Research Article

Richir's Phenomenological and Symbolical as a Model for the Relationship between Phenomenology and Theology

Dominic Nnaemeka Ekweariri[1]

1. Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany

If a new generation of phenomenologists (Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Jean-François Courtine) in France sought to overcome the "methodic atheism" imposed on the phenomenological method by the fathers of phenomenology, it was at the price of going beyond experience immanent to Existence which targeted the invisible, and therefore of lacking a discourse on the critical *restriction of the phenomenological method* and on the *points of contact* between phenomenology and theology. The task of this paper is to show how this lack is overcome by Marc Richir's "quasi theology" viewed from his articulation of the relationship between the phenomenological and the symbolical. This paper argues that whereas for the new French phenomenologists it is usually a question of a *subreptitious crossing* from one discipline to another, in Richir, what we have is *an enigmatic relationship of overlap between phenomenology and the symbolical* which enables us to explore the reciprocal transformation between phenomenology and theology. The paper concludes, on the one hand, that experience remains the immanent ground for phenomenology and the theological science and, on the other, that Richir's approach could be understood as a"metaphysical phenomenology".

0. Introduction

The so-called theological turn diagnosed by Dominic Janicaud in French phenomenology could be summed up as a methodological issue. The French phenomenologists were accused of transgressing the limits of phenomenality, i.e., going beyond the "sphere of experience immanent to Existence" and

 doi.org/10.32388/6LZFSJ

of having now targeted the invisible, "the absolute Other", "the metaphysical". Thus, phenomenology fell prey to "captatio benevolentiae" to become "Archi-Revelation", "life", "pure donation" referring all to the "theological".[1] One of the strengths of this diagnosis is the realization that phenomenology is used in the service of theology (*ancilla theologiae*).

But the above diagnosis should not be a one-way street since the issue at stake concerns also theology. If the French phenomenologists extended the field of phenomenality to theology, if Husserl's teleological development pointed to God as the ground of Being[2] and if one could today speak of the practical turn of phenomenology[3]—in which phenomenology is in active discourse with other disciplines—could one therefore not interrogate the grounds for the possibility of phenomenology? If we understand phenomenology as the science of the experience of consciousness and metaphysics as that which transgresses the limits of experience, the ideas of Reason, one could ask if, and how, it is possible for the metaphysical to appear to consciousness. Does the metaphysical play a role in the process of phenomenalisation in such a way that the phenomenological could also have a practical function for theology? In other words, could one speak today of a methodological discourse which articulates the relationship between phenomenology and theology at their limits and contact points?

The task of our present paper is to show that the task of critical methodological reflection has been explicitly carried out by a less well-recognized French phenomenologist, Marc Richir, as viewed from the lens of the relationship between the phenomenological and the symbolical. Janicaud's diagnosis looked past Richir as a "theologian". The theological dimensions of this most original thinker have not been received within either secular philosophy or scientific theology (either catholic or protestant). This could be explained from the very fact that Richir, like Paul Ricoeur, was understood as holding fast to the "methodic atheism" of Husserl and Heidegger and so categorized as the opposite pole to the "French theologians" (Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Jean-François Courtine) for which he was praised. Richir's theological moment cannot be found in the transgression of phenomenality immanent to conscious experience but—for us – within the context of the phenomenological transmutation of the Kantian sublime, in the articulation between phenomenality and the symbolic. These two registers play an essential role in Richir's phenomenology and it is precisely in this purview that Richir envisaged the metaphysical principle of "absolute transcendence as the phenomenological residue of what the tradition has conceived as God."[4] Henceforth the symbolic can no longer escape the metaphysical.[5] By conceding God a place in phenomenology, even if minimal as Janicaud admits,[6] Richir's contribution to the debate on methodic

discourse between phenomenology and theology should no longer be ignored. He could be accorded today a sort of "religious atheism" or in the language of Gondek and Tengelyi a "quasi theology without religion".[7]

If we speak of the relationship between the phenomenological and the symbolic as model of the relationship between the phenomenological and the theological, then the question as to the nature of this relationship becomes central. For the French "theologian" it is always a case of a surreptitious "crossing" from the one (phenomenology) to the other (theology) without marking the boundaries and of subordinating the one under the other. For Richir—and this is the thesis of this paper—it is an enigmatic relationship of overlap and of reciprocal encroaching of the one into the other which permits us to explore what roles the theological and phenomenological play for the liberation and transformation of one another: how the theological invites the phenomenological to meaning and praxis and how the phenomenological, via its linguistic phenomenon, becomes a tool for the innovation of theology.

To achieve this goal this paper is divided into three parts. In the first part we shall treat Richir's critique of a one-sided account, i.e., one that is either phenomenological or symbolical, and specify the meaning Richir accords the phenomenological and the symbolical within a phenomenological reading of Kant's sublime in the *Third Critique* and the application of such a meaning for experience and for phenomenalisation. Whereas the second part applies the determination of the two registers for the understanding of the divergences between phenomenology and theology, the third part applies it for the understanding of the contact points between phenomenology and theology and defends the thesis of a reciprocal transformation of the two disciplines: The theological invites the phenomenological to meaning and praxis, while the phenomenological in response becomes a tool for the innovation of theology. While concluding, following Janicaud, that experience becomes the immanent ground for all phenomenology (and theological science) which ought not be replaced with metaphysical categories, we note that a purely immanent phenomenology and a pure theological symbolic would be impossible. In this purview, Richir's phenomenology could be understood as a "metaphysical phenomenology", in which case phenomenology and metaphysics are seen as two essential sides of the same coin.

1. Overcoming the One-Sided Account of either the Symbolical or the Phenomenological

If Marc Richir, in our eyes, accomplished a methodic reflection, it is because of—and here lie the subtleties of his ingenuity—the uniqueness and reciprocity of the two registers in his phenomenological position: the symbolic and the phenomenological. Whereas psychoanalysis and psychoanalytically inspired psychiatry and psychopathology have—beginning with Freud (with the publication of *Studie zur Hysterie*) and Schilder and, later on, taken up in a creative way by French psychoanalysis and Psychiatry (e.g. Jacques Lacan, Henri Ey)—laid heavy emphasis on the symbolic, the phenomenological tradition seems to know only the phenomenological.

To be clear about the first movement we could think of the *linguistic overdetermination of corporeal experience* in psychoanalysis which resulted in loss of the philosophically fertile ground for the nature and culture distinction as it remained one-sided. This is attested to by cases in which, in the context of the corporeal experience of the world and the understanding of the self, structures of meaning and understanding culminate only in *symptom complexes* associated with physical-physiological disorders. Following Binswanger's interpretation, within the context of a psychotherapeutic treatment, of the hysteric patient who suffers from *aphonia* (loss of voice), her living body shuts off as a "private world", withdrawing into itself. As Binswanger captures it, the patient "is forced to live a life without an authentic past and future and even, strictly speaking, without an authentic present"[8]—summing up this state with the formula "unconsciously". The hysteric symptom implies for Binswanger, amongst others, not just a stagnation of life and a total abolition of all corporeal sentiments (for instance the loss of communication with voice), but also "an extremely imperfect mode of existence".[9] The task of the therapist is therefore to open her up to the possibility of regaining her voice, to re-integrate her into the world, to open sense to her. For Richir, this mode of thinking, which is reminiscent of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, is faulty: as if one would move from inauthenticity, non-phenomenality, or unconsciousness, to authenticity, phenomenality, and consciousness, as Binswanger insinuated, or as though *the institutional* could emerge from the *phenomenological*:[10] "There is *a priori* no intrinsic reason (i.e., intrinsically phenomenological) for the phenomenon of the world...to conceal itself originally in such a way as to arise from non-phenomenality."[11] It is therefore neither a question of the one being locked and suffocating in the other nor of the one proceeding from the other (a sort of emanatism).

