

The Texts of the Convivium

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PHENOMENOLOGY

As Heidegger notes, “phenomenology” could be defined in Greek as a *léghein ta fainòmena*. Here *léghein* means *apofàinesthai*, “let be seen”. Phenomenology therefore means *apofàinesthai ta fainòmena* “let be seen what is manifested, in the same way as it manifests itself on its own”.

Such a “self-manifestation”, says the same author, “has nothing in common with appearing. The existence of the being cannot be understood as something ‘behind’ which is something else ‘that does not appear’. We find absolutely nothing ‘behind’ the phenomena of phenomenology, unless it hides something destined to become a phenomenon” (*Sein und Zeit*).

So what is the phenomenon? It is the revealing of how much a reality has of the most essential, the most profound and true. The measure in which such a secret can be cultivated depends on the faculties of which the subject is armed. They are the faculties of sight, touch or feeling and perception as well interpreting the matter perceived, giving it a meaning.

If every interpretation in a realistic sense is suspended, the complex of phenomena could reduce itself to pure experiences that the subject limits himself to savouring by suspending any attempt of qualification.

We are now in what one might call a pure phenomenological attitude. What the phenomenologist calls the “natural attitude” is suspended here. One expresses the tendency to qualify every perception in the natural attitude, reducing it in some way to a reality that transcends the pure subjectivity.

We rightly feel the vital need to qualify every experience. It’s a need that explains itself before any other thing in the pragmatic intent to take advantage of the favourable situations and to defend oneself in situations of danger.

An understanding is more easily established between the subjects that come together in qualifying realities in the same way and one joins forces for mutual defence and reciprocal help.

One tends to see a means in every reality, or an obstacle in relation to the action. It is only in a second moment that the reality is considered in itself, in its own nature, in that own intimate essence that offers itself to the subject to enable it to study it more deeply.

Every existence reveals, of itself, that being that is one and everything with its having to be. It reveals itself as God’s creature, united with the other creatures. In this way what could be defined as a particular “human relationship” is established between us of the human species. This could take on all the forms of love.

One catches a glimpse of something else in the heart of hearts of the other human being and finally the manifestation of the sacred. This is where religious phenomenology is born.

There is a manifestation of the sacred at the roots of every existing being. And there is the self-manifestation of the original Sacred at the roots of every hierophany. Therefore every phenomenology of the sacred is referable to an even more fundamental phenomenology of absolute God.

A presence of the sacred dwells in every existing being. This could be said in particular of every existing being gifted with “power”. Every species has its spirit protector. Every human individual has its god, its spirit or genius, or guardian angel. A river, a mountain, a strong oak, a weapon, a canoe, a work tool is a power in itself, which the primitive man worships and turns to asking for protection and success.

In this way the most varied expressions of polydemonism take shape, which then become polytheism at the levels of the most powerful divinities.

Supreme God is recognised as the Creature of the universe, but is alienated by a cult that worships the closest powers. However talking through the prophets like those of the Bible and of the Mazdeism, the supreme Being offers itself as the only God who deserves such a name, before whom the other spirits can only call themselves angels and demons. The creatural experience corresponds to the manifestation of the only God, in other words, the sense of being from such a God created from nothing for all. What follows is the formation of the relative phenomenology.

By feeling a creature of this supreme Divinity, the religious man perceives, in his own heart of hearts, the impulse to fully commit himself to collaborate in the divine creative work. The religious phenomenology of the monotheism therefore becomes phenomenology of humanism.