

**IMAGE, PHENOMENON, AND IMAGINATION
IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY
OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The Society for Phenomenology of Religious Experience (SOPHERE)
Biennial Congress, Prague

NOVEMBER 2 - 4, 2018

VENUE:

Národní 3, Prague 1 - Old Town
(rooms 205 and 206)

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November 2, Friday, Plenary Talks

11:00 am -12:00 pm

SoPheRE Presidential Address: Transcendental Reaches, and the Riches of Experience **Olga LOUCHAKOVA-SCHWARTZ**, UC Davis, Graduate Theological Union – Berkeley, USA

In this plenary address for the Society of the Phenomenology of Religious Experience, I will revisit the transcendental problem, and examine how it plays itself out in the context of religious experiencing. My main thesis will be that when approached under the attitude of metaphysical neutrality of the phenomenological investigations, but on the grounds of its own carefully preserved givenness, experience of religious or spiritual kind reveals the aspects of consciousness which have not been addressed by any phenomenologist. Drawing on less known histories and on my own research, I will demonstrate how such overlooked aspects of awareness inspire original solutions to the transcendental problem. For example, in his 12th century Philosophy of Illumination, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī addresses visible light as the absolute self-evidentiary ground of phenomenality. Then, by placing visuality at the center of the transcendental unity (singularity), he obtains distinctive insights into the phenomenological structure of cognition in empirical and eidetic intuitions, thereby describing conditions of possibility for non-intentional yet adequate and true knowledge. Another example comes from the ca. 1200 B.C.E. Iranian spiritual luminary Zarathushtra Spitama. In one of his poems, Zarathushtra uses a specific reduction which initiates a genetic phenomenological account of the mind. This reduction removes visuality, and describes a phenomenalization of invisible ethical impulses which open into reverse axiological intentionality in the sphere of intersubjectivity. These two opposing treatments of visuality indicate two possibilities for “the first philosophy”. The first possibility is rooted in visuality and leads to the egological account of subjectivity; this possibility was well actualized both in European and Indian Philosophies. The second possibility leads to a decentered, non-egological account of ethical consciousness rooted in intersubjectivity. This possibility was indicated by Zarathushtra, but not realized in philosophy till the independent rediscovery of it in the work of Levinas. We can conclude that attitudes towards visuality play a crucial role in the philosophical conception of the self and in the unity of motivation underlying philosophical reflection. Proceeding from these examples to tasks of contemporary thought, I outline the spectrum of concerns for the Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience.

God and Man as Unrepresentable Images

Carla CANULLO, Università di Macerata, Italy

The Syrian bishop Theophilus of Antioch said: «Show me your man, and I will show you my God!». This sentence is a way of conveying that man is the image of God. The philosophical thought has attempted to grasp this image through the representation, which suggests both the representation as visual model and the act of thought. The image as representation of thought is the method through which both God and man have been thought. This is confirmed by Immanuel Kant who, in the ‘transcendental Dialectic’ of the Critique of Pure Reason showed that the metaphysics thought both man

(transcendental paralogism) and God (transcendental Ideal) as an 'idea'. Instead, Husserl's phenomenology opened a new method by conceiving every image, and therefore also the image of God and man, not as a representation of thought but as a 'phenomenon' that manifests itself. The phenomenological method, based on the imperative "zu den Sachen selbst!", would be adequate to grasp human essence that, like the divine one, is spiritual, indefinable and unrepresentable. In order to think this unrepresentability, the paper would investigate the work by Jean-Luc Marion, who thought the unrepresentable image of God and, therefore, of man, distinguishing the image as an idol and as an icon. Above all, we will try to show that phenomenology allows us to grasp the image of God and man as an icon that cannot be constructed by the thought.

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session A1

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Section: French Phenomenology

Modality and Metaphysics: Ritual Usage and the Predication of Religious Experience with Artistic Representation

William L CONNELLY, The Catholic University of Paris

This paper will explore the role of images and artistic representation in religious practice, suggesting that the cognition of metaphysical realities involves predicative ritual action. Engaging the French phenomenological tradition of Falque, Marion, and Merleau-Ponty, in addition to the philosophy of religion as expressed by Newman, Blondel, and Eliade, this paper will illustrate how the mode and predication of certain religious experiences can be articulated and understood in terms of ritual behavior, where images are used as a modality for making the non-apparent apparent, the notional real, the non-given given. The function of these ritual actions, and the cognitive impact of image use, will also be discussed in terms of contemporary theories of cognition especially by utilizing the notions of Affective Incorporation and the Enactive Approach to Emotions as developed by Giovanna Colombetti; furthermore, such constituting action will be analyzed in ontological and epistemological terms with reference to the metaphysical tetralogy of Maurice Blondel in *Pensée* (1934), *l'Être et les êtres* (1935), and *l'Action* (1936-1937). In conclusion, this paper will investigate the cognitive dimension of ritual action by questioning how affective encounters with images, and the material practices of certain rites, provide a means of predication for metaphysical cognition. I will be arguing how personal religious experiences most often include forms of public religious activity and traditional ritual usage, suggesting the need for such an interdisciplinary approach in understanding how religious practices function as modalities of religious experience.

Ortega y Gasset's Phenomenology of Human Life

Jan WARNDORFF, Utrecht, Netherlands, independent scholar

Long neglected, Michel Henry is increasingly recognized as a highly original and relevant thinker, specifically on account of his 'radical phenomenology of life'. My presentation will show some surprising similarities with the 'phenomenology of human life as radical reality', developed by the earlier and equally neglected Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955). Drawing also on Emmanuel Levinas, I shall furthermore show how the willingness to recognize human life as a reality 'sui generis' is first and foremost an ethical choice, and that all subsequent descriptive and analytical elaboration of human life remains essentially an ethical endeavor. This importantly entails learning to think and speak about human life in a way that constantly acknowledges that same thinking and speaking as an immediate part and expression of human life. In Ortega's phenomenology, the human is explicitly both the source and the end of that phenomenology. In consequence, language and thought can no longer be treated as mechanical tools in the service of a dispassionate pursuit of knowledge, but are an ethical and poetic activity aimed at bringing human life into the open, as the common ground and common concern of all humankind. I shall argue that such an ethical philosophy of human life also has political relevance in today's globalized yet increasingly fractured and frustrated world.

The Phenomenology of the Invisible in Jean-Yves Lacoste

Jan ČERNÝ, Institute of Philosophy, Prague, Czech Academy of Sciences

It was Martin Heidegger who developed the idea of "a phenomenology of the unapparent". The French philosopher and theologian Jean-Yves Lacoste, who may be rightly affiliated with the theological turn in French phenomenology, develops his own phenomenology of an encounter with an invisible God in a dialogue with M. Heidegger. Lacoste's work is paradoxical though: It finds M. Heidegger's account of human existence in *Being and Time* too narrow and limited, yet it confronts us first with the limits of what can be said about experiencing God. The negative vocabulary of a "night", "non-place", "non-time", "disoriented consciousness", and "non-experience" tries to describe the pre-schatological mode of being which belongs to a person before God, according to Lacoste. Probably himself unsatisfied with the limits of such an attitude, Lacoste, in his later work, attempts to define the more affirmative features of prayer and other (as he calls them) "liturgical" experiences. Lacoste's philosophical and theological anthropology thus develops from the kenotic treatment of human subjectivity to a more incarnated and communal treatment that opens up the possibilities of love and affection, revealing at least moments of presence and peace before an invisible God.