Instead, for Richir, the aphonic situation signifies "a gap or a lacuna in the phenomenality of the *Leib*".[12] Simply put, it indicates that the patient has lost the phenomenological liberty, which is also co-extensive with the loss of temporalization/spatialization intrinsic in the phase of the language phenomenon.[13] So "the lacuna in phenomenality can take its origin only from the institution"[14] thus defined: "the symbolic institution in general is to be understood as deriving from sorts of 'effects' of language, which manifest themselves only as lacunae or gaps in the phenomenality of the phenomena of language".[15] The said lacunae are reminiscent of *symptomatic complexes* (in which the patient is conquered by the worry of a non-overcome past, a past s/he inhabits in the present; and in the future s/he still lives in the past[16]). This symptomatic complex concerns therefore "the symbolic institution".

Following Maldiney's commentary on Binswanger that "the closure of the present expresses itself via the repetition of the past"[17]—which is about the closure to the present and about the future expressing itself therefore in repetition—Richir adds that the repetition is an "insistent repetition of the same symptom or more generally of the same symptomatic situation".[18] Such a repetition is not phenomenological, and ought to be understood from the point of view of Lacan's *repetition automatism* where repeatability for Richir touches something that is "underivable". Where Lacan speaks of the unconscious as "unborn", "unrealized", a "yawning gap", "pre-ontologic",[19] Richir deduces from it that the "non-accomplishment"[20] is a cause that induces effects. And where Lacan thinks that the unconscious is about a sort of automatism "where something (the real) is encountered, but always missed", Richir understands the unconscious as inhabiting "the gaps or the lacunae in the phenomenality of language phenomenon" and as arising from the symbolic institution.[21] The greatest discovery of Freud and also Lacan are therefore the order of the symbolic unconscious which is itself created by the symbolic institution. In this first movement it ought to be stressed again that these lacunae hinder phenomenological liberty, or exercise a stronger force on the phenomenological field and thereby stress only the symbolic.[22]

If we now turn to the second movement, the phenomenological—especially as it appears in Husserl and Heidegger—Richir claims that it leaves the symbolic unattended: "And we understand ... that the weakness of *SZ,* and in a sense, of all Heideggerian thought, is to have understood only one type of existential—the phenomenological existential (and in Husserl: the phenomenological *Sinngebung*). This is to be seen, in Heidegger, by the belief that the phenomenological explanation of the structures

of concrete human existence will reveal without remainder the phenomenality of the human *Dasein*, and in Husserl, in the ultimate point of his research within *Krisis,* by the belief that the *Lebenswelt* is purely phenomenological and not already marked by the imprint of *the symbolic institutor*".[23] In other words, the human Dasein, the Lebenswelt, and every experience itself is already marked by the phenomenological and the symbolical. Richir thinks that human experience straddles these two dimensions and the challenge for phenomenology is to articulate how they relate to each other in experience. If the symbolical and the phenomenological are also found in the works of the new French phenomenologists they are there in the form of a service, in which the one (phenomenology) is the maid of the other (the symbolic). Or at the most, the one is suffocated in the other, or it becomes a *prima philosophia* with a denominational prejudice.

Now the question has to be posed about the status of the phenomenological and the symbolic and about what sort of relationship upholds between them. Because, for Richir, the one-sided account of the different registers has to be overcome as it not only does harm to the nature of experience, but also to the relationship between phenomenology and other disciplines (in our present case theology).

1.1. The Determination of the Phenomenological and the Symbolic in Kant's Third Critique?

For Richir, one cannot understand the origin and determination of the phenomenological and the symbolical without Kant's sublime in the *Critique of Judgement*. Therein, the harmonious (inter) play between the two registers is articulated. It is primarily a question of the conflict between the power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) and the idea of reason (*Idee der Vernunft*). First, the imagination fails and falls into an abyss—where it fears to lose itself[24]—while it was called to temporalize and spatialize (phenomenalisation). During apprehension (*Auffassung*), the partial representations of the sensory perception first grasped (by the imagination) start expiring in the power of imagination which simultaneously advances to grasp/represent other sensory representations. Because of its unfettered move to continuously stride in the measurement of space and time and to be open to grasp new representations, the imaginative apprehension was termed "progressus"[25] by Kant. It is exactly this that represents for Richir the *indetermination, the infinity and liberality* of the phenomenological field.

While gaining on the one side, the imaginative power loses on the other.[26] It fails because it is unable, despite its successive unending strides, to gather all the apprehensions/perceptions, in one moment,

in intuition. This failure is coextensive with the loss of phenomenological liberality and marks the limits of the phenomenological field. The failure of the power of imagination is resolved by comprehension (*Zusammenfassung*) beyond which the imagination cannot go. What accumulates in the scattered and successive step of apprehension is picked up and summed up in the unit of time (*comprehensio*n), i.e., in one intuition by comprehension.[27] If we ask what brings the movement of imaginative apprehension to a halt and unable to schematize, it is the "idea of an absolutely supernatural entity"—for Richir, this "idea" alludes to a *pure concept* that is impossible to schematize. Because the idea of reason—which in sensuousness, exerts violence on the imagination "just to expand it appropriately to its actual area (the practical) and to let it see into infinity"[28]—belongs to the realm of the practical and the legal (*gesetzmäßig*) it cannot but have a symbolic origin.[29] If we now ask what constitutes the symbolic origin, Richir unequivocally traces it to God "precisely as that which, as a symbolic institutor, gives force to law...to the moral law...as dynamic source of the symbolic institution".[30] God is therefore the guarantee that everything holds together and so the symbolic has its ground in the purely theological.

These two registers correspond to Kant's "starry heavens above me and the moral law within me"[31] respectively. Whereas the phenomenological field corresponds to illegality, liberality, and the infinity of the heavens, the symbolic corresponds to the legality, constraint, and the determination of the earth.

1.2. The Phenomenological and the Symbolic in Experience and in Phenomenalisation

Experience is accomplished when the two above registers meet: "If there is therefore an encounter between phenomenological and symbolic institution, it is between radical indeterminacy and determinacy (at least relative or apparent), between logology and tautology, between the indefinite and the definite....*since we always live in both*, and never exclusively in indeterminacy or exclusively in determinacy, as mysterious as is the habitation of the radical absence of the world by the Other."[32] Thus the human experience *cannot be reduced* simply to the purely phenomenological as it is *also penetrated by* the symbolic institutor, whom tradition names God and, who is the radical Other. This translates to the fact that what we call the human person, for Richir, resides "at the enigmatic crossroads of "nature" and "culture", between the barbaric proliferation of phenomena and the *institution* of symbolic orders".[33] Besides, humanity is "symbolically constituted in its ipseity by an inconceivable and unfathomable symbolic institutor (God)".[34] Thus, phenomenology, "rather than

taking the objective world as the point of departure ...precisely asks how something like objectivity is possible in the first place. How is objectivity constituted?",[35] if "phenomenology should consequently be understood as a philosophical analysis of the different types of world disclosure (perceptual, judgemental, imaginative, recollective, and so on",[36] and if, in Richir's eyes humanity's being in the world is already penetrated by the symbolic (i.e., the theological moment), then phenomenology cannot, from its very constitution, be neutral to the God question. At the level of experience, God is not just a possibility but simply an intrinsic part of phenomenalisation,[37] a determination that is greater as the indetermination of my life or, to use the words of Michel Henry, "a Life bigger than my life gives me meaning".[38] If phenomenalisation, which is the process of the appearing of the phenomenon, has to open sense or meaning to man in the world of experience, then the theological moment cannot be escaped in the process of sense-making: "For this God has nothing of the master giver of meaning to which we should conform: in his radical enigma, he is on the contrary nothing more and nothing less than *an indefinite call to meaning,* to this meaning that we, each of us, have to be and have to do".[39]

It is not yet evident how the theological or symbolic moment might play out in the phenomenalisation. Let's us now turn to Richir's engagement with Kant's mathematical sublime in order to throw more light on this. For Richir, the particularity of the mathematical sublime is its temporalization and spatialization of the language phenomenon. If we read the section where Kant descriptively wrote:

> ***Measuring*** (as [a way of] apprehending) ***a space*** is at the same time describing it, and hence it is an objective "***movement in the imagination*** and a ***progression***. On the other hand, comprehending a multiplicity in a unity (of intuition rather than of thought), and hence comprehending in one instant what is ***apprehended successively***, is ***a regression*** that ***in turn cancels the condition of time in the imagination' progression and makes simultaneity*** intuitable. Hence, (since ***temporal succession*** is a condition of the inner sense and of an intuition) it is a subjective movement of the imagination by which it does violence to the inner sense, and this violence must be the more significant the larger the quantum is that the imagination comprehends in one intuition. Hence ***the effort to take up into a single intuition a measure for magnitude requiring a significant time for apprehension*** is a way of presenting which subjectively considered is ***contrapurposive,*** but which objectively is needed to estimate magnitude and hence is ***purposive***. And yet this same violence that

> the imagination inflicts on the subject is still judged purposive for the whole vocation of the mind.[40]

The words or phrases in italics above—"Measuring a space", "movement in the imagination, etc.—show that it is here all about time and space as mode of pure form of sensory intuition, the condition of the possibility of appearance in Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,*[41] but for Richir, the question of phenomenalisation or sense-making encompasses temporalization and spatialization.

