Crossing: The INPR Journal

Crossing: The INPR Journal. Volume I. November 2020.

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Crossing : une étape fondatrice de l'INPR

(English Translation on Page III)

L'International Network of Philosophy of Religion (INPR) est un réseau international de jeunes philosophes et théologiens (doctorants, post-doctorants, jeunes professeurs) réunis pour travailler ensemble autour de la question de Dieu et de sa pertinence dans un monde contemporain sécularisé. Essentiellement appuyé sur la philosophie continentale, mais pas exclusivement, il s'efforce d'être au service d'un renouveau de la philosophie et de la théologie chez les jeunes générations pour aujourd'hui.

Loin de rester chacune sur leur pré-carré, philosophie et théologie sont appelées aujourd'hui à se croiser et à davantage se féconder mutuellement, dans le respect de la distinction des disciplines. Et les chercheurs de différents pays, en particulier ceux qui feront la pensée de demain, doivent

eux aussi mieux dialoguer, sûrs que dans la confrontation des idées se fomentent le terreau d'où naissent de nouvelles pensées.

Inauguré en 2015, ce réseau international compte aujourd'hui plus d'une centaine de membres personnellement engagés, de plus de dix nationalités différentes, et venus en particulier d'Europe et des Etats-Unis. Les membres qui constituent ce réseau ont déjà fait la preuve par plusieurs séminaires (grands colloques ou séminaires doctoraux et post-doctoraux) du bien-fondé de leur démarche commune. Le sérieux dans la pensée et les liens d'amitié sont la condition de la confrontation des idées. Les nombreux exposés et débats qui se sont déjà déroulés au cœur de ce réseau ont permis à plus d'un d'orienter sa propre pensée.

Aujourd'hui l'INPR passe à une étape supplémentaire, sous l'impulsion de ses membres qui le font progresser. L'idée d'une revue, capable non seulement de recueillir nos débats philosophiques et théologiques, mais aussi de les créer, a fait l'objet d'une longue maturation - dans son organisation d'abord (comité d'édition) et dans son contenu ensuite (*Expositio, Disputatio, Nostri Libri*).

Ce premier numéro, d'automne 2020, témoigne de l'extraordinaire vitalité de ce réseau, de l'engagement de chacun, et de l'effort pour y tracer sa propre voie. Les discussions sont parfois âpres, ou à tout le moins décidées, mais toujours dans le respect de l'altérité, dans la volonté affichée de nous comprendre les uns les autres, et dans le désir aussi de nous laisser transformer.

Ce que nous vivons dans la créativité de nos rencontres, nous voulons maintenant le produire aussi par l'écriture. *Crossing* n'est pas que la trace de débats antérieurs, mais un véritable lieu d'échange où se fomentent la pensée. La rigueur philosophique est de mise, et l'entente cordiale aussi. Ces deux ingrédients qui font le cœur de l'INPR, dans le souci du renouvellement des générations, y sont pleinement représentés. D'où la très haute qualité des textes et des discussions ici exposés.

Rien de tout cela n'aurait été possible sans la directrice du comité éditorial (Tamsin Jones), et les deux coordinateurs éditoriaux (William Connelly et Domenico Cambria). Qu'ils soient profondément remerciés pour ce travail sans faille, ainsi que tout les membres du comité de rédaction (Martin Koci, William Woody, Adam Graves). C'est à donner sans compter que l'on récolte ce que l'on a semé. Ce qui est une loi de la spiritualité est aussi une loi de la pensée.

Longue vie à l'INPR, à *Crossing*, le dernier né donc de cette aventure intellectuelle, spirituelle et amicale, qui nous rassemble et ne cesse de nous dépasser. Puissions-nous chacun demeurer fidèle à nos idées et à nos propres intuitions, mais toujours dans le respect des autres et de leurs différences.

C'est ainsi que nous « apprendrons d'eux aussi », sans demeurer ancré dans nos seules convictions en quête de vouloir s'imposer. Se confronter ensemble aux « enjeux philosophiques et théologiques » de notre monde contemporain est une tâche à accomplir, dont nous avons l'intime conviction que l'INPR est actuellement, en partie au moins, en train d'y participer. Traverser - « Crossing » - des montagnes, des océans, des frontières, fût-ce un simple Rubicon, est une manière d'inventer de nouvelles voies pour ne pas rester dans une philosophie faite de la répétition du passé. Frayer de nouveaux chemins mène aussi « quelque part » - mais Dieu seul sait où (?) -, et devient d'autant plus urgent que les nations elles-mêmes semblent se refermer sur leurs propres identités.

Paris, le 13 Octobre 2020.

Emmanuel Falque

Editeur en chef

Crossing: A Founding Stage of INPR

The International Network of Philosophy of Religion (INPR) is an international network of young philosophers and theologians (doctoral students, post-doctoral students, researchers, and young professors) gathered to work together on the question of God and its relevance in a secularized contemporary world. Essentially based on continental philosophy, but not exclusively, it strives to be at the service of a renewal of philosophy and theology among the younger generations of today. Far from each remaining isolated in their own squared off domain, philosophy and theology are called upon today to cross paths and become more mutually fruitful, while still respecting the distinction between disciplines. And researchers from different countries, especially those who will be thinking about tomorrow, must also engage in better dialogue, confident that in the confrontation of ideas, the breeding ground for new thoughts is cultivated.

Inaugurated in 2015, this international network now has more than a hundred personally committed members of more than ten different nationalities, particularly from Europe and the United States. The members who make up this network have already demonstrated through several seminars (major conferences or doctoral and post-doctoral seminars) the value of their common approach. Seriousness in thought and bonds of friendship are the condition for the confrontation of ideas. The numerous presentations and debates that have already taken place at the heart of this network have allowed many to orient their own thinking.

Today, INPR is moving to a new stage, under the impetus of its members who are taking it forward. The idea of a journal, capable not only of collecting our philosophical and theological

debates, but also of creating them, has undergone a long maturation - first in its organization (editorial committee) and then in its content (*Expositio, Disputatio, Nostri Libri*).

This first issue, in the fall of 2020, bears witness to the extraordinary vitality of this network, the commitment of each and every one of us, and the effort to chart our own course. The discussions are sometimes bitter, or at least decisive, but always with respect for otherness, in the willingness to understand each other, and in the desire to be transformed.

What we experience in the creativity of our encounters, we now want to produce it also through writing. Crossing is not just the trace of previous debates, but a real place of exchange where thought is fomented. Rigorous philosophy is the order of the day, and so is cordial understanding. These two ingredients, which are at the heart of the INPR, are fully represented here, with a view to the renewal of generations. Hence the very high quality of the texts and discussions presented here.

None of this would have been possible without the director of the editorial board (Tamsin Jones), and the two editorial coordinators (William Connelly and Domenico Cambria). Many thanks to them for their hard work, and to all the members of the editorial board (Martin Koci, William Woody, Adam Graves). It is in giving without counting the cost that we come to reap what has been sown. What is at once a law of spirituality is also one of thought.

Long life to INPR, to Crossing, the latest addition to this intellectual, spiritual and friendly adventure, which brings us together and never ceases to surpass us. May we each remain faithful to our own ideas and intuitions, but always with respect for others and their differences.

In this way, we will "learn from them too", without remaining anchored in our own convictions and seeking to impose ourselves on others. Confronting together the "philosophical and theological stakes" of our contemporary world is a task to be accomplished, in which we have the deep conviction that INPR is currently, at least in part, participating. Traversing - "Crossing" - mountains, oceans, borders, even a simple Rubicon, is a way of inventing new ways not to remain in a philosophy made of repetition of the past. Crossing new paths also leads "somewhere" - but to where God alone knows (?) - and becomes all the more urgent as the nation's themselves seem to be closing in on their own identities.

Paris, October 13, 2020.

Emmanuel Falque

Editor in chief

Introduction

to first edition of

Crossing: The INPR Journal

At the end of a very successful meeting of the INPR in Paris (June 2019), the Founding and Directing Committee began discussions about how to foster continued engagement within the network in between the large bi-annual seminars. As membership of the network continues to increase and not everyone can attend the larger conference, we also wanted to offer ways to share ideas at a distance. “The confrontation of ideas remains the condition for the blossoming of thinkers.” This statement, taken from the charter of the International Network in Philosophy of Religion (INPR), encapsulates the spirit of this journal, *Crossing: The INPR Journal*: its primary purpose is to promote a crossing—engagement, confrontation, debate, and dialogue—of ideas and thinkers in philosophy of religion.

Crossing is closely associated with the membership of the INPR—featuring publications from the thinkers associated with the network and drawing on themes and questions discussed in the INPR seminars; however, it is not limited to that membership either in the submissions or the readership it seeks. *Crossing* seeks submissions from thinkers from around the world bound together by a common philosophical tradition (that of phenomenology and hermeneutics) and a focused interest in religious phenomena and experience. Contributions may come from philosophers, theologians, or scholars of religious studies. While there is a recognition of the value of a “confessional approach” to considering these questions, there is no requirement of it; indeed, the disciplined agnosticism of the religious studies scholar brings a necessary voice to this dialogue with either theologian or (religious) philosopher. In all cases there is a shared commitment to the idea that religion “is a question that engages the sense of what it is to be human, but which at the same time highlights the necessity of confronting different disciplinary approaches as well as the toleration that a plurality of religious perspectives requires” (INPR charter). Religious experience encapsulates the *Ding an sich* which participants in the journal investigate through phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches of continental philosophy.

Structure: Each volume of the journal is composed of three sections: *Expositio*, *Disputatio*, and *Nostri Libri*. Each section has its own editor who will facilitate the gathering of submissions, as well as taking the submissions through the blind peer-review and editing process. Each editor will provide an introduction to their section also.

1.

In the *Expositio* section we solicit submissions from papers given in the INPR seminars—both the larger bi-annual gatherings, and the smaller, regional seminars focused on work of doctoral students. If a response was given to the paper at the conference, these may also be included in

the journal publication in order to again preserve the crossings of perspectives between diverse thinkers.

2.

In the *Disputatio* section the journal will foster a written dialogue between members in the INPR network by seeking written responses to a substantive essay published in the journal. We will also seek out other responses intended to promote a constructive dialogue. The journal will encourage a continued dialogue between the original author and his or her respondents and the online format is flexible and capacious enough to make this dialogue public for all to see.

3.

Finally, the journal will include a section for *Nostri Libri* in which we celebrate the publication of a monograph from one of the members of the INPR network by hosting a symposium on the book. The journal will seek submissions of essays responding to the book and engaging its main ideas and arguments. Like the *Disputatio* section, we will invite the author of the book to engage in this discussion of their book through a response to these essays.

Throughout these sections, Crossing: The INPR Journal fosters collaboration and dialogue between philosophers, theologians, and scholars of religion. While it seeks the highest quality of academic research and is committed to the rigor of the blind peer-review process, in the spirit of an allegiance to the free and broad exchange of ideas, the journal will be *open-access* to maximize its accessibility and functionality. Again, echoing the language of the charter, the goal of the journal is to find a way “to philosophize together, following an ‘*art de la dispute*’ not often practiced today but which we would be wise to recover” (INPR charter).

In the context of the unexpected upheaval of a global pandemic when our opportunities to gather together in person for symposia and seminars have been put on hold, it has become even more important to find places to engage in the activity of thinking together. *Crossing* will be one such forum. We look forward to the discussion!

Tamsin Jones, Trinity College

Director of the Editorial Committee

A note on this issue

2020 has been a year of tumult. Catastrophe has beset much of the world, and the daily privileges of modern life have been vanquished by the rearing head of nature’s little creature: the virus. In Paris, at the Friday doctoral seminar held at the end of February of this year, there was already

talk about the spread of a contagious virus in France and in other parts of the world. Little did we know that this would lead to the upset of all our daily lives for an extended period of time. There is no doubt that every single member of INPR has been personally affected, and some perhaps even tragically so. A number of members have fallen ill with the virus, though fortunately we have had no reports of any serious complications from any of the members of INPR. What started as an invisible threat has turned into a ubiquitous danger with caution as the byword for all social activity.

It seems that such a situation would pull the very rug out from underneath INPR. The ban on international and even domestic travel, the implementation of life-saving social distancing measures, and the near total shutdown of libraries and centers of learning, have all had the impact of eliminating the possibility for INPR to conduct its activities, as “INPR should be defined above all as a space of exchange and conviviality,” to confront one another as much in our bodies as in our thoughts.

The formula of INPR, to gather “young scholars with their elders in the Parisian capital” has been a major success, growing from a 2015 grand summer seminar with around 20 participants, to 40 in 2017, and more than 80 in 2019, a pattern of growth which has pushed INPR’s traditional format to its limit. Starting from 2017 INPR began branching out, permitting new models of intellectual engagement to emerge with the institution of a spring doctoral and post-doctoral seminar of around 20 participants, beginning with Tivoli, Italy in 2018, continuing to Val d’Aulnay, France in 2019, and a planned seminar in Durham, Great Britain for 2020, though this latter seminar had to be postponed due to the ongoing crisis. This is in addition to a new doctoral and post-doctoral winter seminar planned for the United States in Cornwall, New York for 2020, which also had to be postponed. The ease of finding participants was matched by the fluidity of finding sufficient resources to conduct these seminars, altogether confirming the value and interest of INPR’s mission.

The current journal issue was born *not* as a result of these circumstances, but rather from earlier plans to catalogue and make publicly available the texts delivered during the seminars. One thing that sets INPR apart is the insistence for participants to *present a text*—not only to be *heard* but also to be *read*. In this way, INPR is as much a tradition of letters as it is a place for philosophical debate. The consequence has been a genuine engagement not only with ideas, but with texts, and as such the format of INPR naturally lends itself to publication and review outside of the closed quarters of the seminar space.

This issue brings together a collection of texts delivered in different seminars held by INPR, but it also contains new essays and reviews generated outside of these events. The *Expositio* section contains articles given at the 2019 grand summer seminar in Paris (Falque, Bancalari, Dika, Hefty,

de Gramont, Perozzotti, Sutherland, and Tommasi), and the texts by Barnabas Aspray and Pablo Irizar were delivered at one of the monthly Friday doctoral seminars held at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Paris during the 2018-2019 academic year. The *Disputatio* section has submissions that were all prompted by the texts delivered at the 2019 grand summer seminar, and which were then subsequently published in early 2019 as the first set of publications from *Crossing: The INPR Journal*. The *Nostri Libri* section was moderated by Martin Koci and William Woody, who both helped in the selection of books and in soliciting responses from the given authors. The two texts, David Newheiser's *Hope in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, 2019), and Peter Fritz's *Freedom Made Manifest: Rahner's Fundamental Option and Theological Aesthetics* (CUA press, 2018), both serve to highlight some of the key research themes of INPR and represent careful studies in their respective disciplines. Altogether this issue represents the bonds born out of INPR's activities, and it also indicates the continuation of a tradition and community of thought which it seeks to foster.

While INPR remains an independent network, patronage from sponsors has been essential in conducting its activities. Special thanks are due to the Catholic University of Paris (*L'Institut Catholique de Paris*), its Rector Philippe Bordeyne, and the Vice Rectorate of Research. Financial and other support from institutions have also had a major impact in helping INPR to grow and fulfill its mission, with notable support from Australian Catholic University in Melbourne in helping to sponsor the inaugural 2015 seminar; to the Landmark Trust for its support for the 2018 spring seminar in Tivoli; to the Centre for Catholic Studies at the University of Durham, the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, and the Society for French Studies, all for their support of the planned seminar at Durham; and to the Lumen Christi Institute for their support for the planned seminar in Cornwall, New York in 2022. Special thanks are also due to Trinity College for their initial support in helping to launch *Crossing: The INPR Journal*.

William L. Connelly

Domenico Cambria

Editorial coordinators

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In Flesh and Bones¹

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But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’

1 Corinthians 15:35²

“Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). The mystery of the resurrection in flesh and bones is in these words, difficult both to believe and to think. Indeed, we have a hard time adhering to this mystery, and yet the Christian is supposed

to put faith in it. Moreover, one must at least partially conceptualize it, at risk of letting it go up in smoke. The most innocent questions concerning the “carnal consistency” of the Resurrected One today indeed are omitted (corpulence, resistance, digestion, restoration, integrality, functionality...) for want of a suitable and contemporary anthropology for us to ask them. There where the Resurrected One’s “becoming body,” including the material, once filled the pages of the Treatises of the Church Fathers, as well as the Commentaries on the Sentences and the Theological Summas of the medievals, today nothing more is discussed, save to reduce the apparition accounts to a magic difficult even for children to accept, much less for adults to conceive.

Everyone can agree that the mystery of the Incarnation is difficult to believe and to understand, and yet it is precisely what Christians do not cease to profess: “He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary” (the Apostle’s Creed).³ But that one must believe and even understand the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, when it is a matter of our own resurrection on the one hand and of the resurrection of the body on the other, seems just as “unbelievable” (difficult to confess) as “un-thinkable” (impossible to think): “I believe...in the resurrection of the [flesh], and the life everlasting, Amen.”⁴ Philosophy too must try to render comprehensible this mystery of a God made body, even material for us “from one end to the other,” a materiality of the body that must first be assumed in order then to be transformed.

Whence comes the apt remark of John Damascene—this time amidst the debate over iconoclasm (8th century)—in a formula which definitively enjoins one to take up corporeality, but also to recapitulate materiality: “I do not venerate matter, but the Creator of matter, who became matter for my sake and deigned to live in matter and bring about my salvation through matter. I will not cease therefore to venerate matter through which my salvation was achieved. But I do not venerate it in absolute terms as God! [...] Do not, therefore, offend matter: it is not contemptible, because nothing that God has made is contemptible.”⁵

1. The Fright of the Body

The words pronounced on the day of the resurrection—“a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39)—even today are as inaudible as inconceivable. Whence the understandable “distress” provoked by the apparition of the One who indeed seems to be the same as the one who was incarnate: “They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost [or a phantom]. He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself’” (Luke 24:37-39). To be sure, we will always be able to avoid the question and argue that it is a matter only of recognizing him in his stigmatized body, rather than of doing right by our doubts with respect to the

materiality and consistency of this resurrected body. To be sure, it is entirely a matter of recognition—“it is I myself” (egô eimi autos)—and not of knowledge, i.e., what are “these hands which are his” (idete tas cheïras mou) and “these feet which are his” (kaï tous podas mou)? But by casting doubt on these doubts, by not mulling over or showing their merits, we end by falsely imposing certitudes.

We too would be “terrified” (ptoêthentes) with the disciples, “afraid” (emphoboi), “frightened” (tetaragmenoi), even full of “objections” (dialogismoï) if this happened to us. If Christ had appeared as a “ghost” or a “phantom” (pneuma), to which we will return, we in fact would have been less frightened, and probably the disciples would have been less frightened as well, inasmuch as their possibility does not destroy the horizon of what can manifest itself. Bodies which are not really bodies haunt all traditions (from Gnosticism to the angels even); we have simply grown used to it. But that a body made of “flesh and bones” (sarxa kai ostea) can indeed now claim to appear and reappear in what we ordinarily call a horizon of reality or objectivity, this especially goes against our faculties of thought and even imagination. Whence comes the necessity of approaching through a quasi-animal touch, or in any case one stripped of every consciousness, in order to be truly persuaded of it: “touch me”—literally, “palpate me” (psêlaphésate me)—and “look” (idete), “a ghost (pneuma) does not have flesh and bones (sarxa kai ostea ouk ekei) as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). The body-to-body contact with the Resurrected One is sketched here more on the model of “seeing,” too abstract and universalizing to truly penetrate, or better to resist. But this contact is expressed only in touching or by the “touching-touched,” which this time is no longer content with feeling or experiencing in a subjective body (the lived body, Leib), nor with being held there in front in an objective body (the extended body, Körper). Here this contact resists the one with the other in an impenetrability that also constitutes our own common aim (the spread body, seen as human or divine and which remains no less animal or even biological). Whence the not insignificant question: Quid or what is this “flesh” (sarxa) and these “bones” (ostea) to which the Gospel of Luke bears witness? We cannot hastily avoid this question if it sufficed to recognize this flesh and these bones by the stigmata, and therefore by the body’s lived experience of what it was.

2. Of Flesh and Bones

Perhaps we can or could resurrect in flesh and bones, that is to say, “with” the “flesh” (sarksa) and “bones” (ostea) in the sense with which we use those terms today. Such would be the literal reading of the expression: “a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). The common formula *en chair et en os* or in flesh and bones, at least in French, seems to convince us of it, whatever else the philosophical diversity of the expression’s interpretations may be, to which we will return. Whoever is present there—de visu, de tactu, or even better, in

concreto—truly does stand before me “in flesh and bones,” “with” his or her true body made “of flesh and bones,” even of “veins and blood” or “organs and limbs.” Neither virtual nor reduced to the purely emotional, the other is at my side or with me as the one whom I can definitively touch and embrace. For the screen of the possible is finally substituted the backdrop of the real—even what we had forgotten returns or resurfaces: “to seize” or embrace each other, to take hold of or feel, to hold in each other’s arms and console—so that the resurrection of bodies will cease realizing for the screen alone what “flesh” and “bones” have themselves staged (but in what sense?) if not in reality (Realität), then at least in effectivity (Wirklichkeit).

But is it, then, in this sense—that is to say, this purely and exclusively realist sense—that Christ resurrected in flesh and bones, as the immediate interpretation of Caravaggio’s painting, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, might suggest, where the apostle seems to study the open side of Christ like a surgeon examines a wound in order to ascertain its thickness and seriousness? In short, this is not very believable (to give it an act of faith), or at least not very credible (to give reasons for it), insofar as it shocks consciences and even does not necessarily make sense. We will then have to quickly “pass” over the formula in flesh and bones, charging quickly towards the “flesh” or the lived experience of the lived body (Leib) to realize what the physical body (Körper) cannot. In phenomenology (apparition or auto-affection) as in theology (resurrection), it is easier to treat the manner than it is to treat the matter, the lived experience than the substance, and therefore it is easier to treat the “flesh” than the “body.”

The fact remains that we will not quickly flee the reality of the Resurrected One’s body, for such is precisely what produces the fright of the body and also makes the resurrection an “impossibility” to be sidestepped, especially by thought. The apt remark by Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, according to which we will resurrect with our stomachs or with our sexual organs but without having to use these organs, because we will no longer nourish ourselves after the resurrection, is certainly something to smile at, today perhaps more than in times past.⁶ But this is to confuse the aim of restoration (to return in the same way, but without the usefulness) and that of integration (to omit nothing in the act of resurrection): the risen “will, therefore, have all the members of this sort, even though there be no use for them, to re-establish the integrity of the natural body.”⁷ In short, if nothing expresses that in flesh and bones means “with” flesh and “with” bones, at the very least in the sense of their employability or their usefulness, then nothing indicates either that they should be necessarily and integrally suppressed. Besides, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says nothing else than this, according to a “principle of continuity” and a “law of transformation” of the resurrected body that we must not forget: “The risen body in which he appears to them is the same (*idem*) body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and

time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm."⁸

What Thomas Aquinas did in his day for hylomorphism we must do today for phenomenology, though on a smaller scale: namely, to consider the resurrected body anew for our culture as well (which is no longer solely that of hylomorphism). But the difficulty is redoubled with respect to precisely what is "of our time," for a certain danger of Gnosticism menaces phenomenology, just as it haunted theology in the epoch of the early Fathers of the Church. It is not certain that by dint of insisting upon the lived experience of the lived body (Leib) we have not lost everything or nearly as much of its materiality as of its organicity, even here below. If we seek an "expansion of the body," or a certain form of the spread body between the "extended body" of Descartes and the "lived flesh" of Husserl, it is not in this alone that we would somehow need to "compensate for the flesh by the body" in the hereafter; it is rather that the possibility of a "body without flesh" in death (the cadaver or corpse) must no longer lead to a total "flesh without body" in the resurrection (ethereal body). Everything therefore depends on what we understand by in flesh and bones, at least in philosophy but also for theology, in order to determine what truly is this "ghost [which] does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). With Christ's apparition "in flesh and bones" to the Eleven or to the apostle Thomas, to whom we will return, we have a true "expression," in every sense of the term: a manifestation of a body and a linguistic formula. It is by examining this expression that we will better know what can be trusted.

3. Phenomenology of the Flesh

To be sure, the equivalence between *sarxa kai ostea* in the Greek of Luke's Gospel ("with flesh and with bones") and *leibhaftig* in the German of phenomenology ("in flesh and bones") is not self-evident, though it is the least we can say. One could object that cultures are different and that the Scriptures were recorded in Greek, spoken in Aramaic, and have nothing to do with the phenomenological tradition composed in German or French or in any other language. But this is to forget yet again what Thomas Aquinas, for example, accomplished in his time. For there is no more equivalence between hylomorphism and resurrection (accomplished form of the body) than there is between phenomenology and resurrection (in flesh and bones). Rather than fearing passages—from one culture to another—we will claim them as our own instead. At least in Catholic theology, there is no more an overcoming of metaphysics than there is the creation of another culture, even a counter-culture. Quite the contrary, it is through and by a tradition, be it transformed from within, that the reading of Scripture will be renewed and will make sense for us today.

In the two cases of theology (*sarxa kai ostea*) and phenomenology (*leibhaftig*), it is therefore a question of what we name the apparitions described as "in person"—whether it is in Husserl

(“the presence of the incarnate person [leibhaftigen Selbstgegenwart] to an individual object” [Ideas I, §39])⁹ or in the Gospel of Luke (“Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself” [egô eimi autos], in person [Luke 24:39]). There is an equivalence if not in terms, then at least in the fields of manifestation. To know what is here of these “flesh” and “bones,” or of the givenness in what we are in person, is certainly worth considering for phenomenology (the status of corporeity and perception), but also and perhaps more yet for theology (substantiality of the resurrected body, even our own, in via to be sure, but also in patria).

a. In flesh and bones, or ‘in person’

What Edmund Husserl in fact first teaches us in the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology* (1913) is that “leibhaftig” or presence “in flesh and bones” constitutes the heart of phenomenology. Thus the famous principle of principles in §24 of *Ideas I*, where the “effectivité en chair en os—effectivity in flesh and bones” as translated by J.-F. Lavigne, or even the “réalité corporelle—corporeal reality” as translated by P. Ricœur, constitutes the very content of the originarily giving intuition: “that every originarily giving intuition is a source of legitimacy for knowledge, that everything which is offered to us originarily in intuition (that is to say, in its effectivity “in flesh and bones”—leibhaften Wirklichkeit) is to be taken simply as it is given, but also within the limits in which it is given there.”¹⁰ What is important here, at least in our interpretation, is less the limits of that by which the thing is given than what gives itself. And what gives itself, and in all cases in phenomenology, is a form of “effectivity” (Wirklichkeit). But this effectivity, far from being a form of reality, even dialectically engendered (Hegel), is a form of the corporeity of what gives itself (leibhaften), even though it would be here less a question of a “real body” [corps réel] than of a “genuine body” [corps réel], less a question of what is given than of the lived or hyletic material of what is “impressed” upon me: “The German expression ‘leibhaftigen Selbstgegenwart’ (presence in incarnate person),” the French translator of Husserl notes, “clearly indicates the twofold essential determination of every perception conferred by an essence in the mode of its object’s presence: it is present ‘in person’ (selbst), that is to say, it itself is present in its singular identity; moreover, this identity is given as unsurpassable, because it is ultimately manifested—beyond any representation, symbol, or signifier: it is the at once direct, total, and ultimate character of this presence that Husserl intends by the expression ‘Leibhaftigkeit,’ presence ‘in flesh and bones’ or ‘incarnate’ (leibhaft)—even when the object so given cannot in any case be sensible or given to sensibility.”¹¹

We must admit, at least for the uninitiated, that this is full of phenomenological technicalities and complexities. But passing through this perhaps narrow way will allow us to say what it eventually affords theology, with its Christ who moreover is resurrected or, in other words, who is “in flesh and bones.” The whole of the analyses of leibhaftig in the *Ideas I* (1913) in reality only

determines the possibility and even effectivity of this full and complete presence “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig) of the phenomenon, taking into account the content of its datum, but extending it also beyond sensibility alone.¹² We will thus be able to speak of a perception “in flesh and bones,” but also of an imagination “in flesh and bones,” and even of an idea “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig)—according to the celebrated Husserlian principle of a broadening of intuition relative to Kant.¹³ It is precisely because some thing or some quid is intuited that it is given “in person” or “in its person.” But what remains, or rather what is “in flesh and bones” is not the thing as such, obviously reduced here, but the lived experience of the thing which first makes sense. Paradoxically, at least to confront this thesis with the weight of the “thing” in Karl Marx, to whom we will return, the thing (das Ding) can be not given, at least in phenomenology, but the same cannot be said of the lived experience of the thing (die Sache). If something is “effectively given” when it gives itself “in flesh and bones,” this quid is less the thingliness of the thing, as it were, than the lived experience by which it is felt or undergone. There is no thingliness without lived experience, but there can be lived experience once thingliness, at least understood as exteriority, is reduced: “every thingly element given in flesh and bones can equally not be; no lived experience given in flesh and bones cannot equally be not given.”¹⁴

b. The Bridge of Weidenhausen

Heidegger will then take this up, or rather (and it is worth saying) “will give body” to the Husserlian “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig), recognizing as he does the value or the addition of the “perceived” in the mode of incarnate givenness on the one hand (it is not the same, and in fact it is even more, to perceive than to imagine), and giving a descriptive form to the apparition in flesh and bones on the other hand (the Weidenhausen bridge), which his teacher, Husserl, had not yet been able to accomplish. This advance will require the theological apparition to be enriched with its more to come (this time “of flesh and bones,” *sarxa kai ostea*), or the necessity of the mode of the perceived for phenomenological apparition (this time “in flesh and bones,” leibhaftig).

Such is the meaning of the 1925 course delivered in Fribourg entitled *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, where the phenomenologist sees clearly and precisely in the “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig) a form of “self-givenness,” but also of an “incarnate self-givenness”: “The perceived as such has the character of incarnation (Leibhaftigkeit), which signifies that that being which is presented as perceived has the character of being there in the flesh (Leibhaft da—là-en-chair). It is not only given as itself, but as itself in its flesh (in selbst in seiner Leibhaftigkeit—dans sa chair). There is a difference between being given-in-flesh and being self-given.”¹⁵ This analysis is complex, and it is obviously not the objective of the present essay to develop it. It will suffice for us to note (and this is already to say a lot) that it is not enough to “be given” in order to

be “given in flesh and bones.” In other words, every incarnation is a mode of givenness, but every givenness does not take place in the mode of incarnation. The perception of the phenomenon brings something else, even something more, to the simple representation or imagination. In order to perceive one must stand there, with or before what is perceived. For Martin Heidegger it is a matter of practically and almost physically moving in person, and of recognizing that there is a genuine place for intercorporeity, which is precisely what gives meaning to perception as “in flesh and bones” (*leibhaftig*). This is not because the thing exists there independently from me, but because by its independent existence from me I am engaged there in a certain mode called “perception,” which confers upon the phenomenon the character of a “full presence in the present” that neither imagination, representation, memory, nor anticipation possess: “What is essential is the notion of ‘*Leibhaftig*’...of presence there ‘in flesh and bones’: in perception what enters into presence affects my lived body in flesh and bones (*in der Wahrnehmung ist das Anwesende ‘leibhaftig’*).”¹⁶

Such is the example of the bridge of Weidenhausen, to continue Martin Heidegger’s analysis. According to this example, one must distinguish between the representation of the bridge in which it is for me truly “given” (the image of the bridge is only a mere copy of bridge called real), and the perception of the bridge by which it is for me “given in flesh and bones,” that is to say, with all the richness of the perceived that can only be delivered by the “now” of the perceived in the sensible profusion of the corporeity of the object, according to the philosopher of Fribourg: “I can now re-present the bridge of Weidenhausen to myself. I place myself before the bridge. In this re-presentation, the bridge is itself given, I aim at or intend the bridge itself and not at an image of the bridge or a fantasy, but it itself. Yet it is not given in flesh [and bones] (*leibhaftig*). It would be given in flesh and bones if I went down to place myself before the bridge itself. This is to say that what is itself given (*selbst gegeben*) has no need of being given in flesh [and bones] (*leibhaftig*), but, conversely, that every being given in flesh [and bones] (*leibhaftig*) is itself given (*selbst geben*). Incarnation is an exemplary mode of a being’s self-givenness.”¹⁷

c. The Richness of the Perceived

The richness of the perceived over the imagined, and so the presence there in flesh and bones in moving oneself around and standing physically “before the thing,” such is the authority and contribution of Jean-Paul Sartre, at least in his phenomenological period (*The Imaginary*, 1940). In the tradition of Husserl, but especially of Heidegger, there is in Sartre more in perceiving than in imagining, and this moreover makes it so that an apparition in the mode of perception will be more rich than an apparition in the mode of imagination: “in perception, a knowledge (*savoir*) is formed slowly; in the image, knowledge is immediate...But I can keep an image in view as long as I want: I will never find anything there but what I put there...In the world of perception [to the

contrary], no ‘thing’ can appear without maintaining an infinity of relations...If I perceived this patch of grass, I should study it for some time to know where it comes from. In the case of the image, I know it immediately: it is the grass of such-and-such a meadow, at such-and-such a place.”¹⁸

If, therefore, there is “in the image...a kind of essential poverty,”¹⁹ what appeared as an asset from the point of view of modality—a single sheet of white paper (or a single body) given “in person” whether it be perceived or imagined—reveals in reality a weakness from the point of view of materiality.²⁰ There is always more in the perceived (the surprising richness of the grass that I will never have finished observing once I dive into it) than in the imagined (the grass integrally given by the imagination, whose effort to scrutinize will bring nothing more than what was initially deposited there). No one can be content with the imagination in this sense. Not only does it deceive us, but in that way it also remains rich exclusively by what it has produced (and therefore in the unique richness of itself or of what one has put there oneself), and so remains the place of the greatest poverty: “Hence a kind of overflowing in the world of ‘things’: there is, at every moment, always infinitely more than we can see; to exhaust the richness of my current perception would take an infinite time.”²¹

4. Phenomenology of Christ in Flesh and Bone

a. The Eleven

With Jean-Paul Sartre as phenomenologist, but also with Martin Heidegger before him (the bridge of Weidenhausen), the apparition “in flesh and bones” expresses the given “in person,” but with this particularity that the “here in person”—which one indeed finds in the “It is I myself” (ego eimi autos) of the apparitions of Christ (Luke 24:39)—will also have to pass through the richness of perception in order not to remain in the poverty of imagining it alone. If Christ is there in the Cenacle of the Last Supper “in flesh and bones,” or better “of flesh and bones” according to the Greek (sarka kai ostea), it will then be ineluctably necessary, at least in the first instance, that there was then something perceived which overflowed the act of imagining—whence the “fright of the body” experienced by the disciples, precisely because it was unimaginable. As we had indicated in the “fright of the body,” if the Eleven in the Cenacle “were disbelieving” while they were “in their joy” of seeing him again (Luke 24:41), perhaps it is precisely in this that the genuine enjoyment of aiming at him “in the mode of the perceived” consists (he therefore was not a ghost or phantom [Luke 24:39]), nonetheless accompanied at the same time by a greater strangeness yet. For it most likely would have been less frightening or horrifying to see a ghost or phantom (a double of the one that they knew) than what strictly speaking we call in French a revenant, or one who returns from the dead and gives her- or

himself to be seen or perceived in their body. Paradoxically, the fright of the body is redoubled when it is seen in the mode of the perceived and not in the mode of the imagined alone, which greatly distances us now from the simple “itself in the flesh” of the Husserlian *Leibhaftig*. An “of” flesh in “in flesh and bones” is necessary, just as there was “flesh,” or rather “body,” in the incarnation according to Tertullian—precisely in order “to carry the flesh” (*carnem gestare*) and not only “to carry the cross” (*crucem gestare*).²²

b. Thomas the Apostle

We could then believe all too quickly that it suffices to pass from the apparition to the Eleven (Luke 24:36-53) to the apparition to the apostle Thomas (John 20:24-29), so as to bring along this element of corporeity and even exteriority and objectivity, which supposedly would be missing from the one resurrected: “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe’” (John 20:27). But this would be premature, and for two reasons. First, because a pure objectivity of the resurrected body as “in itself” or as that with which I myself would not be involved will be difficult to maintain in philosophy as well as in theology; second, because a return to the “thing” understood no longer simply as “what concerns me” (*Sache*), but as “what involves me in my existence or praxis” (*Ding*), first demands a complete phenomenological analysis where the “flesh” or the “lived body” (*corps propre*, *Leib*) is first spread out. We will return to this second point. If it is necessary or will be necessary for us to pass if not from the “flesh” (*Leib*) to the “body” (*Körper*) in the resurrection, at least from the “lived body” to what we have elsewhere named the “spread body,” it is first in this that we will have pushed the subjective or subjectivist analysis of the apparitions of the Resurrected One to its limit—including the apparition to the apostle Thomas, which seems, however, to lead everything in the opposite direction.

When Thomas doubted the apparition of the Son of God to the Eleven during his absence —“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25)—he did not first question the reality of the body itself, but more importantly he saw and felt in the mode of the anticipated and the imagined what he never thought he could one day experience in the mode of the present and the perceived. In other words, the anticipation of the imagination is without perceived intuitive fulfillment even though something is given in the Husserlian sense (the imagination of Christ appearing), but not “in flesh and bones” in the Heideggerian or Sartrean sense of the words (the perception of Christ appearing). Thomas’ doubt certainly bears upon the aforementioned “reality” of the resurrected body (to which we will return), but first it bears upon the impossible passage from the imagination to perception that he must, however, one day carry out. Where the other apostles already perceived the Resurrected One without actually having imagined him except by a

“fabulation function” or a “miraculous hallucination” in order to defend themselves from it or to not realize it, Thomas conversely imagines him in the aftermath, since someone told him about it and he doubts being able, like them, to perceive him.²³ The path is reversed, or rather different: from perception to reproductive imagination for the disciples (we have truly seen him), from the imagination to the impossible productive perception for Thomas (I will not see him).

And when “a week later,” while “Thomas was with them” and “Jesus came and stood among them” though “the doors were shut” (John 20:26), something “new,” or rather something different then occurred. For what “enters into presence” (Anwesende)—to take up Heidegger’s formula, though this time by making it pass from the bridge of Weidenhausen to the resurrected Christ—first affects Thomas “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig) or in his own body, when Christ appears to him this time after he had doubted. In his flesh or his lived body by way of the body-subject, Thomas is changed by another body, or better, another flesh; he is changed less by the body-object independent of him than by the body-subject that is like him. Body-to-body, or rather flesh-to-flesh, which makes it so that the movements of the body are addressed to him by the gestures or kinesthetic movements which are precisely the chiasm or intersubjectivity of two “lived bodies”: “Put your finger here and see my hands; reach out your hand and put it in my side” (John 20:27). If nothing explicitly says that Thomas touched or penetrated this body with its stigmata, the possibility of accomplishing or effecting this, for him at least, puts him in face of a veritable intercorporeity before which to present himself.

c. Body-to-body or flesh-to-flesh

We will have understood it, then, at least as long as we keep to phenomenology alone. The fecundity of the analysis at this point of our itinerary has less and perhaps even nothing to do here with the thickness or the materiality of corporeity than it does with the empathic possibility of encountering or even penetrating it. The “body-to-body,” or better the “flesh-to-flesh” takes precedence over the “body of flesh,” or rather over the “flesh of the body” (in the usual sense of the term), in that the question of the solidity of the body’s vitality and organicity has been evaded for the moment. The resurrected body is given “in flesh and bones” because it is fully given according to the great richness of what can be given—that is, the perceived rather than the imagined—but the perception still remains a mode of subjectivity or interiority, so that it itself is what must first be transformed. Leibhaftig: God is given “in flesh and bones” or “in person,” as himself and in the greatest profusion of himself—such is what makes his givenness truly a “givenness of himself,” but also an “incarnate self-givenness,” since he is perceived in the mode of corporeity. But that there is “flesh” (sarxa) and “bones” (ostea) in the sense of materiality matters little; what alone matters is the lived experience of the body by which the thing is given, and especially by which it is identified and recognized in an event of intercorporeity.

And yet the question remains, and is now posed: is what we gain on the one hand (manifestation by the flesh) not entirely or nearly lost on the other (the thickness of the body)? In other words, if now it is not a matter of substituting, in a pure and too simple inversion, a “body without flesh” for the “flesh without body” (which would be at the very least an all too facile solution to which the “spread body” as an intermediary body, or rather as a frontier zone has already responded), shouldn’t we nevertheless draw from the side of the body an apparition of the Resurrected One that we have as yet thought only from the side of the flesh, or from the recognition through the lived experience of the flesh (the voice with Mary-Magdalene, the manner of eating with the apostles by the shore of the lake, the shared meal with the disciples in Emmaus, etc.)?²⁴

5. Metamorphosis of the Body

Phenomenologically speaking, the apprehension of the object in “flesh and bones” (the bridge of Weidenhausen, for example) does not therefore presuppose an “exteriority” of the object as such, including in the mode of perception. What is essential, we have said, is not that the bridge (or the Resurrected One) be objectively there before or in front of me, but that I be phenomenologically there before it in my capacity to receive it in all its richness and amplitude (to stand before it, to go round it, to constitute it, or to be constituted by it). Everything is always a matter of subjectivity in the apparition of the phenomenon “in flesh” (*Leiblichkeit*), and what counts is first the mode of receiving it. But a supplementary step could and should be taken from the point of view of philosophy, but also from that of theology.

If the *lectio faciliior* of the resurrected Christ “in flesh and bones” as “in person” (Husserl) is already complicated by its *lectio difficilior* as before or in front of..., being “perceived” and not only imagined (Heidegger, Sartre), the *lectio maxime difficilior* or the most difficult this time will come down to saying and thinking and even experiencing that there is truly “some thing” or “some one” there in the order of a certain objectivity or exteriority. Not that we must go back to an “in itself” or a form of naïve realism unwelcome in philosophy and even more so here in theology as soon as it is a matter of apparitions in the mystery of the resurrection. For only a vital praxis could truly transform me, even if only to both exist and subsist, without reducing me (or reducing him) to the sole mode of immanence or interiority.

a. A Praxis of the Body

Curiously, but quite certainly, one then must appeal to Karl Marx and his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 in order to see and express (and philosophically at that) what becomes of presence in flesh and bones, so as not or (this time) no longer to forget the materiality of the body, even in the resurrection. We should take care here, however, and be clear. In referring to Karl Marx, which might surprise a number of established phenomenologists, it is not

a matter here of Marxism—far from it—but rather of so-called Marxian thought.²⁵ As if in advance, and due to his concern for a certain relation to matter, the young Marx sees a certain pitfall for us that we will only later discover at the very heart of phenomenological thought: an excess of interiority, or even subjectivity, which lacks all or nearly all of exteriority or even everything of a certain sense of objectivity. With Marx it is no longer only a matter of an apparition in flesh and bones within some intercorporeity, but of an existing in flesh and bones in its materiality.

If nothing says that it is necessary to possess a “flesh” (sarxa) and some “bones” (ostea) in order to appear (phenomenal flesh), even here in Marx, nevertheless we must now possess it in order to exist, or at least in order to accomplish the visceral desire which is not only that of seeing, but also that of touching, penetrating, even assimilating and eating (praxical flesh). Here it is not a matter of denying the flesh (Leib) to the sole profit of the body (Körper), nor of extending the notion of the flesh to the whole of the world (the “flesh of the world” in Merleau-Ponty), but rather of understanding that the relation of one person to another is always mediated, or better, always immediately given in the relation of the person to nature in general. Nature, and not the subject exclusively, is the “lived body” (Leib) of the human person according to Karl Marx, for every individual must “constantly remain in contact” with it in order not to die, and therefore quite simply to live (e.g., to eat, drink, reproduce). In flesh and bones will no longer be a mode of manifestation, but the existential and even material means of subsistence: “The human person is a generic being...Nature, that is to say, the nature which is not itself the human body, is the non-organic ‘lived body’ (Leib) of the human person. That the human person lives from nature means: nature is his lived body (Natur ist sein Leib) with which he must necessarily remain in contact in order to not die. To say that the physical and intellectual life of the human person is inextricably linked with nature means nothing else if not that nature is linked to itself, for the human person is a part of nature.”²⁶

Even here the technical nature of this discussion could throw us off track. Indeed, we will ask ourselves why it could do so in our departing from and coming back to Karl Marx in order to understand the presence in flesh and bones of the Resurrected One, when the sole intercorporeity of phenomenology to date should have been sufficient for us to do so. But it is necessary for us at least to admit it, at the risk of an ultimately little justified hegemony: phenomenology does not say everything, and cannot say everything. Perhaps its nobility would be precisely in recognizing the pitfalls by and in which it will eventually be renewed. Even better, the young Marx did not cease to remind us of a sense of exteriority and objectivity, namely, that of the body in an immediately given relation to nature, from which I could never deliver or extract myself. Exteriorly and physically, I have need of another corporeity in order live, whether that of food (biological), of work (economic), or of others (social). Here the expression of being

“in flesh and bones” bears upon the “physical,” which the “phenomenological” sense of the expression had somewhat obscured.

b. The real man “in flesh and bones”

We thus come now to the use of this expression “in flesh and bones” (*leibhaftig*) by Karl Marx himself, but this time in an entirely different sense than the one given it in phenomenology, whether that of Husserl or Heidegger. So it is with the German Ideology (1846), which already, and as if in advance, reverses every form of “interior phenomenism.” The recourse to the formula “*en chair et en os*” or “in flesh and bones” in French to translate anew (but in Karl Marx this time) *leibhaftig* and later *leiblich* will not or will no longer express “in person” alone, even if it is by the flesh (*Leib*) and in the mode of incarnate self-giveness of what “enters into presence” (*Wahrnehmung*). Rather, it will express what becomes “physically,” even “biologically” living and appearing, and this in a quasi-animal body or in any case a body joined to the whole of nature (*Körper*).

What seems but a quarrel of words or of translation will in fact be of considerable importance, even for theology. Suffice it say that one need only refer to Luther’s German translation of the Bible (1522), and specifically the translation of the famous passage of the apparition to the Eleven, in order to face the facts: “*ein Geist hat nicht Fleisch und Bein, wie hir sheet, daß ich habe* —a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). Indeed, it seems that here in this translation it is a matter of a “true flesh” (*Fleisch*) and “true bone” (*Bein*), far from mere phenomenological considerations of the being “in person” or the being recognized “by its flesh” (*Leib*) alone. But “flesh” and “bones” could not wholly define an individual person, nor even man itself in the broad sense of the term. There is in surgery, according to French usage, the words *mou* or “soft” and *dur* or “hard,” from which we would be incorrect to judge that they could return in the same way in the resurrection according to theology—the hardness of bones, joints, the skull or skeleton on the one hand, the softness of the flesh, the stomach and intestines on the other. But is it in fact enough to be or to have the “soft” (the “flesh”) and the “hard” (the “bones”) in order to be human? Nothing is less sure. In other words, if we are truly human—“in flesh and bones”—are we not also and moreover but a simple labile form of “flesh” upon a skeleton made first and also of “bones” (in flesh and bones)? Maurice Merleau-Ponty has already taught us as much in a phenomenological vein, and we must not forget this. It is not enough for us to have “flesh and bones” in order to recognize ourselves in our plasticity (*Fleisch*). We must still introduce there life itself or the living flesh (*Leib/leben*) to express our particular way of existing or inhabiting our body: “everyone recognizes his own silhouette or a filmed version of his own gait,” the Phenomenology of Perception points out, but “we do not recognize our own hand in a photograph.”²⁷

We will therefore not hasten to accuse Karl Marx of being a “materialist” adversary of “idealists.” For if brusquely and in no uncertain terms the author of the German Ideology challenges the “idealists,” and in particular the figure of Ludwig Feuerbach, it is less in order to establish the existence “in itself” of matter than to reproach him for having omitted the intercourse, the conflict, and the interaction that we always have with matter—such that this praxis or this action of being “always already engaged in nature” properly constitutes us. Against Feuerbach to be sure, but in critiques that would just as well apply with respect to Husserl or Heidegger, “in flesh and bones” means not only to aim at or intend “in person,” be it in the mode of the perceived and no longer the imagined, but also to stand “on earth,” with “real men” and in their real life process—a question, to be sure, that we will not be able not to address in turn to the status of the body of the Resurrected One. To return to the real man “in flesh and bones”—*leibhaftig*, to take up the very term used later by Husserl—is therefore in the young Marx to return to the effective man, and not only the thought or even aimed at or intuited man. This is no longer to go from heaven to earth (or from thought to the world), but from the earth to heaven (or from the world to thought): “In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth (*von Himmel auf die Erde*), here it is a matter of ascending from earth to heaven (*von der Erde zum Himmel*). That is to say, not of setting out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in flesh and bones (*aus bei den leibhaftigen Menschen anzukommen*); but setting out from real, active men (*wirklich tätigen Menschen*), and on the basis of their real life process (*aus ihrem wirklichen Lebenprozeß*) demonstrating the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.”²⁸

c. Against the idealism of the flesh

This is what we have been saying. Karl Marx’s lively invective towards Ludwig Feuerbach in The German Ideology would equally apply to Husserl and the whole of phenomenology. When praxis prevails over *theoria* it is not a matter only of the primacy of the practical over the theoretical, but also of a possible “transformation of the self” by the world and in the world. Far from remaining in the unique and singular sensation, which will also be the whole phenomenological perspective as well, Marx invites Feuerbach to return to the real and active man. It is not enough to be “in person” (*leibhaftig*) in order to be in flesh and bones, nor even to be “perceived” with what “enters into presence” (*Wahrnehmung*); one must also be inserted in the “real” or “effective” (*wirklich*) world, made of activity and not only passivity, of body and not only of flesh, of chaos and not only of meaning or sense.²⁹ Feuerbach, though we could probably also say it of Husserl and the whole of phenomenology, “never arrives at the actually existing, active men (*wirklich existierenden*), but stops at the abstraction ‘man,’ and gets no further than recognizing [in sensation] ‘the actual, individual man [in flesh and bones]’ (*wirklichen individuellen, leibhaftigen menschen*), i.e., he knows no other ‘human relations’ ‘of man to man’ than love and friendship,

and even then idealized...Thus he never manages to conceive the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity (lebendiche sinnliche Tätigkeit) of the individuals composing it.”³⁰

Here in theology we will therefore not stay with Karl Marx’s “in flesh and bones” alone, understood as leibhaftig or “in person.” Or rather, if there is “flesh and bones,” in German as in the French translations, we will express it this time by “living in flesh” (leiblich) rather than by “lived experience in flesh” (leibhaftig), by man in his body (Körper) rather than in his flesh (Leib), upon earth (Erde) rather than in heaven (Himmel), exercising his force or strength (Kraft) rather than remaining in passivity (Passivität). Whence the celebrated formula from the Manuscripts of 1844, which already announced the turn: “when real man, in flesh and bones [or ‘the man of flesh’ (leibliche)], stood firmly on the solid and round earth, the man who inhales and exhales all the forces of nature (alle Naturkräfte), establishes his essential forces.”³¹

Everything happens, then, as if man “in flesh and bones” (leibhaftig), or rather the “man of flesh” (leiblich), has taken in advance and as by an indirect consequence the opposite view from that of the lived experience of the flesh. If the interpretation of Michel Henry’s Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality certainly has the merit of showing that praxis is accomplished in interiority and in the transformation of the self by the self, it probably lost some of the weight of exteriority and of the thing as such in Nature itself.³² Facing the subjective, we will rediscover the objective, at least in praxis; against the reduction to sensibility, we will rediscover the sensible; against the sole return towards interiority, we will rediscover exteriority. “In flesh and bones” to be sure, but not only understood here as “in person” or recognized by its flesh (leibhaftig); rather, living from its flesh and by its flesh (lebendig), now in the quasi-physical and even biological sense of the term (leiblich)³³: “as a natural being, in flesh and bones (leibhaftig), sensible, objective, man is a suffering being, dependent and limited like the plant and animal...To say that man is a being in flesh and bones (leibliches), endowed with natural, living, real, sensible, objective forces, is to say that he has for the object of his being, for the manifestation of his life, real, sensible objects; and that he can manifest his life only in real, sensible objects. To be objective, natural, sensible; to have an object, a nature, a being outside or in front of oneself; to be oneself an object, nature, to be sensible, outside of oneself; to be oneself an object, to be sensible for a third, everything is the one and the same thing.”³⁴

6. The Praxis of Christ in flesh and bones

With the praxis of Karl Marx, since it designates a relation wherein the body is always already engaged with matter, something is therefore immediately given that the new sense of Leibhaftig (joined to the engagement with matter) comes to innervate—including for its effects, in view of an eventual interpretation of the resurrected body. Everything proceeded or will indeed proceed

for the better, as much for the Eleven gathered in the Cenacle (Luke 24:36-53) as for the apostle Thomas (John 20:24-29), so long as it was enough to recognize the Christ “in flesh and bones,” that is to say here “in person,” whether in order to remove the “distress” or to reduce the “doubt” that such an apparition can provoke: “Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself” (egô eimi autos) (Luke 24:39). Here, everything then would only be a matter if not of identity, at least of personality. He whom we met yesterday is the same as he whom we see today—whence the presence of the stigmata as the absolute and distinguishing criterion in the two scenes. The question is not first one of having or being a body in order to be resurrected, but above all of carrying and recognizing the “pathic traces” of what happened (the stigmata). What is true for the Eleven—“And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet” (Luke 24:40)—is also true for Thomas: “put your finger here and see my hands...Do not doubt but believe” (John 20:27). Manner always takes precedence over matter, lived experience over the organic, or flesh over the body.

But everything becomes complicated (and severely so) from the moment that this body, which for the time being only seemed to appear in order to be recognized, invokes the biological requisites to share and to make shared its reality, this time by the shore of Lake Tiberias: “While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’”—literally, “something edible” (ti brôsimon). “They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence”—literally, “before their eyes” (enôpion autôn) (Luke 24:41-43). We must therefore once again “drink” and “eat,” and this surprisingly applies just as much to the Resurrected One: “Hunger,” Karl Marx highlights and adds on the same page of the Manuscripts of 1844, “is a natural need to be satisfied, to be appeased; it needs a nature, an exterior object...A being which does not have nature outside of itself is not a natural being, it does not participate in the being of nature.”³⁵

If nothing says with certainty that this body returned from the dead truly has need of drink and food in order to live (we must indeed after all keep his intestines or his genital organs without keeping their usefulness, as we read in Thomas Aquinas above), it is nonetheless on this that every body first lives: in eating and in drinking, joined and in touch with a true nature and exteriority. Even in his resurrection the Son of God assumes the part of our vital praxis without which we would not exist. Because one must drink and eat in order to live, drinking and eating are assumed no longer only in their modality, but also in their materiality. This does not mean that there is an identity of matter, at least in the sense of a return to the exact same of all bodies, but that there is a recapitulation of matter in a transformation and a cosmic recovery or elevation of all bodies. To the question of Thomas Aquinas and his followers, in the supplement of the *Summa theologiae*, “Whether in the resurrection the soul will be reunited to the same identical body?,” the Aquinian responds forthrightly that “the matter that will be brought back to restore

the human body will be the same (eadem materia) as that body's previous matter" (q. 79 a. 1, ad. 3). But this is so only inasmuch as he adds: "the body in rising again differs, not in identity (aliud corpus numero resurgat), but in condition (sed alio modo se habens), so that a difference of bodies corresponds proportionally to the difference of souls" (ad. 2). Integrity and transformation therefore make the resurrected body in its constitution, but do not effect a return to the identical according to numeration, if for Thomas number means the exact same in its entirety; this does not mean that each member returns as identical to what it constituted for us previously (such was the problem of the missing limb or the amputee in the Middle Ages).³⁶

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Here in this integration and metamorphosis which is the resurrection, there is therefore, to speak in contemporary language, a veritable praxis—in the sense where the transformation is no longer that of the ego or "me" alone (phenomenalism of the interior world), but also that of nature and the world, inasmuch as I am directly involved there. The reality of the body, including for the Resurrected One, needs must come from its outside and its exteriority rather than from taking refuge in its pure inside and interiority. It is therefore impossible for praxis (Marx), and probably just as well for the resurrection understood both as recapitulation (Irenaeus) and integration (Thomas Aquinas), to sacrifice objectivity to the sole profit of a pure interiority or subjectivity. I am wrestling with nature and I am in nature by a certain form of materiality. To conserve this link, even this transfigured matter, is what the anti-Gnosticism of theology accomplishes or must accomplish against a certain form of what phenomenology could produce today: "It would therefore be necessary for a theology of matter," Marie-Dominique Chenu notes in a work by that name, "to envisage, even before matter's substantial place in man as we did above, the cosmic and ontological density of matter in the total project of creative emanation. It is not possible to fashion a theology of man without a theology of nature, just as it is impossible to fashion a theology of the incarnate Word without a theology of the creator Word."³⁷ Such is the unique assurance of not forgetting anything, especially in the resurrected Word, as the celebrated adage of Gregory of Nazianzus does not cease reminding us: "that which He [God] has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved."³⁸

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Vécus du non-sens : l'ombre du Qohelet sur le nihilisme contemporain

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Dans la pensée contemporaine, le problème du non-sens s'est concrétisé en un diagnostic, le diagnostic du nihilisme. Sans entrer dans le détail des analyses spécialisées et bien connues, nous pouvons le formuler ainsi : si le néant est l'origine et l'aboutissement de tout ce qui est, le sens, quelle que soit la manière dont on le définit, est provisoire (dans le meilleur des cas) ou (au pire) illusoire. Le crépuscule des valeurs, la mort de Dieu ou l'oubli de l'être sont au fond des variations sur le thème de la prédominance incontestée du néant sur le tout – une prédominance qui mine tout possible sens à sa racine même.

La thèse du nihilisme, quoiqu'elle apparaisse désormais comme évidente, voire comme relevant du bon sens, repose sur une affirmation qui ne l'est pas et mérite d'être examinée avec attention : le néant est-il véritablement l'écueil sur lequel tout sens – et donc le sens en tant que tel – se heurte ? Et si, au contraire, c'était dans une situation que l'on ne peut décrire en terme de nihil que le non-sens se montrait dans toute sa portée ?

Ces questions, par trop ambitieuses, naissent d'une circonstance apparemment marginale, mais sur laquelle il vaut la peine de se pencher. Je pense ici à une certaine reprise contemporaine du diagnostic de non-sens, bien plus ancien que le nihilisme, qui nous est livré au travers de l'un des textes les plus énigmatiques de notre tradition : « tout est vanité », affirme le mystérieux personnage connu désormais sous le nom de Qohelet (le prédicateur ou l'ecclésiaste). Cette affirmation paradoxale, qui déclare la vanité du tout et donc également d'elle-même, fait significativement écho dans la pensée d'origine phénoménologique.

La philosophie, et notamment la philosophie contemporaine, s'est tenue prudemment éloignée de ce texte particulièrement malcommode et largement moins commenté que le Livre de Job par exemple. Il est frappant de remarquer que, sur le plan philosophique, c'est précisément la phénoménologie qui s'est intéressé au problème qui nous occupe : malgré ses nombreux tournants et hérésies, la phénoménologie constitue un horizon théorique décisif pour la maturation de la réflexion contemporaine sur le nihilisme, en particulier dans sa version la plus radicale, c'est-à-dire la phénoménologie heideggerienne. En effet, le présupposé méthodologique fondateur de la phénoménologie permet (et impose) de saisir, dans le néant et/ou le non-sens,

non seulement le résultat d'une application universelle de l'opérateur logique de la négation, mais bien plutôt un problème capable de s'insinuer dans l'expérience quotidienne, se rendant en quelque sorte 'percevable' et impliquant ainsi la vie (Leben) dans sa dimension vécue (Erleben).

C'est précisément ici que les références phénoménologiques au Qohelet, plus ou moins sporadiques, plus ou moins explicites, se font particulièrement intéressantes : elles nous invitent à considérer une hypothèse alternative à celle (désormais presque classique) qui fait de l'angoisse, en tant qu'expérience du néant, une voie d'accès privilégiée au non-sens. De plus, Elles nous obligent à faire face à un texte qui, parce qu'il affirme contemporanément la création du monde et son non-sens, dément de fait la thèse heideggerienne selon laquelle l'idée de la création constituerait en tant que telle la réponse a priori à toute question et ainsi l'impossibilité même d'un questionnement authentique³⁹.

D'un point de vue quantitatif, le matériel textuel est relativement restreint : trois textes, disséminés dans trois œuvres différentes d'Emmanuel Levinas ; un chapitre de Dieu sans l'être de Jean-Luc Marion ; quelques références très implicites d'Heidegger – mais dans ce dernier cas, le discours devient plus indirect et délicat.

Lorsque l'on y porte un regard d'ensemble, ce qui est surprenant est que l'on trouve, certes, de prévisibles et effectives divergences théoriques, mais encore une extraordinaire convergence entre ces différents regards du point de vue de la description. Cette convergence incite à proposer une lecture intégrante de ces différents textes – lecture dont il ne faut pas minimiser le risque méthodologique. Il est sans aucun doute imprudent de superposer ces différentes approches et terminologies ; en élargissant, par exemple, la notion d'Erlebnis, jusqu'à minimiser les différences, voire même les explicites prises des distance de la part de ces auteurs par rapport au 'vécu'. Mais c'est un risque qu'il vaut la peine de courir. Ainsi, au lieu de restituer chacun des textes dans son contexte propre, au lieu d'en souligner les écarts théoriques et lexicaux, nous essayerons de nous concentrer sur l'enjeu qui les rassemble : la description de l'expérience particulière dans laquelle le Qohelet est immergé et qu'il analyse avec une pertinence phénoménologique incontestable. De quelle expérience s'agit-il ? La réponse du phénoménologue va presque de soi. Levinas écrit : « Tout [...] est égal. L'inconnu aussitôt se fait familier et le nouveau coutumier. Rien n'est nouveau sous le soleil. La crise inscrite dans l'Ecclésiaste, n'est pas dans le péché, mais dans l'ennui »⁴⁰. Marion lui fait écho : « Ce qui intervient ici [dans le Qohelet], sous le nom encore indéterminé de 'vanité' répond correctement à ce que provoque le regard d'ennui »⁴¹.

L'interprétation phénoménologique de l'attitude du Qohelet en terme d'ennui – l'idée que l'ennui est le vécu spécifique dont la vanité est le corrélât intentionnel – est justifiée par les traits

essentiels de cette expérience, qu'Heidegger décrit longuement dans son cours sur les Concepts fondamentaux de la métaphysique : comme nous le verrons, l'absence de références explicites – explicites, je le souligne – au texte biblique ne diminue pas l'importance capitale de cette analyse pour notre propos.

L'ennui est avant tout désintéressé : désintéressé de celui qui regarde un spectacle déjà vu et revu, de celui qui sait, et sent, qu'il ne peut s'attendre à rien de surprenant. S'il n'y a rien qui mérite véritablement le nom de nouveauté (Qo 1, 10), si tout ce qui arrive n'est qu'une répétition de ce qui a déjà été, si l'on sait toujours déjà comment cela finira, il est inévitable que l'attention disparaisse. On échoue à prendre au sérieux les attractions multiformes offertes par le monde et dont le Qohelet dresse une liste détaillée : palais, vignes, troupeaux, esclaves, chanteurs, « des femmes en quantité, délice suprême des hommes » (Qo 2, 8), richesse, pouvoir. On s'habitue à tout cela bien trop vite. Et, une fois devenu « coutumier », tout cela ennuie. Dans l'ennui, aucune de ces réalités qui normalement attirent toute l'attention de l'existence quotidienne, n'est plus capable de se présenter comme idole, au sens technique que Marion attribue à ce terme : un phénomène capable de capturer le regard, de l'enchanter et de le fixer sur un point qui devient singulier, qui devient un unicum par rapport à tout le reste, un phénomène capable d'occuper le devant de la scène et de reléguer le reste à l'arrière-plan. L'ennui est l'expérience d'un regard qui ne trouve ni repos ni idole, qui transperce tout ce qui lui fait face comme si c'était transparent : un regard qui, malgré lui, se retrouve vide. Et c'est précisément dans l'« être-laissé-vidé » (Leergelassenheit) qu'Heidegger identifie le premier des deux caractères fondamentaux de cette « tonalité affective », dans laquelle « toutes choses nous glissent dessus »⁴², ne nous « offrent plus rien »⁴³ et, précisément « nous laissent vides »⁴⁴.

Le regard en transparence, vide de contenu déterminé, perd tout point de référence et toute possibilité de s'orienter. Les premiers versets du Qohelet déploient ainsi une extraordinaire phénoménologie de l'espace (homogène, donc inhumain), où les éléments naturels apparaissent comme un démenti continu de la 'direction' et donc du sens : le lever et le coucher du soleil, en distinguant orient et occident, devraient constituer le point de repère par excellence, et pourtant ils sont décrits comme un mouvement unique et répétitif, semblable au souffle insensé du vent et à l'écoulement des fleuves vers la mer, écoulement sans terme, qui ne débouche pas véritablement, puisqu'il ne connaît aucun aboutissement (« la mer n'est pas remplie », Qo 1, 7). Dans cet espace, aucun mouvement véritable n'existe : le mouvement n'est possible que dans un système de repères qui est orienté et qui oriente, or, ici, l'orient est toujours déjà occident. De même, aucune action à proprement parler n'est plus possible, puisque que l'action a besoin d'un telos, d'un objectif à atteindre : et quel objectif serait-il possible de projeter dans un monde où aucune modification substantielle ne saurait avoir lieu ? Comme l'écrit Levinas, lorsqu'il commente « l'expression de l'Ecclésiaste [qui] est merveilleusement précise [:] Vanité avec

exposant », ici il n'y a que des « semblants d'actes, car il n'y aurait plus d'actes, car il n'y aurait plus de sujet ni d'activités. Il n'y aurait plus que de caprices d'épiphénomènes et déjà autres qu'eux-mêmes »⁴⁵.

Il est à ce stade nécessaire de faire remarquer un aspect décisif de cette situation : la « vanité » du Qohelet, qui se révèle dans l'ennui, ne peut être comprise comme 'néant'. La description phénoménologique confirme ici les conclusions de l'exégèse. Dans son sens le plus immédiat, cela est bien connu, le terme hébreu hbl désigne la vapeur, la fumée, le souffle, l'haleine, le brouillard. Lorsqu'il se penche sur la vexata quaestio de la traduction la plus adéquate, Jacques Ellul, auteur d'une très belle Méditation sur l'Ecclésiaste, affirme : « qui traduit par fumée a raison d'insister sur le fait que ce n'est pas : néant ou zéro. C'est fumée, buée, cela se dissipe, cela n'a aucun résultat : ce n'est pas le néant ! »⁴⁶. Le brouillard/hbl renvoie certes à l'inconsistance de ce qui est destiné à s'estomper, comme Abel dont le nom même contient l'éphémère existence terrestre⁴⁷. Mais le brouillard n'est justement pas rien : au contraire, c'est un phénomène tout particulier, caractérisé par le fait qu'il se montre et qu'à la fois il montre un certain mode de manifestation. Ce n'est pas un hasard si l'articulation entre ennui et brouillard acquiert progressivement l'épaisseur d'un véritable topos (que l'on retrouve du De coenobiorum institutis de Cassien à la Noia d'Alberto Moravia)⁴⁸. Ce n'est pas non plus un hasard si Heidegger recourt systématiquement à l'image du brouillard chaque fois qu'il effleure la question de l'ennui : « Somme nous tels qu'un ennui profond s'étend sans fin comme un brouillard silencieux dans les abysses du Dasein ? »⁴⁹. Regardons-y de plus près.

Le brouillard ne se limite pas à camoufler les choses, il en modifie plutôt l'apparition parce qu'il les rend presque irréelles, il les dé-substantifie, en suspend la solidité. Le brouillard, « gouttelettes en suspension »⁵⁰, comme le remarque finement Marion, pulvérise la consistance, fictive seulement, des atomes et ainsi suspend la réalité : « L'ennui désigne le suspens du seul regard humain »⁵¹, car « Frapper de vanité revient [...] à mettre en suspens, à laisser le cas (de tout) en suspens »⁵². C'est précisément ainsi qu'Heidegger identifie le second trait fondamental de l'ennui : « l'être-tenu-en-suspens » (Hingehaltenheit) est l'expérience de la paralysie du flux quotidien de l'existence. À la différence d'Heidegger, qui garde ici une réserve qu'il reste à déchiffrer, Marion explicite pleinement la portée phénoménologique et méthodologique de cette interruption de l'apparaître quotidien : « l'ennui a pour caractéristique de mettre en parenthèses »⁵³, d'opérer donc une véritable époché ou suspension de la réalité ou du monde. Cependant, alors que la version orthodoxe de l'époché vise à un paisible désintéressement qui rend le spectateur disponible au phénomène, ce qui arrive dans l'ennui, selon la définition de Marion, c'est un « intolérable suspens »⁵⁴. S'agit-il d'une exagération rhétorique ou est-ce

qu'effectivement dans l'ennui émerge un élément intolérable, dans tous les sens du terme, donc insupportable de fait et inadmissible de droit ?

Le fait est que le brouillard-vanité estompe les contours. Dans la vapeur ou dans la fumée, la vue se brouille et les choses se confondent les unes aux autres, elles tendent à l'indistinction. La vanité-brouillard n'explique pas, mais exhibe le fait que l'expérience la plus dramatique – intolérable, précisément – du Qohelet n'est pas la finitude humaine face à la mort, bien au contraire : « Alors je félicite les morts qui sont déjà morts plutôt que les vivants qui sont encore vivants » (Qo 4, 2). Le problème est ailleurs, dans la disparition des différences : dans le fait qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil, que « tout est égal »⁵⁵ (Levinas) et que « l'ennui (...) confond toutes choses, les hommes et nous-mêmes avec eux, dans une étrange indifférence. »

(Heidegger)⁵⁶. L'indifférence (subjective) est le contrecoup de l'in-différence (objective), c'est-à-dire de l'impossibilité de maintenir les différences qui, normalement, nous permettent de nous orienter dans un monde qui, justement, devrait être kosmos (ordre) mais qui n'apparaît plus comme tel. La vanité c'est la perte des points de repère, c'est l'indifférence de toutes les différences constitutives de notre existence : entre aujourd'hui et demain (Qo 1, 5), entre la lumière et les ténèbres (Qo 2, 14), entre les paroles et le silence (Qo 6, 11), et même entre les hommes et les bêtes (Qo 3, 19). Quel sens y a-t-il à agir si toutes ces frontières se font perméables et si tout se résout dans une même et indistincte confusion ? Voilà le sens du paradoxe mis en œuvre par l'auto-démenti de l'affirmation 'tout est vanité' ; une affirmation si pleine de sagesse qu'elle sait très bien qu'entre le sage et l'insensé la différence s'annule : « Alors je me dis en moi-même : "Le sort de l'insensé sera aussi le mien, pourquoi donc avoir été aussi sage ?" Je me dis en moi-même que cela aussi est vanité. Il n'y a pas de souvenir durable du sage ni de l'insensé, et dès les jours suivants, tous deux sont oubliés : le sage meurt bel et bien avec l'insensé. » (Qo 2, 15). Ce qui est intolérable ce n'est pas qu'ils meurent : mais que tous deux, le sage et l'insensé, meurent de la même manière. Ce qui est intolérable donc, ce n'est pas l'anéantissement, le passage au néant en tant que tel, mais la vanité de ce passage : c'est elle (la vanité) et non lui (le néant) qui porte véritable atteinte au sens⁵⁷.

