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IV. THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

HOW DOES THE TRUTH APPEAR? FROM PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL COUNTER-REDUCTION

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ABSTRACT. Starting with Husserl's phenomenology and advancing to Jean-Luc Marion's and Jean-Yves Lacoste's phenomenology and to the revealed theology, this paper aims to answer the question: "How does the Truth appear?" Husserl's phenomenological reduction made the appearance of God, who remained in an absolute transcendence, impossible; but John's Gospel states that Christ is the Truth. We accept both of these opinions and offer the following answers: the religious phenomena, which have to do with a religious life and knowledge, could appear after one ignores or weakens the Husserlian epoché; God could appear if the phenomenological reduction became a reduction to givenness; the religious phenomena could appear after a theological counter-reduction, which separated itself from phenomenological rigor and belonged to theology.

Keywords: Christ, Truth, transcendental reduction, phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction, reduction to givenness, theological counter-reduction, faith, grace, God, transcendence, Edmund Husserl, Jean-Luc Marion

The question about the appearance of the Truth points simultaneously towards two disciplines which broaden its horizon: phenomenology and theology. As a science of phenomena, the former teaches us that the discourse about appearance is included in its very concept, given that the phenomenon (phainomenon) is what appears, what manifests itself, what shows itself.[1] The latter, theology, simply affirms the identity between God-man and the truth in the unequivocal statement from John's Gospel: "I am the way, the truth, and the life"

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Ființă și timp* [Being and Time], trans. Gabriel Liiceanu, and Cătălin Cioabă (București: Humanitas, 2002), § 7.

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(John 14: 6). This statement resembles a phenomenological one because, in phenomenology, "truth is what appears."[2] This is why, in this article, the question about the possibility of appearance of the truth will become a question about the possibility of appearance of God.

The answer—an easy one from within theology—is a statement of faith over which philosophy has no real domination: Truth appears as a revelation and as man's answer to the call of God throughout the history of salvation. Then again, how legitimate is the encounter between theology and phenomenological philosophy if the topic of appearance belongs to both of them? Can the religious truth appear while the phenomenological reductions are active? What relationships are possible between the two disciplines in this case?

The following pages examine the legitimacy of a conversation about Christ the Truth within Husserl's tradition of thought. If, as we will prove later on, Husserl's phenomenological reduction eliminates God, who thus remains in an absolute transcendence, how reasonable is the "theological turn in French phenomenology," which practices a discourse based on the Revelation (therefore, a theological one in its intention), but which claims to remain phenomenological in its method and rigor? The thesis that we will support is that the encounter between phenomenology and theology would not have been possible without weakening or rethinking that Husserlian reduction, to make way for new reductions that have to do with religious life and knowledge.

The Phenomenological Reduction and the Rejection of Transcendence

Phenomenology is a philosophical method and line of thought that aims to delineate the phenomena existing in our mind at the level of the intentional consciousness. Trying to avoid any theoretical and metaphysical presuppositions to go "Back to the things themselves!"—according to one of Husserl's principles—phenomenology aspires to be "a science of sciences" and "a theory of theories."[3] It attempts to substantiate the other sciences transcendentally and to grant them a philosophical unity, without claiming to replace them. The transcendental sphere of phenomena appears after the phenomenological reduction, which involves bracketing the existence of the world, which continues to exist for me as part of my intentional consciousness.[4] Husserl takes the concept of intentionality from Franz Brentano and observes that all the acts of our consciousness are intentional, pointing towards contents of consciousness. This idea opens up the

[2] Michel Henry, *Eu sunt Adevărul. Pentru o filozofie a creştinismului* [I am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity], trans. Ioan I. Ică jr, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2000), 50.

[3] Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay, vol. 1, *Prolegomena to pure logic* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2007), 152, § 66.

[4] Edmund Husserl, *Meditaţii carteziene* [Cartesian Meditations], trans. Aurelian Crăiuţu, (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 1994), 50–51, § 8.

