings who for a brief space may take on human shape once more; being many of whom he has known in his own experience as his fathers and grandfathers and brothers, and as his mothers and sisters. The whole country-side is his living, age-old family tree".[8] Here, one notes the sacredness of nature, but how does

one read it using phenomenological instruments? We find ourselves faced with not being able to distinguish between things of nature, living human beings, and those no longer living. Not being able to distinguish indicates a plurality and the plurivocity of the same reality. One does not only distinguish sign and entity, but for each one of these that one considers an entity presents itself as polymorphous or polysemantic. This means that one reality possesses many senses, and reality is that which nature offers us with a particularity of forms and configurations that interest us and call our attention.

"The story of his own doings", continuing with the citation of Strehlow, "at the beginning of time, at the dim dawn of life, when the world as he knows it now was being shaped and moulded by all-powerful hands".[9] It is worth underlining in this passage the expression "the story of his own doing". The importance of oral transmission arises here. This serves not only to give notice that something has happened, but it gives notice of a making that must be recounted while the originary making renews itself. One understands, therefore, why the indigenous person must recall with a rite and recount with myth the originary making. In this way, one clarifies the coincidence of myth and rite, which we referred to above.

The ethnologist and cultural anthropologist, however, say: "every indigenous person". In fact, they fix their attention on a single exponent of the group, and this because it is the singular individual that constructs the canoe or sees in the landscape his ancestors. But, what is the role of the single individual? The lived experiences that we retain as his or hers are truly lived experiences of the group to which s/he belongs; they are lived impersonally. The single individual does not propose his or her own opinion, but re-echoes originary cosmic happenings that are his or hers only accidentally.

The signs of the archaic sacred send us back, therefore, to elementary collective lived experiences in which the hyletic moment acquires a primary importance. They manifest themselves as different, one could even say they do so as opposites, with respect to the lived experiences that characterize our culture. Sometimes even in our own culture we find in some cases that a distinction cannot be made between the religious moment and other realms of knowledge that allow the question of continuity to arise, or at least between the signs of the primitive sacred and that of the complex sacred that are at the base of historical religions. This is the case because, as we have already said before, not only with the case of the great monotheistic religions but also with polytheistic ones, something survives of the archaic sacred within expressions of religion in cultures that distinguish being and sign, subject and object, spirit and material, nature and the supernatural.

II. THE GODDESS IN ARCHAIC SACRALITY

The foregoing interpretation can be confirmed by another example from the history of religions or archeology. The relationship between space and the feminine has deep roots in Western civilization, affecting the role of gender. The research carried out by Marija Gimbutas and Bernard C. Dietrich on archaic religions present in continental Europe and in the regions of the Mediterranean basin, especially on the so-called Mother-goddess culture, a term that, at least for the time being, is to be considered purely provisional, is most relevant.

The "World-View" of Neolithic Europe

Gimbutas' fine book, *The Language of the Goddess*,[10] has now filled an important gap for the proper understanding of the archaic age, tracing matters back beyond both Indo-European and pre-Indo-European cultures. We are here concerned with interpreting the "word-view" that can be dated to between 6500 and 3500 B.C.E. in south-eastern Europe and between 4500 and 2500 B.C. in Western Europe. Here, we find various Mediterranean cultures, including Cyprus, Crete, Sardinia, Sicily and Malta, from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age. According to Marija Gimbutas, historical documents, myths and rituals show that a good part of this great artistic culture permeated ancient Greece, Etruria and other parts of Europe. She holds that these beliefs continue to live in the present. They have been handed down by women, having avoided the imposition of the earlier Indo-European and later Christian myths; they left an indelible imprint on the Western psyche.

This research also fills the gap that even Dumézil had to admit and, indeed, deemed to be a thorn in the flesh of his system concerning the part played by the "ancient goddesses", who in the Indo-European context appeared as the *"déesses dernières"*, but who in actual fact continued to play a leading part, Athena in Greece being a case in point.

Examining the archeological finds of the period with painstaking care, Gimbutas along with Dietrich realized that these finds constitute an extremely important source, speaking a language of their own, namely, the language of the Goddess.

A problem arises concerning how this language is to be analyzed. Following the approach prevalent in the history of religion, sustained, above all, by the Louvain school and by Julien Ries, its leading proponent, Gimbutas underscores the symbolic aspect of these finds, the structures, images and designs of which are normally seen as referring us to…, deemed to have the significance of…, and, consequently, held to represent the attributes of

the Goddess. The previous phenomenological analysis makes it possible to overcome and go beyond this interpretation, which tends to turn these representations into symbols, something that is thoroughly in keeping with our modern mentality, but which does not appear to stand in the foreground of archaic thought. These finds show precisely that the choice of the representations, the objects, and the places was not guided by a symbolic reference, but by profound likenesses (resemblances) on the hyletic level; in short, they confirm the "realism" of archaic peoples and not their presumed symbolic attitude. Indeed, Gimbutas herself would implicitly seem to admit this when she sustains that the *menhir* is the epiphany of the bird goddess (and therefore not her symbol); a similar admission is also made when she expresses the view that the Goddess, albeit in the variety of her epiphanies and functions, is one and one only and, therefore, immanent rather than transcendent, consequently manifesting herself physically.

This manifestation is exactly what in phenomenological terms is called the hyletic (or material) moment, and this means that the resemblance (likeness) or association leads to an identification of the two aspects of physical reality; they become interchangeable to the point where one assumes the characteristics of the other and, thus, becomes the other, that is to say, it does not simply refer to the other as is the case in symbolic representation.[11]

Nevertheless, bearing in mind the material offered by Gimbutas and the way she interprets it, there is no invalidation of her results. On the contrary, they very clearly validate each other and become all the more significant when one abandons the ground of symbolism, thereby—transferring to the terrain of realism.

Before coming to grips with the question concerning the problem of space in relation to femininity, it may be appropriate to recall a very interesting comment made by Dietrich in support of archaic realism. Referring to the Cretan-Mycenean civilization, he observes that the sensation of the divine presence and the practice of direct invocation were the principal features of Minoan and Mycenaean religiosity. All efforts tended toward direct communication with the divine, a concept that is fundamentally different from rites practiced in front of a statue.[12] This explains the lack of statues among the finds, a feature that one can still note in Homer. In fact, the seated figure of Athena he describes in the Trojan temple cannot be considered a statue, because the poet tells us quite explicitly that she shakes her head.[13] Remembrance of all this was eventually lost, so much so that Aristonicus, a commentator of Homer, deemed this description to be quite ridiculous—a natural conclusion when one bears in mind that he thought we were dealing with a statue.

A further confirmation of the belief in the epiphany can be found in the architecture of the palaces and places of ritual of the Minoan civilization. All of them contained an open space intended for the appearance of the divinity, possibly represented in some cases by the priestess. Once again, therefore, there is the "presence" of the divinity rather than a "sign" or "symbol".

Two important elements emerge from the remarks that have just been made: first, the question of "realism" that is configured (according to the reading of these phenomena proposed by Domenico A. Conci) as sign-realism, an aspect to which we shall return in connection with the interpretation of space; second, the centrality of the cult of the Goddess. According to Dietrich, witness to this aspect is borne by the fact that the scenes of the cult on precious stones and on frescoes, scenes in which one may reasonably suppose a divine presence, generally show a goddess among her followers and faithful; the male element, however, appears only to be of secondary importance as it is associated with the goddess in her role as *paredros*. The Goddess does not possess a name, if one excludes that of Eileithyia. This corresponds to the image of the cave of Amnisos, whose symbol was a stalagmite pillar. But, as Dietrich adds, this furnishes further reason to support and confirm the realism previously mentioned, if not quite simply her physical presence.

Indetermination, borne out also by the lack of names, is the reason for the large number and great variety of the images of the Goddess, whose presence—and I am here using the term "presence" in place of the term "symbol" employed by Gimbutas—is lunar and chthonic. It is to be identified with life on the earth, which is continuous transformation, constant and rhythmic change, from creation to destruction, from birth to death.

The Space of the Goddess

Let us re-examine the images of this Goddess. Her representations enable us to grasp the type of space associated with her. Among the great variety of representations I shall choose a number that seem to me to be particularly significant.

According to Gimbutas, in ancient Europe the pillar of life was considered to be the materialization of the mysterious vital force, intermediary between nonbeing and being; and this vital force was enclosed within the egg, in the serpent, in water and in the lap of the Goddess, who materialized in a cave, an underground crypt, or in a megalithic structure. This description contains a veritable tangle of references that on first sight seem to bear no relationship to each other, and yet this confused mass can be unraveled when one uses the conception of space as the key. Let us begin with the

cave, which is clearly a womb with stalagmites and stalactites, with the sacred water at the back. A cave at Scaloria in Apulia yielded vases dating back to 5600–5300 B.C. These vases displayed motifs based on eggs, plants, serpents, triangles, and hour glasses. I want to draw attention to the egg and the serpent, the latter depicted by means of curved lines. The water, moreover, apart from being physically present in the cave, was reproduced on carvings in the form of concentric-circles. That this represented the entire existential cycle is demonstrated, for example, by the excavations at Garvinis, where the Genitrix-Goddess is identified with the carvings of multiple arches, undulating lines, zig-zag bands and forms of serpents, little cups and circles that indicate belief in the regenerative potential of rock. One notes how the hyletic moment, that is, stone, constitutes the fundamental element and is here identified with the creative force of the Goddess. Dietrich remarks that for the inhabitants of ancient Europe the tomb was a uterus. The megalithic tombs were not "sepulchers" in the proper sense of the term; rather, they were sacred monuments used by the community for its regeneration ceremonies and ancestor worship.

Let us now pass on to another series of signs that involve segments rather than curved lines. The foregoing description referred, among others, to triangles and hour-glasses, signs that stand for the regenerating vulva, constituting a further guiding thread that helps us understand other representations bound up with the animal world. Just as the frog,[14] the hedgehog and the fish stand for the uterus of the Goddess, bird legs are the vulva and the bull a frontal representation of the uterus. Contrary to what one might suppose, the bull is not a sign of virile force, but is associated with the Goddess on account of the profound resemblance that the head and horns of a bull bear to the uterus and the fallopian tubes, as has been noted by Dorothy Cameron.[15] Indeed, if one examines the very fine bull's head found in the museum at Heraklion, one notes that it is wrapped in a kind of net, just as if it were immersed in amniotic liquid.

Even the double-headed axe, so widely found in Crete, is nothing other than a stylization of the butterfly, epiphany of the Goddess in her aspect of emerging life, an incarnation of the transformation principle.[16] Here, we have signs that can be traced back to a triangle, that is to say, to a closed geometric figure.