It is therefore all about the linguistic phenomenon. And for Richir, pausing our reflection on Richir's re-interpretation of the Kantian passage above, let us note that "to think of the phenomenon in its phenomenalisation…requires the implementation *of a free and productive schematism* where the imagination in its liberty…is subsumed by comprehension [*entendement*] in its legality as the power of the unity".[42] To put it more clearly, in schematism, required by phenomenalisation, there is "an intimate union between *a diversity* already straining *towards unity* and *a unity* already *open to the diversity* it welcomes therein".[43] So phenomenalisation is a schematic creation of diversity and unity.

Let us continue Richir's interpretation of the Kantian passage in view of the phenomenon of language in its schematic *diversity* and *unity.* As infinite or indeterminate the phenomenon spreads out through progression in the vastness of space (as transcendental). What accumulates in the scattered and successive step of spatialization is *suspended* and comprehended in the unity of time, i.e., in one intuition. What happens during the *suspension* is simultaneously *contra-purpose* and *purposeful*. The schematization of the linguistic phenomenon touches on two basic tendencies: the *linguistic* and the *beyond-linguistic* (*le hors langage*). The linguistic (*langage*) reflects on its own, but also in relation to what lies outside its horizon (*hors langage*). This *hors langage* happens at the moment when the linguistic in its phenomenality experiences a gap (suspension) which Kant understood as a violence to imaginative liberality. With the onset of the suspension (*lacuna)* of schematization, a symbolic objective (*finalité*) appears with its *specificity.* So, the symbolic purposefulness or teleology proposes a *specific goal* that "opens to the determination of concepts which the linguistic phenomenon does not possess".[44] These concepts are proposed by the ideas of Reason,[45] which, as we have seen, has a theological source. Having the origin in a radical outside, the absolute transcendence, the concepts lie beyond the linguistic phenomenon. The linguistic phenomenon cannot linguistically schematize this radical and absolute transcendence which proposes the concepts.

Within the project of Richir's re-establishment of Phenomenology, one however observes an orchestrated effort to liberate the phenomenon from all the shackles of positivity and determination. Richir wants to accomplish the phenomenalisation of the *phenomenon as nothing but the phenomenon.* It is *de jure* more original than the concept and determination. All this means that the phenomenon which is prior to concept is not in itself something of determinacy. There is an essential *non positivity of the phenomenon* which makes it irreducible to all forms of ontic and ontological positivity—because it bears in itself indeterminacy.[46] The native distortion of the phenomenon arises when it "dissimulates itself from our thought by disguising itself in the concept or in the idea that it seems to hold out to our thoughts".[47] That means that determinacy of the symbolic institutor as the legality of concept and idea, the theological, is the primary source of the distortion of the phenomenon, and *a fortiori* of the phenomenological sphere. The limitation of the phenomenon, in its determination, "appears as a transcendental illusion" which the same phenomenon "upholds as a sort of obstacle to thought".[48] In other words, the theological symbolic, although at play in the process of phenomenalisation, is, simultaneously and potentially, a source of illusion for *the phenomenon as nothing but the phenomenon.* In sum, the task of transcendental phenomenology is to escape the symbolic institution it cannot do without.

2. Phenomenology and Theology at their Points of Divergence

We see how therefore, in the scrupulous delineation of the symbolic and the phenomenological differences at their borders (coercive, finite determination and liberal, infinite indetermination), Richir, like Paul Ricoeur,[49] has evaded the problem the new phenomenologists in France have been accused of, namely, of swallowing the one in the other. Following this delineation we could sum up phenomenology as that discipline which investigates how the *lifeworld* is given to us in experience which, not only as Vergote noted is an intuitive grasping of meanings and values,[50] but also articulates, following Richir, the non-intuitive and indeterminate layers of meaning. Correlatively, theology is defined as that discipline that studies determinate Revelations of an indeterminate institutor (the eternal *Logos)* in view of God-human encounter—indeterminate because the institutor determines determination itself and is capable of holding all symbolic institutions (philosophy, music, religion, medicine, science, etc.) together. Furthermore, this delineation underlines, as Heidegger rightly did, *firstly* that the particularity of phenomenology as a discipline does not lie in being "real" (*wirklich*) but in its self-understanding as *possibility*. One already understands therein that the

particularity of the theological lies in its "realness", "actualness"—metaphysics from Plato onwards until the Neo-Platonism has always emphasized the singular, unrepeatable Reality of the One true Form. Without overemphasizing the issue that Heidegger rated possibility more than the actuality of "reality" (*Wirklichkeit*) when he wrote that "possibility stands higher than reality",[51] we can already understand this demarcation as a further understanding of the specific and particular borders of the disciplines.

This means that wherever theology sees reality (as the *one* and the *only* eternal *Logos*), phenomenology takes a skeptical stance and looks out only for possibilities. These possibilities, following Richir's phenomenology, are, for us, those of the phenomena that show themselves as *sense in the making*: This refers to that which "every language phenomenon (*langage*) carries, while seeking to express itself. It is thus conveyed by the language phenomenon without which it cannot be. It is that which emerges each time I have an idea or a feeling I want to communicate. Richir describes sense in the making as an enigma because on the one hand I embody it and on the other hand it escapes me...To escape me implies simply that I cannot employ language to capture it since there is an aspect of it that is evasive. The most primitive aspect of meaning is evasive and non-positional; it appears to us as sense".[52] We can see already that the possibility of phenomenology can only lie here, in *sense in the making* since it is therein that all possible disclosure of the world is potentially contained. On the other hand, "reality" is captured, if we follow Richirian paradigm, by what he calls the linguistic system (*langage*) which we can decipher from this citation: "Thus, if everything is the *linguistic sense* (*temporalisation*) before being *sense stated in such or such determined language* (*instituted*) [langue déterminée institué]– for example French or Chinese –, all lived experience, beyond its identification in such and such a language, is first of all a *being of sense* and therefore *linguistic*".[53] It is thus in a system of language (and in its grammatical organization) as concepts that reality is expressed and accessed, if we agree with Richir that ideas of Reason proposing these concepts have a theological source in the *one* and *only* eternal *Logos*. In a linguistic system, possibility (or abstraction) coincides with actuality (practice). The possibility of encountering an almighty, all-knowing, omnipresent *logos* is exhausted in the reality of a *God* where *God* guarantees the linguistic system that codes *sense in the making.* Here concept (God), in its nature entirely determinate, as articulating *Bedeutung* (almighty, loving, omnipresent, etc.), is symbolically identical to the *being*[54] (God).