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meditation towards two directions: on the one hand, towards contents of consciousness—intuitions, noemata or cogitata, the noematic direction; on the other hand, towards the descriptions of the acts themselves—such as perception, memory, retention, i.e. towards intentions and the cogito itself. The phenomena are constituted in the consciousness and the constitution of the transcendental world is an infinite guiding idea.[5]

For Husserl, phenomenology is an eidetic science that studies ideas, essences, principles, the a priori universal.[6] Therefore, Husserl talks not only about a transcendental reduction, but also about a categorial reduction to the essence of phenomena, and both of them define the proper meaning of a transcendental phenomenology.[7] Knowledge is a constitution in the transcendental consciousness of the phenomena obtained after making those reductions; it is a unity of fulfillment by gradual confirmations and refusals, and the truth belongs to the apodictic evidence.

Under these circumstances, the phenomenological reduction is the most radical obstacle to the possibility of appearance of a religious transcendence. Husserl defined reduction as follows:

> "Formulated explicitly, the philosophical ἐποχή that we are undertaking shall consist of our completely abstaining from any judgment regarding the doctrinal content of any previous philosophy and effecting all of our demonstrations within the limits set by this abstention."[8]

The reduction can be split into a negative movement, which eliminates the theories and prejudices that block the way to the phenomenon—affecting theology as a corpus of teachings prior to the reduction—and a positive one, that returns to the pure phenomena in the way they give themselves.[9] Phenomenology sheds light on the transcendental realm of phenomena, surpassing naïve objectivism and granting access to those phenomena through intentionality. The movement of abstention (epoché) is essential for the refusal of religion, which enters alongside other doctrines in the realm of the suspension that addresses any philosophical and scientific hypotheses. Bracketing the existence of the world to

[5] See the "Second Meditation" in Husserl, 58–87.
[6] Husserl, 104.
[7] Husserl, 105.
[8] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy.* First Book: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology,* trans. F. Kersten, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983), 33–34 [33], § 18.
[9] Jacques Taminiaux, *The Metamorphoses of Phenomenological Reduction* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 9.

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reveal the transcendental realm does not lead to a fantasy, because, as Husserl said, fantasy cannot be excluded, cannot be put out of action.[10] The criterion for the difference between illusion and reality is bracketing itself. Applied to theology, we can observe that, from Husserl's perspective, there is nothing to bracket; maybe just the text of the Scripture, which we read because it shows itself to us and reveals meanings, but it could be considered a fantasy, which does not ensure the evidence of the theological meanings it contains, only the existence of the Scripture as a book that is within my intuitive horizon. Given these circumstances, the theology of that book does not resist the phenomenological reduction. However, does the theology of liturgical experience resist? No, because it can fall under the same hits, as a theatrical play reflecting a fantasy. The reduction purifies and does not annihilate, its main goal being to discuss the phenomena that remain within the field of consciousness after bracketing. Those phenomena belong to the field of knowledge but "with a change of sign," namely outside the natural attitude and according to a transcendental attitude.[11] We must emphasize that this reduction is plural, because Husserl talks about "phenomenological reductions."[12] We can interpret this plurality in two ways: on the one hand, as applying the reduction to the different fields of factual and eidetic sciences—the reduction of physics, psychology, logic, and others; on the other hand, as a gradual, never-ending reduction. Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and even Husserl affirm the gradual nature of the phenomenological reduction. Marion also implies it in his principle "So much reduction, so much givenness."[13] The most important aspect of this discussion is the fact that reduction does not bracket only the existence of the world, but all our theories and prejudices as well, which is very difficult to do completely.

Though comparable to a religious conversion, the reduction remains problematic for religion itself and for the absolute transcendence of God due to its passing from the natural attitude to the transcendental one.[14] In fact, three transcendences remain after the reduction: the transcendence of the world, which is different from noemata, the transcendence of the pure ego, which is different from noesis, and the transcendence of God.[15]

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[10] Husserl, *Ideas I*, 59 [54–55], § 31.
[11] Husserl, 322 [278–279], § 135.
[12] Husserl, 66 [59–60], § 33.
[13] Jean-Luc Marion, *În plus. Studii asupra fenomenelor saturate* [In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena], trans. Ionuț Biliuță, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2003), 26.
[14] See R. A. Mall, "The God of phenomenology in comparative contrast to that of philosophy and theology," *Husserl Studies* 8, no. 1 (1991), 1.
[15] Angela Ales Bello, *The divine in Husserl and other explorations* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands; London: Springer, 2009), 25.