As in the case just discussed, we are always concerned with signs that—as far as we are concerned—refer us to the Goddess, but which for the primitive mentality *are* the Goddess. Here we have our sign realism; it is associated, always from our point of view, with a closed but powerful and creative space, a circle or a triangle, which is life, death and regeneration. These are not

purely sexual representations or Venuses, as some votive statuettes of that period have been called; they are not even purely mothers, but presences of the power of life and death.

Here, we have confirmation of the fact that the space bound up with femininity is a closed space, a powerful space, but it is not addressed to the outside in an aggressive manner. And, because this type of sacrality is well known to be highly pervasive (i.e., it does not concern a particular aspect of these cultures, but rather underlies them globally), Gimbutas and Dietrich observe that we are concerned with cultures whose gynocentrism is also a sign of non-aggression and of a condition of peace, understood from a social perspective.

It must be underscored that what has been said so far can be read in a plurality of mutually interconnected ways. Here, we come face to face with the excavation work undertaken in a zig-zag fashion by Husserl. The social function of women or, at least, the manner in which society considered the feminine (which encompassed the animal world and the fertility of the soil, precisely on account of the lack of distinction between these levels) is brought out by this research work.

It has already been suggested that the change came with the invasions of so-called Indo-Europeans, who superimposed an entirely different and androcentric view of the world, which included the division into classes, a military structure of society, an expansionist and aggressive attitude, and the predominance of masculine divinities.

As has already been noted, the civilization of the Goddess nevertheless survived in an underground fashion; the lived experiences that characterized it are not complete strangers to us. We can still understand and analyze them because even today we can still live them, enabling us to gain insight into these historical phenomena.

An example of the profound transformation wrought by the Indo-European invasions can be seen when visiting that extraordinary, fascinating and unique place that is Delphi. Whoever comes there will note the presence of two levels, both physical and ideal, that divide the mountainside. The one situated higher up the mountain contains the temple of Apollo, while the other, the lower one, encloses (because less exposed, almost as if wrapped up) the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia. The present setting, of course, has been constructed in such a manner as to lead first to the sanctuary of the God, and only afterwards can the visitor make his or her way down to the series of buildings that contain the new temple of Athena as their centerpiece. Above all that, there is the incomparable jewel among the Delphian monuments, the Tholos. This building is built on a circular plan. It was put up at the beginning of the fourth

century B.C. and, therefore, dates back to the classical period. The experts tell us that its provenance is wholly unknown; there are other tholoi at Epidaurus, Olympia, etc. We know, however, that the circular form undoubtedly derives from a very ancient tradition, probably bound up with chthonic cults. It is, therefore, certainly older than the cult of Apollo. Could it be that Apollo really was the head of a warrior people come from the sea, who took this place of the Goddess cult by force, establishing the supremacy of a God and relegating the female divinity to a secondary role? This divinity, subsequently identified with Athena, could be tolerated in view of the fact that she had not been born of woman, but sprang fully armed from the head of her father. This hypothesis seems less rash when it is seen against the background of the previously mentioned clash of the two world-views. But, one thing remains certain: the space of the Goddess is a closed space, mainly circular, a centre of generative force and all that is linked up with her (signs, images, places and so on) is chosen because of its hyletic appeal. That means that, considering the sacred as feminine and the feminine as identical with the circular and the closed, what is circular and closed in an extraordinary and special way—"numinosus" in the sense proposed by Rudolf Otto—shows the "presence" of the Goddess.

NOTES

[1] C. Lévi-Strauss, *Le pensée sauvage* (Paris: Libraire Plon, 1962), Chapter I.

[2] An application of the phenomenological method on archaic cultures was carried out for the first time in Italy by Remo Cantoni in his book, *Il pensiero dei primitivi (The Primitives' Thought)* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1962). It was followed by Domenico A. Conci's work, which shows for the first time the importance of the hyletic dimension, as can be seen by his numerous essays on the topic. See in particular: D. A. Conci and A. Ales Bello, *Phenomenology as Semiotics or Archaic or "Different" Life Experiences. Toward an Analysis of the Sacred, cit.*

[3] Otto showed this is in his work, *Das Heilige (The Idea of the Holy).* Translated by J.W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press 1923). This can also be seen in the work of Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*: *The Nature of Religion.* Translated by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

[4] *Ideas I*, Section 85.

[5] This can be expressly seen in Ms. D 10 I *Zur Konstitution der physichen Natur. Zuerst Leib — Aussending; dann rückführend auf Hyle und Kynesthese (On the Constitution of Physical Nature; In the First Place: External Thing-Body; And then Referring to Hyle and Kinesthetics)*, May 1932.

[6] C. Lévi Strass, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 241.

[7] Ibid., p. 243.

[8] Ibid., p. 243.

[9] Ibid., p. 243.

[10] M. Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess.* Foreword by Joseph Campbell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

[11] At this point, it would not be out of place to recall the analysis of the symbol carried out by Husserl, especially in the texts that have now been grouped under the title *Phantasie, Erinnerung, Bildbewusstsein*, Husserliana, vol. XXIII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1980). Here, he very acutely pinpoints the difference between the lived experiences of fantasy, remembering, symbol, and of perception, operations that are closely connected within the consciousness of the individual, though each of them possesses specific characteristics of its own.

[12] B.C. Dietrich, *Religion Cult and the Sacred in the Cretan-Mycenaean Civilization*, in *Mediterranean Civilization and the Sacred*, *Traité d'anthropologie du sacré* vol. III, ed. J. Ries (Paris: Descleé, 1992).

[13] *Iliad*, 6, 302–311.

[14] Concerning the persistence of these associations, Gimbutas has discovered that an ex-voto made in Bavaria in 1811 bears by the side of the Madonna a frog with a vulva on its back.

[15] D. Cameron, *Symbols of Birth and of Death in the Neolithic Era*, (London: Kenyon-Deane, 1981).

[16] The epiphany of the Goddess as a butterfly is represented by abstract figures surrounded by uterus (or fish bladder) forms, a case in point being a Late Minoan jug, dating to about 1400 B.C., found in Crete.

CHAPTER 2

ECSTASY AND CONTEMPLATION IN VARIOUS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

If one considers the phenomenon of "ecstasy", if one tries to describe its phenomenological meaning, it is good to begin to do so by first examining "effects" and then "motives". Proceeding in this manner, one can examine the phenomenon in order to describe its essential characteristics.

The "effects" of ecstasy consist in a state of being estranged from oneself, but the end of such an estrangement seems to be a return to the self. Given this description, one could ask how these two attitudes, which seem so different from one another, possibly reveal themselves as coinciding with one another. To answer this question it is necessary to note that their opposition depends on a certain chosen point of view. If one examines ecstasy "from the outside", that which appears to the spectator consists of altered states, excitation or even a lack of reaction to all that is occurring in the surrounding environment. It is as if the moment of perception, which places us into contact with the external world, is "altered" or "suspended" and diversity is measured with our "normal" daily experience.

If we seek to understand the phenomenon from the point of view of s/he who lives the experience "from within", we must base our understanding on the testimonies of examined subjects or even our personal experiences. In every case a question of capital importance is raised: can such experiences be universalized? Do they reveal something absolutely singular and private that cannot be studied according to their essential structures?

If we examine the "motives", one notes that they are traceable through contact with a world that is "other" with respect to that which is experienced in an everyday fashion. Interesting, fascinating and difficult to understand is the consistency of such alterity. Does this deal with a pathological phenomenon that concerns the singular human being, a disturbance in his or her personality, or even an encounter with something other that manifests very peculiar characteristics? It is possible in both cases that the situations must be weighed according to the cases with which one comes into contact. This is why it is fundamentally important to begin an investigation of this field, examining concretely that which experience offers us. It is important not to absolutize prejudicially one of the solutions. But, how should one comport oneself

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with regard to concrete cases? Here, we are concerned with investigating the lifestyle, the behaviors that are related to the fact that the moments of ecstasy are exceptional; they are "breaks" within an existence lived in light of a self-realization and characterized by absolutely "normal" actions, even if the behavior is always or prevalently altered.

I would like to examine ecstasy within sacro-religious experiences that are seen in connection with an encounter with something other. But how does one justify the fact that the encounter happens in relation to a peculiar alterity? One cannot begin from this question and preliminarily consider it valid, but it is more opportune to begin the investigation from the very constitution of the human being. This is not done in an abstract fashion. We begin by moving from the analysis of certain experiences that are traceable in historical and cultural contexts, even those that are very distant from one another, that show singular affinities. I refer to shamanism and the mystical experiences present in Hinduism, Christianity, and Sufism. I do this not only to establish whether the encounter with the Other or the other-world may be true or false but also to examine what happens in the human being when s/he places herself or himself in contact with a reality different from a more ordinary one.

I. ECSTASY IN SHAMANISM

We begin with shamanism, which appears as a residue of ancient attitudes that were present on all continents, especially in Asia and America and, therefore, in places that were far from one another, places that hardly facilitated communication, above all, in prehistoric times. Certainly, the descriptions that we have at our disposal are mediated by testimonies taken from Western observation, and this is a given that must always be taken into consideration. Notwithstanding the disparity among the narrators, the phenomenon appears with certain extraordinary, common traits.

Naturally, one can examine the phenomenon from diverse points of view: How does one becomes a shaman?; What is the relation between the shaman and the group s/he finds herself or himself in?; What is the history of shamanism, etc? It is important to focus our attention, however, on the moment in which the rite is activated.

It is interesting to note that Michel Perrin in his book on shamanism underlines that when the shaman does not exercise his or her function, s/he is a "normal" person.[1] The alteration of his personality happens in the case in which s/he is called to complete the rite. From our point of view, then, s/he falls into a trance or becomes ecstatic. These two words are employed to indicate a hyper-agitation or a loss of consciousness. Such states, one

being "active" and the other being "passive", seem to follow one another or to alternate one with the other, according to various testimonial reports. Often such states are arrived at by ingesting certain drugs, which makes the appearance seem quite artificial and this seems to put the authenticity of the phenomenon in crisis; the phenomenon, of course, is described by those who live it as a "passage" to another world that is recognizable by those present through bodily modifications. From a clinical point of view, one speaks of "altered states of consciousness". According to psychiatric studies, to which we often refer to understand what is happening, it is maintained that such altered states can come about through physical or mental causes or even through the ingestion of certain hallucinogenics, and in these cases the phenomenon is viewed as pathological. The contrary position is taken up by Mircea Eliade, who speaks of an encounter with the sacred.[2] There are those, however, who believe that there are cultural reasons that shape such changes, attributing to the social context a seeking out of exceptional practices. In general, this is the view of the ethnologist and historian of religion, who maintain, like Perrin, that the changes and effects of such changes are real "insofar as they become products of thought and, therefore, also produce effects on society, individual psychology, on one's well-being or one's not being well, on health and healing, all things that receive an essentially cultural definition".[3] This means that one cannot deny the reality of phenomena; rather, one must abstain from declaring whether such phenomena are true or false, that is, whether there is really a passage from this world to the other.