Une telle conclusion n'est bien évidemment pas sans conséquence en ce qui concerne l'analyse heideggerienne de l'expérience du néant comme angoisse, et ce pour au moins deux raisons. Tout d'abord, du point de vue philologique, cela nous oblige à nous pencher sur une curieuse situation. Le primat méthodologique de l'« affection fondamentale » (Grundbefindlichkeit) de l'angoisse n'est jamais révoqué : sa fonction de renvoi de l'être-là à lui-même, donc à la question qui lui est la plus propre, celle de l'être, est en quelque sorte renforcée entre Sein und Zeit et la conférence, postérieure de deux ans, Was ist Metaphysik? dans laquelle le néant ouvert par l'angoisse se révèle comme l'être lui-même dans sa différence ontologique d'avec l'étant. À quelques mois de distance toutefois, Heidegger propose une description très complexe de l'ennui comme « tonalité

affective fondamentale » (Grundstimmung), sans pour autant préciser le rapport qu'entretennent l'ennui et l'angoisse sur le plan de la fonction méthodologique. Il est alors inévitable de se demander : du point de vue de l'ontologie fondamentale, l'ennui reste-t-il subordonné à l'angoisse, lui est-il co-originaire, ou se substitue-t-il à elle ?⁵⁸

Mais il y a une seconde et plus profonde raison pour laquelle la description de l'ennui met sérieusement en question celle de l'angoisse. Le fait est que, plus la description confère une concrétude phénoménologique à l'ennui, plus l'angoisse prend l'aspect d'une construction artificielle qui n'a plus rien de phénoménologique.

Du point de vue du bon sens – ou de l'auto-interprétation quotidienne de l'être-là – l'ennui est une expérience que chacun connaît bien : si de nos jours seul ce qui est médicalisé est pris au sérieux et si nous préférons parler de dépression plutôt que d'acedia, la familiarité de ce vécu reste toutefois indiscutable. Peut-on en dire autant de l'angoisse ? Si l'on s'en tient à ce qu'Heidegger lui-même affirme, l'angoisse proprement dite est « rare »⁵⁹ parce que, bien souvent, elle est confondue avec cette Stimmung quotidienne qu'est la peur. Cela implique, du point de vue phénoménologique, une difficulté de taille. Ce, d'autant plus qu'Heidegger tente de s'opposer frontalement à cette confusion quotidienne de manière à souligner une différence radicale qui est chargée de 'montrer' la différence ontologique ; et il entend le faire sans renoncer à l'exigence phénoménologique qui veut que l'on se place sur le plan de la description de ce qui se donne, peut-être rarement, mais qui se donne tout de même. Pourtant, à bien y regarder, dans *Sein und Zeit*, la spécificité de l'angoisse est essentiellement établie par opposition : c'est dans un constant contrepoint d'avec la peur (de quelque chose de déterminé) qu'émerge progressivement – ou plutôt est construite – l'expérience d'une tonalité affective qui est qualitativement irréductible à celle de la peur. En effet, en tant qu'elle est privée d'un étant déclencheur, en tant qu'elle pose l'être-là face au non-étant, l'angoisse est chargée d'attester l'irréductibilité de l'être-là au monde et à tout ce qui est mondain. On peut alors à juste titre soupçonner cette stratégie de différenciation par opposition de donner lieu à une définition exclusivement négative : et en effet, au vu du poids qu'Heidegger voudrait attribuer à la distinction entre les deux Stimmungen, le fait que la peur soit déclenchée par un objet clairement déterminé, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans l'angoisse, semble quelque peu léger. Le caractère 'menaçant' reste fondamental dans les deux cas ; sur le plan proprement phénoménal, cela constitue une caractéristique commune plus essentielle que toute éventuelle différenciation qui serait fondée sur la présence/absence de fait d'un corrélat intentionnel déterminé : le fait que l'on échoue à trouver un objet à l'angoisse ne signifie pas nécessairement que cet objet soit par principe exclu de l'expérience de la menace, ou bien qu'il ne soit caché que provisoirement. Par ailleurs, l'angoisse (ou justement la peur) de sa propre mort peut, à bon droit, être considérée comme le dard venimeux de toute peur face à un danger déterminé, c'est-à-dire comme ce qui confère à toute menace son caractère proprement

menaçant. Tout péril, au fond, ne l'est qu'en tant qu'il préannonce la mort et rend son imminence manifeste.

Ce n'est pas un hasard si la distinction heideggerienne va plus loin que ne le fait la langue allemande dans laquelle les deux termes ne sont pas nettement distingués. De même, ce n'est pas un hasard si les conceptions quasi contemporaines de l'Angst de Freud⁶⁰ ou d'Aurel Kolnai⁶¹ (dans son essai sur le dégoût) admettent in fine que, ce que le langage ordinaire suggère, vaut également sur le plan théorique : la présence ou l'absence d'un corrélat intentionnel déterminé n'est pas discriminant sur le plan essentiel qui montre plutôt une homogénéité substantielle de l'expérience⁶².

Mais ce n'est pas tout. Heidegger tente d'établir un lien entre angoisse et « insignifiance » (Unbedeutsamkeit) : le fait que l'on échoue à identifier ce qui est menaçant ferait plonger le monde dans une « complète insignifiance »⁶³. Pourtant, ici encore, la donation effective de cette expérience ne semble pas étayer la thèse heideggerienne. Face à une menace, l'étant intramondain en général ne perd en aucun cas son sens, au contraire : d'un côté, il est interrogé au titre de possible origine de la menace, de l'autre, il est éprouvé comme un refuge ou une contre-mesure possible. Cela peut ne pas réussir, c'est effectivement ce qui arrive dans le cas d'une peur qui échoue à identifier son objet ; mais on ne peut pour autant parler d'une prise de distance par rapport à la structure de « tournure » qui caractérise l'intramondain en tant que tel. La manière dont on peut passer de l'inquiétude de la menace à l'expérience d'une perte de sens et en conséquent d'une perte d'intérêt pour le monde (qui au contraire est ce dont, en cas de danger, je ne veux pas être séparé) reste obscure. On remarque alors inévitablement ici une équivoque superposition d'expériences qualitativement distinctes, superposition qui sera abandonnée par Heidegger précisément au moment où son attention se déplacera de l'angoisse vers l'ennui. En ce sens, la conférence de 1929 signale de manière décisive la progressive transmutation de l'angoisse en ennui : l'angoisse est alors vue comme l'expérience de l'« indifférence » (Gleichgültigkeit)⁶⁴, du « glissement » (Entgleiten)⁶⁵ dans l'indifférence, de la « suspension » (Hineingehaltenheit)⁶⁶ ; notions qui, dans les Grundbegriffe, reviennent à leur lieu phénoménal naturel et sont pensées comme caractères de l'ennui⁶⁷ – ennui dans lequel ne se configure aucune menace et où ne se profile aucune préfiguration de mon propre non-être⁶⁸.

Il est tout à fait compréhensible qu'Heidegger conserve une forte résistance à l'égard de l'articulation entre ennui et angoisse. En effet, si l'on accueille véritablement la révélation offerte dans la souveraine indifférence face au monde, on prive la mort comme possibilité de tout privilège méthodologique : face à l'ennui, la mort est aussi insignifiante que le sont tous les pseudo-événements mondains. L'être-pour-la-mort est peut-être susceptible de se soustraire à l'inauthenticité de notre être-affairé-au-monde, mais il ne saurait se soustraire à l'expérience

dramatique de la vanité, qui constitue un tertium datum à l'alternative vivre/mourir, être/non-être⁶⁹. Comme l'écrit Baudelaire, « L'ennui [...] prend les proportions de l'immortalité »⁷⁰. C'est un drame bien connu à une époque comme la notre, plus ennuyée qu'angoissée, et où la question la plus vivace – et qui produit le plus de philosophie – n'est pas tant d'éviter la mort que de réussir à mourir : ce n'est pas par hasard si l'on s'interroge, non tant sur la mort en tant qu'ouverture sur le néant, mais bien plutôt sur la possibilité/légitimité d'une bonne mort (euthanasie) ou sur la façon de gérer la survivance à laquelle nous oblige une mort qui arrive toujours plus tard, peut être trop tard.

Dès lors que l'on distingue l'ennui de l'angoisse, de la vanité du néant, on prive la mort de son rôle de protagoniste et on dévoile le trait caractéristique de l'expérience de l'obscurcissement du sens. « Rien de nouveau sous le soleil » : quel est le véritable deuil exprimé dans cette affirmation inconsolable ?

Parmi toutes les différences englouties dans l'équi-valence (Gleichgültigkeit) de tout ce qui est, il en est une qui est essentielle et qui, en quelque sorte, rend possibles (et disponibles) toutes les autres : c'est l'expérience d'une paralysie – et également d'une clôture – du temps. Heidegger le remarque si clairement qu'il définit l'ennui comme le contrepoids explicite de l'expérience habituelle du flux temporel qui donne accès aux étants dans leur multiplicité et leur spécificité : « L'ennui en général n'est possible que parce que chaque chose, comme on le dit, a son temps. Si chaque chose n'avait pas son temps, il n'y aurait pas d'ennui »⁷¹. « Comme on le dit » dit sobrement Heidegger, et la phrase n'est pas mise entre guillemets dans la transcription du cours, et pourtant, l'allusion au très célèbre incipit du troisième chapitre du Qohelet résonne haut et clair⁷². Il y a un temps pour chaque chose, comme le rappelle le prédicateur, l'ennui nous assaille justement quand au contraire le temps se bloque et nous force à rechercher désespérément un quelconque « passe-temps », quelque chose qui allège la pesanteur de la stagnation temporelle : « S'ennuyer c'est ainsi être tenu en suspens par le cours du temps qui s'attarde dans l'instant »⁷³. Dans l'ennui nous sommes bannis (gebannt) par le temps, qui nous chasse hors de son horizon et, par contrecoup, nous écrase contre nous-mêmes : « Ce temps immobile nous le sommes nous-mêmes, mais c'est notre moi en tant qu'il est abandonné par son passé et par son futur »⁷⁴. Le temps nous enferme dans la « pesanteur propre de l'être-là »⁷⁵. C'est précisément ce qui rend intolérable l'expérience de l'ennui : le fait que la paralysie du temps confine le moi dans l'espace exigü de ses propres limites.

Dans le texte que nous avons déjà mentionné, Levinas insiste sur la véritable opération d'emmurement du moi qui est provoquée dans l'ennui : « La crise inscrite dans l'Ecclésiaste, n'est pas dans le péché, mais dans l'ennui. Tout s'absorbe, s'enlise et s'emmure dans le Même [...] Vanité des vanités : l'écho de nos propres voix, pris pour réponse au peu de prières qui nous reste

encore ; partout retombée sur nos propres pieds, comme après les extases d'une drogue »⁷⁶. L'interprétation levinassienne du redoublement – vanité des vanités – mis en oeuvre par le Qohelet est fulgurante : là où la philologie nous enseigne à lire le superlatif hébraïque, Levinas entend un écho, l'affligeant ricochet de la voix sur le mur qui renferme le Même sur lui-même. En deçà de l'indifférence du cours apparent des choses se dissimule le Même, le spectateur désintéressé et ennuyé qui échoue à s'annuler (comme il serait naturel de le faire) dans l'indistinction de ce flux, parce que son présent, le présent dans lequel consiste le Même, ne passe pas : « La mélancolie de l'éternel écoulement des choses qui s'attache paradoxalement à ce qui, dans l'instant, est la suprême garantie de sa liberté de l'origine et qui inscrit l'évanescence de l'instant dans un registre idéal des parties perdues (dans l'Ecclésiaste), témoigne que le présent contient un nœud que sa pâmoison ne dénoue pas, que le présent dans son retour inévitable sur lui-même n'a pas la possibilité de son anéantissement »⁷⁷.

En l'absence de temps, aucune ek-stase, aucun hors de soi n'est possible et le moi devient pour lui-même cette « chambre » dont parle Pascal où ne nous savons « demeurer en repos »⁷⁸, ou encore cette cellule dont parlait déjà Cassien⁷⁹ : la frénésie, l'impossibilité à rester immobile, l'horror loci sont des réactions du moi à ce manque structurel d'espace. Le moi n'a pas d'espace parce que tout l'espace est déjà plein de soi. De ce point de vue, le vide du regard dans l'ennui, qui ne trouve pas de contenus auxquels se remplir, se révèle être le contrecoup d'une satiété fondamentale : il suffit de s'attarder un moment de trop sur ce qui ennue, car trop souvent goûté, vu, expérimenté, pour que l'ennui devienne dégoût.

Si telle est la situation, Heidegger en arrive bien trop rapidement à nier la parenté entre ennui et désespoir⁸⁰, et à attribuer à l'ennui, par contrecoup, rien de moins que la capacité à révéler sa liberté à l'être-là. Selon Heidegger en effet, on atteint le degré le plus profond de cette tonalité affective lors du passage du moi qui s'ennue, ce « 'je' qui nous est si cher », au « cela vous ennui (es ist einem langweilig) »⁸¹. L'ennui semble précisément ne pas pouvoir garantir ce passage au-delà du « cher » moi : on ne comprend pas comment l'engluement en soi-même peut, contemporanément, devenir libération de soi, ni comment le recul de l'étant (Versagen) peut se renverser en un « renvoi à autre chose »⁸², en une « annonce » (Ansagen)⁸³ voire même en un « appel » (Anrufen)⁸⁴. Que derrière cet appel, il n'y ait rien d'autre que l'écho de ma propre voix, c'est là une idée désolante mais tout à fait plausible. Il serait ainsi possible qu'au fond ce jeu de renvois de soi à soi soit exactement ce à quoi Heidegger, en dernière instance, aspire. Il est symptomatique que, bien des années plus tard, dans un remarquable passage de la première des conférences de Fribourg de 1957, Heidegger rappelle le célèbre « rien de nouveau sous le soleil », reprenant à son compte ce dont le regard affligé du prédicateur voudrait s'éloigner. Après avoir écarté le sens banal de l'affirmation, à savoir qu'au fond dans l'histoire il ne se passerait jamais

rien, Heidegger la réinterprète à sa manière, la reprenant à son compte : « Si par contre la proposition “il n’y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil” signifie : il y seulement l’ancien dans l’inexorable puissance de transformation de ce qui est initial, alors elle saisit l’essence de l’histoire »⁸⁵. L’absence de nouveauté signifie en somme que la temporalité historique n’est que la « venue de ce qui a été (Ankunft des Gewesenen) »⁸⁶, un déploiement progressif de la puissance de l’origine. Déploiement qui toutefois ne donne lieu qu’à une histoire ennuyeuse, entièrement tissée d’ennui et intolérablement liée à ce moi dont l’ennui s’ennuie. Mais cet ennui, cette ennuyeuse répétition de l’origine est le lieu même du non-sens : le lieu du non-sens comme ce qui m’est propre et ce d’où il faut réussir à s’échapper. Dès lors, non seulement le néant n’est pas la solution, mais il n’est même pas le problème.

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Heidegger’s Concept of “Sense” in *Being and Time*

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§1

The Concept of “Sense” in the Seinsfrage

The novelty of Heidegger’s formulation of the Seinsfrage in *Being and Time* consists, not in its orientation towards the sense of being in general, but rather in the way in which he understands the Seinsfrage and the path he lays out in order to answer it. Heidegger’s principal thesis in *Being and Time* is that time constitutes the horizon for “any understanding whatsoever of being” (GA 2: 1, BT: 19) and, therefore, that time effectively constitutes the sense of being in general (Sinn von Sein überhaupt).⁸⁷ This means that time organizes the manifold senses of being (in both its categorial and existential determinations) by referring them back to a “general” or “focal” sense. Before one examines Heidegger’s thesis that time constitutes the sense of being, however, it is important to underline the following point: it does not go without saying that the question of being should be framed in terms of the concept of “sense.” Even after Heidegger defines the concept of “sense” as an existential in *Being and Time* §33, the decision to formulate the Seinsfrage in terms of the concept of sense conceals a number of suppositions, the most

important being the supposition that the manifold senses of being can be organized around or referred back to a focal sense. This supposition does not depend on the thesis that the sense of being turns out to be constituted by time. The entire problem of the sense of being, and the possibility of a science devoted to this problem, arises from the elementary fact that the sense of being is manifold; being has many different senses. It is not initially clear whether these senses can be organized around a focal sense. In nearly all of his courses both before and immediately after *Being and Time*, Heidegger continually reminds his readers and students that being is a *pollachôs legomenon* (πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον). He introduces the *Seinsfrage* by referring to the universally recognized, even pre-philosophically available fact that being has many senses, i.e., that the understanding of being, which constitutes *Dasein* in its being, is as diverse and differentiated as the kinds of being that there are.⁸⁸ Furthermore, he consistently restricts the multiplicity of the senses of being to the level of beings alone. It is beings in their diversity that differentiate the sense of being and distribute it over the whole territory of beings. Nevertheless, for Heidegger, the diversity of the senses of being is never so radical as to affect the sense of being in general. The sense of being, once determined, can account for the many senses of being, for however different these senses may be both from one another and from being itself, the focal sense of being does not evaporate in mere equivocation. Being is not equivocal, and only insofar as it is not equivocal can the question regarding its sense first arise. And yet being is not univocal either. It does not always and everywhere have the same sense. Hence the problem: if being is neither equivocal nor univocal in its sense, but rather has an Aristotelian “unity of analogy,” as Heidegger put it in *Being and Time* §1,⁸⁹ what does being mean, and how can the sense of being organize its manifold senses?

The manner in which Heidegger formulates the *Seinsfrage* as a question about the relation between the focal sense of being and the many senses of being in no way depends on any substantive phenomenological thesis. It is entirely Aristotelian, and can be formulated without reference to the phenomenological method or phenomenological concepts. Indeed, Heidegger sets out to demonstrate why ontology is only possible as phenomenology in *Being and Time*. He sets out to demonstrate why the *Seinsfrage* can only be raised and answered by means of phenomenology. The manner in which Heidegger formulates the *Seinsfrage* also does not depend on any theses about the correlation between being and time. That time constitutes the horizon for any understanding of being whatever is Heidegger’s answer to the *Seinsfrage*, and forms no part of the formulation of the *Seinsfrage*,⁹⁰ which can and has throughout the history of metaphysics been raised without any explicit reference whatever to the correlation between being and time. The correlation between being and time, as the explicit and privileged object of ontological inquiry, is peculiar to Heidegger’s own project in *Being and Time*. Thus, I will postpone discussing the correlation between being and time until §3, in order to focus first on how the concept of

sense operates in Heidegger's formulation of the Seinsfrage in Being and Time. My hypothesis in §3 will be that Heidegger's interpretation of time, or the way in which he understands the relation between being and time, is deeply determined by the concept of sense he employs in his formulation of the Seinsfrage. In §2, I will argue that Heidegger's strategy for motivating the Seinsfrage consistently failed to establish the thesis that being has a focal sense that can be the object of ontological inquiry. In §4, I will conclude by suggesting (but only suggesting) that Heidegger's thesis that time constitutes the sense of being is philosophically problematic and historically questionable. The Greeks (Aristotle) did not (not even unthematically) understand being in terms of time in the way that Heidegger suggests. Rather, I will argue, they understood time in terms of motion, and motion in terms of power (*dunamis-energeia*, δύναμις-ενέργεια), a fact Heidegger knew very well, and which he analyzed in many contexts, but which he consistently interpreted in ways that favor the priority of time (constant presence) over every other "horizon" of the understanding of being.⁹¹

§2

Is the Sense of Being Given in the Understanding of Being?

Heidegger's principal strategy for motivating the Seinsfrage – and motivating the Seinsfrage has become absolutely necessary in light of its forgottenness and obscurity (GA 2: §1, 2–4, BT: 21–24) – is to point to the fact that we already live in and therefore have an understanding of being (*Seinsverständnis*, GA 2: §1, 4, BT: 23). In Being and Time §1, Heidegger addresses the objection that there is no need to raise the Seinsfrage, since being "is of all concepts the one that is self-evident," for "[whenever] one cognizes anything or makes an assertion, whenever one comports oneself towards entities, even towards oneself, some use is made of 'being' [...]. [In] any way of comporting oneself to entities as entities – even in any being towards entities as entities – there lies a priori an enigma. The very fact that we already live in an understanding of being [Daß wir je schon in einem Seinsverständnis leben] and that the sense of being is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again" (GA 2: §1, 4, BT: 23). From the fact that we live in or have an understanding of being (and, therefore, of beings in their totality), Heidegger infers that there must be a sense whose sovereignty over the many senses of being can be demonstrated. This sense remains "veiled in darkness." The thesis that the sense of being is veiled in darkness depends on the thesis (1) that there is such a sense, and (2) that the many senses of being somehow veil its focal sense. But has Heidegger actually demonstrated that the understanding of being depends on the prior givenness of the sense of being? Not at all. From the fact that Dasein lives in the understanding of being, it only follows that Dasein understands the many senses of being, not that these senses are organized around or refer back to a focal sense, which each of the many senses differentiates in its own way.

In *Being and Time* §2, Heidegger once more insists on the fact that Dasein's understanding of being indicates that the sense of being has already been disclosed to it, if only in a vague, average (*durchschnittliche*, *vage*, GA 2: §2, 5, BT: 25) manner. He first insists that "we always conduct our activities in an understanding of being. Out of this understanding arise both the explicit question of the sense of being and the tendency that leads us towards its conception. We do not know what 'being' means. But even if we ask, 'What is 'Being'? we keep within an understanding of the 'is,' though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact" (GA 2: §2, 5, BT: 25; first emphasis mine). Here, Heidegger claims that the question of the sense of being merely renders explicit the understanding of being itself. The *Seinsfrage* is simply what the understanding of being becomes when the latter turns towards itself and raises questions about its content and possibility in order to discover the sense of being that underlies and determines it. The sense of being – i.e., the *Erfragte*, the third and most important part of the formal structure of the question of being (GA 2: §2, 6, BT: 26) – unassumingly "falls out" of the understanding of being when the latter adopts the comportment (*Verhalten*) of ontological inquiry.

Later in §2, Heidegger once more insists on the givenness of the sense of being in the understanding of being: "Everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being; what we are is being, and so is how we are. being lies in the fact that something is, and in its being as it is; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the 'es gibt'" (GA 2: §2, 6–7, BT: 26). In this passage, Heidegger has effectively enumerated many of the senses of being he hopes to ground in the focal sense: being as reality (presence-at-hand), as existence (in the traditional sense, *existentia*); essence (also in the traditional sense, *essentia*); Dasein (*Existenz*); truth. There is no contesting the fact that Dasein understands all of these senses of being. Nevertheless, once more, Heidegger has inferred from the fact that Dasein has an understanding of all of these senses of being that there is a focal sense each of these senses only declines or differentiates. All of his descriptions of Dasein's understanding of being presuppose that this understanding would not be possible without the prior givenness of the (conceptually obscure, but nevertheless effective) focal sense of being, which binds these senses to one another and so exercises ontological priority over them all.

From these considerations, I draw a preliminary conclusion: the introduction to *Being and Time* does not conclusively demonstrate that the *Seinsfrage* can only be formulated as a *Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*, because the only possible basis for such a thesis is not itself demonstrated: viz., that the sense of being is given in, and so informs the understanding of being, such that the latter would not be possible without the former. The dependence of the understanding of being

on the sense of being is presupposed, but not demonstrated. Heidegger's descriptions of the understanding of being phenomenologically yield only that Dasein understands the many senses of being, not that this understanding depends on the prior givenness of the focal sense of being. The only remaining way for Heidegger to demonstrate the thesis that the sense of being achieves givenness in, and so informs the understanding of being is to demonstrate it, not independently of the thesis that the sense of being is constituted by time (as it should have been demonstrated), but rather precisely by reference to this thesis alone, which is not demonstrated by the end of this unfinished treatise, not even by Heidegger's own admission (I will return to this in §3). Henceforth, in order to show that being has a focal sense that determines its manifold senses, Heidegger must show that the focal sense is time, and he must show how time organizes and distributes the many senses of being. Heidegger must demonstrate in the conclusion what he could only presuppose in the introduction. This is not a circularity charge, which Heidegger adroitly disposes of early on in the introduction by oblique reference to Plato's *Meno* and Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (see GA 2: §2). Clearly, in a very general sense, in every inquiry, the object of inquiry must in some way already be given. I am not criticizing Heidegger for claiming both that we already know what being means and claiming that we have yet to discover what being means. I am claiming that Heidegger does not demonstrate the prior givenness of the sense of being in the understanding of being. In other words, Heidegger does not satisfy the phenomenological criterion of evidence. On the contrary, he infers the prior givenness of the sense of being from what is truly and alone given: the many senses of being, of which Dasein does indeed have an understanding. This understanding is given, very clearly. Heidegger's thesis that the understanding of being depends on the prior givenness of the sense of being stems from traditional (Aristotelian) ontology, not phenomenology.⁹² That Heidegger must demonstrate, and cannot simply assume, that the *Seinsfrage* can only be posed by distinguishing between the focal sense of being and the many senses of beings is clear: his entire aim in the introduction to *Being and Time* is to pose the *Seinsfrage* and to remind his readers of what the question means, to reawaken the *Seinsfrage* in his readers precisely as a question of sense.

§3

Sense, Horizon, and Time

In §§1–2, I claimed that Heidegger does not successfully (i.e., phenomenologically) demonstrate that the *Seinsfrage* must be formulated in terms of the focal sense of being, as contrasted with the many senses of being. There is, however, a further supposition Heidegger makes in his formulation of the *Seinsfrage* that cannot be passed over here: viz., that the sense of being, whatever it might be, can only be determined by reference to the “horizon” in terms of which beings are understood. The concept of the “horizon” is transcendental, and denotes an a priori

condition of possibility (not in the Kantian, formal sense, but rather in the phenomenological, concrete sense of a condition that can itself be exhibited in phenomenological intuition and, therefore, evidence). An horizon gives light to whatever appears within its limits (peras), and here, what appears within its limits are beings. The thesis that the sense of being can only be determined by reference to an horizon is logically independent of the thesis that the horizon is time, however closely related these two theses are to one another in the conceptual economy of Being and Time (so closely related that we hardly ever distinguish between them). That the sense of being must be determined in terms of a horizon only means that, whatever the sense of being might be, it can only appear in the light cast by a transcendental condition. To assert that time is the horizon in which any understanding of being moves is to assert that it occupies the office of such a condition, and as such enjoys priority over being as the foundation of its sense (and, therefore, as what enables us to fix its sense). Thus, before Heidegger has even attempted to offer an interpretation of time, he has already assigned it a definite place in ontological inquiry: viz., that of a condition. Furthermore, because of the equivalence between (1) time as the horizon of the sense of being and (2) time as the horizon of Dasein's understanding of being, the next steps of the inquiry have been clearly delineated: it must be shown that time conditions Dasein's understanding of being. An existential analytic therefore becomes necessary. The concept of horizon interposes time between being and beings, such that beings understandingly appear to Dasein only insofar as they are temporally projected by Dasein via what Heidegger terms its "potentiality-for-being" (Seinkönnen; pouvoir-être). If (1) the Seinsfrage is formulated in terms of the focal, unified sense of being, which commands the totality of its many senses, and if, moreover, (2) this sense of being can only be disclosed, not via a definition of any sort, but rather as an horizon, and if, finally, (3) the horizon is itself defined as time, then it is only by way of Dasein's deployment of temporality in thrown projection that the sense of being can be disclosed. In this way of posing the Seinsfrage, time enjoys transcendental priority over being, so much so that fundamental ontology becomes reducible to "temporal science,"⁹³ where time is interpreted in an explicitly transcendental manner, due to the form of the Seinsfrage and, more specifically, the dependence of the sense of being on its horizon.

But Dasein is an entity whose sense is itself dependent on the prior givenness of the sense of being. Claude Romano has compellingly demonstrated that Heidegger's project in Being and Time and Basic Problems of Phenomenology fails because his analysis of Dasein's temporality ultimately yields only three senses of being, none of which can be identified with the sense of being in general. These three senses are Zuhandenheit, Vorhandenheit, and Existenz. The first two depend on the ecstasis of the present and its modification in the now (Gegenwart, Jetzt), and the third depends on the ecstasis of the authentic future (Zukunft).⁹⁴ The problem is that these three ecstases, together with their corresponding schemata, do not in any way seem to converge

in or disclose a focal sense, but are rather irreducibly diverse, so much so that they render the sense of being equivocal. Heidegger's interpretation of time does not establish the focal sense of being, but only mutually irreducible senses of being. To be sure, all of these senses refer to or are based on time, but they are mutually irreducible senses of different entities, and do not disclose a focal sense that encompasses them all. I agree with Romano's interpretation, which further confirms not only that Heidegger does not demonstrate in the introduction to *Being and Time* that the sense of being is given in and determines the understanding of being (and so can become an object of ontological inquiry), but also that he has not demonstrated this by the end of *Being and Time* and *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which contains "a new elaboration of Division 3 of Part 1 of *Being and Time*," where Heidegger intended to finally disclose the sense of being in light of the horizon of time.⁹⁵ Heidegger's recognition of this failure led him to realize that his formulation of the *Seinsfrage* stemmed, not from *die Sache selbst*, but rather from the one aspect of the history of ontology that survived the otherwise radical *Destruktion* he carries out in *Being and Time*: the formulation of the *Seinsfrage* as a question about the sense of being, to which all other senses can be referred and in which they find their unitary ground. In the 1930s, Heidegger will abandon the project of trying to account for the sense of being by way of time. He will abandon the concept of "sense" in his formulation of the *Seinsfrage*.⁹⁶ In the *Kehre*, he will focus on the co-belonging of being and time in the *Ereignis*, without prioritizing one over the other, according to a decidedly post-transcendental *Fragestellung* hinting in the direction of a phenomenology of givenness.

§4

Being, Time, and Power

Instead of following Heidegger down the path of the *Ereignis*, however, I would like to briefly pursue the suggestion I made in §1. I have already explained why Heidegger's thesis in *Being and Time* that time constitutes the sense of being is philosophically problematic. I would now like to explain why it is also historically problematic. The Greeks (Aristotle), I suggested, did not (not even implicitly) understand being in terms of time in the way that Heidegger suggests. Rather, they understood time in terms of motion, and motion in terms of power (*dunamis-energeia*, δύναμις-ενέργεια), a fact Heidegger knew very well, and which he analyzed in many contexts, but which he consistently interpreted in ways that favor the priority of time (constant presence) over every other "horizon" of the understanding of being.⁹⁷ Why did Heidegger insist on the primacy of time as the unthematized foundation of ontological reflection in the West since Aristotle, if not earlier? In Heidegger's texts, it is clear that this historical thesis rests on his interpretation of the basic categories of Aristotelian ontology. The basic thesis running through all of Heidegger's interpretations of Aristotle is that the fundamental concepts of Aristotelian

ontology are only intelligible in light of time (and, more specifically, the privilege Aristotle gives to constant presence in his interpretation of being). He frequently contends that Aristotle, together with the subsequent history of ontology up to Hegel, failed, for essential reasons, to fully appreciate the dependence of being on time, and so could not pose the *Seinsfrage* in the way in which, he felt, it had to be posed: viz., in terms of the relation between being and time. Heidegger's presentation of these theses is extremely abbreviated in *Being and Time* §5, but it can be found in a more elaborated form in texts written both before and after. One of the clearest formulations can be found in *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (1930), where Heidegger examines the concepts of *ousia*, *parousia*, *eidos*, *energeia*, and finally *aletheia*. He interprets all of these Aristotelian concepts in terms of time and, more importantly, in terms of constant presence, and he regards his temporal interpretation of Aristotelian concepts as evidence for his own thesis that being has always been understood in terms of time, even and perhaps especially when the relation between being and time is not explicitly stated as such or even remotely understood.

It is important to remember that Heidegger does not simply regard his interpretation of Aristotle as a merely "external" confirmation of an independently, phenomenologically verifiable thesis about the relation between being and time. On the contrary, as he himself explicitly asserts: "If this interpretation of being as constant presence [*beständige Anwesenheit*] is not correct, there can be no basis for unfolding a connection between being and time, as demanded by the fundamental question."⁹⁸ Nevertheless, things are not so clear. Heidegger wavers. Immediately after, he continues: "Yet although Greek metaphysics as such, together with the subsequent tradition of Western metaphysics, is of great significance for our problem, its implications do not extend this far. For even if for some reason or other our interpretation of Greek ontology could not be carried through, what we have asserted as the fundamental orientation of the understanding of being could be exhibited from our own immediate comportment towards beings [...] as will be shown – we humans must understand being in terms of time."⁹⁹ Here, Heidegger insists on the fundamental exteriority of any historical investigation vis-à-vis the correlation between being and time, which can, he claims, always be demonstrated independently by reference to the understanding of being, and so remain secure from history, should any "anomaly" in the history of being creep in and destabilize the required correlation between being and time Heidegger demands. Clearly, Heidegger is worried about the possibility that his analysis might not yield the required conclusion: that the history of ontology, beginning with the Greeks, has always understood being in terms of time. But he is too subtle to simply reverse his earlier statement, for he adds yet another fold: "However, the history of metaphysics provides us with more than just examples. [...] [History] offers us more than a picture of earlier and superseded stages of thought. [...] If we try to grasp the Greek concept of being, this is not a

matter of acquiring external historical knowledge,” for it helps us show that the Greek concept of being has determined the history of ontology up to Hegel in a non-arbitrary way.¹⁰⁰

How should we interpret Heidegger’s hesitations? He is not seeking in history a series of “examples.” Indeed, Dasein’s understanding of being must always live itself out in terms of time, and the interpretation of historical texts must always confirm this. Any historical exception is no longer a mere exception, but rather constitutes an objection to the philosophical thesis that Dasein always understands being in terms of time. In other words, Dasein’s Seinsverständnis places constraints on the interpretations of being historical Dasein has produced from the Greeks to the present. Suppose, then, that Heidegger were to demonstrate what we now know he cannot: viz., that the focal sense of being is constituted in the horizon of time and that this sense organizes all other possible senses of being. What would happen if Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle were to turn out not to confirm the thesis that being is always interpreted in terms of time? Would we say that this is a mere anomaly? An exception that proves the rule? Not at all. We would say that such a “disconfirmation” should be a priori impossible, given the kind of being that Dasein is and the fact that the history of ontology is but the history of various attempts to articulate what its understanding of being consists in. The trace of time as the foundation of the sense of being must leave its mark in every understanding of being whatever, from the most ancient to the most contemporary, and from the most vulgar to the most elevated. This trace can never fully be erased, however buried it might be.

Significantly, Heidegger’s hesitations about the importance of the history of ontology in confirming his thesis that being has always been interpreted in terms of time occur immediately after the section of the course devoted to the concept of *energeia*. Regarding the latter, he writes: “In summary, we can say that the Aristotelian concept for the actuality of the actual, i.e. the concept of *energeia* as well as the later concept of *actualitas*, determined by this, does not initially confirm our thesis of ‘constant presence’ as the fundamental meaning of Being in Greek philosophy.”¹⁰¹ Why? This is not immediately clear. On the contrary, everything in Heidegger’s text up to this point seems to suggest that his interpretation of *energeia* does confirm the thesis that constant presence is the fundamental meaning of being in Aristotle. After all, Aristotle himself, as Heidegger interprets him, correlates *dunamis* to *apousia* and *energeia* to *parousia* in the conceptual economy of *metabolé*, which is the essence of *phusis*, and which Heidegger’s regards as fundamental to Aristotle’s concept of *ousia*

metabolé (μεταβολή)

apousia (απουσία) *parousia* (παρουσία)

dunamis (δύναμις) *energeia* (ενέργεια)

Why, then, if *energeia* belongs to *parousia*, can there be any risk of a disconfirmation in Heidegger's fundamental thesis that being has always been interpreted in terms of time? Here, I can only risk the following hypothesis: because the play of *dunamis* and *energeia* grounds the play of *apousia* and *parousia* (i.e., of *ousia* as defined by these two terms), rather than the other way around, because *dunamis* and *energeia* are more fundamental, since they ground time itself. Time is but the measure of change, and the play of *dunamis* and *energeia* are the source of all change in *phusis*. Time reveals itself as secondary, derivative, by comparison to *dunamis* and *energeia*, for these do not depend on time, rather time depends on them. The value of presence in Aristotle is but the value of fully manifested power in *energeia*. No manifest power, no presence. *Energeia* does not occur "in the present," it is itself the source of any and all presencing. The word *energeia* denotes the manifestation of a *dunamis*, of an ability-to-be. In short, *energeia* is the manifestation of a *Seinkönnen*, which is also the origin of Dasein's temporality.¹⁰² Dasein does not project into a future that is already there, but rather in projecting its own potentiality-for-being is the future. Even in *Being and Time*, power has priority over time, since time arises directly from Dasein's ability-to-be. Heidegger's reduction of *energeia* to *parousia* in *On the Essence of Human Freedom* is a strategic decision made in the interest of preserving the correlation between being and time, for in truth *parousia* is reducible to *energeia*. But if this is so, then we must raise questions about Heidegger's temporal interpretation of the fundamental concepts of Aristotelian ontology, and perhaps invert the order of priority:

metabolé (μεταβολή)

dunamis (δύναμις) *energeia* (ενέργεια)

apousia (απουσία) *parousia* (παρουσία)

To conclude, I have defended two theses, one "historical," and one "philosophical," although the distinction between them cannot be rigorously maintained in this context. The "philosophical" thesis is twofold. First, Heidegger demonstrates neither that the sense of being is given in the understanding of being in the introduction to *Being and Time* nor that time constitutes the horizon of the sense of being by the end of *Being and Time* and *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Second, power determines Heidegger's own interpretation of the understanding of being even in *Being and Time* itself: Dasein always understands itself in terms of its ownmost ability-to-be, and time is nothing over and above this ability-to-be, in all of the various ways (authentic and inauthentic) in which it can be modalized. The "historical" thesis is that Aristotle did not interpret being in terms of time. *Ousia* is reducible to *energeia* as the manifestation of *dunamis*, and time, despite its importance, is secondary. The concept of the phenomenon in Aristotle, and perhaps beyond, is essentially the concept of expressed power. These two theses

reorient the concept of the phenomenon and the question of being in a different direction, towards the concept of power, and away from the concept of time.

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Is There a Body without Flesh?

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In this paper I investigate the theme of sense and nonsense as it pertains to the phenomenological problem of “flesh.” My remarks here also respond to the two-fold, intellectual invitation Emmanuel Falque has extended to philosophy to embark into theological territory and to engage without polemic or fear in a combat amoureux over the things that matter—the things themselves. Struggle can be loving only if the work itself is motivated by a love, and a love of what we can still dare to call truth. It is in this same spirit, which I recognize and esteem in Falque, that I wish to address here the question of body and flesh that is central to his work, as it is for many others.

I will raise two main sets of questions that have been the subject of historical debate, and Falque knows them well, because they are also his questions: 1) How should we describe and understand the relationship of flesh [Leib] to body [Körper] and body to flesh? Can we give legitimate status to the materiality of the corporeal condition while maintaining the phenomenological privilege of flesh and life? Or, alternatively, should we deny the privilege of flesh in favor of a more moderate “balance” of flesh and body, and so rescue material embodiment from the oblivion to which a naive priority of flesh would consign it? 2) By extension, how should we describe and understand the relationship of flesh and body, in their phenomenality, to the theological reality of the Incarnation of the Word?¹⁰³ How is the passage into theology effected in phenomenology when it is a question of body and flesh?

In a way that has not yet been acknowledged adequately, these questions bear on the relationship of phenomenology and the sciences, which also deal with “bodies,” perhaps exclusively and with greater rigor than phenomenology. What do we gain from recognizing this bearing? It is explicitly against what he perceives to be rampant Western materialism and its unilateral science that

Michel Henry frames the phenomenology of life. It is also in the name of material, embodied reality that Falque objects to Henry's approach. For reasons I will spell out in detail, and while I recognize his theological hesitations and share his theological commitments, I think Falque's objections misconstrue Henry's position. We have good reason to doubt that the phenomenality of incarnation, in either its philosophical or theological senses, can be adequately described by a phenomenology in which perception is ultimate.

§1. The Myth of Experience

Is there a body without flesh? The question seems as rhetorical as the inverse one Falque poses to Henry. We already know Henry's answer: A body cannot appear, and thus be, unless it is first given to flesh. This rule applies whether I am dealing with a material body in the world or with the *corps propre*, my own body.¹⁰⁴ In the one case as in the other, a body cannot appear unless it is first given to sensibility, and nothing is given to the senses I call mine unless it affects me. Apart from this affective instance, without a flesh that is impressional, I have no way of saying whether I am dealing with the front of a thing or its backside, its blue hue or hardness, girth or speed, or with its disappearance, because I know nothing about it. I can offer no description, phenomenological or otherwise. Of what would it be the description? I have no access to a thing unless it is given to me in experience, or in imagination, as composed of what is so given.¹⁰⁵ Unless I can be affected, unless I am endowed with flesh, nothing like a body can appear and I am simply not entitled to speak of a body, not even as an idea.¹⁰⁶

Why then ask whether there is a body without flesh if such a possibility for these decisive reasons is unintelligible? Can any further precision show the question to be worth the annoyance of posing and the labor of investigating? What is a body and what is flesh? According to the standard definition, a body in general is a material thing bearing sensible or intelligible properties—the categories of Aristotle (time, change, motion, quality, size, place, etc.), or the sensible qualities of Galileo or Descartes (extension, figure, etc.), the pure forms of intuition of Kant (space and time), or the properties of sub-atomic physics (spin, location, charge, mass, etc.). Even in the latter cases, where the properties of a body are not known through the senses, but through instruments of measurement that have been designed to detect and record what the senses cannot, senses nevertheless must intervene to “read” such instruments. The physicist that denies that our senses tell us the truth of the universe must consult the senses in some way in order to arrive at that conclusion.¹⁰⁷

The question can nevertheless be answered affirmatively. Yes, there is a body without flesh. The universe is populated with bodies of this sort, which are what they are independently of any appeal to flesh for their appearance. First, for the strict reason that they do not appear to flesh

and do not affect it directly. In itself, flesh knows nothing about them. Second, because they are what they are, and will be what they will be, whatever we may wish to assert about flesh, or even if we wish to ignore flesh, and what is given to it, altogether. It is not even obvious that someone must observe the Large Hadron Collider, since programs can be designed for that purpose, and register the events in question with more subtlety and precision than the “naked eye.” If we were smart enough, we would program those computers also to interpret the data better than we can, find errors in our assumptions, mistakes in our models, and so on. From this perspective, not only is there a body without flesh, perhaps an infinite number of them; in addition, if we are to arrive at the truth of the bodies that populate the universe, we must ignore flesh altogether.

Including our own? Nothing prohibits the positive sciences from applying the same methods to the human body they apply to the cosmos. Whether we are dealing with cell biology, genetics, neuroscience, or the other cognitive sciences, no reference to flesh is required, and it is not obvious how any discussion of flesh, in Henry’s sense, can be included in either the assumptions, methods, or results of these fields. It is true that some forms of cognitive research on so-called “live” subjects do involve prompting the subject of research to “think about” or “imagine” an object, and so forth. Through a process of trial and error, it is possible to correlate material events in the brain with reported experiences, so that eventually consciousness would be, as Daniel Dennett says, “explained.”¹⁰⁸ What seems to be, and is called, an experience of something, is in fact, caused or occasioned by material episodes of which we are entirely unaware. Edit the episode (or what codes for it), edit the experience. Even if some are uncomfortable with the idea of dismissing human experience as entirely illusory, the scientific position is clear: the material, bodily event is phenomenal; the experience of sensing and of sensed, scientifically speaking at least, is epiphenomenal, or worse, illusory.

If such a conclusion seems difficult to accept, resolving it goes beyond the purview of science. Let politicians, therapists, pharmaceutical companies, social workers, school teachers, and prison guards deal with the consequences. Science must tell us only what is true. We must dare, precisely not to think anymore, but to experiment.¹⁰⁹ It is no longer the philosopher who dethrones the gods of the mythmakers, but the scientist; and in the universe of science, only one god is worthy of the name. Evidence. But the etymology of the word is no longer its meaning. If *e-videre* means to come from seeing, here in question is not seeing, nor even what is seen, at least if that must involve and depend upon sensibility. Rather, a certain way of determining and “explaining” the material world, including what we do see, that is the *arche* and *telos* of science, the limits of its *veritas* and its *realitas*. Is the ambition of science anything but to establish once and for all a correct explanatory account of the universe in all its dimensions on the basis of an exact understanding of the causal relationships that govern its constituent parts?

In any case, we are up against a problem. We have in phenomenology a reference to flesh and to the sensing body as a necessary condition of experience and definition of reality, and the exclusion of any such reference in the natural sciences, as a condition of any experimentation and also as a definition of reality. How should one respond intellectually or practically to this apparently-unresolvable dilemma cutting the history of reason in two? On the one hand, the world of our experience, with all its sensible delight—our ambitions, aims, and hopes, fears and regrets, joys and sorrows, love and hate—this world of meaning, of sense, of value. On the other, the empirically-observable, material world of bodies visible to us, or detectable in dimensions far beyond what we can see—this material world, the better understanding of which continues to benefit humanity in myriad ways.

An objection arises: Where is the dilemma? If the visible universe is an element, and a marvelous element, of the world of experience, as of creation, then no rational person ought to resist the desire to understand the mechanisms by which it operates. Can one really suppose it to be a world of inert bodies in which no meaning, no sense, can be found? The apparent contradiction between sense and nonsense—here, the world of meaning and the world of senseless bodies—covers over another one that is more difficult. We are up against two incompatible definitions of the real. If so-called “first-person” experience cannot be reduced, and what is observed in the third-person can never be raised to the level of experiencing itself, for what kind of correlation can we hope?

§2. Embodied Mind: Thinking Matter

The opposition just posited—between the world of meaning, on the one hand, and the world of senseless, inert bodies, on the other—is it artificial or contrived? Far from being a contradiction needing resolution, are these worlds not already, originally and always, conjoined, as Merleau-Ponty has taught us? Flesh is a body that is part—a body-part—of this great body that is the universe (we leave aside the question of whether another, or an infinite number of others, is possible). Flesh, the living, sensing body, is a constituent part of the universe, even if it has raised itself—but why “raised”?—to the level of self-awareness. Admitting the worldly nature of flesh does not require us to nullify or diminish the realm of meaning, the so-called “space” of reasons. “Meaning is not a mysterious gift from outside nature,” John McDowell reminds us; to think so would commit us to a “rampant platonism.”¹¹⁰ Cognition, and the mind as such, is “embodied.” In its acts of knowing it need neither be absorbed by nor separated from what it knows, but is or at least can be “simply present and available.”¹¹¹

In significant continuity with Merleau-Ponty’s work, a growing field of research now seeks to demonstrate the thesis that the fleshly body is a worldly body, and to do so while respecting the

prerogatives of both phenomenology and science.¹¹² To take one notable example, Evan Thompson in *Mind in Life* aims to integrate phenomenology and cognitive science in an “enactive” approach that promises to describe and explain at once: “Starting from a recognition of the transcendental and hence ineliminable status of experience, the aim would be to search for morphodynamical principles that can both integrate the orders of matter, life, and mind, and account for the originality of each order.”¹¹³ Once a dynamic morphology of sufficient complexity is recognized—made possible by new topologies, differential geometry, etc.—it is possible to “map,” and then to demonstrate, dynamic and isomorphic relations that arise between physiological systems and perceptual forms.

The effort to achieve such a demonstration, Thompson thinks, would have been embraced by Merleau-Ponty, had a morphology of sufficient richness and complexity been available to him. From this perspective, the remove at which classical phenomenology stands vis-à-vis science, emblematic of Husserl’s *Krisis* (to say nothing of Heidegger’s position), is not a matter of principle, but only a contingent, conceptual constraint, bounded as it was by the limits of the sciences then-available.¹¹⁴ In any case, if Husserl thinks it is the task of phenomenology to assign the sciences their ultimate meaning, it cannot accomplish this task unless a genuine connection arises between phenomenology and the sciences it purports to ground. Otherwise, phenomenology amounts to little more than a series of one-sided assertions and pronouncements about the world of experience, which the world of science can safely ignore. But if the results of the sciences can be altered by taking into account phenomenological insight, as advocates of this approach have shown, then the sciences cannot afford to ignore it.

How should we account for this development phenomenologically? How is it possible that a phenomenological analysis according to the strict phenomenological reduction of what is given in intuition, far from providing the antidote to materialism, naturalism, or reductionism, is now enriched by it, to the point of morphing into a “naturalized phenomenology”?¹¹⁵ We should not fail to notice that protagonists of the enactive approach refuse “objectivism” quite explicitly, and insist on the irreducible, transcendental character of “experience” as the condition for the possibility of the appearance of any object. In addition, and this point is perhaps more important, we are not dealing with a conflation of methods or perspectives, since the engagement with science goes hand in hand with and is predicated upon the insistence on the importance and irreducibility of the phenomenological perspective. One might reasonably consider such an approach to offer a kind of concrete synthesis of mind and world, rather than the a priori one Kant sought.

If the world of experience is irreducible to the world of science and yet integrated with it, is that not what we ought to expect and indicative of a certain correctness? Or, alternatively, in order to

effect such an integration of phenomenology and science, has the concept of experience, necessarily, become a concept of scientific experience alone? Or, yet again, are we dealing with a Malebranchian parallelism that is simply harder to detect because the lines now overlap, or intertwine, to use Merleau-Ponty's word? What is involved in the reduction of experience to scientific experience (that is, the experience of the scientist) and what are its consequences? I will offer three objections, which will lead us into a more refined and direct engagement with the question of flesh and its relation to the body before opening onto a theological question.

First, properly speaking, I do not and cannot have an experience of my neurons as objects. It is true that I can connect my own skull, let us call it *le crâne propre*, to a brain scanner, and vary my thinking as I watch correlating parts of my brain light up on a screen. On the basis of such correlations between my thought and my body, can I ever claim to have an (original) experience of my neurons as sensible or intellectual objects? It would be a reflective experience, and nothing would keep me from learning something perceptually about my body in this way. But what I observe on the screen is not my body and can never be, at least if by body we mean the original, subjective body in its original givenness to itself, its auto-affection, or pre-reflective awareness.

Second, if what I observe is not my body, but only a visual representation, can we say that the correlation has proved successful, that we have evidence for it? Even if one embraces the brilliant level of engagement of phenomenology with science, even if one were to achieve the perfect accord of carnal affectivity with the perception of the body, the problem of principle remains: these are two irreducible orders of givenness, of phenomenality. A fundamental practical problem also remains: Imagine a real-time projection of every dynamic alteration of the organic body flashed on a optic lens, available to the concrete perception of my eye—visible. Is it even possible to perceive, organically, the immense complex that is the organic body, all in one view?

A third and parallel objection can also be raised. The possibility of such a perception is highly-specific, and more often than not, prohibitively expensive. What is given in it goes well beyond what is given in the range of perceptual experience available to anyone. If the notion of what is phenomenal—and, even more, its phenomenality—however broadened and enriched, is available only to one who has already entered into the scientific perspective, and if such a perspective excludes in principle the subject that perceives, feels, or enjoys, then such an approach can indeed admit perception, feeling, or enjoyment, but only on the condition that they become what they are not, which is to say, reports of a perception, feeling, or enjoyment. The problem is not that such reports can be mistaken, which in any case might prove relevant for the experiment, but rather that, in the phenomenality of such a report, the original phenomenon is torn from its original givenness, apart from the world, in order to disclose it in a visibility that is foreign to it. Yes, the scientist engrossed practically in an experiment, or theoretically in the

effort to design or modify a model for what is observed experimentally, also perceives—that is, sees through forms, however rarified they may be. But experience has here been reduced to scientific experience. It can be extended to the universal—taken as universal experience—only by a decision.

If many suspect the world of science and with it virtual reality, automation, and so-called artificial intelligence have encroached too far, it is because the lifeworld as living has been colonized by technology.¹¹⁶ That is why those who adopt it, who prefer to experience the world or themselves as mediated by technology, risk losing knowledge of the world or themselves apart from it. “The information age will be the age of idiots,” claims Henry in 1987.¹¹⁷ The orgasm-feigning robot that will cater to your every wish, or discipline you as programmed, perhaps when you least expect it—or can it learn that you expect that?—is indeed a body without flesh. “Life is but a motion of the limbs... why may we not say, that all Automata... have an artificial life?”¹¹⁸

§3. Touching Flesh: Sensing Nonsense

In light of Michel Henry’s phenomenology of life and its critique of scientism, such a decision stands out in all clarity, but in order to admit it must we follow his characterization of flesh as originally auto-impressional? For Henry, the reality of flesh is invisible, irreducibly and in principle. In its original givenness, where it is given to itself as auto-impressional and the only place its givenness is original, it does not and cannot appear in the exteriority of world. Nor can flesh be extended to the world in the manner of Merleau-Ponty’s touching-touched, sensing-sensed, feeling-felt chiasm.¹¹⁹ Endowed with a power the world forever lacks, the hand that is touched, when it is a question of one’s own body, can become the hand that touches. That is correct. But the in-principle reversibility of touching and touched that characterizes the living body does not extend to the material world. No coffee cup “touches” the hand that holds it, nor has a stone ever picked up the hand that throws it.¹²⁰ The ontological duplicity that distinguishes phenomenologically the body of flesh from the worldly body seems unassailable.

But have we lost the body in its worldly reality in the process? Emmanuel Falque thinks so.¹²¹ In his view, Henry’s thesis concerning auto-affection, and originary flesh as auto-impressionality, fails to account for anything like the body, or the embodied condition as we actually experience it, in “flesh and bone,” as he says: “[N]othing indicates, beyond his masterful descriptive analyses, that there is a genuine access to the body through the flesh. Put otherwise, everything happens as if the flesh, that is to say the experience of our own life, becomes so invasive here that we would come to forget that it is possessed and even experienced, at least materially and visibly, in and through a body.”¹²² For Falque, the flesh that is ours is not only seeing but also visible. It can indeed be seen and touched. This visibility is not simply one way of access to flesh, and to flesh

that is ours, but the first way of access.¹²³ We experience and possess flesh also through our body; and there is no flesh, for us, that we cannot also see or touch.

Falque and Henry thus offer two quite distinct conceptions of flesh that seem incompatible. For Falque, Henry's flesh "disincorporates," "absorbs," and ultimately "destroys" the body, and with it all the "thickness" of what is felt.¹²⁴ After all, "it is also necessary to recognize the weight of our own body (and its kilos, we dare to say!) without which this pain [of a steep climb, for example] would never be experienced" (157).¹²⁵ What phenomenological reality would such a pain have, if not for the fact of the body's quite material weight, which does not simply explain or measure the pain at a causal level, as the reference to kilos might suggest, but is also involved in the very fact and event of it? Falque certainly must have the phenomenality of weight in mind, precisely its heaviness, and not only the relative scientific measure of a primary quality.

On the other hand, there is no question that in Henry's approach only an auto-impressional flesh can experience its own heaviness or lightness. I feel the weight of another not perceptually, by seeing it, but only and at most when the other (the other's weight) is quite strictly bearing down upon me. But even in this case, I do not feel the weight of the other, properly speaking—that is, its heaviness for the other, which remains strictly invisible (an object not of sensibility, but impressionality). Its impressional status does not make it inhuman. Quite the contrary. For Henry, the heaviness or lightness of flesh can be felt only because it is capable of feeling itself, and a worldly body—the strict concept we all have in mind when we speak of a worldly body—is not so capable, even if it can be assigned a weight value. For Falque, heaviness or lightness can be felt only by a flesh that also weighs something, and thus also bears the properties of a worldly body. Otherwise, how can we say that is its own heaviness? I think such a question motivates Falque's objections. The phenomenology of incorporation, and not only of incarnation, has its own legitimacy, but seems impossible if the phenomenological distinction of flesh is not first admitted. Of course, we can question whether kilos, to use one of Falque's examples, is an essential characteristic of the body, or only of its relation to the earth. The physicist will speak of gravity, but not flesh, and nothing keeps gravity from serving as a total principle of explanation in a so-called "unified theory."

In Henry's perspective, I do not experience the "weight" of my body, which strictly speaking is an abstract measure. Rather, I experience, as a resisting continuum, the resistance of the body I am; and I experience fatigue in my effort to overcome it. A worldly body, from this angle, experiences no such resistance or fatigue, but friction and entropy. Moreover, the fatigue of my flesh is not fatigue at a distance, but my own proper exhaustion. If the weight of my flesh is felt, it is felt because my flesh feels it in itself, not because it senses it at a distance, as a sensed body. I can always form the intention of the object "weight," assign it to my body, which I also see, and

appeal to my perception of the weight and the body to gather these two distinct objects together in a unity. But no fatigue is felt in such a perception, since fatigue is affective. I feel the fatigue, before I have a perception of it, and whether or not the thought of it ever crosses my mind. That is why, for Henry, the flesh is auto-impressional, without any reference to the sensed body.

In my own view, though I do not pretend to have fully demonstrated it here, I think Henry's position is necessary if Falque is to have what he wants, which is the body in its visible, material, incorporated reality—and to have this together with flesh—in a way that also supports a genuinely theological conception of incarnation and incorporation. Moreover, I think Falque gets a deeper version of what he wants if he embraces Henry's perspective, for only what transpires in flesh can account phenomenologically for what we “observe” in the living body, not only the phenomena of birth and growth in the mundane sense, but also of distress, sorrow or joy, which do not register visibly in the body at random, but account phenomenologically for, indeed explain, what so registers (the lines of distress in a face, tears of joy upon seeing a loved one, etc.).

§4. Eyes of Faith: Flesh of the Theological

These questions as far as they go remain phenomenological and do not depend upon articles of faith. Nevertheless, Falque correctly detects in Henry's Incarnation a liaison between Part II and Part III, between the phenomenology of flesh *stricto sensu*, and Incarnation in “the Christian sense.” Here, Falque advances a second principle objection and a positive claim: “[N]othing ensures, at least in reading Michel Henry's work, that the divine incarnation in a flesh pure and simple [Inkarnation] also expresses the becoming human of God [Menschwerdung]... Only a theology of the body or of the purely organic, rather than a unilateral phenomenology of the flesh, will be able to produce the identification, frequently avoided by Michel Henry, between the carnal incarnation of God and his historical and corporeal humanization in the figure of the incarnate Word.”¹²⁶

Falque seems to suspect that Henry subsumes “Incarnation in the Christian Sense” under a general and also inadequate phenomenology of incarnation.¹²⁷ Far from providing an account of incarnation in the Christian sense, Henry's phenomenology of life glosses over it and renders it equivalent to the fleshly condition of anyone. At best, Revelation becomes a mere moment of phenomenology, rather than the absolute Transcendent.¹²⁸ What is worse, it can hardly be called “incarnate” or even “human,” since it is fundamentally dis-incorporated. Flesh without body, in this precise sense, is finally a gnostic flesh, as a-corporeal as a-cosmic. It is neither Christian nor human. “A monadism and a modalism of the Henryan flesh would thus become all the more dis-incorporated as the body would be destroyed and absorbed into it.”¹²⁹

In response to this precise objection, let us consider more closely a text that Falque cites in support of these claims and that seems to invite the charge of Spinozism. Henry describes the living person [vivant] as “no more than a mode of it [auto-impressionality]. In other words, it is something that has no consistency by itself, but only as a manifestation, modification, or peripeteia of a reality that is other than it.”¹³⁰ Read one way (as Falque reads it), this passage seems to deny the integrity of creation, and to assert a strange, if not to say false, relation with an a-cosmic, unworldly, dis-incorporated reality. One cannot even say it is a relation of dependence, which would already imply a consistency of its own, but rather a relation that merely, as Spinoza might say, expresses the absolute. If Henry means what Falque thinks he means here, Falque would be right to reject it. But I think Henry is saying something else entirely, and a better understanding of it will also shed light on Falque’s other objections.

I read Henry’s phrase, “has no consistency by itself,” with Augustine rather than Spinoza in mind. If Henry means that apart from Life and, in a deeper sense, apart from God’s own life given in Christ, human living dis-integrates, and lacks unity or consistency, then Henry’s claim is impeccably phenomenologically and theologically precise. Neither here nor elsewhere does Henry turn finite flesh into a dis-incorporate epiphenomenon lacking all reality. Nor does he claim it is only a “mode” of absolute life in the manner of Spinoza. Henry is claiming, instead, at least three things: 1) Finite flesh is not autonomous absolutely. The pretense to be itself on its own, by its own power, is illusory.¹³¹ It cannot give itself its own law if it cannot give itself its own life. 2) Flesh can be a site in which life manifests itself, or alternatively can be a site where life is denatured. Whether one or the other eventuality ensues is, in part, a function of the kind of relation flesh maintains with the life that gives it to itself. 3) Infinite Life, strictly speaking—insofar as it brings itself about in itself [se porte soi-même en soi]—is, with respect to finite life, an alterity, “a reality that is other than it.”

Here we have a fundamental distinction between finite and infinite flesh, an alterity not reducible to the alterity of the finite other. It expresses in phenomenological terms what the creature-creator distinction expresses theologically. As fundamental as it is, however, that distinction does not destroy the fundamental relation that is creation. But Falque does not see this distinction in Henry, or does not find it strong enough: “There is a distance in the relation of the human to God... that is not identical to the distance of sin.”¹³² For Henry, once again, finite life cannot “bring itself about in itself.” The power to give life, even life to itself—a power at infinite remove from any human power—it forever lacks. I am not “my own” life and will never be. Is this not, in fact, the orthodox concept of creation? God is Life and the giver of life, and all the living bear a relation to God by virtue of their living condition.¹³³

It is not simply creation that Falque finds missing, but also an orthodox concept of incarnation. Somewhat surprisingly, he suspects that Henry denies that the Son of God has taken on the human condition in every way but sin. Where Henry writes that the “one who took on flesh in Christ was not an ordinary man but the Word of God” (160 / 69, Falque’s emphasis, citing Incarnation, 231 / 331), Falque interprets Henry as denying that Jesus was born in human likeness, just like any of us, with a carnal body of visible matter. But here again nothing prohibits us from reading this differently. The one who has taken on human likeness in the man Jesus is not just anyone, is not you or me, but rather the One who is in himself the Word. Of course Jesus is a man like any other, but he is not only a man like any other, since he is in his person the very Word of God. Falque wants to compliment an emphasis on the “exemplary” with an emphasis on “the ordinary life and common fleshly humanity of the Son of God.”¹³⁴

In addition to an adequate conception of the humanity of Jesus, it is also the uniqueness or singularity of the incarnation that Falque wishes to safeguard. Now citing “the philosopher” Merleau-Ponty: “the Incarnation changes everything.”¹³⁵ And Falque is right. Incarnation in the Christian sense does change everything. But Falque thinks incarnation in Henry’s sense, like the astral flesh of Marcion, or the angelic flesh of Jakob Böhme, cannot “change” anything, strictly speaking. How could it if the auto-impressional flesh it involves is forever a-temporal, invisible, dis-incorporated, and thus entirely unlike the temporal, visible, bodily appearance of the Word made flesh, which in the words of John, “we have heard... we have seen with our eyes... we have looked at and touched with our hands”?¹³⁶ If we are to affirm these words, as we do, must we not side with Falque against Henry on this point? The theology Falque wishes to preserve is not in question here, but only the phenomenology, and thus the conditions under which (the way) the revelation of God in Christ comes to manifestation.

How does the affirmation that the Word was made flesh in a flesh like ours go together phenomenologically with the theological singularity of the Word made flesh, indeed its primacy? For as we have seen, it is not just any incarnation in question, in your flesh or mine, but the incarnation of the One who is the Word. To be more precise, how must we describe, following Nicholas of Cusa but this time phenomenologically, the co-incidence of the following two apparently-irreconcilable opposites: The man Jesus is both seen and heard, and rejected as God by many?¹³⁷ Can a phenomenology that starts with visible body tout court do it? We should avoid any hasty appeal to faith to explain the difference between acceptance and rejection. Falque’s intuitions are correct: it is not only the eyes of faith that see God in Jesus, but the sensible eyes of the body, and also the intellectual “eyes” of those who contemplate him.

But by insisting that the one who sees Jesus—i.e. sees him “bodily”—does indeed perceive God in the flesh, has Falque left any room for those who wish to deny it, as many did and still do? After

all, they do not reject what they see, a man in space and time, visible like any other. Nor is it a different man, but the same one his followers also see. What they reject is that this appearing man is God. (In this precise respect Falque claims about the priority of the body are correct. In the order of historical time, they see Jesus first, before some come to believe he is the Christ.) But can the humanity of precisely the Word made flesh be recognized as such by appealing first or exclusively to the visibility of it, where the meaning of “flesh” is blended with, and finally phenomenal as, the visible body? How then could we come to terms with the invisibility of the Father? In the Johannine text, Jesus says: “No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me... Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.”¹³⁸

By refusing the phenomenological privilege of invisible, auto-impressional flesh, not just the experience of flesh or life, but flesh as it undergoes experiencing itself—is Falque committed to an exclusivism of the sensed?¹³⁹ Not necessarily. He does not refuse the fact of an invisible dimension of flesh, but refuses it priority, and refuses to sever its (visible) bond with the irreducibly visible, the “spread body.” He refuses the notion that flesh is invisible alone, sensing alone, touching alone, in favor of a view that it is also, and at the same time, visible, sensed, and touched—which is to say, is also body. Of course, at one level, Falque’s claims are entirely legitimate. This “thing” I call my flesh “is” also this “thing” I call my body. The distinctions Henry and others make between the subjective body, the living body, the organic body, the objective body, and so on, these are phenomenological declinations of the body as such. The body, as such, “is” their unity. But only in flesh and as flesh is that unity self-given. It is not given in its original phenomenality either in perception or in sensibility.

If we wish to follow Merleau-Ponty’s path, as Falque does, either we must remain in an ontic register that denies the fundamental, original, phenomenological irreducibility of visible and invisible, world and life, and finally flesh and Life, or we must enter into theological territory and with eyes of faith recognize these twos as ones. One can offer a kind of phenomenology from faith, as Emmanuel Falque does so well, but one can also wonder whether, because this is a phenomenology of faith and from the perspective of faith, it is theology more from “from above” than “from below,” despite everything. “Eyes of faith” here means, minimally, hearing the Words of Christ and believing, and maximally, participating fully in sacramental life. If we remain in the realm of sense perception and confine our understanding of these realities to the sheer ontic unities of flesh and body, body and world, flesh and world, we seem committed to a theologically- and phenomenologically-questionable materialism. If, instead, we understand seeing as seeing in the light of faith, we must admit that it is faith that gives the incarnate unity in question, Word and flesh, and Word made flesh. In the order of perception, it is faith and not sensibility, or better faith with sensibility, that gives the unity in question. The one who denies that Jesus is

Lord also sees Jesus, or could do so. In seeing Jesus they also see the Lord, and deny him. But they do not deny what they see, Jesus.

Without the duplicity of appearing, one has either a kind of ontic phenomenality, so to speak, or faith. But then the phenomenality of faith, properly speaking, would seem to remain out of reach, since the sensible has already, of itself, been so fully loaded with faith. It is a way of thinking the unity of faith and phenomenological reason, but perhaps one that risks compromising something of both. The theologian must still bear the burden of describing phenomenologically what life means, and what it means for that Word to give its life for the world, for you and for me, what it means to live with it and in it and from it, to “participate” in precisely that Life and no other, and to be made able to do so. I am not confident all this can be done on the basis of the phenomenality of the world alone. Of course, I understand “world” here in Henry’s sense and not that of Merleau-Ponty, and an objection to the position I am sketching here might find in that fact a point of dispute.

The charges of Gnosticism and Spinozism, in any case, are misapplied and ultimately unhelpful, at least when it comes to what clearly becomes the trajectory of Henry’s final writings on Christianity. Like Kierkegaard says life must be lived, Henry’s writings on Christianity must be read forward, but can only be understood backward. Life does not save me from the world, nor do I need saving from it. It simply gives itself otherwise and differently than what the world gives and how the world gives. The givenness of the world (as much as of the body and its bones) is and remains a givenness, but never a self-givenness. This is a phenomenological claim, not a soteriological one. The two should not be confused. But the decision to limit one’s understanding or definition of reality to the unilateral exteriority of the world may indeed have soteriological implications. We may never come to terms with what faith means, what faith is about—to say nothing of creation, which is not a mere concept but also reality itself—if we remain so limited.

A word remains to be said about the engagement of phenomenology with science and its place in these reflections. That area of study has its own merit, legitimacy, and interest. The protagonists of such research deserve enormous praise, with two small qualifications. First, the effort to correlate first- and third-person perspectives risks slipping to a kind of scientism if only those correlations ground the phenomenality and phenomenological legitimacy of experiencing undergoing itself in flesh. The phenomena arising in flesh are proper to flesh. The varying worldly vestiges of it, including its practical action, illuminate only what a world can be (including the world of science). They do not give or illuminate or justify what is given in flesh in itself, which has its own phenomenological integrity. Secondly, and for a related reason, science will never prove God (and here we mean “science” and not “reason”). Nor will it ever prove, for

example, that Jesus is Lord. “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”¹⁴⁰ None of this can count in any way as a failure of science, but only as a difference from phenomenology, and in another way, a difference from faith.

Falque’s phenomenology of flesh and bone is clearly distinct from Henry’s phenomenology of life, and the distinctions between them merit further investigation. I share the same theological commitments as Falque, and I hold in high regard the profound spirit of his theological vision. These objections are only about phenomenology, and in a secondary way about how phenomenology relates to Christian faith, tactically speaking. I suspect that ultimately Falque’s objections to Henry presuppose that one has already refused Henry’s basic theses concerning phenomenality and the duplicity of appearing. But new questions can also now be posed, this time to Falque: Does the phenomenological priority of the body to the flesh assume a theological acceptance of the body as sacramental, and thus as theologically meaningful, as significant? If so, should we not understand this to be a sacramental phenomenology? And if that is the case, does it presuppose and depend upon the eyes of faith, or even sacramental experience, for its phenomenality? In my view, the further development of the phenomenology of life may also go in a sacramental direction. Henry himself invites it, and it is not clear that a rapprochement between their positions could not be found there.¹⁴¹

In any case, one cannot avoid being struck by the subtle moments Falque expresses thanks for the reprieve that arrives when Henry admits a kind of “transcendent” life. But Falque does not put much stock in it. Why? Because admitting it, he thinks, would make of Henry’s work a total contradiction and destroy its most important theses. But I think Falque and with him almost all readers of Henry have missed something very important. The phenomenology of life Henry finds in Christianity is not reducible to his own. Henry discovers in Christianity a depth (of life) that offers more than his own phenomenology on its own can provide, a depth which later involves a reproach that overturns the entire affective economy and the world of ethics it presupposes. If we must turn to Words of Christ to see its contours and extent, nothing prohibits us from reading Henry’s final text, in part, as a response to Falque’s objections. If that is in any way the fruit of a combat amoureux, for this we can also thank Emmanuel Falque.

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Y a-t-il une métaphysique ricœurienne ?