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session B1

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Section: Spatial Images and Spatial Aspects of Imagination

Aspects of Phenomenological Space in a Semiotactic Study of Wayside Shrines

Małgorzata HAŁADEWICZ-GRZELAK, Opole University of Technology, Poland

Religious space can be addressed from a variety of perspectives. In my presentation I propose to relate to the Lotmanian term of 'semiosphere', and in particular, to its part referring to a religious experience of an individual, which I propose to call sacrosphere. Its boundaries are delineated by the culture-specific oppositions *sacrum/profanum*. The investigative perspective consists in applying phonological methodology to study non-verbal religious discourse, in particular, to investigate the co-occurrence of religious markers, the perspective I propose to call 'semiotactics'. It transposes methodology applied in phonological studies, known as phonotactics (cf. e.g. Dziubalska-Kotaczyk– Zielińska 2011), investigating the restrictions on and the possibilities of phoneme combinations in languages. The work is part of a larger semiotic study on the dynamic nature of *sacrum* and *profane* dimension in culture. The analysis draws on three databases collected by the author in various European countries in the years 2009-2018. I will focus on the phenomenon of a wayside shrine and a wayside cross as a spontaneous expression of individual piousness and also as a mean to strengthen group identity. I will treat wayside shires as a type of religious marker and focus on some dimensions of contrast within particular types of culture in Europe. The results will be modelled as semiotactic primes. The results showed for example more affinities in terms of sacrosphere phenomenology between Slovakia and Poland/ Hungary than between Slovakia and the Czech Republic

Religiosity and Superstition

Silvana ERRICO and Mariarosaria CASOLINO, Fondo Ambiente Italiano, Environmental and Cultural Heritage, Italy

Aediculae with rich decors and plentiful flowers in the streets and lanes of Naples mark a deep devotion to the "anime pezzentelle" ('abandoned souls') of Purgatory, destined to Paradise but not upright, they combine earthly imperfection with celestial perfection. These apparatuses serve to pray or think of an inescapable future, in which each vanity is shattered - in a mixture of the sacred and the profane - while the road is hallowed by wayfarers. In some churches this veneration is extended to skeletal remains placed in glass shrines or fixed in the walls of horrifying crypts, where the warning of death ignites the lights of ancient rites. We go towards that Hades to which each one will return: from the catacombal columbari we pass to these burials 'coram populo', to which we turn to implore graces. From Santa Maria della Sanità to the Fontanelle Cemetery it's all a hymn to simulacra emptied and paired in bony shapes. The dilated spaces and staircases of Santa Maria are a link between the living world and the other world through the phantasmagoric crypt, in which frescoes of the V-VI century A.D. reaffirm pain and resurrection. In Italy other places (Capuchin Crypt in Rome, Ferentillo, Urbania, Roccapelago, etc.) express human transience and salvation through faith. The 'Santa Muerte' also has its followers in Mexico City, where in some neighborhoods large altars

pop up with skeletons adored and adorned like saints. Devotion or Latin superstition? Is it macabre horror or exalted resignation?

The Dynamic Geometry of Religious Experience: A Phenomenological Theory of Walking the Labyrinth

Jonathan DONER, independent Scholar, Virginia, USA

In her book, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice*, Lauren Artress explores the process and potential of using a labyrinth as a means for personal and spiritual growth. Though the experiences of people walking a labyrinth are as varied as are the individuals themselves, the growth of the so-called "labyrinth movement" attests to the fact that a significant number of persons have found these experiences rewarding and enlightening. Artress considers such experiences to be the result of what she calls "process meditation" and discusses several conditions which might influence their nature and profundity. These include quieting the mind, the recitation of prayers or mantras, and allowing the body to move freely and intuitively. Despite the potential significance of these, as well as other factors she mentions, none of these processes are unique to labyrinth walking per se. All are important practices which can be pursued under a variety of physical activities, from sitting still to active motion. The purpose of the present paper is to offer a new psychological perspective which clarifies how the labyrinth itself, its geometry and the movement this geometry directs, is a critical element in the generation of the person's experience. Essentially, from this perspective, the labyrinth and the individual are co-creators of the person's internal experience. This phenomenological approach not only enriches our understanding of the labyrinth experience, but also our view of the nature and consequences of spiritual praxis in general.

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session A2

15:30 pm - 17:00 pm

Section: Imaginative Inter-Esse: Kant – Kierkegaard - Hegel

Taking Interest in the Imagination: A Mark of a Good Soul and the Foundation for Religious Experience

Alexandra GRUNDLER, Philosophy Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz

In this paper, I investigate Kant's claim that immediate interest in natural beauty is a mark of moral character. This claim is fascinating in part because Kant notoriously states that all judgments of beauty are disinterested. Through a close reading of the text, I show that the interest that truly marks a good soul for Kant is not an interest in the object of beauty at all, rather it is interest in the activity of the imagination in reflection on that object. This, as well as Kant's discussion of the genius, reveals that human beings take a part in natural beauty as well, and natural beauty takes a part in us. The distinction between natural beauty and artistic beauty is not that of human involvement, as it may

seem at first glance—it is the distinction between experience and product, respectively. The imagination's ability to render nature as symbols of our morality and engage in our own artistic creation grounds our experience of locating nature's purposes in ourselves and in our own experience. I show how taking an interest in the workings of the imagination is not only the mark of a good soul, but how it opens us up to a religious experience of intimacy with the creator of nature through reflection on the creation of natural beauty both in us and outside of us.

Hegel's Account of the Representations of the Gods in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion

Jon STEWART, Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences

The ancient Egyptians are known for their art works that were most all related in some way to their religion. Likewise, the Greeks also had numerous beautiful and highly skilled depictions of their gods. By contrast, other religions such as Zoroastrianism have produced very little by way of visual representation of their deity, while Judaism and Islam straightforwardly forbid such representations. In this paper, I wish to explore the question of why some religions produce a plethora of art works, whereas others do not. What is it about the religious experience in the different belief systems that either inspires art or discourages it? In this paper I wish to draw on Hegel's analyses of the world religions in the "Determinate Religion" section of his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. Hegel argues that there is a direct connection between a given religious belief system and its production of art. He believes that the visual or representational element is particularly important at a specific period in the development of religion when the deities are conceived as anthropomorphic. In this paper I will critically examine his arguments about this.