Concerning the fact that it is necessary to suspend judgment about truth or falsity, the ethnologist is correct. Concerning the attribution of a purely social meaning to that which happens, one could raise the objection that all of this is too reductive. Let us try, therefore, to examine the phenomenon from another point of view that is largely linked to the experience of the singular.

One can draw inspiration from the description of acts and objects used during sessions. According to Perrin, there is a rich symbolism and implicit theory of communication that involves all the senses; it serves to either establish contact with the other world or with those present at the rite. Drinking tobacco juice serves to create a crossing over of sensations and odors. In fact, the whole body opens up, and if it does not do so, contact with spirits becomes impossible. The sleep-like state of the shaman produces a sonorous current and in the wake of the sound and smells the spirits communicate through the chanting. Perrin's comment is very interesting, but it is insufficient. He affirms, "It is all in all a very materialistic concession to communication".[4] It is precisely the adjective "materialistic" that must be examined; we must

ask, what does "material" mean at this point? From a phenomenological perspective, one deals with the hyletic dimension.

It is possible to interpret the phenomenon of the trance or the ecstasy of shamanism on the basis of a hyletic analysis, connecting it to the moment of the sacred. In this case, one observes an intimate relation between bodily manifestations and the external world. Colors, objects and sounds are not strictly linked to localized sensations, understood as bearers of "sensations". Michael Oppitz remarks that often the shaman's drums have permanent ornamentation or, on the contrary, such ornamentation is painted specifically for the particular occasion, indicating the nature of the problem to be treated or the identity of the spirits.[5] Here, one notes the continuity between color and the nature of the problem, that is, between the type of color and the resonances that it produces on the psychic and spiritual levels.

I already noted the intimate connection between the corporeal dimension and the psychic one, but this does not signify that spiritual activity is not present; such activity manifests itself not only in the decision to complete the rite and the goal of the rite proper, which is often therapeutic, but also in the modality of its execution. The shaman re-lives myths, connecting to it journeys of his or her soul and the views of the other world. S/he also regulates ritual spaces, imposes specific ways of behavior, and enumerates the causes of various tragedies and sad events. In short, s/he activates his or her intellectual capacities. "Shamanism is an oral and theatrical art in which personal qualities are essential", writes Perrin.[6] The "paintings of sand" produced by certain shamans are adapted from time to time to suit the evolution of the malady and are dictated by contact with spirits. Undoubtedly, the shaman feels himself or herself as the mediator between the sacred and the community, and this mediation passes through the complex structure of the human being, the corpo-psychic dimension with its hyletic value, and the spiritual dimension. The hyletic furnishes the direction of one's comportment through kinesthetic references. The shaman contemplates and acts, but the relation between action and contemplation is not lived in a dichotomous fashion, as was said above; rather, his or her action is contemplation and his or her contemplation determines his or her acting. Dichotomies are more of a Western phenomenon; our culture operates with such distinctions. The grasping of the sacred is total. Ecstasy is the contact with the Power that renders one powerful and allows one to heal.

I have shown diverse "doses" of the hyletic and noetic moments within diverse cultures. One notes, in fact, that as one distances oneself from the archaic, the hyletic seems not to take on a more primary function. This is not to say that it ceases to exist, for it is part of the structure of the human being;

rather, its position weakens in favor of the noetic moment. In any case, the reflections within the complexity of human existence remain present.

II. CONTEMPLATION IN HINDUISM

Concerning the theme of the hyletic and noetic, it seems that the relation to the divine that is particular to the experience of yogis is to be understood as a triumph of the noetic over the hyletic. In the description that follows one will note that the hyletic aspect is surprisingly very present in the process of purification that typically characterizes a certain type of yoga, namely, krija yoga.

Having traced the hyletic and noetic moments as physical and psychic, this allows phenomenologists, especially Husserl and Edith Stein, to describe the human being as a complex and stratified entity constituted by three dimensions: the corporeal, the psychic and the spiritual. It is clear that these are always present and active, but it is possible to observe that from time to time in diverse cultural expressions each one of these is present in a certain dose. In Hinduism, the spiritual moment seems to prevail, but this does not manifest itself except by passing through the body and, in particular, through breathing in the case of kriya yoga.

Let us examine the experience of a yogi, Paramahnsa Yogananda, who is capable of comporting himself in an objective fashion when confronting himself. He is capable of examining his experiences, either spontaneous or provoked, in a critical, honest fashion.

In the case of Yogananda we find ourselves facing an interesting fact, namely, that he is writing his autobiography.[7] Here, we are not dealing with the description of an observer, but a self-description that is fully immersed in its cultural setting. Though not an outside observer, he is nonetheless able to understand himself within this environment.

It seems important to analyze a long passage of his autobiography in which the path that leads to the heart of contemplation is described. The technique used is the ancient one of kriya yoga that draws inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita: “Breathing in while exhaling and exhaling while breathing in, the yogi neutralizes both of these types of breathings. In this way, he takes away prana from the heart and brings it under his control”.[8] Another verse from the Gita says: “The expert of meditation (muni) is free when he seeks the Supreme Méta; he becomes capable of withdrawing from external phenomena, fixing his gaze on the centre point between the eyebrows, thereby neutralizing uniform flows of prana and apana in the nostrils and lungs. He dominates the sensory perceptions and intellect”.[9]

To summarize, the two passages describe the path that the yogi completes, which involves all dimensions, including the corpo-psychic and the spiritual. From the hyletic point of view, the two involved dimensions include breathing, the gaze, and that which can be defined as the "sensory mind" that the phenomenologists describe as psychic and the seat of desire, fear and anger. Edith Stein maintains that the life force is active in this dimension; it can be both dominated and integrated by another force, namely, the spiritual.[10] Interesting is the fact that in diverse cultural contexts one sees similar descriptions. In both cases, one retains the intellectual spiritual part as the seat of control; through this seat of control one is able to reach the supreme Méta and, therefore, eternal liberty.

Kriya yoga, however, presents itself as a bodily discipline, as mental control and meditation. This comes to be through the cosmic sound of the OM. Modulating this sound signifies being in tune with the Divine, Creative Word, cultivating the Divine Presence. Yogananda maintains that this state of divine union was also experienced by Saint Paul, who lived each and every day a union with Christ, understood in this case as Christic Consciousness. This seems to be highlighted by Saint Paul when he says in his Letter to the Corinthians: "I die every day". He declares himself dead in the sense that he sees himself capable of emitting or cutting the life current of his own senses in order to immerse himself in the Cosmic Spirit. It is clear that from the Hindu perspective of the divine vision divinity cannot be seen as personal as is the case in Judaism and, above all, in Christianity. Moreover, it can be supposed that Saint Paul converted following a mystical experience. That this provoked the fall from his horse, his blindness, all physical reactions, this should not surprise us. Immobility, the rigidity of the body, these belong to those who find themselves before the divine presence. Also, it is true that s/he who finds herself or himself in this state is also consciously aware of what is happening. Yogananda maintains that once one has had this experience, communication with God is possible under normal conditions, which also include regular everyday activities.

Controlling one's breathing not only aims at establishing an inner equilibrium and achieving elevated mental activities but it also ensures that the interior and exterior of the universe coincide. This could occur normally over a long period, even a thousand years. The practices of kriya yoga sometimes allow one to obtain this result during the course of one's life and in one's next existence.

This is defined as the "aerial way" and does not sacrifice the senses to the intellect; rather, it establishes circularity such that the mind is directly controlled by the life force. The goal is "to immerse the soul in divine realms or

in the world of matter. He (the yogi) is no longer constrained by the life force to enter the turbulent earthly sphere of sensations and unrequited thoughts".[11] This deals with the struggle against the superficial ego and the struggle to discover the immortal soul. "The true yogi, wholly denying himself—mind, will and sentiment—in relation to the false identifications with the desires of the body, uniting his mind with the super-conscious forces of the sacred, lives in this world as God has ordered. He is constrained neither by the impulses of the past nor the stupidity of the newly moving human being. The true yogi has ransomed Supreme Desire and has reached safely and soundly the last portal of the inexhaustible, blessed spirit".[12]

In relation to the anthropological and theological vision of the West, one can observe that, even if the goal of union with the divine is shared, the difference resides in the value attributed to the singularity of the human person. Union with the Cosmic Spirit seems to eliminate personal and individual characteristics, and not only the negative ones but also positive ones.

Contemplation, however, is an act of purification, which, through the rite of fire consumes all desires to reach wisdom.

III. CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM: PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND MYSTICAL HYLETIC

The field of Christian mystical experiences is most wide. It is wise, however, to delineate it, and the delineation I would like to introduce is that revolving around Carmelite mysticism, which I have come to know through my own studies of Edith Stein. This German phenomenologist dedicated certain of her important reflections to Carmelite mysticism. She was so interested that she decided to enter and become part of the Carmelite monastery of Cologne as a cloistered nun.

I begin by referring to a very important text of Edith Stein that we find in her *Ways to Know God*. In particular, I refer to the text concerning the supernatural experience of God and the specific relationship between revelation and inspiration. The fundamental moment of such an experience is the interior certainty in which God speaks. "This certainty can rest on the 'feeling' that God is present; one feels touched in his innermost being by him, by the One present. We call this the *experience* [*Erfahrung*] of God in the most proper sense. It is the core of all mystical living experience [*Erlebnis*]: the person-to-person encounter with God".[13]

The supernatural experience of God is distinct from both faith and intellectual knowledge, which always present themselves as mediated. In phenomenological terms, one could underline that in these cases the noetic

moment prevails; it is important, but it lacks an originary cognitive apprehension. The distinction between the two moments is theorized by Stein in this way: "In relation to those revelations in which God is not revealed as personal, but as a single truth or even a single event that is accessible to rational understanding, cognitive personal experience has an immediate quality to it. It can be called an immediate presence of reality in relation to that which only asserts itself only with its effects or that which is made present through its messengers. But, God 'is not immediately intuited' in the same way as something falling under the senses or even as something the mind knows by insight".[14] Here, immediacy and mediation have a hyletic and noetic character, not in the sense that one can do less than the other, but in the sense that one has a different weight compared to the other. In the first case, *hyle* exerts an extraordinary attracting and manifesting function. Presence is lived as a Power, to borrow from the language of van der Leeuw, that fills one totally, immediately and existentially; it involves the whole human being, who, in this case, is de-centered and not ego-centered.

This involvement can be studied *a parte subiecti*. This is why the aforementioned observations on the hyletic can be seen here as timely. Knowledge of God, as we have said already, this "feeling", comes to us through non-rational means and is the highest form of understanding that humans can achieve. One finds here an affinity with negative theology insofar as it demonstrates the incapability of the human mind to reach God with its own forces. A profound difference between these two ways can be seen in the modality of "feeling" that presents itself as a completely "positive" fact and that pushes the human mind to become aware of its not being able to achieve a similar experience by itself. At the same time, however, it makes one aware that it is possible to choose a different path. In fact, the awareness of the extraordinary involvement and seizing of the human being is activated in a very strong fashion. In any case, we must resort to the words of the mystics and to their descriptions.