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Introduction

Parler de la métaphysique n'est pas aisé, dans le contexte de la philosophie française.¹⁴² Avant tout c'est à cause de l'influence de Heidegger qui a inauguré la « destruction de la métaphysique ». ¹⁴³ Cela ne veut pas dire que Heidegger est contre toute sorte de métaphysique. Il veut détruire seule une métaphysique ontothéologique qui invoque Dieu comme origine et fondement, un « Dieu des philosophes » qui s'appelle transcendance, absolu ou infini. ¹⁴⁴ Le problème, c'est que, selon Heidegger, l'homme ne peut pas parler authentiquement des choses qui dépassent son expérience. Heidegger nous a enseigné que l'horizon de notre finitude est indépassable. Parler d'un quelconque au-delà dont personne n'a l'expérience, cela n'a pas de sens, et ça ne veut rien dire.

La plupart des philosophes francophones, croyants et non-croyants, ont suivi Heidegger, son rejet de la métaphysique traditionnelle, et donc la possibilité d'un « Dieu des philosophes ». Emmanuel Falque, par exemple, écrit que la métaphysique (c'est-à-dire la pensée d'un au-delà) n'est pas possible pour l'homme « tout court » parce que la finitude de l'homme « tout court » est un horizon bouché, une limitation, l'indépassable. ¹⁴⁵ Falque continue en disant que la pensée d'un au-delà n'est pas possible sauf à partir de la résurrection qui transforme l'homme et ses possibilités. ¹⁴⁶

Je ne vais pas contester que, si l'homme « tout court » est pure finitude, si l'homme n'est que finitude, la métaphysique et la pensée de Dieu est impossible. Ce que je vais montrer, c'est que pour Paul Ricœur l'homme « tout court » n'est pas finitude pure et simple. Selon Ricœur, l'homme est finitude et aussi infinitude, inséparablement, indivisiblement. En cela Ricœur suit Descartes, mais il est contre Heidegger. ¹⁴⁷ Et c'est cela qui rend, pour prendre les mots d'Andrea Bellantone, « la métaphysique possible ¹⁴⁸ ».

Dans cet article, je vais décrire comment Ricœur montre la disproportion « fini-infini » de l'homme. Ensuite, je vais souligner un endroit où Ricœur utilise au sens constructif (c'est-à-dire où il présente sa propre pensée, et non la pensée des autres) le mot « métaphysique ». Avant de

commencer, je veux souligner que celui-ci - le débat entre finitude et infinitude – est un débat philosophique et non théologique. Il n'a rien à faire (au départ) avec la théologie. Certes, il y aurait des conséquences pour la théologie *en aval* – comment peut-il ne pas y avoir? – mais cela ne veut pas dire que la théologie soit déjà là, ou qu'elle dirige les résultats de la philosophie.

Disproportion Fini-Infini

En 1960, Ricœur publie son livre *L'homme faillible* dont l'importance n'est plus à démontrer. D'ailleurs, selon Pamela Sue Anderson « plusieurs spécialistes ont pris *L'homme faillible* pour la clé de la vraie compréhension de Ricœur ». Elle rappelle en outre, qu'en 1986, Ricœur avouait lui-même que ce livre était, de l'ensemble de son œuvre, son ouvrage préféré.¹⁴⁹

Dans *L'homme faillible*, Ricœur cherche la faillibilité de l'homme pour expliquer la possibilité du mal, du péché, et de la culpabilité. Comment est-ce que le mal entré dans le monde ? Mais il faut décrire l'homme avant l'entrée du mal, pour montrer sa possibilité et non son actualité.

En faisant l'anthropologie philosophique, et en parlant de l'homme et de la « condition humaine », Ricœur suit la plupart de ses contemporains francophones et germanophones. Selon Heidegger, Thévenaz, Sartre, Camus, Marcel, etc. etc. la condition humaine est le vrai sujet de la philosophie – en fait le seul possible sujet de la philosophie. L'homme ne peut connaître que soi-même par le moyen de la réflexion sur sa propre subjectivité.

Mais Ricœur ne suit pas ses contemporains en cela qu'il ne prend pas la finitude comme point de départ. Pour lui, « le premier concept directeur d'une telle anthropologie n'est pas, et ne peut être celui de finitude » ; pour lui, au contraire, « la finitude est résultat et non origine¹⁵⁰ ». Il sait bien que cette perspective est assez étrange pour son époque. « Nous nous séparons, écrit-il, quelque peu de la tendance contemporaine à faire de la finitude la caractéristique globale de la réalité humaine¹⁵¹ ». Cette « tendance contemporaine » explique « qu'on doive parler d'infinitude autant que de finitude humaine¹⁵² ». La finitude est donc quelque chose qu'il faut *découvrir* par le moyen de la réflexion.

Comment trouve-t-on la finitude de l'homme ? Ricœur aborde la question de manière husserlienne en considérant un objet devant ses yeux. Si je regarde un objet, qu'est-ce que je découvre ? Que je ne peux le regarder que d'une perspective particulière. Il serait impossible de voir quelque chose dans sa totalité. Un regard sans perspective n'existe pas. Donc, il en conclut que « la finitude originelle consiste dans la *perspective* ou *point de vue*¹⁵³ ».

Ici la perception fonctionne comme une sorte de synecdoque pour toute la vie spirituelle ; toute la connaissance, toute la pensée, vient aussi d'une perspective particulière. Notre point de vue sur le

monde – tant physique que spirituel – vient d'un « ici » géographique et historique qui n'est pas absolu, n'est pas universel, n'est pas neutre. Mais pour nous c'est l'« origine zéro » d'où vient toute notre ouverture au monde. Alors la réflexion sur la perspective nous montre qu'« Il appartient à l'essence de la perception d'être inadéquate¹⁵⁴ ». Ceci est la bonne phénoménologie, qui ne soulève pas trop la controverse.

J'ai fait le résumé de ce qui, dans *L'homme faillible*, se trouve dans une section intitulée « perspective finie » et souligne la finitude de l'homme. Mais la section suivante traite de totalement autre chose. D'abord, elle est intitulée « verbe infini » et souligne l'infinitude de l'homme.

Comment arrive-t-il à discourir sur l'infinitude de l'homme ? Par le biais de la réflexion sur les conditions de possibilité de la connaissance de notre finitude. « C'est l'homme fini *lui-même* qui parle de sa *propre* finitude. Un énoncé sur la finitude atteste que cette finitude se connaît et se dit elle-même ; il appartient donc à la finitude humaine de ne pouvoir s'éprouver elle-même que sous la condition d'une « vue-sur » la finitude, d'un regard dominateur qui a déjà commencé de la transgresser.¹⁵⁵ »

Ricœur souligne qu'il serait impossible pour la finitude de se connaître elle-même si elle était pure finitude. Si nous étions la finitude pure, nous n'en saurions rien. On serait, comme les animaux, sans conscience de soi-même. « Toute perception est perspectiviste. Mais comment connaîtrais-je une perspective, dans l'acte même de percevoir, si *en quelque façon* je n'échappais à ma perspective ? ¹⁵⁶ » Dans l'échappement de la perspective, qui est la conscience elle-même d'avoir une perspective, se trouve l'infinitude de l'homme. Est-ce que cela sonne comme un retour à Hegel et à nouveau au « savoir absolu » ? Ricœur anticipe cette question. Il se demande lui-même : « Comment ne pas ériger cette idée de la non-perspective en un nouveau point de vue, qui serait en quelque sorte vue plongeante sur les points de vue, survol des centres perspectivistes ? La finitude signifie qu'une telle vue non située, qu'une telle *Uebersicht* n'existe pas. Si la réflexion sur le point de vue n'est pas point de vue, qu'est son acte ? ¹⁵⁷ »

La réponse ricœurienne est de prêter attention à la façon dont l'infini est découvert ; c'est d'une manière négative. J'imagine cet absolu point de vue que je ne possède pas et que je ne pourrais jamais posséder. J'imagine mon propre point de vue comme non-absolu, par comparaison avec un absolu vide. Quand je veux nommer un objet comme objet, et non seulement une silhouette bidimensionnelle qui fait impression sur mes yeux, je veux dire que cet objet dépasse ma perspective finie et bidimensionnelle, que l'objet n'est pas bidimensionnel. Je « juge de la chose même en transgressant la face de la chose dans la chose elle-même. Cette transgression, c'est l'intention de signifier ; par elle, je me porte au-devant du sens qui ne sera jamais perçu de nulle

part ni de personne, qui n'est pas un super-point de vue, qui n'est pas du tout point de vue, mais inversion dans l'universel de tout point de vue¹⁵⁸ ».

Ce point de vue absolu, la conscience de la finitude qui la dépasse en la découvrant, est comme une « certitude négative » pour reprendre les mots de Jean-Luc Marion.¹⁵⁹ On nie la possibilité d'une perspective totale, mais dans l'acte de la nier, on l'affirme de manière paradoxale. L'infinitude de l'homme est saisie par le moyen de la négation : c'est « le négatif en quoi consiste ma transcendance ». « Je ne puis *dire* ma transcendance à ma perspective, écrit Ricœur, sans m'exprimer négativement¹⁶⁰ ».

Ricœur sait bien que cette conception de l'homme est contraire à celle de Heidegger ; « Autrement dit, explique-t-il, je ne suis pas entièrement défini par mon statut d'être-au-monde : mon insertion dans le monde n'est jamais totale que si je ne conserve le recul du singulier, du vouloir-dire, principe du dire. Ce recul est le principe même de la réflexion sur le point de vue comme point de vue¹⁶¹ ».

Affirmation Originnaire

Mais cette *via negativa* n'est que le *moyen* par lequel l'homme peut saisir l'infini : ce n'est pas l'infini lui-même. L'infini lui-même n'est pas négatif mais positif. L'infini lui-même est, « comme dit M. [Jean] Nabert, *l'affirmation originnaire* qui s'annonce ainsi à coup de négations¹⁶² ».

Le dernier article dans le livre *Histoire et vérité* s'appelle « Négativité et affirmation originnaire ». Ce texte est précieux parce qu'il rejoint les deux motifs au cœur de la pensée de Ricœur. Pendant presque vingt ans – les années 50 et 60 – Ricœur a donné des cours aux étudiants sur le sujet de la négation. L'archive du Fonds Ricœur à l'Institut Protestant protège ses notes de cours, et Alison Scott-Baumann, au conseil scientifique du Fonds Ricœur, a publié un livre, *Ricœur and the Negation of Happiness*, qui est une enquête sur ces inédits de Ricœur.¹⁶³ Ricœur a dit que, depuis Hegel, les philosophies du siècle ont un geste en commun – ils sont tous, malgré quelques exceptions, les philosophies de la négation.

Mais en même temps qu'il développe sa pensée de la négation, Ricœur lit le philosophe réflexif Jean Nabert et sa notion d'« affirmation originnaire ». Plus tard, dans son autobiographie intellectuelle, Ricœur affirmera : « Jean Nabert devait m'influencer de façon plus décisive dans les années cinquante et soixante¹⁶⁴ ». L'influence de Jean Nabert est trop peu remarquée. Heureusement, Jean-Luc Amalric le fera bien remarquer : « *L'homme faillible* ... trouve son principal fil conducteur dans la notion d'affirmation originnaire, héritée de Nabert¹⁶⁵ ». Pierre Colin le souligne aussi à son tour : l'œuvre de Ricœur « ne demeurerait authentiquement philosophique que par sa fidélité aux lignes directrices tracées par Nabert¹⁶⁶ ».

Par conséquent, on ne peut surestimer l'importance de ce petit article « Négativité et affirmation originaire » à la fin d'*Histoire et vérité*. On ne sait pas pourquoi Ricœur n'a jamais publié un livre avec ses pensées sur la négation. La plupart d'entre elles reste inédite, sauf ce texte, qui porte la marque de plusieurs années de réflexion. Ricœur y souligne que la négation par laquelle on découvre l'infini ou la transcendance du point de vue, est en réalité une négation d'une négation, une dénégaration. « Ma thèse est donc limitée, note-t-il: avant la dénégaration ou négation de transcendance, il y a la négation primaire qui est la négation de finitude¹⁶⁷ ».

Lorsque la négation primaire est la négation de finitude, il y a deux conséquences. D'abord, la négation de finitude est négation d'une infinitude originaire. Ensuite, cette infinitude originaire n'est pas négation mais *affirmation originaire*. La négation est une étape nécessaire pour découvrir l'affirmation originaire de l'infinitude. Étape nécessaire mais qui ne peut pas être l'étape finale. Une négation originaire est impossible, explique Ricœur, parce que derrière chaque négation, il y a toujours une affirmation. Il prouve ce principe en trouvant une base de positivité dans les sentiments humains les plus négatifs : « l'indignation, la protestation, la récrimination, la révolte¹⁶⁸ ».

Sa source d'inspiration pour cette idée est *L'homme révolté* d'Albert Camus. Camus commence son livre avec une question et une réponse : « Qu'est-ce qu'un homme révolté ? Un homme qui dit non. Mais s'il refuse, il ne renonce pas : c'est aussi un homme qui dit oui, dès son premier mouvement¹⁶⁹ ». Personne ne peut être *contre* n'importe quoi sans être *pour* quelque chose d'autre. La révolte doit être motivée par quelque chose de positif, « comme le disait si justement Camus, *sans en apercevoir toutes les implications métaphysiques*¹⁷⁰ », observe Ricœur.

Ce que Camus a découvert dans le champ de l'anthropologie philosophique, Ricœur veut le transposer en métaphysique : pas de négation sans affirmation originaire. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que la négation n'est pas nécessaire. La négation reste nécessaire. C'est la *via negativa* par laquelle on remonte au Dieu infini inconnaissable.

Dieu infini et inconnaissable

Qu'est-ce que l'affirmation originaire, concept hérité de Jean Nabert ? Pour Ricœur, c'est le Dieu des philosophes qui n'est pas le contraire du Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob. Dans un entretien avec Richard Kearney en 2003, Ricœur a rendu explicite la conjonction des termes : « Je ne suis pas sûr de l'irréconciliabilité entre le Dieu de la Bible et le Dieu de l'être (compris chez Jean Nabert comme 'affirmation originaire' ...)»¹⁷¹.

Qu'est-ce que l'infinitude ? Pour Ricœur, et dans le sillage de Descartes, c'est un terme philosophique pour dire Dieu aussi. L'infinitude est positive parce qu'elle est l'affirmation

originnaire. Avec approbation Ricœur cite le célèbre passage de Descartes dans sa troisième *méditation*. « C'est Descartes qui avait raison, affirme Ricœur, lorsqu'il disait que l'idée d'infini était tout entière positive et identique à l'être *plane et simpliciter* et que le fini était en défaut par rapport à l'être. 'Et je ne dois pas imaginer que je ne conçois pas l'infini par une véritable idée, mais seulement par la négation de ce qui est fini, de même que je comprends le repos et les ténèbres par la négation du mouvement et de la lumière puisqu'au contraire je vois manifestement qu'il se rencontre plus de réalité dans la substance infinie que dans la substance finie, et partant que j'ai en quelque façon premièrement en moi la notion de l'infini, que du fini, c'est-à-dire de Dieu, que de moi-même'¹⁷² ».

L'infini de Descartes est Dieu, et l'affirmation originnaire de Jean Nabert est Dieu – le Dieu des philosophes, certes, et point du tout le Dieu de la foi, de la révélation. Il faut souligner ici, que ce que Ricœur fait n'est absolument pas de l'apologétique. C'est du bout en bout de la philosophie qui n'a rien à dire du Dieu de la Bible. En pensant l'affirmation originnaire, Ricœur suit la pensée de Nabert qui n'était pas croyant. Concernant ce Dieu des philosophes – l'infini, l'absolu, l'origine – ce que Ricœur propose est que *l'homme ne peut pas ne pas penser ce Dieu*, parce que ce Dieu est d'ores et déjà là dans notre connaissance, comme infini et comme affirmation. D'où la métaphysique ricœurienne.

Est-ce que cela veut dire que Ricœur et Descartes sont contre Thomas D'Aquin qui dit que « Dieu n'est pas pour nous le premier connu » ? Pour Emmanuel Falque, cet aveu est important pour déceler les frontières de la philosophie et de la théologie.¹⁷³ Est-ce qu'il faut confronter Descartes et Thomas, conceptions mutuellement opposées – Ricœur à côté de Descartes et Heidegger à côté de Thomas ?

À vrai dire, Descartes et Thomas sont plus proches qu'on aurait pensé, même s'il reste un écart entre eux. Tout dépend du sens précis des mots « premier » et « connu ».

D'abord, que-est ce que Thomas veut dire par le mot « connu » ?

Il faut faire attention au contexte de la citation ci-dessus dans le *Somme Théologique*. L'argument de Thomas, dans l'article 3 de la question 88 du *Prima Pars*, est le suivant : « Puisque l'intelligence humaine ne peut, dans la vie présente, connaître les substances immatérielles créées, *on vient de le voir*, elle pourra bien moins encore connaître l'essence de la substance incréée. Il faut donc affirmer absolument que Dieu n'est pas pour nous le premier objet connu¹⁷⁴ » Thomas s'appuie, dans l'article 3, sur ce qu'on « vient de voir, » c'est-à-dire à l'article 1 de la même question.

L'homme ne peut connaître Dieu parce que l'homme ne peut pas connaître les « substances immatérielles ». Mais qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ? Qu'on ne peut rien savoir de rien qui n'est pas

matériel ? Pas du tout. Dans l'article 1, il éclaire ce qu'il veut dire. C'est la connaissance parfaite des choses immatérielles qu'il interdit. « D'après les philosophes, précise Thomas, la science de l'âme est un point de départ pour la connaissance des substances séparées. Car, du fait qu'elle se connaît elle-même, notre âme parvient à une certaine connaissance des substances incorporelles, comme il lui arrive d'en posséder. Cela ne fait pas qu'elle les connaisse *d'une manière absolue et parfaite* en se connaissant elle-même¹⁷⁵ ».

Mais Ricœur ne veut pas dire qu'on peut avoir une connaissance de l'infini « d'une manière absolue et parfaite ». Ricœur l'a déjà montré, on connaît Dieu par la *via negativa*, par la voie de la négation. C'est une connaissance tout à fait imparfaite, « nous ne voyons que d'une manière indirecte, comme dans un miroir » dit l'apôtre Paul (1 Cor 13,12). Thomas l'a déjà dit, à la question 3, que « nous ne pouvons savoir de Dieu que ce qu'il n'est pas, non ce qu'il est¹⁷⁶ ». C'est pourquoi cette métaphysique de Ricœur n'est pas une nouvelle forme d'ontothéologie dont Heidegger a dénoncé les prétentions. Même si cette métaphysique parle de Dieu, elle n' imagine jamais qu'elle a *compris* Dieu comme un objet dans le monde, même l'objet le plus haut ou le plus fondamental. Dieu dépasse toujours et nécessairement l'horizon de notre compréhension.

Deuxièmement, que-est ce que Thomas veut dire par le mot « premier » ?

Il faut encore faire attention au contexte. Dans ce passage, Thomas parle de l'épistémologie, et non métaphysique. Ce qui est « premier » en métaphysique ne doit être « premier » en épistémologie. Ici nous avouons que Ricœur s'éloigne de Descartes d'une certaine façon, mais il reste proche de Thomas. Descartes ne fait aucune distinction : pour la métaphysique, et donc pour la pensée, le fini revient vers l'infini, donc l'infini est premier et le fini est second. Mais pour Ricœur, qui écrit après l'idéalisme, le concept de « premier » ou « point de départ » est équivoque, et « cela bouleverse notre créance dans un point de départ qui serait le simple.¹⁷⁷ » Alors « le commencement, éclaire Ricœur, n'est pas ce qu'on trouve d'abord ; il faut accéder au point de départ : il faut le conquérir¹⁷⁸ ».

Comment comprendre cet énoncé ? Nous invoquons l'aide de Jean-Yves Lacoste, qui distingue entre l'*origine* et le *commencement* (même si le « commencement » ricœurrien est en fait l'« origine » lacostienne, de manière confuse).¹⁷⁹ Utilisant le vocabulaire de Lacoste, on dirait que l'*origine* est le point de départ métaphysique, le *commencement* est épistémologique. L'*origine* est le fondement de notre être, ce que nous donne notre existence, ce qui est vrai en soi. Mais l'*origine* n'est pas la première chose que nous pensons quand nous commençons à penser philosophiquement. L'*origine* n'est pas le point de départ pour la pensée. L'*origine*, c'est ce à quoi il faut accéder avec le travail de la pensée. Le *commencement*, c'est ce qui est vrai *pour nous* au début.

D'après Ricœur, l'infini est l'« affirmation originaire » de Nabert. L'infini est la vraie origine métaphysique. Mais l'infini n'est pas tout seul le *commencement* épistémologique. Ni la finitude ni l'infinitude ne sont un commencement pur et simple ; chacun présuppose l'autre, et quand on découvre l'un, on a déjà découvert l'autre. Pour la pensée, le fini et l'infini sont dans une dialectique : « D'un seul mouvement, d'un seul jet, l'acte d'exister s'incarne et déborde son incarnation. ... Nous prenons *conscience de notre finitude en la dépassant*¹⁸⁰ ». Pour la pensée, ce n'est pas d'abord infini et ensuite fini, mais ce n'est pas non plus l'inverse. Les deux sont inséparables. On ne peut pas penser à l'un sans penser l'autre implicitement. La connaissance est donc circulaire, suivant une pensée qui est déjà herméneutique.

Conclusion : redéfinir les frontières

Le cœur de l'argument de Ricœur est le suivant : Si nous n'étions que finitude, nous n'aurions aucune connaissance de notre finitude. La connaissance et certitude de notre finitude vient du fait que nous sommes finitude et infinitude inséparablement, au même moment. Bien que l'infinitude soit découverte par le moyen de négation, cela ne veut pas dire que l'infinitude à laquelle nous participons est négation. Selon Ricœur, et cela résume son petit article : « la négativité est le chemin privilégié de la remontée au fondement ; c'est pourquoi il fallait tout ce complexe cheminement : découvrir la transcendance humaine dans la transgression du point de vue et la négativité dans la transcendance ; puis découvrir dans cette négation, une double négation, la négation seconde du point de vue comme négation primaire ; puis découvrir l'affirmation originaire dans cette négation de la négation¹⁸¹ ».

On a vu que cela s'appelle métaphysique, au moins aux yeux de Ricœur. Ce n'est pas la métaphysique qui fait partie d'un système clos, comme l'ontothéologie à laquelle Heidegger s'est violemment opposé. Même si c'est une métaphysique qui trouve Dieu comme base et fondement, c'est aussi une métaphysique apophasique. L'affirmation originaire est le fondement de notre être, mais nous ne la connaissons que par le moyen de négation, la *via negativa*. On ne peut pas nommer Dieu, sauf comme l'innommable. On ne peut pas connaître Dieu, sauf comme l'inconnaissable. On ne peut pas saisir Dieu, sauf comme l'insaisissable. Comme Gabriel Marcel, dont l'influence sur le jeune Ricœur est sans conteste, le souligne bien : « La théologie à laquelle la philosophie nous conduit est essentiellement négative¹⁸² ».

Et c'est vraiment de la philosophie, et non la théologie, que Ricœur fait, quand bien même il s'agirait de Dieu. Dieu est l'objet légitime de la philosophie s'il est aussi objet de la théologie. Thomas d'Aquin l'a écrit de façon on ne peut plus claire : « Rien n'empêche donc que les objets mêmes dont traitent les sciences philosophiques, selon qu'ils sont connaissables par la lumière de la raison naturelle, puissent encore être envisagés dans une autre science, selon qu'ils sont

connus par la lumière de la révélation divine. La théologie qui relève de la doctrine sacrée est donc d'un autre genre que celle qui est encore une partie de la philosophie¹⁸³ ». Donc, il n'est pas question de soutenir une quelconque thèse selon laquelle Ricœur a confondu la philosophie et la théologie. Personne n'a respecté les frontières entre les disciplines plus que Ricœur.

Son souci, de « ne pas mêler les genres » reste « jamais atténué, » si bien que plus tard il a reproché à la thèse de son ami Pierre Thévenaz, d'avoir une philosophie « sans absolu ».¹⁸⁴ Ce n'est pas une question de *transgresser* les frontières, mais de les *redéfinir*, pour que Dieu reste objet de la philosophie aussi. Quel Dieu ? Non pas le Dieu de la Bible, certes, mais le Dieu des philosophes. Ce Dieu n'est pas nécessairement personnel, ou créateur. Si on peut prier ce Dieu, si ce Dieu peut devenir homme – ce sont là des questions pour la théologie, pour la révélation. Cependant, ce que la philosophie découvre de Dieu reste vrai pour la théologie. La théologie élargit notre connaissance de Dieu, en nous donnant quelques contenus que nous n'aurions pu découvrir sans la révélation. Mais ce que la philosophie dit de Dieu reste le fondement de toute théologie.

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Ce qui est donné et ce qui est espéré dans l'expérience

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Nous naissons pour ainsi dire provisoirement quelque part ; c'est peu à peu que nous composons en nous le lieu de notre origine, pour y naître après coup, et chaque jour plus définitivement.

Rilke, *Lettres milanaises*, Lettre du 23 janvier 1923, Paris, Plon, 1956, p. 28

Devant ce qui naît en Grèce au tournant des VII^e et VI^e siècles avant Jésus-Christ, revenant sur ce commencement proprement inouï qui correspond à une toute nouvelle attitude vis-à-vis du monde, le vieil Husserl n'hésite pas à parler d'une « humanité nouvelle », tout en sachant comme nous qu'humanité et monde sont bien plus anciens encore que la philosophie : avant le premier philosophe (Platon, lui qui invente la langue de la philosophie), ou le tout premier (Thalès, à qui il

aura suffi de cette parole simple : « tout est eau » pour porter jusqu'à la pensée l'étant dans sa totalité) il y a le premier homme (Adam, à qui il revient d'avoir donné un nom à tous les animaux). Mais que le monde ait lieu avant la pensée n'ôte rien à ce commencement qui est tout de pensée : la possibilité de porter l'être jusqu'à la pensée, et rendre ainsi intelligible la totalité de l'étant.¹⁸⁵ Ce projet n'est pas loin de trouver avec Hegel un premier achèvement – ce qu'il annonce à Iéna lorsqu'il propose de déposer l'ancien nom de la philosophie, celui d'amour de la sagesse, pour qu'elle devienne science effective – et ce qu'il réalise en quelque façon à Berlin, en publiant l'ultime édition de l'Encyclopédie et en prononçant des leçons où rien n'est oublié de ce qui a trait à l'Esprit, c'est-à-dire en déployant le Discours de la Raison selon les dimensions cardinales du monde. Ce qui revient à donner raison à la formule de Derrida, parlant de la philosophie occidentale : « le hegelianisme n'est que ce langage lui-même prenant absolument possession de soi. »¹⁸⁶ Ce qui depuis Platon relevait d'un projet se voit donc bel et bien accompli : porter jusqu'au concept la totalité de ce qui est, jusqu'au recouvrement parfait de ce qui est effectif et de ce qui est rationnel.

C'est pourtant encore le même projet qui se répète à l'aube du XXe siècle avec la naissance de la phénoménologie, pour que phénomène et logos viennent à leur « commune présence », l'être rendu tout entier présent dans sa phénoménalité comme mouvement de se donner à nous, et la pensée tout entière ramenée au mouvement d'aller aux choses, ou plutôt aux choses mêmes. Là où il y a un cercle, de ce qui se donne et de ce qui vise, il est possible d'y entrer par un côté ou par un autre. L'interprétation historique à laquelle se livre Husserl, et que résume l'expression par ailleurs si problématique d'idéalisme transcendantal, porte l'accent sur le côté du logos – aucun passage ne montre mieux sans doute comment la phénoménologie historique se place dans la suite du projet métaphysique que ces quelques lignes du § 6 de la *Krisis* : « Porter la raison latente à la compréhension de ses propres possibilités et ouvrir ainsi au regard la possibilité d'une métaphysique en tant que possibilité véritable, c'est là l'unique chemin qui mette en route l'immense travail de *réalisation* d'une métaphysique, autrement dit d'une philosophie universelle. »¹⁸⁷ Mais c'est aussi la génialité de Husserl que d'avoir ouvert la voie à d'autres interprétations possibles du projet phénoménologique où l'accent se porte sur le libre événement du phénomène qui se donne à nous, avant toute compréhension mais aussi en l'appelant – à partir donc de ce qui se donne dans l'événement et son épreuve, encore aveugle et muette, dans l'attente d'être porté jusqu'à sa compréhension et son expression, ce que traduit cette fois la célèbre formule du § 16 des *Méditations cartésiennes* : « Au commencement il y a l'expérience pure et, pour ainsi dire, muette encore, qu'il s'agit d'abord d'amener à l'expression pure de son propre sens. »¹⁸⁸

Attachons-nous à la seconde version de ce projet phénoménologique dans la mesure où elle révèle davantage les déplacements opérés par la répétition du projet proprement métaphysique. Là où il était question d'être et pensée, là où il était possible de lire toute l'histoire de la métaphysique

comme une suite de variations sur la phrase de Parménide : « Le même est à la fois penser et être », ¹⁸⁹ la phénoménologie déploie son travail de description et de compréhension depuis deux autres piliers : l'expérience et le sens. Chacun de ces deux concepts fondamentaux demanderait assurément de très longs éclaircissements, allant bien au-delà d'un simple travail de définition puisqu'ils engagent l'Idée même de phénoménologie sans cesse à penser et repenser. De manière très provisoire, trop incomplète, et pour ne pas rejeter à l'infini ce que nous nous proposons d'exposer dans ces pages, contentons-nous de deux indications tirées de la formule husserlienne des *Méditations cartésiennes* :

L'expérience est bien ce qui a lieu au commencement, et la vocation nativement descriptive de la phénoménologie est à demeurer à jamais fidèle à ce qui nous est donné dans l'expérience, quitte à raturer des descriptions qui semblaient jusque-là définitives ¹⁹⁰ ou même à corriger les principes qui devaient commander ces descriptions. ¹⁹¹

- Le sens est ce qui vient par nous, comme ce que l'expérience seule (l'expérience pure et pour ainsi dire muette encore) est impuissante à nous livrer, de quelque manière que nous interprétions ensuite l'articulation entre ce qui nous arrive dans l'expérience et cette donation de sens qui cherche à lui répondre. Ainsi pouvons-nous souscrire à l'affirmation d'Aristote selon laquelle si l'homme n'existait pas les étoiles n'en continueraient pas moins à briller dans le ciel, ¹⁹² à condition d'ajouter que sans nous la lumière des étoiles ne brillerait d'aucun éclat, c'est-à-dire d'aucune beauté, c'est-à-dire à condition d'ajouter cette autre affirmation, de Kant dans la *Critique de la faculté de juger* : « sans les hommes la création tout entière serait un simple désert inutile et sans but final. » ¹⁹³

Voilà qui dit encore trop peu, mais à partir de quoi il est possible d'avancer en deux directions. Celle de l'expérience d'abord, qui livre sans hiérarchie tout ce qui nous arrive, le plus infime comme le plus bouleversant, le rêve dont les contours s'estompent au petit matin comme la première nuit passée avec l'être aimé, les nuages « les merveilleux nuages » qui glissent sur le bleu du ciel comme la vastitude du ciel. Tout ce qu'il y a nous vient ainsi pêle-mêle, sable et neige, pierre et arbres, hommes et étoiles, sans premier plan ni arrière-plan, ou plutôt sans autre ordre que la succession contingente de nos impressions au fil du plus et du moins proche. Les journaux d'écrivain, où le plus anodin côtoie les séismes les plus profonds à même de secouer une vie, témoignent de cette égalité de l'expérience où, initialement et de droit, tout ce qui arrive est doté d'une égale dignité. Non seulement « au commencement est l'expérience », comme expérience pure et réduite à soi, sans le mélange d'aucune interprétation qui superposerait langage et signification à son mutisme, quand le phénomène s'offre à nous dans les limites de la seule expérience pour ainsi dire, mais encore « l'expérience elle-même est l'autorité », ce à quoi nos discours doivent revenir sans cesse pour y puiser leur ressource, sans quoi ils ne font que rêver

autour de l'être au lieu de le dire. Ce qui emporte deux conséquences : l'ouverture de l'expérience (au pluriel des possibles) et son exposition (au danger).

Parce que l'autorité est liée au fait de l'expérience et non à son contenu, aucune expérience particulière ne peut en effacer une autre au motif qu'elle aurait plus de poids ou de valeur. Ici congé doit être résolument donné aux discours de consolation (théodicées) qui s'efforcent de mesurer ce qu'il y a de bien ou de mal dans le monde pour décider qu'une part de l'expérience l'emporte définitivement sur l'autre. Autrement dit il n'y a pas d'expériences possibles auxquelles il faudrait faire plus de droit qu'à d'autres. Le retour d'Ulysse à Ithaque ne compte pas davantage que les péripéties de l'Odyssée (Circé, Calypso, Polyphème, les sirènes...) au motif qu'il clôt de manière heureuse une traversée riche en périls. Ulysse n'est pas moins Ulysse au milieu des épreuves chantées par Homère que dans le repos qu'il trouve au dernier chant auprès de Pénélope. Ulysse est l'histoire entière d'Ulysse. L'expérience en elle-même est sans privilège. Dit encore autrement, avec Jean-Yves Lacoste, les descriptions du phénoménologue portent à égalité sur tout ce qui se présente :

La phénoménologie husserlienne se conçoit comme un retour à toute chose et n'importe quelle chose et non pas comme l'élucidation d'*Erlebnisse* privilégiés : tous les phénomènes sont égaux et d'égale importance. Face à ce qui lui apparaît, la conscience est toujours égale à elle-même : le même moi, muni des mêmes aptitudes à l'expérience, fait indifféremment l'expérience du beau et du laid, du bien et du mal, de l'angoisse donc et de l'être-en-paix (dont Husserl, faut-il le préciser, ne parle pas).¹⁹⁴

Une expérience ne se réfute pas, pas même au motif qu'une autre expérience se substituerait à elle,¹⁹⁵ chacune étant douée de la même autorité, de sorte que vaudrait pour le concept d'expérience ce que Stanislas Breton écrivait du monde dans une traduction par ailleurs discutable du premier aphorisme du *Tractatus* de Wittgenstein : « Le monde est tout ce qui arrive en nous tombant dessus. »¹⁹⁶ Et si l'expérience nous livre à égalité tout ce qui arrive, c'est bien parce qu'elle s'ouvre en amont à tous les possibles, sans la moindre hiérarchie entre une expérience de premier plan et une expérience d'arrière-plan.¹⁹⁷ Ce qui veut dire qu'elle s'expose à égalité au plus heureux et au plus dangereux, à ce qui nous soulève de joie comme à « l'insoutenable vérité du désastre. »¹⁹⁸ (Quand souffle le vent du Danger et que l'expérience ne s'y dérobe pas, le mot de Maurice Blanchot prend toute sa force : « L'expérience elle-même est l'autorité, mais l'autorité s'expie »).¹⁹⁹

Second pôle de cette Idée de la phénoménologie, la question du sens introduit une inégalité foncière dans l'égalité de l'expérience, ce qui nous arrive se distribuant désormais selon la différence de l'important et de l'insignifiant, du léger et du lourd, de l'habitable et de

l'inhabitable, ou de ce qui nous soulève de joie et ce qui nous accable, autrement dit selon la dualité du sens et du non-sens. Là où l'expérience est à prendre comme un tout, là où il faut faire droit à ce que Claude Romano thématise comme holisme de l'expérience,²⁰⁰ le sens naît par différence et contraste. Ainsi là où justice est rendue met-elle fin à l'injustifiable du mal qui régnait auparavant. Ainsi le beau, quand il surgit et déchire la trame du visible, suspend-il notre regard quotidien sur le monde – regard maintenant capturé, emporté, ravi. D'autres travaux auront à montrer comment cet événement du sens n'a proprement lieu que dans notre réponse, de sorte que même là où il prend sa naissance hors de nous il est juste de dire qu'il ne vient que par nous.²⁰¹ Qu'il suffise pourtant de tenir ces deux affirmations : que l'expérience est ce qui a lieu sans cesse et dès toujours, mais que le sens est proprement ce qui doit naître – et à ce titre ce qu'il nous appartient d'accueillir ou de faire venir, de porter jusqu'à son expression pure et sa pleine présence. Aussi ne peut-il venir que comme une possibilité adossée à sa possibilité adverse, comme une présence qu'il faut arracher à une absence, ou comme une affirmation qui doit s'enlever sur fond de menace. C'est là avouer qu'il ne peut y avoir de sens que marquée au sceau d'une incontournable fragilité²⁰², parce que venant au milieu d'une histoire où se mêlent sans cesse sens et non-sens²⁰³. Comme c'est là reconnaître que la possibilité d'un effondrement du sens, précisément parce que ne s'agit que d'une possibilité, constitue une menace qui jamais ne pourra être définitivement écartée.

A la question métaphysique « Pourquoi y a-t-il quelque chose et non pas plutôt rien ? », il est possible d'objecter que l'évidence du quelque chose a définitivement révoqué l'hypothèse devenue impossible du rien. Mais à la question « Pourquoi y a-t-il du sens et non pas plutôt du non-sens ? » Husserl savait qu'il n'y a pas d'autre réponse dans notre histoire qu'une téléologie rejetant à l'infini, donc hors de notre portée, le dernier mot de la raison. De là ce danger de non-sens, danger toujours présent, dont aucune affirmation du sens ne pourra nous délivrer une fois pour toutes. Ce à quoi l'expérience nous expose ainsi, nous avons alors pour double tâche de le décrire²⁰⁴ et de lui résister.²⁰⁵ Des travaux récents de Jean-Yves Lacoste montrent quelques variantes de ce Danger (quand il porte respectivement sur l'être, la parole et la vérité) et comment mener à bien cette double tâche. Citons-les brièvement comme autant de programmes phénoménologiques alors qu'ils sont déjà bien plus.

L'être se met en danger en ce qu'il autorise l'oubli. La donation excède le donné. Le sort de la substance est lié à l'événement. L'être enfin ne nous est jamais confié que dans le prisme des modes d'être. Tout mode d'être ou presque est en danger. Mais si la topologie du provisoire est une topologie de l'être-en-danger, l'hypothèse du définitif, et ce que nous recevons comme anticipation du définitif, nous permet de penser un au-delà du danger,

comme une paix définitive nous permet de penser un au-delà définitif de l'angoisse et des menaces de néant.^{[206](#)}

Après avoir décrit un possible triomphe de la parole dans l'expérience excessive de la "lecture divine", une tâche plus sobre nous incombe, élucider la fragilité essentielle à toute parole - le *danger* dont elle ne peut s'affranchir - et la fragilité propre à la parole liturgique. L'élucidation permettra de suggérer qu'il y a une histoire de la parole, dont la période présente est celle du *nihilisme*. Elle nous forcera alors à demander s'il y a des paroles capables de survivre au nihilisme, ou même de le surmonter.^{[207](#)}

Le vrai est en danger, et il l'est d'abord en son essence. (...) Le *logos* est en danger, la *ratio* elle-même est en danger lorsqu'elle est réduite à un exercice scientifique, et la tâche du *logos*, lorsqu'il s'est plié à toutes les exigences du "rationnel", est de prendre pied sur des terres dont la *ratio* seule ne peut prendre connaissance. Le *logos* nous habilite à plus que la logique. Son domaine est plus vaste que celui de la rationalité, en son acception moderne. Et pour nommer l'excès de l'une par l'autre, disons que le *logos*, lorsqu'il fait plus que raisonner, a pour besoin propre celle de la *pensée*.^{[208](#)}

Tirons une leçon aussi simple dans son énoncé que délicate à réaliser, à savoir qu'il n'y a pas de description du sens qui puisse faire l'économie d'une considération du non-sens. Pensée tenue à cette dualité des possibles, mais *inégalement* : le sens, parce qu'il peut venir ou ne pas venir, est affaire d'espérance (« Qu'il vienne, qu'il vienne, / Le temps dont on s'éprenne »),^{[209](#)} mais le non-sens, parce qu'il est cette possibilité toujours présente où l'expérience à tout moment peut s'effondrer, affaire de connaissance (« Ce fut d'abord une étude. J'écrivais des silences, des nuits, je notais l'inexprimable. Je fixais des vertiges »).^{[210](#)} Aussi n'y a-t-il de sens que comme sens naissant, qui s'enlève sur fond d'une altérité (le danger) ou d'une antériorité (l'expérience comme totalité indifférenciée) dont la menace ou la présence ne pourront jamais être définitivement écartées.

Au commencement *pour nous* est le chaos, espace béant et sans direction, sans haut ni bas, sans avant ni arrière, sans orient, et où nous sommes jetés.^{[211](#)} A moins que jetés dans un espace sans haut ni bas veuille dire : jetés en bas. A moins que là où il n'y a aucune différence pour s'orienter dans l'expérience - selon la différence du sens et du non-sens, du haut et du bas, de l'avant et de l'après - « le clair-obscur du monde » (Jean-Yves Lacoste) ne soit rendu à une obscurité plus grande que la clarté, et le tout de l'expérience à sa vanité.^{[212](#)} L'absence de sens, le non-sens - pour l'existant, non pour le logicien, la frontière qui les sépare est quasi-imperceptible. « Au commencement est le chaos » - ce mot est du poète Hésiode, et il donne à penser. Mais ce commencement ouvre aussi une histoire - et quelle histoire puisqu'il s'agit de la *Théogonie*. Au

premier mot succède un second puis un troisième, commencement d'une histoire où il est permis d'espérer.

Donc, avant tout, fut Abîme, puis Terre aux larges flancs, assise sûre à jamais offerte à tous les vivants, et Amour, le plus beau parmi les dieux immortels, celui qui rompt les membres et qui, dans la poitrine de tout dieu comme de tout homme, dompte le cœur et le sage vouloir.²¹³

Au commencement est le tout indifférencié de l'expérience à même lequel il importe de tracer des différences. Avançons ici l'hypothèse que ces premières différences sont esthétiques en ce qu'elles relèvent de l'espace et du temps. Ce qui revient à dire que le sens (compris comme signification) s'ancre dans le sens (compris comme sensation).

Dimension spatiale du sens. Sans doute n'y a-t-il pas de schème plus manifeste de la différence comme arrachement du sens au non-sens que ce mouvement qui prend son départ dans un point pour en rejoindre un autre – ce qui répond exactement à la troisième signification du mot sens, celle du sens comme direction, mais troisième manière d'en comprendre le concept qu'il faut penser dans son rapport aux deux autres (la signification, la sensation). Ce qu'Henri Maldiney a su parfaitement expliquer : « Les racines premières de la langue montrent comment le sens-direction sous-tend le sens-signification²¹⁴ ». Pour qu'une différence de sens puisse naître, il faut que l'existant s'arrache sur fond de l'antériorité d'un chaos ou de l'altérité d'un non-sens pour aller là-bas, vers un lieu qui lui serve d'orient. D'ici vers là-bas, du lieu où il est jeté vers cet autre lieu au-devant duquel il jette son regard, et le corps entier, et tout le poids de son existence. D'ici vers là-bas, d'une manière d'être au monde rivée à l'être-en bas, d'une manière d'être jeté qui l'écrase vers le bas, jusqu'à cette puissance d'ascension qui le fait exister au plus haut de soi parce qu'il se jette désormais vers le haut – en un mouvement de transcendance qui commence par la surréction du corps, celui-ci luttant contre sa propre pesanteur pour se ramasser tout entier dans la puissance de sa verticalité.

Même s'il convient de faire droit aux six dimensions fondamentales qui permettent au corps de se mouvoir (vers la gauche, vers la droite, en avant, en arrière, vers le haut et vers le bas), la primauté revient à la dimension de la verticalité parce que l'orientation vers le haut est sans variation et que l'être au sol donc en bas constitue le point-zéro de tout mouvement. Ma main gauche restera à jamais ma main gauche, mais ce qui se tient à ma gauche, à tout moment, par le plus simple mouvement du corps, peut passer à ma droite. De même, ce qui est en avant pour moi restera toujours l'en-avant du corps, mais il en va tout autrement de l'être en avant des choses qui à tout moment peut passer derrière mon dos. Alors que le ciel en sa hauteur restera toujours en haut et la terre en bas. Un ciel vers lequel se dresser en s'arrachant à la pesanteur de la terre.

Aussi cette inscription dans l'espace d'un sens trouve-t-elle chez le Platon du *Théétète* sa parfaite description :

Mais il est impossible que le mal disparaisse, Théodore ; car il y aura toujours, nécessairement, un contraire du bien. Il est tout aussi impossible qu'il ait son siège parmi les dieux : c'est donc la nature mortelle et le lieu d'ici-bas que parcourt fatalement sa ronde. Cela montre quel effort s'impose : d'ici-bas vers là-haut s'évader au plus vite.²¹⁵

Où il faut que le corps lutte contre soi, contre son évidente pesanteur, pour s'emparer de sa puissance de légèreté qui l'emporte vers le haut. D'une certaine manière, l'âme est le nom que Platon aura donné à cette puissance du corps de s'arracher à son propre poids.²¹⁶ Où le haut et le bas, première dimension du sens, s'éprouve à travers l'antagonisme du lourd (qui nous retient vers le bas) et du léger (qui s'emporte vers le haut). Il faut donner raison au romancier Milan Kundera quand il écrit dans *L'insoutenable légèreté de l'être* : « Une seule chose est certaine. La contradiction lourd-léger est la plus mystérieuse et la plus ambiguë de toutes les contradictions²¹⁷ », mais aussi corriger son affirmation, et voir dans cette contradiction la plus évidente épreuve par l'existant de l'antagonisme du sens et du non-sens.

Que le lourd puisse se retourner en léger, que le poids du corps et de l'existence entière, littéralement son fardeau, l'accablement de celui qui est jeté dans le monde et comme abandonné, et pour qui selon l'expression même de Heidegger au § 29 de *Etre et temps* « l'être est devenu manifeste comme un poids »,²¹⁸ puisse être suspendu pour que le pesant soit rendu à sa possible légèreté, voilà ce qui est digne de description et de pensée. Que s'ouvre l'espace des possibles, non plus seulement pour nous exposer au Danger, mais pour nous tourner vers la promesse d'une légèreté de l'existence conquise sur sa pesanteur, voilà ce dont il faut s'étonner, ce qu'il faut espérer et ce que la philosophie a pour tâche de comprendre. Voilà pour nous aujourd'hui la tâche, celle qu'ont vue en des pages sur lesquelles il faudrait s'arrêter longtemps Augustin, Kierkegaard ou Michel Henry :²¹⁹

'Le bagage que j'impose est léger'. Tout autre te pèse et t'écrase ; mais celui du Christ t'allège et relève ; tout autre pèse son poids, celui du Christ donne des ailes.²²⁰

Christ voulut enseigner ce qu'il montra par son exemple : le fardeau est léger, même quand la souffrance accable. Le fardeau reste ainsi en un sens le même, puisqu'il est la souffrance, la lourde souffrance ; et cependant il devient léger. Le lot de l'homme ici-bas n'a pas changé par suite de l'apparition du christianisme dans le monde. Un chrétien peut avoir à endurer exactement les mêmes souffrances que celles qu'a connues l'humanité avant la venue de Christ ; pour lui toutefois, de pesant, le fardeau devient léger.²²¹

Or cette transformation du fardeau le plus lourd en ce qui est le plus léger, cette transsubstantiation magique elle aussi de la plus grande souffrance dans l'ivresse de l'amour sans limites, tout cela n'advient que chez celui en qui - à l'image du Christ - l'auto-affection de la Vie absolue s'est substituée à l'auto-affection du simple vivant donné à lui-même sans l'avoir voulu, dans l'auto-affection de cette Vie absolue et par elle cependant. Tout cela n'advient en lui que si, vivant sa condition de Fils et n'étant plus rien d'autre qu'elle, s'éprouvant soi-même dans l'épreuve de la vie infinie et vivant de cette épreuve, il est né une seconde fois re-généré dans la seconde vie.^{[222](#)}

Dimension temporelle du sens. A l'évidence il était impossible de décrire la « direction de sens »^{[223](#)} sans mêler l'espace et le temps. Si la différence d'espace entre haut et bas s'éprouve bien dans l'antagonisme entre pesanteur et légèreté, celui-ci est rendu manifeste à son tour par les mouvements adverses qui attirent le corps vers le bas ou l'emportent vers le haut. Encore faut-il qu'il y ait temps pour rendre possible ce passage d'une région vers l'autre, dans un mouvement du haut vers le bas (chute) ou du bas vers le haut (ascension). Où il y a direction il faut encore qu'il y ait succession. Lu dans l'horizon maintenant du temps, la direction de sens ne suppose pas seulement une différence mais une dissymétrie foncière entre un avant et un après, un point de départ et un point d'arrivée, un premier et un dernier mot. Où il y a sens, il ne suffira pas de constater une succession aléatoire où la joie vienne après la peine, et réciproquement, selon les hasards de ce qui nous arrive, mais il doit y avoir une direction, l'orient de cette différence, pour qu'un premier mot *nécessairement* devienne un dernier mot, que la joie vienne *toujours* après la peine, ou que le lourd à *tout moment* puisse se transformer en légèreté.

Pour que naisse le sens, il ne suffira pas que du temps s'écoule mais il faudra que son passage, qui fait revenir un présent toujours vivant, soit porteur d'une puissance d'incessant renouvellement. Il ne faudrait pas surtout que le dernier mot, celui qui détient l'eschatologie du sens, revienne à la mort ou à la logique de l'être-vers-la-mort, mais bien plutôt à cette puissance de commencer et de recommencer que pourrait traduire alors l'expression d'être-vers-la-naissance^{[224](#)}. Aller vers sa légèreté (et vers le haut), aller vers sa naissance – ces deux mouvements vont de pair. Ce qu'Henri Maldiney, commentant Binswanger, a su dire :

Si nous disons que le soir tombe et que le jour se lève, c'est à raison d'une liaison non-thématique, éprouvée entre l'éclairement, l'ascension (et la naissance) et l'assombrissement, la chute (et la mort).^{[225](#)}

Reste que cette naissance du sens ne va pas sans paradoxe, puisque le corps doit s'arracher à sa propre pesanteur et au mouvement naturel de sa chute, et que le passage du temps semble conduire toute chose vers sa ruine et l'existence vers sa mort. Au renversement du lourd en léger

correspond alors le retournement de la flèche du temps et la possibilité d'aller non pas vers notre mort mais vers notre puissance de commencer et de recommencer, vers notre naissance ou notre nouvelle naissance.

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La métamorphose de l'amour

Une méditation

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La métamorphose de la finitude, qui s'effectue en parole, corps et volonté perd sa porosité dans la dialectique de l'éros – l'amour dit charnelle – et de l'agapè – l'amour dit spirituelle – lorsqu'elle est confinée aux bornes stériles d'une équivocité fragmentaire ou d'une univocité totalisante. Les puissances ou les potentialités de la finitude, c'est-à-dire le mode, l'intensité et la durée de l'amour, ainsi que les tensions qu'y correspondent à l'intégrité de la parole, du corps et de la volonté, résistent à la fragmentation d'une part et à la totalisation d'autre part en s'ouvrant à la profondeur de la texture de « l'entre deux » qui se manifeste au cœur de la dialectique de la métamorphose de l'amour.

Le discours sur l'affect tente donc de capturer, par le prisme de la finitude, la complexe spontanéité des premiers mouvements tel qu'ils se donnent, dans un premier instant, au sein de la dialectique entre la volonté et la raison. Ensuite, par un triple mouvement simultané, issu de la tension qui reste complémentaire quoique toujours non résolu au cœur de ce mouvement, la métamorphose metaxologique de l'éros et de l'agapè – qui se produit à travers la spontanéité de l'affecte, effectue et maintient les tensions propres à la finitude de la parole dans le cadre de la communauté face à l'individu – au sein du corps comme union de la chair et de l'esprit et de la volonté dans son double mouvement de liberté et de nécessité. L'activité spontanée résiste donc à la fois à l'univocité et à l'équivocité, aussi bien celle de l'éros et celle de l'agapè, privilégiant au contraire la porosité de la métamorphose metaxologique, voire l'apérité, issu de la force créative dans la dialectique de la finitude.

« La parole » : elle exprime spontanément, en mode descriptive, et transforme, en mode prescriptive, la dynamique affective qui gouverne les interactions individuelles et collectives. La régulation affective est issue du confinement spontané, à savoir la normativité de la finitude conçue dans sa limite comme la conséquence de l'imperfection moral, c'est-à-dire le péché. Réduite au mouvement spontané de la méfiance inspirée par le dualisme spirituel d'où les pôles catégoriques « le bien » et « le mal » –, de la régulation affective surgisse la spontanéité comme manifestation de la limite dans la limite par laquelle l'affectivité définit, paradoxalement, la plénitude de la valeur humaine conformément à la certitude d'autodétermination. Les mécanismes sociaux déployé afin de satisfaire l'inclination sensuelle qui vise à apprivoiser l'imprévisibilité, éprouvé comme spontanéité des puissances affectives, ne doit pas être mené au détriment de la porosité des affects dans leur élaboration performative des dynamismes sociaux.

En effet, de la spontanéité de l'affect, c'est-à-dire de la parole comme source originaire et fin limitée des rapports sociaux, surgissent, dans l'horizon de la finitude, les tensions et les fractures en forme de métamorphose. Ces tensions s'accomplissent par une profondeur et par une texture complexe lesquelles se donnent comme outils de dialectique de l'affectivité spontanée selon les paramètres de la finitude, à savoir le mode, la durée et l'intensité. Ces paramètres forment le tissu même des tensions de l'individu face à la collectivité et permettent leur manifestation ainsi que leur préservation.

La limite de la limite, ou le péché, définit la spontanéité affective dans le cadre de l'amitié comme tension et résistance au cours de la métamorphose, voire comme épreuve partagée de la finitude. L'affect propre à l'amitié subit une mutation originaire du statut de « loi universelle » au statut de « loi individuelle ». Il s'en suit que la limite finie de la finitude devient l'expression incarnée de la volonté individuelle. La tension, au sein de la profondeur de la finitude, qui se manifeste dans la contraposition du mouvement spontané avec l'amour de la raison, exige immédiatement la prescription d'accompagner les puissances incontrôlables de l'amour par le poids de la volonté métamorphosée à travers la spontanéité de l'affect au-delà de la raison – c'est-à-dire, de la limite de la limite comme limite finie de la finitude, pour ainsi s'écouler et devenir une limite de finitude tout court. Être affecté spontanément consiste à résister et donc à rester en tension, non pas à cause de la limite dans la limite, voire dans l'illusion du péché, mais en faisant partie d'une dimension constitutive de l'apérîté de la finitude. La régulation de la spontanéité consiste donc à voir la limite dans sa finitude affective se métamorphosée en tant qu'ouverture vers le possible dans le confins du mode de la nécessité.

Source et fondement de la communauté, l'amour est l'origine de l'amitié et non pas l'amitié l'origine de l'amour, dans le combat de la raison et de l'affect. L'amour de la raison soulève

l'inclination initiale de la spontanéité de l'affecte, ainsi effectuant l'amour en résistance au-delà de la nécessité du précepte, chose qui demeure impossible pour l'inclination seule. La dialectique entre la spontanéité de l'amour affective et celle de l'amour de la raison permet positivement la création des attitudes de résilience envers l'ami dans l'inclination, ou envers l'ennemi motivé par le précepte. Cette dialectique engendre l'amour, voire une communauté agapeic. La purification ou a métamorphose de l'affectivité préserve la tension dialectique sous forme d'inclination contre le précepte, ou bien sous forme de la spontanéité contre la nécessité, alors qu'une résolution reste toujours impossible soit-elle par une synthèse ou bien par une déconstruction. En gardant une telle tension s'ouvre la possibilité d'un amour génératif à l'origine de la dynamique individuel et collective, de la société tout court, comme aperiété metaxologique. De là, il s'ensuit que la porosité metaxologique de la dialectique de l'individuel, qui résiste le collective, et du collective, qui nie son contrepoids dans la parole, engendre la structure parallèle du corps dans l'union de la chair et de l'esprit.

« Le corps » : le mouvement spontané des puissances sensibles régule les opérations de l'esprit et de la chair dans la métamorphose du corps éprouvé comme fissure et combat contre la constitution de la finitude. Les pouvoirs sensibles opèrent spontanément à l'intérieur de la tripartition de l'âme – soit dans la pensée, l'affect et l'intention ou bien dans la raison, l'affect et la volonté – quand ils sont dissociés de la dialectique du contrôle des puissances de l'esprit, bien qu'ils restent toujours en tension avec ces dernières. Le tissu de la finitude, comme tension des limites dans la chair et dans l'esprit, bien qu'essentiellement manifesté à travers l'esprit, est produit par l'unification dialectique des pouvoirs sensibles de la chair dans la mesure où ils interagissent avec les pouvoirs supérieurs de l'esprit, toujours par la médiation dialectique de la spontanéité affective. La résistance contre le chaos par les puissances opposées s'intensifie à l'intérieur de la limite et s'oriente vers la totalité où elles s'incorporent dans l'existence humaine à la fois chair et esprit. Au-delà de la raison, le chaos se naturalise par la force de la spontanéité de l'affect dans la finitude de la chair et de l'esprit dans la réduction d'une fonctionnalité génératrice.

La naturalisation spontanée de l'affect, voire l'affect naturel (*affectus naturalis*), délimite, contient et maintient la résistance du corps comme dichotomie de l'esprit vis-à-vis de la chair, en forme de puissance sensible ou énergie vitale émanée non seulement de la métamorphose des éléments de la vie, mais aussi comme le dynamisme fondamental de l'esprit vers la corporalité dans la totalité de la finitude selon sa manifestation corporelle. Intégrer les intensités de l'affectivité naturelle sous la forme du désir de l'esprit, intensifiés dans leur fonction et dans la complémentarité de la puissance affective de résistance, produisent, dans la métamorphose de l'affect, une source dialectique de la tension dans la profondeur de la corporalité rendue poreuse,

voire par la condition, la tension et la génération. La porosité corporelle est pénétrée par l'échange dialectique de l'envie, comme désir, et de la résistance comme spontanéité modale, produisant ainsi des possibilités innumérables – à savoir l'apérîté metaxologique pour atteindre des modifications texturales et nécessaires de la volonté et son mode, intensité et durée, dans les limites de la finitude. Donc, la volonté constitue l'apérîté metaxologique de la dialectique corporelle, dans la mesure où celle-ci est naturalisée par la spontanéité affective pour ainsi devenir génératrice d'apérîté modale, c'est-à-dire des possibilités dans l'horizon de la nécessité de la finitude, manifestée cette fois comme volonté pure.

« La volonté » : la rupture et la relocalisation de la chair et de l'esprit dans la volonté, par la rivalité entre la raison et l'affect, se produit dans la texture de l'envie, conçu comme désir, et de la résistance, qui correspond cette fois à la métamorphose de la volonté dans la spontanéité de l'efficacité de la puissance affective. L'affect n'est plus une simple puissance du désir, elle devient plutôt une efficacité spontanée multiforme et complexe du mouvement de la corporalité qui conserve la tension dialectique de la volonté comme possibilité et de la raison comme nécessité. L'impulsion de la volonté corporalisée par l'affect spontanée, échappe au domaine de la volonté et devient donc le mode le plus pure de la volonté en vue de la durée et de l'intensité de l'affect face à la nécessité extérieure et non pas à la détermination. L'autodétermination de la volonté comme première mouvement spontané de l'affect, régit les strates progressives de complexité, de la régulation des processus vitaux du corps jusqu'à la production des conditions, permettant ainsi la possibilité des mouvements spontanés et autonomes, en raison de leur spontanéité. L'affectivité spontanée est donc par nécessité un mode neutre de la volonté inscrite dans la dialectique de l'action des premiers mouvements, voire dans le mouvement de l'activité et de la passivité, qui s'ouvre à la production de la jouissance comme conséquence qualitative de l'affect. L'apérîté metaxologique des tensions de la volonté dans la possibilité et la nécessité engendre par la suite l'amour agapeic, car quand la volonté s'affecte ou est affecté spontanément la volonté se rend effective.

De la parole à la volonté, en passant par la corporalité, surgit donc la spontanéité metaxologique de l'affect comme amour, lequel encadre progressivement et maintiennent les tensions dialectiques des structures parallèles de résistance et de résilience dans la parole (individuelle et collective), dans le corps (chair et esprit) et dans la volonté (possibilité et nécessité), toujours à la limite de la limite, voir par la durée et l'intensité de l'affect spontanée, pour ainsi effectuer par la métamorphose de l'amour, la dialectique de l'apérîté manifesté comme génération metaxologique.

L'affectivité spontanée comme première mouvement de la volonté dépasse la dichotomie morale du « bien » et du « mal » puisqu'elle s'inscrit dans le cadre moral de l'affectivité même avant que la question de la responsabilité puisse surgir dans les interactions de la dialectique, voir la passion et l'action, de la volonté comme incorporation spontanée de la chair, et de l'esprit en action. La responsabilité est donc la configuration par la volonté de la limite dans la limite qui transcende et transforme les limites de l'envie comme nécessité du désir en mode de possibilités. Pourtant la jouissance des manifestations créatives de la volonté comme puissance est le mouvement même de la spontanéité affective comme amour communiqué à la totalité de l'être en mode de parole, corps et volonté. Par-là que l'amour définit les modes de la spontanéité affective en fonction de la durée et de l'intensité affective. L'amour efficace est donc l'expression metaxologique de l'action qui correspond à l'affectivité spontanée. L'amour surgit comme capacité de manifestation de la spontanéité affective dans la force de la nature par la volonté ainsi que dans la porosité de la dialectique metaxologique comme surdétermination spontanée de l'affectivité spirituelle laquelle s'atteint par la jouissance dans l'unification de la fragmentation toujours ouverte de la volonté, corps et parole. Dans l'horizon de la finitude, au-delà de la limite de la limite, l'apérîté metaxologique de l'éros se métamorphose par la spontanéité affective au sein de la nécessité dialectique des possibilités finis de l'amour où la texture de l'infinie de la finitude devient apérîté, soit pure puissance de la volonté, voire l'amour. L'éros s'ouvre, grâce à la métamorphose, à la rencontre de l'agapè par la dialectique de la parole, du corps et de la volonté, ou dans la metaxologie de l'amour conçu comme fissure de la finitude, voire comme champs d'innombrables possibilités.

Finem.

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Sens et non-sens de la temporalité :

génération et eschatologie

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1.

Le paradoxe eschatologique et la logique de la naissance

L'interrogation théorique de la temporalité se propose comme laborieuse et féconde soit pour la pensée théologique soit pour celle philosophique. Tout au long du XXème siècle elle se lie notamment à la définition du sujet et de ses possibilités : il s'agit en effet de vérifier si la temporalité n'est qu'une limite radicale – déterminant le sujet en tant que marqué par une finitude révélant son manque constitutif, ou plutôt si elle est l'enjeu qui ouvre une histoire douée de sens, dans laquelle le sujet exerce un rôle significatif, une forme de singularité absolue.

La question métaphysique concernant la relation entre le temps et l'éternité est parfois liée à la théologie chrétienne, dans le développement de sa pensée eschatologique. Le dernier siècle en particulier a beaucoup travaillé pour exprimer la concentration christologique de la théologie et par conséquent il a relevé l'impossibilité de définir la démarche eschatologique comme ayant une simple relation aux « choses dernières », donc à la fin des temps et de l'histoire : il s'agirait d'une renonciation définitive à l'humanité valorisée par la Révélation de Dieu dans la vie du Fils Jésus. La thématique eschatologique touche donc deux questions entrelacées : celle relative à l'éternelle dynamique trinitaire, impliquant le monde dans la relation amoureuse entre le Père et le Fils ; celle des êtres humains qui se confrontent avec la vie rédemptrice du Christ.²²⁶ Il est pourtant question de définir la fin de la temporalité chronologique et au même temps de vérifier pourquoi elle ne comporte pas la simple totalisation de l'histoire ; c'est-à-dire comment peut-elle autoriser l'ouverture d'une temporalité définitive et originaire, un temps destinal plutôt que terminal, ultime en tant que décisif.

Une temporalité qui ne relève pas seulement de la chronologie, mais qui maintient son rôle absolu et définitif, a été synthétisée grâce à la notion philosophique d'événement. Elle est reconnue en tant que mot clé pour la philosophie à partir de plusieurs approches (cf. Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, Martin Heidegger, Donald Davidson) et elle a notamment retenu l'attention des auteurs français travaillant la phénoménologie²²⁷. Pour suivre l'hypothèse qui trouve dans la notion d'événement l'aide pour le développement d'une authentique pensée eschatologique, il faut découvrir s'il y a des phénomènes capables de définir toutes les nuances de l'événementialité en question. Tout d'abord, suite à la démarche heideggérienne, la mort a été considérée en tant qu'événement singulier ; cependant, récemment beaucoup de philosophes ont montré la fécondité du phénomène de la naissance par rapport à une théorie de l'événement²²⁸.

De façon encore sommaire il est possible de considérer la forme de la naissance comme analogique à celle eschatologique, elle vérifie un événement qui est à la fois l'ouverture d'une temporalité radicale et qui détermine la forme de la première personne en tant qu'absolument

intersubjective, ouverture d'une histoire dans laquelle la réceptivité correspond à la détermination du soi. L'eschatologie s'est d'habitude intéressée à la mort, cependant la naissance se propose elle aussi en tant que phénomène capable de relever une dimension radicale dans laquelle la temporalité est comprise selon son sens plénier.

Une rapide incursion dans la phénoménologie de la naissance confrontée avec la démarche eschatologique peut par conséquent se révéler une modeste illustration du fécond entrelacs entre les ressources philosophiques et théologiques. On procédera tout d'abord dans l'observation de la naissance dans sa dimension de césure radicale de toute temporalité linéaire – paradoxe du renversement du rapport entre l'effectivité et la possibilité, pour poursuivre avec l'indication de sa dimension spécifique, laquelle ne relève pas de la contraction de l'instant, mais plutôt de la transformation totale, déjà enracinée et cachée dans la période qui précède la naissance en tant que telle. L'analyse de la gestation permettra alors de conclure avec la monstration de son analogie avec le dispositif théorique de l'eschatologie, en particulier si on considère son relief mondain.

1. La naissance : origine permanente

Les raisons du choix pour la naissance en tant qu'événement originaire se recueillent dans les deux dimensions du temps et de l'altérité : les deux sont comprises comme dialectiques par rapport au sujet personnel et en parallèle elles déterminent la consistance de ce dernier. Le sujet est corrélé de manière tout à fait unique à l'événement de sa propre naissance : en effet, dans certains cas on peut se donner la mort ou déterminer ses causes et sa contingence, mais cela est impossible pour la naissance, personne ne peut décider de manière irrévocable ni quand elle doit arriver, ni le fait même de son irruption ; elle demeure tout à fait impossible à être planifiée. Une description métaphysique à partir du concept de causalité est impossible parce que la « naissance se phénoménalise bien, mais à titre d'événement pur, imprévisible, irrépétable, excédant toute cause et rendant possible l'impossible (à savoir ma vie toujours nouvelle), surpassant toute attente, toute promesse et toute prédiction » [229](#).

La naissance comporte la rupture de la linéarité du temps chronologique, elle est l'irruption dans la temporalité quotidienne d'une nouveauté absolue par rapport à ce que c'est déjà existant ; au même temps elle implique l'attitude réceptive de ceux à qui elle arrive (tant les parents que le nouveau-né). La naissance en tant que telle correspond à la découverte d'un rôle subjectif tout à fait particulier, lequel n'est pas compréhensible à partir de l'alternative entre activité et passivité. L'inauguration du temps tout à fait nouveau donné par la naissance est rendue possible par une séparation originaire : « en tous les ordres de l'existence, seule une perte peut nous séparer de l'origine, [...] et par là faire que nous soyons distincts d'elle, et donc que nous puissions devenir

nous-mêmes en vérité »²³⁰. Cependant, il s'agit d'une rupture nécessaire afin d'établir un nouveau lien : tant les parents que celui qui naît sont appelés à une implication totale par rapport à cet événement autrement indisponible. Les parents sont les seuls témoins de ce qui s'est passé, à travers leur narration le sujet pourra se reconnaître en tant qu'individualité, il lui est impossible de s'approprier tout seul de son existence et au même temps il est nécessaire qu'il réponde à travers une assomption de responsabilité. L'origine est reconnue soit comme indisponible soit comme promettant, il pourra vivre à partir de la décision de s'impliquer en première personne dans l'histoire future qui lui est consignée. Cela arrive s'il reconnaît l'origine hors de sa possibilité d'accès, d'une certaine façon en se faisant à son tour témoin de ce qu'il ne peut pas posséder. C'est proprement cette indisponibilité à déterminer la forme indestructible du lien²³¹. Le temps y joue un rôle de tout premier plan, parce qu'il est le dispositif à travers lequel la réponse peut être bâtie, le sujet se découvre engagé dans l'histoire commune, laquelle lui fournit le plan pour son unicité.

La faille provoquée par l'événement est donc bien radicale, mais son caractère absolu est reconnaissable seulement à partir d'un moment successif, lequel n'est pas simplement instantanée, mais plutôt détendu dans le temps. Ce paradoxe du lien entre l'irruption pure et sa reconnaissance plongée dans le quotidien offre la possibilité de comprendre la dimension événementielle de la naissance, laquelle, dans le langage heideggérien mené à son but par Jean-Luc Marion, implique la priorité absolue de la possibilité sur l'effectivité, à tel point que la naissance est définie en tant que « impossibilité de l'impossibilité »²³². La dimension d'ouverture totale n'est pas simplement éventuelle, mais douée d'un enracinement absolu dans l'histoire, la naissance est l'événement impossible par excellence parce que c'est la source de toute dimension possible, elle met en lumière que la réalité effective en tant que telle est excessive, événementielle²³³. Elle comporte la transformation totale du temps et pas son abandon, sa dynamique originelle est en réalité le rythme propre de toute l'existence, avec Emmanuel Levinas on peut reconnaître ce bouleversement en définissant le temps lui-même comme étant toujours « une nouvelle naissance »²³⁴.

Si par rapport à l'irruption événementielle on a envisagé l'entrelacs entre deux dimensions, celle temporelle – signée par l'interruption de la continuité fluente et celle intersubjective – marquée par la précedence des témoins sur la réceptivité du sujet, alors cela s'annonce comme la trace qui marque l'existence en tant que telle et pas seulement son moment inaugural. Ce dispositif temporaire se révèle très similaire à celui eschatologique : il évite la totalisation du temps dans l'instant apocalyptique sans perdre aucun des traits de nouveauté. En plus, la découverte du lien intersubjectif dans la forme du témoignage intercepte la possibilité de décrire le rôle indépassable et irréductible joué par la finitude par rapport à l'universalité.

2. La deuxième naissance : transformation continue

La découverte de la dimension universelle liée à la naissance porte à considérer les ressources théoriques cachées dans le lien paradoxal entre la première naissance, césure de la temporalité fluente, et la temporalité dilatée, possibilité de naissance toujours nouvelle, c'est la liaison entre la première et définitive naissance et la « deuxième » à nécessiter d'une attention précise, afin de ne pas réduire l'événement à la contraction du temps jusqu'à la disparition totale de ce dernier, donc à vérifier si l'existence en tant que telle aussi se caractérise par une naissance absolue.

Le temps se configure comme naissance s'il est considéré à partir de la transformation qu'il rend possible, si on arrive à valoriser la distance qui se constitue par rapport à l'origine et permet de la considérer différente par rapport au simple commencement, toujours donné après coup.