Patheticness and Temporal Phenomenalisation of Transcendence according to Kierkegaard

Maria GOŁĘBIEWSKA, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

The Hegelian philosophy, above all the phenomenology of Spirit, grasping reality as a realm of phenomena, i.e. manifestations of the Spirit, stood as a significant object of polemics within the philosophical works of Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard contrasted the theory of history as a science based on the construction of the past with the Hegelian theory of die Geschichte and history. Referring to the Platonic division between the transcendent and the immanent world as but a manifestation of the former, he grasped the phenomenal character of the temporal world. According to Kierkegaard, in Transcendence, God is, and the transcendent Ideas exist as patterns of beings given to us in temporality, the fontal phenomenal character of which (as manifestations) intertwines with the real temporal ontological character. Kierkegaard argued against the Hegelian theory of dialectic, as well as, the pathos theory, presenting dialecticity and patheticness as two ways in which the existing subject refers to: 1) the immanent world of temporality, 2) the spiritual realm of Transcendence. The process of phenomenalisation, accomplished along with the existence of all temporal beings, is accompanied by a singular, subjective response of each individual to the immanent world. The response assumes the form of a dialectical balanced reaction, or a pathetic, hyperbolic, overexpressive, in the aesthetic and ethical phase of individual existence. However, in terms of the religious phase, it is a

response to the world of Transcendence, and also it assumes two forms: dialectical and pathetic, this time related to two types of individual religiousness. The paper is dedicated to discussing the relations of the process of the phenomenalisation of Transcendence to its individual, religious responses, particularly, the relations to the pathetic type of religious response, as indicated by Kierkegaard.

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session B2

15:30 pm - 17:00 pm

Section: Visual Art

"Exemplary 'God-men': A comparative overview of the Spiritual Beliefs of Malevich and Kandinsky"

Sally STOCKSDALE, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Department of History

In this overview I identify each artist and situate them within the Symbolist, "Silver Age" Era context of Russian History (1890-1920). A prominent facet in this era's culture was the occult, and its related characteristics of correspondences, symbols, mysticism, metaphysics, alchemic transformations, gnosticism, and God-building.* I outline their attitudes towards art and the artist, and what their artistic goals were, as exemplified in several pieces of their artwork. While Malevich believed art to be a revolutionary thing, in and of itself, and it "does not need us and it never did," Kandinsky was just as radical and religiously spiritual in that he called for art to "counter the whole nightmare of the materialistic attitude, which has turned life of the universe into an evil, purposeless game." Whereas Malevich was, in part, concerned with depicting sacred geometry, Kandinsky, among other things, was interested in revealing essences, bio-chemical airborne particles, auras, and vibrations. Both were interested in color, shape, and form. Both were interested in depicting "non-objective, non-representational" art, and revealing that which cannot be seen and which has been concealed. Both were interested in liberating both art and society from the restrictive theories and constructs of the past. Both were opposed to bourgeois, aesthetic art because it was "mimetic," and "never original." Both saw art and the artist as highly spiritual, doing God's work, indeed, in the gnostic tradition, actively participating in, authoring, and driving civilization's salvation. For each, art was sacred, in and of itself, and its purpose was religious in nature: to uplift, and deliver humanity to a new reality, the real reality. To the extent that both saw art as the tip of the arrow, the head of the spiritual vanguard, guiding, leading, dragging civilization to higher levels on its Hegelian journey to apothotic perfection, they were God-men.*

*For Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900), God-manhood is when man, in an upwardly mobile ascension, unifies with the Godhead. In addition, Soloviev referred to Jesus as a God-man: if God became man, then man can become God. But for Nietzsche, his Superman was also God-man. Nietzsche had such an influence on Russia's Silver Age artists: Annie Besant stated that "Nietzsche belongs distinctly to us!"

Religious experience in Fra Angelico's frescoes of San Marco: the origin of «visual» in Georges Didi-Huberman's philosophy of images

Lucía MONTES SÁNCHEZ, Departamento de Filosofía, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

1990 was the annus mirabilis of Georges Didi-Huberman: he published two of his main texts (*Devant l'image* and *Fra Angelico: dissemblance et figuration*). With a precise regard to experience to Fra Angelico's frescoes, he discovered an unpardonable omission in the traditional studies on this painter: on the base of the *Madonna of the shadows*, there were four painted panels that looked like marble. Four images where a huge number of mixed colours with white spots disrupted the «figurative field», in the hegemonic sense established by the formalistic approach to art history: they actually seemed to be nearer to abstraction than to figuration. What was the function of these marbles to the painting in its unity? How do they collaborate in the task of representing the biblical story? What functions could have had this painting (and others –as we will see in detail–, such as annunciations and crucifixions) for the monks of the dominical convent of San Marco? It is through an archaeological review of medieval exegetical texts of this period and through a noteworthy influence of psychoanalyse how Didi-Huberman opens the semantic field of the word «figure», suggesting the semiotic category of «visual» (instead of the traditional «visible» and «invisible») to rethink figurability and resemblance in Fra Angelico's work. Therefore, in his conception, «visuality» has nothing to do with the aspect, shape or visible form of the figures represented in paintings. Specifically, it is related to the notion of «virtuality», which suspends the traditional opposition between presence and absence. The aim of this proposal will be to demonstrate the hypothesis whereby we have to return to these writings on Fra Angelico and to medieval semiotic biblical exegesis to understand the procedures behind the notion of «visual» and even of «image» in Didi-Huberman's thought. Indeed, we are forced to return to these writings to take into consideration how the religious experience of getting in contact with the divinity, lived by the Dominical monk –not only while painting the different biblical scenarios and stories, but also when he crossed the corridor where the scene was painted on the way to his cell, and even in his daily prairies–, is on the base of Didi-Huberman's particular way to face the image, from a phenomenological point of view of its efficacy and power. Just by this way we will arrive to expose the particularities of visuality and figuration in his approach to images.

Virtuality - Experience of Mystery in Painting

Katarzyna Lidia WEICHERT, University of Warsaw, Poland

Painting presents not only biblical scenes, it also discloses the invisible. The invisible applies to the incarnation, the silent voice of the Annunciation or even the experience of mystery. Painting can bring on the experience of transcendence. The aim of my paper is first, to describe the conditions of opening up to what is present, but invisible, and second, to conceptualize the role of the viewer's imagination in this experience. I will focus on the phenomenological and symptomatic painting analyses of J-N. Nancy, G. Didi-Huberman and L. Marin. Nancy describes Pontormo's painting **Visitation** as touching the invisible presence that concerns both: a silent greeting and a new life - pneuma. This presence is hidden in the glances of women, in the tumult of cloth rippling on their bellies. The viewer is invited to participate in the mystery of conception through the frontal gaze of the figures turned toward the viewer. He is inscribed in the presentation of their vision (Marion). This experience requires an imaginative opening up to the visibility of the image, one which allows us a phenomenological and symptomatic analysis. Didi-Huberman in this way describes the fresco of Fra Angelico's **Annunciation** - the conditions of its manifestation, the whiteness of walls and above all its virtuality, that is, the power of invisible content that builds branching constellations of sense. This happens because of the imagination that stimulates the flow of images and memories, integrates

impressions and associations and activates symbolic (cultural) knowledge. It goes beyond image consciousness or perceptual imagination in classical phenomenology. It allows us to open ourselves to the richness of meaning, mystery and transcendence.