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Firstly, the transcendence of the world distinguishes between the content of the consciousness after the phenomenological reduction—those noemata—and the objects that constitute their references. Noesis–noemata are immanent to the consciousness, but the noematic objects remain transcendent, according to Husserl. In metaphysical terms, this is a relationship between the images and the objects of the intuition; noema is the image immanent to consciousness, whereas the object remains transcendent. This is an admitted limit of Husserl's phenomenology, characterized by the limit established by the reduction: even though it questions the transcendent reality of our consciousness, Husserlian phenomenology does not intend to offer a science of its own or to answer the question of whether this is possible, but focuses on the immanent and on the phenomenological stream of the intentional consciousness:[16]

> "That acts of thought at times refer to transcendent, even to non-existent and impossible objects, is not to the case. For such direction to objects, such presentation and meaning of what is not really (reel) part of the phenomenological make-up of our experiences, is a descriptive feature of the experiences in question, whose sense it should be possible to fix and clarify by considering the experiences themselves. In no other way would it be possible."[17]

Another limit is given by the very importance of objects in Husserl's phenomenology. If the principle "back to the things themselves" targets the objectivity of the phenomena appearing after the reduction, then it ignores, for the most part, non-objective phenomena. Husserl even claims in Ideas I that a transcendency that lacks the present perception and the phenomenological constitution would be nonsensical.[18]

Secondly, there is also a transcendency of the pure ego, inasmuch as it joins the acts and the noetic–noematic contents while eluding the field that appears after the phenomenological reduction. Being imperative to every cogitatio and remaining identical to itself despite its changing acts, "it cannot in any sense be a really inherent part or moment of the mental processes themselves."[19] The pure ego remains irreducible[20], indescribable and pure

[16] Husserl, *Logical Investigations* 1: 179, § 7.
[17] Husserl, 177, § 7.
[18] Husserl, *Ideas I*, 100 [85], § 46.
[19] Husserl, 132 [109], § 57 (emphasis in original).
[20] Jean-Yves Lacoste claims that God also is irreducible. See Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Fenomenalitatea lui Dumnezeu* [Phenomenality of God], trans. Maria-Cornelia Ică jr (Sibiu: Deisis, 2011), 88–89.

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emptiness, has "no explicatable content,"[21] which is why it has a paradoxical "transcendency within immanency":

> "If we retain a pure Ego as a residuum after our phenomenological exclusion of the world and of the empirical subjectivity included in it (and an essentially different pure Ego for each stream of mental processes), then there is presented in the case of that Ego a transcendency of a peculiar kind—one which is not constituted—a transcendency within immanency."[22]

Both transcendencies—of the world and of the pure ego—extend to all situations where the intention points to the phenomena of the others (the problem of intersubjectivity) or to the stream of mental processes of other egos.[23]

Thirdly, due to its problem with intersubjectivity, the phenomenological reduction becomes even more problematic with regard the divine alterity, which is considered radically transcendent. Husserl's phenomenology cannot make way for God in its analytical field, because of its phenomenological reduction, which eliminates all presuppositions and is descriptive and essentialist. The transcendental subjectivity which exercises a phenomenological reduction can accept only an immanent God, constituted phenomenologically, but this is absurd because God has no place in noetic–noematic correlations.[24] In paragraph 58 from Ideas I, Husserl claims that the phenomenological reduction excludes God. Although Husserl accepts a teleological argument implicitly and speaks of God as a "base" and not as a "physical causal reason," he considers God's transcendence to be a radical one, different from both the transcendence of the world towards consciousness and the transcendence of the pure ego. The absolute of God is different from the absolute of pure consciousness.[25] Here, we may notice the "methodological atheism" of phenomenology, which is specific to Husserl's and Heidegger's thought.

To sum up, the phenomenological reduction excludes the possibility of God's appearance, which cannot be analyzed within phenomenology. However, some solutions were found to overcome this interdiction: (1) weakening or ignoring the reduction—a kind of reduction of the reduction— and using a non-Husserlian and non-rigorous discourse (this is the solution of Husserl himself,

[21] Husserl, *Ideas I*, 191 [160], § 80.
[22] Husserl, 133 [109–110], § 57 (emphasis in original).
[23] Husserl, 79 [68], § 38.
[24] Mall, "The God of phenomenology in comparative contrast to that of philosophy and theology," 4–5.
[25] Husserl, *Ideas I*, 133–134 [110–111], § 58.