L'événement, en fait, ne correspond pas au surgissement à partir du vide total, mais il est plutôt l'émergence vitale en relation avec un arrière fond. Seulement à partir de l'événement il y a l'émergence d'un horizon, reconnaissable comme toujours franchissable. Pourtant, il s'avère nécessaire de vérifier quelle est la qualité de la période inaugurée par la naissance ; le dispositif de la transformation se propose comme adéquat pour la définir, donnant relief à la finitude. Le thème proprement théologique de l'eschatologie, c'est-à-dire la question relative à l'histoire qui continue, bien que la révélation de Dieu soit définitive dans l'histoire du Christ, trouve son parallèle théorique dans le fait de considérer la naissance en tant qu'événement pur et total, qui toutefois au même temps implique sa continuation dans l'ouverture d'une histoire qui tend vers l'avenir²³⁵.

On peut tirer des suggestions fécondes de la confrontation avec le très célèbre récit de la rencontre de Jésus avec Nicodème (cf. *Jn* 3,1-21). À partir de là on aperçoit la nécessité de comparer la naissance avec l'événement eschatologique de la résurrection et de considérer en tant que fondamentale la dynamique de transformation qu'y est impliquée. Les analyses de Emmanuel Falque peuvent aider à ce propos. Proposer l'analogie entre la naissance et la résurrection signifie reconnaître qu'elles dévoilent des caractéristiques similaires visant à la transformation radicale, voire eschatologique : « on ne sait si elle vient ni même quand elle vient, mais on sait qu'elle est là lorsqu'elle s'est produite – nous la constatons et la vivons comme un “fait accompli” qui nous fait davantage que nous ne le faisons »²³⁶.

La deuxième naissance que le Christ propose à Nicodème fait découvrir qu'elle consiste dans une réelle résurrection, possible si on passe à travers la même dynamique vécue par le Christ, c'est-à-dire la vie donnée jusqu'à la mort. Il s'agit d'un trait tout à fait eschatologique en tant qu'ouverture d'un temps nouveau, lequel se spécifie non pas à partir de la logique binaire de l'opposition (vie – mort ; temps – fin du temps ; monde – totalisation du monde), mais grâce à une

dramatique permanente de transformation. Nicodème reçoit l'annonce d'une transformation possible, laquelle ne comporte pas l'abandon de sa vie, mais plutôt transforme de manière radicale le rapport avec le monde qu'il vit. Il découvre pourtant qu'il est tout à fait impossible un retour direct à l'origine (cf. *Jn* 3,4), mais que pour la rejoindre il faut se décider par rapport à l'existence du Christ, engagement qui provoque une transformation de soi. Le fait de naître à nouveau n'annule pas la première naissance, mais offre la possibilité de la reconnaître en tant que promesse ouvrante la possibilité d'une histoire nouvelle. Dans ce récit on retrouve la même logique à l'œuvre dans la narration relative aux disciples d'Emmaus, où la résurrection est l'enjeu principal : la résurrection du Christ n'est pas sans le changement du vécu des disciples, jusqu'à quand ils ne sont pas capables de le reconnaître, pour eux aucune résurrection a lieu (cf. *Lc* 24,13-35)²³⁷.

La dynamique de transformation rend explicite la relation testimoniale : la subjectivité personnelle a accès à son identité – donc à son origine – seulement à partir de la décision radicale par rapport à un événement qui excède sa finitude, mais auquel elle peut se lier. Cependant, il ne s'agit pas d'une simple prise de position morale à laquelle l'événement de la naissance fournit une image²³⁸. Cette structure risque de mystifier la transformation en un simple transformisme, qui dépourvoit le commencement nouveau de sa réelle charge de possibilité radicale²³⁹, le rôle de la naissance est bien plus fort, on peut la définir comme métaphorique²⁴⁰. La forme permanente de la naissance est dévoilée de manière encore plus profonde si on considère qu'elle ne relève pas du tout l'instant sans durée, mais qu'elle est plutôt une gestation qui implique déjà la distension temporaire²⁴¹. Le temps de la transformation est donc la coexistence, dans la finitude du temps chronologique, d'une dramatique événementielle, toujours ouverte à la radicalité historique du futur²⁴².

3. La période prénatale : symbole destinal

Pour montrer de manière encore plus décisive les analogies de la naissance avec l'eschatologie il faut perdre sa mystification dans un instant sans durée. Pour suivre cette trace on peut donc se plonger dans la dimension tout à fait unique de la période prénatale, laquelle a des traces opératives aussi dans la période suivante. Il s'agit d'une période qui dévoile une ultérieure explicitation de la liaison du relief temporaire à la dynamique intersubjective. Ce lien a déjà été reconnu comme eschatologique parce qu'il implique l'union de la dimension absolue à la valorisation de la finitude en tant que concrète ouverture à l'avenir. Particulièrement, la période de la grossesse évidence que le plan temporaire et relationnel touche soit la mère soit le fœtus, elle est exceptionnelle à cause de l'expérience unique qu'ils font d'une relation mutuelle destinée à se terminer avec un nouveau commencement²⁴³. La période précédant l'accouchement est

exemplaire en tant que dépossession totale de la singularité, laquelle correspond à une découverte tout à fait unique de sa propre corporéité en tant que relationnelle²⁴⁴.

La distension temporaire qui caractérise la grossesse se configure en tant que temporalité destinale, en effet la ligne du temps est bien dirigée vers le moment encore indisponible de la naissance. Pendant la grossesse il y a donc une protention qui trouve son point final dans la naissance ; cependant, elle n'efface pas la pleine valeur de chaque jour qui la précède, au contraire seulement le but donne sens à ce qui le précède²⁴⁵. La direction vers l'avenir demeure la seule possible tout au long de la vie ; cela détermine la possibilité d'un retour sur l'origine encore plus décisif, celui de l'appropriation nouvelle en tant que symbolique, a posteriori elle donne la possibilité de comprendre qu'elle est en effet originaire. Ce que le philosophe allemand Peter Sloterdijk a nommé « gynécologie négative »²⁴⁶ exprime la valeur eschatologique de l'événement de la naissance : l'impossibilité à naître deux fois – équivalente à l'interdit de parcourir dans les deux sens le lien envers la mère – qualifie une venue au monde qui ne se caractérise pas seulement en tant que perte, mais qui correspond à la possibilité à être soutenu dans une forme différente par ce lien originaire. Le fait d'avoir bénéficié d'une période de temporalité symbiotique avec la mère permet à la temporalité dramatique qui la suit de ne se transformer pas dans un manque de sens.

La coprésence dans la même période d'une attente événementielle et d'une plénitude satisfaisante se lie à l'unicité du rapport intersubjectif : il n'y a pas encore une distinction corrélatrice, le rapport entre la mère et le fils est bien plus fluide. La relation entre la mère et le fils peut se définir comme non objective, parce que la subjectivité du fils n'est pas encore celle de la pleine singularité²⁴⁷. C'est proprement ce rapport à favoriser l'individualisation successive ; néanmoins, elle n'est pas accomplie avec la naissance en tant que telle non plus²⁴⁸, mais nécessite d'une période bien plus longue – on pourrait dire qu'il faut la vie entière pour l'accomplir. Cette situation tout à fait unique implique une considération de la période du commencement en tant que caractérisée par la plus intime relation duale, où la pluralité précède l'unité. Sloterdijk fournit une suggestion majeure : non seulement il identifie dans ce rapport originaire l'originalité de la relation, mais il le reconnaît comme possible à partir d'un organe ayant une seule fonction, celle de mettre en relation. Il définit « *mit* (avec) » ce que la biologie nomme « placenta », lequel termine son rôle au moment de la naissance²⁴⁹. L'échange duel est rendu possible par un tiers qui demeure de manière complète caché et oublié. La fonction du « *mit* » est donc double : il favorise l'individuation subjective parce qu'il évite la fusion totale avec la mère et au même temps, dans son invisibilité, il est le garant du rapport à la source de la vie. Ce tiers fonde de manière totale la relation originaire, mais sa fonction médiatrice arrive jusqu'au but quand il est expulsé avec l'enfant.

L'événement de la naissance définit pourtant la temporalité suivante comme étant pleine de sens parce que fondée sur une sorte de mort de celui qui était tout à fait symbiotique avec l'enfant, avec son abandon la transformation radicale peut advenir. Grâce à la considération de ce que se passe avant la naissance on peut donc confirmer la double dimension qui caractérise cet événement : celle de la séparation corrélée à une plus forte liaison. Cela est le signe d'un entrelacs profond qui caractérise soit la temporalité (événementielle en tant que plongée dans la quotidienneté chronologique) soit l'intersubjectivité (individualisant en tant que fondée sur une originaire dimension relationnelle).

4. La pré-eschatologie ouverte par la génération

Ce bref parcours donne l'opportunité de tracer quelque suggestion par rapport à la possibilité d'une temporalité eschatologique. Il faut considérer une forme eschatologique qui ne correspond pas à la fin de toute temporalité, mais plutôt à la définition d'une temporalité pleine et accomplie, dans laquelle la finitude subjective n'est pas considérée en tant que limite. La grossesse présente une temporalité radicale, laquelle marque la qualité eschatologique de la vie entière. La période de la gestation, terminant avec la naissance, se propose comme analogie très suggestive pour tout ce qui la suit, jusqu'à sa fin. La naissance, événement irréductible et in-déductible, a été découverte comme en réalité une période de gestation, temps dilaté déjà avant de son commencement. Une temporalité particulière, qui se lie de façon déterminante avec la transformation du soi et du vécu temporaire. Par rapport à l'eschatologie, on gagne le fait que dans l'expérience universelle, tout à fait quotidienne et commune, se déploie une temporalité bien différente de la chronologie. Il devient possible de bâtir une proportion entre la période qui se termine avec la naissance et celle qui commence avec elle pour arriver jusqu'à la mort. Dans aucune de ces structures il y a manque de temps, mais elles correspondent à une dynamique qui implique l'histoire de la réponse personnelle. En tant que promesse, elle se configure comme ouverture à l'avenir et pas du tout comme prédétermination.

On aperçoit au même temps que la naissance met en lumière avec clarté l'expérience d'une dimension intersubjective originaire, laquelle se découvre comme altérité au cœur même de l'identité, déployée selon une structure ternaire et testimoniale, soit pendant la période de la gestation, soit pendant le temps qui suit la naissance. Cela suppose une décision personnelle du sujet, la responsabilité envers son advenir, qui implique la possibilité de l'accès à soi seulement à travers la vie des autres. Une structure qui suppose finalement la totalité du monde : en lui donnant sa propre origine les autres ouvrent au sujet, de façon médiée, la possibilité de l'avenir personnel²⁵⁰. Il devient donc impossible identifier l'événement avec un instant vide, la duplicité des temps nécessaires pour la naissance (de la fécondation à l'expulsion du fœtus) exprime le

redoublement impliqué dans ce phénomène, il implique et nécessite dès son commencement une renaissance pour être complet²⁵¹.

On peut mieux comprendre ce parallèle si on considère la définition que le théologien Jean-Yves Lacoste donne de la vie liturgique (dans sa théorie correspondant à la vie en tant que telle) : il reconnaît le temps de la vie humaine comme inchoatif, c'est-à-dire pré-eschatologique ; cela n'a rien à voir avec le dispositif partiel, parfois utilisé dans la théologie classique (encore marquée par le raisonnement métaphysique dual) du « déjà / pas encore ». Ce dernier condamne le présent à être simple partialité qui sera annulée au moment de la parousie. Ici il est plutôt à l'œuvre un dispositif différent, qui est capable de retrouver dans le temps quotidien les traces du définitif²⁵².

La simple considération de la définition de la mort comme « naissance définitive » assume alors toute sa valeur, qui n'est pas de consolation réductrice, mais de véritable accomplissement d'une existence en état naissant. La mort peut être reconnue en tant que dimension eschatologique si on commence à vérifier son lien intrinsèque à la naissance, et on donne donc attention à la période de la vie historique en tant qu'originellement significative. La dimension qui suit la mort, pourtant, ne peut pas se caractériser en tant qu'éternité dépourvue du temps. La temporalité s'est révélée comme dimension eschatologique et non pas le marque d'une finitude réduisant l'humain à partialité ; elle correspond à la dynamique sans fin d'une dilatation capable d'ouvrir à jamais la dimension du possible. Elle fait donc reconnaître comme irrecevable toute équivalence du définitif eschatologique à une éternité dépourvue de temps²⁵³.

Une référence biblique résume le lien de la naissance avec l'eschatologie : une des premières attestations de la résurrection individuelle sort de la bouche d'une mère, ayant une fonction génératrice en tant que soit masculine soit féminine. Face à la mort de ses fils, elle prononce sa profession de foi, son attente dérive de l'engagement dans l'événement de la gestation qui, demeurant excessif et mystérieux, c'est le seul ouvrant à l'espérance définitive :

Cependant la mère extraordinairement admirable et digne du souvenir des bons, qui, voyant périr ses sept fils en un même jour, le supportait avec courage, à cause de l'espérance qu'elle avait en Dieu, exhortait fortement chacun d'eux dans la langue de ses pères, remplie de sagesse ; et, alliant un mâle courage avec la tendresse d'une femme, elle leur dit : « Je ne sais comment vous êtes apparus dans mon sein ; car ce n'est pas moi qui vous ai donné l'esprit, l'âme et la vie, et ce n'est pas moi qui ai joint les membres de chacun de vous ; mais le Créateur du monde, qui a réglé la naissance de l'homme, et qui a déterminé l'origine de toutes choses, vous rendra de nouveau l'esprit et la vie (2Macchabées 7,20-23).

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Unseeing Sainthood

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The saint. What sort of saint? No one has ever seen a saint. For the saint remains invisible, not by chance, but in principle and by right

Jean-Luc Marion²⁵⁴

The saint is “the ‘stranger’ *par excellence*.”²⁵⁵ Saints transcend material reality through their close affinity with the divine. They share in that which marks God’s alterity: his holiness. If saints join God in being set apart, can they be recognized precisely as *set apart*? The dialectic between presence and absence, hiddenness and revelation, intimacy and ineffability, homeliness and the uncanny haunts all aspects of cultic devotion. This tension emerges in a special way with regard to the hagiographical tradition. According to the apophatic or negative theological school of thought, holiness cannot be represented mimetically. Aesthetic depiction of an ineffable phenomenon should be impossible. Yet this is the task of hagiography. The literature of sainthood must produce saintly visibility, rendering sainthood perceivable by imagining what holiness looks like. Saints are made, by God but also by culture. In both cases “making” has the full force of poesis. *Legendum*, one of several words used throughout the Middle Ages to describe the genre of saint’s life, indicates the deep textuality of sainthood. From the Latin verb *legere* (“to read,” “to collect or gather together”), *legendum* translates “ought to be read.” The word “legend” has come to signify a quasi-historical event imbued with mythic (if not actual) truth and, in its colloquial usage, often has fantastical connotations. Despite its givenness in the mode of textuality, hagiography seeks to preserve the mystery of the holy even as it depicts holy persons. In order to represent holiness as such, hagiography must constantly undo its project of cataphatic (that is—affirmative, imagistic) representation. It must mortify the gaze, hide the saint, offend the mind’s eye—all in an attempt to let the dark luminescence of the holy shine forth more brightly. Because of this, the hagiographical mode of literature can be said to have an apophatic, or negative, poetics. It must render the icon without creating an idol. Hagiography has the difficult task of preserving the transcendent prerogative of holiness while creating an imaginary space within which one might contemplate holy persons. The aesthetic apparatus of sainthood—

the cult-making—provides a backdrop against which the phenomenon of sainthood can emerge, even if the holy itself can never been seen in its essence. Christ's concrete personhood, and its attendant theology of Word-made-flesh, guarantees sainthood's ability to manifest, however fuzzily. While the cultic process necessarily distorts the phenomenon of sanctity, it indicates the presence of something real and positions devotees within an epistemological darkness that is generative rather than void.

It may seem surprising that holiness should be considered ineffable, given the wealth of images that flood the mind as soon as one hears the word "saint." Within a Christian framework, a holy life participates in the *vita Christi*. The sanctified person becomes conformed to Christ, an *alter Christus*.²⁵⁶ Holiness, then, is an irreducibly supernatural phenomenon. Sainthood does not refer to moral perfection, though goodness bears a direct relationship to holiness, and the two are often conflated. Ethicists working within the analytic tradition have taken up the concept of "moral sainthood," coined by Susan Wolf, in an ongoing conversation about supererogation. Those interested in the possibility of a postmodern ethics have occasionally made a similar move.²⁵⁷ Zooming outward from the personal to the civic, sainthood is sometimes viewed as fundamentally political.²⁵⁸ So charismatic is the saint as a cultural force, the idea of such a figure compels even when evacuated of spiritual content. It makes sense that sainthood has proven an enduringly slippery phenomenon, difficult to pin down. The "definition" of sanctity has no independent content of its own; rather, it describes a mode of relationality toward the divine. Its sense is more directional than prescriptive. It reconfigures the thrust of one's existence. Only God's own activity can complete the process of becoming holy. Sanctification transfigures individual human persons. Orthodox thinkers refer to this transformative process as *theosis*, or divinization, focusing on the soul's ability to share in the divine life. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God's holiness is coordinate with his transcendence. When a person becomes sanctified, she enters into this alterity. Participating in the divine life entails a partial sharing in God's ineffable nature. If saints as such share in God's unknowability, then it would seem we have no hope of recognizing them as saints.

One contemporary strain of phenomenology articulates this paradox most starkly. Following Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion applies phenomenology to the revelatory, transcendent realm. **His doctrine of saturation has created an entire field of inquiry, with implications for many topics. He addresses sainthood specifically in an essay titled "The Invisibility of the Saint."** For Marion, anyone who thinks he has recognized a saint fools himself: saints are invisible. "The saint. What sort of saint? No one has ever seen a saint. For the saint remains invisible, not by chance, but in principle and by right."²⁵⁹ He borrows the language of praise for this declamation: *le saint, le saint?, le saint*. Holy, holy, holy.²⁶⁰ He affirms, questions, then

negates the saint, arguing that she retains her invisibility in all circumstances. In order to recognize saintliness in another person, one must have experienced the phenomenon of holiness within oneself. Upon what other basis can one attribute it to another? Holiness cannot be defined, only known by direct experience. How does this work, though, if “no one can say ‘I am a saint’ without total self-deception”?²⁶¹ To account oneself holy is to commit the sin of pride. In fact, the holier a person becomes, the more fallible she seems in her own eyes. The evidence of one’s holiness must manifest during an encounter with the holiness of another. True recognition of the holy consists in understanding one’s own lowliness. It is known not by similitude, but by disparity. Rudolf Otto calls this reaction the *mysterium tremendum*, a shuddering awareness of one’s own creaturely nature.²⁶² When Jesus’s identity as the Christ begins to dawn on Peter, the disciple does not gape or touch. He takes a step back: “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” (Luke 5.8). So strong is his reaction, he dares to address Jesus with an imperative. This reaction sanctifies Peter. According to Marion, presuming to comprehend and label the holy verges on idolatry, and “all idolatry actually results in self-idolatry.”²⁶³ One’s own standards become the measure of the divine. The holy’s elusiveness consigns saintliness to formal invisibility.

Marion makes a powerful case for why sanctity’s phenomenality must remain invisible, but his disturbing claim invites further conversation. For example, how does one attain to this higher order of “recognition”? What enables that penitential movement in the first place? How does the *mysterium tremendum* effect or enable sanctification? Most striking of all, how do we account for all the material accoutrements of cultic devotion, which somehow mediate sanctity to devotees? Consigning holiness to absolute invisibility seems to preclude the possibility of being drawn to it or following its implicit command of *imitatio*—which would seem, in turn, to make sanctification impossible. There must be a kind of “recognition without recognition” if conversion is to remain possible.

Petra Turner develops the concept of saintly invisibility within the context of Marion’s larger body of thought. Drawing on his doctrine of the saturated phenomenon, a phenomenon whose intuition (in-flowing) exceeds one’s ability to intend (reach out to) it, Turner sheds some light on Marion’s argument. Her commentary illuminates the dynamism of saintly invisibility, distinguishing it from something like an abyss or vacuum. The perceiver experiences saintliness “as something outside of and foreign to oneself, and perceives and receives it as a *conceptual* lack, as a space where the profane cannot enter” (emphasis added).²⁶⁴ What is experienced as lack, however, is actually the sense of a fullness that exceeds one’s ability to perceive and conceive of it. We might liken an experience of holy hiddenness to the paradoxical realization that one has a blind spot. How does one come to see a blind spot? This experience has a negative component: holiness “inscribes itself in the individual’s response to it,” in Turner’s words, carving out a space

within the individual.²⁶⁵ To see holiness is to lower the gaze in nascent repentance; to repent is to begin to become holy. This participation increases one's ability to receive the phenomenality of holiness even more. Turner calls this the "holy dance of encounter and change."²⁶⁶ Though clarified by the use of a wider philosophical lexicon, the idea of saintly invisibility remains an insoluble problem. That moment of conversion retains its profound mystery. What makes one person jeer at the crucifixion tableau and another weep? As Turner points out, "to recognize the holy is already to be caught up in it."²⁶⁷ A basic tautology resides at the heart of the thesis proposed by Marion and elaborated by Turner: one must belong to holiness in order to recognize it, and one must recognize holiness in order to belong to it. In order to deepen this quasi-gnostic conception of sainthood let us turn from philosophical to cultural responses to holiness.

Christians have always imagined saints as intercessory beings. In some way, however qualified, saints ostensibly strive for recognition, precisely because they desire to be companioned. This will-to-relationship is embedded in the very idea of Christian sainthood. The cultural production of saints—canonization if you will—depends precisely upon the recognition and naming of saintliness. People who come to be recognized as saints have often positioned themselves within a genealogy or are imagined as having done so. Dorothy Day (twentieth c., whom the Catholic Church is considering for canonization) quotes Thérèse of Lisieux (nineteenth c.), who authored plays about Joan of Arc (fifteenth c.), who heard a voice she ascribed to Margaret of Antioch (third c.), who, legend has it, craved martyrdom upon hearing the stories of Sts. Lawrence (third c.) and Stephen (first c.). Saints are creatures of community, always situated within an ongoing story of heroic holiness. If the greatest commandment, according to Christ, is to love God, the second most important is to love one's neighbor (Matt. 22.36-40). The neighbor-oriented aspect of holiness makes its set apartness not exclusive, but invitational.

In one of the most popular texts of the late Middle Ages, a collection of *vitae* known as the *Legenda aurea*, or *Golden Legend*, Jacobus de Voragine (thirteenth c.) offers this account of All Saints Day: "The saints make festival in heaven over us, for there is joy before the angels of God and holy souls over one sinner doing penance, and so we should make a fair return by celebrating their feasts on earth... When we pay tribute to our brothers, we honor ourselves, since love makes all things to be in common, and all things are ours, in heaven, on earth, and in eternity."²⁶⁸ The feast days that pepper the medieval calendar reflect the celestial celebrations that these intercessory figures make in heaven, rejoicing when a soul is added to their number. Though the saint refers her being to God, doing so refers her back to humankind. Saints are ineluctably *pro nobis*. Their project of *imitatio Christi* drives them to serve and commune with others, whether through heavenly prayer or earthly ministry. The communion of saints unites the church triumphant with the church militant, extending the church's sociality from this world into the next. According to Paul, the saints are nothing less than a great "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12.1).

Surrounding the heavenly throne, they are caught up in the beatific vision, gazing at the Godhead and offering ceaseless hosannas. But they are also imagined as looking downward, their eyes glued to the spectacle of human suffering. They cheer the living on as if they watched a sporting event. Occupying the space in-between God and the world, the saint is a Janus-faced creature, simultaneously focused on heaven and earth. The cloud of witnesses both witness and bear witness to God, reflecting his glory in their own luminous souls. Hagiography must figure out a way of holding their transcendence in tension with this intercessory givenness. For if one cannot see holiness in its essence, it is by no means true that one looks on embodied holiness and sees nothing.

If holiness as such remains invisible, what does one see when one looks at a saint? What does a saint look like? This is an aesthetic question. It explores the connection between human sense perception and divine activity. Since Christianity's earliest days, thinkers who have wanted to understand sanctification have favored one mode of writing above others: hagiography. The "writing" of "holy writing" also means "drawing." Iconographers, though they produce visual images, are said to write icons. So does a hagiographer present "a verbal portrait or icon of the saint."²⁶⁹ It has become commonplace to point out that the western church has an underdeveloped pneumatology, or theology of the Holy Spirit. Yet it has an overabundant tradition of spiritual writing, both confessional and narrational. "Spirituality is at the core of any practice of a religion," according to one scholar.²⁷⁰ It encompasses lived, embodied faith. As a kind of spiritual writing, hagiography addresses the question of God's activity in the sensible world.

In its attempt to understand and then depict the mystery of sainthood, the hagiographical mode can itself be understood as performing a *phenomenology of sanctity*. The hagiographer examines the phenomenality of holiness as embodied by exceptional individuals. He then recreates artistically what he perceives (with his bodily eye) or imagines (with his mind's eye)—producing a virtual experience of sanctity. Let us not confuse this process with reporting. The hagiographer stylizes sainthood, refracting its ineffable quality through the prism of artistic interpretation.²⁷¹ Each literary device the hagiographer employs acts as a facet on this prism, drawing out the colors hidden within sanctity's invisible light. In so doing, he performs what I call *the hagiographical reduction*, leading the mystery of embodied sanctity back to the perceiver through the mediation of a literary product. As aesthetic endeavors, saints' lives do not seek explicitly to define holiness. Rather, they represent it in dynamic, painterly terms. Husserl himself, the father of modern phenomenology, acknowledged the kinship between the aesthetic and the phenomenological gazes.²⁷² Artistic endeavor affords one way of performing the phenomenological reduction. It employs and fosters the sort of beholding to which

phenomenology exhorts us, even if it eschews the technical vocabulary.²⁷³ Self-consciously to translate reality so that it might be understood and beheld while simultaneously adding to the mystery and depth of that reality: this is the project of art. That such translation is especially needed in the case of saintly persons is attested by the wealth of artistic renderings that survive and continue to be produced in the form of narrative and homiletic prose, verse, stained glass, jewelry, reliquaries, statuary, drama, icons, carvings, ballads, film, and more.

The visibility of the saints emerges within a literary tradition that not only represents them, but also makes the idea of sainthood thinkable. Perhaps sainthood as such is formally invisible, as Marion argues. Practically speaking, however, sainthood exists neither in the abstract nor in isolation: it always springs forth from a representational tradition from which it cannot be divorced. It is always personal, never merely conceptual. The representational matrix in which Christianity is embedded provides the horizon against which saintly phenomenality can emerge. Saints are textual creatures. Both literary-historical and theological data support this claim. Christian sainthood is premised upon the imitation of Christ, who is himself Word made flesh (John 1.14). The Incarnation, which gives humanity an ultimate visible instantiation of the divine, resembles an act of cosmic writing, translating the divine Word into material reality. Christ's afterlife in the gospels and other literal, legible texts—themselves containing words ascribed to him—further compounds this translation. Theologies of the divine Logos aside, the historical Jesus of Nazareth was firmly rooted within a Jewish scriptural tradition. Much of his speech as reported in the gospels quotes and interprets the so-called “Old” Testament. “Jesus’ own conscious imitation of scriptural types” invited the gospel writers to imagine other parallels, producing a typological relationship between the Old Testament and the earliest Christian writings.²⁷⁴ Saints carry this typological relationship forward, imagining themselves as the Body of Christ. Throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages, movement of saintly bodies through space was imagined as analogous to textual acts; the relocation of a saint's corpse or relics was an official event known as *translatio*. Additionally, the material realities of ancient and medieval writing lent themselves to a rich theology of text and flesh.²⁷⁵ The process of writing “bridged the mental and the bodily; while the written text, inscribed on papyrus or on skin, was embodied logos.”²⁷⁶ A saintly life, as lived in material reality, bore a direct relationship to the literary *vita* representing it.

Even if the *vita* was mostly imaginative embellishment, it endowed the saint with a liveliness that continued past death. The saints that were pure fabrications of a hagiographical tradition almost literally took on a life of their own. St. Catherine of Alexandria (fourth c.) was one of the most venerated saints of late antiquity and the Middle Ages but was temporarily removed from the Catholic calendar in 1969, along with many popular saints, due to lack of evidence substantiating her existence. St. Christopher is another figure whose story is likely pure invention. In the

western version of his *vita*, Christopher is a giant who carries the Christ child across a river. His name, of course, means “Christ-bearer,” making the story an obvious case of allegory. Eastern traditions imagine him as a cynocephalus, a dog-headed man such as those reported in fantastical travelogues like the fourteenth-century *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Unbothered, iconographers depicted the saint’s canid features with gusto. Given his monstrous form, the Byzantine St. Christopher may afford the best example of *legendum* as legend. His immense popularity as patron saint of travel sparked a reaction against his removal from the calendar. Catherine, Christopher, and the other demoted saints were eventually reinstated. In the cases of these early, undocumented cults, the stories swiftly outpaced their origins. A textual life conferred a kind of presence, even in the absence of a corresponding biological life. As Robert Bartlett puts it—and this is key: “The saint is only seen through the writing about the saint as saint.”²⁷⁷

Yet the story of saintly stories is not one of triumphal, straightforward presence. Textuality is not a panacea for the trauma of absence. It functions like a vaccine, reproducing a manageable dose of absence in order to achieve a deeper understanding of what is in fact present. Hagiography both manifests *and hides* the individual venerated. Usually, Bartlett continues, “there can be no lifting of the veil; it is a veil that is created by the fact that, by the time people in the present can have any kind of encounter with the long dead person, that dead person has already been conceptualized as a saint, with all the implications.”²⁷⁸ If this is so, then the person herself disappears into the formal invisibility of sainthood-as-a-concept as soon as people begin to identify her as such—to say nothing of her body’s absence in death.²⁷⁹ Indeed, this covering over of a holy person by the idea of sainthood can happen during one’s lifetime. When referred to as a saint during an interview, social activist Dorothy Day reportedly rebuked the journalist for trivializing her.²⁸⁰ This then is the paradox of representing sainthood: as soon as a person emerges *as a saint*, the mystery of her holiness retreats somewhat. The logic behind Marion’s claim is compelling, even relentless: saints cannot be seen as such. Yet who cares if sainthood remains invisible *in essence*? Sainthood is never abstract since it refers by definition to a specific person. It is always an incarnational, particularizable phenomenon. If it exists at all, it never exists as pure concept.

Similarly (and prototypically), the Christian God is not pure spirit or idea. Rather, he “proceeds” toward creation in the form of a material being—a person, specifically. The theological precondition for the possibility of Christian sainthood is Christ as incarnate Second Person. The historical precondition is the production of a gospel genre rendering Christ’s exemplarity and recounting speeches ascribed to him. Indeed, the Second Person has often been identified with scripture itself, his passion-wounded skin imagined as marked pages of parchment. Sainthood enters into this textual tradition. Saint-making is always a poetic endeavor. Not only does a saint know truth and do good—he is beautiful as well, moving toward beatification, although that

beauty is cruciform here on earth. As Hans Urs von Balthasar has elaborated at length, recognizing the beauty of holiness means understanding the (anti-)aesthetics of the cross. This is no easy task and is largely what keeps holiness hazy in a this-worldly context. In an attempt to accommodate a commonsense understanding of sainthood, I argue that it *can* be recognized as sainthood, if only through the mediation of a cultic tradition that renders its form somehow manifest. This does not mean that sainthood is subject to easy and unqualified revelation. The same literary tradition that guarantees the saint's presence also acknowledges and preserves her inscrutability, refracted through the cruciform aesthetic of the cross. This dialectic between appearing and non-appearing is the mechanism by which saintly representation becomes possible.

The saint's absence is the wound at the heart of cultic devotion. The protagonist of a hagiographical narrative manifests an absent body. She does so precisely because hers is a *textual* body, however visual its poetic construal.²⁸¹ Yet even though "texts might substitute for bodies, texts did not provide an opposition to the body," according to Derek Krueger.²⁸² The saint is endowed with a "textual body," able to absorb the demands of both visibility and invisibility.²⁸³ She is read, her body delivered to the mind by way of language. This non-apparitional quality of textuality becomes ironically "apparent" in the overdetermined visuality of martyr narratives. The earliest iterations of the *passio* subgenre favored long passages of ekphrasis, exhorting the hearer or reader to envision the absent saint. This imagistic impulse is auto-deconstructive, ultimately reminding the reader of the saint's physical absence. Even when a relic provided physical, material presence, much imaginative and theological work assisted its manifestation as more than inert matter. Focusing on sculptural art objects, Peter Brown argues that "the art of the shrine in late antiquity is an art of closed surfaces. Behind these surfaces, the holy lay, either totally hidden or glimpsed through narrow apertures. The opacity of the surfaces heightened an awareness of the ultimate unattainability in this life of the person they [i.e., pilgrims] had traveled over such wide spaces to touch."²⁸⁴ This may sound pessimistic, yet the "carefully maintained tension between distance and proximity ensured one thing: *praesentia*... the presence of an invisible person."²⁸⁵ If this paradoxical absence-presence seems irreducibly mysterious, one thing is certain: artistic mediation makes it possible. While the hagiographical mode certainly evolved throughout the Middle Ages, an intensely visual poetic remained at its core, a generic holdover from its late antique past. Often the language with which scholars themselves discuss passion narratives slips into the immediate and spectacular. Seduced by the texts' ocular rhetoric, they treat the subject as if she were immediately present.²⁸⁶

Narratives of martyrdom deal with this presence-absence, visibility-invisibility most overtly, being self-proclaimed accounts of *witness*. Early Christians obsessed over the fate of martyred

bodies.²⁸⁷ These bodies comprised the raw material of Christian cult-making and so had a formative impact on the genre of hagiography. The word “martyr” means “witness,” a juridical term that accrued its sacrificial and supernatural valence with the persecutions of Christians that occurred sporadically in the late antique world. These persecutions were by no means as systematic, constant, or unbridled as Christian accounts—especially passion narratives—make them seem.²⁸⁸ In fact, Larissa Tracy argues that violence in late medieval hagiography more directly evoked Inquisitional and political torture enacted by Christians upon one another than it did conflict with pagan oppressors.²⁸⁹ Yet the cultural trauma of martyrdom created a deep wound, one that replicated and compounded the logic of Christianity’s foundational event: the Crucifixion.²⁹⁰ The threat of martyrdom shaped the collective Christian consciousness—manifest in its art, liturgy, theology, burial practice, and so on—to say nothing of the actual experience and testimony of those who witnessed or underwent such executions.²⁹¹ The possibility of torture and capital punishment inspired Christians to respond dialectically to state violence, producing a literature of triumphant suffering. The term “martyrdom” is value-laden, reflecting a desire to find meaning in pain, to remember the dead, and to produce what Elizabeth Castelli calls a “useable story” that could be handed down.²⁹² The highly visual, spectacle-oriented quality with which martyrdom imbued hagiography intensified the challenges inherent in representing an ineffable phenomenon.

The hagiographical mode contains a paradox at its heart. Sainly bodies assume a measure of God’s ineffability; as Marion insists, a share in God’s holiness necessitates participation in his invisibility. God tells Moses that no one can see God’s face and live (Exod. 33.20). Yet the aesthetic givenness of the incarnate Second Person guarantees some degree of visibility for holy things. Since saints restage the *vita Christi*, participating in Christ’s holiness, their own holiness should also deliver itself to the gaze (sensorial or mental). Still, the paradox remains, as Christ himself provides no easy, straightforward revelations. Even the Transfiguration, the most explicit manifestation of his divinity, confuses the disciples who witness it. Christ’s own presence, especially his resurrection apparitions, is fraught with a sort of invisibility. Denys Turner notes that Christ contains “not only the visibility of the Godhead, but also the invisibility: if Christ is the Way, Christ is, in short, our access to the unknowability of God, not so as ultimately to know it, but so as to be brought into participation with the Deus absconditus precisely as *unknown*.”²⁹³ Thus, the saints’ participation in Christ’s givenness does not result in a mere buffet of presence. They are swept up in his hiddenness as well. In a turn-of-the-century work titled *The Psychology of the Saints*, Henri Joly argues that saints must “manifest exteriorly the ‘hidden’ life... [of Christ], but in order to do this, they must have begun by ‘hiding’ Him in their hearts.”²⁹⁴ The saints emulate Christ not stagily, performing him for the world’s eyes, but meekly. As Marion notes, holiness is not self-conscious. It is blind to itself and cannot present as such. The left hand does

not know what the right one is doing (Matt. 6.3). Still, sainthood invites emulation. Imitate me as I imitate Christ, says Paul (1 Cor. 11.1). Hagiography works to reconcile this joint imperative of hiddenness and manifestation—a “problem” that is not resolved, but is perhaps deepened into mystery, by its Christic template. The hagiographical reduction leads readers back to sainthood by guiding them through a thick cloud of unknowing. How does it do this? As a genre it has, over time, developed an array of poetic devices meant to put the protagonist under erasure. Saints’ lives often contain moments of negativity, opacity, blindness, indeterminacy, darkness, and unknowing. The hagiographical mode has developed many motifs and topoi in order to express sanctity’s elusiveness.

One of the most illustrative of these devices is the blinding of an impudent onlooker. This topos often has a sexual charge and appears in many kinds of folklore, the most iconic instance being the Anglo-Saxon tale of Lady Godiva (Godgifu). According to legend, she rides through town naked in an attempt to obtain a lighter tax burden for her people. The townsfolk shut themselves indoors out of gratitude and respect—with the exception of one young man who, in later versions, comes to be known as “peeping Tom.” God blinds the voyeur as punishment for his obscene gaze.²⁹⁵ This plot point appeared early on within a particular strain of *passio* narrative: the virgin martyr legend. In most of these tales, the protagonist (beautiful, nubile) pledges her virginity to Christ. A male authority figure and would-be suitor invariably challenges this intention. The threat of rape hovers over these narratives but remains implicit since the saint’s fetishized virginity must remain intact. Although these tales stop short of imagining the protagonist’s violation, they delectate in exposing and tormenting her body, often edging toward the pornographic. In so doing, they raise questions about how to view a saint.

Take Prudentius’s account of St. Agnes, found in the fifth-century *Peristephanon Liber*, a compendium of martyr tales in verse. When Agnes, a “scarce yet marriageable” young girl refuses to honor Minerva, the judge orders her placed in the outdoor area of a public brothel, hoping that “the young men will rush to seek the new slave of their sport.”²⁹⁶ Without explicitly stating it, the text lets us know that she has been stripped since, as in the Godiva legend, the crowd collectively lowers its eyes to respect her modesty. Her wounds on naked display, Agnes is at her most cruciform. Nevertheless, possibilities for misrecognition abound. The phenomenon of holiness retreats under the lustful gaze: “One [onlooker], as it chanced, did aim an impudent gaze at the girl, not fearing to look on her sacred figure with a lustful eye; when behold... he fell blinded.”²⁹⁷ The verb H. J. Thomson translates as “aim” is *intendere*, which means “to stretch toward.” This word evolved into one of phenomenology’s central concepts, that of intentionality—the perceiver’s attempt to assist manifestation. Here, divinity rebukes intentionality: “a fire came flying like a thunderbolt and with its quivering blaze struck his eyes.”²⁹⁸ In attempting to “reduce” holy things, intentionality overreaches itself—risks voyeurism—and must be purified

through mortification. The young man falls as if dead. Agnes intercedes on his behalf, and God restores both life and sight. His vision is reborn, having passed through the darkness of death. The poem concludes with a surreal depiction of the martyr's ascent to heaven, clicking into Agnes's point-of-view. Whereas she was the object under review, she is now the viewing subject. Anticipating *The Blue Marble* image taken by the Apollo 17 crew, Prudentius has Agnes lower her gaze to regard the universe: "She marvels at the world that lies beneath her feet; as she mounts on high she looks at the darkness below and laughs at the circling of the sun's orb... the life that is lived in the black whirlwind of circumstance."²⁹⁹ Holiness affords true perspective, right vision. A literary portrait of holiness can make this point, taking the reader beyond this world into the shimmering space between heaven and earth.

Still, hagiography has limits. The young man undergoes reform, but does the reader? Prudentius's poem gets caught up in its own erotic charge, evoking the very details it has censored. At the executioner's approach Agnes declares herself pleased by "this lover" (*hic amator*). "I shall welcome the whole length of his blade into my bosom," she enthuses, and it is no coincidence that "vagina" comes from the Latin word for "sheath."³⁰⁰ Suggestive language like this coaxes the reader into a voyeuristic gaze, potentially undermining the text's theology. "Writers and readers of ascetic literature, like the persistent pilgrims crying at the doorway or peering into the chinks of an ascetic's cell, are thus positioned as so many 'peeping Toms,'" according to Virginia Burrus.³⁰¹ Is Prudentius winking at readers, making a moral point at their expense? Is the text trying to create the same feeling of shame that characters experience? Perhaps. But I tend to think these titillating moments are symptomatic of the canonizing move in general. Artistic representation exaggerates by necessity, presenting us with a heightened, curated portrait of reality. It does this precisely in order to render subtle phenomena more visible so that we might reflect on them. Art's temptation, then, is to give us more and better spectacle, whether linguistic or visual, in order to drive its point home.

While art can help us imagine the holy, its stylization of an ineffable phenomenon will always fall short. It can only gesture. *The case of the virgin martyr is not unique. It epitomizes a dynamic inherent in any attempt to view, or depict, the holy. To regard the crucified Christ casually or even with curiosity indicates a degree of blindness. It takes a willingness to abject oneself, allowing one's gaze to be darkened, in order to receive the drenching transformations of that same holiness. At least within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the same God who strikes Uzzah dead for steadying the Ark with his bare hand is the God-man who invites Thomas to probe his wounds (2 Sam. 6.3-8, 1 Chron. 13.7-11, John 20.24-29). Thomas is allowed his well-intentioned impudence, but Christ gently rebukes him nonetheless. "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (John 20.29). Throughout the history of Christian thought, theologians and artists have striven to take this not-seeing seriously.*

A parallel strain of discourse developed alongside hagiography, asking similar questions about representation and holiness. Apophatic theology, known also as negative theology or the *via negativa*, responds to concerns about God's hiddenness. It emerged out of early contemplative, Neo-Platonic thought. It now constitutes an entire theological tradition, albeit one that remains inextricably braided with its cataphatic counterpart. In some ways apophatic conceptions of the divine allowed proponents of Christian art to both have and eat their cake.³⁰² From the beginning apophatic theology was embedded in debates about the status of religious images, consistently brought to bear against iconoclastic perspectives. Nor was it a fleeting movement, only occasionally in the air for subsequent generations of Christians. The liberating logic of the *via negativa* enabled and encouraged a rich material tradition—and it never went away.

The literary devices meant to render the saint indeterminate constitute hagiography's intersection with the apophatic tradition. Just as apophatic theology made the veneration and use of religious images possible, it undergirded and informed textual representations of holiness as well. This makes sense especially if one follows Patricia Cox Miller in viewing hagiography "not as a discrete genre limited to literary lives of saints but rather as a set of discursive strategies for presenting sainthood."³⁰³ This discursive technique side-steps idolatry by endowing the saint with an "apophatic body" or a "subtracted self."³⁰⁴ Miller's work analyzes uncanny representative techniques used to mediate holiness, scenarios in which the materiality of a saint's body is put into question. For Miller, these instances of subtle embodiment dislocate saintly presence, producing a "'haunting' whereby the saint's textually reconstituted body flits in and out of focus, tantalizing the reader with intimations of complete divine-human synergy."³⁰⁵ Such material indeterminacy preserves the saints from reification. These "subtle embodiments are the hagiographical version of apophasis."³⁰⁶ Ideally, this apophatic hagiography shields the devotee from idolatry by informing the way he perceives or conceives of the imagery, both frustrating and opening up the mind's eye. As a "spiritual exercise," reading saints' lives helps prime the physical eyes to interpret material representations of the holy with a deeper understanding of matter's ambivalence.³⁰⁷ This dialectic (or synergy, as Miller puts it) reminds us that holiness is ultimately a mystery that eludes both understanding and perception.

The hagiographical mode may delectate in its cataphatic images, but it also endeavors to push readers beyond perceptual and conceptual experience altogether. Of course, being an artistic medium, hagiography can never do this entirely. Yet it can simulate the final stage of apophatic negation, exhorting readers to question and transcend their own sensorial and intellectual gazes.³⁰⁸ The pervasive presence of monstrosity in early legends (dog-headed men, centaurs, dragons), for example, was intended to startle the reader into a meditation on the holy's otherworldliness. "Monster" comes from the Latin *monere*, meaning "to warn" or "show." It is

etymologically linked to the word “monstrance,” the liturgical device that frames and displays the Eucharist. In addition to blurring the line between spiritual and material manifestation, the hagiographical mode occasionally works to undermine the gaze entirely. It does this by depicting secondary characters as going blind in the saint’s presence (as illustrated above), by eclipsing the saint’s body with another entity (i.e., constructing a scene in which she is present but inapparent), by allowing others to mistake the saint for someone else, and by describing her with grammatical negatives. These topoi constitute the heart of hagiography’s apophatic poetics.

It seems tempting to call these instances of saintly *invisibility*. Yet, as mentioned, the presence of a *vita* before the reader’s eyes (or mind) keeps the saint from disappearing altogether. I prefer a less stark term, borrowed from Marion’s “Sketch of the Saturated Phenomenon”: *irregardability*. This word maintains the saint’s presence and reality while emphasizing her ability to frustrate the gaze. It describes not absence, but a kind of super-manifestation. The saint eludes the gaze not because there is nothing to see, but because there is too much. The mind’s eye rolls off of her. For Marion, “Determining the saturated phenomenon as irregardable amounts to imagining the possibility that it imposes itself on sight with such an excess of intuition that it can no longer be reduced to the conditions of experience.”³⁰⁹ “Saturated phenomena” (for our purposes, saints) cannot be experientially reduced, or “led back,” in the way that regular objects can. Marion acknowledges that this seems to imply impossibility of experience. He insists that the phenomenon “is nevertheless seen, but as blurred by the too narrow aperture, the too short lens, the too cramped frame, that receives—or rather that cannot receive it as such.”³¹⁰ This metaphor recalls the narrow apertures that Peter Brown identifies as key to the function of a reliquary—as well as the Eucharistic monstrance itself. Rather than enjoying an easy spectacle, the eye sees primarily its own impotence and inadequacy, which is not the same as seeing nothing. Additionally, the perceiver becomes aware of her own scrutiny by a rarefied and penetrating gaze. This causes her to regard herself anew, and to recognize the limits of her own gaze. The awareness of these limitations—of “the narrow aperture”—indicates the presence of something not fully visible. The direction of experience has been reversed, producing a “counter-experience.”³¹¹ The saturated phenomenon constitutes the perceiving subject as a “witness,” rather than allowing itself to be constituted as an object.³¹² This seems to be the dynamic at play in the *Peristephanon Liber*, a narrative about the double “witness” of martyrdom. By the poem’s end Agnes looks down on all that is—and laughs. She sees the “black whirlwind of circumstance” for what it is. God sees reality laid bare, and for Marion the ultimate saturated phenomenon is the divine, the source and wellspring of all holiness. Some have described the saturated phenomenon as an intrinsically theological concept, not merely philosophical. Bracketing this issue, it is nevertheless the case that the doctrine lends itself beautifully to an analysis of hagiography, a theologico-imaginary discourse that attempts to portray the elusive, supernatural

phenomenon of holiness. By unpacking literature's attempts to render the saint as irregardable, we learn to unsee her, deepening our understanding of the ineffable sanctity at her core.

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Sens et non-sens de la transcendance :

analogie, paradoxe, dispositif³¹³

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Dans le cadre de ce texte, nous avons l'intention d'exposer trois modèles possibles pour le traitement philosophique de la question du sens et du non-sens de la transcendance. Ces trois modèles sont illustrés par trois concepts : analogie, paradoxe et dispositif. Mais ces trois modèles peuvent aussi être mis en relation avec trois approches disciplinaires : théologie naturelle, philosophie de la religion et théologie politique. En effet, ce que nous avons l'habitude de définir comme « philosophie de la religion » ne constitue, au sens strict, qu'une modalité historiquement déterminée d'aborder l'étude philosophique de la transcendance. Mais cette modalité déterminée a une histoire *a parte ante* ainsi, désormais, qu'une histoire *a parte post*. Les trois concepts et les trois approches disciplinaires correspondent donc également à des étapes chronologiques, c'est-à-dire à trois phases historiques de ce qu'on peut définir de manière générale – *latu senso* seulement, mais d'une manière philologiquement non technique – comme « philosophie de la religion ».

1. Analogie : c'est-à-dire, la théologie philosophique

Du point de vue de l'histoire des concepts, la philosophie de la religion est une invention des Lumières. Comme l'ont montré les reconstitutions de Walter Jaeschke, Marco Maria Olivetti et Jean Greisch, les premières occurrences de cette expression remontent en effet au XVIII^e siècle. Le syntagme « philosophie de la religion » est attesté dans l'œuvre de Sigismund von Storchenau en 1784 mais c'est Hegel le premier qui, en 1821, tient des cours académiques portant cette dénomination.³¹⁴ Dans l'organisation universitaire, la nouvelle discipline appelée « philosophie de la religion » remplace la « théologie philosophique », autrement dite rationnelle, ou naturelle.

Celle-ci, à son tour, se distinguait de la « théologie révélée » et était une branche culminante de la métaphysique spéciale. Christian Wolff ou, pour encore plus de précision, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, mettent définitivement de l'ordre dans cette organisation de la métaphysique : l'ontologie comme « métaphysique générale », puis psychologie, cosmologie et théologie naturelle comme « métaphysiques spéciales » : « ad metaphysicam referuntur Ontologia, cosmologia, psychologia et theologia naturalis ». ³¹⁵ Mais les traces les plus anciennes d'une telle division apparaissent déjà dans le *Sapientiale* de Thomas d'York, au XIII^e siècle. Dans ce sens, Wolff est le dernier représentant d'une longue tradition qui plonge ses racines dans la scolastique et dans ce qu'on appelle le « second début de la métaphysique », inauguré par le retour des textes aristotéliens dans l'Occident latin, dont, justement, les livres classés comme *metà ta physikà*. ³¹⁶

Cette dichotomie entre métaphysique générale et spéciale dépend d'une oscillation déjà présente dans la compréhension aristotélienne de la *prote philosophia*, entre la science de l'étant en tant qu'étant (Ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη τις ἥ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὄν καὶ τούτῳ ὑπάρχοντα καθ' αὐτό) ³¹⁷ (une science dénommée 'ontologie' à partir du XVII^e siècle seulement) et une science de Dieu (ὥστε τρεῖς ἂν εἴεν φιλοσοφίαι θεωρητικάι, μαθηματική, φυσική, θεολογική ... καὶ τὴν τιμιωτάτην δεῖ περὶ τὸ τιμιώτατον γένος εἶναι. αἱ μὲν οὖν θεωρητικαὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν αἰρετώταται, αὕτη δὲ τῶν θεωρητικῶν). Albert le Grand parle de l'opposition entre *philosophi* et *sancti*. D'une façon générale, le modèle scolastique se caractérise par une position conciliante et concordiste de cette opposition qui, à partir du *Sapientiale* de Thomas d'York au XIII^e siècle puis jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, distingue la métaphysique en une partie générale et une partie spéciale. La métaphysique se partage donc en deux selon ces deux directions :

- l'être est le concept le plus universel, et la science qui le traite a le primat du point de vue de la généralité.

- Dieu est l'étant le plus éminent, et la science qui le traite a le primat du point de vue de l'importance.

Cependant, ce modèle concordiste présente une grave difficulté : en effet, Dieu est considéré comme un étant parmi les autres, il n'est donc qu'un élément dans la totalité des êtres. Mais en même temps il fonde l'ordre même de l'être, qui est créé par lui.

- Donc Dieu est un être mais, en même temps, il est en dehors de l'être même. En effet, Dieu est considéré comme un étant parmi de nombreux autres. Il n'est qu'un élément dans la totalité des êtres. Mais en même temps, Dieu est en dehors de l'être, parce que l'être est créé par lui.

C'est le cœur du problème de la transcendance du seul et unique Dieu dans la tradition philosophique : Dieu doit être totalement autre que le monde et que l'être, mais en même temps il ne peut pas être totalement privé de relation avec le monde et avec l'être. Le total manque de communication et de rapport avec l'être signifierait, en effet, le manque complet de signification et donc l'absence ou la non pertinence. Dieu ne serait rien pour l'homme. Au contraire, l'entrée de Dieu dans l'horizon de l'être et du sens implique immédiatement la perte de la transcendance.

Le terme de *transcendens* indique originellement – dans son utilisation technique – un excédent par rapport aux catégories. Dans la pensée scolastique, les *nomina transcendentia* sont ces notions qui transcendent les catégories, peuvent être prédiquées de tout et, pour cette raison, sont les plus importantes. Il s'agit de l'étant et des termes qui lui sont convertibles, comme 'un', 'vrai' et 'bon'. Ils sont qualifiés de *communissima* – « les plus communs » – pour leur universalité, et de *prima* – « les premiers » – pour leur importance. D'un côté ce sont les notions les plus génériques de toutes et, d'un autre côté, les notions les plus éminentes. Cette dichotomie entre *communissima* et *prima* répète encore une fois la décrite dichotomie entre ontologie et théologie. Le problème philosophique de la transcendance se trouve donc dès le début enraciné dans cette difficulté.

C'est le concept d'analogie l'architrave qui soutient le modèle selon lequel Dieu est un être mais est aussi en dehors de l'être : en effet l'analogie est l'instrument théorique utilisé par la scolastique pour exprimer le concept aristotélicien selon lequel l'être « se dit de nombreuses façons ». On peut attribuer à Dieu le prédicat de l'être (ainsi que tout autre prédicat) mais non dans le même sens où on l'attribue aux étants créés. Comme tout terme du langage humain, l'être ne peut que s'affirmer d'une façon imparfaite de Dieu. Telle est la prédication *per analogiam*. Le IV^e concile de Latran institutionnalise, en 1215, ce principe : *inter creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda.*^{[318](#)}

Ressemblance et dissemblance doivent être présentes en même temps. Mais l'efficacité du mécanisme de l'analogie représente également sa faiblesse. On tente en effet de garantir en même temps deux exigences contradictoires :

- D'un côté, le fait que Dieu n'est pas totalement privé de relation au monde. On peut parvenir rationnellement à Dieu et donc Dieu communique avec le monde.

- D'un autre côté cependant, un tel modèle garantit également à Dieu un inépuisable excédent sur lequel la philosophie n'a pas de légitimité à s'exprimer, non plus qu'aucun autre instrument créatural, parce que Dieu est extérieur par rapport à l'horizon de l'être et donc à l'horizon du sens.

A la suite de ces débats se développera l'idée de l'*aseitas*, c'est-à-dire de l'être 'en soi' et non 'ab alio' comme l'un des attributs de Dieu. Duns Scot est le premier qui introduit la dichotomie, mais

la patristique avait déjà parlé de Dieu comme *anarcos* (sans principe) et *agenetos* (non né). Dans les débats métaphysiques de la période baroque, l'être *a se* sera même considéré par certains théologiens comme l'*essentia Dei metaphysica*. La première caractéristique de Dieu et la plus importante est son être radicalement indépendant et donc seul. Dieu est *sine causa* et deviendra avec Descartes *causa sui*, la seule vraie substance. Aussi, l'on comprend comment une version radicale du monothéisme comme la version spinoziste peut conduire à l'idée de la substance unique. La question de fond est toujours la difficulté à faire face à l'ambiguïté structurelle de l'analogie.

Ainsi Thomas d'Aquin affirme que la relation du monde avec Dieu est réelle, mais l'inverse n'est pas valable, parce que le monde est créé par Dieu et dépend de lui, alors que Dieu est absolu. Le Dieu *ab-solutus* est détaché de tout lien, qui limiterait sa perfection et son excellence. De ce point de vue, on peut donc dire que la transcendance de Dieu comporte l'absence – pour reprendre l'expression technique de saint Thomas – de relations 'réelles'. Maïmonide aussi affirmait déjà que l'existence du monde dépend de l'existence de Dieu, tandis que le contraire n'est pas vrai, parce que l'existence de Dieu est nécessaire. Et dans ces considérations basées sur ce qu'on appellera ensuite les catégories de modalité, Maïmonide reprend des réflexions qui avaient déjà été formulées par Avicenne. Toutes les traditions dites monothéistes semblent donc concorder sur ce point. Thomas d'Aquin écrit :

Ostensum est autem supra [q. 12 aa. 11-12] quod Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri per suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudinem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis Sic igitur potest nominari a nobis ex creaturis, non tamen ita quod nomen significans ipsum, exprimat divinam essentiam secundum quod est [...].³¹⁹

Ressemblance et dissemblance doivent apparaître simultanément dans l'analogie. Être et Dieu, ontologie et théologie, peuvent ainsi être solidaires et former ce modèle de pensée que Heidegger – avec une expression kantienne – a défini d'« ontothéologie ».³²⁰ Les différences spécifiques dans les conceptions de l'analogie de chacun des auteurs et le débat correspondant – qui, après Mélancton, se manifeste à nouveau dans le champ de la scolastique protestante – loin de démentir les contours du cadre complexe, en confirment la persistance dans la longue durée.

Mais c'est Kant qui formule la critique décisive du modèle fondé sur l'analogie. Le développement kantien précritique sépare définitivement la dichotomie décrite. Kant soutient la thèse selon laquelle l'être dans le sens existentiel ne peut jamais être un prédicat, et toutes les preuves de l'existence de Dieu effectuent le saut indu de la pensée à l'être qui est le propre de la preuve ontologique. Kant met fin à l'ontologie, c'est pourquoi il écrit, dans la *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* :

der stolze Name einer Ontologie [...] muß dem bescheidenen einer Analytik des reinen Verstandes Platz machen.³²¹

Ainsi Kant porte aussi un coup à la théologie philosophique : on ne peut pas avoir de connaissance rationnelle, avec des instruments purement philosophiques et donc naturels, de l'objet « Dieu », parce que celui-ci outrepassé nos sens. Dans la description d'Heinrich Heine, reprise par le poète italien Giosuè Carducci : de même que Robespierre décapita le roi, ainsi Kant décapita Dieu.

Une telle critique représente un premier pas décisif pour l'affirmation qui s'ensuit du nouveau nom de « philosophie de la religion » à la place de celui de « théologie naturelle ». Cependant, Kant ne ferme pas totalement la porte à toute possibilité de parler de Dieu « innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft ». Une utilisation transcendante des catégories de l'intellect est possible dans le champ pratique. Aussi Kant introduit-il les néologismes de « Metaphysik der Sitten » et de « Ethico-Theologie ». Le paradigme éthico-théologique kantien est oscillant et constitue une phase de transition entre théologie rationnelle et philosophie de la religion. Kant n'utilise pas encore l'expression « philosophie de la religion », il parle cependant de « philosophische Religionslehre ». Dans les *Vorarbeiten* du texte kantien sur la *Religion*, on lit :

Die Religion unterscheidet sich von der Theologie darin, daß sie eine Moral ist, die mit der Erkenntnis von Gott und seinem Willen übereinstimmt.³²²

- *Sous de nombreux aspects, l'éthico-théologie est encore métaphysique et fondée sur l'analogie. On recherche en effet une ressemblance entre immanence et transcendance qui permette de construire un pont. Ce pont est situé dans la conscience morale.*

- *Toutefois, une nouveauté apparaît : l'analogie n'est plus « de l'étant » mais – comme l'a écrit Theodor Kobusch – « de la liberté ».³²³ Cela représente un déplacement sur le plan de l'immanence.*

La morale chez Kant est un champ encore pur, nouménique, abstraitement séparé et, pour cette raison, transcendant. Cependant, ce plan est entièrement intérieur à l'homme, parce qu'il réside dans le Gewissen. Ce n'est pas un hasard si, chez Fichte, l'assimilation présumée entre Dieu et l'ordre moral du monde conduit à un « Atheismusstreit ».

2. Paradoxe : c'est-à-dire, la philosophie de la religion

En effet, la démarche kantienne s'inscrit dans le paradigme le plus général des Lumières qui – avec des modes et des accents divers – véhicule une critique générale de la transcendance. Ce déplacement vers l'immanence – bien que non sans résistance – est radicalisé au cours des XIX^e et

XX^e siècles. La pensée dialectique hégélienne montre l'impossibilité de penser toute transcendance privée de relation et, donc, non contaminée. En effet pour Hegel, même le *Gewissen* ne peut pas être un champ pur. La pensée dialectique met en crise la possibilité d'isoler une transcendance séparée. Toute présumée transcendance n'a qu'un caractère représentatif et donc illusoire. La forme pure de l'impératif catégorique est une proposition analytique qui reste vide.

Es ist nicht das praktische Interesse, eine Tautologie zu produzieren, und um dieser müßigen Form willen, die doch ihre einzige Kraft ist, würde nicht so viel Aufhebens von der praktischen Vernunft gemacht; durch Vermischung der absoluten Form aber mit der bedingten Materie wird unversehens dem Unreellen, Bedingten des Inhalts die Absolutheit der Form untergeschoben, und in dieser Verkehrung und Taschenspielererei liegt der Nerv dieser praktischen Gesetzgebung der reinen Vernunft. Dem Satze »das Eigentum ist Eigentum« wird anstatt seiner wahrhaften Bedeutung: »die Identität, welche dieser Satz in seiner Form ausdrückt, ist absolut«, die Bedeutung untergeschoben: »die Materie desselben, nämlich das Eigentum, ist absolut«, und sofort kann jede Bestimmtheit zur Pflicht gemacht werden.³²⁴

La caractéristique décisive de la « philosophie de la religion » – à partir de Hegel – est donc d'essayer de rendre compte de l'inévitable contamination de toute transcendance présumée – y compris morale – qui n'a qu'un caractère représentatif et donc illusoire. L'athéisme marxiste, le positivisme, la psychanalyse et l'annonce de la mort de Dieu, constituent des défis encore plus radicaux. Pour reprendre les mots de Ricœur :

Il est relativement aisé de constater que ces trois entreprises ont en commun de contester le primat de « l'objet » dans notre représentation du sacré et le « remplissement » de la visée du sacré par une sorte *d'analogia entis* qui nous grefferait sur l'être par la vertu d'une intention assimilatrice³²⁵

La transcendance n'est que le fruit de projections qui partent d'une immanence aliénée. La philosophie de la religion – nouveau nom qui surgit en cette phase pour qualifier la discipline traitant de la transcendance en philosophie et qui remplace donc l'ancienne 'théologie philosophique' – tente de prendre ce défi au sérieux. La structure dialectique du rapport entre immanence et transcendance, déjà inhérente à la figure de l'analogie, est extrémisée et un nouveau modèle théorique fait son apparition, celui du paradoxe. C'est encore Ricoeur qui dit :

Mais ces trois maîtres du soupçon ne sont pas trois maîtres de scepticisme ; ce sont assurément trois grands 'destructeurs' ; et pourtant cela même ne doit pas nous égarer ; la destruction, dit Heidegger dans *Sein und Zeit*, est un moment de toute nouvelle fondation, y compris la destruction de la religion, en tant qu'elle est, selon le mot de Nietzsche, un 'platonisme pour le

peuple'. C'est au-delà de la 'destruction' que se pose la question de savoir ce que signifient encore pensée, raison et même foi.³²⁶

D'un point de vue philosophico-religieux, on a donc tenté d'interpréter le moment critique comme moment purificateur, à savoir comme *pars destruens* pour une nouvelle et plus solide *pars construens*. Dans la philosophie de la religion, qui insiste sur le paradoxe, il ne s'agit pas d'analyser le phénomène religieux contre la critique des 'maîtres du soupçon', mais au contraire de l'analyser grâce à cette critique. On ne s'ouvre pas à la transcendance au détriment de l'immanence, mais bien en vertu de l'immanence.

La figure de l'analogie travaillait sur la ressemblance, tentant de trouver des traces du divin dans le monde : à partir des effets, de l'ordre, de la beauté, on remontait jusqu'à l'étant parfait. Le paradoxe, lui, trouve Dieu à partir des éléments qui, à première vue, sembleraient le nier. Si la théologie philosophique trouvait des traces de Dieu chez les étants mondains et remontait, par analogie, jusqu'à l'étant suprême, la philosophie de la religion institue un lien dialectique entre Dieu et le monde. Dieu est la réponse aux défis du monde.

En effet, la philosophie de la religion basée sur le paradoxe affirme, à partir de Kierkegaard, que c'est justement l'unicité et l'absolue altérité et différence de Dieu par rapport à l'homme qui garantissent à l'homme la possibilité d'entrer dans une relation authentique avec lui. Cette relation fonctionne, justement, paradoxalement. Kierkegaard pensait que si Dieu est absolument différent de l'homme, alors l'homme est absolument différent de Dieu. Tel est sans aucun doute le paradoxe par excellence, le paradoxe absolu.³²⁷ Selon Kierkegaard, tout le christianisme est structuré autour du paradoxe :

- Moins la transcendance se laisse saisir par l'immanence, plus elle s'avère *incompréhensible*.
- Mais plus elle est *incompréhensible*, plus la transcendance est *crédible*, parce que l'homme a besoin d'autre chose par rapport à l'immanence.
- La caractéristique décisive de la philosophie de la religion qui insiste sur le paradoxe semble être qu'on n'essaie pas de défendre le phénomène religieux *contre* la critique des « maîtres du soupçon ». Mais on redécouvre le phénomène religieux *grâce* à cette critique. Avec des gestes théoriques paradoxaux, on ne s'ouvre pas à la transcendance *en dépit* de l'immanence ; on mais on s'ouvre à la transcendance *en vertu* de l'immanence.

Telle est donc la différence fondamentale avec le paradigme précédent :

- L'analogie et la théologie philosophique travaillent sur la ressemblance et tentent de trouver dans l'immanence une trace de la transcendance : on remonte des effets, de l'ordre, de la beauté – ou de la bonté morale – à l'étant le plus parfait, ou au bien suprême.
- Le paradoxe et la philosophie de la religion procèdent dialectiquement et trouvent exactement la transcendance là où seule l'immanence semble se manifester.

Ainsi, si la métaphysique spéciale de la tradition classique trouvait Dieu comme étant suprême (théologie philosophique) à partir de l'âme (psychologie) et du monde et de la liberté (cosmologie), la philosophie de la religion trouve Dieu – paradoxalement – à partir du corps, de la question du mal et même dans l'athéisme.

1. L'athéisme
2. Le corps
3. Le mal

Par rapport à la question de l'athéisme, la pensée philosophico-religieuse après l'annonce de la 'mort de Dieu' a cherché à purifier le concept de Dieu de l'idolâtrie métaphysique. Dietrich Bonhoeffer et sa critique de Dieu 'bouche-trou' ou la 'Death of God theology' peuvent être considérés comme des représentants de cette orientation. Bonhoeffer écrit :

Was den Begriff der „Lösung“ angeht, so sind vielmehr die christlichen Antworten ebenso wenig – (oder ebenso gut) – zwingend wie andere mögliche Lösungen. Gott ist kein Lückenbüßer.^{[328](#)}

Mais Emmanuel Lévinas aussi a parlé de l'athéisme comme d'une prémisse nécessaire à la religion. Dans sa perspective, seul un sujet athée – dans le sens de non dépendant, privé d'idoles – peut entrer dans une relation authentique avec l'autre : et cette relation constitue pour Lévinas le sens de la 'religion'. Dieu ne se donne jamais en tant que tel, mais toujours médiatement, à travers la responsabilité éthique du rapport avec l'autre homme. On évite ainsi le risque de faire de Dieu une idole conceptuelle.

Se rapporter à l'absolu en athée, c'est accueillir l'absolu épuré de la violence du sacré. [...] Seul un être athée peut se rapporter à l'Autre et déjà s'absoudre de cette relation. [...] la foi épurée des

mythes, la foi monothéiste, suppose elle-même l'athéisme métaphysique. [...] L'athéisme conditionne une relation véritable avec un vrai Dieu kath'auto.^{[329](#)}

Pour marquer la séparation avec l'horizon de la tradition d'ontothéologie, on a utilisé l'expression efficace – et très connue dans ce contexte parisien – de « Dieu sans l'être ».

L'irruption d'une altérité perturbante et l'échec qu'elle implique pour le lien autrement serein et pacifique entre moi et le monde est décrite par le jeune Lévinas en relation étroite avec le phénomène du corps. C'est ici un second point sur lequel insiste la philosophie de la religion qui se réclame du paradoxe. Il s'agit d'un paradoxe dans au moins deux sens : avant tout dans des termes généraux, parce qu'au contraire de ce qu'a fait la tradition philosophique et théologique – et que continue à faire le sens commun – la transcendance n'est pas recherchée à partir d'éléments invisibles et immatériels, comme l'âme ou l'esprit : si justement la théologie rationnelle, à travers l'analogie, travaillait sur la ressemblance (les éléments immatériels sont plus proches de la divinité invisible et lui sont plus semblables), à présent un pont vers la transcendance est recherché – de façon contre-intuitive – dans le corps. Pour Platon, et pour la tradition religieuse qui s'en inspire, le corps est la prison de l'âme. Mais à l'époque contemporaine, Michel Foucault a renversé le point de vue et montré que, sous le concept d'âme, sont véhiculées les formes, les essences et les définitions qui ont, chaque fois, réduit à nouveau l'homme à un seul aspect spécifique. C'est donc le concept d'âme qui a emprisonné le corps. Mais Franz Rosenzweig déjà, dans l'esprit d'une *Neus Denken* tournée vers la réalité et la concrétude, écrivait dans les premières lignes du *Stern der Erlösung* que la division entre l'âme et le corps était la stratégie (désormais inefficace) adoptée par la tradition philosophique pour anesthésier la peur de la mort. Au surplus, cependant, chercher la transcendance dans le corps représente un paradoxe supplémentaire, parce que c'est dans la gêne, dans la difficulté, dans l'obstacle représenté par le corps qu'on entrevoit Dieu. Rosenzweig écrit :

VOM TODE, von der Furcht des Todes, hebt alles Erkennen des All an [...] Aber die Philosophie leugnet diese Ängste der Erde. [...] Sie läßt den Leib dem Abgrund verfallen sein, aber die freie Seele flattert darüber hinweg. Daß die Angst des Todes von solcher Scheidung in Leib und Seele nichts weiß, daß sie Ich Ich Ich brüllt und von Ableitung der Angst auf einen bloßen „Leib“ nichts hören will – was schert das die Philosophie.^{[330](#)}

Ainsi, dans la pensée de Michel Henry, cette immanence radicale de la chair (le mot « chair » traduit en français, à partir de Merleau-Ponty, le terme husserlien de *Leib*) coïncide avec l'*Urphänomen* représenté par la vie. Immanence et transcendance s'unissent dans ce qu'Henry définit comme l'« archi-chair ». La philosophie de la religion ne croit plus à l'âme et à l'esprit, mais doit trouver la transcendance dans le corps.^{[331](#)}

Mais chercher la transcendance dans le corps institue également un paradoxe selon un second point de vue : en effet, la transcendance ne se manifeste pas seulement dans une archi-chair, mais aussi dans la difficulté et dans l'obstacle qui est représenté par le corps. Dès ses *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlérisme*, Lévinas décrit le corps comme un 'être rivé' par rapport auquel il faut chercher ce qui – dans un autre texte – est défini de façon significative comme 'évasion'. L'angoisse, la nausée, l'insomnie, sont des phénomènes qui manifestent un manque de satisfaction du je dans le monde. Mais très tôt, la réflexion de Lévinas s'oriente dans une direction de pensée où c'est l'obstacle même causé à la tranquillité du rapport entre le sujet et l'être qui est de façon équivoque – et paradoxale – perturbant et libérant. C'est exactement là où je rencontre le trouble que je trouve aussi la transcendance. Lévinas écrit : « Dieu me fait mal pour m'arracher au monde en tant qu'unique et exceptionnel » :³³² le mal est un signe d'élection.