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session A3

17:15 pm - 18:45 pm

Section: Phenomenological Ontology

Cognitive Phenomenology and the Rubber Hand Illusion: Thinking About the Transcendent
Christopher STRATMAN, University of Nebraska—Lincoln

This paper argues that a theory of human thought must give a plausible account of how intentional thoughts can be directed at non-existent objects. In *The Objects of Thought* (2013), Tim Crane endorses this constraint on intentional thought, but fails to recognize just how pervasive such thoughts are in our phenomenology. To help illustrate this point, consider holes and absences. These objects appear everywhere in human experience, but are not obviously fictional objects. It seems clear, however, that we can think about them and they seem to present themselves in our phenomenology as causally efficacious. Crane focuses too narrowly on fictional objects and in so doing wrongly argues for a relational account of how we think about non-existent objects. After showing why Crane's relational account fails, I appeal to common cases of illusions in cognitive science, in particular the Rubber Hand Illusion, in order to show that a non-relational account is a far better explanation of how intentional thoughts are directed at non-existent objects. I argue that intentional thoughts about non-existent objects are instantiations of adverbial properties of the entire human nervous system. The paper concludes by considering important implications this view has for debates concerning intentional thought and religious experience. It demonstrates that cognitive phenomenology exists independently from perceptual phenomenology. As such, it also shows that an equitable and naturalistic account of the phenomenology of religious experience regarding non-existent objects is entirely reasonable.

Inquiring into the Pure Immanence. Notion, Appearances, Experience.
Cezary WOŹNIAK, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Institute of Culture

It is widely known that the basic idea of phenomenology was expressed by Husserl in his famous apothegm „back to the things themselves”. This sentence can also be understood as a determination of the destiny of the whole phenomenology, i.e. its still more radical exploration of experience in order to reach that level of experience which may be named the primordial sphere. Yet in Heidegger's courses of 1919 there appeared the idea of philosophy as primordial science. One can however put here some questions: how to describe it and how to practice the phenomenology according to it? Is there any limitation in the exploration of experience? What could be the ultimate telos of phenomenology? And, last but not least, how is phenomenology at all possible? These questions will be addressed in the paper by the analysis and the exploring the concept of pure immanence, probably the most radical concept of immanence at all (vide Laruelle understanding of pure immanence). I would like to argue that pure immanence is ultimate

notion of primordial sphere and also the ultimate telos of phenomenology, phenomenology in the most broad sense. Therefore, I would like to catalog and comment upon the most important concepts of pure immanence, trying to show its basic characteristic. In order to deepen and confront it, I also make a reference to ancient Tibetan buddhist text Dorje Sempa Namkha Che. Finally, I try to elucidate possible experience of the pure immanence and its value for human being.

Being, Phenomenality, and Phenomenology: John Scottus Eriugena?

Kyle H. KAVANAUGH, The Catholic University of Paris

Can medieval philosophy and theology contribute to contemporary questions in general and to phenomenology in particular? This is the inquiry Emmanuel Falque poses in the preface to his *Dieu, la chair et l'autre* (2008) explicitly opening up an area of questioning already implicitly prepared by Jean-Luc Marion (e.g. *L'idole et la distance*, 1977) among others, to which Falque will answer in the affirmative. In some cases, Falque pushes this further, arguing that there are forerunners in medieval thought who can contribute to the very method and nature of phenomenology itself. In the case of 9th century early medieval philosopher John Scottus Eriugena, all being is conceived of as theophany—that is, as phenomenon of God, taken in the literal, etymological sense of the term (θεοῦ-φάνια). Being itself is thought of as a manifestation of God in different modes—theophany as all of created being, theophany as man created in the image of God, theophany as Christ, and theophany as special divine apparition (e.g. the burning bush or the baptism of Jesus). But theophany is not one way among others of the phenomenon to manifest to us; it is the very essence of phenomenon. Phenomenon is grounded in the manifestation of the “immoveable, immutable one” (God), beyond all being and nothingness, which is first principle, source, and unity of all. All phenomena are thus “God-phenomena” (theo-phania). Phenomenality is theo-phenomenality. All is thus radically united in God, save for freedom and evil. All of being reflects the non-apparent, “super-essential” (trinitarian) God. Yet, does not this reorientation of the ground of phenomenality itself both for the phenomenologist and for the common believer serve as a contribution to a richer phenomenology of religious experience? On the other hand, does not such thought fall prey to anachronisms and misreadings? I argue that this method, and thus Falque’s drawing from medieval thought for phenomenology, are valid—though not without caveats. We must distinguish when we are doing history of ideas and when we are doing phenomenology; when we are indeed being historical and when we are indeed being contemporary. I will critique Falque’s work where it falls short in this vein, while nonetheless affirming the originality and potential of this approach. Though Falque also argues that Augustine can contribute to a phenomenology of relation and substance (Ch. 1), Meister Eckhart to reduction and detachment (Ch. 3), Irenaeus to a phenomenology of the flesh (Ch. 4), and so forth (Tertullian, Bonaventure, Origen, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus, Ch. 5 – 9), this paper focuses on the “God Phenomenon” of John Scottus Eriugena (ch. 2). This paper thus takes as its starting-point Falque’s retrieval of Eriugena’s notion of theo-phenomenality (θεοῦ-φάνια) but expands on it in view of Eriugena’s degrees of theophany (H. A. Mooney), status as among the greatest metaphysicians in the history of philosophy (H. Bett), and as a thinker of nothingness and the non-apparent par excellence (O. Boulnois)

November 2, Friday, Parallel Session B3

17:15 pm - 18:45 pm

Section: Pragmatics of Imagination

Wonder as Limiting Phenomenon and Challenging Limits of Anthropological Concept of Religious Experience in Ernst Tugendhat.

Martin MURÁNSKÝ, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy, Bratislava

Ernst Tugendhat is not a typical philosopher of „phenomenological imagination“ and „religious experience“. Nevertheless, in his last systematic work “Egocentricity and Mysticism“, especially in the last chapter „Wonder“, Tugendhat wants (again) to cross the narrow boundaries of analytical philosophy and in polemic against Wittgenstein restore the central role of philosophy - its effort to understand the "Allness" (Allheit). “Wonder“ has therefore become a border phenomenon par excellence, because unlike Wittgenstein's stance, expresses not only the records of the "self-evident", but also borders of "incomprehensible and inexplicable", i.e. the records of the "borders of reasonable". With regard to religious experience the most decisive correlative to wonder (as the implicit evidence of the whole) is the explicit experience of contingency and that of thanksgiving. They both confront human being with the meaning of life as whole. Therefore, Tugendhat suggests another relationship to volition and time - abdicating the will instead of insisting. This “retreat from oneself” as a condition of viewing the universal (“higher”) order can be done as personalised conception of religion or non-personalised conception of mysticism. The critical aim of my contribution is to show the limits of Tugendhat's own reflections about the anthropologically based acceptance of mysticism and concurrently his rejection of religion as the product of wishful thinking. These tensions follow, so my thesis, from his ahistorical concept of “the first philosophy” as opposition between authoritarian and rational mode of understanding in whole.