Here, we are really speaking about a path and an *askesis*. Let us follow Edith Stein's words as found in her work on Saint John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. She dedicates numerous pages to her attempt to understand the particularity of mystical experience, distinguishing it from general religious experience and even from the experience of faith. Stein remarks, "The content of faith delivers material for meditation. In meditation the soul occupies its faculties with that which we have accepted in faith. . ." [15] But what Stein says following this passage is also significant. She says that we *reconfigure* this content through *images*; we *reflect* through *reason* and we decide through

the *will*. This noetic and egocentric comportment is accompanied by a hyletic component that could be understood from the investigation carried out above. One can observe that "The soul now remains in tranquil, peaceful, loving surrender to the Presence of God, whom it has come to know through faith without having meditated on any single article of truth".[16]

This deals with *acquired contemplation* that is certainly a devout and loving entry into God, but the *contemplation* that Saint John of the Cross is speaking about is something quite diverse. God permits a hidden and loving knowledge of Himself through faith; this can deeply penetrate contemplation. Certainly, faith prepares the soul, as the Carmelite saints show, but, moving beyond the observations of Stein, we know that mystical experience is present in diverse religious contexts, not only Christian ones. It can even happen to those whom do not live in a fully religious way. This can be seen when Stein strongly underlines the fact that the initiative belongs to God; this deals with a certain seizing. "The new form is a being seized by the God whose presence is felt or—in those experiences of the *Dark Night* when the soul is deprived of this sensible perception of His presence—the painful wound of love and the fervent longings that remain in the soul when God withdraws from it. Both are mystical experiences, based on that form of indwelling that is a person-to-person touch in the inmost region of the soul. Faith, on the contrary, and all that belongs to a life of faith rests on the indwelling by grace".[17]

Mystical experience, then, is de-centered with respect to the I. It deals with a manifestation, and also a seizing, that fills one with a *presence.* This is why the human being is involved through and through with the totality of his or her person. Privileged in this direction is the realm of the senses. We are dealing here with a *sensate presence* or even a *privation of the senses*. While "faith is primarily a matter of the intellect … contemplation is a matter of the heart, that is, the inmost region of the soul and, therefore, of all its faculties".[18] Presence is accompanied by interior sensations of happiness or excruciating nostalgia. At this point, the intellect and the will "stand and watch". They are not active; rather, they are seized. The divine presence germinates and ascends to love, penetrating, according to the description of Saint Teresa of Avila, the center of the castle, which is like the heart of the Andalusian palm, the intimate center where the soul is truly at home.

If it is true that in both faith and contemplation the soul is acted upon through God's initiative, the acceptance of Revelation happens through the operation of the intellect and the will. "In contemplation the soul meets God Himself, who takes possession of the soul".[19]

Religious experience, even experiences of faith, with respect to mystical experience, is only an attempt. If the hyletic moment is always present, even

in religious experience insofar as it always deals with a manifestation of Power and of the Other, as van der Leeuw says, it is the human being that seeks power and finds it; here "to seek" and "to find" indicate a sort of possessing on the part of humans. On the contrary, in mystical experience the completion of this seeking and finding is truly realized in one being seized.

Analyzing the texts of Saint John of the Cross, which are very poetic, we see that these texts succeed in expressing in a direct manner the whole range of interior experiences. Edith Stein insists precisely on the diverse levels of human involvement. For example, reading Saint John's *The Living Flame of Love* she traces a series of the soul's "sensations". "The activity of the Holy Spirit in the soul produces an inflamed love in which the will of the soul is one single love in union with the divine flame".[20] The flame *touches* and *wounds* and it executes a substantial and most pleasing action in the deepest center of the soul, which is an anticipation of the beatific vision. "It is true that the soul can only act through the bodily senses; but in this state it is completely subject to them, …. Insofar as all movements of the soul are divine, they are acts of God even though they always remain acts of the soul".[21] Here, one can think of Bernini's sculpture of Saint Teresa in ecstasy and the way he succeeded in expressing this situation of being subjected and ravished, which involves the whole person. Even the senses in their passivity participate in this union. Such a union is revelatory of the very nature of God. In fact, one feels that God is one and three. The following verse is revealing:

> "O cautery so sweet!
> O wound full of delight!
> O soft hand! O gentle touch!
> Taste of eternal life you give
> And pay off every debt.
> By slaying, you change death to life".[22]

Edith Stein suggests that the mystery of the Trinity is revealed not through rational reflection, which, according to Stein, could never have happened except through direct contact, through the *cauterization*, the *hand* and the *caress*; these represent respectively the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son. These do not deal with metaphors or symbols. These are *real* presences and *real* actions. "…each of the three persons participates in the 'divine work of union".[23] All of this provokes an extraordinary delight and it remains, according to the descriptions of the mystics, prevalently inside the soul, but "[i]n some cases"—Edith Stein comments—"the internal wounding is visible externally on the body. John here calls to mind the stigmata of Saint Francis…"[24]

If faith is an intellectual fact in the sense that it involves the human being and appeals to his or her intelligence and will, even eliminating and elevating them in an extraordinary way, theology, understood in its negative and positive forms, always represents the taking on of a human position. If we reflect, then, on Stein's *Ways to Know God*, we note that she explores all of these forms in order to understand their value. If apophatic theology plays an important role in her interpretation, we cannot underestimate the role of negative theology, which consists in taking away from the mind false images, limiting the human presumption to know things that it cannot possibly know, including the direct and essential way to contact God. Mystical experience, on the contrary, is characterized by an absolute manifestation, by the absolute initiative of God, who penetrates the human being, transforming him or her, expanding his or her limits, allowing him or her to experience God's presence directly without mediation. The noetic and hyletic dimensions, though correlated, are activated in diverse ways, furnishing us with diverse hesitations concerning the question of the ways to know God.

IV. MYSTICAL UNION AND CONTEMPLATION IN SUFISM

Giuseppe Scattolin, who comments and publishes work on Sufi mysticism in the tenth and eleventh centuries,[25] underlines affinities and differences relative to such experiences in the three monotheistic religions. He indicates that with respect to Judaism and Christianity, Islam considers God in a less personal way and, therefore, as less participatory in the life of humans. If this is true for Islam in its most general context, this is less true for Sufism, which is an interesting variant of the official religion and which has numerous testimonies of mystical experiences.

Examining the texts of the Sufi mystics, one notes that the characteristics of the union with the divine are present in Christianity, and in many different senses. They could be considered either in relation to the hyletic or noetic moments that transverse all the experiences examined up until now, even those that seem so remote or under the profile of a personal union, which is certainly more explicit in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Al-Gunayd, who lived in the second half of the ninth century CE, identifies Sufism with mystical death:

> Sufism is
> God making you die to yourself and bringing you back to life
> In Him;

The purification of your heart from assailing temptations
Of creatures;
Saying goodbye to natural inclinations;
Abstaining from the solicitations of the senses;
Adhering to spiritual realities;
Ascending by means of divine knowledge.[26]

But, notwithstanding the projected elimination of the corporeal dimension, the hyletic moment is not completely put aside; it returns in an unexpected way when it faces the theme of mystical love. Love—the insistence upon which allows one to note the existence of a relation with Christian mysticism—is the moment in which corporeity is once again co-involved, even if in a transfigured way. The initiative of the contact between human being and the divine certainly comes from God, who, to show his presence, says:

When I love, I will be his eye with which
He sees,
His hearing with which he hears,
His hand with which he subdues.[27]

The psychic dimension is not even annihilated. The mystic maintains the desire for God; this is even a means to achieve contemplation:

God gives to the Gnostic the ardent desire
To contemplate His essence; therefore,
Knowledge becomes vision;
Vision becomes revelation;
Revelation becomes contemplation;
Contemplation becomes existence with and in God.[28]

The point of arrival is a union, understood in an ontological sense, a real and existential union as happens in the experiences already examined. This union can be described with accents on psychophysical experiences, which strike the human being in a particular way. We see this when John of the Cross and Al-Hallag speak of the night. The latter says:

O night of abandonment, that passes
At once slow and then quickly;
What does this matter?
He, the Friend, is the hope

Of my vigil
And my memory![29]

Union comes in an absolutely personal way:

I saw
My Lord
With the eye of my heart.
I asked Him, "Who are You?"
He answered, "I am You."[30]

This union determines a unity in which space and time exist no longer. The imagination no longer is capable of producing an image of this presence. If this presence can no longer be understood fully by a finite being,

Present, absent,
Near, far,
No sign can
Define Him.[31]

In fact,

He
Is closer
Than thought to perception,
He is more intimate
Than scintillating inspiration.[32]

I have dealt with sacral and religious phenomena that are both far and close to one another in order to show that it is possible to find a reference to a human structure beyond differences, which shows itself to be unifying from an anthropological perspective, especially in its openness to the sacred and the divine. It is possible, then, to establish deep relations in extraordinary situations, which, with regard to the testimonies reported, even though they are desired by human beings, can be realized only from the Other that overcomes us and that comes to meet us, as van der Leeuw says.

The anthropological reading proposed by phenomenology allows us to understand how such an encounter articulates itself in the human condition, which is finite, but it is not excluded from making contact with Something that fills it, giving it the possibility of knowing its profound meaning. It can be seen from the phenomena described that they are understandable only if one

analyzes the complexity and stratification of the human being, if one makes evident its components and if one knows how to understand the particular dose in which every aspect and moment—the body, the psyche, and the spirit—show themselves within diverse experiences that have shared communal traits. This is why it is possible to group them in specific territories that follow general criteria. Above all, that which emerges from the descriptions is that the human being shows himself/herself as possessing in the depth of his/her being or "core", to borrow an expression from the phenomenologists, an openness to the Other. The configuration of the encounter with the Other can vary, but communal traits are traceable in diverse religio-sacral experiences and, above all, with reference to that which is called mystical experience. The two moments of ecstasy and contemplation manifest themselves in such experience with the same recurring characteristics.

NOTES

[1] M. Perrin, *Le Chamanisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002[2]).
[2] M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).
[3] M. Perrin, *Le Chamanisme*, p. 107.
[4] Ibid., p. 53.
[5] M. Oppitz, *Drawings on Schamanic Drums* in *Res*, 22, 1992.
[6] M. Perrin, *Le Chiamanisme*, p. 64.
[7] P. Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, (Los Angeles: Self-realization Fellowship Publishers, 1958).
[8] Ibid., p. 226.
[9] Ibid.
[10] E. Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*.
[11] P. Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 231.
[12] Ibid., p. 232.
[13] E. Stein, *Ways to Know God*: *The "Symbolic Theology" of Dionysius the Areopagite and Its Objective Presuppositions*, in *Knowledge and Faith*, Translated by Walther Redmond, (Washington, DC: ICS, 2000), p. 104.
[14] Ibid., p. 106.
[15] E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, p.182.
[16] Ibid., p. 182.
[17] Ibid., p. 183.
[18] Ibid., p. 18.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., p. 187.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 195.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. 197.