L'élément même qui, traditionnellement, était le plus scandaleux au regard de l'affirmation de l'existence de Dieu, est alors utilisé comme point de départ pour permettre l'ouverture à la transcendance. Si le mal est, alors Dieu n'est pas – tel était l'argument mis en valeur par la critique de la religion contre toutes les tentatives de théodicée. Bien au contraire, si la religion existe, c'est justement pour tenter, de façon irrationnelle et superstitieuse, de répondre au problème du mal : telle est la critique de Hume dans *l'History of Natural Religion*, mais aussi la critique des théoriciens contemporains de la religion comme *Kontingenzbewältigung*. A cette stratégie, les arguments de la théodicée tentaient de répondre en niant la réalité du mal. Le mal était conçu selon un mode privatif – comme *privatio boni* – et était donc, en ultime analyse, dissous, sans réalité. La nouveauté de la philosophie de la religion récente est que le mal est au contraire engagé dans toute la réalité, on n'essaie pas d'en nier l'épaisseur ontologique. A partir du mal, on argumente ensuite paradoxalement en faveur de la religion. Par exemple, Richard Swinburne affirme que la souffrance d'un être humain qui conduit à un bien pour autrui n'est pas seulement une limite de réalité donnée par l'ensemble de ce qui est compossible. Mais, affirme Swinburne, il s'agit aussi d'un bien en soi pour celui qui subit cette souffrance. Pâtir du mal, dans cette perspective fondée, de toute évidence, sur l'élection et la substitution, est une grâce ; en réponse à laquelle il faut rendre grâce. Dans la 'pensée tragique' de Luigi Pareyson, le mal est, de façon schellinguienne, situé chez Dieu même. Le Dieu de la religion est pensé comme le principe d'expiation et de rédemption du mal même, au point que Dieu ne serait ni concevable ni pensable sans la présence du mal. Pareyson écrit : « Il n'y a pas d'indice plus sûr de la divinité que la présence du mal ».³³³

Ce n'est pas un hasard si Pareyson a été le maître de Gianni Vattimo, penseur qui étend sa propre perspective de 'pensée faible' à la religion. Avec l'incarnation, selon Vattimo, le christianisme s'est posé comme le principe de la critique du sacré, des idoles, du concept classique et païen de la divinité et donc – paradoxalement – le christianisme est le principe qui inaugure la

sécularisation. La laïcisation n'est donc pas un processus opposé au christianisme, mais il lui est intérieur et cohérent. Ce n'est pas un hasard si, à partir des considérations de Walter Benjamin, qui voient dans le capitalisme l'ultime et la plus envahissante forme de religion produite par l'Occident, requérant un culte sans trêve, Giorgio Agamben a vu dans la catégorie de la profanation – encore une fois, paradoxalement – une action authentiquement 'religieuse'. Le mode le plus authentique pour entrer en relation avec un Dieu qui demeure Dieu, c'est-à-dire qui soit vraiment transcendant et donc différent des créatures – semble donc bien consister à annuler sa transcendance, à dépasser la distance. Un Dieu qui est vraiment proche de l'homme efface la distance et dépasse l'isolement, au point de se faire homme et d'endosser le mal.

Dispositif, c'est-à-dire : Théologie politique

Suite à nos remarques relatives à Benjamin et à Agamben, nous parvenons à l'ultime paradigme – après l'analogie et le paradoxe – qui caractérise, à nos yeux, la plus actuelle réflexion philosophique sur Dieu. Il s'agit du 'dispositif', qui peut être vu comme le concept décisif de l'approche récente appelée 'théologie politique'. Ainsi, si l'analogie caractérisait la théologie philosophique de l'époque scolastique, et le paradoxe la philosophie de la religion moderne, se manifeste ici une troisième phase contemporaine.

La théologie politique contemporaine naît sur la base des célèbres considérations de Carl Schmitt à propos d'une analogie, à savoir de la symétrie entre le rôle des concepts en théologie et en politique.

Alle prägnanten Begriffe der modernen Staatslehre sind säkularisierte theologische Begriffe. [...] Der Ausnahmezustand hat für die Jurisprudenz eine analoge Bedeutung wie das Wunder für die Theologie. Erst in dem Bewußtsein solcher analoger Stellung... usw....[334](#)

Mais très vite, la théologie politique développe, elle aussi, l'analogie en direction du paradoxe. Si tout concept de la théorie politique moderne se révèle comme un concept théologique sécularisé, la réciproque aussi peut être affirmée : tout concept théologique est un concept politique hypostasié et transposé dans la sphère transcendante. Jan Assman a parlé d'*Umkehrung* (renversement) de la théologie politique de Schmitt et a appliqué cette idée à ses recherches consacrées à l'origine du monothéisme. Théologie et politique – transcendance et immanence – sont donc deux secteurs corrélatifs, sans qu'il soit possible de comprendre lequel est originaire et lequel est dérivé. La théologie politique travaille sur l'hypothèse d'un renvoi structurel réciproque.

Mais ce rapport de dualité et ce renvoi réciproque ne confondent pas pour autant les deux domaines en un seul. Immanence (politique) et transcendance (théologie) sont liées, sans

parvenir à s'unir. La théologie politique est donc un champ disciplinaire fondé sur une polarité.

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La théologie politique travaille sur l'hypothèse d'un renvoi réciproque structurel. Mais le rapport dual et le renvoi réciproque ne fondent même pas les deux champs en un seul. Immanence (politique) et transcendance (théologie) sont inextricablement liées, sans se confondre pour autant.

Le champ théologico-politique est dual, sans qu'il soit possible de trouver un champ d'origine et un champ dérivé. Et sans jamais de fusion définitive. Le rapport se base sur une analogie et se développe à travers un paradoxal renvoi réciproque. Voilà pourquoi la théologie politique radicalise les caractéristiques des approches précédentes et le problème de penser le sens de la transcendance du Dieu du monothéisme, comme séparé du monde et de l'être mais, en même temps, en communication avec eux.

Ce sont les auteurs de ce qu'on appelle l'*italian theory* qui ont récemment approfondi la théologie politique. Roberto Esposito a écrit que la théologie politique fonctionne « en séparant ce qui déclare unir et en unifiant ce qui divise ». Giorgio Agamben a tenté d'élaborer ce rapport en décrivant une dynamique qu'il définit « de l'exclusion inclusive ». Dans les phénomènes résumés par la perspective de l'*homo sacer* – comme l'état d'exception, ou le serment – Agamben voit à l'œuvre ce mécanisme, qui selon lui est typique du mode de penser occidental dans son intégrité :

C'est toujours la même stratégie : une chose est divisée, exclue et jetée au fond et, à travers cette exclusion même, est incluse comme *arkhè* et fondement. Cela vaut pour la vie qui, dans les mots d'Aristote, « se dit de nombreux modes » – vie végétative, vie sensitive, vie intellectuelle, dont la première est exclue pour servir de fondement aux autres – mais aussi pour l'être, qui se dit en de nombreux modes, dont l'un sera séparé en guise de fondement. [335](#)

On peut remarquer que – selon Agamben – cette dynamique représente le mécanisme implicitement présent dans l'ontologie et donc, de la tradition caractérisée par la figure de l'analogie. Mais ce mécanisme peut également être vu comme intrinsèque au paradigme du paradoxe : ce qui était traditionnellement exclu de la religion – l'athéisme, le corps, le mal – devient au contraire fondateur.

Cependant, le mécanisme d'exclusion inclusive est encore mieux résumé par Agamben par le recours au concept de dispositif. Le mode de penser le rapport entre immanence et transcendance dans la théologie politique recouvre et dépasse l'analogie et le paradoxe à travers cette nouvelle figure. Le dispositif, qui est un terme utilisé de façon technique par Michel Foucault, représente probablement une reprise du *Gestell* heideggérien. Pour Foucault, 'dispositif'

indique quelque chose qui agit avec la fonction d'ordonner et de déterminer. Mais la détermination a un rôle ambigu. Elle tente, en effet, d'inclure dans un ordre, mais ce faisant, elle perd quelque chose de ce qu'elle saisit et elle est contrainte à exclure. Mais ce qui est exclu est aussi posé comme fondement. Cela se produit parce que ce qui est exclu est exactement cela même qu'on cherchait. Selon Foucault, des exemples de dispositif sont constitués par le langage, les institutions ou le sacrement. Le langage, par exemple, est un dispositif qui veut saisir et comprendre l'être : il représente et encadre la réalité mais, ce faisant, ne l'atteint jamais et ne fait pas autre chose que de créer une copie d'elle. Il doit donc la présupposer comme fondement : telle est l'inclusion exclusive. Les institutions confèrent à la vie une détermination qualitative, mais au lieu de saisir l'aspect biologique dans sa nudité, elles redoublent la vie. Les sacrements doivent véhiculer et gouverner la grâce, qui par principe est cependant indisponible et constitue en revanche leur fondement insaisissable.

C'est pourquoi il apparaît clairement que la dynamique du dispositif peut également être efficace pour décrire le rapport entre politique et théologie dans la théologie politique par le découpage réciproque d'une sphère séparée et le fait d'établir comme fondement ce qui est exclu dans une telle séparation. La politique est la sphère de l'immanence et elle exclut la transcendance, c'est-à-dire la théologie, dont elle tire cependant ses concepts ; et vice-versa. Quand l'immanence prétend épuiser la transcendance, elle prend une signification absolue et donc transcendante : c'est pourquoi elle doit présupposer la transcendance même comme fondement. A son tour, la transcendance doit nécessairement travailler avec des concepts immanents, qui deviennent donc fondateurs pour elle. Chacune des deux sphères essaie de saisir l'autre mais doit, en même temps, poser l'autre comme son propre fondement.

Ce n'est pas un hasard si la question politique prend, chez Agamben, une signification immédiatement métaphysique. Agamben écrit :

L'isolement de la sphère de l'être pur, qui constitue la prestation fondamentale de la métaphysique de l'Occident, n'est pas sans analogie avec l'isolement de la vie nue dans le champ de sa politique.^{[336](#)}

Il s'agit donc d'un nouveau mode de penser le rapport entre immanence et transcendance, qui reprend les caractéristiques classiques en les radicalisant. Tout caractère immanent réduit le transcendant et le limite en le saisissant ; mais en même temps il ne parvient pas à l'épuiser et doit le présupposer comme son propre fondement. De toute évidence, cette description rappelle la dynamique de la *similitudo* et *maior dissimilitudo* dont on parlait plus haut en relation à l'ontologie. Et cette description implique une dynamique intrinsèquement paradoxale. Parce que c'est justement ce qui est exclu qui devient fondateur. Il apparaît donc clairement que le dispositif – comme concept-clé de la théologie politique – représente l'explicitation et le

développement de ce qui était déjà implicite dans les deux paradigmes précédents, celui de l'analogie (théologie philosophique) et du paradoxe (philosophie de la religion).

Dans l'ontothéologie dominée par la figure de l'analogie, l'être comme acte pur est exclu, et en même temps posé comme fondement. Dans la philosophie de la religion basée sur le paradoxe, ce qui traditionnellement ne pouvait être saisi et était donc exclu – l'athéisme, le corps, le mal – devient fondateur. Le mécanisme de l'exclusion inclusive exprimé par le dispositif semble donc synthétiser les deux moments de la tradition précédente et se poser comme moment de synthèse d'une histoire de très longue date vouée à penser la transcendance.

Toutefois les trois étapes – analogie, paradoxe, dispositif – ne décrivent pas une philosophie de l'histoire. Elles représentent plutôt trois moments qui sont constitutifs d'une dynamique globale. L'analogie met l'accent sur le moment positif de la ressemblance et de la médiation entre immanence et transcendance. Le paradoxe se constitue sur le moment négatif de la dissemblance, déjà présent dans l'analogie, mais insuffisamment mis en évidence par cette dernière. La fonction fondatrice du moment négatif dans la détermination réciproque d'immanence et de transcendance est ensuite définitivement mise en lumière par le dispositif. Le dispositif met en crise toute possibilité de penser l'immanence et la transcendance comme des réalités statiquement séparées.

Le mécanisme du dispositif conduit à la limite (*aus-trägt*) les possibilités de la pensée métaphysique fondée sur l'analogie. Mais il conduit à la limite (*aus-trägt*) et consume également les possibilités de la pensée opposée et corrélative, centrée sur le paradoxe, c'est-à-dire la philosophie de la religion. Le mécanisme du dispositif conduit à la limite (*aus-trägt*) les possibilités de penser le rapport et le déchirement (*Austrag*) entre immanence et transcendance. La coappartenance entre transcendance et immanence doit donc être pensée avant l'alternative entre identité et différence. Pas d'immanence sans transcendance. Pas de transcendance sans immanence.

Disputatio

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Corps rituel et conscience croyante

Une réponse à Karl Hefty

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L'article de Karl Hefty s'avère être un excellent exemple de « combat amoureux » : en prenant position sur les propositions d'Emmanuel Falque et de Michel Henry, il ouvre de nombreuses pistes de recherche intéressantes. Dans cette brève intervention, j'ai choisi de suivre deux voies, dans l'espoir qu'elles puissent relancer le débat.

1. Corporéité rituelle

Hefty se pose une question importante à mon avis : il demande si le crédit de Falque pour le « résidu du corps » ne doit pas être compris dans le sens du « corps comme sacramentel ». Si c'était le cas, cela ouvrirait une voie pour une éventuelle rencontre entre la phénoménologie de la vie de Henry et la phénoménologie de la chair de Falque. J'aimerais donc creuser ce sujet en suivant cette hypothèse.

En effet, Henry et Falque traitent tous deux de la question du « sacrement » chrétien et, ce faisant, ils ne peuvent que révéler tous les présupposés épistémologiques qu'ils ont élaborés.

Michel Henry a écrit un article intitulé *Eucharistie et phénoménologie dans la réflexion philosophique contemporaine*.³³⁷ Dans sa réflexion, il reprend un concept qui lui est très cher, c'est à dire l'idée d'« oubli » : l'homme, en tant que « sujet » et « moi » distinct du « monde », a oublié de vivre dans la Vie³³⁸. Penser qu'il existe une « conscience intentionnelle » dont dépend la constitution du corps et du monde lui-même est, à son avis, une folie³³⁹. Dans sa philosophie du christianisme, il propose une « sotériologie bizarre » : bien qu'il ne parle que rarement des événements de Pâques, le Christ est l'Archi-Fils qui nous permet de dépasser l'oubli et de vivre dans la Vie. Mais comment est-il possible que l'on puisse vivre sa propre chair comme le Christ lui-même l'a vécue ? Comment ne pas tomber dans une sorte de « gnosticisme » ? L'eucharistie est la clé pour résoudre le problème : manger le corps du Christ génère une incorporation dans son corps mystique, la rédemption de l'oubli, la conscience pré-verbale et a-verbale de faire partie de la seule vie qui se perçoit.

Emmanuel Falque, dans son livre *Les Noces de l'Agneau*³⁴⁰, complète la proposition de son « triptyque philosophico-théologique ». Si la finitude est la condition phénoménologique essentielle³⁴¹, le Christ opère une métamorphose de la finitude par sa résurrection : le monde devient autre chose, le temps s'ouvre à l'éternité et la chair renaît³⁴². Mais l'eucharistie est le lieu

de la métamorphose : grâce au Jeudi Saint « Dieu nous donne philosophiquement de réintégrer notre propre corporéité dans la transsubstantiation filiale du pain eucharistié »³⁴³.

On peut donc dire que pour Falque comme pour Henri, à travers l'expérience rituelle de l'eucharistie, une transformation se produit dans l'expérience de sa propre corporéité. Pour Henri l'eucharistie est le lieu où l'homme parvient à la vérité perdue de sa propre chair, tandis que pour Falque dans l'eucharistie le Christ prend en charge le poids du corps pour ouvrir une expérience métamorphosée de la chair. Dans les deux propositions, le rite de l'Eucharistie est un lieu de vérité de la chair. Le dilemme d'un poids accordé au corps ou à la chair semble trouver un point d'accord dans l'expérience d'un « corps rituel ».

Dans l'eucharistie, la corporéité semble atteindre, sous forme rituelle, sa propre vérité eschatologique : la découverte de l'être dans la Vie ou la métamorphose de la finitude sont des manières d'expérimenter la corporéité qui ne sont possibles que dans le contexte de la référence théologique, puisque l'enjeu est la première et dernière vérité de l'homme.

Néanmoins, je voudrais poser la question suivante : ce qui se passe dans l'eucharistie, à savoir l'accès à la vérité de la chair sous la forme d'un rite, ne partage pas la voie ordinaire de l'accès de l'homme à la vérité de sa propre corporéité ? Je voudrais donc transformer la question en thèse : la dichotomie apparente entre « corporéité comme corps » et « corporéité comme chair » peut-elle trouver sa composition dans « corporéité comme rituel » ?

En effet, lorsque Husserl discute pour la première fois de la différence entre *Körper* et *Leib*, il n'en parle pas comme deux « propriétés » de la corporéité, mais comme deux expériences phénoménales. Dans les *Idées*, la chair / *leib* apparaît comme le « point zéro » de toute expérience ilétique possible³⁴⁴. « Mon corps » est ce qui est toujours impliqué dans toute sorte de phénoménalité, et j'arrive à savoir qu'il est « à moi » en faisant l'expérience, à travers lui, de toute forme de transcendance. Dans la cinquième *Méditation Cartésienne*, l'expérience de l'inaccessibilité du corps d'autrui comme « sien propre » est ce qui permet au sujet d'éprouver son propre corps comme « absolument propre »³⁴⁵. La rencontre avec le corps des autres ne peut jamais se passer en dehors d'une « liturgie du sens » : le poids du corps, l'expérience de ma chair, la position par rapport à la chair de l'autre, la dimension affective et les implications éthiques ce sont des éléments qui ne se distinguent que didactiquement, car en fait ils sont simultanés. La corporéité vient à la vérité parce qu'elle agit et tout acte de corporéité ne peut être séparé du sens que le sujet s'attribue en tant que corps. Falque a raison de rappeler l'abîme de la corporéité et Henry a beaucoup de pages intéressantes sur la passivité absolue de la douleur. Mais l'abîme et la douleur ne sont didactiquement isolables que du « flux vital » du sujet, qui génère des symboles, des pratiques, des relations avec lesquelles habiter l'abîme et la douleur.

Falque, citant Husserl, rappelle que le corps est tel “ en chair et en os ”. Pour continuer à jouer avec les mots, il faut rappeler que la “ chair ” sert largement à faire allusion au corps dans sa musculature : la viande à manger est constituée de muscles (en italien, la signification est particulièrement évidente car il n’y a qu’un seul mot pour la viande et la chair). Il faut donc se rappeler que le corps « en chair et en os » est aussi un corps en « os et muscle » : le corps n’est pas inerte, il bouge, il agit, il rencontre et il vient à sa tête par ses propres actions et relations. Chaque expérience que le corps a de lui-même a un temps et un espace, et elle se déroule sous des formes symboliques. La perception du corps et de la vie n’est jamais chose intemporelle, anhistorique ou immobile.

J’en viens donc à formuler une première piste pour une éventuelle étude ultérieure. En plus d’une « passivité de la chair » ou du « poids du corps », une « dynamique de la corporéité » mérite d’être approfondie. Ce que Falque et Henry proposent dans une clé eschatologique en parlant de l’eucharistie pourrait ouvrir un scénario pour l’investigation des formes ordinaires de la corporéité. La corporéité n’est pas seulement métamorphosée à travers la sacramentalité rituelle : le phénomène du corps n’est jamais dissociable de ses actions, qui ont toujours un caractère symbolique et doxique. L’homme instaure des actions, agit des symboles, interprète les liens humains en positionnant son corps. Il se comprend comme un corps en agissant rituellement. En une formule : pas seulement corps et pas seulement chair, mais corporéité rituelle. Ou peut-être encore mieux : corps et chair à travers une corporéité toujours rituelle. Le phénomène appelle toujours le corps et le corps fait l’expérience de la phénoménalité dans une clé liturgique : c’est la grande leçon de Lacoste. Le rituel n’est pas simplement la prérogative de la philosophie de la religion, mais décrit la forme de base de l’expérience et « quant à décider a priori de ce qui “peut” nous apparaître, et d’une signature qui en ferait un phénomène sous juridiction philosophique ou un phénomène sous juridiction théologique, nous en sommes splendidement incapables »³⁴⁶.

2.

Sur l’invisible

Parmi les nombreuses idées, je voudrais emprunter une deuxième voie de réflexion que Hefty propose, à mon avis avec une grande clarté. Il discute avec Falque de la question de la visibilité de la chair. Falque « rejette le privilège de la chair invisible et auto-impressionnable » au profit d’un crédit pour la visibilité de la chair. L’implication théologique de la prémisse réside dans le fait que, tout en ne rejetant pas une dimension d’invisibilité de la chair (le corps est plus que ce que l’on peut voir), nous n’avons pas d’autre accès à la chair d’autrui que par la visibilité du corps. En fait, Falque se révèle très fidèle à l’approche husserlienne : dans la cinquième *Méditation Cartésienne*, le Maître de la phénoménologie affirme que le sujet n’a pas accès au *Leib* d’un autre sujet, et pourtant il perçoit qu’il fait face à « un autre *Leib* » à travers une expérience d’empathie.

Dans ces conditions, Hefty pose une question décisive : comment reconnaître le Verbe fait chair dans le corps de Jésus ? Il n'y a pas d'autre moyen de connaître la Parole faite chair que le corps de Jésus-Christ. Mais la phénoménologie du visible de Falque peut-elle rendre compte de cette reconnaissance ? Hefty propose deux solutions : si l'on reste absolument fidèle à une « phénoménologie du visible » (à la manière de Merleau-Ponty) on risquerait un matérialisme théologiquement discutable ; la seule solution est d'admettre que la reconnaissance de la Parole ne peut se faire que par un privilège accordé à la foi. En ce sens, Hefty se dit peu confiant sur la possibilité d'une « théologie phénoménologique d'en bas » : soit une « phénoménologie de la foi » est admise (qui lit des données sensibles à partir de ses propres convictions), soit on adhère à une « phénoménologie du sensible », où cependant la foi n'a pas de citoyenneté.

Je voudrais essayer de relire la question sous un autre angle. La question du rapport entre visible et invisible dans la perception est l'un des thèmes qui a intéressé à plusieurs reprises la réflexion de Husserl. Chaque expérience est placée par le sujet dans un horizon de sens : le sujet ne perçoit pas l'*Erlebnis* individuel comme des actes indépendants, mais enchaîné dans un seul cadre jugé sensible, que nous appelons proprement « monde ». Le monde est la prémisse des *Erlebnisse* : nous expérimentons les phénomènes uniquement en les comprenant comme mondains. Mais quelles preuves le monde peut-il présenter ? Husserl, au paragraphe 7 de *Expérience et jugement*³⁴⁷, soutient que la conscience du monde est une conscience qui a la croyance comme mode de l'évidence.

La conscience n'existe que comme lieu de constitution du sens : nous vivons des événements que nous organisons en récits de sens. Mais le sens que nous attribuons au monde dans lequel nous plaçons nos expériences est généré avec une qualité doxique : c'est ce que nous considérons comme valable compte tenu de nos prémisses. Husserl rappelle que nous ne sommes pas imperméables à l'effort continu de génération de sens : cette opération se produit au sein d'une communauté avec laquelle chaque sujet interagit. Beaucoup de nos croyances ont une origine sociale.

Hefty fait allusion aux récents progrès neuroscientifiques. C'est un domaine qui m'intrigue beaucoup, mais sur lequel je n'ai pas une expertise suffisante pour une réflexion sérieuse. Cependant, dans le débat au sein de la « neurophilosophie » naissante, les positions de ceux qui soutiennent que même les résultats neuroscientifiques ne peuvent échapper à un cadre de référence doxique d'un régime narratif me semblent nombreuses. Que tout acte de conscience suppose un processus neurologique ne signifie pas que le processus neurologique lui-même est le siège de l'évidence : il ne suffit pas de voir ses neurones s'activer pour comprendre ce qui se passe dans la conscience, il faut composer les données dans des horizons narratifs articulés ; pour ce faire, les sujets créent du sens, attribuent des significations, s'orientent vers des conclusions qui

ne sont au départ que des intuitions. Cela ne délégitime pas les neurosciences, mais fait plutôt place à la phénoménologie³⁴⁸.

La grande leçon de Husserl, face à la crise des sciences européennes, consiste précisément à reposer l'acte intentionnel comme la particule minimale de toute évidence. Mais l'intentionnalité pour Husserl est toujours « agissante », elle atteint les horizons par des actes de protension et synthétise des expériences par des actes de rétention. Le théologien Pierangelo Sequeri a proposé une définition très intéressante : il parle de « conscience croyante »³⁴⁹. La forme de la foi n'est pas une exception au régime universel d'accès de l'homme à l'évidence, mais c'est sa forme originelle. La conscience a une structure croyante à l'origine. Au contraire, le défi que la foi religieuse pose à la conscience croyante consiste en la possibilité d'une qualité de croyance protologique et eschatologique : face au « corps rituel » du Christ (c'est-à-dire de ses actions, de ses relations, de son style, de sa Pâques) les disciples ont envisagé d'avoir à repenser la création, car ils pensaient que la conscience ne pouvait être créée qu'en tant que « croyante » pour être en relation avec le Christ. Mais tout cela s'est passé sans renoncer aux règles universelles de preuve de la conscience croyante.

Hefty a raison d'espérer une théologie phénoménologique capable de thématiser les voies par lesquelles la conscience croyante accède à la foi christologique. De nombreux travaux vont dans ce sens, mais je partage l'avis qu'il s'agit d'une tâche à réaliser en grande partie. Schlier, par exemple, a écrit un livre très intéressant sur la résurrection de Jésus, où il montre que la foi dans la résurrection n'est pas une prémisse pour des rencontres avec le ressuscité, mais est le fruit d'un changement d'horizon qui a eu lieu chez les disciples à partir de la phénoménalité qui a été produite³⁵⁰. Il s'agit de la foi dans le Ressuscité, qui pour les disciples présente un caractère de totalité non commun aux autres croyances avec lesquelles le monde est constitué, néanmoins cette foi n'est configurée que dans le régime universel de l'évidence, toujours de nature doxique. Seul son contenu en fait une question de compétence théologique, sur laquelle la philosophie phénoménologique a cependant plein droit de se pencher, en tant que domaine disciplinaire capable de reconstruire la structure formelle de l'évidence elle-même.

Mais la théologie et la phénoménologie sont plus proches que l'on pourrait penser, car toutes deux croient que l'évidence réside dans un événement qui appelle la liberté. La phénoménologie suit l'étude de la formalité de l'événement, tandis que la théologie thématise l'effectivité de l'événement christologique. Mais il est difficile d'établir dans quelles conditions l'intentionnalité, toujours doxique, soit théologique ou phénoménologique. Je trouve intéressant le troisième chapitre de *Passer le Rubicon*³⁵¹, où Falque soutient que nous sommes tous et toujours des croyants : cette thèse peut être soutenue dans une parfaite fidélité aux canons de Husserl.

Husserl a proposé l'idée de croyance comme une forme de l'évidence : la comparaison avec la foi théologique pourrait-elle être propice à l'étude de l'extension de la notion de croyance ?

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The Intelligibility of the Flesh

A Response to Emmanuel Falque

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I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no spirit in them.

Ezekiel 37:8

Flesh exists as a tissue generated from successive passages of time through vast regions of space. In this sense flesh is historical. Rendering the flesh from the point of its successive generation, we come to terms with one of its principal qualities: folded tissue. The soft tissue of flesh bears the mark, or trace, of successive states and is indicated in heritable folds of tissue. Bred within this tissue is an intelligibility which is only indirectly apparent to consciousness. In essence, flesh is the durable and intelligible content of *productive activity*. The very composition of the material element bears a specific intelligibility inherent to itself. This composition is generated through the projection of specific activities through immense stretches of time and space. In this sense it is spread out—intelligible within the immediacy of direct contact, and also discernible through the congenital data bred into its very constitution. This intelligibility appears according to the Spinozan teaching: “The conatus with which each single thing endeavors to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself.”³⁵²

The flesh—or the body in general—brings together two *heterogenous* realities into a coherent unity: the formal constitution of its material nature, palpable and teeming, and also a certain depth born within it, occupied by an intelligibility only latent to consciousness. These successive states—manifest in the flesh—are not fully lived out and do not necessarily manifest themselves in conscious life; they are inherited and carry within themselves latent content which may be

expressed in life. They *express* themselves in terms of a *cycloidal ontogeny*, through successive stages and a sequence of states, and are not explicitly apparent to consciousness in either an immediate or direct way. These data, present below the level of immediately lived perception, should not be excluded from a philosophical comprehension of the world. The very activity of successive production and sequential unfurling must necessarily be taken into consideration when coming to terms with the intelligibility of the flesh, just as Leibniz asserts for the world itself: “I call ‘World’ the whole succession and the whole agglomeration of all existent things.... For they all must necessarily be reckoned together as one world or, if you will, as one Universe.”³⁵³

Between the immediately given phenomena and its successive depth, a link can be found, and a bond may be made, serving to bridge together an embattled void within the phenomenological tradition: ontology. While the conflict between phenomenology and ontology is perhaps the founding springboard of all philosophical inquiry, bringing this dynamism into clear relief yet remains one of its most lofty tasks. Whether it be under the guise of intentionality, in the “immediate givenness” of conscious life (Husserl),³⁵⁴ or in grasping phenomena in a scientific way where “everything about them” is treated by “by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly” (Heidegger),³⁵⁵ the phenomenological tradition has fixed itself upon immediate and direct apprehension of phenomena; and here, right from the start, the *school of phenomenology* appears to occlude the indirect, the inapparent, the riddled depths—the elusive *essence* of the things themselves. But how can a philosophy devoted to the description of human experience systematically neglect—or bracket—these depths?

Emmanuel Falque seeks to explore these depths, even going so far to announce a “Descent into the Abyss” as he titles the first section of his, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb* (2016). Here he first introduces the notion of *the spread body*, and it is precisely within the context of a critique of phenomenology’s limits that he brings this model into expression. He asserts that the phenomenological tradition has placed too much importance upon *signifying*, leading to illusory mirages which must be evacuated in order to truly render “the darkness in humankind, made up of passions and drives....”³⁵⁶ This leads him to conclude, “the borders of Chaos are inaccessible through a phenomenological approach.” He reaches this conclusion by identifying two misleading tendencies of the phenomenological approach, firstly in the “constant recourse to lived experience”, and secondly “the constant recourse to the ideal of passivity as against force....”³⁵⁷ These critiques serve to lay out the parameters for a paradigmatic approach, where one cannot be satisfied to understand the body either in term of its “lived” nature, nor in terms of its “extension” as an object in space: “The body spread out... is more than the simple extension of matter (the objectivity of the body) and more than pure selfhood of the flesh (subjectivity of the

flesh).³⁵⁸ Here with the paradigm of the spread-body, Falque points towards “the Chaos that only our human biological body encounters: the animal and instinctual.”³⁵⁹ He warns however, that “[t]he point is not simply to deploy some kind of physiology of passions, like a contemporary neurology—one that privileges the somatic over the psychic; it is important simply to understand, and to seek, what is at the foundation of our embodiedness....”; and this leads him to continue following “a line of thought based on *the strength of the body*....”³⁶⁰

Falque continues to develop this notion of the spread body while further clarifying his critique of phenomenology, first focused upon the limit of phenomenality, especially in regards to “the night of phenomenology”, when “the possibility of meaningfulness is torn asunder” and not merely in terms of this ‘non-appearance’ as simply “the privation of a phenomenon that could or should otherwise appear” but more fundamentally as the impossibility of appearing altogether (the *extra-phenomenal*)³⁶¹—, and secondly, he builds upon this theme in terms of questioning “*the apriori of phenomenolization*” in phenomenology and seeks to interrogate “this never interrogated apriori of manifestation and its possible signification.”³⁶² These themes coalesce in his book *Nothing to It* (2020), where he seeks to amend these limits in terms of a *backlash* of psychoanalysis in phenomenology, which he suggests will provide a means for orienting the psychic for its “descent into the abyss.”³⁶³ This is accomplished in a return towards the unconscious of Freud—in the Id, and the chaos of the passions and drives—whose thought provides, ironically, a certain framework for delineating both the psychic from the somatic, placing the Id and its drives at the border where the psychic is anchored to the somatic, but also by recognizing that even these divisions can’t stand to hold as absolute. This in turns offers a means for recovering “the power of the ‘force’ that constitutes us.”³⁶⁴ It is here in the Freudian drive that Falque finds the nexus where “rooted in a body that is not only flesh” there may be found a certain collusion with “force” that here serves to clarify the constitutive powers of the will, and how one may place the psyche in relation to it.

Embarking upon this descent into the depths, Falque becomes heir and benefactor to the legacy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose unfinished master-work was fixed precisely on this lacuna in the Husserlian phenomenological paradigm. For Falque, this journey leads toward “the obscure point of what is below or beneath signification intended by the Freudian ‘unconscious’ and recovered in the Merleau-Ponty-Pontyan ‘raw nature’”, and his conclusion is that philosophers must “come back to the organic body and not be satisfied with any attempted escape from it into the psychic.”³⁶⁵ While Falque continues the course set out by Merleau-Ponty, Falque minimizes the ontological elements so central to the initial endeavor. One way to understand the course being charted out is to look at perhaps the first and most complete representation of this later

work, his *The Visible and the Invisible* (1961), where Merleau-Ponty frames a general critique of the Husserlian school of phenomenology:

It is necessary to take up again and develop the... latent intentionality which is the intentionality within being. That is not compatible with 'phenomenology,' that is, with an ontology that obliges whatever is not nothing to present itself to the consciousness It is necessary to take as primary, not the consciousness ... with its distinct intentional threads, but the vortex ..., the spatializing-temporalizing vortex (which is flesh and not consciousness facing a noema).³⁶⁶

Falque's decision to approach this critique from the camp of the *masters of suspicion* (Nietzsche, Freud, Marx)³⁶⁷ certainly has its value, though it also has a certain limitation. Falque finds in Merleau-Ponty a route to identify "a new mode of phenomenality, or rather another manner of describing our darkness."³⁶⁸ While Falque certainly has justification in taking this task, and following the course set out by Merleau-Ponty in regards to a certain *depth psychology*, or a *phenomenology of the underground*, there is a certain tendency in his thinking which rejects the ontological impetus which had driven much of Merleau-Ponty's final endeavor in the first place. In radicalizing the Freudian aspect of Merleau-Ponty's thought (and injecting a strong Nietzschean element), he seems to overlook if not detract its ontological character. In one way Falque could be critiqued for a certain *romanticism of the flesh* where he seeks to subtract any ontological value of the flesh while at the same time to stabilize it in a place at antipodes to the psychic, which tends to strip it of any inherent intelligibility while substantializing within the flesh a perpetual chaos and spontaneity, without any place for a subsisting order or structure. It remains to describe more clearly how the intelligible nature of the flesh may be signified without idealization, and also to better describe the relation between the fundamental intelligibility of the flesh with human consciousness. It does not follow from the unconscious nature of the body that it would then lack any intelligibility; and further, the unconscious nature of the body would in no way negate any structural or organizing principle within it (even if operative at an unconscious level), which Falque's treatment of the body would seem to suggest.

These tendencies within Falque's treatment of the flesh—here characterized as a certain *romanticization*—are hedged against in his recent essay *In Flesh and Bones*, where he introduces the concept of the *corps praxique*, in the turn towards the "‘real’ or ‘effective’ (wirklich) world," and the effort to "rediscover the objective" by means of praxis.³⁶⁹ This is a necessary step in order to assuage the antagonism towards intelligibility which his thought tends to take. This is also a promising aspect to develop in light of his notion of *the ethics* of the spread body, particularly if it could be brought into conjunction with the research on "the facility of mystical theology" in his treatment of the *praxis experimentalis* involved in an "aesthetic operation" where "the mystical takes over from the theological, the theological from the philosophical, the

philosophical from the mathematical.”³⁷⁰ Much progress could be made if this chain could be developed in light of the intelligibility of the flesh, where the material subsistence of the body (or bodies in general), can be viewed in terms of common structural patterns of organization rooted in mathematics, or in an intelligible ontological substrate that is practically viable. The formal distinctions Falque makes between the psychic and the somatic are helpful, but only insofar as they show the fundamental integrity of composed beings; it seems worthwhile to try and link this chain, brought out in the context of *effective practice*, with his notion of the *spread body*, particularly when expressed in the following terms:

...I am being held and maintained in life via ‘organic forces within me’ that make me and render me alive, neither only via my matter or my *hylē* nor exclusively via my spirit or my *psychē* but via a ‘body’ or a *soma* through which the whole of myself is expressed and hence also generated.³⁷¹

I would contend that such a maneuver towards the powers of the bodily nature must also lead to a more fundamental *backlash* of the traditions of French spiritualism, one of whose primary concerns could be considered the very question of “force.”³⁷² Here phenomenology finds itself overcome by such figures as Henri Bergson, Maurice Blondel, Felix Ravaisson, Main de Biran et al., and here perhaps finally with the traditions of Neo-Platonism. Falque recognizes the contribution of a number of these figures in some ways,³⁷³ but his emphasis upon the *école du soupçon* seems to preclude their contributions. It must be said that the full thrust of Merleau-Ponty’s later thought is more in the direction of Blondel’s ontology and Henri Bergson’s vitalism, than in the radicalization of Nietzsche’s, or even Freud’s, thought, to which Falque seems so earnestly committed. One missed opportunity in this drive towards the unconscious depths is in the clarification of the intelligible nature of the flesh, which perhaps may be brought out here in a major challenge that this tradition of French spiritualism poses to philosophy, and which seems so necessary at this particular moment in time, found in the recovery of a certain *supplement from the soul*:

The soul supplement [*supplement d’âme*] is called by Bergson as a precise requirement for the modern industrial society. Technical progress has disproportionately increased the material capacities of modern man.... Consequently, if we do not want technical progress to serve only those men who are able to implement advanced scientific approaches and increase the difference between rich states and poor peoples, a counterweight is necessary: it is the ‘supplement from the soul’ in the sense Bergson speaks of. In order to solve the problems of growth, there must be an ethical reference, a concern for justice, a spiritual impetus.³⁷⁴

Such models as the spread body can meaningfully contribute to this question, but this model needs to broaden its scope to be able to render clear description of the *intelligibility of the flesh*, to

clarify the dynamics and activities involved in the operations of the flesh, their relation to human cognition, and how they all relate to patterns of human behavior. This association can be perhaps most clearly expressed in terms of the ascent of data, and the dawning age of Artificial Intelligence, as flesh is in itself a log of productive activity which is not only intelligible, but *hyper* intelligible, so much so that the philosopher must have something to say on the matter; this becomes apparent with the manifestation of what could be described as digital flesh or even a virtual body (perhaps even an *anti-soul*) that persists in digital space and is not only a unique extension of one's own personal life, but becomes a very active element of one's lived experience.

The Intelligibility of the Bodily Nature and the Spectre of Artificial Intelligence

The limitations which have beset the human mind for millennia are now being overcome in an unprecedented manner—memory, analytic processing power, and the simultaneous synthesis of various points of information, etc., are all just now coming to be mastered by digital technology, as computing technologies can now record and transmit a wide array of information with perfect memory, immense collections of data can be analyzed immediately, and vast quantities of information immediately synthesized. The aforementioned processes lay out the basic modes of a new operative force in human life: artificial intelligence. Through the power of automation, AI has the power to substitute capital for labor, resulting in massive inequalities between wealthy firms and the common lot of humanity. The monopolization of the *intelligibility of the flesh* has resulted in massive gains for certain sectors of society, and the ongoing obliteration of others.

This situation provides the means for a certain reciprocity, where the basic features of this new AI and its *modus operandi* help lead towards a precise articulation and meaningful description of the basic features of human experience. The basis, or even motive power, of AI is found in the virtual reserve of human *data*, consisting in nothing other than the trace,—or the “exhaust”—of human behavior. What industrial capitalism once claimed: nature, forests, rivers, oilfields, human labor, etc., is now in the age of AI being substantially overshadowed in value by this digital reserve of human data, now being rendered to the point where ‘private human experience’—human interiority itself—is now a raw ‘material’ to be exploited.³⁷⁵ All of this has changed the basic way humans must think of their place in the world. Developing the frayed threads of a philosophy of the flesh, or of nature, or of matter in general, helps provide a useful framework for coming to *human terms* for how this new technological paradigm is to be understood in reference to the human being. Emmanuel Falque's development of a certain *ethics of the spread body* offers a constructive model to help address and better describe the stakes of this new power. This goes to confirm the remark from Anne Davenport, made in reference to

Falque's thought, that indeed "phenomenologists might also have very helpful suggestions about the ethical aspects of AI."³⁷⁶

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The Sense of Phenomenology

A response to Tarek Dika

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1.

Dika's Critique of Heidegger

Professor Tarek R. Dika has provided a thoughtful engagement with the sense of the manifold senses of being in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. He opens his analysis with a threefold distinction between the sense of being in general, Heidegger's particular understanding of the *Seinsfrage*, and the "path" Heidegger proposes for answering it. Heidegger's novelty, he suggests, is not in directing our attention toward the question of being in general. The manifold senses of being and the question of their possible relationship are at least as old as Aristotle and have as their more proximate exponent, Franz Brentano's dissertation, *On the Several Sense of Being in Aristotle*, that was so influential for the young Heidegger. The Heideggerian novelty, rather, resides in the second and third distinctions enumerated above. First, in Heidegger's idiosyncratic understanding of the question of being, its structure and manner of exposition. Second, in raising the question of the right type of access [*Zugangsart*] and starting point [*Ausgang*]³⁷⁷ for such an inquiry, i.e., phenomenology as fundamental ontology and its *Daseinsanalytik*.

Dika's principal critique, developed in conversation with the work of Claude Romano, is that, "Heidegger's interpretation of time does not establish the focal sense of being, but only mutually irreducible senses of being."³⁷⁸ Heidegger provides penetrating phenomenological descriptions of *Zuhandenheit*, *Vorhandenheit*, and *Existenz*, but in the end, contends Dika, we are left with "only mutually irreducible senses of different entities."³⁷⁹ These ontological investigations "do not disclose a focal sense that encompasses them all."³⁸⁰ Of course, Heidegger suggests this is

precisely what *Being and Time* has accomplished through its analysis of time as the sense of being and the horizon of its manifestation and investigation. Dika knows this well. He proposes two counter-arguments to Heidegger, which also support his principal thesis. First that, “Heidegger does not demonstrate the prior givenness of the sense of being in the understanding of being. In other words, Heidegger does not satisfy the phenomenological criterion of evidence.”³⁸¹ In conjunction with this first claim Dika argues that, (i) it is presupposed rather than argued that “the question of being should be framed in terms of the concept of ‘Sense’”³⁸² and (ii) that there should be a “focal” or primary sense of being at all. His second counterargument is that even if we grant these presuppositions, Heidegger’s analysis of time does not disclose a focal sense of being.

The inescapable, though never stated, conclusion of this argument is that the meaning of being is merely equivocal, or at least that is all we are entitled to conclude upon a careful rereading of *Being and Time*. As a corollary we must reject Aristotle’s *pros hen* — often translated “focal meaning” — manner of philosophical investigation as the lone palimpsest of the history of ontology to survive Heidegger’s otherwise radical *Destruktion*.

Dika is certainly correct that the analysis of time is central to Heidegger’s investigation of the sense of being in *Being and Time*. In the book’s second introduction Heidegger writes, “Our treatment of the question of the meaning of being must enable us to show that *the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time, if rightly seen and rightly explained*, and we must show *how* this is the case.”³⁸³ Heidegger indicates that this is principally a question of leading back the concept time (*Zeitbegriff*) to its foundation in temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*)³⁸⁴ or Dasein’s experience of time. This suggests in an anticipatory way that not only temporality, but Dasein itself, will prove essential to the question of the meaning of being, that *Existenz* is at once the starting point and the manner of access to beings and to being.

I would like to consider the first of Dika’s two counter-arguments and its corollaries and then reflect on the possible implications of that analysis for the second “procedural” critique of *Being and Time*, that is, that having stated his intention, Heidegger does not proceed to supply the evidence necessary to fulfill it.

2.

Sense and Evidence

Does Heidegger select an arbitrary starting point when he begins by asking the question of the meaning [*Sinn*] of being? Or must phenomenology approach the question of being in terms of “sense”? It would seem the second scenario is the case, at least if the analysis is to remain *phenomenological*. Husserl’s principle of all principles,³⁸⁵ in suggesting that intuition gives

something to be thought, implies an understanding of “sense” as the toward-which (*Woraufhin*) of conscious intentionality. Heidegger expresses this same understanding prior to *Being and Time* as “hermeneutic intuition.”³⁸⁶ This concession does not yet settle whether a single focal sense of being has been given; however, it is an essential first clarification. For Heidegger, sense is in the indication of a direction: “Meaning is the ‘upon-which’ of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, a fore-conception.”³⁸⁷ In other words, it is because Dasein discovers itself always already within a world that is meaning-laden that understanding occurs. Phenomenology is the clarification of such prepredicative givenness. Meaning is therefore logically prior in the structure of interpretive understanding—it is both the towards-which and on-account-of-which of our projecting understanding. To ask whether this entire structure of meaning (*Sinn*) and understanding (*Verstehen*) might have been otherwise, is an interesting question, but it is not a phenomenological one. The evidence for the phenomenological starting point is the fact that we are directed toward meaning at every level of our conscious living, even, as Merleau-Ponty demonstrates, our preconceptual forms of perception are “already inhabited by a meaning which gives [them] a function in the spectacle of the world and in our existence.”³⁸⁸ Thus, the sense of an entity and, *a fortiori*, of being, is *heuristic*, an anticipatory indication of a direction of inquiry. As Daniel Dahlstrom explains, “sense is constitutive of the projection, grounding it, and making it possible and intelligible.”³⁸⁹ This is one reason why fundamental ontology requires a *Daseinsanalytik*, i.e., because sense is a process not a product, a projecting and a projected at (*dasWoraufhin*), sense and existence, experiencing and experienced. For this reason, Heidegger argues that “‘meaning’ must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the Disclosedness which belongs to understanding.”³⁹⁰ In other words, meaning (*Sinn*) is both the self-disclosing of the world and the dative of that disclosure, Dasein itself. Therefore, for phenomenology at least, Dasein can only formulate the question of being as a question of sense and therefore as a question of “the meaning of being.”

A second distinction might also be helpful here. Dasein’s world—the only world it could ever question or be curious about—is meaning-laden. However, precisely because meaning is a process of discovery and clarification, it is not “given” simply, but rather gradually uncovered and discerned. This has implications for how we understand the role of *Evidenz* in phenomenological description. For phenomenology, *evidence* is task word not an achievement word. The recognition that an object is given with “intuitive fullness” is most often a gradual, even painstaking, process of accomplishment. Husserl’s focused elucidation of the phenomenological notion of evidence in his *Formal and Transcendental Logic* is contrasted to the common understanding of evidence “conceived as an *absolute apodicticity*” and proposes instead a definition of evidence as, “...that performance on the part of intentionality which consist in the given of something-itself...it is the

universal pre-eminent form of ‘intentionality,’ of ‘consciousness of something.’”³⁹¹ Phenomenological evidence, moreover, possesses “different modes of originality.”³⁹² Heidegger retains this notion of evidence as an ongoing task and one that is often arduous. He also broadens it to include the sedimented traditions of interpretation in the wake of which our facticity develops and which present certain theses about being as “self-evident.” Put simply, we could say that, for Heidegger, the evidence of beings and of being is ambiguous and it is a first achievement of his hermeneutic phenomenology to return us to that primordial ambiguity in order that the question of the meaning of being revisit us as a question. He beings by rejecting the presupposition that being is the most “self-evident” of concepts at the outset.³⁹³ These distinctly phenomenological understandings of “sense” and “evidence” suggest that Heidegger would not be distressed at Dika’s contention that, in *Being and Time*, “the dependence of the understanding of being on the sense of being is presupposed but not demonstrated.”³⁹⁴ The only route to discovering if there is adequate evidence for the meaning of being is to clarify the experience of beings in their various modes of givenness.

3.

Conclusion

We are now prepared to assess Dika’s second argument against Heidegger, namely, that his analyses are unable to disclose a “focal sense” being through his analysis of time. This also points us back to Heidegger’s second innovation according to Dika’s opening set of distinctions: the question of the correct beginning and form of access to examine the meaning of being. Our foregoing distinctions help us appreciate the path Heidegger follows. Because phenomenological sense is a process that always already implicates *Existenz* (Dasein), we cannot ask about the meaning of anything, including being, without simultaneously asking about the meaning of ourselves. The various “tissues” or strata of the Heideggerian concept of sense are perhaps more clearly elaborated in Heidegger’s earlier courses which speak about a “context of sense.” That context includes, content-, relational-, and enactment-senses (Gehaltsinn, Bezugsinn, Vollzugsinn)³⁹⁵ and later a temporalizing sense (*Zeitigungssinn*).³⁹⁶ Our tendency is to prioritize the content-sense and relation-sense of an experience and miss the dynamic dimensions of constitution implied in its enactment-sense and temporalizing-sense. Because sense is the product of constitution and constitution is the dynamic of Dasein’s concourse with the world, the being of Dasein (*Existenz*) is always implicated. That is what the enactmental and temporalizing dimensions of meaning are meant to indicate to us. This means that, if the meaning of being can only be accessed in an experience of being and only Dasein is capable of such an experience, then the meaning of being, if there is one, will be a particular experience of *Existenz*. Therefore, if

time is the horizon of Dasein it will necessarily be the horizon of any understanding of the meaning of being.

What Heidegger claims to have shown by the abrupt end of *Being and Time* is that because meaning is at once *in the world* and also always *for Dasein* the meaning of anything including being will be subject to the temporal ecstases that characterize Dasein's being-in-the-world.³⁹⁷ Is this enough to secure a "focal" sense for being? The answer is unclear. I think Dika's framing is a fruitful one, but its conclusion seems less certain than he suggests. I will conclude with three further pertinent questions to be considered were we to pursue the question further.

First, what exactly is meant by "focal meaning"? It is not a term that appears in *Being and Time* and Dika does not provide a formal definition of it. He does cite Heidegger's approving reference to Aristotle as someone who, "himself knew the unity of this transcendental 'universal' [i.e., Being] as a *unity of analogy*..."³⁹⁸ The language of unity suggests the search for something like a focal meaning, but the qualification of "unity by analogy," which is a more capacious category of relation than focal meaning, suggests there may be other possibilities. Alternatively, perhaps a particular understanding of focal meaning would illuminate what Heidegger's analysis—whether it is successful or not—intends. Aristotle scholar Michael Pakaluk, for example, defines focal or "central case" meaning in Aristotle as the relationship that obtains between unrelated beings that are nonetheless "all oriented toward a single goal."³⁹⁹ Applied to Heidegger's analyses, *Vorhandenheit*, *Zuhandenheit* and *Existenz* would not be united by sharing some overlapping characteristic, but precisely through their distinct relations to a goal that transcends them.

Second, does not Heidegger's—admittedly elliptical—definition of being as "the *transcendens* pure and simple"⁴⁰⁰ suggest that the type of unifying meaning will be something other than a conceptual definition? Might temporality as revealing the disclosive character of all three modes of being unify them in virtue of this dynamism? Is this a *via media* between the alternatives of a conceptually unified meaning of being and its ineluctable equivocity?

Third, does this suggest about Dasein, in virtue of its temporalizing appropriation, in relation to the focal sense of being? Is Dasein in some sense the focal sense of being? If this were the case, it would not be self-evident that "time...enjoys priority over being as the foundation of its sense,"⁴⁰¹ precisely because, as Dika points out, "power" understood as Dasein's potentiality or ability-to-be is equiprimordial. It is Heidegger who reminds us at the start of *Being and Time* that, "higher than actuality stands possibility."⁴⁰²

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On the 'Absolute Relation' of the Spread Body (Falque) and the Flesh (Henry)

A response to Karl Hefty

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Introduction

A response to a response forms a kind of 'antiphony' or responsorial relation that calls out across a void between participants, sounding out its contours and its depth, letting it take shape in the interstice. In the space left in the midst of this antiphony, calling out across the distance between Falque, Hefty, and now me, there is a body. This is precisely the image of the loving struggle, with the body, on this occasion, as the 'thing itself' in question. What follows takes advantage of the friendly and loving nature of this struggle and puts forward a decidedly speculative and experimental response. It performs, then, a series of gesture that have or will be more fully developed elsewhere.

Before doing so, however, it is necessary, first of all, to outline the stakes. In this responsorial, there is, on one side, the more classical phenomenological question of the 'how' of appearing, privileging this over the mere fact that something has appeared, and the need for duplicity (or dualism) in order to account for the difference between the 'eyes of faith' that see the Incarnate Word and the 'eyes of the world' that see only Jesus, the ordinary man. This is, too briefly put, Karl Hefty's position. On the other side, there are questions concerning the non- or – to draw upon more recent work – extra-phenomenon of the 'weight' and 'thickness' of this body and the need for this to be included in a full account of the *human* and *ordinary* dimension of the Incarnation. This is Emmanuel Falque's position. In short, there is the immanent *pathos* of the flesh (Henry) as necessary condition for the possibility of experience, on one side, and the real body, on the other, as extra-phenomenal reality.

There appears, on first view, then, to be an insuperable distance between these two positions. This is borne out by Hefty's reassertion of the need for ontological dualism in order to retain the integrity of incarnate auto-affective experience. But Hefty is too hasty in inscribing the body Falque describes within the transcendent horizon of the 'world'. The body in question is not an object, thing, or *res extensa*, but a *spread* body.

§1 The 'spread body' is not a *res extensa*

Hefty reiterates Henry's unyielding critical stance against the technical manipulation and reduction of embodied life to objectified things as well as the difference between scientific observation of this same life and its phenomenological condition. Both Henry and Hefty assert the need for ontological dualism in order to resist the 'barbarism' of monism that subsumes life into the horizon of objects and ideal or alienated conceptual representation. In brief, they both resist the dissolution of singularity into the anonymising force of general ontology and the technical reduction of the living to objects and things.

The formulation of the 'spread body' in Falque's *Éthique du corps épandu* (2018) describes a body that is neither objective (*res extensa*) nor pure interiority (flesh). It is important to note, then, that the 'spread body' questions precisely the reduction of the human body to objective material *at the same time* as certain ethical approaches that exclude the animal body, seeking, instead, to focus on precisely the interior, subjective experience of suffering. On this point, Hefty and Falque are in agreement. Both wish to avoid reducing embodied life to scientific measure. But Falque introduces an ambiguity when drawing attention to the "weight of our own body (and its kilos, we dare to say!)" as well as the flesh in the 2016 article under discussion. While the parenthetical remark refers to the objective measure of this body, the 'weight' refers to the 'fatigue' and 'riveting' of this flesh to a material body that Falque, a few years later, characterises as a *spread body*. It is important to note, then, that the spread body is not a *res extensa* or straightforwardly an external, transcendent entity. This is, perhaps, the only interpretative issue with Hefty's response. The 'weight' of the body Falque mentions in his 'Is there a flesh without body?' is that of the later *spread*, not *objective* body. "Entre le « corps étendu » (Descartes) et le « corps vécu » (Husserl)," writes Falque, there is "un troisième type du corps – que nommons ici « cors épandu »."⁴⁰³ It is a body that occupies this 'mid-place' between objective bodies and subjective embodied experience. Neither inner experience of flesh (Henry) nor external object of technical manipulation, the spread body is a non- or extra-phenomenal dimension to embodied life. It is a neologism that designates the animal-human body – that is, the body that is seen at once as animal *and* human, rather than only human (subjective) or animal or material (objective). This is precisely the 'weight' of the body that is felt at the same time as the flesh.

On this point, the spread body is closer, perhaps, to Maine de Biran's 'organic body' that occupies a curious, 'middle' status within Henry's early engagement with the spiritualist realist thinker. "C'est ainsi qu'à l'être originaire de notre corps est lié une sorte de *corps organique*," writes Henry, "dont l'âme n'est, selon un mot de Leibniz que cite Maine de Biran, jamais séparée."⁴⁰⁴ The originary body, later called the flesh, is irrevocably linked to the organic body. One cannot be thought or conceived without the other. This is, indeed, Falque's point viz. Henry's account of the

incarnation. The organic body escapes reduction, just as much as flesh : "l'être de notre corps transcendant ne se réduit pas, en effet, à celui de notre corps organique."⁴⁰⁵ There must be body and flesh.

In the usual accounts of Maine de Biran's philosophy, the organic body marks the resistant term in the differential relation between force and resistance that forms the basis for the 'hyper-organic' feeling of effort. But Henry resolves the active and the passive into a single, absolute sphere of immanence in order to account for the unity of activity (effort) and passivity (bodies) in the originary body. The organic body, however, ultimately draws its unity and identity from the transcendental unity of the subjective body.⁴⁰⁶ It lacks the same ontological dignity of the flesh, and, indeed, when considered alone, is merely an abstraction: "l'être du corps organique est un être abstrait."⁴⁰⁷ There can, indeed, be no body without flesh.

But this is not the whole story. Within this reduction to immanent flesh, the organic body occupies a curious position. This body is, as said, irreducible to the transcendent body (objective body).⁴⁰⁸ It is neither a representation nor an epistemological object, but rather the "inner extension" of the absolute life of the subjective body – that is, the flesh: "l'étendu intérieure du corps organique [...] que'elle est immanent au mouvement [subjectif] et lui appartient."⁴⁰⁹ Henry claims that this inner extension of the organic body in the flesh constitutes an 'absolute relation'.⁴¹⁰ Both are irreducible to the world. Each counts as an absolute term and form, together, an absolute relation. This relation does not, importantly, operate within the horizon of phenomenological transcendence; there is no spatialised exchange between the organic body and the flesh. There is, moreover no constitution of their unity via a dialectical co-determination of some kind. It can no longer really be understood as one term in a differential relation. Henry thus departs from the usual reading of Maine de Biran.

Despite the lack of any 'worldly' or 'spatialised' relation, the organic body is nevertheless the 'immediate term' for the subjective body.⁴¹¹ The organic body thus occupies a curious 'middle' state: it lacks ontological consistency, requiring the unity of absolute life, but remains irreducible to the world and ontological monism. There is thus 'conceptual space' within Henry's phenomenology of the body to think this organic – indeed, *animal* – body otherwise than as *res extensa* in the way Falque suggests. The spread body operates within this space left by Henry. It accounts, as said, for a body that is neither an object for science (*res extensa*) nor a given subjective experience. But it does so in a manner that is, in certain important respects, consistent with Henry's own insights with respect to embodied life. The spread body opens the way to thinking the real of this flesh – that is, its 'inner extension'.

§2 Phenomenology and the Real

This touches upon a more crucial question viz. realism and phenomenology. The positions outlined in Hefty's response, briefly and, perhaps, too simply put are (a) the naïve realism of scientific observation and naturalising of phenomenology, on one side, and (b) the auto-affective flesh as condition for experience (and, therefore, scientific observation), on the other. In the simplest terms, without the auto-affective flesh experiencing itself, undergoing itself, there is no experience of anything at all. The flesh is the principle of their unity that guarantees the singularity of embodied life over and against the anonymous realm of objects and things. It is precisely this singular flesh, irreducible to essence or ideal meaning-intention (Husserl), that precedes and unites experience. This is the reason why the 'weight' of the spread body insofar as outside or extra to auto-affective flesh falls, therefore, within the scheme of ontological dualism at least, within external world.

But the foregoing suggests another way to think about the relation between the flesh and the real. The world of objects and things is not the only way to think the real; indeed, recent iterations of realism articulate what I think Falque searches for via the spread body and recent explorations of the extra-phenomenon. It is not a realism of objects and things (naïve realism) but rather contingency and accident.⁴¹² This reformulation of realism dispenses with the subject of predication, that is, thing = x , in favour of the chaos and pell-mell of the real that is irreducible to regional essences (Husserl) and other iterations of the post-Kantian epistemological relation between subject and object. This real does not constitute the 'object' for a phenomenology of night, Falque observes, but rather the night of phenomenology; it is not the invisible *pathos*, but the hitherside of this night.⁴¹³ In this night, very briefly put, the flesh is invaded by the real of the body⁴¹⁴ or the trauma of the accident.⁴¹⁵

The most straightforward counter-argument would be simply that accidents, contingency, invasion, and so on, nevertheless rely upon a *prior* auto-affective flesh to account for the unity experience and the conditions that make any such experience at all possible – that is, flesh as the undergoing of life (suffering), including the chaos of the real. The world can be experienced and make sense only on the basis of subjective flesh undergoing and suffering itself. But the foregoing indicates that the organic body marks a term in this 'absolute relation' with the flesh, without exchange in the world, the irreducible status of which remains insufficiently determined. If the subjective life of the flesh is absolute, that is, without relation to the world, then so too must the organic body. This is Henry's point (see above). But, furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, if this organic body lacks relation with the world, at least insofar as it (a) remains irreducible to a *res extensa* and the objective body and (b) remains within an 'invisible sphere' (i.e., non-representation, non-given), then this retains a certain autonomy or at least irreducible status with respect to the flesh, too. They are, recall, two absolute terms in an absolute relation. The absolute status of the flesh is determined, certainly, as auto-affection, via ontological dualism,

but the absolute status of the body in its own right remains undetermined insofar as it is irreducible neither to flesh nor to world. If the organic-animal body is absolute, like the flesh, then it is also irreducible to the flesh. This is something that both Henry and Hefty would accept; the flesh does not equate to the organic body. But the organic body under discussion does not equate to the world (in the phenomenological sense). The philosophical and phenomenological significance of these incommensurables remains to be determined. But the spread body offers, perhaps, a novel way to account for this organic body. It names the 'inner extension' within absolute life – the 'back door' through which the real enters, even invades, the flesh.

This is, of course, a very brief and too hasty formulation of a much wider deconstruction of the auto-affective flesh indicated and developed elsewhere.⁴¹⁶ It rests on the claim that the organic body is irreducible to the phenomenological logic of auto-affection that sustains the consistency of the flesh and resolves everything in advance into the order of auto-donation. Falque is right to question this tendency in phenomenology with the figure of the spread body, and, later, resistance.⁴¹⁷ The claim that the organic body is irreducible to the flesh is, in some respects, consistent with Henry's own reading of Maine de Biran (see above), although, of course, ultimately the unity of this animal body rests on the flesh. Nevertheless, the logic of auto-affection goes too far and repeats the error Jocelyn Benoist identifies in phenomenological idealism, namely the assertion that the syntax or logic of phenomenological experience – that is, meaning-intention, essence, pure *ego* in Husserl's writings, for example – is autonomous and *a priori*, in some sense or other, the real.⁴¹⁸ Even though Henry's flesh is 'non-intentional', and so no longer relies upon the syntax of intentionality and transcendence (Husserl), nevertheless the *essential* determination of experience *tout court* remains always auto-affection. It is the sole phenomenological operator into which any and every experience finds itself ultimately resolved. The origin and genesis of each and every experience resolves itself into the invisible presence of auto-affective flesh. Realism, by contrast, privileges, as the name suggests, the autonomy of the real with respect to sense, meaning, and syntax with the former determining the latter; in short, sense is not wholly autonomous from the real.⁴¹⁹ It designates what is given (*datum*) without an operation of phenomenological donation.

Yet this does not necessarily equate to a naïve assertion that objects, things, entities, etc., *really* exist autonomously and prior to or independently of experience. The 'new realisms' that have emerged over the past 15 or so years offer novel ways to think the real of the organic body or spread body. Far from undermining the importance of Henry's phenomenology of the body, the foregoing opens the way to deepening understanding of his wider phenomenology of life. The issues raised thus far are, indeed, internal to Henry's own thinking about the body and the flesh. While Henry himself acknowledges that the originary or subjective body (i.e., the flesh) is unthinkable without the organic body (see above), only the status of the flesh as absolute finds

itself developed and fully determined as auto-affective. The absolute status of organic body, the nature of this 'inner extension', and so on, remains undetermined. It stands in the 'mid-place', perhaps with Falque's spread body: "le corps épandu tiendra de l'une et d'autre, de la mécanique et de la mystique, de l'étendu et du vécu," writes Falque, as an "*espace intermédiaire*" or "*zone frontalière*".⁴²⁰ It is neither the "récit de son histoire" nor "l'épreuve de son vécu" that can be gathered together once more into the order of donation, but a 'liminal' site for an encounter with this real, where the surprise of the body that lives me, not just the auto-affective experience of an incarnate subject, finds itself encountered.⁴²¹

§3 An Ordinary Christ

With respect to the Incarnation, the argument Falque makes is simply that this 'idealism' leaves the question of the organic-animal body (*caro*) that Tertullian poses with little or no response. "Where did his body [*unde corpus*] come from, if his body is not flesh [*si non caro corpus*]"⁴²² This question seeks an account of this body that is born, suffers, and dies; in short, a body that has a *human, organic* genesis ('where does his body come from?'). But the foregoing indicates how this might not necessarily amount to questions about the world, objects, and things nor that the body (*caro*) in question is reducible to *res extensa*. This is something that the 'weight' of the spread body seeks to articulate.

The spread body concerns, implicitly at least, the way the body of Christ is given and received, something indicated in the following quote: "le corps anesthésié, endormi, ou crucifié, apparaît et s'apparaît à lui-même d'abord comme « corps » (*Körper*) dans une organicité [...] et ensuite comme « chair » (*Leib*) dans la visée que pourtant moi-même, ou un autre, ne cesse de lui attribuer."⁴²³ While this passage concerns chiefly Husserl's distinction between body and flesh, there are nevertheless lessons to draw for this brief antiphony. The foregoing discussion indicates at least that there is a *weight* to the body that the flesh undergoes that is at once *outside* the world of objects, *res extensa*, etc., and irreducible to the *pathos* of the flesh. This 'weight' is the spread body. It does not necessarily amount to the exteriorisation of flesh, at the level of the ontic (if this is understood to be reducible to objects and things), as Hefty claims; rather, it is the organic 'inner extension' (above) of this invisible flesh toward the real in the night of phenomenology. It is the flesh open to the surprises and contingencies of the real – that is, the strikes and blows of life. What Christ offers is not just flesh but also the burden, suffering, fatigue as well as joy of his ordinary body. It signals the 'weak force' of grace, in the real of this ordinary body, and precisely the 'low' status of Falque's Christology.

In response to Hefty, one could say that the body of Christ is, then, given as *body* (organic) but *without donation*, in the phenomenological sense at least, and, one could say, received in *flesh*

(subjective) through the 'eyes of faith'. This responds to the need for 'duplicity', as Hefty calls it, with regard to this body. It is possible to see only the ordinary body of Jesus, certainly, but also the Lord. Yet Henry and Falque acknowledge that the organic and the flesh cannot be thought apart, and so must be thought together. The spread body offers a way to think precisely this ordinary, animal body in a way that Henry's auto-affective flesh does not permit.

* * *

If there is, indeed, an absolute relation between the flesh (Henry) and organic, spread body (Falque), as suggested, then this requires a novel 'grammar' or economy of experience, which is the focus of my own research. While others, like Merleau-Ponty, account for the difference between flesh and body via a *chiasm* or similar interweaving of the visible and invisible, which qualify as more sophisticated iterations of ontological monism, Henry insists upon an ontological dualism, as Hefty reminds us, between two distinct, irreducible modes of experience – life and the world. This dualism counters, however, only a specific mode of phenomenological transcendence as well as naïve realism(s).

In this rather speculative response, the 'night of phenomenology' that Falque articulates via the 'spread body' offers, perhaps, a way to formulate a conception of the real that is not quite the same as the mode of transcendence Henry critiques and, perhaps, opens the way to rethinking the relation between phenomenology and the real otherwise than Husserl, Heidegger, and Henry. It would be a style of phenomenology that looks out, with the scientist, into the night.

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Holding One's Beliefs Loosely

A Review of David Newheiser's *Hope in A Secular Age*

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In his *Hope in a Secular Age*, David Newheiser makes a strong case for hope is that which joins believers and unbelievers. Newheiser does so, mostly, by bringing the work of negative theologian Dionysius into conversation with that of Jacques Derrida whose deconstruction quite often ventured into the terrain of negative theology. Before we proceed to Newheiser's peculiar account of hope, it is to be noted that with the phenomenon of hope, Newheiser believes it "possible to find echoes of the [Judeo-Christian] tradition [...] even among those who are no longer religious" (3) and live in a secular age indeed.

Newheiser's book opens with a brief discussion of Charles Taylor, to whom Newheiser's book owes part of its title. Hope, Newheiser argues, is what allows us both "to transcend the immanent frame" and what "illuminates the future of faith in a secular age" (5). For hope, according to Newheiser, will not settle for a closed immanence and a calculable future beyond which nothing can be imagined. Faith, then, has a future in such an era of secularization if and only if it hopes for something beyond its provisional stance, that is, if it learns "to holds its beliefs loosely" (35).

The phenomenon of hope, for Newheiser, is to be positioned over and against both complacency and despair. Complacency follows the false assurances of an all too certain hope; despair is a state of hopelessness that revels in disappointment and uncertainty. For these latter two phenomena, Newheiser takes Jean-Luc Marion and John D. Caputo, to whom Newheiser displays an uneasy relationship to say the least, as paradigmatic examples. Marion is portrayed here as a representative of a "confident traditionalism" (11) and Caputo "recommends an indeterminate spirituality" (ibid.). Yet confidence is, in this book, regarded as leading more or less directly to complacency. Newheiser, for instance, regularly refers to the work of Albert Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus* and David Elliot's *Hope and Christian Ethics*: for the former "hope posits a confidence that distracts from life" (13) and for the latter "hope displays a confident expectation of ultimate blessedness" (67). Hope need not lead to such false confidence, just as a hopelessness need not lead us into despair. Yet, given the book's ambiguous relation towards Caputo's work, the book might be read as if Newheiser suggests that an exaggerated stress on indeterminacy (of a democracy to come for instance) and the concomitant lack of specific hopes and ethical actions might lead to despair. Newheiser is to be commended, though, for capturing something central to many of the classical accounts of hope when emphasizing hope as the middle ground between complacency and despair. In effect, the book covers a wide variety of sources and Newheiser often succeeds in portraying his authors succinctly and in unexpected ways. One can wonder, though, about the absence of Ernst Bloch and Jurgen Moltmann, especially given the fact that the former seems rather close to the position of the book under discussion.