The Influence of William James “Varieties of Religious Experience” on Wittgenstein's Pictorial Thinking or Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy as a Phenomenology

Alexander BERG, Charles University Prague, Department of German and French Philosophy

In the presentation, I would like to argue for the thesis that especially Wittgenstein's early reading (in 1912) of William James *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902) has deeply influenced the philosophical approach of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1918). In this context of Wittgenstein's early philosophy, the relation between the image-theory of meaning and the so-called logical space becomes significant.

But Wittgenstein's reading of James also had an influence on the change to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, especially in the posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). In particular, Herman Lübbe and Hans Georg Gadamer point to the connection between Wittgenstein's later philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology. In this context, the special form of these *Philosophical Investigations* will be discussed, that Wittgenstein gains from certain (pictorial) phenomena that are strongly associated with photography (especially composite photography) and qualities that result from experiencing photos in the form of a photo album. Here it is of particular interest how this specific form of the *Philosophical Investigations* becomes essential for the revelation of its content. So at the end of his life Wittgenstein can say about his philosophy: “I am not a

religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view." (RW 79)

November 3, Saturday, Plenary Talks

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Experiencing God as a Consociate, Justification, and Reality

Michael BARBER, Saint Louis University, USA

In Alfred Schutz's account of the structure of the social world, he distinguishes relationships between Consociates, who share space, time and bodily presence, from those between Contemporaries who inhabit the same time but not space. Consociates experience others in ongoing continuity, in which the responses one receives leads one to revise typifications of self and other. Bodily distant Contemporaries, however, only receive, intermittent, occasional responses (e.g., email, letter) on whose bases they revise their inferential types of each other. The religious experience of God, not bodily present, but experienced in ongoing immediacy and leading one to revise or confirm self-typifications, represents, then, an anomaly.

This anomalous transformation of the very structure of the social world suggests either that religious experience is merely a phantasy or that religious experience pertains to a distinctive realm. This paper highlights how religious experience of God differs from phantasy. Both Husserl (in his various accounts of phantasy culminating in quasi-acts and quasi-objects) and Schutz (for whom phantasy is a finite province of meaning) emphasize how phantasy is experienced as a great liberation from everyday life constraints. Little is said about finding oneself resisted or affirmed through a continual interaction with a person phantasied as one's object. The freedom and unconstraint experienced in phantasied interpersonal relationships contrasts with the religious relationship with God, which, according to Steinbock and Scheler (in analyzing the religious act) involves the experience of God's action on oneself. Hence the religious relationship is anomalous vis-à-vis the everyday structure of the social world.

The Counter-Spectacularity of Religious Experience: Or, a Case for Inconspicuousness

Jason W. ALVIS, Institute for Philosophy, University of Vienna

It often is understood that Modern Philosophy--the means of developing logical distinctions and arguments in a clear way--often runs counter to Religious experiences -- the enchanting, shocking, and "eventful" nature of revelation beyond epistemological conditions. Yet in many ways, these two tendencies are quite similar, as both focus upon, and seek to unfurl "the apparent" and what shines with brilliance; the eventful and the spectacular. As Guy Debord once critiqued, western societies are obsessed with spectacles, and this goes hand in hand with certain theological and philosophical

presuppositions. It is not without some bit of irony, then, that it is possible to define the word "inconspicuous", or that which is non-apparent (Unscheinbar), according to its etymological basis as "counterspectacular" (spek). This presentation locates and describes particular aspects of the emphases upon a "spectacular phenomenality", then develops as a response a "phenomenology of the inconspicuous." After (1) locating a particularly paradigmatic debate that reflects these tensions within the pejoratively named "Theological turn in French Phenomenology" and the work of Dominique Janicaud), I then (2) introduce Heidegger's notion of a "phenomenology of the inconspicuous" in order to demonstrate three reasons why "inconspicuousness" may be used to overcome this particular, aforementioned problem of both (a) the philosophical focus upon clarity/appearance and (b) the emphasis upon "religious experience" as a spectacle.

November 3, Saturday, Parallel Session A4

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Section: Ethics and Politics

Secularism and Violence as the New Masks of God

Domenico BILOTTI, Magna Graecia University, Catanzaro, Italy

The current representation of religions in the so called "public sphere" probably stands in a troublesome turning point. Particularly in Western societies, but even considering Eastern laws and cultures (that is one of the main theses of this essay), our perception of religious beliefs and practices acts in a widely secular cultural space: we use secular notions to describe and to regulate religious praxes and behalves and we use confessional notions to describe and to regulate civil praxes and behalves. The global changes in everyday life and customs are not linked to a specific spiritual framework. On the other hand, an increasing part of the religious public opinions and many monotheistic faiths are experiencing a renewal in interpreting, using, choosing and even dictating religious values and precepts. It is happening in orthodox Hebraism, in Islamic fundamentalism and in the new wave of Christian Congregationalist Churches. In spite of well known theories about the precarious materialism of our legal culture and equally recognized doctrines about the rediscovery of the holy part of existence, an aggressive religious propaganda conducted by a minority and a secular uncertain majority are the opposite points of the same segment: the contemporary human phenomenology of faith.

Phenomenology of Sacrifice in Patočka, Marion and Nancy

Petr KOUBA, Institute of Philosophy, Prague Czech Academy of Sciences

In my paper I intend to examine the phenomenon of sacrifice from the phenomenological point of view as outlined by Jan Patočka, Jean-Luc Marion, and Jean-Luc Nancy. With their help I would like to differentiate several kinds of sacrifice (strategic, moral, political, and religious), but above all I am interested in the limits of sacrifice. Provided that the fields of morality, politics and religion are opened by sacrifice, is there

any morality, politics and religion without sacrifice? And if so, what is the meaning of morality, politics and religion that are not based on some kind of sacrifice? These questions seem essential in our time, when the meaning of sacrifice is compromised by acts of terrorism. It is relatively easy to denounce terrorism and its propaganda, which uses the concept of martyrdom, as an inauthentic approach to the experience of sacrifice (Marion). But how could we break its spell if we believe that sacrifice brings our existence to completeness (Patočka)? How can we avoid the inauthentic forms of sacrifice, if we believe that without sacrifice we must fall into nihilism and indifference? If we want to put certain limits to sacrifice, we must ask ourselves, together with Nancy, what is for us the unsacrificable.