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Levinas, Michel Henry, and Jean-Yves Lacoste); (2) re-thinking the reduction to allow God's appearance (as in the case of Jean-Luc Marion's reduction to givenness); and (3) allowing the theological reductions present for phenomena of faith and admitting the possibility of a noetic–noematic analysis that accepts the irreducibility of God (Jean-Yves Lacoste's solution).

The Reduction of the Reduction

In a "Note" from Ideas I, Husserl talks about a cosmological and teleological argument of the world, starting from the idea of the order of the universe and of the visible telos. He observes that one can rationally presuppose a theological principle of absolute transcendence, but this principle cannot be analyzed phenomenologically: "The ordering principle of the absolute must be found in the absolute itself, considered purely as absolute."[26] This idea opens the field towards the possibility of discourses other than the phenomenological one, discourses that can legitimately refer to God:

> "In other words, since a worldly God is evidently impossible and since, on the other hand, the imanence of God in absolute consciousness cannot be taken as immanence in the sense of being as a mental process (which would be no less counter-sensical), ther must be, therefore, within the absolute stream of consciousness and its infinities, modes in which transcendencies are made known other than the constituting of physical realities as unities of harmonious appearances; and ultimately there would also have to be intuitional manifestations to which a theoretical thinking might conform, so that, by following them rationally, it might make intelligible the unitary rule of the supposed theological principle. It is likewise evident, then, that this rule must not be taken to be 'causal' in the sense determined by the concept of causality as obtaining in Nature, a concept attuned to realities and the functional interdependencies proper to their particular essence."[27]

Firstly, this paragraph distinguishes between the worldly transcendence and the absolute transcendence—adequate to God; the latter reappears at the end in the form of the rejection that God could be a worldly cause. As a foundation of the world, God cannot be a "cause" in any ordinary meaning, for there is no relationship between cause and effect, as in physical causality; instead, He is a

[26] Husserl, 116 [96], § 51.
[27] Husserl, 116–117 [96–97], § 51 (emphasis added).

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foundation visible only through faith. The causality of the world is a horizontal one and does not need to be founded by divine transcendence. Here, Husserl seems to think that God's transcendence is transcendent to the transcendence of the world, namely a superior transcendence. The difference between the mundane sphere and divine one can also be observed from the fact that the phenomenological constitutions are not adequate to God.

Another important idea is that Husserl accepts the legitimacy of other, no less rational ways of thinking than the phenomenological one, but which do not exercise the phenomenological reduction, nor do they use intuitions that could be accepted by theological thinking.

Finally, the "supposed" theological principle of Husserl's text leads to the possibility of a counter-reduction: what if what we see in the religious phenomena belongs to our sphere, our faith, and our Christian teachings?

Through this note, Husserl opens a field for religious analysis, a less rigorous discourse than the phenomenological one, with no phenomenological reduction. Husserl himself talks about God in his manuscripts, ignoring reduction, exercising a phenomenology without epoché. No matter where we situate Husserl's ideas about religion and God, they are essential for the legitimacy of such discourses. Thus, Husserl—who converted from Judaism to Protestant Christianism—writes about the superiority and the universality of monotheism, defending the Judeo-Christian Revelation, about the importance of the teleology for understanding God, who is not a totality of monads, but an entelechy. He also defines God as infinite life, love, will, and happiness; he speaks about the "ethical love" of Christ and the ethical way of man.[28]

Theological Counter-Reduction

How does the truth appear? Jean-Luc Marion gives another answer, trying

> "to broaden the meanings of phenomenology and to propose a phenomenology of givenness which overcomes the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger. His reduction to givenness is radical and goes beyond the reduction to objectness (Husserl) and the reduction to beingness (Heidegger). Its role is that of freeing the phenomena from anything a priori, which favors the act of discussing the phenomena

[28] I developed all these ideas in Nicolae Turcan, "Fenomenologia fără *epoché*: Problema religiei la Husserl" [Phenomenology without *epoché*: The Problem of Religion in Husserl], in *Simetriile înțelepciunii. Studii de filosofie și teologie* [Symmetries of Wisdom: Studies of Philosophy and Theology], ed. Alin Tat, and Nicolae Turcan (București: Eikon, 2017).