How does hope mitigate between complacency and despair? And can we still speak of a Christian hope when one is to 'hold one's beliefs loosely'? For this, the author relies on St. Paul's account in Rom. 8:24 where hope in things unseen is regarded as uncertain and no easy thing to uphold if the task is to 'wait for it with perseverance' (6). From the outset, the author makes it clear that hope, at its best, is to be seen as irrational and that, for there to be hope at all, a leap of faith is required. Such a hope, then, can deal with disappointment and uncertainty. Yet, because of its determinateness and its affirmation, it does not sink into despair. This hope, for Newheiser, is consistent with a "profound pessimism" (9)—a point that is repeated throughout the book: if this hope does not make things any easier, it sure does not make them worse either. The book's ambition is to show that such a middle position can be found in both Derrida and Dionysius whose accounts of hope and concomitant commitments differ "in content but not in kind" (11) even though Derrida's stance is one of melancholy and Dionysius' rigorous negativity displays a rather "sanguine bent" (11, 73 and 85). These similarities between Derrida and Dionysius make for the fact "that religious commitment can be resolutely undogmatic, and that religious tradition can contribute to reflection in a secular context" (11).

Newheiser's (sometimes bold) intervention in the debate depends on a reading method that he clearly puts in practice. "People think by reading" (ibid.), Newheiser argues, and it is for this reason that Dionysius and Derrida suggest that advances in thought do not come through "pure novelty" but rather through a faithful reading of texts and of traditions with an eye on their "unexpected possibilities" (11). It is in effect such a method that Newheiser puts in action throughout his book reading his authors carefully and thinking, through and with their texts, prudently. In this sense, Newheiser's book is a performance or enactment of what he himself prescribes: a "practice of reading" (37) Dionysius and Derrida as they themselves have recommended the art of reading, in view of, precisely, activating, "re-instituting" (29), "constructive" (36) possibilities gathered within these traditions and texts.

How to keep up hope in hopeless situations? How to affirm that it is all worth it when evidence, oftentimes, seems to point to the contrary? These questions open onto Newheiser's first chapter. The question makes clear already that hope is a phenomenon we need to 'keep up': it needs perseverance and persistence. After all, hope is something that one can 'lose'; it does not come by easy. This first chapter answers these questions in three moments. The first one is that of a negativity that is reflexive; the second one stresses the dynamics of affirmation and the third focuses on the ethical and political aspects of such a difficult affirmation. Throughout the chapter Newheiser points intriguingly to the continuity between Derrida's early and later work; the early work, focusing on an *Ausseinandersetzung* with the structuralism in vogue of the days, taught us to know that the truth of a system lies outside the system all the while being related to that very system. Just as the center of a discourse is not part of that discourse itself although the discourse,

the text and the transcendental system relate to that which only “function[s]” (20) as its center and seems to ground it, as it were, from the outside. Newheiser teaches us then the return of a similar stance in later Derrida when stating that the justice to come is outside the particular laws although it never is foreign to these laws either. The truth of the system is outside the system even if it is not to be perceived anywhere else than in this very system. The justice to come is found no where else than in these imperfect laws addressing and responding to this justice. The outside of the text, if there is such a thing, is experienced only within texts and traditions (to the point of a possible confusion as Levinas would add). Newheiser so reads certain passages in Derrida, for example the one where Derrida states that the order of justice and the order of the law are 'heterogeneous but indissociable' (27) with more care than unfortunately has become common in contemporary academia.

Let us focus now on the three moments that set us on the course of the phenomenon of hope. Responding to critics of critique such as Bruno Latour—*à quoi bon*, indeed, critique in an age of precarity?—Newheiser explains that Derrida does not just revel in critical negativity. On the contrary, Derrida acknowledges that critique alone can be stifling and therefore proposes a “negativity that is reflexive” (18), i.e. aware of its limits and conscious of its being in default when it is not put into (ethical) practice. There is in this sense, in a bit of an understatement, a “florid affirmation” (ibid.) in Derrida which imposes itself as an act, a decision if not a response. Here we have the first moment on the way to hope. “Derrida holds negativity and affirmation in tension to encourage a persistence that acknowledges its vulnerability” (19). In face of uncertainty, it is easier to lose hope than to keep up hope. Hope needs time and it needs to persist in face of adversity (knowing fully well it cannot always persist in just this way).

Derrida acknowledges that most people, however, will choose for an affirmation or certainty that is not in any way surrounded by any negativity. This “desire for safety” (21) is at best a pretense and at worst a lie: it is the illusion, in earlier terms, that the center really is a center and not just a function of our discourse. It is the religious belief, to put it bluntly, that a God is really 'out there' as the guarantee of the 'ultimate blessedness' one comes up with to cope with the adversities and anxieties here down below.

This brings us to the second moment: whomever thinks hope, needs to think a movement. Hope is 'up' and hope is lost. It comes and it goes and has its own dynamic. This too Newheiser finds in Derrida in what perhaps is the most important argument of the book. A reflexive negativity ultimately amounts to a self-critical stance: it is not to make an exception of oneself when it comes to hegemonic discourses. Newheiser, in this regard, repeatedly points out that Derrida taught that his own texts, too, fall prey to the play of *différance* (Cf. 35) and that there thus is no way that he himself could oversee (as a sovereign indeed) all of its possible interpretations. Yet

self-critique, when viewed from the timeless perspective of a system of propositions [,] could seem contradictory, but this neglects the fact that people exist in time. Once self-critique is situated within the context of an unfolding life, its function is not to disbelieve what one believes [...] but to hold one's beliefs loosely, available for future development (35)

In simpler terms: people can always change their minds. Heidegger's *Being and Time* mentions that the retracting of a previous resolution is a sure sign of authenticity. Newheiser finds a *simila* argument in Dionysius. Here too the unfolding of life makes possible the 'juxtaposition of affirmation and negation'—one of Newheiser's favorite formulations in the book in question, it recurs no less than 14 times throughout the book.

Yet one needs to keep in mind that such a change of mind is not always a conscious and active decision. It can similarly be forced upon us by changed circumstances and contexts. Sometimes there is a game-changer and sometimes the game just changed. It is this that Derrida recognizes, rather abstractly, in 'the formal structure of the promise': "there is always a promise insofar as there is still a future to come" (37). Tomorrow, in effect, things might be different. It is such a formal eschatological structure that breaks open the 'immanent frame' and "opens possibilities that are unconstrained by the subject's present understanding" (38). Both despair and complacency, one might argue, settle for what is: whereas despair can no longer imagine something beyond the present circumstances (and for this reason despairs), complacency is so full of itself and its surroundings that it does no longer want anything other than what it presently takes pleasure in.

This bring us to the third moment: the political and ethical implications of a hope that unsettles the status quo and persists in doing so against all odds. These implications turn hope into an "affirmation without assurance" (37), into a decision about what is undecidable and into a leap of faith even. Yet this does not mean, for Derrida nor for Newheiser, that such an affirmation and a decision is anarchic and uninformed by the present possibilities. On the contrary, "Derrida insists that we must respond as best we can in the situations in which we find ourselves, which requires both calculation according to rules and attention to a particularity that cannot be captured in a rule" (27). It is to Newheiser's credit that he shows how both these tenets are present in Derrida's account of decision: both calculation (rule-following programs, law) and what is beyond calculation (singularity, justice). What Derrida has reminded us about is that calculation alone is never enough and that justice alone is never present. Newheiser points to Derrida's theme of a democracy to come to make this third moment of hope, its ethical and political implications, clear and to show that all judgments (about laws, about justice, about God or about hope in a secular age even) only ever are "provisional" (28). Everything would be easier if the distinction between law and justice for instance was a 'true distinction' (Derrida, at 27), pertaining to a timeless

system of oppositions if you like, but in the context of life unfolding views over what justice is and is not might change from day to day and it is absurd to think it would ever be fully realized. Even if one could be just in one respect, one might be unjust in other respects. In case of a democracy, definitively instituted and realized completely, Derrida's negativity shows itself as an "ethical discipline with political implications" (32), for here Derrida

...worries that [in such a case] the aura of democracy [is] appropriated by political systems that remain, in many respects, undemocratic. [Some] societies assert that they embody the realization of democratic ideals, but this obscures the ways in which they fall short of democratic representation (in their treatment of poverty, incarceration, immigration, and so forth). (32-3)

Newheiser to comment: "This is not the only point that needs to be made for a healthy politics, but there is good reason to think it is important [...]", and a bit later, "Derrida's negativity is political insofar as it keeps policy debate in motion, struggling toward greater justice" (33). We have already of these dynamics for Newheiser; later we need to point to some problems when it comes to the struggle for a greater justice.

Chapter two turns to Dionysius and seeks to detect similar moments and movements in his works. The chapter focuses mainly on two themes in Dionysius: his account of apophasis and his theory of hierarchy which seems to run counter to the drive towards democracy present in Derrida. Intriguingly, Newheiser starts with the same argument as he detected in Derrida's work. Dionysian apophasis is able to juxtapose affirmation and negativity through its unfolding in the time of a life. It is this temporal aspect, in effect, that pushes us outside of 'true distinctions' and 'systems of propositions': "the tension between affirmation and negation could appear to be a contradiction when evaluated from the (synchronic) perspective of logical analysis, it becomes the means of ethical transformation when plotted (diachronically) in time" (40). This explains not only how affirmation and negation can in effect be joined together but also why one can be inclined towards a positive theology the one day yet feel for negative theology the next day. It is such an 'unfolding in and through time' that Newheiser seeks to detect in both Derrida and Dionysius. This juxtaposition also nuances, for Newheiser at least, Dionysius stress on ecclesial hierarchy as the one and only mediator between the heavenly and the earthly realm: in line with Derrida's emphasis on provisional judgments in matters of justice and democracy, Newheiser makes a case that "any institution [that] is directed toward God can only possess provisional authority" (41).

Both theses encounter severe difficulties: is it really the case that Derrida and Dionysius "juxtapose" affirmation and negation and how to describe this paradoxical 'beyond' affirmation and negation? Is it really the case that Dionysius is not the traditional hierarchical thinker that some have made of him? One feels that Newheiser struggles with this second question and, at

any rate, seems less convinced (and convincing?) than with regard to the first question. We will not focus here on the peculiarities of his argument but outline the main reasons why Newheiser thinks that Dionysius and Derrida can be joined together after all.

How to conceive of the way of apophasis if it is not to be seen as negative unsaying and undoing of any and all affirmation and as, say, a 'true distinction'? "Dionysius is clear that neither affirmation nor negation is adequate" (43). Pure negation, a negation that disavows all affirmation, is even impossible. We will have to think through the first of many conundrums to take hold of the way of unsaying: "at the very moment at which [Dionysius] says that God is beyond every assertion, he is making an assertion about God" (43). Just as the negation ultimately gives way to an affirmation, just so, it seems, all affirmation will, at one point or other, need to be negated: "Dionysius indicates the inadequacy of theological discourse both by the negation of every divine name and by the affirmation of every possible name for God" (58).

Yet what is left if negation and affirmation is not simply to be seen as a 'true distinction' or contradiction and if it is to be stripped of a logical analysis? Then apophasis appears suddenly as a way, as an *Unterwegs*, as Heidegger would have it. This reader at least was reminded, for instance, of the 'Yes and No' that Heidegger simultaneously uttered over and against technology sending typewritten letters to Caputo all the while arguing that typewriters disturb the work of the hand. "Apophasis [...] constitutes a way—a dynamic process, not a static structure. Whereas the juxtaposition between affirmation and negation appears paradoxical when considered in abstraction, with an unfolding life it becomes a means of ethical transformation" (47-8).

Temporal aspects also play a crucial role in Newheiser's answer to the question of hierarchy and its role in mediating the divine to humanity. Such a way, for which neither affirmation nor negation suffice, entails "dissolv[ing] the notion of divinity itself" (42) considering that each and every name we would come up for the divinity is equally close and equally distant (cf. 61 and 100) from that which it tries to bring to speech: it is not even certain whether we are praising God when we are praising God. Dionysius, according to Newheiser, paves the way for a "desacralization" (55) which we will have to consider later in more detail. For now it is to be noted that just as for Derrida all democracies fall short over and against the very idea of a democracy to come, so too for Dionysius all the divine names fall short over and against the very idea itself it tries to name. Nonetheless, just as this does not mean, for Derrida, that we should not work on our very imperfect democracies so too this does not mean for Dionysius that we do not try to name the divine at all. It does mean, though, for Newheiser, that any act of naming, just as every institution of democracy for Derrida, only ever will be provisional. Such a desacralization, Newheiser will argue, therefore differs from Giorgio Agamben's concept of profanation.

To underscore Dionysius' take on such provisional attempts to name the divine, Newheiser points again to the way of a “neither/nor” proper to apophysis: “because God [for Dionysius] is neither temporal nor timeless, God's actions take the form of an unforeseeable event” (60). For this, Newheiser turns to the following citation (of which we are not sure that it will convince the experts) and to which we, no expert at all, will have to return as well:

We *now* learn these things in the best way we can and as they come to us wrapped in the [...] veils [...] with which [...] hierarchical traditions cover [...] things. [But] *in time to come*, when we have become incorruptible[,] immortal [and] blessedly happy, we shall be struck by his blazing light. (60, my italics, reference to DN 592B, 52-53)

Newheiser concludes from this passage, and from the difference between what we now can learn but will know in the time to come, that “Dionysius describes ecclesial hierarchy as a provisional attempt to approach the divine in the present” (60) or even that “there are signs that the structure he describes is a human construction” (52).

In the hope to establish that “religious and secular hopes should not be opposed” (73), chapter three focuses on the discipline of hope itself. Here Newheiser shows himself at his most original: probing into the ‘how’ of hope as it were. “To say ‘I hope...’ is already to admit that the outcome is uncertain; however, hope doesn't take uncertainty as a cause to quit” (64). On the contrary, hope, in Dionysius and Derrida, is what teaches us to “endure” (64), to “persist” (63) and to “press forward” (14), for instance, to “unpredictable possibilities” (16). Hope, in this way, is the acknowledgment that the future to come is uncertain—‘I hope things turns out well’—and that whatever calculations and programs we install and institute, these might not be sufficient to master the unforeseeable possibilities the future can contain. Derrida and Dionysius, furthermore, know all too well that the ‘desire for safety’ causes “people to project themselves onto that which is different, and they both worry that this forecloses the unexpected” (63). Newheiser agrees with Camus when the latter states that hope at times is but a “false comfort,” he disagrees when saying that this hope always would be an “evasion” from the uneasiness of the present. For instance, “Dionysius affirms the promise of the resurrection, but he does not describe what is to come and he does not suppose that it solves anything in the present” (68). Newheiser's religious hope, inspired by Dionysius, and its Christian practice, is therefore a “provisional attempt that is relativized by the unforeseeable future” (68-9). It is a “hope robust enough to acknowledge its uncertainty” (70).

It even seems the case that the hope Newheiser has in mind starts out from a situation of hopelessness. After all, no one would utter the words ‘I hope that...’ if all were already in place and properly in order. In this regard, it is to be noted that our author again points to a situation which echoes Paul's propositions in Rom 8:24 when indicating a situation in which Christians had

to “revise the hopes they previously held” (71). There are plenty of examples in the scriptures which denote the appearance of Jesus as sudden and Dionysius, too, “places himself in the tradition that portrays God’s action as unpredictable” (70-1) or as an inexplicable event: no matter what one hopes for, its arrival will always come as a surprise that exceeds expectations.

Derrida does not speak often of hope. Yet, for Newheiser, Derrida and Dionysius “relate to the commitments they hold in similar ways” (71) or, as we noted earlier, their attitude differs in content but not in kind: where Dionysius joins affirmation and negation, Derrida gathers critique and (religious) commitment in one bold move (Cf. 73). Derrida, for instance, places his faith in democracy, in Europe or in European institutions but this does not make him any less critical over and against these institutions. Yet the difficulties begin when we start to ponder the objects of these hopes precisely. What is it that Derrida and Dionysius are hoping for exactly? What can someone ‘who holds his beliefs loosely’ hope for precisely?

It is on this point that Caputo’s work intervenes in the debates and Newheiser grants Caputo that “Derrida does express some anxiety about determinate hopes” (75). Derrida is not one who follows the hopes and dreams of a community, a nation or a belief system blindly. Here Newheiser’s position tends to become a bit confused. On the one hand, he is distinguishing his own position from Caputo who, “in simplistic oppositions” (105), “opposes indeterminate openness and determinate commitments” (76). On the other hand, Newheiser argues that “Derrida frequently affirms particular hopes” (77), for instance, for Europe and its institutions. Newheiser might be right that Caputo in some works stressed the opposition between particular hopes and indeterminate openness a bit too much, he in turn runs the risk to turn this distinction into a dialectic, especially when he recognizes a “pattern” (75) in Derrida that would be the simple unfolding of the “tension” (76) between indeterminate futurity and determinate attempts to promote democracy in Europe or elsewhere.

For Derrida, however, it is never a matter of the one leading automatically to the other: the danger for Derrida would be to stick with one determinate form as well as to permanently revel in its sheer indeterminacy. Newheiser seems more aware of the second danger (which he associates with Caputo) but less worried about the first one. The reason for this is simple: in a dialectic one would be lead automatically to other forms of determinate hopes and there would always be one or the other openness (to otherness) presupposed as the dialectic is necessarily premised on a multitude.

This brings us to our question again: just how determinate is the object of hope in Newheiser’s account? Recall that for Newheiser this hope is the hope for a future that is unforeseeable and exceeds all expectations. “Derrida and Dionysius suggest that aims which outstrip the subjects’ understanding of what is possible are the paradigm of hope” (80). Now we see that such hope

need not be rational (79) and is a matter of the will (e.g. 81): for Newheiser, one 'hopes' for something just because it seems impossible. Newheiser does give good (and even funny) arguments for this: "the problem with unhealthy hopes is that they are unhealthy, not they aren't genuine hopes" (81). For Newheiser one can hope for no matter what, as for instance "the ability to levitate" (ibid.) but the discernment whether this is a healthy or unhealthy hope, rational or rather foolish, is entirely "extrinsic to hope" (ibid.). Confusion, though, occurs when the question arises whether or not hope must have a determinate object: is a hope in a future to come exceeding the subject's present judgment (Cf. 80) a genuine hope? Is a hope in God's unforeseeable event surpassing all (sacramental) anticipations still a determinate Christian hope?

Here Newheiser wavers and tackles two different questions but answers only one: referring to Adrienne Martin's *How We Hope*, Newheiser writes "hope must have an object that the hoper judges to be possible"—one does not hope for levitation if one at least doesn't think it's possible (80). Yet if hope has an object after all, it seems not that uncertain: one would at least know what to hope for? The question cuts both ways: what is the object of the hope of one who holds his belief loosely, if it is not a determinate object? Newheiser then goes on to answer the other question, that hope is genuine even if it is irrational, but remains silent about whether or not this 'hope in a secular age' requires a determinate object or not. Yet what is the object of such a genuine but irrational hope? Does the hope for the (indeterminate) democracy to come have a (determinate) object? Does one hope for an indeterminate 'democracy to come' or does one hope for such a future to come through hoping for present determinate democracies? Does one have faith in a democracy to come or a belief in our present democracies (according to a distinction that rages through contemporary continental philosophy of religion)?

In the case of Dionysius, the problem is even more glaring. After all, what is Dionysius hoping for? Let us return to the quotes above. One of the problems with hope, as perceived by Camus and Elliot, is that it is an all too confident expectation of an ultimate blessedness that distracts from the problems in the present. Yet Dionysius, in the passage quoted above, seems quite certain what exactly is to come in the 'time to come'. Despite all of his theoretical efforts aiming at a divinity that is able to surprise our expectations, Dionysius seems quite certain that in the time to come, he (and his fellow believers) will be 'incorruptible', 'immortal' and, not to forget, 'blessedly happy'. The problem with the determinate object of hope is in effect that it might stick with the one determinate objects it knows and ecclesial hierarchies are not known for surprises: they can seem quite certain what it is we can hope for (and even more who can hope for it and who cannot!). In the end, Newheiser's account of a hope that could do (almost?) without any object seems destined to fail—for a 'beyond' of present democracies or for a 'union' with God 'beyond' what can be anticipated—and the question of what someone 'who holds his beliefs loosely' can hope for remains unanswered. Similarly, Newheiser argues that "Dionysius claims that, because

union with God remains yet to come, our present situation is radically uncertain” (77). However, is this uncertainty really radical or “profound” (105)? It is uncertain how exactly this union will look like, but it is not uncertain that such a union will take place. This is, in any case, not the uncertainty of Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life* where we see St. Paul stating that for the Christian the only genuine question is 'will I be saved?'; it is rather, the already somewhat complacent, question of a Christian that has a very determinate idea of the 'time to come' and asks 'when exactly will I be saved'? There are thus gradations when it comes to the object of hope and here we need to heed that Dionysius was one of the more enlightened examples in the history of Christianity. But how much more do ordinary believers need a reachable, imaginable object to keep their Christian hopes up!

Newheiser remains silent about these questions and quietly seems to assume that hope best be without an object. Yet this would bring him closer to Caputo's stress on indeterminacy than he elsewhere is willing to admit! The question deserves to be posed nonetheless: what is hope if it does not hope for something particular? To be sure, Newheiser mentions that just as Derrida 'fills in' his indeterminate hope for a democracy to come with 'particular hopes', just so Dionysius “fills out his hope for union with God with imagery drawn from a Christian scripture” (77, also 95). Both of them have certain particular and determinate affirmations, yet both of them, too, insist that these affirmations “remain subject to revision” (ibid.). We will have to ponder later about the exact status of such 'revisions' (especially in the case of a lingering dialectic) but for now we need to realize that the act of filling in these 'indeterminate objects of hope' with a determinate object is not innocent at all: certain Christian believers, just as the ones triumphing about one aspect of their democracy, will fill their hopes in in a particular way and will remain stuck in the one dominant version of Christianity that they desire. In short: it is not sure whether we can hope, at all, for a Christianity that holds its beliefs loosely (although, of course, the fact that believers are looking for manners to hold their beliefs loosely is, in a way, hopeful).

In chapter four, the book takes a turn and the question of hope seems to disappear somewhat. This particular chapter mostly revisits the debate between Derrida and negative theology through the commentaries of Marion and Caputo. Interesting is Newheiser's consult of the Derrida archive through which he had access to as of yet unpublished texts of Derrida: from these one gathers that the hyperessentialism Derrida supposedly ascribed allegedly to negative theology is but one reading of negative theology (cf. 97) and per usual, for Derrida, there is *plus d'un*. We will not rehearse these (old and a bit outdated) debates between Marion and Derrida here but focus rather on the advances in Newheiser's argument. Where Marion and Caputo argue, respectively, that religion must choose either for “a secure assertion of traditional dogma” or for “an attenuated religiosity abstracted from any determinate content,” Newheiser hopes to come, through his reading of Dionysius and Derrida,

...to an alternative that is urgently needed. In the context of pluralistic societies, the claim that a particular tradition possesses unquestionable authority rings false, but decontextualized gestures towards higher meaning are vague and unsatisfying. [Yet] it is possible to affirm religious commitments in all their particularity while holding those commitments open to transformation. (86)

These lines are programmatic for the chapters to follow where Newheiser seeks to show what hope can mean for a secular age or what a certain religious stance can contribute to the public realm (Cf. 106). Once again Newheiser concludes the chapter by stating that for Dionysius and Derrida negativity cannot be maintained 'all the way' and at one point has to give way to an "affirmation that is necessarily uncertain" (102)—yet an affirmation of a religious (or otherwise) commitment nonetheless. Derrida fills in his particular images of democracy from within the peculiarities of his context whereas Dionysius uses the Christian images of his time. Both, however, have shook up their discourse from within: the reality of this democracy in Belgium here does not live up to the idea of democracy, whereas the hope for the union with God might not be the union we wish or imagine just as the God one meets will not conform to the ideas of divinity one has beforehand. If hope, then, for Newheiser is never entirely without object—we are hoping for something but it is not sure whether this hope "reaches its object" (96)—it is therefore a sort of 'object without object' that this hope presupposes and once more one is in the proximity of the 'religion without religion' that Newheiser throughout the book rejects.

Chapter five asks whether religious commitments can find their way again to the public and secular realm when the default position of the secular age has been to separate politics and religion. In this chapter, Newheiser examines Derrida's rather ambivalent relation to secularism. Newheiser argues that Derrida opposes "programmatic" secularism but not "procedural" secularism: the former states that religion is to be excluded from the public realm no matter what where the latter simply prohibits that the state prefers one religious group over others (109). This paves the way for Derrida's claim that the influence of a religious tradition on the public realm is often "subtle" and "subterranean" (ibid.). Yet just as hope, for Newheiser, establishes an openness towards the future beyond the limitation of the present, so the idea of justice (itself subtly stemming from religious traditions) and "religious traditions open imagination to a justice that transcends the status quo" (109). Here one finds a conundrum present in Derrida's later writings: although without the religious traditions of the West one would not have imagined such an idea of justice, these religious traditions never embody once and for all this idea of justice—the very idea of justice transcends the traditions that taught us the very idea of transcendence.

The problem with this chapter is that it, apart from a discussion of Martin Hägglund, remains with Derrida's ambivalence. Yet whereas this is Derrida's end-point—somewhat like a born again *soixante-huitard*—it should be our starting-point. It is one thing to state that for Derrida religion and the public realm cannot be entirely separated or 'immunized' from one another, it is something else entirely for us to see that the religion that is now entering the secular stage can be every bit as violent as the religions that modernity tried to expel in the first place. We will have to come back to this question, for what if the difference in content (between modern and postmodern religion for instance) cannot be all that neatly separated from a difference in kind and, instead, makes for a difference in kind altogether?

We would then be facing a new situation even if it is at times with old means but violent ones all the same—wasn't this what Derrida puzzled in his *Faith and Knowledge* when wondering about the fundamentalism that used teletechnological means to distribute its age-old phantasms? The chapter seems to shy away from these, admittedly difficult, questions with regard to Derrida's legacy. This question is not simply the observation that for Derrida, in fact, religion and secularism intertwined, the question rather is where this will lead us given the fact that one cannot neatly separate religion and politics. All this makes for the fact that this chapter, though it contains some nice insights on Derrida's relation to religion, is sidetracked just a little when it comes to the question of hope in a secular age. Concluding the chapter with the statement that an “ambivalent relation to a religious heritage characterizes life in a secular age” (130) does not alter this.

In Chapter six Newheiser asks what exactly “theological reflection can contribute to democratic politics” (132) and the question of hope resurfaces. Both religious commitments and political movements can fall prey to the desire for safety and to a certain rigidity. Religion so “becomes impervious to other possibilities [and] political movements that critique the status quo sometimes find it easier to resist power than to exercise it” (132). Newheiser's negative political theology wants it both ways: both the religious affirmation and the critical negation that remain open to other possibilities. “A commitment to radical transformation,” Newheiser argues, “does not rule out the compromise required to enact concrete policies in the present” (132). Newheiser is to be commended to see a similar structure in Derrida, for all the dreams about democracies to come never entailed that one should nonetheless not at least try, in the best possible way, to maintain democratic impulses in the present. *Il faut essayer*.

In this last chapter, Newheiser positions Derrida over and against Agamben with whom Derrida had a somewhat tortuous relationship. Derrida wasn't particularly impressed by Agamben's work. Agamben agrees with Derrida, though, that our religious heritage still works in our present governmental system: administrations serve, in one way or other to glorify the power structures

at work within our societies. Derrida disagrees with Agamben if the way out of this complex legacy would be to dream up a “nostal[gia] for a pure profanation that [...] preceded the emergence of religion” (145). Here Newheiser's approach to Dionysius and Derrida pays off, for both these thinkers do not want such a 'pure' profanation, desacralization or secularization:

Much as Dionysius subjects the things he says are sacred to desacralizing critique, Derrida holds particular concepts and practices (such as democracy) as extraordinarily significant, while insisting that they must remain subject to revision. Where Agamben pits profanation against the sacred, Derrida and Dionysius show that it is possible to draw upon symbols that possess special significance, at the same time, maintaining, a critical practice that loosens their authority. (145)

We should consider these symbols more closely, for their status remain somewhat undetermined in Newheiser's account. These symbols might be an incarnatory reflex, a psychoanalytical fetish or just a point of contact between the empirical and the transcendental. Yet Newheiser's example of these symbols, and his interpretation of them, is of interest. First, however, we should note that these symbols follow from Newheiser's account of Dionysian desacralization: although one can 'desacralize' everyone and everything, one cannot desacralize all the time: there is a 'remainder' that, for the time being, will be considered sacred. These things are multiple—and Newheiser already got in trouble enough for the mention of sharing a “piece of apple pie” (151).

Desacralization seeks a difficult balance between the provisional character of all things sacred and the need to revere these sacred things. We should first note that Newheiser finds such a practice of desacralization both in Dionysius and Derrida. “Dionysius articulate a sacramental theology that desacralizes everything including Christian worship” (107) and Derrida seems to come up with a similar thought when he follows Levinas' distinction between the sacred and the holy (147). If something sacred remains, Newheiser tends to use it the sense of what is 'separated', 'at a distance' from the ordinary. Similarly, “Dionysius desacralizes the sacred, affirming some things as sacred while submitting them to critique” (134). Derrida, we have seen, in similar fashion, values certain things as 'extraordinarily significant'. Newheiser mentions several examples of such symbols –the flag, the nation, democracy, and so on—all the while claiming that the affirmation of some things as sacred need not mean one cannot “[resist]its appropriation as a tool of legitimation” (143). One needs to understand why Newheiser stresses the importance of such symbols: they sustain “commitments [that] constitute a faith that exceeds the calculation of cause and effect [and] transcend the pursuit of individual interests” (150 and 149) and particular policy goals. Newheiser is quite clear about how such sustaining takes place. Especially “in moments of national crisis” (149)

Symbols of common identity give a group something to argue over, and they situate disagreement within a shared enterprise. The sacred brings bodies together within rites of communal identity:

singing a hymn or the national anthem, eating the Eucharist host [...], processing on Palm Sunday or in a Pride parade (151)

All of a sudden, in effect, in the midst of a movement of desacralization no less, a lot of things are sacred! Yet, even if Newheiser might have spent more time on which things exactly can become sacred (and which things not), our question lies elsewhere. For, even though, one can agree that these sacred things have a certain empowerment to them and are “an indispensable resources for a politics in pursuit of justice” (151), questions abound, once more, when it comes to the object and aim of such a “performative power that opens political possibilities” (ibid.). Newheiser, for instance, writes that one needs perseverance and “[insist] upon a justice to come while pursuing particular improvements on the level of law” (151).

In an earlier quote, we already pointed to the presence of metaphors of 'revision', 'development' and 'improvements' in Newheiser's book. It is in effect surprising how often such a logic surfaces. A few examples: political action “pursues imperfect improvement” (16); Derrida “opens a space for unpredictable improvement by insisting that every judgment is uncertain” (19); critique seeks “continual improvement” (38) and therefore entails a sort of affirmation; apophysis “opens [the self] to unforeseeable development” (47); “affirmations in tension with a negativity [...] opens future development” (82) and so on.

The question now is to where exactly all this development and all these revisions lead? Given the occurrence of what can surmise is a lingering dialectic between determinate hopes and indeterminate future and given the occurrence of all too certain object of hope, one might legitimately wonder whether Newheiser has emancipated himself enough from seeing the 'democracy to come' some sort of regulative ideal to which we are heading but will never reach. Similar questions arise when one considers Dionysius peculiar account of Christian practice and its eschatology of a union with the divine 'to come'. The difference between Derrida (and Heidegger's account of St. Paul) and Dionysius is that the former's account of the future remains to come, whereas Dionysius, despite all evidence to the contrary, is certain that the 'to come' he is describing, the union with God, will in effect come. Dionysius knows both what to hope for and what will come (although an element of surprise might be present). All of a sudden, the eschatology of Dionysius appears as an 'ideal' just waiting to be realized (which, for ordinary believers, will easily be turned into a goal 'to be reached') whereas Derrida's promise in no way delivers a blueprint or example of what is to come.

There is, however, reason to believe to Newheiser reads Derrida exactly in such a fashion when one perceives a dialectic between 'determinate' hope and 'indeterminate' ideas continually improving. Even the object cannot be reached (which remains to be seen when it comes to the 'union with God') in precisely the preconceived fashion, it will become an ideal nonetheless and

something to which all affirmations and all actions are heading and, in this way, an ideal (as a determinate object), as Caputo has it, constrains the open-endedness of the promise of a democracy to come.⁴²⁴

Yet even if Newheiser has not always stuck to the logic of the conundrum he at times advance and succumbed to all too determinate objects of hope, it is to be noted that “inhabiting the middle space” these conundrums, between determinate objects and indeterminate hopes, prescribe is a difficult balance indeed: why indeed “develop a theological system that is rationally ordered [while] claim[ing] that the divine shatters the structure of reason” (81-2)? Why in effect “articulate a sacramental theology that desacralizes everything” including the logic of the sacraments (107)? Why improve the democracies around us if the democracy to come is never to be realized in the first place?

Perhaps what we can gather from Newheiser's fine book is that if such a conundrum would be permanently realized in the context of an unfolding life and not constantly 'inclined towards one side or the other' (Ignatius of Loyola), this would be nothing short of miraculous—as it happens the topic of Newheiser's new book. The promise is made, and the hopes are up.

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A Caputian Reading of David Newheiser's *Hope in a Secular Age*

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Now more than ever our experience of politics and faith is marked by a feeling of loss and 'disappointment.' At the time of writing, the world as we know it has been turned upside down and daily-life reconstituted. The deadly Corona virus, causing deaths now well over a hundred thousand globally, has brought entire nations to an economic stand-still and placed the livelihoods and well-being of many into precarity. Moreover, beyond the innumerable social, economic, and ecological ailments that already mark our contemporary condition, American cities (and now elsewhere) are pulsing with furious riots as violent clashes between police and

protestors escalate against the backdrop of calls to end systemic racism. In the midst of this geopolitical watershed, religious institutions have equally found themselves vying for legitimacy. Members of faith communities are isolated from each other, unable to participate and share in collective activities and liturgical rites. Faith leaders struggle to pursue new digitally relevant ways of providing solace and comfort to those in desperate need. To finally make matters worse, presidents waive sacred texts in front of cameras for publicity, eerily reminiscent of fascist imaging from the early twentieth century.

It is surely no overstatement that if in recent times we have ever needed a counter-narrative, what one might call a 'politics of hope', now is that time. This is what David Newheiser has given us in his prescient new book, *Hope In A Secular Age* (2019). Newheiser enjoins us that despite all the disappointment and uncertainty, we must persist; neither blindly into idealist utopias which resist ambiguity, nor into cynicisms which thwart concrete improvements. Hope as the solution to these false choices has that character of resilience which "enables desire to endure without denying vulnerability" (2). However, it is also a weighted concept rich in its Judeo-Christian resonances that are unmistakable in our 'secular' European languages (3). For Newheiser, the category of hope therefore offers a site for reflecting on the 'future of faith' in a 'secular age,' since it both draws from the religious archive and transcends secular rationality. The secular and religious poles enmeshing each other, and which structure the argument of the book, are the works of Jacques Derrida on the one hand, and the negative theological tradition represented by Dionysius the Areopagite on the other. Unlike the supposed epistemological certainty offered by modern reason or the triumphalism which sometimes characterizes Christian confidence (5-7), both thinkers share an 'affinity' between a religious and secular hope that is persistent but remains vulnerable to disappointment and uncertainty. Through these traditions Newheiser aims to clarify hope's character which he understands to be implicitly at work in Derrida's thought and Dionysius' negative theology. Without the ventriloquism characteristic of postmodern commentary, the welcomed lucidity of Newheiser's unadorned yet eloquent prose is matched by a tone that is balanced and measured but no less urgent with its intentions. An academic concinnity spans the book's six chapters, and is grounded in an impressive breadth of secondary sources and careful detail in the use of primary ones. From this Newheiser fashions an argument that convincingly retrieves the compatibility between Christian commitment and deconstruction. Beyond wanting to simply resurrect the old debates concerning the sympathies between these pre- and postmodern traditions, Newheiser's ultimate aim is to defend a non-dogmatic religious discourse — what he calls a 'negative political theology' (132) — that is able to constructively contribute to political life in such a way that maintains its own self-critical awareness. This review will be structured in two parts. In the first I will outline the argument of the book's six

chapter's, before limiting myself in the second part to some initial reflections that will critically consider Newheiser's interpretation of John D. Caputo.

In the *first chapter* Newheiser tacitly enters into the well-known debate in Derridian scholarship in terms of the 'definition of culture' and the place of 'theory' (or 'anti-theory') within it. In favour of the former — viz. deconstruction is not simply negation and critique — Newheiser argues for the continuous ethical implications of Derrida's thought from the early to late explicitly political works. Here, whether *différance*, justice or the democracy to-come, Derrida evinces a negativity that is not paranoiac, but reflexive to the extent that exposure to the Other opens up new possibilities for ways of being. In the space between criticism (negativity) and the need to continue speaking (affirmation) lies an 'ethics of uncertainty' which does not close down judgements, for example, but demands their continual revision. Such an ethics, therefore, "encourages a form of commitment that refuses complacency" and "exemplifies the discipline of hope, which presses forward despite its uncertainty" (19).

In the *second chapter*, Newheiser engages the negative theological tradition through the enigmatic sixth-century mystic, Dionysius the Areopagite. According to Dionysius, given the creator-creature distinction, no name for God, or indeed any predication of God is adequate for the divine. Hence, "because God is the creator of everything, one must affirm (*kataphaskein*) every name for God, but it is necessary to unsay (*apophaskein*) every divine name" (44). Similar to deconstruction, Newheiser boldly asserts that beyond the linguistic manoeuvres of apophatic discourse there are ethical and political implications to Dionysius' thought. Instead of being able to seize upon God as if s/he were some knowable object, Dionysius' apophatics requires a *dispossession of the self* in relation to God, which "becomes a means of ethical transformation" (47). An important hermeneutical question (and potentially problematic position for Newheiser's argument) are the implications of the ecclesial hierarchies in the Dionysian corpus that supposedly mediate the hidden knowledge of God. In response, Newheiser offers a compelling defence of the *provisional* nature of the ecclesial order; instead of creating an idol of the hidden God that is mediated through church hierarchy, this hiddenness becomes precisely a part of the apophatic tension in which the sacramental nature of the church, its symbols, and structures, are all relativized (57). Thus, "affirmation of the sacred enacts a disciplined critique that keeps both discourse and practice in motion" (60).

What the ethics (or apophatics) of uncertainty accomplishes is not merely an epistemological posture or 'discursive technique' of humility, but rather a 'discipline', 'practice' and 'commitment' of openness to what is unexpected (63). According to Newheiser, this "Discipline of Hope", which titles the *third chapter*, is for Derrida and Dionysius an *activity* that affirms the pursuit of a future — whether a democracy to-come or the kingdom of God — but does so with the understanding

that this pursuit is always vulnerable to disappointment. Contrary to Albert Camus who thinks hope claims a false discomfort and imposes an artificial assurance denying the absurdity of existence (65), Newheiser argues that the vision of hope found in Dionysius and Derrida takes place on a 'groundlessness' that does not attempt to impose meaning on the world, but rather embraces the weight of life refusing to "circumscribe present uncertainty" (70). Since they have commitments which are 'different in content but not in kind,' as Newheiser repeats throughout the text, "the two authors share an uncertain hope they suggest that religious and secular hopes should not be opposed" (73).

The stakes of faith's 'future in a secular age' come to the foreground especially in the *fourth chapter*. A part of Newheiser's methodological argument is the performative dimension that emerges in the relationship between Dionysius and Derrida. If their affinity — operating on the level of ethics and not epistemology (86) — can hold, then this would not only clarify, but also justify the coherency of a faith that functions reliably within the context of secular modern pluralism. On Newheiser's reading, the relationship between negative theology and deconstruction has been misinterpreted through the presentation of an either/or scenario, replaying the philosophical dichotomy of form and content. Representative of the former is John D. Caputo who, according to Newheiser, insists that Derrida rejects negative theology in favour of a 'religion without religion' and thus without determinate content (85). Opposing this 'attenuated religiosity,' Jean-Luc Marion argues that Derrida is unfairly hostile toward negative theology, and that the latter should be defended because it presents us with a God already deconstructed (94). Drawing from previously unpublished material in Derrida's corpus (91), Newheiser's third-way approach argues that both Caputo and Marion over-determine the status of predicative statements in Derrida's interpretation of negative theology. By contrast, instead of having to choose between indeterminacy (Caputo) and determinate content (Marion), Newheiser says that both Derrida and Dionysius hold "affirmation and negation in tension" (86).

If Newheiser's alternate response to secularization includes the compatibility of deconstruction and negative theology, then the political implications of religion in secular politics can be demonstrated. This is the task for the final two chapters. In *chapter five*, "Atheism and the Future of Faith", he engages Mark Lilla's well-known attempt to disengage religion and politics for the sake of public life (113). Confirmed by the analyses of José Casanova and Talal Assad (118) which skilfully questions these assumptions, Newheiser argues that Derrida instead follows a "procedural secularism" that desires a neutral state but which permits the participation of religion in the public sphere (114). In the line of Carl Schmitt and drawing on Paul Kahn, modern political concepts are not just reactions to Christianity but still continue to function *theologically*. Following the formal indistinguishability between Derrida's political-religious faith and negative theology, Newheiser subsequently, and rightly, rejects Martin Hägglund's reading that Derrida

himself dismisses religion in favour of a radical atheism (126). For Derrida, the fragility of political life should lead neither to the often-violent imposition of religion as a means for stabilizing instability, but nor should it be the reason that religion is relegated. On the contrary, “the reason religion is dangerous is the reason it is indispensable: it opens imagination to a future that has not yet come into view” (131).

Having crafted this opening for religion to present itself as a potentially positive force for political life, Newheiser introduces his own notion of a ‘negative political theology’.⁴²⁵ Returning to Dionysius, the latter’s apophatics can now “contribute to democratic politics”, wherein “political movements can affirm realistic proposals in hope while subjecting them, at the same time, to utopian critique” (132). The foil for Newheiser’s argument in the final *sixth chapter* is Giorgio Agamben’s reading of Dionysius, and reflects the same issue of hierarchy dealt with in chapter two, except now with the political implications in full view (134). In short, Agamben argues in *The Kingdom and The Glory* (2011) that Dionysian mysticism reinforces the ecclesial order (because the latter mediates the unknowable God) and therefore, according to Agamben’s thesis, becomes a model of sacralization for the glorification of contemporary government bureaucracy (137). Opposing specialist readings that seem to confirm Agamben’s intuitions, including Andrew Louth and Alexander Golitzin, Newheiser insists that Dionysian apophatics does not affirm the authority of Christian worship. Instead, “[r]ather than sacralizing the *oikonomia* of the church by associating it with the *theologia* of divine transcendence, Dionysius desacralizes every claim to access the divine” (140). As such, the apophatics of negative theology is in fact closer to achieving Agamben’s political goals than he himself recognizes, since it both delimits theological authority and continues to proliferate speech about God—similar to what Agamben calls ‘play’ or ‘profanation’ (143). Dionysius therefore offers a negative political theology that stems assertions of power, but which also does not shy away from bold affirmations that are nevertheless always provisional.

In moving now to the second part, I would like to state at this point that I am deeply sympathetic to Newheiser’s project, both in the broad sense with respect to the value of hope as arguably *the* political-religious category of our time, and more precisely to the creative way in which post-secular deployments of religious and philosophical resources are expedient for addressing contemporary political challenges. Newheiser’s argument is, at its most fundamental level, concerned with maintaining the interdependence between affirmation and negation. Affirmation without negation leads to dogmatism, and negation without affirmation leads to cynicism. In the delicate maintenance of both resides a mutually productive tension wherein the phenomenon of hope is to be situated. For Newheiser, both Derrida (who tends to be more ‘melancholic’) and Dionysius (who seems more ‘sanguine’) are able to balance this tension wherein it is “neither necessary to avoid negativity in order to preserve the possibility of affirmation nor to avoid

religious commitment in order to preserve the possibility of critique” (73). But for Newheiser there are some interpretations of Derrida in particular where the preservation of affirmation is lost in the amplification of negativity. John D. Caputo’s reading of Derrida according to Newheiser, takes this stance which descends into cynical despair, because a ‘celebration of indeterminacy’ hinders one’s ability to make determinate decisions, articulate specific hopes, or offer concrete proposals. In my view, I do not think that this is an accurate rendering of Caputo’s Derrida, and would go further to say that Newheiser’s own position with some qualifications, ends up closer to Caputo than what he may have thought.

One important qualification is whether Newheiser’s updated treatment of Derrida’s relationship to negative theology is in fact accurate. For the reflections that follow, I would like to bracket this question because I readily concede that the picture here is more complex, and Newheiser’s exceptional archival work seems to have confirmed this. However, if Caputo has contributed to the oppositional relationship between Derrida and negative theology, I do not believe, as Newheiser argues, that Caputo’s interpretation of Derrida “hinges” (86) on it, nor do I think, therefore, that to emphasize the “messianic rather than apophatic” (87), as Caputo does, results in the dialectical reading of Derrida that simply undervalues ‘determinate religion’ or the concrete practices and decisions which necessarily involve daily life. On the contrary, I think that Newheiser’s mistake with respect to Caputo is precisely to have limited his interpretation to the first chapter in *Prayers and Tears*. Here again a second qualification; even if Caputo has over-emphasized the role of *superessentialism* in negative theology (92), he cannot be said to only “sometimes acknowledge that messianism always takes a determinate form”, as Newheiser quietly footnotes (74). Caputo, on my reading, is very well aware of these tensions in Derrida as well as in his own thought, and while it could be argued that there may indeed be some rhetorical slippage that occurs in some of his ‘middle’ period,⁴²⁶ this cannot for the most part be said of his later work (which Newheiser does not engage).⁴²⁷ My claim, then, would be that Caputo is not a counter-productive source for the project of a ‘negative political theology’, but rather, in virtue of what I would call his own ‘radical political theology’, he might, in fact, come to be considered a congenial ally.

Newheiser’s position can be summarized as follows: “Derrida’s emphasis on indeterminacy serves a specific function: it aims to disrupt the assurance that justice is already realized. At the same time, although the future is undecidable, Derrida acknowledges that undetermined openness is not a state that people can achieve” (75). The latter signals that ‘indeterminacy’ or ‘openness’ is not the Kantian regulative ideal toward which we asymptotically move — we cannot ‘live’ or ‘dwell’ in the undecidable, if that is to mean the avoidance of making decisions in the here-and-now. Caputo is charged with insisting “upon an indeterminacy that no one can actually sustain” (86). As mentioned, Newheiser’s interpretation of Caputo is limited to the latter’s reading of

negative theology, and since this relationship in particular is primary for Newheiser's aims regarding Christian theology vis-à-vis deconstruction, he treats the argument here in isolation, misconstruing Caputo's overall depiction of Derrida as one that peddles "simplistic oppositions" (105). The cited text from Newheiser's footnote referred to above is actually the culmination of several carefully considered pages in *Prayers and Tears*⁴²⁸ where Caputo intends 1) to emphatically *resist* the oppositional thinking Newheiser accuses him of and 2) to *accentuate*, not simply 'acknowledge,' the irreducible particularities of life, which is, moreover, central (the hinge?) to his understanding of deconstruction. Let me quote him at length here:

The messianic goes to the heart of deconstruction and of deconstruction's passion and deconstruction's religion, its affirmation of and engagement in the world, in events, in what is happening, in traditions and what is to come, in 'life/death,' *survivance*, surviving *today* Derrida's desert-like and arid, an-khôral, atheological messianic enjoys a great deal of the life of the historical messianisms, of their historical hope, of their religious affirmation of something that is to come, a great deal of the energy of *engagement*.⁴²⁹

Caputo quite clearly understands that deconstruction's messianic hope is not a purity, a 'true' messianic in general, or a sublime alterity, for that would strictly have the "form of absolute *inhospitality*, of uninhabitability."⁴³⁰ One could grant some further allowances for the view that Caputo denigrates particular hopes if we continue to follow Newheiser's citation of passages from Caputo's popular autobiographical work *Hoping Against Hope*. But even amidst the lyrical prose of this text, the caricature of revelling indeterminacy remains imprecise, since Caputo consistently stresses that what he is trying to describe is something "going on *in religion*" — not something outside, spinning indeterminately.⁴³¹ Newheiser rightly points to a number of commentators who agree with him, citing essays by Jamie Smith, Kevin Hughes⁴³² and Arthur Bradley.⁴³³

In my reading, there is definitely a reception of Caputo's book that has had this effect, and subsequently many of these critics, if not all of them, have the same central concern: How to read the 'without' (*ohne, sans*) between religion and its double? Or inversely, what happens to the 'with' of religion, the determinate hopes that religion offers? Caputo had reflected at length and responded to many of these complaints already early on,⁴³⁴ and he continues to refer supposedly new criticisms of his more theological texts, to these earlier essays.⁴³⁵ In short, I think that Newheiser believes Caputo has embraced an understanding of Derrida that essentially reviews him as a postmodern Kantian. Religion *without* religion is akin to a 'religion within the limits of reason alone', which stands opposed to any determinate hopes that are made available through the revelation of the Christian faith. But in my reading, Caputo is explicit that the way to get beyond the Heideggerian distinction — to which Derrida refers as a 'temptation' in "Faith and Knowledge" and which I think Newheiser himself has fallen into, not Caputo — between

‘revelation’ and ‘revealability,’ is to introduce the famous quasi-transcendental. In “Faith and Knowledge” this is encapsulated by the notion of *foi*. However, *foi*, that kind of archi-faith, if left by itself (a pure messianic indeterminacy) remains empty, and so should be understood “hauntologically” as that which ‘haunts’ the determinate faiths (*croyances*). Viewed in this way, Caputo does not believe that this archi-faith, or religion without religion, is a “faith that somebody believes, or a religion that somebody can inhabit.”⁴³⁶ Rather he understands this *foi* as “a ghost, a spectre, that haunts us in the sorts of concrete positions—philosophical, political and religious—that we do take.” A religion without religion holds these commitments and these hopes to account, and renders them provisional as Newheiser might say.

As I have tried to argue elsewhere, alongside broader philosophical movements that have tried to reclaim the ‘materiality’ of deconstruction and phenomenology after the predominance of ‘textuality’,⁴³⁷ as well as what could well be a reaction to this residual Kantianism discerned in Caputo’s work, I think his later more explicit theological texts, which include a turn to Hegel, can be considered his definitive effort to quell these concerns over the status of ‘matter’, ‘materiality’ and historical instantiations of faith that have been raised by Newheiser and others. If I am correct to say that the picture Newheiser has presented of Caputo in *Hope In A Secular Age* cannot simply be reduced to an uninhabitable experience of indeterminacy, then I wonder how Newheiser might respond when Caputo now begins to embrace and speak of a ‘radical theology’ that seeks a “possibilizing” of the event, or which emphasizes the proximity of “existence and insistence,” or the “becoming radical of confessional theology” in his more recent work (*The Insistence of God*, 2013 and *Cross and Cosmos*, 2019). In this light, a light that shares the productivity that is generated by Derrida’s negativity, are Caputo and Newheiser in the end so different? Do they not have similar provisional hopes and dreams? Is Caputo not a source of misunderstanding, but rather a forceful ally for a world that desperately needs to learn how to hope? I think he might be, and lord knows, we all need the help and hope we can get in these troubled times.

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Secular Hope or a Quest for the Phenomenon of Hope

A Response to David Newheiser’s *Hope in a Secular Age*

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In his thought-provoking book, *Hope in a Secular Age*, David Newheiser sets himself the task of thinking the reality of hope after the dawning of the secular age and its constitution of reality as bounded within an immanent frame. Without necessarily challenging the grounds of this determination of the secular, and while suspending (even if momentarily) any a priori commitment to the transcending of this immanent frame by an afterlife, he asks whether it is possible to think the question of hope from a certain common ground of shared human experience, as required by the secular. The immediate pertinence of the questioning is of course to decouple the logic of hope from its safe and unquestioned anchoring in a metaphysics of the afterlife, after the secular age has unsettled the self-evidence of such a framework and complexified the landscape with alternative and competing paradigms. The plurality of the secular sphere, particularly, the resultant non-givenness of the religious (whatever further specification that may take) framework, imposes new exigences for thinking hope. The “secular hope” to be sought, against any singularly “Christian hope,” must forego the confidence and triumphal assertiveness in an inevitable telos in order to embrace a reality of uncertainty as the shared experience of hope in the pluralistic secular. Though it is not elaborated much, Newheiser very broadly seems to aim at a certain reduction that defines for the secular age a shared horizon of experience, in a similar way, for example, as the Heideggerian and Deleuzian analytic of finitude do. In this way, the pluralities of hopes, beyond their particular content, share a general and formal determination that is grounded in a radical contingency or open possibility of being frustrated. This therefore raises the question: When the telos (since in the secular age, this telos is no longer universal) that naturally grounds an expectant confidence in the future is removed or suspended, what remains of the attitude of hope? Is it possible to conceive of hope in the absence of this telos, which would remove its guarantee of fulfilment and expose it to the possibility of disappointment? For the proposal of a secular construct of hope, Newheiser stakes a lot on this vulnerability to disappointment of hope, because separated from its telos. He proposes that the common denominator of hope, then, is uncertainty, and to truly hope is to stand in the existential tension of this non-resolved suspended middle. These all go to defining what he insists is an “ethics of uncertainty,” to the extent that he is more interested in the motivating praxis and attitudes that attend to this uncertainty than with its purely epistemological status.

But the episteme that inspires the comportment cannot be avoided. This is because essential to the author’s intuition, the attitude of uncertainty for the Christian rests upon the fundamental unknowability and ineffability of God. God cannot be known as knowledge for he exceeds the concept and is beyond representation. The impossibility of God to fall into knowledge precipitates within the Christian tradition an alternative knowing within unknowing, systematized in the negative theology of Dionysius the Areopagite. Negative theology defines a

kind of positivity of the unknown (and unknowing) that unsettles any definitive knowledge by possession. For Newheiser, gesturing in the same direction, the deconstructive approach of Jacques Derrida, numbering among “theorists with no religious commitment of their own,” not only cultivates an attitude of constant deconstructive questioning into knowledge, but, as an antidote to the anxiety of uncertainty, instils a mentality that is comfortable and accepting of this deconstructive instability of knowledge. I think what Newheiser proposes is an episteme of indeterminacy and uncertainty as the shared, neutral ground of the secular, and hope as a placed solidly on this foundation. This motivates him to double down on Derrida’s deconstruction as the philosophical and ethical attitude to secure just this openness and fluidity. So that, at the very point of entering into an excluding and dogmatic determination, the deconstructive *élan* auto-corrects through a continuous self-critique to restore the posture of indeterminacy. In this regard, the author manages to make Derrida’s dry pessimism and Dionysius’s seeming other-worldly mysticism work in tandem in the employ of a contemporary and hopeful ethic.

In what follows, my aim is not so much to engage the details of the readings made of Dionysius and Derrida nor to evaluate the success or not of the rapprochement made between negative theology and deconstruction, nor yet the specifics of the political theology worked out from Dionysian negativity. Rather, it is to briefly interrogate more generally “the discipline of hope” as Newheiser explores it, along with the basis for its entry into the secular age.

The question of hope has a long philosophical-intellectual history in the Western tradition that goes from Ancient Greek thought, through Christianity and Medieval treatments to early modern and contemporary explorations.⁴³⁸ We know of the ambivalence of hope as Hesiod presents it in the myth of Pandora and as it unfolds throughout the tradition. There is the recurring question of whether hope is a good thing vis-à-vis human agency and its ability to confront difficulties, or, whether it is a negative thing by providing false securities and militating against the exercise of courage. A major inflection point on hope, which Newheiser engages, is its theological definition by Christianity in terms of certainty and confidence because anchored in God and beyond the contingency and temporary limitations of the hopeful person. This hope is not founded on any evidential certainty, or epistemology, strictly speaking, and yet is not for that devoid of its own intelligibility; nor, as St. Paul make clear, does it preclude a real experience of the present as suffering. St. Augustine, in his *City of God* (book XV, §XXI) derives a thoroughgoing political theology out of the transformed Christian understanding of hope as the confident expectation of the promise of a heavenly city in the future. The Christian hope, then, is always connected to faith and to the love of God, forming the well-known Medieval triad of virtues.

In this light, Newheiser opposes an acceptance of hope as a dogmatism that arrogates to itself a handle on the future with a ring of confident finality. He takes much of his analysis starting from

the questioning of post-Kantian existentialism, taking very seriously the pessimistic charge of Albert Camus that hope deceptively tends to absolve a person from facing the raw vicissitudes of existence and at the same time the more optimistic positions of Søren Kierkegaard and Gabriel Marcel that see in hope the overcoming of the anxiety and angst of everyday life. That is, on one hand, insisting, against Camus, on the crucial importance of hope against despair but, on the other hand, not conceding to Kierkegaard and Marcel on the metaphysics that makes hope a guarantor of certainty. But given this tension, it still remains the case that in order to concretely hope, there must be some kind of prehension of the possibility of a desired future. Analytic philosophers, such as Adrienne Martin in *How We Hope*, have argued that there is an assent of reason to the conditions of possibility of contingent futurities that in turn serves as the basis for the practically engaged willing of hope. This argues against the acceptance of hope as passive expectation. The outline is from Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, Q. 40), who had similarly set himself the task of thinking hope in the absence of faith (even though this is not his own final position), but whose rich analyses remain absent from Newheiser's treatment. Newheiser agrees that "hope is not simply a passive emotion" but insists that it is "wrong to locate its active dimension in reason" (79). Let us pose the question with him, then: What is the active dimension of hope grounded in? We can go along with the author in flagging the rationalist determination of the possible (in Martin's account) as problematic but no so far in the consequences he draws from this. He affirms, "Hope is a resolute desire that persists in the face of uncertainty" (82). Even more strongly, "hope is a decision added to desire: a discipline of the will, not the conclusion of a proof." By these proposals, there is an overcoming will-to-hope that rises to the occasion against the anxiety of uncertainty. Hope as actively anchored in the will not reason, yes. But what remains unquestioned is why this hope should arise in the first place. It seems that implicit in the insistence upon the will as the active component of hope is the idea that the will may will beyond the possible – at least beyond what may be known by reason to be possible. Because on this account, the will does not wait on reason for an assessment of what is possible as its object. As a result, hope would spring from a more fundamental and spontaneous movement of the will.

The language and concept of "uncertainty" perhaps meets a challenge of its own at this point. For while Newheiser insists that the active dimension of hope rooted in the will does not require reason's assessment of the possibility of an outcome for its operation, what he achieves is to place the subject of hope in an agnostic attitude to future outcome. The uncertainty paradigm, it seems, requires not only the subject not to be able to positively say whether the object of hope is possible or not, but by the same token to not be able to positively say that it is impossible either. And perhaps this agnosticism robs hope of some of its most radical dimension, namely, hope in the face of the certainty of impossibility. Newheiser rightly makes the point about hope's orientation

to outcomes that “have no chance of occurring” but immediately translates this as implying “the uncertainty of this belief” (79). Yet, a consideration of apocalyptic understandings of hope, for example, suggest to us that hope sustains, with certainty and zeal, a belief in objects that are impossible as such. More so, the object of such hope is so ‘extreme’ as to sometimes include within itself not merely a cataclysmic event in the future but the end of history itself and therefore the conclusion of every reckoning of futurity. Such hope, far from encouraging passivity vis-à-vis the present, has done the exact opposite. Jürgen Moltmann’s *Theology of Hope* and *The Coming of God* have achieved much in highlighting how hope can itself be a theory of time in such a way that the constantly assumed linearity of past-present-future gives way to the priority and primacy of the future over the present. The future on this reckoning is not the set of actualisable possibilities but a primordial, originary made present. At the risk of dismissing this sense of hope as merely ‘religious’ hope without a place in the secular age, Ernst Bloch’s *Spirit of Utopia* and extensive *Principle of Hope* have shown the extent to which there is more to the very phenomenon of hope as such, hope that reaches to the impossible. This highlights that essential to hope is the relation of the future to the present and the account of temporality that holds both together.

Ultimately, the Christian hope is hope for an ‘impossibility’. It is not a held certainty in the eventual arrival of a possible object, which would situate hope merely as the futurity of what already is for possibility. So, the pressure point in the Christian hope is not so much between certainty and uncertainty but between possibility and impossibility. For, if this hope is elicited by a longing for something that is ordinarily impossible, the desire for something which all the causal forces of history cannot proffer, then, there is necessarily within this hope both the kind of unknowing that Newheiser suggests is essential to hope (but here intensified) and much more. This hope is not so much that the progression of history brings ultimate hope to a culminative conclusion but that hope itself is what brings history to a conclusion. Thus, hope understood as the arrival of this impossible invigorates every aspect of the now with purpose.

These considerations raise the suspicion that, first, Newheiser’s account by which religious hope was reckoned to reside in a posture of certainty anchored in the transcendent may be too hasty, for it misses the crucial proleptic and retroactive dimensions of the phenomenon of hope. Second, one may raise again the overall project of deciding hope in the secular age as the question of an ethics of uncertainty. Newheiser is right that after the removal of the theological object and surety of hope (at least its non-unanimous status in the secular age), it is of vital importance to weave into the analysis hope’s vulnerability to disappointment. This raises the question of whether certainty and uncertainty, knowing and unknowing as well as the foundations (or absence thereof) for their determination represent the most robust basis for a universal experience of the phenomenon of hope in the secular age. Does the “affinity” between religious

and secular hope fully play out here? The challenge at hand is to decide what philosophical strategies might be required to better bring out the universality of the phenomenon of hope. Perhaps instead of interrogating hope as a concept – whether in the religious or secular – a more phenomenological questioning might be called for in order to understand this spontaneity of the will to hope. If hope, as Aquinas reckoned, is born from the desire for something difficult to attain or even impossible to attain by my own resources, then, the discipline of hope might also require an investigation integrated with the dynamism of will, desire and human action. For, even without necessarily reaching his conclusions, “hope attains the supreme rule of human actions” (ST II-II, Qu. 18, Art. 5).

What Newheiser achieves here is really, in my estimation, the successful first proposal and invitation to think hope in the secular age as a shared horizon of experience. He has taken up the question by attempting a generalized, universal concept or account of hope. It remains up to the reader to decide whether the specifics of the approach go as far as it could potentially go. In interest of more strongly situating the important contribution and originality of Newheiser’s project, one would have wished the book had included a fairly detailed intellectual historical account of hope, the important inflexion points of its development, in order to better understand the merits of the secular determination that the author so centrally envisions for it. Overall, this is a serious work of significant intellectual daring in its creative reading of Dionysius and Derrida, constructive of dialogue between negative theology and deconstruction, as well as the fascinating imagination a negative political theology. It definitely opens many avenues for further stimulating discussion.

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A Hope that is Concrete but Uncertain

A Response by David Newheiser

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Because there is a lot of myself in this book, I am grateful to receive such thoughtful responses from Victor Emma-Adamah, Joeri Schrijvers, and Calvin Ullrich. Their reflections help me to see what's in the book in a new way, and the questions they pose allow me to find a new angle on issues I have been thinking about for some time. I am conscious that this brief response will not do justice to their rich reflections, but I am glad for the chance to think further about questions that we share in common.

One of the main aims of my book is to show that religious and irreligious communities share more in common than it might seem. Where some commentators claim that religion and the secular are mutually exclusive, I argue that Jacques Derrida and Dionysius the Areopagite share a hope that is identical in kind (though not in content). Although Derrida is an atheist (of a sort) while Dionysius is a Christian monk, I show that both authors affirm determinate hopes that they see as uncertain. (In this respect, I differ from earlier interpreters of deconstruction and negative theology: in my view, commentators such as John Caputo exaggerate the indeterminacy of Derrida's project and misconstrue Dionysius's negativity.) For this reason, although Derrida and Dionysius hold different commitments, they indicate that hope constitutes a point of contact between those who are religious and those who are not.

Each of the respondents takes issue with one of the points outlined in this brief summary, but in each case I think our disagreement hinges in part upon a misunderstanding of what the book is doing. I am grateful for the chance to clarify what I intended to argue in order to identify where the respondents and I are closer than they think – and where genuine disagreement remains.

Victor Emma-Adamah writes that my book develops “the successful first proposal and invitation to think hope in the secular age as a shared horizon of experience,” but he wonders whether I unfairly stigmatize religious hope by associating it with an unjustified certainty. Although I am grateful for the generosity of Emma-Adamah's interpretation, I think both the compliment and the criticism are misplaced. He writes that “what Newheiser proposes is an episteme of indeterminacy and uncertainty as the shared, neutral ground of the secular, and hope as placed solidly on this foundation.” This is not exactly what I intended to propose. I see my project as more Foucauldian than phenomenological: rather than describing a shared horizon of experience, I aim to show that the regime of the secular is contingent and therefore fungible. On my account, secularity is specific to particular times and places; thus, although it has significant effects in some contexts, this experience is neither neutral nor universally shared. This does not mean that we can simply return to a pre-secular past, as some theologians imply, but I think the secular is open to possibilities (such as messianic hope) that it could seem to exclude.

My account of religious hope is contextually specific in just the same way. Emma-Adamah writes that I set secular hope against Christian hope; in his reading, my appeal to secular uncertainty as

a shared horizon entails that religious hope is illegitimate. As he observes, I direct my account of hope against theologians who claim that Christian hope constitutes a form of certainty grounded in divine promise. However, I do not identify this view with Christian hope (let alone religious hope) as such. On the contrary, I argue that a specific theological tradition (i.e. negative theology) offers an alternative theology of hope, one that acknowledges its uncertainty. In this way, I aim to unsettle the widespread assumption that religion exclude critique by demonstrating that some forms of religious hope incorporate a rigorous negativity. Much as I see secularity as open to the sacred, I think Christian thought models a hope that is suited to a secular age.

Rather than pitting a supposedly neutral secularity against a theology that is necessarily dogmatic, my book argues that an atheist like Derrida and a Christian like Dionysius share an uncertain hope. For this reason, I am deeply sympathetic with Emma-Adamah's concluding reflections on hope and the impossible. Although he presents these comments as a corrective to my account, I agree that the impossible is key to Christian hope. As I argue in the book, the view that the impossible is paradigmatic of hope is explicit in Derrida's work, and it is implicit in Dionysius. This does not mean that my account of hope is universal, but it suggests (more modestly) that particular traditions are linked by unexpected points of connection.

Where Emma-Adamah argues that I exaggerate the dogmatism of Christian hope, Joeri Schrijvers claims that I underestimate it. He writes, "Certain Christian believers will fill their hopes in in a particular way and will remain stuck in the one dominant version of Christianity that they desire. In short: it is not sure whether we can hope, at all, for a Christianity that holds its beliefs loosely." Schrijvers appears to share the widespread worry that religion is necessarily dogmatic. Although I think this anxiety is understandable, one of the central aims of my book is to show that it is unnecessary. I think Schrijvers is right that Christians fill out their hopes with a particular content, but this does not entail that they will remain stuck in a rigid system of beliefs. In my understanding, hope allows for an affirmation that is concrete and contentful while remaining open to revision.

My argument hinges upon the difference between affirming particular hopes and asserting that those hopes are certain to be realized, but Schrijvers blurs this distinction. He points to the fact that Dionysius describes a particular vision of the future as evidence that he claims to possess certain knowledge of the future. In my reading, however, Dionysius articulates particular hopes for the future while acknowledging that they are uncertain. It is because hope holds together determinate affirmations and a self-critical negativity that (unlike other interpreters) I see it as central to the Dionysian corpus. Dionysius famously insists that union with God requires radical dispossession, including the negation of theological speech. This does not reduce theology to simple silence; instead, Dionysius argues that theology should proliferate unpredictably, making

use of every name to address an unknowable God. I argue that this apparent paradox functions as an ethical discipline that resists the sort of false assurance that worries Schrijvers. Because Dionysius's vision of future union with God is situated within this rigorous negativity, it exemplifies a hopeful affirmation (without assurance).

Schrijvers claims that Derrida rejects the particularity of Dionysius's vision of the future, but I read both authors differently. Schrijvers writes, "The difference between Derrida and Dionysius is that the former's account of the future remains to come, whereas Dionysius, despite all evidence to the contrary, is certain that the 'to come' he is describing, the union with God, will in effect come. Dionysius knows both what to hope for and what will come." Against this reading, I argue in the book that Dionysius and Derrida both affirm hopes that are determinate and uncertain. As I have explained, I think there is a sense in which Dionysius knows what to hope for (insofar as he holds particular hopes), but that does not mean that he knows what will come. On the contrary, Dionysius associates the divine with a futurity that is strictly unforeseeable. Rather than claiming that his hope is certain to be realized, Dionysius insists that Christians must abandon every potential source of certainty. By the same token, much as Dionysius fills out his hope for union with God with imagery drawn from Christian scripture, Derrida describes his hope for democracy to come in terms drawn from a tradition of European political thought that runs through Kant and Marx. Both authors underscore that the object of their hope eludes their own writings, but neither claims that we must cease to speak of it. Instead, they both affirm determinate hopes that are kept in motion by a discipline of hope that acknowledges its uncertainty.

My argument hinges on the view that indeterminacy and uncertainty are not identical, but Schrijvers elides this distinction. He writes, "If hope has an object after all, it seems not that uncertain." This claim entails that any hope that has a determinate object is also certain, but I disagree. In my view, particular hopes are always concrete, but the discipline of hope functions as a reminder that every hope is uncertain. Because uncertainty and indeterminacy can be separated, it is possible to affirm particular objects of hope while acknowledging that they may not be realized. These hopes are determinate (in the sense that they are directed toward a particular object), but they remain uncertain.

Schrijvers concludes by posing a profound question: "Why in effect 'articulate a sacramental theology that desacralizes everything' including the logic of the sacraments? Why improve the democracies around us if the democracy to come is never to be realized in the first place?" The difficulty Schrijvers identifies is a central preoccupation of my book. As I argue, Derrida demonstrates that the impossibility of fulfillment does not mean that we must retreat into a vague indeterminacy. Instead, he says that we must pursue justice in the situations in which we

find ourselves while remembering that there is always more to be done. Dionysius's idiom is different, but he says in similar fashion that Christians should pursue the divine while acknowledging that God is never in their grasp. To press on in this way, with no guarantee of success, is certainly difficult. However, both Dionysius and Derrida indicate that people possess the capacity to endure uncertainty through a resolute hope. In this way, they point to a negative political theology that pursues justice as best it can while acknowledging that there is always more to be done.

Calvin Ullrich takes issue with my reading of John Caputo. In my reading, Caputo claims that Dionysian negative theology is opposed to Derrida's "religion without religion," and he does so because (like Schrijvers) he assumes that Dionysian hope is dogmatic while Derrida's is indeterminate. For the reasons I have described, I think this is a mistake, but Ullrich argues that Caputo is more hospitable to determinate traditions than I allow. Ullrich acknowledges that Caputo's *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* may contain some rhetorical slippages that confirm my argument, but he thinks Caputo's later work is close to my own negative political theology.

As Ullrich observes, my discussion of Caputo focuses on *Prayers and Tears* (which is Caputo's most influential work) and on his account of deconstruction and negative theology (which is what my book is about). Because Caputo's reading of Derrida's relation to negative theology has been hugely influential, I argue at length that his reading is wrong. I think my argument is well-substantiated by Derrida's published work and by unpublished archival materials; in my view, this evidence shows that Caputo's confusion concerning negative theology relates to a basic misunderstanding of Derrida's project. For this reason, I think my response to Caputo is fair. However, I think Ullrich is right that it is incomplete.