Images of Hope in Palliative Care

Marta SZABAT, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Faculty of Health Science, Kraków, Poland

First, I define the meaning of hope in the context of palliative care [PC]. My understanding of the latter follows Charles Peirce's concept of the sign, which states that an image is understood both as a sign and in relation to other signs in a specific context. An image does not represent reality, but rather elucidates a meaning to its interpreter. In this perspective, hope is understood as a manifestation of personal needs and desires in the holistic context of PC philosophy. This philosophy holds that each person's psychological, spiritual, physical and social aspects must be taken into account in treatment. However, the image of hope in PC is strongly related to suffering and disease. That is why hope cannot be related to the false (in this context) optimism associated with the hope of recovery. Secondly, based on articles selected from the Web of Science database, I present the principle images of hope for the dying. The starting point of my research is the paper "Hope in Palliative Care: An Integrative Review", in which the authors describe two basic contexts of hope in PC: living with hope and hoping for something. The first image conveys an existential concept – maintaining hope helps the dying to keep their dignity and peace of mind until the very end. The second is related to more specific things: the best possible quality of life with minimal pain and suffering, a good death and immortality.

November 3, Saturday, Parallel Session B4

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Section: Digital Imagination

Can an Iconogram Convey the Divine? The Eastern Orthodox Icon in the Internet Age

Amy SLAGLE, University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Philosophy and Religion

In an age of digital reproduction, to what extent and in what capacity can an electronic image convey divine presence? How do avowedly incarnational practices fare in a digitized milieu that may more aptly reflect excarnation (i.e., the diminishment of embodied modes of religious expression), which Charles Taylor (2007) considers a hallmark of twenty-first-century Christianity? These questions propel my present exploration into the ways that digital media influence the contemporary status and reception of the Eastern Orthodox icon, so often touted as the very epitome of Orthodox tradition.

Grounded in an incarnational theology emphasizing the material world's participation in the energies of God, icons of Christ and his saints are understood to make physically present their depicted prototypes in the lives of the faithful. While the Orthodox Church has traditionally considered the handpainted icon its aesthetic and liturgical ideal, Internet users, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, are just as likely to seek out digitally-(re-)produced icons for personal devotional use.

Among the many digital choices available in recent years is the iconogram, an electronic greeting card that Internet users can click and transmit to family and friends from a database featuring hundreds of icons of Orthodox saints and holy scenes. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in the United States has developed the iconogram specifically as a form of missionary outreach and boasts that over half a million iconograms have been sent to recipients worldwide. Drawing upon the "carnal hermeneutics" of philosophers such as Richard Kearney and John Panteleimon Manoussakis among others, I take the everyday phenomenon of the iconogram as a point of deeper reflection into these wider issues of what may be incarnationally/excarnationally lost or gained with the digital icon and the possibility of the digital as a medium for the divine.

Deconstruction as a Neophenomenology: The Apophatic Techno-Image and Ecstasies
Joanna SARBIEWSKA, University of Gdansk, Poland

The paper points out that one of the current challenges in the „third culture” should be re-reading (relegere) the discourse of religion and the discourse of knowledge in a neophenomenological approach. The author proposes a neophenomenological interpretation of the late Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, by bringing it into the light of postsecular negative philosophy and indicating the application of its mystical/ecstatic implications on a media techno vision basis. In this conceptualization, deconstruction/negation, as an epoche strategy, denudes (kenosis) cognition of the idolatry, characteristic of the traditional metaphysics of presence and the dogmatic religion, and thus, causes the experience of radical emptiness (*chora*) as a condition of an opening to the Im-possible. The author, by presenting the concept of apophatic image, demonstrates that technology visual media provide a suitable space (Ungrund / groundlessness) for Im-possible to manifest itself. Techno-image that set in motion an intuitive mode of ecstatic work, signifies the movement of transgression the subject-object duality and "immersion" in the unconditioned (pure) Being, which is the Other. The mysticism and technique belong to each other, because they are „the Other” of metaphysics [Heidegger, Derrida]. On the quantum physics basis, today we can assume that the techno-ontology status is a natural extension of the trans-media space: the apophatic ontology of Reality itself, which is opposite to a "hard presence". It can be characterized by a wave structure: couldn't be defined as being or non-being, it is rather a kind of perpetual motion of "photons of light". In the mystical re-reading the discourse of religion, the same gesture of negation of the idolatry seems to appear in the „work of elements” - it's especially intensive in the scrutinizing, transforming „work of Fire”. The video-installations of Bill Viola (*Martyrs* and *Fire Woman*) can be the examples of proposed here neophenomenological strategy of vision transformation. The techno-cultural discourse of the „naked eye”, interpreted in this way, seems to indicate the „third way” between two pointless (bipolar) options: fossilized, closed to the dynamics of the „element” conservative thought and indifferent, neutralizing, neoliberal thought.

Interfaces as Spheres of Religious Experience

Martin NITSCHÉ

Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

In this presentation, I would like at the beginning to introduce shortly the phenomenological field as a transitive-topological sphere (based on Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Schutz, and Gurwitsch). I would focus mainly on how phenomenological reduction enables to describe the reversibility of touch.

A definition of the transitive-phenomenological model of touch is the initial stage for achieving the main goal of the proposed presentation. The main aim is to explain how the transitively understood tactile experience relates to current situatedness of humans in a digital environment. My initial claim is that the transitivity of touch (chiasm) articulates the sphere of our lived world as an interface. I understand interface not only as a double-sided surface, but transitively, in accord with Hookway as "a liminal or threshold condition that both delimits for a kind of inhabitation and opens up otherwise unavailable phenomena" (Hookway, 2014, p. 5), or with Galloway as "autonomous zones of activity" (Galloway 2012, p. vii). These "phenomena" and "zones" include not only a direct relation to technical interfaces (tangible media) such as screens, touch-displays, etc. but also our access to and experience of digital world of social media. Tactile experience seems to be what establishes the sphere of interface therefore I want to examine if so, how, and in what extent. Consequently, I will be also interested in how touch can help to make sense of digital worlds, and to orientate in them.

The presentation wants to make an initial step to research interface-based religious experiences (including a question if we even can speak about this type of religious experience).

November 3, Saturday, Parallel Session A5

15:30 pm - 17:00 pm

Section: Phenomenological Psychology

A Space Oddity: Overview of Neurophenomenological Methods for Examining Religious and Spiritual Experiences in Simulation Environments

Patricia BOCKELMAN, Institute for Simulation and Training, University of Central Florida

Captured from the vantage of space, the famous "Blue Marble" images of Earth often elicit responses of awe and wonder, transcending cultures and bridging humanity. Likewise, when astronauts return to Earth, they often share narratives of transformative experiences having viewed our home planet. In these shared experiences, spiritual and religious themes emerge. While the pattern of these themes is observable, researchers struggle to objectively capture and quantify these experiences in meaningful and satisfying scientific ways. The proposed paper and presentation will detail a

neurophenomenological study examining the spiritual and aesthetic experiences elicited when viewing Earth from space within a simulated environment. The study is positioned as a methodological example of how transdisciplinary approaches (the example, herein being neurophenomenology), provide unique opportunities to examine questions of human experience. Participants in the study were placed into two conditions, controlled by context of starting point, within an immersive simulation environment. Within the simulation, participants experienced visually moving away from Earth, from a proximal to distal vantage.