Secondly, following the above delineation, we underline another specific border between the two disciplines: that theology, and God as its major object, is tautological, whereas the phenomenological

is the regime of the adventure of sense-making. If we follow Richir's claim—which we know takes place in an extreme case, especially when the symbolic fails to harmonize with the phenomenological in the temporalization—that "the characteristic of the symbolic institution is to repeat itself automatically and sometimes immutably, in human societies, from generation to generation",[55] it would immediately become evident that the concept of God and theology is highly prone to tautology. In Heidegger's reading of Hegel this idea becomes evident: The "indefinite immediacy" of "Being" gives off its self-sufficiency as that thought that thinks itself absolutely.[56] This way of "absolute Being" to think itself is termed *the same* (*das Gleiche*[57]) by Heidegger and resonates with what we could term a "closed circular circuit" or a "symbolical system" where all distinctions and differences are included in this *same universal*.[58]

The above corresponds to the classical metaphysical understanding of God. For instance, Anselm of Canterbury's ontological proof takes the indubitable *existence of God in "reality*" from *existence in "understanding"*, where *actuality* corresponds to *possibility*. From being that than which nothing greater can be thought (*quo nil maius valet cogitari*[59])—i.e., *from essence*—follows *existence*. In the concept "God", human understanding cannot stretch further since there is no differentiation in him —his being is auto-determining.[60] God, as Hegel says, is the only *Being* that exists through its very *being.* Some of the formulations found in Hegel and Anselm concretize this: "all proceed from him and return to him", "self-contained who is in absolute unity with himself", "spirit essentially with itself" [*wesentlich bei sich seiende Geist*], "this pure relation to oneself, the absolute being and staying with oneself",[61] "existing by itself alone" (*solum existens per seipsum*[62]). Thus, in this metaphysical understanding, all *difference* is excluded, and God is repeated in all and every form of existence. God, coinciding with himself, implies a lack of distance (difference). The thoughts of God coincide with his acts, eliminating the distance between *abstract thinking* and *practical thinking* and making a reflexivity (the realm of possibility) between *a here* and *a there* impossible. We can now see that God, as the object of theology, is the guarantee of the linguistic system itself, i.e., as the ground of all *determinations* and *reality.*

The above logic holds sway for theology. This discipline accepts the didactic method's lack of distance and conformity between beginning and end: "What is thus said at the beginning must then be said identically at the end".[63] This conformity renders all theological problems (or questions) solved in advance.[64] The theological method seems, then, to be founded in itself; being self-determining it

gives an air of self-sufficiency.[65] Theological thinking becomes *a repetition of the same*: tautologous. All that is *yet to be known* in experience has been *already said in advance* in Revelation as though *possibility* is swallowed in the *real*. Theology, accordingly, becomes that science which begins with the result (*the end*). While commenting on Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* where Hegel asks: "with what should the beginning of science be made?",[66] Heidegger responds that Hegel's science (*Wissenschaft*) begins with the result (the end[67]). If the beginning of science is God, then in Him science has the beginning coinciding with the end. Heidegger terms such a science "theology" (*Theo-Logik*) which with Ontology (*Onto-Logik*) constitute the discipline of Metaphysics.[68]

In contrast, the philosophical method has been described as "heuristic" which requires a non-conformity of the beginning and end of the reflective act. The philosophical attitudes of wonder[69] (Thales, Plato, Aristotle) and doubt (Descartes) attest to this infinite open-endedness. The same can be said of the phenomenological attitude of reduction (Husserl, Marion), from which then givenness is accessed. Whereas theology (for Heidegger) focuses on Revelation (*Offenbarung*) which does not thematize human thought, philosophy is that science in which revealedness (*Offenbarkeit*) of the phenomena becomes topic.[70] In essence, philosophy is an adventure of thought in its most poignant radicality. In relation to the primary phenomenon of phenomenology, the living body, Richir writes: "there is always more in it than what we, spontaneously, recognize in it *from the words and the structures of the language*".[71] So, contrary to the theological, the phenomenological in Richir's phenomenology could be described as an *excess,* an adventure of *sense-in-the-making,* beyond positionality and beyond an intentional meaning (*Bedeutung*).[72] Like the linguistic phenomenon its characteristics is "to proliferate itself indefinitely".[73]

3. Phenomenology and Theology at their Contact Points

Given this demarcating delineation between the two disciplines, at their points of divergence, does this then mean that there is no sort of intersection or relationship between them? In actual fact, we see that both domains, despite their differences, are related to each other in a way too. The crux of our essay is to delineate the nature of this relationship. Therein the politico-methodological reflection of Richir could be relevant for the relationship between phenomenology and theology.

Before we go into the forms of relationship, suffice it to say that Richir spoke against not only the confusion of the two registers with each other, but also against any form of passage from the one

(phenomenology) to the other (symbolic): "Heidegger very significantly confuses the phenomenological and the symbolic, or believes, at the very least, in the rigorous coextensivity of one and the other in such a way that, from one to the other, and in both directions, the passage is simple and immediate".[74] What exists for Richir between the phenomenological and the symbolic is an enigmatic encounter, and never a passage "that would be logically thinkable or deducible from one side or the other".[75] To do so would be like "pulling a rabbit out of a hat—from the phenomenological "pole" to the symbolic "pole" of experience", in a way quite similar to Emmanuel Falque's model. This last (also the pupil of Marion) recently recognized the possibility of crossing over to theology from phenomenology (in favor of Marion); at the same time he argues that the passage should not be masked ("*lavartus pro Deo*"/"*masqué devant Dieu*"/masked before God[76]), but rather, against Marion, marked („detecta fronte prodeo"/"à visage decouverte"/"with open face"[77]). What Richir emphasizes, against this crossing over, is that we humans inhabit these two registers of determinacy and indeterminacy simultaneously. No human can escape the symbolic or the phenomenological moment, even when this is not consciously lived. For our concern, theology as a symbolical institution will be fraught with this type of relationship with phenomenology.

Thus, if the relationship is not a passage, what is it then? It is an enigmatic encounter in which, not mixing up the two registers, the phenomenological overlaps with the symbolic. So, it is a reciprocal encroaching of the one into the other in a way that we could imagine a reciprocal openness: "a phenomenological existential should open itself in that very thing where an symbolic existential opens itself."[78] Some lines later and, in another paragraph, Richir writes of the "reciprocal reflection of non-phenomenality", "of non-temporalization and of non-spatialization in the linguistic" which happens within or "in the interior of the phenomenality of language", "of temporalization and spatialization in the linguistic".[79] If this is reciprocal, implying also a reverse form—which means that the reflection of phenomenality (of temporalization and spatialization) also happens at the heart of non-phenomenality, which Richir in this passage understands as the symbolic. For Falque, it is precisely the "overlapping of philosophy by theology" that is preferred,[80] rather than a Bonaventuran and Pascalian understanding of it as a relay: "theology begins where philosophical knowledge ends".[81] This last model does not proffer any interaction between the two disciplines, but commands an estimation of hierarchy. The French phenomenologist of religion argues, contrary to it, for a "reciprocal fecundity in a radical transformation of the one by the other".[82] From here one could begin to imagine how such a reciprocal openness and transformation could be realized between

phenomenology and theology. For his part, Richir himself understands this movement as a difficult task.[83] His reflection on the reciprocal and symbiotic *contact points* from distance between the symbolic and the phenomenological serves as a paradigm for the sort of encounter that holds between theology and philosophy. Consequently, we identify two models of relationship: 1) the theological invites the phenomenological to meaning and praxis; 2) the phenomenological, via its linguistic phenomenon, becomes a tool for the innovation of theology.