[25] G. Scattolin, *Esperienze mistiche nell'Islam—I primi tre secoli (Mystical Experiences in Islam — The First Three Centuries)* (Bologna: Editrice Missionaria Italiana, 1994).
[26] Ibid., p. 95.
[27] Ibid., p. 96.
[28] Ibid., p. 95.
[29] Ibid., p. 124.
[30] Ibid., p. 119.
[31] Ibid., p. 121.
[32] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

GOD AS "THIRD" OR AS "YOU"?: COMPARING PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The aim of this last chapter is to summarize all that was said before in order to pin point my main themes and arguments, ultimately establishing a link between thinking and believing.

I. THE THIRD FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The encounter with the other is experienced in the immediacy of the experience of the similarity that binds us; this is undeniable in our capacity to live and do things in the same way. If we examine further such experience, we notice that this similarity presents us with a challenge. On one hand, the recognition of our common humanity on the physical, psychic and spiritual levels makes us feel united and close. On the other hand, we observe the differences that constitute our inner worlds and that make us doubt the former and its value. Within the tension between belonging to a humanity that is both shared and distant, which is inevitably experienced, there resides in a very deep way the difficulty of human existence. It oscillates between the joy of the encounter and the pain of incomprehensibility, between the happiness of living together and the sadness of incommunicability.

A deeper excavation of human interiority allows us to describe at an existential level the structure of lived experience and the overcoming of the apparent contradiction between belonging to a community and being a stranger. This is to be understood in the sense that, through this excavation, one can give reasons for this tension, even if one cannot radically eliminate it. How is it possible, therefore, to describe interior experience in terms of awareness? It is precisely this level of "awareness" that draws my attention.

To this end, I believe that a plausible contribution can be made within the large panorama of the history of philosophy in the sense that awareness shows what actually happens and, therefore, makes possible an essential description. It is always wise to take history into account in order not to fall into a state of ignorance or presumption. Let us, then, turn to the analyses given to us by Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein. What follows is inspired by what both

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describe as interiority. Their descriptions serve as a starting point and as a point of arrival for all that is received by us as human beings.

In that which can be considered his spiritual testimony, *Teleology in the History of Philosophy*,[1] Husserl articulates a sphere of subjectivity, always with great humility and, at the sametime, conviction. Borrowing from Kant, he defines it as "transcendental"; he profoundly distinguishes his analyses from those of the thinker from Königsberg. One can see Husserl as surveying a new land, often sought, especially by modern philosophers, but never reached. He does this by reasoning about the *quoad nos* and, paradoxically, *the quoad nos* insofar as it is *in se*. To whom does truth reveal itself, if not to the human being?

Earlier, I discussed awareness as a fundamental theme. Awareness doubles itself on two levels, on primary and secondary levels. First, there is the awareness that accompanies all acts of lived-experience. Second, there is the awareness that generates self-consciousness. This distinction is of extraordinary importance and one finds in it the paradox of human beings, who are both the subject and object of investigation. Primary and secondary awareness can even exchange roles with respect to their value. It is clear that the primary awareness that accompanies every act as an interior light, as Edith Stein says,[2] has a foundational value, but without the second type of awareness, which is linked to lived-experience, namely, that of reflection, no possibility would exist of having the necessary distance to examine and re-elaborate upon our awareness.

I seize upon this distinction because it allows one to individuate the sphere of lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*) in their purity, that is, in their essentiality, in order to understand their function. This is the sphere of the flow of lived experiences.

Keeping in mind that which has been said already about lived experiences, one can ask how is it that I know/recognize the difference between the thing deprived of life and that which is animate? Furthermore, how do I know the difference between different grades of animate being, for example, the difference between the animal and human worlds? How do I live through the primary experience that is not still reflexive? If I immediately understand this difference, this means that I live my humanity and the humanity of the other in a direct way. I realize that I can then elaborate all this in a reflexive way and I live this very experience in its particularity insofar as it is distinct from all my other lived experiences. Viewing the other human being and viewing an inanimate thing, always form the viewpoint of seeing, activates the same perceptual acts, but I know that the first lives like me and the second does not do so. How, then, do I reach such awareness? It is necessary to

observe that I have activated simultaneously the lived-act of perception and another lived-act, different form the first; this is so because "I feel". This is the primary sense of *ein-fühlen*. Hence, I am immediately aware that the other is similar to me and I understand the other in his or her un-repeatable singularity and as belonging to the human community. Notwithstanding this similarity, which can fill me with joy because I discover something similar to me as in the case of Adam's joy when he discovered Eve at his side, a distance is delineated between that which I am living and something that is "other" to me. I discover that the other can live that which I too can live, but I do not know truly if s/he is truly living it and even if I know it is the other who lives it. Perhaps I wish to live the experience "together", sharing and simultaneously living through the experience, both experiencing it as one, but our reciprocal individuality places itself as an obstacle.

Living the other as "myself" is the lived-act of experience that we can define as empathic, an immediate act of recognition, and the encounter tells me that the other is also recognizing me as a human being, "feeling" that which I live. All this may seem too optimistic because my comportment or that of the other may not display such recognition. On the contrary, it could show that the difference between human beings and things has not been understood. This is what is constantly denounced as reification in philosophical reflection. One can think here of Kant's second categorical imperative, taken up and amplified by Husserl in the following manner: "'To treat humans and animals as mere things' has, to be sure various senses—a juridical and a moral sense—and, on the other hand, a scientific sense".[3] It is interesting that here one distinguishes all that which is animate from that which is inanimate. So, animals are brought closer to human beings, but they are not confused with them. Husserl adds, "From a moral-practical standpoint, I am treating a human being as a mere thing if I do not take him as a person related to the moral, as a member of the moral association of persons, in which the world of morals is constituted".[4]

If we draw closer to the phenomena we are examining, we recognize that we never live a single act one at a time; rather, we live through a series of acts, an intertwining, that is often difficult to take apart reflexively. Moreover, we become aware that we are more affected by that which we live at the emotional level. This means that acts, which we can call psychic, are those that draw our attention in a forceful manner, that appeal to us with great insistence, pushing to the background other preliminary acts, those which led to an emotive reaction. I must see something (perceptual lived experience) in order to recognize it as similar to me (lived experience of entropathy) and in order to take on an attitude concerning it (the lived experience of attraction or repulsion). Insofar as Husserl traces such regularity, he maintains that there

is a "style" of experience. From that first connection a spiritual sentiment of love-hate can also be generated, understood as an ethical comportment of acceptance or reflection. Here, we are dealing with a rapid experience and everything happens simultaneously. The complete acts are distinguishable only if they are submitted to attentive reflection.

There is an intertwining of lived acts in me, in the sphere of immanence. It is opened intentionally toward something that is outside me and this something is understood entropathically or empathically. This means that it is similar to me, it is an *alter ego* and, therefore, a "you". In every case, this "you", who is also recognized as an *alter ego*, is always transcendent with respect to me. Here, we are dealing with a transcendence within the plane of immanence, an horizontal transcendence, which means that we are two. We are not the same thing; our singularity is reciprocal and cannot be eliminated. I can or cannot recognize that the other is similar to me for a series of reasons that need to be investigated.

In the case where the recognition of the other is obfuscated, the you becomes impersonal, a stranger, hostile or indifferent; the other becomes a third. This is one of the possible understandings of "being a third". The other can also be a third with respect to an exclusive personal relation that does not include every human being as an iterated you; there is only one you or only certain yous.

From this perspective, one understands the difference between diverse forms of human association, including the mass, society and the community. It is more or less in the presence of personal relations that these forms can be distinguished, according to Edith Stein,[5] and it is the community that is distinguished by its personal relations. The number of members of a community does not matter; what really matters is the fact that the you can be iterated to such a point that it constitutes a "personality" of a higher order. We speak of "personality" here because we have an "expansive" notion of person insofar as all single personalities are recognized in this expansive personality; each single person is linked by personal links. The process of expansion can reach a point where it includes all of humanity.

Certainly, one need not always defer to the "third" because even community, for example, can present itself as a third in a grammatical sense, and this points to the human capacity to generalize and universalize human relations; the operation of objectivation is useful in an orienting and even in a communicative way, both in conceptual and linguistic senses. That which allows the difference to emerge is an ethical attitude.

Similarity, accepted or rejected, is the key to understanding the significance of human relations. The analysis of empathy leads, in fact, to the sources of

analogy. The insistence of Husserl on the quality of the analogical relation, from which point the relations between humans emerge, is particularly significant. Because empathy is a lived and intuitive act, the analogical relation that it institutes is not a "reasoning" about something. Edith Stein observes that it can serve as the basis of a reasoning. One can affirm, then, that one has found the experiential source of analogy, which can yield its copious fruits on the reflexive level. It does so, above all, with respect to the human capacity to speak about God in those currents of thought, especially from the Middle Ages, that consider the human being to be created in the image of God.[6]

The fully lived analogical relation with the other can lead to the recognition of the value of a common humanity and can push one to complete coherent actions for such a common humanity; it can also lead to a misrecognition, and through repulsion, refusal, and hate, it can lead one to carry out certain actions that tend to eliminate or cancel the other. All that remains is my I. The ethical dimension is here delineated in its essential nature. Good, evil, freedom, all of these are essentially folded into the aforementioned description. Value, non value, self-determination or -conditioning are contained in the dynamics here discussed. It is wise to make them explicit and thematic because one can then reflect more amply on the ethical life. All of this, however, is indissolubly linked with recognition, not least of which is the recognition of the other as *alter ego*, a you.

The *alter ego* is always a you, and since it is iterable, others are always a you, be it in the case of acceptance or refusal. If I posit myself in community with a particular you, I can consider others as a third. In other words, they exist outside of this relation. It is necessary, however, to examine the motive behind such an exclusion. One can evaluate if this exclusion comes from a point of view that is relative to a given circumstance, which is not absolutized. Also, one can consider it as truly exclusive in the sense that others are truly considered as others. We enter once again into the case examined above, which concerns ethical comportment. There are different ways to understand the other, which implies the assumption of diverse attitudes: linguistic, grammatical motives, which always have at their base a showing/considering of a reality that presents itself and which is ideally indicated to someone, a you, who is different from both. Here, connotation, denotation and naming enter the scene; in fact, a meaning is individuated and denoted for this reality; there are also ethical motives that are based on emotive acts traceable on the psychic plane. In every case, we are in a particular situation in which immanence and transcendence are intertwined. The other, just as the you and the third, always transcend the I and, at the same time, such transcendence maintains the quality of an I thanks to the similitude between all of these

individuals. Here, we are dealing with an immanent transcendence, not only in the sense that it is recognized in the immanence of the single human being, but, from an ontological perspective, it reveals the same quality and it places itself on the horizontal plane, which is only such if it is confronted by a vertical plane, that is, with another type of transcendence.