To examine the experiential data, the interdisciplinary research team used a triadic neurophenomenological approach, combining an art-informed stimulus (relying on historical and artistic analyses then verified with astronaut consultation which were incorporated into the immersive simulation), physiological metrics (functional near infrared, electroencephalography), psychological metrics (four psychological surveys measuring religious experience, absorption, ambiguity tolerance, as well as a customized metric for examining awe, wonder, curiosity, and humility specifically), and a phenomenological interview. The results of the study suggest that experiencers of awe, wonder, curiosity, and humility while viewing the simulations demonstrated distinct physiological traits in brain activity and were more likely to self-identify in ways that are different from non-experiencers. Further, data cluster patterns suggest trends in viewing experiences and the self-identification of "religious" or "spiritual" people.

The presentation will describe the methodology for clustering data in this transdisciplinary approach. While the results will be discussed, as well as possible interpretations of the findings, the focus of the presentation will be exploring the methodological implications of the study. Immersive simulation technologies present opportunities for mobile and non-invasive stimulus presentation techniques which may move more thought experiments and other difficult-to-examine topics into the realm of plausible experiments.

Approaching Spiritual Experiences Through Different First-Person Modes

Anna-Lena LUMMA and Terje SPARBY

Department for Psychology and Psychotherapy, University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany

Spiritual practices are often accompanied by alterations in the way one perceives and relates to the world. However, experiential changes induced through such practices are often very subtle and thus hard to verbalize. Furthermore, contemplative research demonstrates that the usage of standard third-person methods such as closed-format questionnaires are often insufficient for measuring the subtle changes in subjective experience that spiritual practices lead to. To overcome such challenges and stimulate new ideas for how to measure subtle facets of subjective experiences induced through spiritual practices, we propose a theoretical framework that outlines different types of first-person methods and how they can measure these subtle facets. A particular emphasis will be put on introspection as a first-person method that specifically enables an illumination of qualitative components of psychological states and avoids the split between the researcher and research participant. Overall, we suggest that integration and advancement of first-person methods in contemplative science can contribute to the empirical investigation of spiritual practices and related experiences. Moreover, we suggest that knowledge from different spiritual traditions can enrich the development of methods that can capture subtle aspects of psychological experiences more generally.

The Phenomenology of Job's Self-image as a Knower of Things: Implications for Psychology

Thomas BOWN, Brigham Young University, Department of Psychology, Provo, Utah

A phenomenology of how Job views himself as a seeker of truth or knowledge will show that at the beginning of his story he is in the pursuit of real causes. He wants to know why he is suffering and sees himself as the kind of being that can apprehend the cause(s) of his suffering. However, through his suffering and his experience with the Lord, Job's self-image changes, and he becomes what we might call a fool before God. He now sees himself as incapable of knowing causes directly, but rather as one who trusts that in his experience of God, as the cause, he finds the meaning that he seeks. In that Job provides an example of what is possible, this change in being as a seeker of knowledge has implications for psychology. As a research discipline, psychology is usually about the pursuit of causal realism. In practice, though, it often attempts to be eclectic, even though this eclecticism leads to contradictions. However, Job's movement away from causal realism suggests a way for psychologists to also move away from causal realism. Just as the meaning of Job's experiences changed, likewise a similar movement in psychology would necessitate a similar change in the meaning of its findings. The strength of this new position is that a logical eclecticism is now possible.

November 3, Saturday, Parallel Session B5

15:30 pm - 17:00 pm

Section: Daemonic and Animal Dimensions of Imagination

The Diabolical Order of Striped Garments

Cornelia EDWARDS, Charles University, Prague

This paper deals with the phenomenon of the perception of subject matter and a visual system, which surfaced during the middle ages, in parallel with Christian thought. Stripes prompted scandals, and clothing provided the most visible medium for it. From the Jew, to the madman of the Book of Psalms, to the character of Judas, you were seen as an outcast if you were wearing the suspect system of lines. In opposite of the scripture of Leviticus 19:19 "Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material", the stripe paradox unfolds even more in the attire of the black King Balthazar, in the depiction of the Adoration of the Magi by Joos von Cleve. Why was this distinction chosen to designate a negative status? Was it more of a visual than a scriptural problem? Priority is given to the Gestalt-psychology interpretation of the stripe as an artistic element to develop new definitions in the phenomenology of visual experience.

Daemonic Dimension and Symbolic Politics: A Study in Historical Anthropology

Vít POKORNÝ, Institute of Philosophy AV CR, Prague

What does it mean to be a symbolic being and what is the nature of symbolic consciousness? In this paper, I assume that becoming human is becoming symbolic. Human and symbolic realities intertwine and determine each other from the dawn of human history. The symbolic element emerges from the bodily one as its transformation

and its double allowing humans to find their identity in symbolic expression. I will back up this hypothesis by interpreting the key motives of E. Cassirer's Philosophy of symbolic forms, R. Alleau's Science of symbols, and M. McLuhan's theory of media. This interpretation will be applied on the history of the relation between human culture and deemonic dimension, starting with the birth and evolution of the Egyptian deemonic figure of Bes. I will also ask what is the relation between religious symbolism and politics, and how did the relation to the deemonic dimension evolved in modern times.

Merleau-Ponty and the Phenomenology of Animal Piety

Mira T. REYES, University of Pardubice Centre of Ethics, Czech Rep.

This paper is borne from a curiosity about Campbell's account of tribal hunters' sacred rites of sending the animal's spirit to the heavens before eating the animal. It attempts to make use of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to describe and articulate the worldview that sponsored the ancient view of animals as vestiges and purveyors of divine spirit and its creative and imaginative translation into contemporary forms. This work will move in two parts. First, an elucidation of Merleau-Ponty's key concepts: the hollow of being which accounts for the ecological transpatial view of the species and accordingly, a lateral view of religion that is not 'one coming from above'; and, chiasm, which enables the mystical oscillation between seer and seen that makes all perception a carnal communion thus fomenting an ethical kinship with animals. These concepts explain the beliefs and practices of Native Americans and Celts about animal spirits, the dietary practices of ahimsa in Hindu religion, and the rituals of animal sacrifice in early Christian tradition. The second part is an articulation of Merleau-Ponty's clairvoyance as relation between faith and style, a presentiment of divine presence and intention inherent in cultural symbols and representation, i.e., animal emblems and lucky charms, and animal characters in popular Japanese animé and British mythological literature, which surreptitiously continue to convey animal piety in a world that objectified the animal as meat, aspiring for the lost kinship with animals and divining ethical direction through imagined utopic worlds of interspecies harmony.