Prayers and Tears is a very big book: around 200,000 words. Because Caputo's writing often sacrifices consistency in service of a charming exuberance, I assume that there are passages in the book that support Ullrich's reading. When I first began to read Derrida at the tender age of twenty, I found Caputo's work – and his personal generosity – to be enormously helpful. However, as my reading of Derrida developed, I came to find other commentators more compelling. I think Amy Hollywood is a more penetrating reader of Christian thought, Chantal Mouffe is a more careful interpreter of Derrida, and Ted Smith is a more creative commentator on political theology. This is the reason I have not read everything Caputo has written since *Prayers and Tears*. However, I didn't intend to characterize the entirety of Caputo's oeuvre. (For that, we have Ullrich's own book to look forward to!) Instead, I was simply trying to correct a common mistake that *Prayers and Tears* made into an unquestioned consensus.

Apart from this minor difference concerning the interpretation of Caputo's early work, Ullrich and I are in broad agreement – both about what my book is trying to do and about the broader

issues at stake. I greatly admire the critical care with which he and the other respondents have engaged my work. Precisely because we do not agree about everything, it is a gift to have their help in thinking through things that I care deeply about. There are many ways in which the world of 2020 seems desperately grim, but conversations of this kind help me hold out hope for a future in which philosophical community remains potentially transformative.

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A response to Peter Fritz's, *Freedom Made Manifest: Rahner's Fundamental Option and Theological Aesthetics*

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Peter Fritz's second volume in his projected trilogy on Karl Rahner does exactly what the first volume did: it demonstrates that Rahner, reduced to a desiccated system with its attendant vocabulary and commitments (e.g., the so-called anthropological turn, *Vorgriff*, fundamental option, transcendental existential, anonymous Christian) is a rather anemic Rahner – or rather, no Rahner at all. This he does with clear prose, an elegant structure, and an expansive understanding of how the various genres of Rahner's corpus (transcendental philosophy, piety, dogmatics) fit together cohesively. What Fritz destroys rather mercilessly, and quite rightly, is the picture of Rahner as Kant playing a twentieth-century Catholic priest. This he does in the first volume, *Karl Rahner's Theological Aesthetics* (CUA, 2014), in which he makes it evident that Rahner's engagement with Heidegger (and concomitantly his distance from Kant on the transcendental ego) had far more staying power than simply a memory of his halcyon days as a student in Freiburg, and can be detected particularly in his most transcendental of texts, *Geist in Welt*, as well as in much later, and specifically dogmatic, texts.

In this subsequent volume, *Freedom Made Manifest* (FMM), Fritz sets his sights on another prevalent reading of Rahner: that for all of his occasional forays into sacramental theology and the Church, which sit rather uneasily with his main constructive work, Rahner is above all oblivious to the fact that concrete historical life could render something other than a happy, facile

“yes” to God, given that our anonymous (and private) identities move us along towards that happy day whether we like it or not. Fritz makes it clear that the rather generic conception of a “fundamental option” is something that Rahner himself intended to flesh out in an ecclesologically robust way, with the concrete specificity of the sacramental practice of the Catholic Church. This becomes most clear when Rahner’s prodigious writings on the sacrament of penance are read as the fundamental option in action: a “yes” or “no” to God within the communal context of a suffering and repentant Church.

After noting that I consider the text to have successfully accomplished its stated goals, I will here make three interrelated inquiries about the text: first, concerning Fritz’s denunciation of the category of the dramatic, second, the question about the Christological density of the fundamental option, and third, the relationship between concupiscence and finitude.

Fritz’s projected trilogy has a conspicuous, if largely subterranean, dialogue with Balthasar in mind, far beyond those moments in which the Swiss theologian becomes a thematic topic himself. This is most evident in the fact that Fritz’s trilogy follows the lead of Balthasar’s: first, the question of aesthetics (*The Glory of the Lord*); second, the tension inherent in the exercise of human freedom (and the *analogia libertatis* between divine and human freedom is the dominant question throughout the *Theo-Drama*); and third, by way of anticipation, the content or the “truth” of revelation (and Fritz tacitly uses the title of the first volume of the *Theo-Logic* to describe his next volume: *Wahrheit der Welt* [FMM, 244]). I read this not as an attempt to make Rahner into an anonymous Balthasarian, but more simply to demonstrate that, all along, the theologically rich, historically attuned, and poetically inclined are attributes of not only one, but both of these theological giants. Fritz is decidedly committed to Rahner, though never ungenerous towards Balthasar.

Given the above, which I consider too obvious to be merely circumstantial, it is a curiosity that at the moment in which the Rahner-Balthasar comparison becomes most acute, Fritz chooses to distance Rahner from the notion of the dramatic, whereas he is eager to recover a Rahnerian commitment to the aesthetic. “For Rahner, freedom is not primarily a matter of drama, certainly not high drama fit for a grand stage,” and the ultimate result of this volume “is an aesthetic of fragility, not of dramatic heroism” (FMM, 237–38, see also 214). Whether or not Fritz is suggesting that Balthasar’s drama precludes attention to human frailty, or that he prefers heroic sanctity over the more mundane variety, it is clear that Fritz wants to locate holiness (or at least its potential) in the mundane, often tragic, struggle for a free assent to God’s will.

The importance of retaining the dramatic is highlighted by Fritz’s opening question: “How can the insignificant *announce* the eternal?” (FMM, 1, emphasis added). Quite easily, in fact. If understood as a mere sign, a circle can “announce” the eternal. But the entire weight of Fritz’s

argument, especially his elucidation of Rahner's "Theology of the Symbol" and his emphasis on the Schellingian roots of Rahner's notion of the person's *exstasis* from nature, points to the fact that by "announce" he does not mean "signify," but more precisely "enact." The astonishing fact is not the finite signifying the infinite (the basis for all analogical predication), but the finite bearing the infinite, the eternal enacting itself finitely through finite decisions that reach out towards the infinite.

Just as Fritz acknowledges that a theological aesthetics is not held captive by artistic good taste or philosophical presuppositions about beauty (*FMM*, 11), so likewise Christian conceptions of what constitutes significant drama cannot submit to what aesthetes consider "fit for a grand stage." Indeed, the major contention of Fritz's book is that Rahner's attention to exposed, fragile human freedom is *the* drama underlying all human life as it is exposed both to the world at large (often resulting in trauma) and to God. But the key here is that human freedom is always undergirded by the freedom of God, by "God's free, eternal decision to create, to save, and to self-communicate as love" (*FMM*, 239). And in Fritz's interpretation, the Jesuit Rahner does not view this as a bland, generic call, but as a personal encounter between the freedom of God and finite human freedom (*FMM*, 146–50). This text then provides us with a highly dramatic Rahner, one attentive to the vicissitudes and contingencies of human life, which encounters a God who wills through the particular and demands responses in kind. Whether this drama appears remarkable or mundane is utterly irrelevant to the one who has chosen the path of Ignatian *indiferencia*.

The second and related inquiry concerns the "Christoform" or "Christological" rendering of the fundamental option. While I consider the ecclesiological and sacramental renderings of Rahner to be definitive and largely unassailable, Fritz insists that Rahner's theology of freedom is a "Christological idea" (*FMM*, 10), a claim he repeats throughout the text. With a few minor exceptions (to which I will return shortly), what Fritz seems to mean by this is that it is a "Christian" conception of freedom, meaning that it is not a vague decision between the individual ego and "God," but a decision that the Christian makes within an ecclesial context regarding whether one will serve Christ or Lucifer (the Two Standards). It is Christological with regard to its object, but with very few exceptions, not with regard to the subject. That is to say, *Christ's* freedom is not the main focus of the text, which would have necessitated a discussion of Christ's unconfused and undivided wills (Constantinople III), how his finite freedom expressed in and through his created human nature and will are an exemplum of all human freedom and willing.

Third inquiry: even for Rahner's reinterpretation of concupiscence as not necessarily sinful, and rather as the *conditio sine qua non* of our tension between nature and person and thus the finitude of our decisions, Rahner still affirms that Jesus and Mary did *not* have concupiscence, even as understood in this more generous manner. Further, as he says in the essay "The Theology of

Power,” the concupiscence that makes our freedom determined and limited is eventually to be left behind:

[Concupiscence] is gradually to be overcome, it is something to be fought against by means of spirit, love and grace. Though man’s task is endless, though he fails at it again and again till victory is bestowed on him as grace in the coming of death and resurrection, man is a being who is to integrate his whole self more and more, including his material element, into the God-ward decision of his freedom under grace.⁴³⁹

Given the role that Fritz affords to concupiscence as grounding humanity in historicity and finitude, its absence leads to the inevitable question regarding the enduring status of the finite. Fritz would obviously resist the notion of a penultimate finitude, and there are seeds of a more stable, enduring ground scattered throughout the text: the non-concupiscent, yet finite, human heart of Jesus. We will return to this in a moment. But apart from a citation of Rahner noting that Christ was indeed free from concupiscence (*FMM*, 231), it remains unclear just how dependent our own finitude is on our (temporary) concupiscent condition, as well as how Christ relates to our concupiscence (Christ is “overwhelmed by a concupiscent remainder,” he “receives the full force of concupiscence,” [*FMM*, 233–34]).

Fritz places great weight on concupiscence as rendering human freedom possible as a finite, contingent, and fraught affair. Nevertheless, it seems that even for all of Rahner’s highly suggestive re-reading of concupiscence, the effect is actually the opposite of what Fritz intended: were it *not* for Original Sin, finitude and contingency would not be constitutive of the human person, and thus the prelapsarian and eschatologically redeemed human would indeed be the Kantian transcendental ego that Fritz fought so hard to critique. “Concupiscence is a condition of finitude” (*FMM*, 69), “concupiscent life does not have the *last word*” (*FMM*, 238). Perhaps it is phenomenologically insignificant how one reads the etiology of finitude, given that it is patently our current constitution, but theologically there are enormous consequences, especially as regards eschatology. Is finitude to be endured historically but abolished eschatologically (and Rahner’s notion of the pan-cosmic flesh will need be interpreted here), or is finitude a positive, enduring feature of creaturely difference from God? Is Christ’s finitude, without concupiscence, not the better model for creaturely freedom?

Rahner does, of course, decouple concupiscence and finitude, and not only does he insist on the finitude of the humanity of (the non-concupiscent) Christ on earth, but the enduring relevance of Christ’s humanity in the eschaton, particularly in his essay “The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus for our Relationship with God.” Balthasar, too, lauds Rahner for this essay.⁴⁴⁰ Even if it is a muted note in the book, Fritz does highlight a genuinely Christological finitude. And

though they are rather exceptional usages of “Christological,” I read these moments in which Christological is understood most robustly as key to Fritz’s text. While Rahner’s devotion to and theological deployment of the Sacred Heart is noted throughout, usually it is as an example of the Christological object of Christian freedom. Yet, in a few highly suggestive pages (*FMM*, 229–35), Fritz turns to an analysis of freedom from *within* the Christological mystery: speaking of “Christ’s exposed freedom,” and “Christ whose heart is pierced” (*FMM*, 234), even to say of Christ in Gethsemane: “This is Rahner’s model for human decision, even for the fundamental option—an existence grounded in a pierced heart, overwhelmed by a concupiscent remainder, suffering unto God, uttering a silent cry” (*FMM*, 233, emphasis in the original). Thus, while Fritz earlier highlights other instances of human suffering as an example of exposed freedom, such as his analysis of Rahner’s “old age” essay (*FMM*, 186–89), other forms of depression and suffering should be read in the light of Christ’s self-abandonment, and his experience of abandonment on the cross.

Here, despite whatever quibbles with vocabulary there may be, Fritz indicates that Rahner’s conception of freedom is truly a dramatic one, and given that it is the Logos incarnate who utters that silent cry, perhaps it is even a theo-dramatic one. And though Rahner is allergic to Constantinople II (as noted by Fritz, *FMM*, 214), he still affirms that the Sacred Heart is the heart of the Son of God, the Logos. And this, again, is not to abolish the true differences between Rahner and Balthasar, but to note the true theological, specifically Christological, density of the former. Given the indications concerning the last installment of the trilogy (*FMM*, 244–45), we can hope that Fritz will capably elucidate how, for Rahner, Christ not only announces transcendent truths, but enacts them from within the interiority of the world.

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Dostoevsky and the Fundamental Option

A response to Peter Fritz

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Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it

Luke 18:17.⁴⁴¹

In this brief reflection, I put Peter Joseph Fritz's recently published work *Freedom Made Manifest: Rahner's Fundamental Option and Theological Aesthetics* (FMM) into conversation with Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (BK).⁴⁴² I find this conversation interesting because one of Fritz's main aims in his work is to respond to the critics of Karl Rahner who find his fundamental option too disconnected from concrete, lived life – something like a convenient fallback, “where it seems that a person could, irrespective of material-historical conditions, make a full, conscious, definitive, and permanent decision about the whole of her life” (FMM, 63). My aim is thus to see how Rahner's conception of the fundamental option, and Fritz's rendering of it in view of theological aesthetics, can cast light on the existential quandaries of Dostoevsky's characters. I am especially interested in concupiscence, a topic in Rahner that Fritz argues has gone underappreciated, as precisely the element of friction in human deliberation and decision. To my mind, Rahner/Fritz and Dostoevsky are able to illuminate each other and bring into greater relief the complex question of what it means to say “yes” or “no” to God.

In response to those who claim that Rahner's fundamental option appears too trivial and frictionless, Fritz shows how Rahner's emphasis on concupiscence rather implies the contrary. Concupiscence is understood by Rahner not in terms of the classic formula as “a quality of the ‘sensitive’ part of humanity...that tends toward evil” (FMM, 65), but rather as “man's spontaneous desire, insofar as it precedes his free decision *and persists against it*” (FMM, 66). Concupiscence is equated with “nature” and distinguished from “person” – a distinction Fritz compares to that between “ground” and “existence” in Schelling – where “person” implies what a human decides and determines about him- or herself, while “nature” is what precedes such deliberate self-determination (FMM, 68-69).

Crucial here is the fact that concupiscence understood as such renders it a neutral status. It tends neither towards nor against neither evil nor the good, but simply against decision in general, a “resistant reality – friction in the process of decision” (FMM, 67). Furthermore, concupiscence can never be truly overcome. It is “a condition of finitude” (FMM, 69), a feature of our existence as limited creatures. This belongs to the *Geworfenheit* of the human being and the general paradox of the ground of human freedom being simultaneously its wellspring (as the condition of freedom's possibility) and its chain (as what freedom can never truly master or determine). It is a spontaneity that “cannot be fully overcome in a free decision” (FMM, 209), meaning that the human being can never fully love God nor be fully damned beyond the possibility of redemption.

This notion of a concupiscent remainder that also resists a person's full absorption into evil is very illuminative of the character Grushenka in *Brothers Karamazov*. A woman who very early on in her life was "left in poverty and disgrace" (BK, 437) by her then-husband and who had since turned into a quite wicked woman, she becomes the root cause of the scandalous quarrel between Dimitri Karamazov and his own father, a quarrel around which the novel revolves. Like many of Dostoevsky's characters, she often flaunts her own wickedness, finding a strange enjoyment in demeaning herself.

When Alyosha Karamazov comes to meet her in her own house, himself being depressed due to the death of his master and the scandal that followed, he too expects to find such a wicked woman. In his depressed state, this is in fact what he seeks, as if to confirm his suspicion that the world is a rotten, sinful place. But he is surprised. For while at the beginning of the encounter Grushenka manifests her usual playful, miscreant persona, she has a sudden change of heart when she learns about the death of Alyosha's master:

"So Father Zossima is dead," cried Grushenka. "Good God, I did not know!" She crossed herself devoutly. "Goodness, what have I been doing, sitting on his knee like this at such a moment!" She started up as though in dismay, instantly slipped off his knee and sat down on the sofa (BK, 447).

A Rahnerian analysis allows us to identify the two moments of this brief scene; first we have something like an instinctual reaction of genuine compassion ('Good God, I did not know!') – followed by Grushenka acting upon this instinct, getting off of Alyosha's lap. The first is the concupiscent remainder, and it works here precisely in the terms explained above: someone who perceives him- or herself to be a generally bad person suddenly has a jolt reaction in the other direction. Grushenka's decision to see herself as a "wicked woman" cannot absorb the whole of her being.

Grushenka's concupiscent remainder prompts her to act accordingly, but of course such an individual act does not, in itself, manifest a fundamental option. As Fritz says, "The relationship between the fundamental option and individual acts is best read in terms of manifestation and self-expression" (FMM, 182). But this is perhaps what happens subsequently when Alyosha, in response to Grushenka's moment of compassion, answers by recognizing this act as the true manifestation of her being: "I came here to find a wicked soul—I felt drawn to evil because I was base and evil myself, and I've found a true sister, I have found a treasure—a loving heart. She had pity on me just now..." (BK, 447). Grushenka responds to this again by telling the parable of the onion, in which the guardian angel of "a very wicked woman" who was damned to hell suddenly remembers that during the woman's selfish life, she did once give away an onion to a beggar (BK, 448). The angel uses this deed to convince God to give her another chance, and God grants it, but the wicked lady spoils this chance through another selfish act. Grushenka tells the parable in

order to accuse herself yet again; her one good deed does not outdo her generally selfish nature. But Alyosha begs to differ. He argues passionately that *this* deed manifested what is true in her, and that this deed and what it signifies will be her guide in her coming decision whether to forgive the old man who once disgraced her and ruined her life; “and she won't take a knife with her. She won't!” (BK, 452).

In other words, is not Alyosha here recognizing and subsequently explicating Grushenka's deed as a manifestation of her groundedness in God's love? This brings us to the theme of theological aesthetics which Fritz, with the help of Balthasar, differentiates from aesthetic theology; it is here not a question of using aesthetical categories to apprehend the revelation, but understanding how the revelation itself is revealed aesthetically, that is, as symbolic manifestation (FMM, 11-12). Part of this concerns a re-interpretation of the symbol in theological metaphysics. Fritz explains that for Rahner, an individual being must be understood as plural in and of itself, since its ability to express itself as itself belongs to its own inner moment (FMM, 57-58). The symbolization of a being is its actualization, the way in which it manifests itself through its self-expression. This metaphysics is Christologically founded, for God's free decision to self-reveal in the Incarnation is itself the symbolization or manifestation of this decision: “the incarnate Word is the highest instantiation of freedom made manifest” (FMM, 59). We are also manifestations of God's free decision to create, and we in turn have the fundamental option to actualize this decision at the ground of our existence, or to conceal it (FMM, 62).

In the above scene, Alyosha not only recognizes Grushenka's spontaneous compassion and the subsequent act as the manifestation of her groundedness in God, but goes further to argue that she herself should make this the manifestation of who she is. That is, he is not only recognizing the truth of the ground of her being, but prompting her to make this manifest as the expression of her true self. This highlights not only the fundamental option as a manifestation of one's true being, but also the communal, ecclesial dimension of the fundamental option (FMM, 91). It is the Christian sense of that common phrase “bringing out the best in someone,” for it is to see that God's mercy is greater than their sin, and that the possibility to accept this forgiveness is readily available at the ground of their being. On the other end of the spectrum, the character of Rakitin is constantly attempting to interpret their actions in the worst possible light, seeing Grushenka's and Alyosha's actions as testifying to their foulness. He sees them as beyond salvation, and wants them to see themselves as such too.

So far we have described how a concupiscent remainder in Grushenka could spark in her the compassion necessary to act accordingly towards Alyosha, and how Alyosha prompts her to make this the fundamental expression of her being. Yet we have not discussed closely enough what prompted Grushenka the *other* way (and Rakitin too), that is, to frolic and indulge in her

perception of herself as a wicked woman. The phrasing above, in which I mention that before her compassionate moment, Grushenka “manifested her usual playful, miscreant persona,” was not accidental. Rather, her self-perceived wicked nature seems also to be a willful decision – a fundamental option – to let her wicked actions be the expression of who she “truly” is. This however could bring us into conflict with Fritz’s reading of Rahner.

According to Fritz, a reading of Rahner’s work as theological aesthetics leads to one last insight regarding concupiscence. In terms of the fundamental option as a question of either actualizing or concealing the ground of our freedom in God, concupiscence also relates to this aesthetic decision, as the tendency to misapprehend the ground of which our freedom is a symbolic manifestation: “Concupiscence is that spontaneous resistance within us to recognizing and responding with a decision to the freedom at the ground of appearances; it is our tendency to become absorbed in the appearances themselves” (*FMM*, 74). Concupiscence is the human tendency to apprehend the symbolic at its level of appearance, rather than hearing the ground which the symbol manifests.

But this leads to an apparent paradox. If concupiscence is the resistance which makes impossible a complete decision in favor of *either* good or evil, and if concupiscence is also the creature’s tendency to “mishear the word,” then does this imply that mishearing the word prevents decisions both in favor of *and* against God? And consequently, that “hearing the word” is a precondition for deciding for evil? Or is “choosing evil” or “saying no to God” equated with remaining ignorant of one’s groundedness in God? In that case, how is concupiscence neutral with respect to the decision for or against God, if it only tends toward the misapprehension of the Word? And how can concupiscence then be the impossibility of fully deciding against God, if concupiscence is defined as ignorance of apprehending God’s symbolic manifestation, and this ignorance in turn is defined as saying “no” to God?

If concupiscence is simply resistance to a decision in general, and simultaneously the same as not hearing the word, it would seem that a decision for or against God would both come, somehow, from hearing the Word. I am not at all sure that this is Fritz’s intention with his “aesthetical reading of concupiscence” (*FMM*, 75), but one could, I believe, pursue such a reading. What if exposure to the Word could make a person elect to stay ignorant of it? Acknowledging that the task of loving God and all of God’s creation from the bottom of one’s heart could lead one to wanting a heart that is cold like stone, precisely because of the difficulty of bearing this task. Does this not describe the existential quandaries of so many of Dostoevsky’s characters?

This is the case of Alyosha in the moments preceding his encounter with Grushenka. In this abysmally confused state, in which his faith is staggering, the narrator explains that it is not on account of his lack of faith that his heart is stumbling: “Indeed, all his trouble came from the fact

that he was of great faith" (BK, 429). It is due to the strong, pure love he had for his master that Alyosha at this moment find himself disoriented, for he cannot and will not make sense of the awful and cruel reaction of his fellows to the death of Zossima, who, for truly petty reasons, abused the unfortunate stench of the deceased's body as an opportunity to disgrace his name and reputation. He is of course deeply disappointed in his fellows, but more than anything it is that his love for Zossima has now turned to a suffering aching.

Here, the difficulty of saying "yes" to God does not follow from mere ignorance, but from a deep and intimate relationship with God's love. For it is not the love manifest in Alyosha's heart that is in any sense corrupted here, but suffering the difficulty of seeing it offended. It is precisely the fact that Alyosha has been *given* the option, that it is clear and present to him, that makes the decision difficult – almost unbearable. Something similar could be said to transpire with Ivan Karamazov, at least in his own estimation. His infamous rebellion against God has its source in his childish belief "that suffering will be healed and made up for" (BK, 295). Yet it is precisely this belief that he finds impossible to accept.

I believe that this fits perfectly with the (perhaps) unintended result of the paradox in Fritz's theological aesthetic reading of concupiscence: that saying "no" to God can, at least in some cases, be a possibility precisely for those who *have* "heard the Word," for those who come to recognize the possibility of an all-encompassing love and infinite mercy being the truth. And precisely because so many of Dostoevsky's character finds the possibility implied in this decision so hard to bear – that one can be forgiven in one's depraved state, or forgive others, that love is stronger than hate, that life conquers death – they decide with a "no": *I* cannot be forgiven, or *he* cannot be forgiven.

But although this is my argument, that one should consider the possibility of a "no" to the fundamental option not merely on the basis of ignorance, but also from an intimate confrontation with the possibility of God's mercy, the idea that a "no" to God includes an effort "to conceal the manifestation of divine freedom" (FMM, 75) is far from foreign to Dostoevsky's works. In contrast, his characters often combine these two characteristics: exposure to the possibility (e.g., forgiveness) as the incentive to conceal it. This is very true of the meeting between the elder Zossima and the family father, Fyodor Karamazov, "the old buffoon" (BK, 41), which in a way summarizes the themes we have covered so far.

Fyodor is perhaps the most well versed character of self-defamation in Dostoevsky's universe, from the start not only described as one of the most wicked and despicable people ever to be alive, but as finding great enjoyment in flaunting this perception of himself. We see here again the duality of "nature" and "person"; Fyodor constantly engages in the work of *expressing* his lowly nature. When scheduled to meet with father Zossima, who will act as counsel in the feud

between himself and his son, those familiar with him have good reason to worry, and he does indeed deliver; Fyodor acts in the most ridiculous manner, going to strenuous effort to make a fool of himself. While the other characters are well aware of the reverence expected in a meeting with such an honored and holy man as Zossima, Fyodor finds this an occasion to triple his efforts in demeaning himself and those around him.

The elder responds, however, quite calmly and lovingly – manifesting *his* nature – giving his honest advice, “above all, don't lie to yourself” (*BK*, 48). What is called ‘lying’ here is of a very complex nature, for Fyodor has already admitted that the father “read me to the core” (*BK*, 48); he is quite *knowingly* lying to himself, and the more he is made aware of this, the more he lies. Knowingly lying to oneself – is this not the peculiar and paradoxical feature of someone who knows in their heart that they are in the wrong, who knows that the way they are acting and the behavior they are manifesting is shameful? And further, in virtue of this lie, decides to conceal this by doubling down and by making such shameful behavior the manifestation of their being, precisely in order to tell themselves “no, you are too wicked, you fool, *you* cannot be forgiven!” The old buffoon indeed achieves his intended purpose when his son cries out to him – and perhaps the reader with him? – “Why is such a man alive?” (*BK*, 87).

Facing such terrible decisions, of manifesting a love strong enough to forgive those whom we deem unforgivable – be it ourselves and others – an aching heart can feel compelled to turn itself into stone. This reveals, perhaps, something conversely of what it means to say “yes” to God. As Fritz emphasizes continually throughout his book of our concupiscent vulnerability, we are “able to love precisely in (not despite) this fragile condition” (*FMM*, 70). The fundamental “yes” to God is not a heroic grandstanding, for “even the weakest appeal of a gravely suffering person to God for mercy, not of just forgiveness but also of love and acceptance, would express a ‘yes’ to God” (*FMM*, 223). In Dostoevsky’s work, both those who say “no” and “yes” to the fundamental option are fundamentally broken people, but such characters as Fyodor use their refusal as a sort of self-protection. An affirmative choice, however, manifests the other option: that of opening one’s heart and admitting to one’s weakness precisely in the prayer to God, for help, mercy, and love. It is to believe and put one’s hope in the Word that says “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

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The Hidden Good: A Grateful Response

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Four years ago (May 2016), I participated in a theology and literature congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina.⁴⁴³ The two organizers, Alejandro Bertolini and Cecilia Avenatti de Palumbo, had read my first book, *Karl Rahner's Theological Aesthetics* (2014), and had taken interest in how it could complement work they were each doing on Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics. Avenatti de Palumbo published an article in 2015 that put Balthasar, Rahner, and T.S. Eliot into conversation, with my work as partial background.⁴⁴⁴

She presents a rich analysis of Eliot's *Four Quartets* that centers on the phrase "unimaginable zero summer" from *Little Gidding*, a three-word expression for a paradise that we anticipate though do not yet enjoy, which remains as yet invisible and inaudible to us. Here Avenatti de Palumbo detects a seemingly impossible crossing point between the divergent theological approaches of Balthasar and Rahner: "The gaze and hearing find their point of convergence in the same miracle of being, already manifest in glory, already sensed in the ontological disposition of the spirit open to mystery, pointed toward love as toward its center."⁴⁴⁵ Balthasar, the thinker of the *Schau der Gestalt*, understood foremost in the objective sense of the genitive, articulates the gaze that apprehends glory. Rahner, the thinker of the *Hörer des Wortes*, explicates the hearing (as an ontological, not merely ontic, disposition of the human subject) of divine mystery. Both express attunement to reality's center: love. In this life, such love shines as the miracle that sustains all that is, if often invisibly; and it rings in the opening of all things to what sustains them, if often inaudibly. Avenatti de Palumbo is well aware that Balthasar is more than the theologian of seeing and Rahner more than hearing, Balthasar more than the theologian of "objective evidence" and Rahner more than "subjective." But she finds these traditional readings generative for discovering theological complementarity where polemic alone would seem to be found.

Two years ago, given the generous hospitality of colleagues at the Karl-Rahner-Archiv in Munich, I read correspondence from Balthasar to Rahner, and other letters, including one from Rahner to Johann Baptist Metz, about Balthasar.⁴⁴⁶ Truly these two admired one another—even with their enduring differences—from their early study of each other's work (I read a notebook of Rahner's containing notes on Balthasar's *Apokalypse der Deutschen Seele*⁴⁴⁷) through their collaboration on an edited volume in the late 1970s. *Cordula oder der Ernstfall* (1966) was a significant bump in the road; ironically, Balthasar penned it at around the same time that Rahner was appealing to Joseph

Ratzinger that Balthasar should be awarded an honorary theology degree from the University of Münster.⁴⁴⁸ Balthasar apologized at least twice in writing to Rahner for *Cordula*, calling it in a letter from 18 April 1975 “*die leidige Cordula*” (tiresome Cordula), while recognizing the difficulty—the impossibility, really—of taking back what he said there. Differences remained, for sure, as when Rahner criticized Balthasar’s “Neo-Chalcedonianism” from *Theo-Drama* 4.⁴⁴⁹ Despite the animus housed in secondary literature, I believe that the differences between these primary authors were amicable, even to the point where they could have worked on a common project, as they had earlier in their lives.

I begin in this way mainly as a response to Jonathan Ciraulo, but also as a reminder to myself, since at times in pursuing a project on Rahner and theological aesthetics I feel pulled toward polemics against Balthasar, from whom I have learned plentifully but with whom I have deep disagreements. Preferable would be a “loving struggle.”⁴⁵⁰ If there is a Rahnerian theological aesthetic, and I am betting a great deal on there being one, it owes much to Balthasar’s inspiration. But it is different, maybe even counter-Balthasarian (in the sense Catherine Keller gives to “counter-”, as opposed to “anti-”).⁴⁵¹

This author response is called “The Hidden Good,” a phrase taken from Balthasar, yet deployed in a different direction.⁴⁵² It indicates the transcendental of the good enworlded, made historical, thus mundane; the good that has undergone Christ’s *katabasis* and that finds expression in us humans as in a distorted mirror (1 Cor 13:12). “The hidden good” encapsulates the counter-proposal to a Balthasarian theo-drama: a Rahnerian aesthetic of freedom. So commences a response to the three inquiries from Ciraulo, the third of which implicates Theodor Sandal Rolfsen’s examination of concupiscent freedom in Dostoevsky’s characters.

Drama

Ciraulo registers three inquiries regarding *Freedom Made Manifest (FMM)*: (1) whether Rahner should be distanced from the category “dramatic”; (2) whether the fundamental option as explained in *FMM* is Christologically dense enough; and (3) whether concupiscence is properly rendered. Each inquiry offers numerous in-roads for exploration and mutual critique.

Ciraulo probes my choice “to distance Rahner from the notion of the dramatic.” His investigation implicates not only *FMM*, but the whole projected trilogy.

He quotes my statement, “For Rahner, freedom is not primarily a matter of drama, certainly not high drama fit for a grand stage,” and my ascription to Rahner of an “aesthetic of fragility, not of dramatic heroism” (*FMM*, 237–38). He adds a cross-reference to an earlier page, where I observe (following Johann Baptist Metz), “[Rahner] rejects any theo-dramatization of suffering, opting

instead to recognize suffering in its radical negativity” (*FMM*, 214). Ciraulo presses me, arguing that in fact I present a “a highly dramatic Rahner, one attentive to the vicissitudes and contingencies of human life, which encounters a God that wills in the particular and demands responses in kind.” I agree, depending on what means by “dramatic,” but with his next line we diverge: “Whether this drama appears remarkable or mundane is utterly irrelevant to the one who has chosen the path of Ignatian *indiferencia*.” There is much to discuss.

For certain, I place Rahner in close proximity to Balthasar. Many people will cry foul that I contradict myself by calling distant what seems so near. Is not Rahner a Balthasarian theologian of beauty if he is a theological aesthete? Not necessarily. If Rahner is a theological aesthete of freedom, does this not mean that he must present a theological dramatic theory on Balthasar’s terms? Not the Balthasarian sort, and that is precisely the point I have made in *FMM* (Ciraulo understands this well). Balthasar declares in the preface of *Theo-Drama I*: “the model of the theatre is a more promising point of departure for a study of *theo-drama* [by which he means, I agree with Ciraulo, an account of the personal interaction of divine, infinite freedom and human, finite freedom] than man’s secular, social activity.”⁴⁵³ I am not entirely convinced. What I find particularly questionable regarding the *Theo-Drama*—for all its merits, which are many—and what I interrogate specifically (if allusively, with “grand stage”) is the outsized influence of Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681), particularly his *auto-sacramental*, *El Gran Teatro del Mundo* (1634).⁴⁵⁴ Obviously, Calderón is not the only influence, and surely Calderón is a worthy author (and someone whom I have enjoyed reading and teaching). But inasmuch as Balthasar opts to see God as the author, the world as a stage, life as an apocalyptic drama, and people as playing typical roles (like, most controversially, Man [as word, *Wort*] and Woman [as answer, *Antwort*]), the influence is clear and, though fruitful, not unproblematic. In the *Anatomy of Misremembering*, Cyril O’Regan highlights the advantages of Balthasar’s debt to Spanish baroque drama, especially as it aids Balthasar in developing a maximally-eidetic (content-rich) apocalyptic theology resistant to suspect modern and postmodern apocalyptic discourses.⁴⁵⁵ In *Karl Rahner’s Theological Aesthetics*, I argued for Rahner’s status as an apocalyptic theologian, but, using O’Regan’s terminology, one who occupies a “metaxic space,” or who produces an apocalyptic theology more hesitant than Balthasar’s in comprehensively narrating the battle between good and evil, Christ’s victory over death, and the roles humans play in salvation history.⁴⁵⁶ In keeping with that argument, if we were to call Rahner “dramatic,” we must put the term in inverted commas and know that if Rahner’s theology of freedom admits of a “dramatic” correlate (as with Balthasar and Calderón), it would likely be contemporary performance art, with its mixture of mundane subject matter and rich if hidden content. That is a case to be made elsewhere.

Balthasarian critiques of Rahner tend to be suspicious of his symbolic-sacramental Christology. Is there, perhaps, some measure of this in Ciraulo’s examination of *FMM*’s opening question: “How

can the insignificant announce the eternal?" (*FMM*, 1)? It could be. But were one to interpret Ciraulo more generously, one could see that he is laying bare a warrant for rapprochement between Balthasarians and Rahnerians. At issue is the verb, "announce." Ciraulo rightly notices that when I write "announce" it does not mean (merely) signifying, but something closer to "enacting." In pointing this out, Ciraulo shows that he has understood well the argument of the introduction, chapter 1, and various other places in the book. Freedom is, in its "ground", invisible and inaudible, but in its "existence" becomes manifest as visible, audible, and tangible. Such manifestation is not mere signification, "pointing" to something that is always already there, but rather the emergence of the freedom at the ground of all appearances in a particular appearance. Even more important is what I say without saying it with the word "announce." Heidegger is behind this word. In *Being and Time* §7, he famously describes phenomena as "announcing" (*melden*) themselves, meaning that they both—in terms borrowed from Kevin Hart—reveal and re-veil being as they appear.⁴⁵⁷ Ciraulo treats it as a matter of course that insignificant things (he uses the geometric figure of a circle, an example of which I am unsure; I prefer a common hare, or a condemned peasant hanging on a Roman cross) would "easily" announce the eternal. Here, even though we may agree in general, I would have a particular quibble. I am uncertain that things are so straightforward. We should regard it as a miracle (though it need not be baroque dramatic) that the God of glory may be revealed by "poor" phenomena; even if saying that impoverished things veil God's goodness, making it a hidden good, would make sense. "Announcing" involves both the miracle and the hiddenness; like Rahner's theology, it denotes a middle space, or voice, where God shines through the soil of circumstance (see *FMM*, 245).

Above I quoted and promised to discuss Ciraulo's remark on indifference between the remarkable and the mundane. I cannot but disagree with it, though I can sympathize with Ciraulo's interpretation of Ignatian indifference. Indifference can mean more simply that neither the remarkable nor the mundane/insignificant would be privileged over the other as a path toward finding God (e.g., for Ignatius, I should not desire to be rich or poor, etc.). Thus these would seem equated. On this reading, which I think coheres with a Balthasarian theo-drama, one can viably privilege the significant *dramatis personae* and events in salvation history in order to illustrate what freedom is and how it is properly deployed; all this in the mold of the pedagogical function of the Spanish baroque *auto sacramental*. One can reasonably assume that if drama at a high level is properly apprehended, all mundane details regarding the nitty-gritty of salvation will "quite easily" fall into place. Or maybe not. Indifference can also mean openness to the remarkable and the mundane in all their details, where the difference between them would become more rather than less pronounced. The latter is my position (which I take to be the Rahnerian position) on indifference. This is the insight behind Rahner's rather strange essay on the logic of *existentiell* recognition in Ignatius Loyola, in which Rahner makes a plea, which he

was never able to fulfill, for an ontology that respects rather than glossing over individual particulars (see *FMM*, 149). Indifference could be a great equalizer, or the great as equalizer, with people falling into typical roles (e.g., Man or Woman), or it could be openness to all the details of individuality, where freedom appears as frustratingly complicated, atypical, where one is challenged to find a divine calling in the strangest of places. Some would call this dramatic. I would select a different term.

I write this during a time of global pandemic, an *Ernstfall* if there has ever been one, a time under the sign of the Apocalypse, where the force of evil seems to have been unleashed to frustrate the good, a plague during which many world leaders are unabashed in their disdain for the general populace and their devotion to Mammon, and during which strong forces aim to divide God's church. If we must choose between Rahner and Balthasar (and I am not convinced that we must—Ciraulo and I concur on this, I believe), a Balthasarian reading of freedom may speak better to our time. But I think there is a Rahnerian dimension to it, also. For those of us who bide our time at home, whose lives are marked less by the ravages of disease and more by the tedium of caring for children (including the nuts and bolts of their education), preparing meals, maintaining a household, all the while trying to eke out a little time for work related to our occupations, a theology of the muted freedom of the everyday seems apropos. Or maybe Balthasar and Rahner can converge, in a quiet Holy Saturday theology for a grandmother isolated in a nursing home, dying silently and breathlessly from COVID-19. Her struggle is profound, if mundane, apocalyptic, yet non-eidetic, sustained (we hope) by the Lord of History, but who one can only imagine comes in a still-small voice.

Christological Density

Ciraulo recognizes room for elaboration in my assessment of the Christological density of the fundamental option. My treatment of the fundamental option as a Christological concept (*FMM*, 10) could be fortified by a discussion of the monothelite controversy and its dogmatic resolution at Constantinople III; or, short of such discussion, a general treatment of the theological and dogmatic stakes behind this controversy and resolution. There is something to be said for this suggestion, especially since Rahner so dutifully attended to the history of dogma throughout his career. But Ciraulo's central concern is less with dogmatic councils and more with how I, along with Rahner, attempt to discuss the "subjective" valence of Christ's freedom (i.e., Jesus Christ's freedom as he himself deploys it), and not just Christ as an objective coordinate for human freedom.

Ciraulo appreciates the Christological reflection in chapter 4 on Christ's agony in the garden (with Lutheran theologian Lois Malcolm as the main interlocutor). I saw this as a culminating point of many passages in chapters 3 and 4. In all of these, Christ's subjective freedom is at issue. Christ

paves the way for a proper “yes.” A “yes” is always *in imitatione Christi*, a continuation of Christ’s subjective life, even if it is not a direct repetition of Christ’s life “for the nth time,” as Rahner puts it (*FMM*, 141). We have a Christology of Christ’s subjective life that is not directly conversant with dogmatic councils but rather with piety, even popular piety, the kind that gave rise to the controversies that necessitated the dogmatic councils.⁴⁵⁸ In this humble way, I believe I can favorably meet Ciraulo’s suggestion that attention to, for example, Constantinople III, may have been appropriate. What so draws me to popular piety, though, is the following: pious devotion does not merely look to Christ as the *object* of devotion, to which we may be tempted if our focus is more on doctrines, dogmas, and councils. Pious devotion means to inhabit Christ’s life.

In a published review of *Freedom Made Manifest*, Leo O’Donovan, SJ relates it to Rahner’s *Worte ins Schweigen*. There Rahner imagined “his entire life as one long prayer to God (a clear anticipation of what he would later call a fundamental option)” and he “pressed the Christic form of that prayer.” O’Donovan explains, “In effect he was interpreting for the 20th century the great Pauline text on Christ as the ‘Yes’ to all the promises of God and the mediator of humanity’s invitation to humanity for it to offer in turn the eternal affirmation of its creating and redeeming God (2 Cor 1:19–20).”⁴⁵⁹ The passage from Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians reads as follows: “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed to you by us, Silvanus and Timothy and me, was not ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ but ‘yes’ has been in him. For however many are the promises of God, their Yes is in him; therefore, the Amen from us also goes through him to God for glory.” Quite honestly, I did not have this Pauline passage in mind as I wrote *FMM*. But it makes sense, and I am grateful to O’Donovan for spurring me to further thought. The Amen that issues from us—should it do so—takes part in Christ’s Yes to God, and travels along his subjective trajectory toward God. The Yes is in Christ, but the Amen is in us—or, should we bring in (sneak in?) the negative side of the fundamental option here, the Amen is obscured, unpronounced, or rejected by us. The subjective freedom of Christ conditions human freedom, provides it with a trajectory, but this trajectory must be traveled. The Yes is embodied by Christ; the Amen—the Amens—must be embodied by us. What I aimed to articulate in *Karl Rahner’s Theological Aesthetics* regarding ethos (the comprehensive way of life that the Christian is challenged to inhabit) aligns with what I tried to say in *FMM* (the fundamental option may be seen as the activity of inhabiting, and the receptivity of being exposed to, this ethos). For the prayerful and devoted Christian, Christ becomes her life, which also remains, paradoxically, her own.

Near the beginning of the *Theo-Drama*, Balthasar states, “By entering into contact with the world theater, the good which takes place in God’s action really is affected by the world’s ambiguity and remains a hidden good.”⁴⁶⁰ I am most interested in this hiddenness of the good, in precisely the way that Balthasar is talking about it here, where Christ so completely takes on our life that the divine glory in him becomes murky. Apparently, this is an uncomfortable thought for Balthasar.

Elsewhere in the *Theo-Drama*, he is more concerned with how a super-version of hiddenness transpires within the immanent Trinity, often, I would argue (and here I am Rahnerian and “allergic” to Constantinople II, as Ciraulo puts it) economic hiddenness is unduly eclipsed. The danger here would be that the subjective freedom of Christ, the Yes, would so outshine human freedom’s Amen as to make it an afterthought, if a thought at all.

Brandon Peterson’s account of Rahner’s soteriology may serve as an aid. Peterson’s *Being Salvation* responds to Balthasarian critiques of Rahner’s symbolic-sacramental Christology by discovering Rahner’s “representative” Christology and soteriology. At stake here is whether Rahner’s soteriology is sufficiently Christocentric, and whether his emphasis on the Incarnation within his Christology comes at the expense of an anemic staurology. In short, Balthasar is concerned that Christ does not bring about salvation, but merely notifies us that salvation has occurred. Rahner’s theology does not emphasize the dramatic *stellvertretenden* (vicarious) role of Christ as the one who came to die and thus redeem us (though he does not deny it, either, as Peterson closely documents).⁴⁶¹ But this hardly means that Jesus does not represent humanity in a strong sense, as both “objective redemption” and as divine-human subject; he does. The way that Rahner articulates this representation, namely by holding in productive tension Jesus’ unmixed full humanity and full divinity, could help theologians to account for how our human subjectivity may be transformed by and align with Jesus’ subjectivity. Peterson summarizes: “*In virtue of Jesus*, who is himself the ‘origin of redemption,’ each person has a salvific responsibility to which her freedom can be directed—namely, God.”⁴⁶² Our responsibility is to travel the ambiguous track of this world, where the good is often hidden, through a personal yes (toward God) or no (away from God).

Concupiscence, Finitude, and Art

Here we can bring in Rolfsen, who faithfully represents what is said about concupiscence in *FMM*, and thus could bring some tension to bear on Ciraulo’s critique of the relationship between concupiscence and finitude in *FMM* as he reads it. Rolfsen writes, “Concupiscence can never be truly overcome. It is ‘a condition of finitude’ (*FMM*, 69), a feature of our existence as limited creatures. This belongs to the *Geworfenheit* of the human being and the general paradox of the ground of human freedom being simultaneously its wellspring (as the condition of freedom’s possibility) and its chain (as what freedom can never truly master or determine).” This is right, assuming we are discussing finitude in its infralapsarian conditions, which I have no reason to doubt that Rolfsen is. Rolfsen’s word, “the chain” could be used in combination with the Schellingian phrase I adduced, “*der nie aufgehende Rest*” (the indivisible remainder) to issue a collegial correction to Ciraulo’s reading of *FMM* and Rahner’s “The Theology of Power.”⁴⁶³

Ciraulo reads Rahner as saying that concupiscence will eventually be left behind, and, were this the case, it would raise fundamental questions regarding my treatment of concupiscence. I read it differently. Let us set the context. Rahner discusses the role of power (manifest as force) in society. Christian hope holds that over time, the use of force will diminish. Force, like concupiscence, is a result of sin. As such, even though it is “natural” (at this point in time, it is there as if it has always already been there), it ought not to be. Rahner explains that the authentic Christian stance toward the use of force should be the same as the Christian stance toward concupiscence. One struggles against concupiscence as something “to be overcome.” Where Ciraulo and I diverge is in our apprehensions of the phrase “to be overcome,” as the English translation has it. This “to be overcome” (*zu Überwindende*), in my view, should be understood in the sense of the gerundive in Latin, which carries a connotation of “ought.” Ciraulo prefers a sense of “will.” I do not accept this reading, even if I find it plausible. Concupiscence remains, which is why I found Schelling’s phrase, “the indivisible remainder,” so compelling for elucidating Rahner’s theology of concupiscence—“chain” works, too! Within the “Theology of Power” text, Rahner precisely rules out that it would be worth imagining a paradisaical condition where concupiscence were inoperative. If we want to talk about human finitude, which Ciraulo does and I do too, we have to talk about concupiscent finitude. This is our fact.

We could venture a comparison with another site in Rahner’s theology: concupiscence functions by way of analogy with Rahner’s understanding of mystery. While mystery is something that we often approach with the intent that it be overcome (through knowledge), realistically it will not be. Where the analogy would seem to break down is that mystery is positively valued, and concupiscence at best neutrally, but perhaps the analogy holds, and in an important way. Concupiscence is part and parcel of the *mysterium iniquitatis*, a mystery whose effects abide—precisely this is why it is so mysterious—even after the definitive victory over sin by Christ (1 Cor 15). Regarding Christ, in conjunction with whom Ciraulo raises further critical questions, yes, Jesus Christ lived without concupiscence. But just as he was like us in all things but sin (Heb 4:15), yet he took our sin upon himself (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24; see also Rom 8:3), so too did he, as nonconcupiscent, take on our concupiscence (this is my reading of “He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness” [Heb 5:2]). If we wish to talk about the eternal significance of the humanity of Jesus (that terrific essay from TI 3 to which Ciraulo alludes), it would be worth noting how concupiscence leaves its mark on Jesus, and all of us, to all eternity; the resurrected Christ still bears the wounds of the cross.

Rolfen’s fascinating reading of characters from Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* becomes particularly important on this count. Before I elaborate, I must admit that his interpretation is not something that I could have accomplished. I have read minimal Dostoevsky, and not that well. It is a joy to see *FMM* applied to art. I attempted a brief application to Albrecht Dürer’s *Feldhase*

within the book itself. A long-term hope is to utilize ideas from *FMM*, Karl Rahner's *Theological Aesthetics*, and, should it materialize, *Love's Terrible Radiance* to illuminate other works of art (given my own artistic proclivities, which lie not in literature but contemporary visual art, I would track in that direction). In the meantime, should others converse with the type of Rahnerian aesthetic with which I am experimenting, that would be a great gift.

Rolfson focuses on the friction exerted on the fundamental option by the concupiscent remainder as a way of elucidating Dostoevsky's characters from *The Brothers Karamazov*. He believes, rightly, that Rahner and Dostoevsky can mutually illuminate regarding the complexity of saying "yes" or "no" to God. Grushenka is the wicked woman whose "wickedness" cannot absorb her wholly (a better spin on concupiscence than the idea that Christians can never expect to eliminate violent force fully from human relations!). Grushenka's brief display of compassion to Alyosha manifests the hidden good that still remains within her as, to put it in Pauline terms, she does not understand what she does (see Rom 7:15–20). At the end of *FMM* chapter 1, I cite a footnote from Rahner's article on concupiscence from *Theological Investigations I* in which he suggests that concupiscence aids in repentance (*FMM*, 75). Because human beings cannot exhaustively self-determine, for good or for evil, concupiscence stands as a kind of good news, inasmuch as it keeps the human person from closing himself off fully from God's mercy.

I note all this because Rolfson worries that right around the same point in *FMM*, I back into a paradox, where concupiscence, which I had been arguing functions neutrally, all but determines that the human person cannot but misapprehend God's word (Word?) and thus say "no" to God. It seems to me that the example of Grushenka could have pointed Rolfson's analysis in the opposite direction, thus toward the kinds of thoughts I have just reviewed. The oddity of concupiscence is that this effect of original sin (thus a kind of evil) keeps luring us toward the good. This view of concupiscence is congruent with Thomas Aquinas's, whatever other revisions Rahner makes to Thomas. For Thomas, concupiscence is a tendency toward the good.

⁴⁶⁴ As Rolfson acknowledges, though, the problem with concupiscence is that it leads to absorption in sensible appearances, thus hindering the freedom of spirit in its striving through them toward something higher. Though concupiscence is a brake on saying "yes" to God, it is not so much of a hindrance that it coerces a "no." Rather, it funnels freedom toward an incomplete yes—or no.

Rolfson uses the example of Alyosha's loving distress after Zosima's death as evidence to bolster his objection that I seem to figure the difficulty (or incompleteness) of saying "yes" to God as a matter of ignorance. The word "ignorance" appears only three times in *FMM*, and only once does it possibly suggest what Rolfson thinks. I refer to "human ignorance" in the case of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, meaning that Christ (as human) did not know what his fate would

be (*FMM*, 231). Like Alyosha, Jesus is well aware of his Father's love—not ignorant of it—but is overtaken with death-dealing sorrow. If this is the place in *FMM* that Rolfsen found problematic, then, we must agree to disagree. For me (as for Rahner), the concupiscent incompleteness of a “yes” is not a matter of ignorance, but of misdirected love for the good. That could be of two sorts: (1) misapprehension of an apparent good for the proper end of one's desire, or (2) love that has been harmed or violated, since all human love is “exposed,” as *FMM* chapter 4 explains at length. Perhaps ignorance could be a factor, but that is not something I wrote about in *FMM*. This could be food for future thought, particularly since I intend to write about “gnoseological concupiscence” in *Love's Terrible Radiance*. That said, saying “no” to God is not necessarily or primarily a matter of ignorance. Much of chapter 2 is devoted to arguing the contrary, inasmuch as the possibility of the “no” becomes a live theological question in conjunction with the question of whether baptismal grace (which coordinates with faith and, presumably, some knowledge of God) may be lost.

Rolfsen asks an important, related question: “What if exposure to the Word can make a person elect to stay ignorant of it?” This is the question of the hardening of heart. We could call it the Psalm 95 question: if today you hear God's voice, will you harden your heart (see Ps 95:7–8)? A fundamental option of “no” would, I think, be tantamount to refusing to acknowledge God's offer of mercy and salvation. Dostoevsky's characters who refuse forgiveness (Fyodor foremost) illustrate this well. Even for such as these, Rolfsen suspects, the “no” serves as a kind of self-protection, a glimmer of concupiscent attraction toward the hidden good. In this way, maybe, the “no” can serve not just (or at all?) as the opposite to the “yes,” since it may just be that to say “yes” to God is to admit one's weakness before God. As Rolfsen puts it, “The fundamental ‘yes’ to God is not a heroic grandstanding.”

I suppose this returns us to the beginning, where I contrasted Balthasar's theo-drama with Rahner's aesthetic of fragile freedom. Surely a Balthasarian theo-drama can illuminate Dostoevsky. Ample citations across Balthasar's trilogy attest to this. But Rolfsen heartens me in his contention that a Rahnerian aesthetic has something to offer—something different, a hidden good that, little by little, I have attempted to uncover.

Footnotes

1.

This essay was first delivered in French in the context of the seminar of the *International Network for the Philosophy of Religion* (INPR), convened in Paris on Saturday, June 22, 2019. It was then delivered in English in the United States on September 23, 2019, for the systematics colloquium of the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Originally published in the French as « En chair et en os » *Transversalités*, n. 153, Avril-Juin 2020, p. 5-33.

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2.

All scriptural citations come from the NRSV.

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3.

Catholic Church, "The Credo," in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012). http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm. Accessed on September 27, 2019.

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4.

Ibid.

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5.

John Damascene, "Discourse against those who speak ill against the images (*Contra imaginum calumniatores*), I, 16, PG XCIV, col. 1245. Cited and commented upon by Pope Benedict XI, *General Audience of 6 May 2009*: "John Damascene. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20090506.html. Accessed September 24, 2019. Emphasis added.

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6.

See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Four: Salvation*, trans. Charles J. O'Neil (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), chapter 88: "One ought, nevertheless, not hold that among the bodies of the risen the feminine sex will be absent, as some have thought. For, since the resurrection is to restore the deficiencies of nature, nothing that belongs to the perfection of nature will be denied to the bodies of the risen...Neither is this opposed by the fact that there will be no use for those members, as was shown above [in chapter 83, 'That Among the Risen There Will Be No Use of Food or Sexual Love']. For, if for this reason such members are not to be in the risen, for an equal reason there would be no members which serve nutrition in the risen, because neither will there be use of food after the resurrection." Ibid., 328-329.

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Ibid., 329. Emphasis added.

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8.

Catholic Church, “The condition of Christ’s risen humanity,” in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), § 645.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/-catechism/p122a5p2.htm. Accessed September 27, 2019.

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9.

See J.-F. Lavigne’s new translation of Edmund Husserl’s, *Ideen I* (1913): *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie pure et une philosophie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2018), §39, p. 117:

“Toute conscience percevante a cette particularité, qu’elle est conscience de la présence de la personne incarnée (*leibhaftigen Selbstgegenwart*) d’un objet individuel—Any perceiving consciousness has this peculiarity, namely, that it is a consciousness of the presence of the incarnate person (*leibhaftigen Selbstgegenwart*) of an individual object.” This is translated by Paul Ricœur (*Ideen I*, Paris: Gallimard, 1950/1991, p. 126) by “conscience de la présence en personne d’un objet individuel—consciousness of the presence in person of an individual object.” Whence the surprising relation between “in flesh and bones” (*leighaftig*) and “in person” (*en personne*) in the whole of phenomenology. [Trans.: For a current English translation of this text, see: Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book. General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), 83.]

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10.

Husserl, *Ideen I*, op. cit. §24, s. 43 (“The Principle of All Principles”), trans. Lavigne, p. 71 (cf. Ricœur, p. 78: “dans sa réalité corporelle pour ainsi dire—in its corporeal reality so to speak”). [Trans.: See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, 44.]

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11.

Note of J.-F. Lavigne, in Husserl, *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie pure* (*Ideen I*), op. cit. 117.

12.

Here we warmly thank Michel d'Hueppe, auditor at the Catholic Institute of Paris, for having sent us the ensemble of occurrences of *leibhaftig* in *Ideas I* (and *Cartesian Meditations*) serving as the basis for the present work.

13.

See Jean-Luc Marion, "The Breakthrough and the Broadening," in *Reduction and Givenness*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 4-39.

14.

Husserl, *Ideen I*, op. cit. §46, s. 86, p. 140. As translated by P. Ricœur: "*Toute chose donnée corporellement peut également ne pas être; nul vécu donné corporellement n'a la possibilité de ne pas être également*—Every thing given corporeally can equally not be; no lived experience given corporeally has the possibility of not being equally." [Trans.: See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, 102.]

15.

Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomènes pour une histoire du concept de temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 71-71, as cited in Didier Franck, *Chair et corps, Sur la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981), 20-21. For a current English translation of Heidegger's text, see Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 40-41. We are following Franck's translation here. [Trans.: Because the English translation of *Chair et corps* employs available English translations of sources rather than translating from Franck's idiosyncratic French translations, upon which the present author's conclusions are based, all passages from *Chair et corps* are here translated from the French. See Didier Franck, *Flesh and Body: On the Phenomenology of Husserl*, trans. Joseph Rivera and Scott Davidson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).]

16.

Martin Heidegger, "Protocole du séminaire du Thor" (September 8, 1968), as cited in Franck, *Chair et corps*, 20, n. 14.

17.

Heidegger, *Prolégomènes pour une histoire du concept de temps*, 71-71, as cited in Franck, *Chair et corps*, 20. [Trans.: Falque's brackets.]

18.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (New York: Routledge, 2004), 9 & 10. Emphasis added. [Trans.: Falque's brackets.]

19.

Ibid., 9.

20.

For Sartre's example of the white sheet of paper given "as image" in contrast to "in person," see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, trans. Forrest Williams (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1972), 1-6.

21.

Sartre, *The Imaginary*, 9. [Trans.: The author here reproduces the original emphases in the French text.]

22.

See Tertullian's *De Carne Christi*, translated in English as *Tertullian's Treatise on the Incarnation*, trans. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K. Publishing, 1956), V, 1, p. 17. For our commentary, see: Emmanuel Falque, "The Solidity of the Flesh (Tertullian)," in *God, the Flesh, and the Other*, trans. William Christian Hackett (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 143-165.

23.

See Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra & Cloudesley Brereton (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1974), 109-110, and in particular the example of a "lady" on the landing of the floor of her hotel who sees the elevator doorman push her back, though the elevator had in fact opened upon a void and the operator

24.

See my *Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

25.

[Trans.: The author alludes here to a distinction made by Michel Henry in his text, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), to which he refers below. The distinction here is between, on the one hand, those who view Marx's thought as a strictly scientific program (i.e., Marxists, such as Friedrich Engels and, in France, Louis Althusser) and, on the other hand, those who insist on its fundamentally philosophical character, exemplified in Marx's earlier writings (i.e., Marxians, such as Michel Henry and, we see here, Falque himself).]

26.

Karl Marx, *Manuscripts de 1844*, trans. J. Salem (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion), first manuscript ("Alienated Work and Private Property"), § 24, p. 114. Emphasis original. Which translation we modify, or rather clarify, following Franck Fischbach in: Karl Marx, *Manuscripts économique-philosophiques de 1844: Texts et commentaires*, trans. Franck Fischbach (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 122. See Ibid., 213, n. 165: "Up to this point, Marx utilized the term *Körper*. Here he employs the term *Leib*. We translate *der Körper* by 'the body [*le corps*]' and *der Leib* by the 'lived body [*le corps propre*].'" [Trans.: Because the author's thesis relies on the interpretive decisions made by the French translators of Marx's German text, these passages are here translated from the French. For an English translation of the original passage by Marx, see: Karl Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 112.]

27.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald Landes (London: Routledge, 2014), 150.

28.

Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, trans. anon., 3rd ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 42. [Trans.: Translation modified to read "in flesh and bones" to correspond with the French. See Karl Marx, *Idéologie allemande* (1845) (Paris: Éditions sociales, 2014), 298-299.]

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29.

The three pitfalls of phenomenology. See Emmanuel Falque, “Philosophy to Its Limit” in *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 11-30.

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30.

Marx, *The German Ideology*, 46-47. Emphasis added. [Trans.: Translation modified to correspond with the French.]

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31.

Marx, *Manuscripts de 1844*, op. cit., p. 169. Translation original. Translation by “the man of flesh” comes from F. Fischbach, op. cit., 165. [Trans.: Falque’s brackets. See Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 180.]

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32.

So it is in Henry’s text for practically everything, according to the rereading of Karl Marx by Pierre Rodrigo, in *Sur l’ontologie de Marx: Auto-production, travail aliéné et capital* (Paris: Vrin, 2014), and in particular p. 50: “Not having interpreted the *Manuscripts* as the investigation of an *a priori* mode of being open within which sensible man and nature come forth co-originarily, Michel Henry finds himself compelled to double the interiority of modern subjectivity by a ‘reciprocal interiority’ of all ontic needs, which would be joined in Marx to a need which would finally be ‘life itself.’”

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33.

See, for example, the German expressions: “*Leiblich Mutter bedeutet nicht besser*—Biological mother does not mean the best mother,” or “*Ich hätte nicht gedacht, Sie leiblich zu sehen*—I could not have imagined that you would appear in flesh and bones” (*de visu* or “first hand,” in the corporeal sense of the expression).

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34.

Marx, *Manuscrit de 1844*, op. cit., 170-171. [Trans.: See Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 181.]

↑

35.

Ibid. [Trans.: See Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 181.]

↑

36.

See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Supplement, q. 79, a. 1: “Whether in the resurrection the soul will be reunited to the same identical body?” (*Utrum idem corpus numero anima resumptura sit in resurrectione*).

<https://dhsprory.org/thomas/summa/XP/XP079.html#XPQ79OUTP1>. Accessed on October 5, 2019. On this point, see the excellent article by G. Rémy, “Résurrection des corps et corps de resurrection,” *Revue thomiste* (October-December 2014): 569-619, and in particular pp. 682-585: “*Raisons anthropologiques de l’identité.*”

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37.

Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Pour une théologie de la matière* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 13.

↑

38.

Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101 (Letter to Cledonius)*, PG (Migne), XXXVII, col. 181c, in *Early Church Texts*.

http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/gregoryofnaz_critique_of_apollinarianism.htm. Accessed October 14, 2019. [Trans.: Literally, “all that is not assumed is not saved, and only what is united to God is saved.”]

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39.

M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, « Gesamtausgabe » (désormais : GA) 40, Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M., 1983, pp. 8-9.

↑

40.

E. Levinas, *Idéologie et idéalisme*, dans *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, Vrin, Paris, 1992², pp. 17-33, ici p. 31.

[↑](#)

41.

J.-L. Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, PUF, Paris, 2002² (désormais : DSE), pp. 172-3.

[↑](#)

42.

M. Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*, GA 29/30, 1983, p. 153.

[↑](#)

43.

GA 29/30, p. 155.

[↑](#)

44.

GA 29/30, p. 154 (nous traduisons).

[↑](#)

45.

E. Levinas, *De la déficience sans souci au sens nouveau*, dans *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, pp. 77-89, ici p. 85.

[↑](#)

46.

J. Ellul, *La raison d'être. Méditation sur l'Ecclésiaste*, Seuil, Paris, 1987, p. 54.

[↑](#)

47.

Cfr. A. Neher, *Notes sur le Qohélét (L'Ecclésiaste)* (1951), Minuit, Paris, 2016, p. 73 : « L'immanence humaine du destin dont parle Qohélét est vivement soulignée par le choix du mot *hbl*. Car si l'on peut tirer de ce concept l'image d'un souffle et l'idée d'une déception, il conserve néanmoins, pour l'oreille biblique, une valeur initialement concrète. Il désigne non pas une chose, mais un homme. *Hbl* c'est le deuxième fils d'Adam, celui que dans nos traductions de la Genèse nous convenons d'appeler Abel ».

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48.

Cfr. A. Vigorelli, *Il disgusto del tempo. La noia come tonalità affettiva*, Mimesis, Milano, 2009.

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49.

GA 29/30, p. 115. L'occurrence dans le texte presque contemporain de la conférence *Was ist Metaphysik?* (dans *Wegmarken*, GA 9, 2004, p. 110) ne surprend pas tellement, ce qui surprend c'est plutôt que l'articulation ennui-brouillard soit reprise dans la conférence *700 Jahre Messkirch* de trente ans postérieure (*Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16, 2000, p. 579).

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50.

DSE, p. 179.

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51.

DSE, p. 188.

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52.

DSE, p. 181.

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53.

DSE, p. 166.

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54.

DSE, p. 165.

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55.

E. Levinas, *Idéologie et idéalisme*, p. 31.

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56.

GA 29/30, p. 115.

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57.

Perry, lorsqu'il souligne la différence entre vanité et néant, recourt très pertinemment à la notion levinassienne de l'« il y a » ; T. A. Perry, *The Book of Ecclesiastes (Qohelet) and the Path to Joyous Living*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 128-129.

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58.

Dans l'essai sur *L'angoisse et l'ennui : pour interpréter Was ist Metaphysik* (« Archives de Philosophie », 1980, 43, pp. 121-146) Marion résout la question en interprétant l'ennui comme une totalisation de l'étant, préliminaire et nécessaire à la prise de distance successive, qui sera mise en oeuvre dans l'angoisse. Bien qu'elle soit confirmée dans *Réduction et donation. Recherches sur Husserl, Heidegger et la phénoménologie* (PUF, Paris, 1989, pp. 283-284), une interprétation de ce type ne tient que si elle se limite aux quelques phrases sur l'ennui présentes dans la conférence de 1929 : mais ce qu'Heidegger développe dans les *Grundbegriffe* dément un rapport de simple subordination entre les deux *Stimmungen* : ne serait-ce que du fait que l'angoisse ne semble jouer aucune fonction dans ce cours.

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59.

M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1967 (désormais : SZ), p. 190.

11

60.

Pour Freud, l'*Angst* est essentiellement « peur » et se rapporte le plus souvent à un objet : « Il sera naturel de nous en tenir initialement à cette idée attendue selon laquelle, là où il y a angoisse, il doit également y avoir quelque chose pour lequel on s'angoisse (*wo Angst ist, muß auch etwas vorhanden sein, vor dem man sich ängstigt*) » (S. Freud, *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, XXV, « Gesammelte Werke », XI, p. 416 – nous traduisons). Tout en travaillant la distinction entre angoisse réelle et névrotique (c'est-à-dire privée de corrélat), il finit par déclarer : « Nous voudrions croire que ce sont des choses tout à fait différentes, et pourtant nous n'avons aucun moyen pour distinguer, dans la sensation, l'angoisse réelle de l'angoisse névrotique » (p. 420 – nous traduisons).

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61.

« Le terme de “*Angst*” ne renvoie pas ici à une distinction rigoureuse entre *Furcht* et *Angst*, qui exclurait peut-être la peur face à des objets réellement dangereux. Certes, *Angst*, au sens strict, peut désigner un état de peur immotivé, plus ou moins détaché de tout renvoi direct à un objet ; nous utiliserons toutefois ce terme en son sens large, et nous le préférons au terme de *Furcht* pour rendre justice à l’idée d’un sentiment de peur pleine et “surabondante” (“*pavor*”), par opposition à la peur comme simple “préoccupation” (*Besorgen*) face à un événement malvenu ou comme anticipation d’un danger (“*timor*”). En général, nous nous intéresserons surtout à l’*Angst* normale, celle qui, même si elle n’est pas proportionnelle à son objet, est tout de même *Angst* face à quelque chose », A. Kolnai, *Der Ekel*, « *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* », X, 1929, pp. 519-569, qui pp. 520-521 (nous traduisons).

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62.

Du reste, Heidegger lui-même en 1923/4 présente encore l’*Angst* comme un cas particulier de *Furcht*, comme une « *Furcht* dans un autre sens » : « où nous ne savons pas ce face à quoi nous avons peur (*uns fürchten*) » ; M. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, GA 18, 2002, p. 261 (nous traduisons).

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63.

SZ, p. 186.

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64.

GA 9, p. 111.

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65.

GA 9, p. 112.

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66.

GA 9, p. 115.

11

67.

Cela est parfaitement remarqué par J. Paumen, *Ennui et nostalgie chez Heidegger*, « Revue Internationale de Philosophie », 43, 1989, pp. 103-130. P. 108 : « Tout ce qui, dans la leçon inaugurale de 1929, s'inscrivait au compte de l'expérience de l'angoisse, s'inscrit, à peu de chose près, dans le cours de 1929/1930, au compte de l'expérience de l'ennui ».

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68.

Il est tout à fait remarquable que, dans les premières pages de *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, soient mentionnées aussi bien l'ennui que le désespoir comme de possibles expériences où affleure la « question fondamentale » de la philosophie, mais que l'angoisse n'y soit pas mentionnée (cfr. GA 40, p. 3).

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69.

Ce n'est d'ailleurs peut-être pas banal si Pascal décrit l'expérience de Jésus dans le Gethsémani en termes d'« ennui » (*Pensées*, Brunschwig, fragment 553) : « Peut-être, parlerions-nous, nous, d'angoisse », commenta Vincent Carraud, « car cet ennui a en réalité un objet : la mort toute prochaine » (« *Nous ne nous tenons jamais au temps présent* ». *Quelques remarques pascalienues sur l'imminence et la présenteté*, « Archivio di filosofia », 2, 2018, pp. 207-220, ici p. 216). Ou peut-être pourrions-nous saisir l'occasion de mettre en question la taxinomie heideggerienne et envisager à nouveau, à la lumière du rôle de l'ennui, une lecture phénoménologique de l'agonie de Jésus, telle qu'ouverte par Emmanuel Falque (*Le passeur de Gethsémani*, Cerf, Paris, 2004).

11

70.

Ch. Baudelaire, *Spleen, Les Fleurs du Mal*, LXXVI, *Oeuvres Complètes*, « Pléiade », Paris, 1970, p. 69. Le vers est rappelé et analysé par J.-L. Marion, *L'angoisse et l'ennui*, cit., p. 126.

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71.

GA 29/30, p. 159 (nous traduisons).

11

72.

L'un des éléments les plus faibles de la lecture 'heideggerienne' du *Qohelet* proposée par Martin Shuster (*Being as Breath, Vapor as Joy: Using Martin Heidegger to Re-Read the Book of Ecclesiastes*, « Journal for the Study of the Old Testament », 33, 2008, pp. 219-244), réside dans le fait que l'auteur fait complètement abstraction de la question des éventuelles traces du texte biblique dans les pages d'Heidegger. La compréhension de la « vanité » comme « historicité » de l'existence, plutôt que comme alternative radicale à la temporalité (révélée dans l'ennui), suffit à montrer, selon nous, la piètre plausibilité d'une telle tentative interprétative.

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73.

GA 29/30, p. 151 (nous traduisons).

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74.

GA 29/30, p. 189 (nous traduisons).

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75.

GA 29/30, p. 193 (nous traduisons).

↑

76.

E. Levinas, *Idéologie et idéalisme*, p. 31.

↑

77.

E. Levinas, *De l'Existence à l'Existant*, Vrin, Paris, 1993, p. 134.

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78.

B. Pascal, *Pensées*, Brunschwig, §139.

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79.

Cfr. *De coenobiorum institutis*, X, 2.

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80.

GA 29/30, p. 211.

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81.

GA 29/30, p. 203. Ce passage trouve un équivalent parfait dans l'angoisse : « C'est pourquoi, au fond, ce n'est pas dépayasant "pour moi" ou "pour toi", mais pour "on". Il ne reste que le pur être-là » (GA 9, p. 112 – nous traduisons).

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82.

GA 29/30, p. 212.

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83.

GA 29/30, p. 212.

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84.