3.1. The Theological Invites the Phenomenological to Meaning and Praxis

We could say that this first point of contact is *a call from above*, from the symbolic, the place of the Other. It happens when this last invites the phenomenological to schematize. This is what Richir means when he wrote about "the Character of the place of the Other". So the function of the Other, God, he continues "is therefore to open ...to the apparent determination of a radical indeterminacy".[84] If the incitation of the phenomenological by the symbolic-theological is here not yet evident we can decipher it from the lines later in the text: "the vacillation of the place of the Other which opens the phenomenological field to itself".[85] Richir uses various verbs of action just to describe how the phenomenological is pulled: "incitation", "call", "shocked", "magnetized", etc. And if one asks why the symbolical calls or incites the phenomenological, we read from Richir: "Because this God has nothing to do with a master giver of meaning to which we should conform: In its radical enigma, it is to the contrary nothing more or less than *an indefinite call to meaning...to this meaning* which each of us has to be and do."[86] The Other, which we have previously designated as coextensive with the *absolute transcendence*, comes with a force, a shock, whose function is to open the phenomenological to its very phenomenality, "via the project of the world articulated in the future".[87] This "divinity" elevates the individual beyond its empirical determinacies.[88] In other words, phenomenology would not realize its very vocation to giving meaning to world phenomenon or "to invent acts, gestures and words"[89] (creativity, praxis) were it not to be drawn out from *indetermination* to *determination*. It would remain blind to itself if it were just to be content with itself because the knowing and practicing subject of phenomenology has always to be drawn beyond themselves from a determinate source. To say it in another way, phenomenology as the science of possibility, i.e., the discipline that *is on its way* and in search of itself, can only become by finding the *real* (the theological) which echoes in it (the phenomenological) even though from a distance.

If we claim above that the field of phenomenology, of the phenomenalising subject, remains the sphere of possibility, it is also to signal that it is nothing other than a neediness in search of meaning and that it cannot find the same meaning in itself.[90] That the only certainty philosophy can boast of remains the lack of a certain knowledge, that the subject's consciousness cannot be the ground of philosophy (contra Descartes) and that the need for certainty remains a leftover of a consciousness which, in the past, has always received the essentials from the gods can already be attested to in philosophy (examples are found in Dietrich Heinrich, Ernst Tugendhat, etc.). All these go further to underline the internal neediness of philosophy and the knowing subject. Explicating the ground of the self-conscious Self, Dieter Heinrich's claims on the one hand that "the Self possesses itself as Self" and on the other hand that "to be a Self is to be a unity emerging from a ground that the Self does not control".[91] As that ground which, in its transcendentality, in the human self, surpasses the human, the symbolical institution has been referenced to God in some traditions.[92] We can here think, with Andy German, of Kant's synthetic unity of apperception which is the condition for knowledge, which (this very unity) however cannot itself be known objectively.[93] Thus, the fact that the Self experiences a peculiar relationship to itself in self-consciousness, as an anterior form of the self's world-relatedness, does not make this same Self its own cause since it depends on some other ground. If we turn again to Richir, we then see that that which makes the phenomenon appear—which is an original absence or "transcendence of the absence of the world"[94]—is outside the phenomenological sphere, outside the conscious and knowing subject. It is also in relation to this original absence that the human person, the sphere and object of phenomenology is possible: "Because it is only if there is this absence at the origin that I can be present here".[95] In other words, without absolute transcendence, which is an original absence from an *absolute There*, there would be no *here* and *there* from the standpoint of the subject, no self-consciousness, no knowledge of the world, etc. Thus, the call from a distance to strive to become that which it could become and to be *liberated* from its neediness. It is only a sphere of divinity,[96] as Richir called it, that could deliver it from the said neediness.

While Richir was only interested in the articulation between the phenomenological, the symbolic and the absolute transcendence we think his thoughts could be stretched further, spelling out concretely, with Falque for the most part, how this articulation could play out in the relationship between phenomenology and theology. The phenomenology practiced by the new French phenomenologists was *accused* of becoming "evangelical", of becoming "theological". This is a one-sided attack. One might ask what happens to theology? Could it not also become "phenomenological"? Or more

precisely, what prevents us from thinking of its phenomenological incarnation? Thus, Richir's idea that the symbolical (the theological) invites phenomenology to its mission could be seen as innovative in phenomenology itself. We see therein a double movement: First the door is opened for the theological itself of actualizing its very nature, to take flesh. Richir has understood the theological as "the *abyssal problem of our incarnation*, of *the life of the enigma* and the *enigma of the self*".[97] God became man. So, theology in its very nature has to always descend into man. Secondly it is an open invitation for phenomenology to aspire to the theological, without losing itself. Since it is a reciprocal crossing of the one by the other and since it is not only a question of the phenomenological having something to offer to theology, theology makes phenomenology see "that it cannot refuse to open … to the transcendence of Him who metamorphoses everything only insofar as it has first fully assumed it".[98]

Falque echoes Richir relative to the first movement above: "If phenomenology can quite, in a fruitfulness which it is certainly appropriate to honor today, renew the approach to the divine by taking it on its own, would not theology itself also have the means, as in a "return of hinge" indeed a "backlash", to interrogate phenomenology as such, even if it means making it see its incapacities or at the very least its insufficiencies?"[99] Like Richir, Falque thinks that the phenomenological could become blind to itself, i.e., being insufficient and in a way the theological is built on this lack of self-sufficiency. It is no longer a question of the precedence of the phenomenological. We no longer move from the phenomenological to the theological but from the theological to the phenomenological. In this "backlash" everything changes. In contemporary phenomenology there is the hypertrophy of the "flesh on the body". However, in the context of the "backlash" it is "no longer the 'flesh' or the *Leib* which explains the incarnation of Christ (Michel Henry), but the incarnation of Christ which interrogates the *Leib* or the meaning of its consistence as 'body'[Falque]."[100] The idea is that the theological reveals the purely phenomenological, the human reality in its radical corporeality. God became man and divinization serves the horizon of humanization.[101] Falque invites his readers to descend into the theological reflections of the fathers of the church such as Tertulian to understand how the "flesh of Christ" serves as a model phenomenological description of the living body in its interiority or its auto-affection. The question could now be posed against Falque if the approach is to exclusively theologize. Responding to this, Falque says the accent should not be placed on theologizing but on philosophizing, insisting paradoxically, however, that one philosophizes better by theologizing.[102] There seems, however, to be a tendency here to give primacy to theology.

So, we could say, following the argumentative structure of Falque, that theology promises a transformative force for phenomenology: the divinization of man, the conversion of phenomenology. To claim a transformation for the phenomenological becomes justifiable on the ground above of its neediness. Falque gives an instance how this could be conceived: that "the 'carnal eros' of the spouses will no longer welcome its ultimate meaning until it too has been integrated and transformed in the divine agape (Wedding of the Lamb)". This is to say the sense of human yearning to love and be loved, to experience the warmth of the other, can only be meaningful in a larger unity of Love which grounds it. Thus, it is in the theological that the phenomenological, the human, becomes ultimately fulfilled. Returning to our explication of Richir's linguistic phenomena above with its relationship to the symbolic teleology, we can now understand why the determination of concepts, of symbolic teleology, proposed to the linguistic phenomena, by an absolute transcendence, makes sense and could be understood as a form of conversion—which we in Richir's phenomenology could liken to an architectonic transposition.[103] The linguistic phenomenon in its unending proliferation becomes possible thanks to that which fulfills it as a determination of reality (*Wirklichkeit*), as meaning (*Bedeutung*). Conversion implies a transformation, without essentially losing one's substantial constitution. When converted philosophy is conferred its ultimate sense which lies beyond it: "*Philosophy* is *transformed* and *converted in contact with theology*, not in the sense that it would thus be *prevented from its alleged derivatives or temptations of autonomization*, but in that it receives both the "force of the resurrection" and the "thickness of the Eucharist", *its ultimate meaning which it did not however expect*".[104] While they do not discard their basic humanity (its alleged derivatives above) by mingling with the theological, the phenomenologist satisfies their ultimate desire which is nothing short of the desire for the absolute (resurrection). But this desire is already and fundamentally a human desire.

However by following Hegel's claim—even if religion can be without philosophy, philosophy cannot be without religion which its very essence[105]—Falque could be criticized for not being consistent on what he terms the reciprocal fertilization of both disciplines, and for subordinating phenomenology to theology as *a rebellious* part to be *mastered* in a way that is reminiscent of Aquinas' dictum of *philosophia ancilla theologiae*. He explicitly denies this: If theology uses the philosophical science *tanquam inferioribus et ancillis* ("as inferior and as servant") it is not in the guise of a slave, but "as its servant [*ancillas suas*] which Wisdom calls to the heights [*vocare ad arcem*]".[106] This transformative process of being called to the heights is therefore a thing of honor for philosophy. A philosophy which

does not experience this transformation of resurrection would not have accomplished itself. But in which concrete way could phenomenological philosophy accomplish this transformative call to the heights? We need to get into the subsequent section in order to respond to this question.