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> related to religious experience and Christian Revelation. These phenomena overwhelm human understanding; in Marion's terms, this means that they are given in excess, saturating our concepts with intuition; hence, the name of saturated phenomena."[29]

However, is that reduction to givenness free from a theological counter-reduction? Doesn't the same Husserlian "supposed" theological principle appear here? The remaining pages will try to analyze such a theological counter-reduction, because it is another answer to our question.

A religious phenomenon is an "appearance" of transcendence within the field of intentional consciousness. A good example is an epiphany, the manifestation of the divine through daily phenomena. Even the Christian feast of the Epiphany is the revelation of God incarnate as the Son, revelated by the Father and the Holy Spirit. The history and the philosophy of religions show us other religious revelations: ontophanies—revelations of the true reality or Being—and cratophanies—revelations of the power of the sacred. The phenomenology of religions speaks about privileged objects through which the sacred manifests itself, as well as about sacred spaces, e.g., temples, and sacred times, e.g., feast days. Homo religiosus, who is present in all societies and cultures of the world, understands well such phenomena.

What is more difficult, however, is to define the religious phenomenon starting from an atheist perspective. A phenomenological reduction excludes the sacred, as well as the religious phenomena. There are religious people who transform, by an act of transfiguration, the normal phenomena, giving them exterior meanings. What happens in the intentional conscientiousness in such cases when a religious meaning is granted to a phenomenon that, for non-believers, shows no transcendence? For a non-religious consciousness, intuition and concept can arrive at a certain adequacy and can offer the phenomenon in itself, but without any religious connotation. In the same way, if the phenomenon is an event, surprising and saturating the concept, the religious content is not a necessity. The art lover who admires an Orthodox icon might see a saturated phenomenon without any religious saturation, only with an artistic one. The difference between the non-religious consciousness and the religious one is given by the absence or the presence of faith. At first sight, such a distinction annihilates the specificity of the religious phenomenon, because a faithful consciousness only adds a "supposed" theological principle that is not present in the phenomenon.

[29] Nicolae Turcan, *Apologia după sfârşitul metafizicii. Teologie şi fenomenologie la Jean-Luc Marion* [Apology after the End of Metaphysics: Theology and Phenomenology in Jean-Luc Marion] (Bucureşti: Eikon, 2016), 368–69.

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Such an act could be the creation of a counter-reduction. Even Kierkegaard admitted, in his Philosophical fragments, that man assigns divine ideality to the empirical world.[30]

Holiness—as a manifestation of God's power and love—is not limited by the existence of faith; it can arise even for the non-believer, causing his conversion. However, this is the exception, because the rule is that a miracle is conditioned. Christ asked: "Do you believe I can do that?" Thus, faith appears as an unnecessary and insufficient condition and, from a phenomenological point of view, comparing to the Husserlian reduction as a counter-reduction.

Faithful consciousness transfigures the appeared phenomenon through its faith: for example, when seeing a human being who deserves blame, it tries to love him on account of the commandment of loving one's neighbor, so it adds a certain quality to the other, which is inadequate from a phenomenological point of view. The other does not necessarily have such a quality, but faithful consciousness takes it from its faith. Transfiguring the phenomenological reality, the religious man does not impoverish it; on the contrary, he enriches it, giving it spiritual determinations that the reality itself seems, at first sight, not to have. Through this work of faith, all the phenomena can become religious, because God can work through everyone. This mental activity is not a falsification of the phenomena, because it neither contradicts, nor cancels them; instead, it is a spiritual enrichment, probably even the revelation of the spiritual meaning that those phenomena already have, but keep them opaque.

This idea—that God can work through every phenomenon transfigured by faith—gives us the second meaning of religious phenomenon: it is the revelation of God's power and love. Faith alone is not able to make miracles; it makes only transfigurations of the phenomena, building a world within one can imagine a happy life. When the power of God appears alongside this transfiguration as an answer to man's faith, then there is a second-grade religious phenomenon. In this case, there is something more powerful, more revelated, more surprisingly, which is not only our religious opinion, but also a real revelation. God's revelation overwhelms theological counter-reduction.