At this point, it is necessary to give an account of the relation immanence-transcendence on the plane of existence. From an epistemological perspective and through a phenomenological analysis, the known object, insofar as it is known, is immanent in the subject who knows it. Intentional knowing and the object known, understood as the relation between noesis and noema, are lived though in the transcendental sphere. The object known, however, insofar as it is existing and insofar as we are referring to a physical object, transcends such a relation and, therefore, posits itself in a non-immanent way. If this is true, already at this level the transcendence of the object manifests itself as a transcendence in the ontological sense; this is so because the noema, that is, the object known, refers back to the object and cannot act as a substitute for it, even if the recognition of the existence of the object is understood in a noematic sense. Existence has its own autonomy with respect to the subject that recognizes it.[7] This description of the relation between noesis and noema need not be scandalous as it was for the realist phenomenologists, including Hedwig Conrad-Martius. These realist phenomenologists accused Husserl of not recognizing the value of the existential dimension because he identified existence with the noema. In reality, such an identification only has meaning in a cognitive sense. Who recognizes existence? and how does recognition happen within the internal sphere of lived experience of human beings? The reality is always the *quoad nos*, understood from a cognitive perspective, but this does not exclude that it exists in itself.[8]

Radicalizing and extending reflection, one can observe that it is we that hold truth in clay vases, as Saint Paul says, but this does not mean that truth assumes the dimensions of such clay vases. Being-held is only the limited and partial recognition of something that essentially overcomes every single, true thing. This is so because it is qualitatively recognized as truth.

It is clear that this is difficult terrain because the skeptical objection is always ambushed, and we could possibly ask what the origin is of this very skeptical objection. To succeed in making this move would be important from a phenomenological point of view. Husserl liquidates the objection, affirming that the skeptic falls into a contradiction because, absolutizing the affirmation of the non-existence of truth, s/he proclaims a truth. One could go further and add, as does Edith Stein, that the human being lives in the tension between the finite and the infinite; the human being always has the freedom to choose one

of the two terms and, therefore, can consider even a particular as absolute. But how does one know that it is particular? How is one constrained to accept finitude and that which satisfies it? How does one come to affirm that all is relative? Particularity, finitude, and relativity only have meaning if they are made to relate to that which has no confines and which manifests itself as a totality without limits. Where and how does one experience the overcoming of this limit?

II. THE DIVINE AS YOU AND AS THIRD

What is the Divine?

One can tackle this problem from another perspective by, remaining at the level of human encounters. One can ask how it is that by the human being, when s/he recognizes the other as an *alter ego* in an explicit fashion, be it on the theoretical or practical levels, desires to "become one" with the other, and from whence does the awareness of the validity of such an ideal situation derive?

A critical view of all this can be found also in the "improper" use of the term "empathy", which insistently continues to circulate in our epoch. There are some words and expressions that occasionally become fashionable, and fashion indicates a tendency, an orientation, and even the attempt to resolve a problem. The term empathy is fashionable and is used to indicate being close to the other, the attempt to understand him or her, it is even used to speak of identification in therapeutic practices.[9] The term is often used to indicate sympathy and receptivity, thereby showing the movement of psychic attraction and the caring action that is proper to the spirit.

Very different is the significance of empathy as entropathy that we discussed earlier. Here, we are really speaking about the *Einfühlung* of the phenomenologists. With this term we are dealing with a particular form of lived experience that consists of understanding alterity; empathy is different form sympathy, antipathy or indifference. All of these can accompany the empathic act, but they must not be confused with it. This difference is significant and points to something profound that must be analyzed. The short-circuit, here used when discussing empathy, is constituted by retaining that the recognition of the other as a similar human being seems to me to be accompanied by an attitude of benevolence or proximity or, reversing matters, that benevolence or welcoming seem to be the recognition of a common humanity. The other is always recognized, even in an implicit way, as a human being. Even if it were to be rejected, there is recognition. Empathy, then, is a primary and essential mode that can justify benevolence, proximity, and the desire

to be the same or identical with the other. It is this very identification that interests us here.

Distinguishing empathy in its correct usage, then, results in two specific meanings for the term. First, there is a recognition of the other insofar as the other is similar to me. Second, there is a movement that draws one closer to the other. The second movement is possible because it is a consequent of the first. If there were no first act, there would be no second one.

The first movement attracts and overcomes one because, as Feuerbach asks in *The Essence of Christianity*, what more does a human being desire than to be loved?[10] And, what is love if not the acceptance of the other, beyond his or her limits and weaknesses? Following the line of thought of Husserl's most beautiful reflection on ethical love,[11] to which we shall return later, and not forgetting the observations of Feuerbach, one can maintain that only the attempt or effort of taking on the other in his or her interest and fragility can be observed between human beings. If this is the case, then the recourse to God becomes inevitable.

Before discussing God, let us turn our attention to the more general question of the divine. What is the divine if not that which understands, promotes, exalts, fulfils, that which pushes us to act in the horizontal dimension but which also urges us not to be content with it, as van der Leeuw says?[12] Does not one come to encounter the divine, in its Power, allowing human beings to see what human eyes cannot see?

The two reflections, namely, those of Feuerbach and Husserl, even if they are opposed to one another insofar as the former speaks of the illusion of the encounter with the divine, whereas the latter speaks of the absolute positivity of such an encounter, demonstrate the inevitability of such an encounter. There are many authors that also speak in this way. How does Feuerbach maintain that the maximum human aspiration is to be loved? Is it not precisely because of this that humans project the illusion to themselves of Someone that can love them truly? How can such an illusion and hope arise if not through the positive experience of an encounter? Where is such an encounter to happen?

One could reply that all of this is fruit of the human capacity to idealize, but this reply only skirts the problem. How does the human being idealize and what is the ideal? Something that does not exist, but could exist? Something that is not seen, felt, experienced, but which is strongly present, because it is seen with the eyes of the spirit? The objection to such an affirmation could consist in maintaining that the spirit does not exist and is, therefore, an illusion. But, the ideal that is understood, even though it is not concretely touched, is precisely that which proves the human capacity to understand it

and is, therefore, the seeing of a spiritual activity. Ideality and spirit refer back to one another in a reciprocal fashion.

Another objection arises. It could be that spirit elaborates in a fictional fashion this very ideal. We could ask, however, how is it that the finite human spirit, which has many clues to hold this position, could elaborate such a position of love that is so expansive such that it has no limits? Whence does the feeling of such a great and incommensurable presence arise, and whence does the capacity to elaborate upon this presence through the idea of infinity, omnipotence and eternity arise? One could also choose not to see all of this; this is the source of skepticism, relativism and atheism. All of this appeals to human liberty and could be even read as the proof of human liberty, which could refuse to welcome such a presence for the precise reason that is a Presence, as Augustine and Anselm have shown.

Following our earlier line of thought concerning love, it is Husserl who recognizes the necessity of admitting that only divine love, that is, the love of Christ, completely fulfils human beings. This love is an example and a solicitation to *imitatio* because of Christ's humanity. He showed, for example, and this is truly an extraordinary thing for human beings, that it is possible to love one's enemy. Christ solicits us to follow Him in this direction, and this could have only been done by one who is the source of love.[13] This is theoretical, rational, and rigorous reflection that philosophically clarifies the essence of the religious dimension, which does not leave it within the obscurity of the irrational; it justifies it, welcoming it within the dimension of reasonableness. Here, the relation between *similitude* and *dissimilitude* plays itself out. Christ is similar to the human being, understood empathically by his contemporaries as an *alter ego*; He was even understood as someone who was most high and as taking away one's angst by welcoming His Presence. Here, one thinks of the invocation of Saint Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and recognized that you are the Chosen One of God". (Jn 6: 67) How is one to recognize the Eternal? Certainly, only if it manifests or reveals itself, but how is it possible to welcome it if there was not already a trace of its presence? In this way, we return to Augustine and Anselm.

III. YOU AND THE THIRD: RELIGIONS FACING ONE ANOTHER

In this case, one can affirm that the Divine is a You. The Judaeo-Christian tradition has largely made evident the relation with the divine, understood as person. This is the case because the divine reveals itself as person.[14] The revealed Trinitarian aspect of God is for Christianity that which validates

and confirms the Presence of God in human beings. Internal and historical presence intertwine and are confirmed in events. The creation story, which centers around the fact that human beings, both male and female, are made in the image of God, finds its confirmation in Christ. This is the traceable line of the *similitude*, which implies a trace of the divine in us. That there is only a trace is indicated by the awareness of the fragility, limitation, and the misery that accompanies human existence, which is threatened by evil, sickness and death. The You presents itself on a completely different plane, as Potent, as a *maior dissimilitudo*. It is immanent and even transcendent, but this transcendence is very different from that of the physical world and of other human beings.[15]

One could object that this happens internally within a particular religious tradition and if one were to examine the history of religions, the sacred and the divine do not have a personal character.[16] This is true for both ancient religions in which the sacral is preponderant as well as for many historical religions, not only Eastern ones but also for Islam. This is the case because it was born on the shoulders of Judaism. It was already noted how difficult it was in Judaism to admit God as a person in an authoritative fashion. On my view, two considerations are necessary; one concerns the objective structure of these phenomena and the second focuses on subjectivity and the figure of the follower of these religions.

From the first point of view, even if the divine or the sacred were understood as a distant and impersonal Power, mediations are often necessary to bring the divine closer. Here, we are dealing with intermediating divinities, as is the case with many polytheistic religions. This is very clear in the case of Hinduism where one speaks of Brahman's anthropomorphic manifestations. For example, one can think of the original Trimurti, incarnation, or, according to Acharuparambil,[17] the theophany of Krishna and all the other divinities; there are more than a thousand gods, it is said, indicating a non-definable number of divinities. These gods are also said to be theriomorphic, residues of a culture in which the sacred is diffuse and pervasive; the gods are said to be in all of natural reality. This is also true in Buddhism where divinities are absorbed in the principle of absence-presence constituted by the Nothing. They cede their place to the mediation of the Enlightened One, not God; one could say that they cede to an object of worship or veneration, which assures the constant presence of the divinity among the faithful with each and every successive incarnation.

I wish to stop and examine this perspective of the faithful follower, especially as understood from the vantage points of Rudolf Ott and Gerardus van der Leeuw. What does it mean to be faithful? What motivates the Hindu to

go to the temple, the Jew to the synagogue, the Muslin to the mosque, and the Christian to church? What is the motivation that pushes people within contexts of the archaic-sacral to carry out rites in particular places: the tree isolated on the savanna, the highest mountain that dominates all other mountains, and the miraculous grotto? The trace of the Presence lived interiorly requires a fulfillment as it passes through the psyche that understands it, manifesting a process of attraction. It moves from the psyche to the spirit, which elaborates it and makes it conscious, manifesting to it, in turn, various spiritual sentiments. With the assumption of various theoretical and practical positions it establishes more and more personal relations. The external traces that can lead to the divine are retained as such because they are recognized as traces, moving from the interior presence of the originary trace.