3.2. The Phenomenological, via its Linguistic Phenomenon, as a Tool for the Innovation of Theology

The openness of philosophy and its reception of theology bring us to the second aspect, namely to the phenomenological which, via its linguistic phenomenon, becomes a means for the innovation of theology.

In the context of a commentary on Fichte's preoccupation in which the subject (the reasonable finite being) can only reflect with reference to the backdrop of the limited opposed to it,[107] Richir posits that self-consciousness cannot be without the foundation of determination, of the symbolic institution. The subject articulates itself therein in order to aim at determining its final goals, which according to Fichte are practical goals. Thus, in the face of the final goals the subject feels free to exercise on the form of things.[108] Richir sees herein the birth of the "technical", namely the art of producing forms from already existing materials, the symbolical institutions.[109] Between the free temporalization of self-consciousness (which, according to Richir, belongs to the phenomenological existential) and the determination of objects (this represents, for Richir, the symbolical existential or the trace of the symbolical) there is a conflict: the linguistic phenomenological experiences the gaps (the senseless or dead ends of a register that is no longer accessible to individual sensibility) in its phenomenality.[110] There are two possible translations of this: either the linguistic phenomenon experiences its own lacks or it experiences the gaps in the symbolical. The first is ruled out here since it is obviously about the conflict between two different existentials. Then Richir adds: "everything therefore happens *as if*, in the test by the phenomenon of language of these lacunae in phenomenality..., *the temporalization (spatialization)* in which it resides were in a way re-gathering itself *in order to temporalize and spatialize the determinacies which are like the traces of its lacunae*".[111] Whereas, for Fichte, it is the flutter of imagination[112] that treats the conflict between the determinacy and liberty, for Richir, it is *the linguistic phenomenon* in the liberty of the phenomenological existential that revives the blind spots in the symbolical existential. In *L'expérience du penser* this same idea is taken up: "Reopening times and blind spots for the apperceptions is therefore only possible because their glimpse are at the same time glimpses of language [*langage*] offering the resource of new transpositions or new passages in new

sequences of language system [*langage*] – bearing in mind that the inchoative mass of glimpses of language can never be exhausted there."[113] In other words, the *linguistic* glimpses the blind spots and re-opens them for temporalization and in so doing offers the pre-existing materials fresh and multiple entrances to the apperception of the symbolic. So, for a practical goal to be achieved, in the face of the already mentioned gap, the linguistic phenomenon has to be mobilized. And so, one could not speak of "technical" invention or the realization of a "practical goal" if there were no linguistic phenomenon: "But we see at the same time that there can be technical "invention".... only if this invention draws itself from the resources of temporalization (and spatialization) of the *phenomenon* of language, therefore from phenomenological resources".[114]

It is only when the lacunae in phenomenality are re-temporalised that they can be led to phenomenality. Theology, as has been noted, is the place of this lacuna par excellence precisely because in it the beginning of enquiry corresponds to the end of the same. This leads to symbolic circularity and dead ends for meaning. In theology, as a symbolic institution of the permanence of the *Vorhandensein* of reality, therefore, the idea is saturated by itself for all has been said in it and all that can be said in it is the *same* to be repeated; and in it the perceptive apperception supposes in fact the end of all discursivity[115] and the end of reflexivity.[116] The challenge is then how to liberate the *same* eternally fixated or fastened to itself to become an *ipse*—i.e., that which, in its multifarious and ever changing evolvement, *neither remains the same* nor *loses its very self-identity*. How could theology be made to phenomenalise again, *i.e.*, to become sense accessible.

Phenomenological descriptions bring a *first-person perspective*, i.e., a subjective gaze, into the whole picture. All first-person perspectives are already inhabited by a plurality of subjects, i.e., an intersubjective community.[117] Thus, when this intersubjectively-loaded subjective perspective is cast on the invariance of things (the *same*) what we have is an infinite variety—and here we could think of the "*eidetic", "free" or "imaginative" variation*—of accesses to the *same*. Such descriptions would not only vivify but also evoke infinite emotional and active senses to the theological content.

If the phenomenological method requires that no preliminary decision is to be made how the phenomenologist should relate to the object of their analysis and description (*épochè*), it is in order to open up access (phenomenological reduction) to transcendental relationality (sense of Being). The opposite pole of such a relationality refers to the intentional consciousness (in Husserl), ontology (in Heidegger), a-subjectivity and infinite non-appearing (in Richir); and so, we have different medialities: intentionality, *being, phantasia-affections.* This last (*Phantasia-affection*[118]) inhabiting the

Leib of the phenomenologist, because of its vigorous and infinite variability, re-temporalizes/re-spatializes (the theological content or) the said dead ends, "perceives" the *concreteness,* and gives us access to reality.

Phenomenological descriptions of a text of scripture, driven by the power of imagination, are capable of bringing, beyond the objective references, something new. In this manner too, Falque argues that phenomenology could develop a manner of philosophizing which he likens to an *ad extra* approach, where philosophers take the objects of theology (the discourse on the basis of God) as a space for philosophical treatment. The sacred text could become, for instance, an object of phenomenological descriptions which invites one to phenomenologically describe how the texts speak to a concrete subject. The phenomenological method is brought to eliminate all biases and bear on the text or a given dogmatic content (such as the Incarnation, trinity, passion, etc.); the phenomenologist enters into the scene with their subjectivity; and the dogmatic content or text of scripture is capable of speaking to them. If they enter into the scene as a subject, the theological material transforms them into an object which the theological content addresses as Subject.[119] Because of the intersubjective background of every subjectivity, the text is capable of affording the phenomenologist, each time, an infinite possibility of access to that which ordinarily would have been the end of reflexivity and discursivity (*the same*).

It is here that we can glimpse into such a transformation spoken of by Falque. Phenomenology, at the base of revelation, begins to think the unthinkable and the hitherto unthought:[120] discovering the truths professed by the faith which now become thinkable. Whereas in phenomenology of Husserlian provenance the *Leib* from its zero-point (here) can *neither* be transposed to the *Leib* over there in the way of taking its place *nor* directly experiencing what the other experiences except by way of analogy ("as if I were there"), theology becomes exemplary of how this phenomenological impossibility and unthinkability are to be overcome: Christ's passion and suffering on the cross made the Father to experience what the Son experienced in his temporal and corruptible flesh and the Father was able to transform in the Son the limits Husserl imposed on the *here* and the *there.*[121] Yet the overcoming cannot take place without the liberty of descriptive variability via the apperception of the *linguistic phenomenon*.

Falque warns, however, against thinking that philosophy would have been absorbed or abolished by theology. Transformation implies that something essentially philosophical is not lost in the process of conversion when it thinks the *unthinkable*. Theology does not abolish humanity but rather reinforces

it. So, we must resist the pattern "theology or philosophy". Rather, we should think with the pattern "theology and philosophy" for which he thinks Thomas Aquinas is the best exemplification. He was not just "a philosopher or a theologian" but "a philosopher and a theologian". He could explain theologically what the trinity or incarnation are all about, "and philosophically how man in his action is taken in this act of return towards God without losing his humanity".[122] But by "*unifying* them...*we distinguish* at the same time that *we consciously cross* the ford."[123] Crossing from the one to the other does not only mean that theology is descending to the phenomenological but also that the phenomenological is ascending to the theological.

This last (the ascent of phenomenology) is the second movement which we have thus highlighted above: "it is an open invitation to phenomenology to aspire to the theological, without losing itself" since Christ's incarnation was in view of human divinization. This requires both a philosophy that is open to the theology it could receive and a theology that offers it (philosophy) "the effectiveness of an act of faith that only the revealed...can provoke"[124] while taking its departure from the concreteness of philosophy.