We should make a distinction between two kinds of acts of the religious consciousness: on the one hand, the acts that faithful consciousness adds from within itself and, on the other hand, the acts of revelation, based on faith—which is, let us not forget, a gift and a work of God's grace. A redoubtable objection arises here: our acts, do they not obstruct the possibility of God appearing from himself? Do our transcendental conditions create a God reducible to them and, in the end,

[30] See Søren Kierkegaard, *Fărâme filozofice* [Philosophical Fragments], trans. Adrian Arsinevici (Timișoara: Amarcord, 1999), 64.

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do we fail, as Feuerbach asserts, in front of a God created after our image? The answer to that objection could be: even though we bring our faith from ourselves, such an act of the consciousness is not sufficient for the non-intuitive appearance of God. God could not appear, and we remain only some kind of rationalist believers. The teachings of faith, which are received by way of revelation (The Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition), are inefficient for an authentic mystical experience. Therefore, even though we bring our faith, askesis, and prayer, as "theological reduction,"[31] "liturgical reduction,"[32] and "eschatological reduction,"[33] this is not an actual a priori, because the authentic a priori is the work and the grace of the Holy Spirit. When Christ the Truth comes to us and we receive Him, such an experience overwhelms any previous concept, human effort or intellectual faith.

It is obvious that those appearances belong to the mystical theology rather than to Husserlian phenomenology. They advance into the field of theology and belong to philosophy only by language. However, if the analyzed phenomena are the texts of the Bible or the liturgical experience, the phenomenological method could be appropriate and could show the faith manifested from themselves. There is no faith of the phenomenologist, but, for example, the faith proclaimed by the biblical texts becomes phenomena in order to be analyzed. As a result, faith appears even for phenomenological thought while it describes phenomena of the Christian revelation. When the phenomenologist is also a believer, he understands better what he describes in the field of theology, but he keeps the distinction between the two domains. Working behind its reductions, phenomenology cannot "validate" the teachings of the faith but can only describe them. The frontier between theology and phenomenology passes through that possibility of "validation," so the difference between a phenomenologist and a theologian is not in the manner in which they describe the phenomena—both of them should describe them similarly but in the fact that the theologian believes they are true and tries to live according to them.

[31] Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Timpul – o fenomenologie teologică* [Time: A Theological Phenomenology], trans. Maria Cornelia Ică jr, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2005), 142.

[32] See Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Experienţă şi Absolut. Pentru o fenomenologie liturgică a umanităţii omului* [Experience and the Absolute. Disputed Questions on the Humanity of Man], trans. Maria Cornelia Ică jr (Sibiu: Deisis, 2001), 220–22, § 65.

[33] Lacoste, *Timpul – o fenomenologie teologică* [Time: A Theological Phenomenology], 239.

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Conclusions

The answers to the question about the appearance of Christ the Truth involves overcoming the Husserlian epoché. Firstly, through some absolute and non-phenomenological discourses and by ignoring phenomenological reduction. Secondly, by broadening the meaning of the reduction in such a way that the impossibility of God's appearance becomes a possibility; not due to our a priori categories, but to the appearance of the Truth himself, as a revelation, coming from himself—Jean-Luc Marion's answer. Thirdly, the Truth can show himself after a theological counter-reduction visible in the phenomena of faith; in this case, the eidetic reduction could remain active, but the transcendental reduction—the Husserlian epoché—could not. It is in the realm of theology where the conditions of possibility are doubled by the divine grace, in order to receive Christ the Truth in amazement. Such a gifted "transcendental," an a posteriori one, is the grace of God, through which man can participate in the mystery of Trinitarian love.

As Christ the Truth is not an epistemological notion, He appears in the communion in which the believer comes not only by his faith—a gift from God too—but also with what he does not have, by God's grace. By grace, he receives the spiritual gaze and can see and understand, as far as he can, the unseen and the unknowing of God. An objection might reply that, at that level, there is only spirituality and not phenomenology, that the believer posits faith and the phenomenological reduction is annihilated. However, the phenomenon of faith points beyond itself, towards the God who has always gifted it and has manifested Himself through the work of the Holy Spirit. If this last way leads to the overcoming of phenomenology, then it is time for one last rhetorical question: when we are talking about God, isn't it legitimate for theology to be the fulfillment of our pursuits and to let God to appear under His conditions, not ours?

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