The sacred or the divine, even if theorized as impersonal, as Third, is in its depth always a Power that one encounters on the street, fulfilling various human aspects, as van der Leeuw says. Only something that is "similar" to the human being, even though it is very different, is able truly to fill the human, only a You can be the object of religious contact; one can only be "faithful" to a You.

All this validates, from an experiential point of view, the biblical story of the creation of humans in the "image" of God. To be an image means being a guardian, even if in an indirect way, of that which one is an image. Here, we are not dealing with a fading image, but an analogy that realizes itself on the existential plane. Insofar as one speaks of creation, a glimmer of the originary reality remains in the image.

From a doctrinal point of view, the Supreme Being, the Celestial Being, the Earth Mother of ancient peoples, the Brahman of the Hindus, the Nothing of Buddhism, Allah of the Moslems, putting together diverse religious experiences that have manifested themselves in various epochs, all of these configure themselves as the Third. The Third overcomes and justifies human and natural reality. But the various rites of these religions are always an attempt to establish direct and personal contact with the sacred or the divine, which in many cases assume anthropomorphic connotations. These rites also need human beings that have been specifically designated to carry out the rites through priestly mediation.

A significant proof of this can be seen in the prayer invoked in the Bhagavad Gita. Here we see how a faithful person makes contact with the divine.[18]

> "Certainly, O Krishna, the universe finds in your joy its motives for pleasure and joy. Monsters scatter in all direction and lines of the perfect ones revere you. (11, 36)
> And, why must they not revere you, O Holy One, You more venerable than the Brahman; O Creator Originator, infinite, Lord of all the gods, the refuge of the Universe! You are indestructible; you surpass being and non-being. (37)

> I genuflect and prostrate my body before you; I ask for your grace, my adorable Lord! Be with me, O God, as a father to a son, as a friend to a friend, as a lover to a lover." (40)

This text is particularly complex and stratified. Krishna presents himself as the incarnation of the Brahman. Here, one is able to establish a personal relation and in this sense becomes more venerable because it is possible to call him Father. The prayer flows spontaneously. It flows from a human being to a spirit that can comprehend him or her. The person tries to establish a relation through empathy by recognizing the other as an *alter ego*, as a you, but because the other presents itself in a most eminent way it becomes a You. The third person cedes its place to the second person, who can be "son", friend, or lover. Analogy operates here on two levels. First, there is the analogy that is born from empathy through which a relation of similitude is established. Second, there is also analogical reference that may not even be articulated in a reflexive way: You, Supreme Being, are like a Father; as I establish a relation on the human level of paternity and love, so You can establish it with me. You are Father, and in the highest sense.

That the Third is transformed in prayer to a You can also be seen in the poetry of Al-Hallag quoted above.[19]

> I saw
> My Lord
> With the eye of my heart.
> I asked Him, "Who are You?"
> He replied, "I am you."
>
> For You
> The "where" no longer exists,
> The where finds no place
> In You:
> Where is no longer,
> Where you are.

One observes here the presence of God in every place and particularly in the human being. But, I realize that the few words that I am writing in the form of a commentary express in an impersonal way the third person. Recall that what is being said through prayer and poetry is expressed in direct speech. The You dominates, there is a reciprocal you. The faithful believer who sees God with the eye of his or her heart and, therefore, within one's profound being, which Edith Stein calls the core of the person,[20] knows that it is a You and s/he knows that God also considers him or her as a you. A wonderful

personal relation is established. One could object by saying that we are in Sufism, a particular variation of Islam, but if Islam is capable of generating within itself Sufism, this confirms that no "thirdness" can eliminate the second person from the religious point of view. In every religion when the faithful invokes his/her God, the invocation is an intimate conversation, even if one is not aware of it.

IV. THINKING THE "THIRD" PHILOSOPHICALLY

If religions maintain an ambiguity of the relations with the divine, understood in terms of the third or you, this is due to the dissimilitude between the divine and human beings; the divine is recognized as a Power and is, therefore, vertically transcendent. This happens because of the tension between presence and absence, which characterizes the relationship of the divine to the human. Al-Hallag writes,

> Present, absent,
> Near, far:
> No sign
> Can define Him.[21]

The difficulty of the definition challenges us anew. And, even if it is accepted by the human mind and is understood as a definition, an elaboration is necessary on the intellectual level. Western thought, which has its roots in Greek thought, first accepted this challenge in a double direction. First, it theorized the oneness of the divine. Second, it sought to give to the divine an essential description. Monotheistic or better entheistic—using the Greek word "en", that is, one—tendencies, already present on the religious level,[22] are rationally elaborated. The Logos of Heraclitus, the Sphere of Parmenides, the God of Xenophon, the Good of Plato, the pure Act of Aristotle, all of these appeared in a cultural environment where polytheism dominated and, given this reality, they may have very well appeared as anomalies. They are, in fact, an intellectual elaboration of the Power that is understood as including various aspects of an un-definable reality. To understand and speak about such aspects, one must objectivate and make objective, and this means positing the thing in a dimension of impersonality. The You becomes in this way a Third.

Medieval philosophers were aware of this tension; they lived deeply religious experience, but they also wanted to speak of the divine as the Greek intellectuals did. These medieval thinkers felt strongly the contrast between You and the Third, even as they tried to articulate it. This is where their

originality resided. The distinction between "feeling" and "thinking" God crosses all of medieval thought and can be seen in the Middle Ages' greatest philosophers; these philosophers are great because they thought through the "maximum" of thought. With Augustine's "if you understand, it is not God"[23] and Anselm's "Therefore, Lord, you who grant understanding to faith, grant that, insofar as you know it is useful for me, I may understand that you exist as we believe you exist, and that you are what we believe you to be".[24] The paths of medieval philosophers come together. Both Augustine and Anselm understand the limits of and borders between philosophical reflection and religious experience. They know that if there were no profound experience of God, one could not discuss it at an intellectual level. But, they also know that this level is absolutely insufficient for knowing God. And, it is good that it remains this way. There is no regret for a more ample knowledge; rather, there appears a clear acceptance of the limit and the awareness of the limit of being able to understand God intellectually. In fact, understanding and knowing God comes from God's grace. Anselm writes, "Now we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought".[25] Faith tells us this; in other words, it is originary religious experience that gives us this interior awareness.

It is possible, in fact, for both philosophers to posit a rational argument that confirms that which is believed, that is, which confirms that fulfillment of an openness to the Other, an openness present in the core of the human being. This comes through the successive stages of Revelation, from the Old Testament to the New.

In Chapter XXXI of his *De vera religione*, Augustine maintains that God is immutable nature that transcends the rational soul; He is that immutable truth that is said to be the law of all arts and the soul. When God judges, He does so on the basis of that norm that transcends us. We must nevertheless recognize this, and this is a rational recognition. The first life and the first essence are there where one finds the first wisdom. Anselm, remaining on the same theoretical plane, maintains that it is the fool, who, not wishing to accept the presence of an aperture and fulfillment, denying it at the intellectual level, is able to be solicited and remain on this plane in order to reason about the affirmation: "You are something than which nothing greater can be thought". The *insipiens* or the fool is constrained in this way, always intellectually, to ask himself about the origin of this affirmation. This affirmation cannot be produced by the finitude of human thinking; rather, it refers back to what Edith Stein, following Anselm, calls "originary thought", which consists in the inseparability of that which we in our attempt to understand call the coincidence of existence and essence.

We do not succeed in understanding perfectly that which we see, and we must be content to see partially this original thought as Anselm did. We try to give it a form, and it is for this reason, says Stein, that Anselm`s thought is not a proof (*Beweis*) or consequence (*Folgerung*) of a rational line of thought; rather, it is an attempt to give form (*Umformung*) to the intuition of the perfect unity of essence and existence.[26]

The discussion of the *insipiens* carried out by Augustine and Anselm, and taken up once again by Stein, returns to that which cannot be thought, namely, the "Greatest", understood as a Third in an impersonal manner. Concerning the aforementioned circular testimony between religious experience and rational reflection, Anselm continues, "And, this is you, O Lord our God. O You exist so truly, O Lord that you cannot be thought not to exist".[27] Medieval thinkers know very well how to distinguish the profound belief in God and that which can be spoken about God from the viewpoint of reason. Thomas, who raises the question in very objective terms rooted more in external than internal knowledge, must, according to Edith Stein, accept Anselm's perspective.[28]

It is not possible here to retrace these two modes in which God is treated in Western thought. It is clear that the objective philosophical point of view tends to become prevalent in modern thought, especially when Pascal defines Descartes' philosophy of God as "useless and uncertain" because the latter uses God to give a small stroke to the world in order to create it. Descartes does not establish a personal relation with God, at least as a philosopher. That an objectivation of the absolute principle in a rational sense almost always corresponds to a displacement onto the plane of religious experience is demonstrated in the relation between Hegel and Kierkegaard. Here, one runs the risk of absolutizing either rationalism or fideism; in more recent times fideism accompanies "weak" philosophical attitude or, paradoxically, a nihilistic attitude.

"Only a God can save us".[29] If this is absolutely true for everyone, and here we are dealing with the absolute that is certainly born from the recognition of the validity of religious faith, the task of the philosopher, which is precisely a task, is to understand what this affirmation means. The task is that of thinking about the human possibilities of understanding regarding this affirmation. If this understanding, which is articulated on the intellectual plane of reflection, is absolutized as the only way and possibility, it becomes arbitrary; this is so because it does not recognize the other possibility, namely, the one relative to religious experience, which is not optional, but foundational for human beings.

One could maintain that in-depth analyses of human interiority like the ones carried out by Husserl, Edith Stein and other phenomenologists permit us to

validate the virtuous circle of reasoning of the medieval thinkers discussed above. Here, the You and Third are related, and not only in the sense that the Third is the fruit of philosophical reflection and the You is a point of reference for religious experience; rather, religious experience can be examined further as a possible object of philosophical reflection with an awareness of the distinction of the various levels and even their inevitable implications for one another. This is already present in Husserl, even though it is not theorized explicitly and only intimated.[30] This attitude is explicitly assumed by Edith Stein, especially in her work *Finite and Eternal Being*, which has a structure similar to the medieval *Summae*. Stein reflects in an essential way upon the circularity that exists between religious experience, maintaining not only the legitimacy of employing the second or third person when speaking of the divine as two modes that indicate different attitudes but also the necessity of recognizing that one can speak of the Third, and that this has already been spoken precisely because the Third is a You. Just as the encounter between the I and the you is primary from an anthropological perspective so too is the primary encounter of the I and You; it is foundational for whatever kind of other encounter and theorizing about such an encounter.