Conclusion

By now, it must have become clear that the descent of theology and the ascent of phenomenology are rooted in the primacy of the human condition, *i.e.,* the human experience. If, according to Thomistic dictum all that is received is received according to the mode or measure of the receptor[125] then this concrete human condition becomes the point of departure of all sciences and it is there, at its hinge, that philosophy and theology come together. Experience becomes the foundation of philosophical thought and theological practice (through which it takes flesh). In this way concrete and immanent human experience enables both disciplines to abandon abstractions in favor of immanent conditions. If Janicaud decried the phenomenology practiced by the French phenomenologists, it was in the context of the loss of the immanent ground of phenomenality which was replaced with metaphysical categories such as the attributes of the divine.[126]

We have already seen the above intuition in Richir's phenomenology. The phenomenological and the symbolic are essentially aspects of the same human experience. The ideas proposed by Reason (the symbolical) in their determination, become essentially humanized when they incite phenomenalisation that temporalizes and spatializes human experience. The power of imagination in

its liberality (the phenomenological) while seeking to surpass itself still remains within the zone of human experience, insofar as it merely stretches in its strides to apprehend.

This is, however, not to lump the two registers in one pot, since they relate via their distance to each other. The relationship is that of an overlap as we have shown. If this is so, then ours is to draw the consequence: a pure theological symbolic cannot exist in the same way that there cannot be a pure immanent phenomenology. Would this then not end up transforming phenomenology to theological phenomenology and theology to phenomenological theology? In the end, what we have in Richir's thought could be likened, following Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit,* to a metaphysical phenomenology. Therein phenomenology and metaphysics are two sides of the same coin, difficult to sever, related and dependent on each other in certain ways, without doing harm to their methodic freedom. Whereas metaphysics guarantees the possibility of a system (including that of phenomenality), phenomenality cannot be removed from the *conditions of its phenomenalisation.* Whereas phenomenalisation is understood in *Phénoménologie en esquisses* as the "phenomenological vibration between the appearing and disappearing of phenomena".[127] In this context Richir wrote of his approach: "Such an approach led us, it is true, to extremely complex and paradoxical speculative elaborations, because it was no longer possible to stabilize *the structures unveiled and brought into play* by any *metaphysical authority* whatsoever (Being or God)".[128] In this passage making allusion to the metaphysic behind the appearance of Heidegger's phenomenology, we also see in Richir's phenomenology the dependence of a phenomenality ("unveiled structures brought into play") on a metaphysical instance (Being, God)—a tendency that pervaded the later development of Richir's phenomenology.

Footnotes

[1] Dominic Janicaud, La phénoménologie dans tous ses états, Gallimard: folio essais, 2009 pp.19-24.

[2] Edmund Husserl, Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre: 1908-1914, Hua XXVIII, Ullich Melle (ed.), Dordrecht: Kluwer 1988, p. 181.

[3] Nathalie Depraz, « Le tournant pratique de la phénoménologie », in: Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger », 2004/2 vol. 1299, pp. 149-165.

[4] Marc Richir, Variation sur le sublime et le soi, Grenoble: Million 2010, p. 17.

[5] Janicaud, *op.cit.*, p. 311: "however, it seems doubtful that a general architectonics of the symbolic institution can escape all metaphysics."

[6] Janicaud, *op.cit.,* pp. 272, 273, 311.

[7] Hans-Dieter Gondek, László Tengelyi, Neue Phänomenologie in Frankreich, Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag 2011, p. 674.

[8] Ludwig Binswanger, Introduction à l'analyse existentielle, Paris: Édition de Minuit, 1971, p. 140.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 143: « si elle [notre corporéité] n'était pas une forme cachée de notre être même, nous ne pourrions jamais nous rappeler un nom 'oublié', rendre 'consciente' une émotion inconsciente, déceler en nous n'importe quel effet à partir de quelque chose d'inconscient » [our italics]. To say that a hysteric patient is deficient (inauthentic) would imply that the patient is guilty of the forgetfulness of Being, in resonance with Heidegger's Sein und Zeit. The task of the therapist is to aid the inauthentic Dasein to open up to the question of Being, meaning. Richir thinks this way of thinking assumes that the phenomenon of the world dissimulates itself and that it arises from a non-phenomenality (forgetfulness of Being or inauthentic life). This way Binswanger like Heidegger confuses two important registers that despite a relatedness are independent of each other: the institutional and the phenomenological. These prevent us from searching for the negative in the dissimulation (Verborgenheit)—as though determination would have been a positive side of dissimulation, unconsciousness and inauthenticity or as though the institutional could emerge from the phenomenological. Marc Richir, Phénoménologie et institution symbolique, in: Phénomènes, temps et être; Phénoménologie et institution symbolique, Grenoble: Millon 2018, p. 273.

[11] Richir, *Ibid.*

[12] Ibid., p. 274.

[13] Cf. Dominic Nnaemeka Ekweariri, The World-Relatedness of Affectivity: Heidegger and Richir, in*: Studia Philosophica* 66 (2 supplement): 55-77, here p. 70: „Richir understands language phenomenon as plural phenomena. It refers to those phenom-ena which can only be understood in relationto sense in the making. They have alreadyopened themselves to the subject and arealso trying to establish themselves".

[14] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 275.

[15] *Ibid.,* 276: "l'institution symbolique en général est à comprendre comme découlant de sortes d''effets' de langage, qui ne se manifestant que par des lacunes ou des trous dans la phénoménalité des phénomènes de langage. »

[16] Henri Maldiney, Regard, parole, espace, with an introduction by Jean-Louis Chrétien, Paris: Cerf 2012, p.90.

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 124.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 278.

[19] Jacques Lacan, Les quatres concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse, arranged by Jacques-Alain Miller, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973 [1964], p. 38.

[20] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 279.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 280.

[22] We might say that structuralism and structural linguistics became the reference methodology for most humanities and that, in the process, the corporeal aspect of linguistic symptom-formation and self-formation faded in the background. Even this could not hide the fact that the emphasis on the symbolic linguistic components was one-sided.

[23] *Ibid.,* p.286. The final italics are ours.

[24] Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 2001, p. 124-125.

[25] *Ibib.,* p. 126.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[27] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 330.

[28] Kant, *op.cit.*, p. 134

[29] Richir, op. Cit., 328.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 338.

[31] Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft: Grundlage zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Wilhelm Weischedel (ed.), Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag 2020 [first edition 1974], p. 300.

[32] Marc Richir, Du Sublime en politique, Paris: Editions Payot 1991, p. 50-51.

[33] Marc Richir, Phénomènes Temps et Êtres: Ontologie et Phénoménologie, Grenoble: Million, 1987, p. 29.

[34] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1991, p. 28.

[35] Dan Zahavi, Introduction. In: Ders., The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology, Oxford: 2015, p. 2.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 3. It is evident that the "and so on" ought to include all types of world disclosures and one could also add here: the disclosure of religious experiences.

[37] Phenomenalisation of the phenomen, according to Richir, is "that in which and through which the phenomenon comes to appear ...as phenomenon and nothing but the phenomenon": Marc Richir, Phénomènes Temps et Êtres: Ontologie et Phénomenologie, Grenoble: Millon, 1987, p. 19-20.

[38] Michel Henry, Pour une Phénoménologie de la Vie, Clichy 2010, p. 45.

[39] Richir, *op.cit.,* p. 28-29. [My Italics.]

[40] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, translated by Werner S. Pulhar, Indiana: Hackett pub. Com, 1987 [1790], p. 259. Except for « simultaneity » all others are our italics.

[41] Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Hamburg: Meiner 1998 [1781], A edition, pp. 22, 24.

[42] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 20. [My Italics.]

[43] *Ibid.* [My italics.]

[44] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 334.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 22.

[47] *Ibid.,* p. 22.

[48] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

[49] Yvanka Raynova, « All that Gives Us to Think: Conversations with Paul Ricoeur," in *Between Suspicion and Sympathy: Paul Ricoeur's Unstable Equilibrium,* Andrzej Wierciński (Editor), Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press 2003, p. 688.