GA 29/30, p. 216. Ici et *a fortiori*, on peut faire le même type d'objection que celle que Marion soulève à propos de l'articulation entre être, néant et appel, qui émerge dans *Was ist Metaphysik* : si l'angoisse est l'expérience où l'étant « ne me [dit] plus rien », on ne voit pas comment elle pourrait se renverser en une expérience parfaitement contraire de l'« appel de la voix de l'être » (J.-L. Marion, *Réduction et donation*, p. 274 puis p. 276). En conséquence, Marion se demande : « Angoisse et Rien, en suspendant respectivement la parole et la distinction, ne mettent-ils pas immédiatement et nécessairement entre parenthèses la possibilité même de la revendication (*An-spruch*) – de la moindre parole (*Sprache*) d'un appel différenciant (*An-*) ? » (p. 276).

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85.

M. Heidegger, *Grundsätze des Denkens. Freiburger Vorträge 1957*, GA 79, 1994, p. 84 (nous traduisons).

└

86.

GA 79, p. 84.

¶

87.

All references to Heidegger are to *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), abbreviated as “GA.” Corresponding English translations are cited immediately afterwards. “Esp.” abbreviates “especially,” and provides page numbers from both the German and the English (separated by a slash). All English translations of GA 2 (*Sein und Zeit*) are from *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), abbreviated as “BT.”

¶

88.

See GA 18: §§3–7, 9–35, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009): 17–26 (Summer Semester 1924), esp. 23/18: “ουσία belongs among these ambiguous basic concepts. Thus we will examine that from which its various meanings take their bearings [Zu diesen vieldeutigen Grundbegriffen gehört ουσία. Wir werden also nachsehen, von wo die verschiedenen Bedeutungen ihre Orientierung nehmen].” GA 22: §55, 152–155, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007): 126–129, esp. 152/126–127 (Summer Semester 1926): “But the manifoldness of the meaning of being [der Vielfachheit der Bedeutung von Sein] is not an utterly disparate one [nicht disparat]. It is not simply a matter of one and the same word used with completely different meanings, such as the cock [Hahn] and of the water spigot: the same word, but the meaning is altogether different. Thus the expression ‘being’ is not equivocal, οὐχ ὁμώνυμος (1003a34), *aequivoce*, but neither is it – since πολλαχῶς-συνώνυμος, *univoce*, having the same meaning in every context.” GA 24: §15 (“The Fundamental Problem of the Multiplicity of Ways of Being and of the Unity of the Concept of Being in General [Das grundsätzliche Problem der Mannigfaltigkeit der Weisen des Seins und der Einheit des Seinsbegriffes]”), *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982): 154 (Summer Semester 1927): “From Descartes onward [...] [there is no] success in subordinating this diversity of being as a *multiplicity of ways of being* to an *original idea of being in general* [diese Verschiedenheit des Seins als Mannigfaltigkeit von Weisen des Seins einer ursprünglichen Idee von Sein überhaupt unterzuordnen].”

¶

89.

Heidegger's reliance on Aristotle's formulation of the *Seinsfrage* is clear in §1: "Aristotle himself knew the unity of this transcendental 'universal' as a *unity of analogy* in contrast to the multiplicity of the highest generic concepts applicable to things [sc. the categories]. With this discovery [...] he put the problem of being on what was, in principle, a new basis" (GA 2: 3, BT: 22).

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90.

Heidegger does not employ the concept of time anywhere in *Being and Time* §2, "The Formal Structure of the Question of Being."

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91.

GA 18: §26, 295–296, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, op. cit.: 200 (Summer Semester 1924), where Heidegger relates **ἐνέργεια** to ἐντελεχεία as means towards end, and translates **ἐνέργεια** as **"becoming-completed" (Fertigwerden) towards ἐντελεχεία**, which he translates as "pure presence" (*reine Gegenwart*). GA 22: §62, 173, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*, op. cit.: 145 (Summer Semester 1926): **"ἐνέργεια itself, fundamental presence [Grundanwesenheit] [...]"** See also GA 33, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* Θ1–3: *On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). **Later, in "Metaphysics as History of Being," Heidegger writes that "Aristotle thinks ousia (presence) in the primary sense as energeia." "For Aristotle, being consists in the energeia of the tode ti." "That something is and what something is are revealed as modes of presencing whose fundamental characteristic is energeia." See GA 6.2, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambough (New York: Harper and Row, 1973): 8–9.**

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92.

Even Husserl's claim in *Logical Investigations* that being is given in categorial intuition does not by itself demonstrate, as Heidegger suggests (GA 15, *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003: 67) that it has a focal sense, which determines and organizes its many senses; the givenness of being as a *category* does not and cannot add up to the givenness of a *focal sense*, which is much more robust. Heidegger's reference to Husserl's concept of categorial intuition as the "ground" that enabled him to pose the *Seinsfrage* does not by itself demonstrate that there is a focal sense of being given in and presupposed by *Dasein's* understanding of the many senses of being.

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93.

“Because temporal projection makes possible an objectification of being and assures conceptualizability, and thereby constitutes ontology in general as a science, we call this science in distinction from the positive sciences the *temporal science*” (GA 24: §22, 460, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, op. cit.: 323).

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94.

See Claude Romano, *L'inachèvement d'Être et temps et autres études d'histoire de la phénoménologie* (Paris: Le Circle Herméneutique, 2013), 236.

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95.

GA 24: §1, 1, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, op. cit.: 1.

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96.

See GA 15, *Four Seminars*, op. cit.: 40.

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97.

See n. 5 above.

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98.

GA 31: §9, 74, *Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002): 51; my emphasis.

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99.

GA 31: §9, 74, *Essence of Human Freedom*, op. cit.: 52; my emphasis.

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100.

GA 31: §9, 74–75, *Essence of Human Freedom*, op. cit.: 52; my emphasis.

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101.

GA 31: §8, 71, *Essence of Human Freedom*, op. cit.: 50; my emphasis

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102.

“*Dasein* understands itself by way of its ownmost peculiar ability-to-be, of which it is expectant. In thus comporting toward its ownmost peculiar ability-to-be, it is *ahead of itself*. Expecting a possibility, I come from this possibility toward that which I myself am. *Dasein*, expecting its ability-to-be, *comes toward itself*. In this coming-toward-itself, *Dasein* is *futural* in an original sense. The coming-toward-oneself from one’s most peculiar possibility, a coming-toward which is implicit in *Dasein*’s existence and of which all expecting is a specific mode, is the *primary concept of the future*. This existential concept of the future is the presupposition for the common concept of the future in the sense of the not-yet-now” (GA 24: §19, 374–375, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, op. cit.: 265; translation modified). Cf. GA 2: §65, BT: 370–380.

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103.

Falque has also raised the important question of “Incorporation,” but since “Incarnation” retains the historical and conceptual primacy in *theological* dogma, I will limit my remarks to it here.

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104.

For the classical analyses, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) / *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), I, §§ 3-4, and II, §1.

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105.

“For even when painters try to create sirens and satyrs with the most extraordinary bodies, they cannot give them natures which are new in all respects; they simply jumble up the limbs of different animals. Or if perhaps they manage to think up something so new that nothing remotely similar has ever been seen before—something which is therefore completely fictitious and unreal—at least the colours used in the composition must be real.” René Descartes, *First Meditation*, *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol II, trans. John Cottingham, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 13–14, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1996), [hereafter AT] VII, 20, 2-8.

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106.

In her famous “Letter to Dr. Findlay,” Jan. 13, 1932, the blind and deaf Helen Keller describes her sight from atop the Empire State Building: “Frankly, I was so entranced ‘seeing’ that I did not think about the sight” (my emphasis). She is not appealing to the vivid imagination of one who dreams, but to the feeling of seeing, in the absence of anything visible. One can compare the claim, of course, to many texts from Descartes: “It is the soul which sees, and not the eye” *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol I, trans. John Cottingham, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 174, AT VI, 141, 5-6.); “the ‘I’ who imagines is the same ‘I’.” For even if, as I have supposed, none of the objects of imagination are real, the power of imagination is something which really exists and is part of my thinking. Lastly, it is also the same ‘I’ who has sensory perceptions, or is aware of bodily things as it were through the senses. For example, I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat. But I am asleep, so all this is false. Yet I certainly seem to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false...” What is called ‘having a sensory perception’ is strictly just this, and in this restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking.” (*Second Meditation, Writings*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 19, AT VII, II, 29, 6-15); and, finally, we may be misled “regarding the *perceptions* which refer to certain parts of our body. But we cannot be misled in the same way regarding the passions, in that they are so close and so internal to our soul that it cannot possibly feel them unless they are truly as it feels them to be...” (*Passions of the Soul*, 26, *Writings I*, 338, my emphasis) and still others—For the key analysis of these texts see Michel Henry, *Genealogy of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Douglas Brick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) / *Généalogie de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), ch. 1.

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107.

The point will seem trivial, and with respect to the insight the physicist seeks, it is. But the study of physics happens in a lifeworld, and not only in a world.

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108.

Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1991).

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109.

Sapere aude, originally from Horace, “Letter to Lolius,” *Epistulae*, 1, 2, 40, when taken up by Kant, in his Sept. 30, 1784 Letter to Zöllner, “Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?” becomes an injunction: “Have courage to use your own understanding.” Immanuel Kant,

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110.

John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, 2nd ed. 1996), p. 88.

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111.

Eleanor Rosch, "Introduction to the Revised Edition," *The Embodied Mind*, eds Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch (Boston: MIT Press, 1991, rev. ed. 2016), p. xl. In her 2016 introduction, in the context of prospective remarks on the future of "enaction," Rosch herself admits, "Where science, as it is done now with its mechanistic and materialist assumptions, meets experience, Buddhism, or anything else, the science simply takes over like a colonial ruler. This is body imperialism..." p. lii.

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112.

In addition to Rosch, Varela, and Thompson, among others, see also Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012).

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113.

Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007, 2010), p. 87. One will notice these as analogs of the classical Aristotelian framework, certain vestiges of which one can find, in some sense, still in Augustine.

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114.

For Thompson, the notion of phenomenal form must be broadened and enriched by biology, physics, and mathematics in order to achieve the desired adequate description-explanation. Merleau-Ponty's statement that "a physiological analysis of perception would be purely and simply impossible" does not count as an objection to such an approach, Thompson contends, provided that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of physiological analysis is limited to a lower-order, neuronal level. If, on the contrary, it is expanded to include what Thompson calls a "higher-level, morphodynamic level of explanation," then a physiological analysis of perception is entirely conceivable. Thompson, *Mind in Life*, p. 85. Thompson does not deny that the approach he recommends can alter the notion of the phenomenal domain; the possibility of such an alteration is built into it: the enrichment of form "can circulate back to modify and reshape" what counts as a phenomenon. *Ibid.* p. 86. Nevertheless, when it comes time to

115.

See, in particular, Jean Petitot et al, *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

116.

The claim that all my experience is only a simulation, and that, in any case, I have no way of proving it is not, depends for its compelling force on the concept of reality that is contained in the idea of a simulation, the concept of reality as represented. It is difficult to see how a notion of flesh, the reality of which is first or exclusively in the sensed-body, has any power against such arguments.

117.

Michel Henry, *Barbarism*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2012) p. 51 / *La barbarie* (Paris : PUF 1987, 2nd ed. Quadrige, 2004), p. 93.

118.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 9.

119.

Henry's refutation of this position appears at *Incarnation : A Philosophy of Flesh*, trans. Karl Hefty (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015) / *Incarnation : une philosophie de la chair* (Paris : Seuil, 2000), §21. The original arguments arise in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968) / *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), §4; cf. *Phenomenology of perception*, op. cit., I, 2, p. 106ff.

120.

Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 19th ed. 2006), H 55; cf. Henry, *Incarnation*, III, §47, p. 242ff / p. 345ff.

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121.

Emmanuel Falque, “Is There a Flesh Without Body? A Debate with Michel Henry,” trans. Scott Davidson, *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, Vol XXIV, No 1 (2016), pp. 139–66 / “Y a-t-il une chair sans corps,” *Transversalités*, Janvier-Mars, 2002: 44 – 75, republished in Philippe Capelle, ed., *Phénoménologie et christianisme chez Michel Henry* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 95–133 ; this objection to Henry also appears *Le Combat amoureux* (Paris: Hermann, 2014) / *The Loving Struggle* (London & New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), Ch. 5. The *Transversalités* edition is cited here. For some subsequent development, see also Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), pp. 16ff & 136ff. Falque does acknowledge a minimal presence of a “verbal indicator” of a “body of flesh [*Leibkörper*]” in *Incarnation*, and offers what we find to be a more moderate claim later: “it is not, properly speaking, the case that there is a *flesh without body* but simply that any *passage from the flesh to the body* whatsoever remains unexplained in *Incarnation*, since everything is already constituted on the basis of an originary flesh (the auto-impression), which explains the intentionality of the flesh (feeling), but not the thickness of the body (the felt).” *Ibid.* p. 162 / p. 72 (trans. modified).

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122.

Emmanuel Falque, “Is There a Flesh Without Body? pp. 139–40 / “Y a-t-il une chair sans corps,” p. 44. In fact, for Henry, “access” to the body through the flesh is both impressional and practical. Henry will not equate the experience of flesh with the experience of life, however.

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123.

Falque claims that, “initially,” we are an “organic and thingly lives *before* being an affective pathos.” In addition, “All ‘pleasure’ as well as all ‘suffering’ takes place *initially* through the body, without being reduced to the lived experience of its originary flesh in its simple pathos” (*Ibid.* p. 159 / p. 68, my emphasis). Falque here seems to be appealing to the sensed body, and to sense as intentional, in the manner of Scheler. Henry’s critique of this position, to which Falque does not respond directly, can be found in *The Essence of Manifestation*, IV, §§ 54 and 64. One might still wonder: What scientific description of a pure organic body can account, phenomenologically, for what it is in itself? Simply by reference to what takes place visibly? The completion of biology in its full development, one might say. Then we would have a correct account of the full set of relations, for example, that unite the microbiome of the bowels to the neurology of the brain, and we would be able to describe and characterize these relations accurately, because we perceive them. On the basis of such a correct perception of the organic

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124.

Ibid. p. 163 / p. 73.

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125.

I am not persuaded by Falque's general objections, because I do not think he has adequately accounted for Henry's position. The charge that Henry falls prey to dualism glosses over the rejection of soul-body dualism that is explicit in the text, begs the question of the thesis at issue (the duplicity of appearing), and sits uneasily with the charge of monism later applied to Henry. The charge that Henry resurrects a tired form of de-mythologization does not stick either. Henry's reading of the Fathers is anything but Bultmann's. In any case, if Greek thinking were so compatible with Christian faith, why would it be so unthinkable for God to be born in flesh like ours, as it was to the Greek mind? Why the debates or councils? We can call this enculturation, but we must not do so at the expense of admitting what remains distinctively Christian in it. The charge that Henry rejects the "model" of the visible is also somewhat question-begging, since we are here dealing with a phenomenology of the invisible. Nevertheless, these are not the charges Falque wishes to defend vigorously. And these objections do not prevent Falque from recognizing phenomenological descriptions of great value in Henry. The most compelling, and in my view correct, claims Falque makes are in the sections of the paper that describe what Falque takes to be original in Henry, but these are the very parts of Henry's work Falque embraces.

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126.

Ibid. pp. 140 – 1 / p. 145 (my emphasis). Henry in no way denies that the body is also an object, and also organic. It is a question, rather, of describing adequately the body's phenomenality in its entirety, which Henry thinks is not possible if we seek to account for flesh in terms of the organic body or in terms of the objective body alone. Falque seems primarily worried that Henry's flesh is too *unilateral*. It *seems* as if Falque wants a single notion of phenomenality that accounts for both sensing flesh and sensed body, but wants to get there starting from the body alone. Though I cannot address the issue here, it is for me unclear what a *theological* concept of incarnation (or incorporation) would be, that would be adequately describable as the Word assuming a purely organic matter. As we know from Maximus the Confessor, and so many others, human salvation is affected in the Christ, not because the Word assumes a purely organic matter, which has no freedom or agency, but also because of his obedience, in his human will, to the divine will. Such obedience is not possible unless the flesh is also subjective,

127.

Forget the “theological turn of French phenomenology.” Falque detects in Henry’s final section that is supposed to treat “Incarnation in the Christian Sense” a near-total “*avoidance of the theological*.” Or, if he does not succeed in totally avoiding it, at least “a probable attempt to avoid the theological” (*Ibid.* pp. 149, 147 / pp. 56, 52). I find these claims unfounded. Nowhere in Henry’s *œuvre* does he evince the least fear of theology, or any attempt to avoid it. He is and remains a phenomenologist, and his theologically-motivated critics ought not gloss over this fact, or take it as a demerit.

128.

Ibid. p. 150 / p. 56.

129.

Ibid. pp. 162 – 3 / pp. 72 – 3.

130.

Ibid. p. 162 / p. 72, citing Henry, *Incarnation*, III, §35, p. 178 / p. 255 (my emphasis).

131.

For Henry, the statement of Christ to Pilate (Jn. 19:11) — “You would have no power over me...” — is an absolute claim, applying not only to the political power of the first-century provincial prefect, but also to all power at his disposal, the brute force of a soldier, for example, and any power like it.

132.

Ibid. p. 160 / p. 69.

133.

“The God who made the world and everything in it... does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything.” Ac. 17:24-25.

134.

Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, op. cit., p. 19.

135.

Which continues: “Since the incarnation, God has been externalized [a été dans l’extérieur].” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Faith and Good Faith,” in *Sense and Non-sense*, tr. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Alley Dreyfus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1964), 174-5/ *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Les Éditions Nagel, 4th ed, 1945), p. 310.

136.

1 Jn. 1:1 (NRSV).

137.

“The infinite form is received only in a finite way; consequently, every creature is, as it were, a finite infinity or a created god, so that it exists in the way in which this could best be.” *De docta ignorantia* 1440, II, 2, 104, in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* trans. H. Lawrence Bond (Mahway, NY: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 134. A form of this aporia has been described by Jean-Luc Marion, “The Aporia of the Concept of Revelation: The Epistemological Interpretation,” *Givenness and Revelation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 8-29.

138.

Jn. 6:44-46.

139.

Falque frequently renders Henry as suggesting an experience *of* life, but Henry instead understands life as experiencing undergoing itself, not as an object of experience, where *experiencing* as such would be taken for granted as given.

140.

Lk. 16:31.

It

141.

See, in particular, *Words of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) p. 124 / *Paroles du Christ* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 155; cf. “Archi-christologie,” in *Phénoménologie de la vie, Tome IV : sur l'éthique et la religion* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), p. 113 ff.

It

142.

Un grand merci à Père Nestor Bandora qui a lu une ébauche de cet article et qui m’a aidé avec le français. Si quelques erreurs restent ils sont ajouté après. Merci aussi à Prof. Jerome de Gramont, qui a fait une très belle réponse à la conférence qui était le germe de cet article. Finalement, merci à Prof. Emmanuel Falque qui a répondu avec plein de grâce à mon « repoussoir » à sa philosophie.

It

143.

« La force de la ‘deconstruction’ (*Destruktion*) heideggérienne de la tradition métaphysique fut d’un génération de penseurs post-heideggériens des anti-métaphysiciens » (« The forcefulness of Heidegger’s ‘deconstruction’ [*Destruktion*] of the metaphysical tradition helped turn a generation of post-Heideggerian thinkers into anti-metaphysicians ». Iain Thomson, ‘Ontotheology? Understanding Heidegger’s *Destruktion* of Metaphysics’, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 8, no. 3 [1 January 2000]: 297).

It

144.

Voir Ibid., 297–98.

It

145.

Voir, par exemple, Emmanuel Falque, *Triduum philosophique: Le Passeur de Gethsémani. Métamorphose de la finitude. Les Noces de l’Agneau* (Éditions du Cerf, 2016), 191.

It

146.

Emmanuel Falque, *Métamorphose de la finitude. Essai philosophique sur la naissance et la résurrection* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2004).

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147.

En fait, l'enjeu pour Ricœur et Heidegger est la lecture de Kant. Ils interprètent Kant de manière très différente. Jean Greisch a montré que l'anthropologie ricœurienne « se greffe aussi directement sur une relecture de Kant » (Jean Greisch, *L'Arbre de vie et l'Arbre du savoir.: Le chemin phénoménologique de l'herméneutique heideggérienne (1919-1923)* [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2000], 26). Falque aussi a fait une typologie de lectures francophones de Kant : Heidegger, Ricœur, Marion, et lui-même. Voir Emmanuel Falque, 'Hors phénomène', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 99, no. 3 (2018): 323. Contre le *Kantbuch* d'Heidegger et la finitude « radicale » que Heidegger trouve en Kant, Ricœur trouve par contraste chez Kant un homme qui est un mixte, une « disproportion ».

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148.

Andrea Bellantone, *La Métaphysique possible : Philosophies de l'esprit et modernité* (Paris: Editions Hermann, 2012).

↑

149.

« Numerous scholars have taken *Fallible Man* as the key to understanding Ricoeur » ; « In 1986 Ricoeur himself admits that this book is the one he favors the most of all his works » (Pamela Sue Anderson, *Ricoeur and Kant: Philosophy of the Will* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993], 10).

↑

150.

Paul Ricœur, *Finitude et culpabilité*, Philosophie de la volonté 2 (Paris: Éditions Points, 2009), 187.

↑

151.

Ibid., 39.

1

152.

Ibid., 40.

1

153.

Ibid., 61.

1

154.

Ibid., 60.

1

155.

Ibid., 61–62.

1

156.

Ibid., 63.

1

157.

Ibid.

1

158.

Ibid., 64.

1

159.

Jean-Luc Marion, *Certitudes négatives* (Grasset, 2010).

1

160.

Paul Ricoeur, *Histoire et Vérité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), 385.

1

161.

Ibid., 382.

1

162.

Ricœur, *Finitude et culpabilité*, 389.

1

163.

Alison Scott-Baumann, *Ricœur and the Negation of Happiness* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

1

164.

Paul Ricœur, 'Intellectual Autobiography', in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricœur*, ed. Lewis Hahn (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 6. « Jean Nabert devait m'influencer de façon plus décisive dans les années cinquante et soixante » (Paul Ricœur, *Réflexion faite* [Paris: Éditions Esprit, 1995], 15).

1

165.

Jean-Luc Amalric, 'Affirmation originaire, attestation et reconnaissance: Le cheminement de l'anthropologie philosophique ricœurienne', *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies* 2, no. 1 (10 June 2011): 13. Voir aussi Jean-Luc Amalric, 'Act, Sign and Objectivity: Jean Nabert's Influence on the Ricœurian Phenomenology of the Will', in *A Companion to Ricœur's Freedom and Nature*, ed. Scott Davidson (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018).

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166.

Pierre Colin, 'Herméneutique et philosophie réflexive', in *Paul Ricœur: les métamorphoses de la raison herméneutique*, ed. Jean Greisch and Richard Kearney (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 16.

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167.

Ricœur, *Histoire et Vérité*, 391.

1

168.

Ibid., 399.

↑

169.

Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté*, 30th ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 25.

↑

170.

Ricœur, *Histoire et Vérité*, 399. Nous soulignons.

↑

171.

« I am not sure about the absolute irreconcilability between the God of the Bible and the God of Being (understood with Jean Nabert as 'primary affirmation' ...) » (Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricœur: The Owl of Minerva* [London: Taylor & Francis, 2017], 169). Nous soulignons.

↑

172.

Ricœur, *Finitude et culpabilité*, 389–90. Nous soulignons.

↑

173.

Emmanuel Falque, 'Limite théologique et finitude phénoménologique chez Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* Tome 92, no. 3 (2008): 529.

↑

174.

« cum intellectus humanus, secundum statum praesentis vitae, non possit intelligere substantias immateriales creatas, ut dictum est; multo minus potest intelligere essentiam substantiae increatae. Unde simpliciter dicendum est quod Deus non est primum quod a nobis cognoscitur » (Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa Theologiae (ST)* Ia, q. 88, a. 3, resp. Traduit par l'Institut docteur angélique)

↑

175.

« etiam apud philosophos dicatur quod scientia de anima est principium quoddam ad cognoscendum substantias separatas. Per hoc enim quod anima nostra cognoscit seipsam, pertingit ad cognitionem aliquam habendam de substantiis incorporeis, qualem eam contingit habere, non quod simpliciter et perfecte eas cognoscat, cognoscendo seipsam » (Thomas

| t

176.

« quia de Deo scire non possumus quid sit, sed quid non sit » (Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) Ia, q. 3. Traduit par l'Institut docteur angélique).

| t

177.

Ricœur, *Finitude et culpabilité*, 50. Bien que cette citation vienne d'un autre contexte.

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178.

Ibid., 567.

| t

179.

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Expérience et absolu: questions disputées sur l'humanité de l'homme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994), §34.

| t

180.

Ricœur, *Histoire et Vérité*, 379.

| t

181.

Ibid., 404.

| t

182.

Gabriel Marcel, *Être et Avoir* (Paris: Aubier, 1935), 176.

| t

183.

« Nihil prohibet de eisdem rebus, de quibus philosophicae disciplinae tractant secundum quod sunt cognoscibilia lumine naturalis rationis, et aliam scientiam tractare secundum quod cognoscuntur lumine divinae revelationis. Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur » (Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) Ia, q. 1. art. 1, ad. 2. Traduit par l'Institut docteur angélique).

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184.

Ricœur, *Réflexion faite*, 26.

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185.

Là où Adam ne donne de nom qu'aux animaux qu'il voit défiler devant lui.

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186.

Jacques Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil, 1967, p. 176.

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187.

Edmund Husserl, *La Crise des sciences européennes et la phénoménologie transcendantale*, trad. G. Granel, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 20 sq.

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188.

Edmund Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes*, cité d'après Claude Romano, *Les Repères éblouissants*, Paris, PUF, 2019, p. 61 – voir les traductions des *Méditations* par Levinas-Peiffer, Vrin, 1947, p. 33, et par Marc de Launay, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 83 sq. Formule célèbre et à laquelle Merleau-Ponty s'est spécialement attaché puisqu'on la retrouve au commencement et à la fin de son parcours, dans l'Avant-propos de la *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris, Gallimard, 1945, p. X) et dans *Le Visible et l'invisible* (Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p. 171).

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189.

Selon une affirmation lumineuse de Heidegger dans son cours *Qu'appelle-t-on penser ?*, trad. Paris, PUF, 1959, p. 224.

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190.

Comme Husserl lui-même l'annonce dans les *Ideen I*, à la fin du § 96 (voir trad. P. Ricœur, Paris, Gallimard, 1950, p. 334 ; et trad. J.-F. Lavigne, Paris, Gallimard, 2018, p. 296).

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191.

Comme nous l'avons montré dans notre étude « La phénoménologie comme lutte avec l'ange » dans *Au commencement. Parole, Regard, Affect* (Paris, Cerf, 2013). C'est sous la contrainte des phénomènes que Husserl est amené à corriger le « principe des principes » du § 24 des *Ideen I*.

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192.

« Et cependant les astres, même si nous ne les avons jamais vus, n'en seraient pas moins, je pense, des substances éternelles, distinctes de celles que nous connaissons » (Aristote, *Métaphysique* Z 16, 1040 b 34 (trad. Tricot).

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193.

Kant, *Critique de la faculté de juger*, § 86, trad. A. Philonenko, Paris, Vrin, 1979, p. 250.

1

194.

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Etre en danger*, Paris, Cerf, 2011, p. 196.

1

195.

Pour reprendre l'exemple de Jean-Yves Lacoste : « la bataille de Waterloo ne critique ni ne contredit la bataille d'Austerlitz » (*ibid.*, p. 205).

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196.

Stanislas Breton, *L'autre et l'ailleurs*, Paris, Descartes & Cie, 1995, p. 147, et *L'avenir du christianisme*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1999, p. 99.

1

197.

Ou sans autre différence qu'entre le plus proche et le plus lointain, partant entre le plus aisément visible et ce qui nous demande un effort – ce qui tient seulement au lieu que nous occupons à un moment donné dans l'espace.

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198.

Louis-René des Forêts, *Ostinato*, Paris, Gallimard, 1997, p. 88.

1

199.

Mot que Blanchot prononce dans une conversation avec Georges Bataille, et que celui-ci rapporte dans *L'expérience intérieure* (*Œuvres complètes*, t. V, Paris, 1973, p. 19, 67, 120).

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200.

Voir Claude Romano, *Au cœur de la raison, la phénoménologie*, chap. XVII et XVIII, Paris, Gallimard, 2010.

1

201.

Ce qui est de bonne phénoménologie, car il n'y a de phénomène que par celui qui le reçoit. Ce qui est tout conforme au principe défendu par Levinas, Chrétien et Marion selon lequel l'appel n'est entendu que dans la réponse (voir Jean-Luc Marion, *Etant donné*, Paris, PUF, 1997, p. 396 et références). Et ce dont l'esthétique kantienne fournit un exemple éclatant : il n'y a de beauté de la nature que dans le jugement de goût.

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202.

Sur ce concept, central chez Jean-Louis Chrétien, voir notre article « La fragilité comme existentiel », *Rue Descartes* n°94, 2017/4.

1

203.

C'est une des leçons de Jacques Derrida dans *L'écriture et la différence* « que toute histoire ne puisse être, en dernière instance, que l'histoire du sens » (p. 54 note), mais aussi une histoire où le sens est lié au non-sens, la raison à la folie, le logos de la métaphysique à son excès...

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204.

D'une certaine manière cette tâche proprement phénoménologique est déjà le fait de l'expérience littéraire, telle du moins que la pensée Blanchot, et telle qu'il en vient à la formuler dans la maxime de *L'écriture du désastre* : « Veiller sur le sens absent » (Paris, Gallimard, 1980, p. 72).

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205.

Si une promesse est possible que soit mis fin à la menace du non-sens, alors cette promesse n'est pas la nôtre, mais relève de la théologie.

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206.

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Etre en danger*, p. 369.

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207.

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Recherches sur la parole*, Louvain-La Neuve, Peeters, 2015, p. 211

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208.

Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Thèses sur le vrai*, Paris, PUF, 2018, p. 188, 191 sq.

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209.

Rimbaud, *Une saison en enfer*, « Alchimie du verbe »

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210.

Ibid.

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211.

Tel est bien le sens premier du mot *Khaos* – celui d'Hésiode repris par Henri Maldiney : « La notion de chaos est en effet semblable à celle d'abîme, non venu du grec *abyssos* : sans fond, impénétrable, qui substantivé désigne le vide infini. Le chaos est une béance non seulement sans fond, mais sans aucune direction. Il n'y a en lui ni haut, ni bas, ni droite, ni gauche, ni avant, ni arrière, ni aucune système de coordonnées possibles. Il est hors dimension » (*Avènement de l'œuvre*, Saint-Maximin, Théétète-éditions, 1997, p. 77 sq). L'autre mot vers lequel se tourne Maldiney est celui d'Anaximandre cette fois, dans une sentence dont il faudrait suivre l'interprétation chez Heidegger, Maldiney et surtout Patocka.

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212.

Cette leçon est aussi des Evangiles : à quoi bon amasser des biens si notre âme ignore pour quoi vivre ? « Mais Dieu lui dit : “Insensé, cette nuit même, on va te redemander ton âme. Et ce que tu as amassé, qui l’aura ?” Ainsi en est-il de celui qui thésaurise pour lui-même, au lieu de s’enrichir en vue de Dieu » (Lc 12, 20-21).

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213.

Hésiode, *Théogonie*, vers 116-122, trad. P. Mazon, Paros, Les Belles Lettres, 1928, p. 36.

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214.

Henri Maldiney, *L’art, l’éclair de l’être*, Seyssel, Editions Comp’Act, 1993, p. 349 (nouvelle édition Paris, Cerf, 2012, p. 292). Voir aussi p. 101/85, où après avoir exposé les trois sens du mot sens : sens-direction, sens-sensation et sens-signification, il poursuit : « Le sens-signification est issu des deux premiers, pour autant que ceux-ci concernent le rapport au monde d’un existant ».

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215.

Platon, *Théétète* 176 a – trad. A Diès (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1955).

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216.

D’où cette formule lumineuse d’Elsa Ballanfat à la suite d’une lecture du *Phèdre* où le fameux « mythe de l’âme » est reversé au compte du corps et de son pouvoir d’élévation – presque son pouvoir de danser : « L’âme est un nom posé sur une aspiration du corps » (*La traversée du corps. Regard philosophique sur la danse*, Paris, Hermann, 2015, p. 97).

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217.

Milan Kundera, *L’insoutenable légèreté de l’être*, trad. F. Kerel revue par l’auteur, Paris, Gallimard, 1987, p. 14.

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218.

« L'être est devenu manifeste comme un poids » (traduction E. Martineau, Paris, Authentica, 1985, p. 113) ; la traduction Boehm-Waelhens donne : « L'existence se manifeste comme un fardeau (Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p. 168). Jean Greisch commente brièvement : « la fait de se sentir "accablé" ne nous dit pas seulement quelque chose de nous-mêmes, mais de l'être. L'être a le pouvoir de nous accabler, de nous peser, de se révéler comme un fardeau » (*Ontologie et temporalité*, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 178). Mais il n'y a rien là qu'Augustin n'ait déjà dit : « Je suis un poids pour moi-même » (*Confessions* X,28,39) et Heidegger relevé dans son cours du semestre d'été 1921 : « Il s'agit de cerner de manière plus précise ce caractère fondamental dans lequel Augustin expérimente la vie facticielle, c'est-à-dire la *tentatio*, et de comprendre à partir de là en quel sens celui qui vit dans une telle lucidité et à un tel niveau d'accomplissement est nécessairement un fardeau pour lui-même » (*Phénoménologie de la vie religieuse*, trad. J. Greisch, Paris, Gallimard, 2012, p. 230).

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219.

Première esquisse de notre part dans « Le poids de la joie », publié dans *Nunc* n°18, mars 2009 et repris dans *Au commencement. Parole, Regard, Affect*.

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220.

Saint Augustin, Commentaire du Psaume 59,8 – cité in Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi*, Paris, PUF, 2008 (voir son commentaire p. 212-216 et tout le § 41, « *Pondus meum* », p. 352-365). Sur ce thème on lira avec profit Emmanuel Falque, « Le Haut Lieu du soi : une *disputatio* théologique et phénoménologique », *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, juillet 2009, p. 372 sq, 375-379.

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221.

Kierkegaard, *L'Evangile des souffrances* (1847), trad. P.-H. Tisseau, Paris, *Œuvres complètes* t. XIII, 1966, p. 266. Voir notre commentaire dans *Le Discours de la vie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001, p. 216-229 (« Le retournement de la souffrance en joie »).

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222.

Michel Henry, *C'est moi la vérité*, Paris, Seuil, 1996, p. 262. Sur le fardeau et la nouvelle naissance, comme sur la christologie henryenne qui rend possible ce paradoxe du lourd devenu léger, voir notre étude « De l'historial de la vie à l'histoire du vivant », in *La vie et les vivants. (Re)-lire Michel Henry*, Grégori Jean, Jean Leclercq et Nicolas Monseu éd., Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2013.

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223.

Concept repris à Ludwig Binswanger, et à propos duquel Henri Maldiney peut écrire : « cette alliance de mots [rend] sensible l'unité du sens-direction et du sens-signification » (*Regard Parole Espace*, Lausanne, L'Âge d'homme, 1973, p. 77 sq ; nouvelle édition Paris, Cerf, 2012, p. 143).

11

224.

Ce qu'aura bien montré la phénoménologie de Jean-Yves Lacoste : « Nous nous heurtons à la mort comme à la seule eschatologie qui ait une réalité ontique, et pouvons être tentés de l'interpréter comme eschatologie du sens. Nous disions que les enjeux du sens débordent en fait les conditions auxquelles, à l'ombre de la mort, nous avons du temps » (*Note sur le temps*, Paris, PUF, 1990, p. 201). Mais depuis l'événement de Pâques une autre logique se fait jour, qui est proprement une « logique du commencement » (p. 202).

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225.

Henri Maldiney, *Regard Parole Espace*, p. 101/147.

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226.

On peut faire référence au parcours théorique de Hans Urs von Balthasar, de la reconnaissance de la question eschatologique comme déterminante, à partir de la définition du Christ en tant que *eschaton* absolu, cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Umrisse der Eschatologie," in Johannes Feiner – Magnus Löhrer ed., *Fragen der Theologie heute*, (Einsiedeln : Benziger Verlag, 1957), pp. 403-421 jusqu'à son développement théorique propre, cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dramatique divine*, vol. IV, *Le dénouement*, (Namur : Culture et Vérité, 1993). Pour une considération ponctuelle et remarquable de l'eschatologie à partir du dispositif événementiel, cf. Sergio Ubbiali, "Levento e il definitivo. Per una teologia dell'Escatologico," *La Scuola Cattolica* No 118 (1990) : 507-530.

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227.

Cf. l'interprétation offerte par Hans-Dieter Gondek – László Tengelyi, *Neue Phänomenologie in Frankreich*, (Berlin : Suhrkamp Verlag, 2011), pp. 671-673, identifiant le trait commun de la « phénoménologie française » dans la catégorie événementielle.

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228.

Cf. les recherches de Frédéric Jacquet : Frédéric Jacquet, *Patočka. Une phénoménologie de la naissance* (Paris : CNRS Editions, 2016) ; Id., *Métaphysique de la naissance* (Leuven : Peeters, 2018) ; Id., *Naissances* (Bucharest : Zeta Books 2020) et de Claude Romano : Claude Romano, *L'événement et le monde* (Paris : PUF 1998) ; Id., *L'événement et le temps* (Paris : PUF 1999). Une approche générale à partir de l'angle visuel de la philosophie est donnée par Silvano Zucal, *Filosofia della nascita*, (Brescia : Morcelliana, 2016) et par rapport à la théologie par Giuseppe Angelini ed., *Nascere e rinascere. Lo spirito come verità della carne* (Milano : Glossa, 2011). Il ne faut pas oublier que la naissance est une catégorie de premier plan dans l'œuvre de Hannah Arendt, cf. Hannah Arendt, *Condition de l'homme moderne*, trans. G. Fradier (Paris : Calmann-Lévy, 1961) ; étant déjà beaucoup travaillées, dans cette étude on ne considérera pas ses positions, cf. au moins Cristina Schües, *Philosophie des Geborensseins* (Freiburg – München : Karl Alberg, 2008).

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229.

Jean-Luc Marion, "L'événement ou le phénomène advenant," *De surcroît* (Paris : PUF, 2001), p. 50.

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230.

Jean-Louis Chrétien, *L'inoubliable et l'inespéré*, (Paris : Desclée de Brouwer, 2000), pp. 9-10.

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231.

Cf. Claude Romano, *L'événement et le monde*, (Paris : PUF, 1998), p. 96.

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232.

Jean-Luc Marion, *Le phénomène érotique, Six méditations*, (Paris : Grasset, 2003), p. 322.

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233.

Cf. Jean-Luc Marion, "L'imprévisible ou l'événement," *Certitudes négatives*, (Paris : Grasset, 2010), pp. 292-297.

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234.

Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre*, (Paris : PUF, 1983), p. 72.

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235.

Cf. l'interprétation de *Phil* 3,12-15 donnée par Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi. L'approche de Saint Augustin*, (PUF : Paris 2008), pp. 310-311, en s'appuyant sur le livre XI des *Confessions* augustinienes.

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236.

Emmanuel Falque, "Métamorphose de la finitude. Essai philosophique sur la naissance et la résurrection," *Triduum philosophique* (Cerf : Paris, 2015), p. 273.

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237.

« La manière (chrétienne) d'être ressuscité au monde consistera moins à proclamer une quelconque objectivité de la résurrection, qu'à accueillir ce mode selon lequel le croyant s'apprête et accepte de se laisser transformer par Celui qui "est" la Transformation même » (*Ibid.*, p. 311). Il est toutefois nécessaire de ne pas confondre la transformation radicale avec la simple modification, c'est-à-dire réduire le contenu eschatologique de la décision absolue par rapport à la croix du Christ dans la simple et solipsiste prise en compte de soi.

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238.

Il n'existe pas de forme privée d'engagement, la nouvelle naissance détermine la prise en compte politique de la totalité de l'humanité dans la décision de soi, cf. Enzo Paci, "Modalità e novità in Bloch," *Idee per una enciclopedia fenomenologica*, (Milano : Bompiani, 1971), pp. 583-584.

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239.

Cf. Guido Cusinato, "Trasformazione e germinazione. Per una nuova filosofia della nascita," *Thaumàzein*, No. 4-5, 2016/2017 : 37.

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240.

Cf. Giovanni Salmeri, “La nascita come metafora e come realtà,” in Gilfredo Marengo – Bruno Ognibeni ed., *Dialoghi sul mistero nuziale* (Roma : Lateran University Press, 2003), pp. 335-349.

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241.

Cf. Sergio Labate, *La verità buona*, (Assisi : Cittadella, 2004), p. 351.

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242.

Dans le demain théologique les analyses que Balthasar dédie aux quarante jours suivant la Pâques sont très suggestives, s’agissant d’une temporalité eschatologique qui le Christ ressuscité vit dans la chronologie, une temporalité déjà accessible à l’humanité dans la forme sacramentelle et dans le choix décisif de la forme de vie, cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Théologie de l’histoire*, trans. Robert Givord (Paris : Plon, 1960), chap. 3.

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243.

La période de la grossesse évidence le rôle tout à fait unique du féminin ; cependant, la structure symbolique qu’elle ouvre est déterminant pour l’humanité en tant que telle. Pourtant, ce qu’on affirmera à propos de la mère évidence une structure fondamentale et universelle en tant que testimoniale et générative. Même s’il n’est pas l’enjeu de cette étude, il faut quand même reconnaître que l’histoire de la pensée, tant philosophique que théologique, s’est malheureusement développée comme aveugle de cette dynamique, elle a en effet tout de suite effacé le rôle maternel et a transposé la structure générative à la symbolique masculine (de Aristote jusqu’à Marion, de la paternité divine à la simple réceptivité mariale).

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244.

Cf. Natalie Depraz, “L’autre intime. Phénoménologie de la grossesse,” in Sylvain Camilleri – Christoph Perrin ed., *Epreuves de la vie et souffrance d’existence* (Paris : Vrin, 2011), p. 31 ; cf. aussi Carla Canullo, *Etre mère. La vie surprise*, trans. Davide Ambrosini – Yves Roulliere (Bruxelles : Lessius, 2017).

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245.

Cf. Depraz, *L’autre intime*, op. cit., p. 25.

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246.

Bien que les analyses de Sloterdijk ne puissent pas être considérées *stricto sensu* phénoménologiques, leur profondeur le rend incontournable par rapport au thème de la naissance, cf. Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphères I. Bulles*, trans. Olivier Mannoni (Paris : Pluriel, 2011), chap. IV, *La réclusion dans la mère*, pp. 295-318.

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247.

Depraz, *L'autre intime*, op. cit., p. 23.

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248.

Cf. Edmund Husserl, "L'enfant. La première Einfühlung," trans. Natalie Depraz, *Alter*, No 1 (1993) : 265-269 ; cf. Emmanuel Housset, *Personne et sujet selon Husserl*, (Paris : PUF, 1997), pp. 141-156.

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249.

Cf. Sloterdijk, *Sphères I. Bulles*, op. cit., chap. V, *L'accompagnateur originel*, pp. 371-430.

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250.

Cette structure éclaircie la relation établie par la théologie entre le jugement personnel et le jugement universel : l'un ne peut pas être sans l'autre.

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251.

Cf. Natalie Depraz, "Naître à soi-même," *Alter*, No 1 (1983) : 87.

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252.

Cf. Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Expérience et absolu. Questions disputées sur l'humanité de l'homme*, (Paris : PUF, 1994), p. 226 (cf. aussi *Ibid.*, p. 102).

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253.

Au niveau théologique la vérification de ce dispositif est trouvée par la confrontation avec le fait définitif de la croix. Elle est l'événement eschatologique de la relation du Fils au Père qui implique le monde en tant que tel ; chaque être humain mesure sa vie par rapport à cet événement et décide de son existence.

Ce n'est pas sans signification que la théologie trinitaire nomme le rapport entre le Père et le Fils en tant que « éternelle génération », cf. François-Xavier Durrwell, *Le Père. Dieu dans son mystère*, (Paris : Cerf, 1987), chap. III, *Le Père salut du monde*, pp. 55-77 ; chap. VI, *Le mystère du Père*, pp. 79-109 ; Pierangelo Sequeri, *Il sensibile e l'inatteso. Lezioni di estetica teologica*, (Brescia : Queriniana, 2016), chap. VII, *Il grembo eterno della paternità divina*, pp. 157-179. La forme de la génération, que un des conciles de Tolède (675) a signalé jusqu'à affirmer « *neque de alia substantia, sed de Patris utero, id est de substantia eius idem Filius genitus vel natus* » (DS 526) se propose comme une catégorie capable de définir de manière ni confuse ni séparé tant l'humanité que la divinité.

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254.

Jean-Luc Marion, "The Invisibility of the Saint," trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Saints: Faith Without Borders*, ed. Françoise Meltzer and Jaś Elsner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 355.

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255.

Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 91.

[↑](#)

256.

See Candida Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[↑](#)

257.

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958): "We generally take 'holy' as meaning 'completely good'; it is the absolute moral attribute, denoting the consummation of moral goodness... But this common usage of the term is inaccurate" (5); Susan Wolf's now-classic essay "Moral Saints" has sparked an interesting conversation about this exact issue. In it, she equates sainthood with moral perfection. Robert

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258.

David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Alexander Irwin, *Saints of the Impossible: Bataille, Weil, and the Politics of the Sacred* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

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259.

Marion, "The Invisibility of the Saint," 355.

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260.

Petra Turner, "The Unknown Saint: Reflections on Jean-Luc Marion's Understanding of Holiness," *The Postmodern Saints of France: Refiguring 'the Holy' in Contemporary French Philosophy*, ed. Colby Dickinson (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 231.

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261.

Marion, "The Invisibility of the Saint," 356.

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262.

Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 12.

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263.

Marion, "The Invisibility of the Saint," 356.

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264.

Turner, "The Unknown Saint," 235.

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265.

Ibid, 239.

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266.

Ibid, 243.

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267.

Ibid.

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268.

Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 660.

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269.

Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 6.

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270.

Patrick Sherry, *Spirits, Saints, and Immortality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 1-3.

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271.

Depending on the *vita*'s place in literary history, this stylization ranges from fabulist recastings of some kernel of truth to the scientific aspirations of modern biography, which nonetheless remains susceptible to rhetorical flourish and narratological intervention. (The more obvious this intervention, the more likely the biography will be disparaged as "hagiography," but that is another story.) Lives are *not* narratives, after all, even if humans are meaning-making creatures. The text can never be the *bios*, not literally—however closely they are identified.

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272.

"Husserl an von Hofmannsthal (12. 1. 1907)," *Briefwechsel*, 10 vols: *Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, ed. Elisabeth Schuhmann and Karl Schuhmann (Boston: Kluwer, 1994) 7:135. Cited in Kevin Hart, *Poetry and Revelation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 156.

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273.

See Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible, On Kandinsky*, trans. Scott Davidson (New York: Continuum, 2009), 3, 13.

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274.

E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1995), 85.

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275.

See Bruce Holsinger, "Parchment Ethics: A Statement of More than Modest Concern," *New Medieval Literatures* 12 (2010): 131-136.

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276.

Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 4.

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277.

Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 519.

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278.

Ibid.

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279.

Even if her body is exposed as a relic, the saint's liveliness is eclipsed by the more obvious fact of her death. Should she disrupt this inertness through miraculous intervention, there is no guarantee that this manifestation will be understood and processed. As Christ himself points out, "signs" are at best a problematic mode of appearing that invariably produce as many skeptics as believers. Nevertheless, the *liber miraculorum*, or "miracle book," is a popular sub-genre of hagiography: a catalogue of posthumous miracles meant to validate a particular shrine and encourage pilgrimage.

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280.

Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York: Touchstone, 1990), 33; Andrew M. Flescher, *Heroes, Saints, and Ordinary Morality* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003) 192-6. Flescher even goes so far as to call Day a “nonsaint.”

21

281.

Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Patricia Cox Miller refers to “the invisible bodies of the saints in hagiography,” arguing that saints’ lives develop a corporeal poetics in order to make those bodies manifest (8).

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282.

Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 133.

21

283.

Ibid.

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284.

Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 87.

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285.

Ibid, 88.

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286.

Virginia Burrus, *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008): “Here we view four well-known—indeed, virtually classic—literary performances of Christian witness...” (19, emphases added); “Writers and readers... of travelogues and hagiographies not only frequently betray awareness of the *ocular transgression* inherent to their literary endeavors but also sometimes seem to exult in the very shamelessness of these acts of exposure” (36, emphases added); Elizabeth A. Castelli,

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287.

Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*, Lectures on the History of Religions 15 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): “...Christians did worry passionately about the bodies of the martyrs” (49).

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288.

See Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).

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289.

See Larissa Tracy, *Torture and Brutality in Medieval Literature: Negotiations of National Identity* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012).

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290.

See Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

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291.

Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*: “Indeed, one might argue that the capriciousness of state violence—the mere presence of the imperial judicial apparatus with its omnipresent threat of violence, whether or not it was actually carried out—performed a critical kind of psychological work for all manner of subjected peoples, Christians included” (38).

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292.

Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 29; See also Richard A. Bauman, *Crime and Punishment in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Richard C. Beacham, *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Alison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); Ed. Ralph Jackson, *Gladiators and Caesars: The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome* (London: British Museum Press, 2000); Paula James, “Prudentius’ *Psychomachia*: The Christian Arena and the Politics of Display,” *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), 74; Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Thomas E.

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293.

Denys Turner, "Apophaticism, Idolatry and the Claims of Reason," *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation*, ed. Denys Turner and Oliver Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23.

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294.

Henri Joly, *The Psychology of the Saints* (Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books), 22. (First pub. 1898).

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295.

Daniel Donoghue, *Lady Godiva, a Literary History of the Legend* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

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296.

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, *Peristephanon Liber in Prudentius, Volume II*, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1953), 339.

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297.

Ibid, 341.

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298.

Ibid.

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299.

Ibid, 343

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300.

Ibid, 342-343.

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301.

Burrus, *Saving Shame*, 36.

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302.

See Filip Ivanović, *Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Iconoclastic Crisis* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

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303.

Patricia Cox Miller, "Subtle Embodiments: Imagining the Holy in Late Antiquity," *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation, and Relationality*, ed. Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 45.

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304.

Ibid.

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305.

Ibid, 57.

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306.

Ibid, 57-8.

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307.

Jacques Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie dans l'occident chrétien: Esquisse d'une histoire de la poésie latine chrétienne du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1981). Quoted and cited in Miller, *Corporeal Imagination*, 90.

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308.

See Miller, "Subtle Embodiments," 45-58.

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309.

Jean-Luc Marion, *The Essential Writings, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy*, ed. Kevin Hart (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 120-121.

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310.

Ibid.

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311.

Ibid.

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312.

Ibid.

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313.

Traduction modifiée d'un article paru en allemand : "Analogie. Paradoxon. Dispositiv. Die Frage nach dem Objekt der Religionsphilosophie" in "Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica", CXII (2020), 3, 789-806.

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314.

Cf. Walter Jaeschke, *Die Vernunft in der Religion. Studien zur Grundlegung der Religionsphilosophie Hegels*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, frommann-holzboog, 1986 ; Marco Maria Olivetti, *Filosofia della religione*, in P. Rossi (Éd.), *La filosofia*, vol. I, Torino, Utet, 1995, p. 137-220 ; Jean Greisch, *Le Buisson ardent et les Lumières de la raison. L'invention de la philosophie de la religion*, vol. I (*Héritiers et Héritages du XIXe siècle*), Paris, Cerf, 2002.

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315.

A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, Halle u. Magdeburg 1743²

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316.

L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit und Realität in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit (Duns Scotus – Suárez – Wolff – Kant – Peirce)*, Hamburg, F. Meiner, 1990.

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317.

Aristote, *Met.*, IV, 1, 1003a20-21.

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318.

H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 806 (ed. Freiburg i.B., Herder, 1991³⁷, p. 361).

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319.

Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a.1 c.

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320.

Cf. J.-F. Courtine, *Inventio analogiae. Métaphysique et ontothéologie*, Paris, Vrin, 2005.

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321.

I. Kant, *KrV*, A 247/B 303.

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322.

I. Kant, *Vorarbeiten zur Religion...*, AA 23, p. 91.

└

323.

T. Kobusch, *Metaphysik der Freiheit und modernes Menschenbild*, Freiburg i.B., Herder, 1993.

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324.

G.W.F. Hegel, Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der

praktischen Philosophie und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften, in Werke, Bd. 2, p. 464.

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325.

P. Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation* (Essai sur Freud), Paris, Édition du Seuil, 1965, p. 41.

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326.

Ibi, p. 40-1.

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327.

« Wenn Gott vom Menschen absolut verschieden ist, dann ist der Mensch von Gott absolut verschieden [...] Das ist zweifellos das Paradox schlechthin, das absolute Paradox » (S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophische Bissen*, 1844, dt. übers., mit Einl. und Komm. hrsg. v. Hans Rochol, Hamburg, Meiner, 1989).

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328.

D. Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, DBW, Band 8, 454.

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329.

E. Levinas, *Totalité et infini. Essais sur l'extériorité*, Livre de Poche, Paris 1961, p. 75.

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330.

F. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am M. 1988, p. 3.

└

331.

« J'ai repris ici les thèses de Maître Eckhart : Dieu s'engendre comme moi-même. Moi j'appartiens à cette temporalité immanente qui ne se sépare jamais de soi. Ce mouvement, c'est le processus interne de Dieu car Dieu s'engendre nécessairement comme un Soi, il y a forcément un Soi dans la vie, il n'y a pas de vie sans une auto-affection qui s'éprouve pathétiquement soi-même dans l'ipséité d'un Soi et c'est ainsi que dans cette temporalité apparaît le Soi et donc mon Soi transcendantal et donc la possibilité de la Chair. Car la chair n'est autre que la matière phénoménologique pure de cette auto-affection de la vie en laquelle je m'éprouve moi-même et viens en moi. Autrement dit, il y a dans la vie comme une archi-chair, un archi-pathos qui est la substance de la vie, de l'amour, qui est celle du désir. Toutefois ma chair à moi est une chair finie parce qu'elle ne s'apporte pas elle-même en soi. Dès lors si elle ne s'apporte pas elle-même en soi il faut que la puissance de la Vie absolue qui s'apporte elle-même en soi, soit en elle. Le salut consiste non pas à comprendre cela mais à le vivre, c'est-à-dire à être brusquement envahi par cette puissance. On ne peut le comprendre que si on le vit ». (M. Henry, *Entretien avec Virginie Caruana*, «Philosophique», 3, 2000, p. 69-80).

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332.

E. Levinas, « Transcendance et mal », *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, Paris, Vrin, 1982, 189-207, 201

| t

333.

L. Pareyson, *Ontologia della libertà. Il male e la sofferenza*, Torino, Einaudi, 1995, p. 227.

| t

334.

C. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre der Souveränität*, Berlin, Ducker & Humblot, 2004 (1934) (1922¹), p. 43.

| t

335.

G. Agamben, , *L'uso dei corpi*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2014, 3p. 34-336

| t

336.

G. Agamben, *Homo sacer*, Torino, Einaudi, 1995, p. 203

↑

337.

M. Henry, Eucaristia e fenomenologia nella riflessione filosofica contemporanea, dans N. Reali (ed.), Il mondo del sacramento. Teologia e Filosofia a confronto, Paoline, Roma 2001, 125-133 : 128.

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338.

Cf. M. Henry, C'est moi la vérité. Pour une philosophie du christianisme, Seuil, Paris 1996.

↑

339.

Cf. M. Henry, Incarnation. Une philosophie de la chair, Seuil, Paris 2000.

↑

340.

Cf. E. Falque, Les Noces de l'Agneau. Essai philosophique sur le corps et l'eucharistie, Cerf, Paris 2011

↑

341.

Cf. E. Falque, Le passeur de Gethsémani. Angoisse souffrance et mort. Lecture existentielle et phénoménologique, Cerf, Paris 2004.

↑

342.

Cf. E. Falque, Métamorphose de la finitude. Essai philosophique sur la naissance et la résurrection, Cerf, Paris 2004

↑

343.

Les Noces de l'Agneau, 375.

↑

344.

Cf. E. Husserl, Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch : Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution, M. Biemel (éd.), Husserliana IV, Nijhoff, Den Haag 1976.

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345.

Cf. E. Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, S. Strasser (ed.), *Husserliana I*, Nijhoff, Den Haag 1950.

| t

346.

J.-Y. Lacoste, *La phénoménalité de Dieu. Neuf études*, Cerf, Paris 2008, 9.

| t

347.

Cf. E. Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil. Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik*, a cura di L. Landgrebe, F. Meiner, Hamburg 1985

| t

348.

Cf. A. Zhok, *Libertà e natura. Fenomenologia e ontologia dell'azione*, Mimesis, Milano 2017.

| t

349.

Cf. P. Sequeri, *Il Dio affidabile. Saggio di teologia fondamentale*, Queriniana, Brescia 1996.

| t

350.

Cf. E. Schlier, *Über die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, Johannes, Einsiedeln 1968.

| t

351.

Cf. E. Falque, *Passer le Rubicon. Philosophie et théologie: essai sur les frontières*, Lessius, Bruxelles 2013.

| t

352.

Baruch de Spinoza, "Proposition 7," *Ethics*, in *Spinoza: Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 283.

t

353.

Leibniz, "Theodicy, I, 8," in *Theodicy*, trans. E.M. Huggard (Bibliobazaar, 2007), 131.
Translation modified.

t

354.

Edmund Husserl, "§68. The task of a pure explication of consciousness as such: the universal problem of intentionality," in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 233.

t

355.

Martin Heidegger, "§7. The Phenomenological Method of Investigation," in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (Blackwell, 1967), 59.

t

356.

Emmanuel Falque, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist*, trans. George Hughes (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2016), 15.

t

357.

Ibid., 21

t

358.

Ibid.

t

359.

Ibid.

t

360.

Ibid., 25, 106.

↑

361.

Emmanuel Falque, "The Extra-Phenomenal," *Diakrisis Yearbook of Theology and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2018): 11.

↑

362.

Nothing to It: Reading Freud as a Philosopher, trans. Robert Vallier and William L. Connelly (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 104.

↑

363.

Ibid., 100.

↑

364.

Ibid., 64.

↑

365.

Ibid.

↑

366.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Note from April, 1960," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 244. See also my own response to this question, "At the Confluence of Phenomenology and Non-Phenomenology: Maurice Blondel and Emmanuel Falque," in *Transforming the Theological Turn: Phenomenology with Emmanuel Falque*, ed. Martin Koci and Jason W. Alvis (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020).

↑

367.

Here Falque also takes a lead from Paul Ricœur with his *école du soupçon*, as described in his *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (Yale University Press, 1970).

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368.

Emmanuel Falque, "Le «spiritualism incarné» de Maurice Merleau-Ponty," in Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, *Le supplément d'âme ou le renouveau du spiritualisme*, De visu (Paris: Hermann, 2016), 228.

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369.

Emmanuel Falque, "In Flesh and Bones," *Crossing: The INPR Journal* I (2020): 23-24.

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370.

Emmanuel Falque, "The All-Seeing: Fraternity and Vision of God in Nicholas of Cusa," *Modern theology* 35, no. 4 (2019): 765, 82, 84.

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371.

Emmanuel Falque, "Toward and Ethics of the Spread Body," in *Somatic Desire: Recovering Corporeality in Contemporary Thought*, ed. Sarah Horton, et al., trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 101-2.

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372.

Dominique Janicaud, *Une généalogie du spiritualisme français* (La Haye: M. Nijhoff, 1969), 6.

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373.

See Falque's "A Phenomenology of the Underground," in Emmanuel Falque, *The Loving Struggle: Phenomenological and Theological Debates*, trans. Bradley B. Onishi and Lucas McCracken (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018), 49; and also the aforementioned "Le «spiritualism incarné» de Maurice Merleau-Ponty," in, *Le supplément d'âme ou le renouveau du spiritualisme*.

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374.

Jean-Louis Viellard-Baron, "Introduction," in *Le supplément d'âme ou le renouveau du spiritualisme*, 7-8.

↑

375.

For a remarkable account on this subject see, Shoshana Zuboff, "Big Other and the Rise of Instrumentarian Power," in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (London: Profile books, 2019), 378. She describes this process in striking terms: "[it] exiles us from our own behavior. It severs our insides from our outsides, our subjectivity and interiority from our observable actions."

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376.

Anne Davenport, "Falque's Fraternal Finitude," *Research in Phenomenology* 49, no. 2 (2019): 279.

↑

377.

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), H6, 26.

↑

378.

Tarik R. Dika, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Sense' in *Being and Time*," in *Crossing: The INPR Journal*, Vol. 1 (2020), 48.

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379.

Dika, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Sense,'" 48.

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380.

Dika, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Sense,'" 48.

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381.

Dika, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Sense,'" 46.

↑

382.

Dika, “Heidegger’s Concept of ‘Sense,’” 41.

[↑](#)

383.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H18.

[↑](#)

384.

“Here we must make clear that this conception of time and, in general, the ordinary way of understanding it, have sprung from temporality” (*Being and Time*, H18).

[↑](#)

385.

Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2014), §24.

[↑](#)

386.

Martin Heidegger, *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (Athlone Press, 2000), 94.

[↑](#)

387.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H151.

[↑](#)

388.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. (CITY:PUBLISHER), 60

[↑](#)

389.

Daniel Dahlstrom, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, (CITY: Bloomsbury,), 197.

[↑](#)

390.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H151.

↑

391.

Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), §59.

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392.

Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §59.

↑

393.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H4.

↑

394.

Dika, 46.

↑

395.

Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. by Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 63.

↑

396.

Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

↑

397.

“...the meaning of Dasein is temporality...” (*Being and Time*, H.331).

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398.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H3.

[↑](#)

399.

Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31.

[↑](#)

400.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H38.

[↑](#)

401.

Dika, "Heidegger's Concept of 'Sense,'" 47.

[↑](#)

402.

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H38.

[↑](#)

403.

Emmanuel Falque and Sabine Fos-Falque, *Éthique du corps épandu suivi de Une chair épandue sur le divan*, (Paris: Cerf, 2018), pp. 38-39

[↑](#)

404.

Michel Henry, *Philosophie et phénoménologie du corps, Essai sur l'ontologie biranienne*, (Paris: PUF, 1965) p. 169

[↑](#)

405.

Ibid, p. 177

[↑](#)

406.

Ibid, p. 172

[↑](#)

407.

Ibid, p. 174

[↑](#)

408.

See ibid, p. 177

[↑](#)

409.

Ibid, p. 181

[↑](#)

410.

See ibid, pp. 175-176

[↑](#)

411.

Ibid, p. 179

[↑](#)

412.

See, for example, Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident*, trans by C Shread (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012) and Quentin Meillassoux *précis* of this emergent realism and novel account of contingency in *After Finitude*, trans by R Brassier (London: Continuum, 2009)

[↑](#)

413.

See Falque, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26

[↑](#)

414.

See, for example, Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre*, (Paris : PUF, 1979)

↑

415.

See, for example, Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident*, trans by C Shread. Cambridge: Polity, 2012

↑

416.

This is indicated in “Toward a Contemporary Grammar of Experience” (forthcoming) and developed in *Le grammaire de l’âme* (forthcoming)

↑

417.

See Falque, *op. cit.*, p. 25

↑

418.

Jocelyn Benoist, 2005. *Les limites de l’intentionnalité : recherches phénoménologiques et analytiques*, (Paris : VRIN, 2005), p. 271

↑

419.

Ibid.

↑

420.

Falque, *op. cit.*, p. 50

↑

421.

Ibid., p. 46

↑

422.

Falque, “Is there a flesh without body? A Debate with Michel Henry” in in *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, vol XXIV, no 1 (2016), p. 161

└

423.

Falque, *op. cit.*, p. 40 (my emphasis)

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424.

Caputo, *Hermeneutics. Facts and Interpretation in the Age of Information* (London: Penguin, 2018), pp.

212-3.

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425.

The term, however, is usually associated with Jacob Taubes, but see Newheiser's own "Why The World Needs Negative Political Theology" in *Modern Theology* 36 no. 1 (January, 2020): 5-12, where he further elaborates its history and distinguish his own intentions with the phrase.

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426.

I think this is especially the case in Caputo's *Against Ethics* (1993). In my reading the rhetorical effect of that book is a negative anthropology that declares the ontological status of cosmic meaningless as a fact of the world, ultimately culminating in the inability to decide, which is the essence of Newheiser's complaint, as I understand it.

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427.

I develop these stages in Caputo's work in greater detail in *Sovereignty and Event: Toward John D. Caputo's Radical Political Theology* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck: 2021 forthcoming).

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428.

John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 134-44. In these pages Caputo is in fact so careful about avoiding simplistic oppositions, that he is even concerned that Derrida himself may have framed the discussion between the messianic and the historical messianisms in too simplistic terms, 137-38.

429.

Ibid., 141-2.

430.

Ibid.

431.

John D. Caputo, *Hoping Against Hope: Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 18. Before referring to the *concrete* work of religious ‘sanctuaries’, ‘justice workers,’ Pope Francis as the ‘pope of the poor’ (20)—all surely inspired by Christianity’s determinate commitment to God’s reigning Kingdom of justice—Caputo writes, “I will state from the start that these three—hope, the reality of the material world, and (an oddly religionless) religion—are my non-negotiables.” (18). This hardly sounds like the ‘celebration of indeterminacy’ that Newheiser suggests.

432.

Both Smith and Hugh’s essays appear in *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition amid Modernity and Postmodernity*, edited by Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

433.

Arthur Bradley, “Without Negative Theology: Deconstruction and the Politics of Negative Theology,” *Heythrop Journal* 42 no. 2 (2001).

434.

See John D. Caputo, “Hoping in hope, hoping against hope: a response” in James H. Olthuis (ed.) *Religion With/Out Religion: The Prayers and Tears of John D. Caputo* (London: Routledge, 2002), 120-149. The one criticism of Caputo’s understanding of the ‘without’ in defense of the ‘with’, which he considers to be particularly sensitive was Kevin Hart’s, “Without” in Marko Zlomislčić and Neal DeRoo (eds.) *Cross and Khôra: Deconstruction and Christianity in the Work of John D. Caputo* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 80-108 and Caputo’s reply in the same volume “Only as Hauntology Is Religion without Religion Possible: A Response to Hart,” 109-117.

11

435.

See more recently J. Aaron Simmons and Stephen Minister (eds.) *Reexamining Deconstruction and Determinate Religion: Toward A Religion With Religion* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012). And Caputo's more than eighty-page response, "On Not Settling for an Abridged Postmodernism: Radical Hermeneutics as Radical Theology", 271-353. In this essay Caputo refers repeatedly to his early work, which the authors of the volume seem not to have properly taken into account.

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436.

Caputo, "Only as Hauntology Is Religion without Religion Possible," 114.

11

437.

For example, Richard Kearney and Brian Treanor's (ed.) *Carnal Hermeneutics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

11

438.

Ernst Bloch, *The principle of hope*. 3 vols., trans., N. Plaice, S. Plaice, & Paul Knight (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Joseph J. Godfrey, ed., *A Philosophy of Human Hope* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1987); Claudia Bloeser and Titus Stahl, "Hope", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/hope/].

11

439.

Karl Rahner, "The Theology of Power," in *Theological Investigations 4: More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 394.

11

440.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, Vol. 5: *The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 384, n.36.

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441.

All biblical citations are from the New International Version (NIV).

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442.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamozov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Lowell Press, 2009). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *BK*.

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443.

The event was hosted by the Universidad Católica Argentina, and the congress was the sixth biennial meeting of ALALITE, the Asociación Latinoamericana de Literatura y Teología. The proceedings were published as Cecilia Avenatti de Palumbo and Alejandro Bertolini (eds.), *El Amado en el Amante: Figuras, Textos, y Estilos del Amor Hecho Historia* (Buenos Aires: Agape Libros, 2016).

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444.

Cecilia Avenatti de Palumbo, "El asombro ante la figura bella y la palabra poética: Una perspectiva estético teológica," *Teoliterária* 5, no. 10 (2015): 14-31.

└

445.

Ibid., 29 (my translation): "La mirada y la escucha hallaron su punto de convergencia en el mismo milagro del ser, el cual ya manifestado en la gloria, ya presentido en la disposición ontológica del espíritu abierto al misterio, apuntó hacia el amor como a su centro."

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446.

Archiv der Deutschen Provinz der Jesuiten (ADPSJ) 47-1010 (KRA) II, A, no. 1990 (Balthasar-Rahner correspondence); ADPSJ 47-1010 (KRA) II, A, no. 2342 (Metz-Rahner correspondence).

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447.

ADPSJ 47-1010 (KRA) IV, A, 85.

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448.

ADPSJ 47-1010 (KRA) II, A, 2342, letter from Rahner to Metz dated 26 August 1964. Metz responded on 5 September that, although Balthasar deserves it, he does not think that the faculty will be able to deliver.

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449.

For an extended treatment of this, see Brandon R. Peterson, *Being Salvation: Atonement and Soteriology in the Theology of Karl Rahner* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

11

450.

See Emmanuel Falque, *Le Combat amoureux: Disputes phénoménologiques et théologiques* (Paris: Éditions Hermann, 2014); ET: *The Loving Struggle: Phenomenological and Theological Debates*, trans. Bradley B. Onishi and Lucas McCracken (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

11

451.

See Catherine Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

11

452.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. 1: Prolegomena*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 19. Hereafter TD 1.

11

453.

Balthasar, TD 1: 11–12.

11

454.

Helpful on this topic (though more circumspect in its claims than the one I am making here) is Cecilia Inés Avenatti de Palumbo, *La Literatura en la Estética de Hans Urs von Balthasar: Figura, Drama, y Verdad* (Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 2002), 312–20. Avenatti de Palumbo notes, “Balthasar not only attended on various occasions performances of Calderón’s *El gran teatro del Mundo* in Einsiedeln, but also, furthermore, he ventured to translate it [translation published 1959] and to adapt it to put it onstage” (my translation).

↑

455.

Cyril O'Regan, *The Anatomy of Misremembering: Von Balthasar's Response to Philosophical Modernity, Vol. 1: Hegel* (New York: Crossroad/Herder & Herder, 2014), 490–502. The proximate target here is Walter Benjamin's minimalist apocalyptic.

↑

456.

See Peter Joseph Fritz, *Karl Rahner's Theological Aesthetics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 246–51.

↑

457.

See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 52–53.

↑

458.

While I cannot cite specific pages (there would be too many!) from his writing to substantiate this fully, I should note that I gathered this insight under the tutelage of Brian Daley, S.J., especially in his fall 2006 seminar on the Cappadocians and his translations of Gregory of Nazianzus, but also, more recently, upon reading portions of his relatively recent book, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

↑

459.

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., "[Review] Fritz, Peter Joseph: *Freedom Made Manifest: Rahner's Fundamental Option and Theological Aesthetics*," *Theologische Revue* 116 (March 2020), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17879/thrv-2020-2647>.

↑

460.

Balthasar, TD 1: 19.

↑

461.

For an explanation of “representative,” see Peterson, *Being Salvation*, 40–46, and for how Rahner and Balthasar differ on this topic, see 46, 263–64.

[↑](#)

462.

Peterson, *Being Salvation*, 39.

[↑](#)

463.

Karl Rahner, “The Theology of Power,” in *Theological Investigations 4: More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth, (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 391–409; the pages under examination are 393–94.

[↑](#)

464.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a-2ae, q. 23, a. 1 and 1a-2ae, q. 30, aa. 1 and 2.

[↑](#)