NOTES

[1] E. Husserl, *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte*, n. 32, Husserliana XXIX.

[2] E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, p. 106.

[3] *Ideas* II, p. 200.

[4] Ibid.

[5] See Stein's work, *The Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, especially Part II, "Individual and Community".

[6] A summary analysis that moves from Augustine to contemporary thinkers can be found in Edith Stein's *Finite and Eternal Being*.

[7] Husserl treats noema-noesis in Section III of his *Ideas I*.

[8] I developed this argument in: *The Controversy of the Existence of the World in Edmund Husserl's Phenomenological School: A. Reinach, R. Ingarden, H. Conrad-Martius, E. Stein* in *Analecta Husserliana* vol. LXXIX, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004).

[9] This term is used in particular research in psychology in order to indicate the grasping of psychological data; we see this in the work of Heinz Kohut or in the work of Ralph R. Greeson, who explains knowledge of an emotive type. See Part I, Chapter 2, note 22.

[10] "One thinks that love is an attribute of God because one loves; one believes that God is a sage and good because one considers goodness and intelligence one's best qualities. One believes that God exists, and that he is, therefore, a subject or a being. That which exists is a being and then becomes defined and characterized as substance or as a person or in whatever kind of way. This is so because one exists, because one is a being". Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*. Translated by G. Eliot (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989).

[11] E. Husserl, *Die ethische Liebe* in *Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, Bd. II, Husserliana, XIV, *Beilage* 9, pp. 172–175. See above Part II, Chapter 1, Section 3.

[12] G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, Section 111.

[13] "The Christian who practices love toward his or her enemy does not love the evil present in the enemy, and the Christian does not approve of the maleficent act. . .*Christian love* is nothing but love, but it is linked to the tending (necessarily motivated by love) toward the realization of a community of love in the largest possible way. [This means], therefore, forcing oneself to "enter into relation" with human beings, opening oneself to others and disclosing them to oneself, etc. All of this happens according to practical possibilities, whose limits are ethically positioned, and, therefore, this happens directly through ethical love". As quoted in Angela Ales Bello, *Husserl—Sul problema di Dio*, pp. 90–91.

[14] Within Judaism one observes a major and minor presence of the definition of God as person. If Martin Buber strongly underlines the divine Thou (You), and we see this also in the work of Stéphane Mosès *(Y-a-t-il une troisième personne?)* in *Archivio di Filosofia—Archives of Philosophy* n. 1–3, ed. Marco Maria Olivetti (Pisa-Roma: Fabrizio-Serra Editore, 2007, pp. 13–18), one can see that God has an absolute alterity with respect to human beings. It is Christianity that makes evident the strong personal link with the divine, and this is due to the incarnation of Christ. Also emphasized is the centrality of the Trinitarian vision of the divine. Jesus says, ". . .the work that the Father has given me to complete, the very same works that I am doing, these testify that the Father has sent me. And, even the Father, who has sent me, has used me as His testimony". Jn 5: 36–37.

[15] See E. Husserl, *Ideas I*, Section 58, pp. 134, discussed above in Part I, Chapter 1, Section 2.

[16] I have dealt with this question in my book, *Culture e religioni—Una lettura fenomenologica (Cultures and Religions—A Phenomenological Reading)*.

[17] D. Acharuparambil, *La spiritualità dell'Induismo (The Spirituality of Hinduism)* (Rome: Studium, 1986).

[18] Ibid., p. 131.

[19] Part III, Chapter 2, *Mystical Union and Contemplation in Sufism*.

[20] "The core of the person is the essentiality that the person is in himself or herself; it is this that is the *similitude* with the divine being. It is the positive foundation of the *analogia entis*. What renders the *analogia entis maior dissimilitudo* does not intrinsically belong to the core of the person". E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt: Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins (Potence and Act: Studies on a Philosophy od Being)*, ESGA, vol. 10 (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), p. 146.

[21] See Part III, Chapter 2, Section 4, Mystical Union and Contemplation in Sufism.

[22] See R. Pettazzoni, *Dio: formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo nella storia delle religioni (God: The Formation and Development of Monotheism in the History of Religions) Vol. I: L'essere celeste nelle credenze dei popoli primitivi (Heavenly Being in the Beliefs of Primitive People)* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1922).

[23] Augustine, *De trinitate,* Book V, Chapters 1, 2.

[24] Anselm, *Proslogion*, op. cit. 99.

[25] Ibid.

[26] E. Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 109. I have already pinpointed Edith Stein's position in connection with Anselm's argument in Part I, Chapter 2, *The subjective Way to God*, note 53.

[27] Anselm, *Proslogion*, p. 101.

[28] E. Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 109.

[29] Even in Heidegger we find the question concerning "thought" and "belief" posed ambiguously. See Martin Heidegger, *"Nur Gott kann uns helfen"* in *Der Spiegel*, 13 May 1976.

[30] Husserl writes: "We pass over whatever else, from the point of view of religious consciousness, is able, as a rational grounding motive, to lead to the same principle", *Ideas I*, p. 134. I have examined this earlier in Part I, 2, II.

CONCLUSION

It was noted in the Introduction to this study that there are two motives that animated the arguments advanced in my investigation. The first is historical and interpretative, the second is a theoretical one.

Concerning the first motive, I sought to make evident Husserl's viewpoint of the God-question, always treated from a philosophical perspective, ultimately, establishing a comparison between him and other thinkers of the past while referring to his own personal religious profile. Regarding the second aspect, I reached certain conclusions that can serve to stimulate a further development of the problem. I wish to examine briefly these two moments.

Husserl arrives at some results in his analyses that can be considered close to certain positions of the past, not only those of modernity but also, going beyond his own intentions, those of the Middle Ages. Dealing with arguments now considered classic, like those of Anselm of Aosta and Thomas Aquinas, confirms this hypothesis. The phenomenologist is not recovering pathways already trod because they often seem not to be known by him. On my part, however, I chose to deal with the abovementioned thinkers in order to draw closer to them, thus enabling me to evaluate Husserl's positions. This leads to a reflection on Husserl's chosen path. Moving from an experiential plane and employing logical and epistemological criteria, he recovers that pathway that permits intellectual access, which has characterized most of Western philosophy. His novelty consists in the fact that he proposed a new philosophical beginning that can be interpreted as a maximum, human cognitive effort; such a beginning profoundly traces the modalities of knowledge that can be found in conscious lived experience.

Though consciousness is Husserl's privileged field of investigation, he moves to treat questions concerning metaphysics, including the problem of God. As a problem relative to existence and to the configuration of a divine reality, it presents itself to the human being as resolvable through the recognition of a Power that overcomes the human being and that delineates itself as absolutely Other, justifying the intimate constitution of reality, even in those impulsive instinctual aspects of natural and human life. It is in the latter direction that the analyses of the hyletic dimension constitute the second novelty of Husserl's trajectory.

I do not believe that the solution to the problem of God can be entrusted to rational faith as does Jaspers' solution.[1] Husserl's position, as was mentioned above, is a position that can be defined as classic even with respect to metaphysical questions, which are not primary in the sense that he began to deal with them; rather, they are primary with respect to the unfolding of his research. This is the case because it was first necessary to distinguish them from the cognitive perspective. "First philosophy" consists in a phenomenological analysis of the conditions of a cognitive type that make possible the solutions to metaphysical problems, which belong to a "secondary philosophy"[2] only in this sense, that is, not because they have a secondary value, but because in a logical sense they are resolvable after they have taken the necessary steps to develop the arguments relative to those problems. Concerning the question of God, taken from a philosophical perspective, Husserl is convinced that an argument, if not a proof, is necessary. Religion resides in the fact that it is not possible to know God through experience, through empathy, as it happens in the case of human beings.[3] As we have seen, he does not refute another type of knowledge *sui generis* that is given by religious experience. He even considers religious questions as most important and, above all, they are to be viewed from an ethical perspective.[4]

The two-fold manner to arrive at God, i.e., the philosophico-argumentative approach and the religious experiential one, do not contrast with one another. Husserl does not oppose them; rather, he sees them as complimentary. From this point of view, his analysis harmonizes the philosophical way and the religious one; even his observations concerning the theological way are in agreement with this vision.

From a theoretical point of view, one can affirm that such an effort to harmonize can be appreciated because it makes evident the validity of the moments proper to rational reflection, which can be recognized as an indispensable instrument of clarification that goes beyond any difficulty of skepticism and which returns to make itself felt in contemporary culture. At the same time, it also plays an indispensable and unstoppable role in religious experience that is not reducible to something other; it possesses its own autonomy. This applies to all religions because they all have a nucleus of truth.[5]

Furthermore, there are innovations that can be underlined and discussed. First, the recovery of the hyletic dimension with its potent structure is innovative, be it in relation to the philosophical theme of religion, discovered here operating at different levels of depth, including those that are apparently not reachable by rational means, be it in relation to the justification of sacro-religious experience. Concerning the latter, phenomenological analysis,

by its making evident the structures present in the human being, allows us to recover the pathway that leads to the origin of such experience in the human subject. It does so moving from the trace of the divine, rising up to the psychic processes of attraction and repulsion, that is, sensory feelings, and moving to spiritual feelings that solicit the interventions of the will and intellect in the spiritual dimension. The weight attributed to various moments, i.e., the hyletic weight of sentiments brought on by the senses and the noetic one of spiritual acts, permits us to understand the differences between various expressions of the sacro-religious.

In this innovative way, one can configure a new phenomenology of religion that founds itself on a phenomenological archeology, understood as an analysis of sacro-cultural expressions.

This is why the theoretical approach suggested by Husserl's analyses is noteworthy; it can lead to a development of certain fundamental themes, including those relative to the significance of religious experience, the evaluation of religions, the relation between cultures reachable through phenomenological reductions, and the constitutive sources of the human being in his or her singular and intersubjective dimensions.

NOTES

[1] Karl Jaspers' emblematic position affirms the necessity of a rational faith that does not have universal validity; rather, it is only valid for me in my relation with God. See Leonardo Messinese, *Un passo oltre la scienza — Filosofia e trascendenza in Karl Jaspers (A Step beyond Science — Philosophy and Trascendence in Karl Jaspers)* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2002), pp. 97–105. Husserl's position vis-à-vis Jaspers' reveals the constant demand to understand aspects of the universality of phenomena, including faith, which he sees as religious faith and not as philosophical faith.

[2] Husserl develops these ideas in the first volume of *Erste Philosophie (First Philosophy)*, Husserliana vol. VII (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956). See also Nicoletta Ghigi, *La metafisica in Edmund Husserl (Metaphysics in Edmund Husserl)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007).

[3] See Dorion Cairns' testimony in *Conversations with Husserl*, p. 26.

[4] Ibid., p. 47.

[5] Ibid., p. 52.

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