[50] Antoine Vergote. The Religious Man: A Psychological Study of Religious Attitudes. Translated by Marie-Bernard Said, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1969, p. 27.

[51] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit,* Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 2006 [1927] p. 38.

[52] Dominic Nnaemeka Ekweariri, "The World-Relatedness of Affectivity: Heidegger and Richir", in *Studia Ubb. Philosophica,* vol. 66 (2021), no. 2 Supplement, pp. 55-77, here p. 70; Cf also Marc Richir, « Des phénomènes du langage », in *Perspectivas o sujeto et racionalidade*, Maria José Cantista (ed.), 95-107. Porto: Campo de

Lettras 2006, p. 96-97.

[53] Marc Richir, Le corps, Paris: Hatier 1993, p. 72.

[54] Marc Richir, « Sens et paroles: pour une approche phénoménologique du langage », in: *Figures de la Rationalité—Etudes d'Anthropologie philosophique* IV, Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de Louvain-La Neuve, 1991 pp. 228 -246, here p. 231.

[55] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 305.

[56] Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz.* Band 11, Gesamtausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2006, pp. 54-55.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Philip Markeinere. Berlin: Dunder and Humbolt edition 1832.

[59] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion,* Latin-German edition, ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt. Stuttgart Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog v. 28. 1984.

[60] Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion,* ed. Philip Markeinere. Berlin: Dunder and Humbolt edition 1832, p. 52.

[61] *Ibid.,* pp 49-51.

[62] Anselm, *op.cit.,* 1984.

[63] Emmanuel Falque, *Passer le Rubicon: Philosophie et Théologie: Essai sur les frontières*, Paris: Éditions Lessius. Falque, 2013, p. 155.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Markus Kneer, 'Das Verhältnis von Phänomenologie und Theologie neu gewendet: der Ansatz von Emmanuel Falque', in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 62, 2015, p. 357.

[66]"Womit muss der Anfang der Wissenachaft gemacht werden?" Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, Wissenschaft der Logik, Band 1 Das Sein. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1812, p. 1.

[67] Heidegger, *op.cit.,* 61-62.

[68] *Ibid.,* 62-63.

[69] Recently Espen Dahl has described wonder in terms of a transitional space of "an unresolved tension between the familiar and the strange" Espen Dahl, 'Preserving Wonder Through the Reduction: Husserl, Marion, and Merleau-Ponty'. In: *The Problem of Religious Experience: Case Studies in Phenomenology, with Reflections and Commentaries*, ed. Olga Louchakova-Schwarz, 66-81. Vol. 103, Contributions to Phenomenology. Cham: Springer 2019, p. 57.

[70] Claudia Welz, 'Kierkegaard and Phenomenology' In: The Oxford Handbook on Kierkegaard, eds. John Lippit and George Pattison, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Welz 2013, p. 453.

[71] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1993 p. 72.

[72] Marc Richir, « Des phénomènes du langage », in: M.J. Cantista (ed.), *Perspectivas o Sujeto et racionalidade,* Porto: Campo de Lettras 2006, pp. 95-107, here p. 96, 103, 106.

[73] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 290.

[74] Richir, *op.cit.,* p. 1993, p. 44.

[75] Ibid., 51.

[76] Emmanuel Falque, *Le combat amoureux, Disputes phénoménologiques et théologiques*, coll. « De visu », Hermann, Paris 2014, p 167-183.

[77] *Ibid.,* pp. 191-193. With this Falque introduced a shift of accent to show that there is a contact point between phenomenology and theology.

[78] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 292.

[79] *Ibid.,* p. 294

[80] Emmanuel Falque, Passer le Rubicon: Philosophie et theologie: Essai sur les frontières, in Paris: Lessius 2013, p. 161. Falque claims that the Thomistic concept of « ancilla » covers this approach in which philosophy is not just a slave of philosophy but a servant of honor called by theology to nobility. *Cf. Ibid.,* 160.

[81] *Ibid.,* p.61-162.

[82] *Ibid.,* p. 162.

[83] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p.292. [My italics.]

[84] *Ibid.,* p. 294.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Richir, *op.cit.,* p. 1991, p. 29.

[87] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 291.

[88] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1991, p. 75.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Whatever the phenomenalising subject knows does not reside in it, but is incited from the outside (whether from another as the trace of the Other or the world as the trace of transcendence).

[91] Dieter Heinrich, „Fichte's Original Insight", in: *Contemporary German Philosophy*, vol. 1. Darrel. E. Christensen (editor), Pennsylvania State University: Univ Park 1982, p. 42.

[92] Marc Richir, L'éxperience du penser: Phénoménologie, philosophie, mythologie, Grenoble: Million 1996, p. 16.

[93] Andy German, Speculari Aude": The Platonic Patho of Metaphysics in Dieter Heinrich, in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 69, n. 2 2015, pp. 347-372, here: 355.

[94] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1991, p. 33.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Richir, *op.cit.,* 1991, p. 75.

[97] *Ibid.,* p. 83. [My italics.]

[98] Emmanuel Falque, Passer le Rubicon. Philosophie et théologie: Essai sur les frontières, Lessius, Bruxelles 2013, p. 193.

[99] *Ibid.,* p. 189.

[100] *Ibid.,* p. 190.

[101] *Ibid.,* p. 184.

[102] *Ibid.,* p. 191.

[103] This is the movement from one register to the other. Example is moving from a positionlessness to positionality.

[104] Falque, *op.cit.,* 2013, p. 166 [My italics.]

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[106] *Ibid.,* p. 160.

[107] Wissenschaftslehre, Fichte III, 18, Richir p. 287.

[108] See Fichte Wissenschaftslehre, ni 28-29.

[109] Richir, *op.cit.,* 2018, p. 288.

[110] Ibid.

[111] *Ibid.,* p. 289. The last is our italics, the first Richir's.

[112] Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre, SW, III, 29, Richir, p. 289.

[113] Marc Richir, *L'expérience du penser,* Grenoble: Million 1996, p. 13.

[114] *Ibid.,* p. 289.

[115] *Cf.* Richir, *op.cit.,* pp. 195, 198.

[116] *Cf.* Marc Richir, « Le rien enroulé—Esquisse d'une pensée de la phénoménalisation », in: *Textures* 70/ 7.8, Distorsions, Bruxelles, 1970, Seite 3 – 24, here: p. 6.

[117] Richir, Fragments Phénoménologique sur le Temps et l'Espace, Grenoble: Éditions Jérome Million 2006, p. 342: "In return, this means that any gaze awaken and inhabited by seeing, when it is cast on the invariance of things (which is at the same time perceptual invariance of the world in the current sense), is inhabited by an *a priori* indefinite and potential plurality of other gazes of the same nature".

[118] This precisely the pre-objective area of pre-predicative mobility (affectivity). No intentionality, and therefore no object, is envisaged here.

[119] Paul Ricoeur, « La fonction hermeneutique de la distanciation » (1975), in*: Du Texte à l'action, Essais d'herméneutique II*, 1986, Paris, Seuil, pp. 129, 131.

[120] Nicolas Reali, « Penser phénoménologiquement la résurrection: À propos du rapport philosophie/théologie dans *Métamorphose de la finitude* », in: *Une analytique du passage: Rencontres et*

confrontations avec Emmanuel Falque, Paris: Éditions Franciscaines, 2016, p. 177.

[121] Emmanuel Falque, Triduum Philosophique, Paris: L'éditions du Cerf, pp. 260-261.

[122] Falque, *op.cit.* 2013, p 187-188.

[123] *Ibid.,* p. 191, [Our Italics]

[124] *Ibid.,* p. 193.

[125] Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Bk 1, d. 8 q. 1, a. 2s.c.2.

[126] Dominic Janicaud, « Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française », in: *La phénoménologie dans tous ses états,* Gallimard, Paris, 2009 (1991), pp. 17-36.

[127] Marc Richir, Phénoménologie en esquisses: Nouvelles fondations, Grenoble: Million, 2000, p. 23.

[128] Ibid.

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.