November 3, Saturday, Parallel Session A6

17:15 pm - 18:45 pm

Section: Phenomenology and Islam

The Phenomenology of Love (Rabia al-Adawiyya (VIII c.) and Edith Stein (XX c.)

Kenul BUNYADZADE, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

The paper reviews the divine love on the basis of the thoughts of Sufi thinker Rabia al-Adawiyya (VIII c.) and phenomenological philosopher Edith Stein (XX c.). The main aim of the research is to present the universal idea that is beyond the religions and time. The author studies the poems of Rabia and only the last work of Edith Stein where she wrote her views on divine love – "Science of Cross". The article consists of three parts where the Sufi and Phenomenological terms are compared. First, the heart is considered as a

noematic core and then the hope is studied as a transition between the rational and irrational thoughts. In the third part the divine love is investigated as a process that is named a process of perfection in Sufism and phenomenological reduction in phenomenology.

“Remember Me, and I will Remember You:” The Phenomenology of Ritual Remembrance in Sufi Zikr

Noman BAIG, Social Development & Policy, Habib University

In recent years, Islam's esoteric tradition of Sufism has come under vicious attack by the modernist and religious extremist, labeling it as irrational or heretic. While it struggles to survive in a tumultuous environment, Sufis continue to practice the art of inner purification, through rigorous contemplative exercise, known as zikr/dhikr. Commonly referred as remembrance of God, zikr is performed in various ways, involving recitation and invocation of God's name as a technique of disclosing God like ethos in one's being. Drawing on phenomenological first-person experience and concrete ethnographic research of a Sufi circle in Pakistan, this article illuminates how the contemplative exercise of zikr shapes the nature of subjectivity. I argue in zikr the arduous and repeated declaration of negation and affirmation – No God but God – Islam's first logos (kalma) alters the nature of the self by splitting subjectivity into “non-dual opposites.” Living with such a radical alterity is seen as a coenvisioned paradox of self and the God in an interpretative framework of ‘spiritual anthropology.’ Grounded in the Sufi practice of zikr in Pakistan, this article contributes towards a growing ethnographic inquiry into the nature of Muslim subjectivity vis-à-vis normative Islam as well as into emerging anthropological theories of ontology and self.

November 4, Sunday, Plenary Talks

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Embodiment and the Experience of the Divine

James R. MENSCH, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague

How, in fact, do we reach the divine? From Plato onwards, the traditional answer involved purifying our experience of all its bodily components “because the body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth” (Phaedo 66a). Such a view is behind the long history of the ascetic practices in Christianity. Such practices, however, ignore the fact that the body is essential to our experience. We cannot have experience, sensuous or conceptual, without its participation. Granting this, how does our embodiment shape our experience of the divine? Hume gives the standard response to this question. If we think of God in terms of our embodiment, we fall into an inadmissible anthropomorphism. He also notes, however, that if we regard God as genuinely transcendent, we lose any experiential sense of him—such senses being given by our embodied experience. In my paper, I am going to argue that the dilemma Hume presents us with is built upon the presence of the traditional, Platonic account of embodiment. If we examine embodiment phenomenologically, we find that many of the features traditionally associated with the divine—transcendence, unique singularity, and the notion of the sacred as what is set apart—all characterize our experience of our flesh. My conclusion is that embodiment is not opposed to transcendence. Rather, transcendence is inherent in our experience of our embodiment. There is an inner alterity in the presence of our flesh that is, in fact, a condition for our experience of the divine.

A Phenomenology of Image-Bearing: Spirituality, Humanity, and the “Supra-” Relation

Neal DEROO, The King's University, Canada

The concept of humanity as “Imago Dei” is central to Christian accounts of the nature of human being. But if we bracket the “Dei” as what is ‘imaged,’ we could ask: what does it mean to conceive of humanity as an image-bearing entity? Conversely, can thinking image-bearing in this broader phenomenological way help us gain new insight into religion or religious experience more broadly? These are the two main questions I will tackle in this paper. I will begin by offering an account of human beings as image-bearers via a two-stage interpretation of the Dutch phenomenologist Herman Dooyeweerd’s notion of the “supra-temporal heart”: first, I will examine the ‘supra’ relation, and how it is a key element of Dooyeweerd’s understanding of the heart (Section I). Then, I will explain what it means to be “heart-ed,” and how this shows that humans cannot help but show something else (i.e., bear the image of something else) in and through everything they do (Section II). With this account in place, I will then look at the “something else” that humans show in and through their lives via a phenomenological understanding of spirituality as that which constitutes subjects and is expressed in everything they do, even as it itself is also the product of a lifeworld (Section III). I will end by taking a look at what this means

for the relationship between transcendence and immanence, both religiously (“all of life is religious”) and phenomenologically (“the transcendental”) (Section IV).

November 4, Sunday, Parallel Session A7

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Panel: Reading Filipino Expressions of Faith and Collectivity

An Analysis of the Philippines' Pre-Hispanic Religious Belief Through Revolutionary Movement

Emmanuel Jeric A. ALBELA, Department of History, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

This research discusses the pre-Hispanic beliefs (religion) of the Filipinos in the lens of the Philippine Revolutionary movement in the year 1896. This will begin with a historical account of its beginnings and how it eventually formulated several descriptives of what they claim as the early Filipino's systematic practices of their beliefs. Specifically, this research is an attempt to override the biased look at paganism as unsophisticated, thereby affirming that there already exists and organized and refined belief practices. The study shall expose that the pre-Hispanic Philippines already have, or at least, is oriented to the concept of God, the idea of Universal Morality, the concept of life after death or the “afterlife”, the local idea of cosmogony or genesis; and specific practices and ceremonies performed by the early Filipinos. The Revolutionary movement brought all these into surface for the purpose of reformulating a local and independent Philippine Independent Church. Part of this paper is an in-depth examination of the ancient religious practices of the Filipinos, which specifically sets a historical context that can be significantly connected to the Spanish colonization during the mid-part of the 16th century. This context somehow justifies how the early Filipinos have easily embraced the Christian religion.

Communicating Joy, Generosity and Solidarity: Exploring Play and Festive in the Contemporary Filipino Celebrations of Christmas (Pasko) Through Gadamer's Phenomenological Hermeneutics

Fleurdeliz R. ALTEZ-ALBELA, Dpt. of Philosophy, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

This paper is a narrative that justifies the depth and breadth of the Filipino's signification to Christmas (locally called Pasko or Pascua) through practices that have evolved from being religious (e.g., Catholic) up to being localized expressions of Filipino values that uphold the family and the local community. As a nation composed of many islands and regional-linguistic-cultural groups, the study takes into consideration (and so will have to mention) the varied mechanics and nuances of selected widely-practiced traditions during the Christmas season. For this paper, the author aims to concentrate on the following: the musical re-enactments of Joseph and Mary's quest for lodging up to the birth of Jesus (variedly according to regional groups: Panunuluyan, Panarit, Pastores, Villancicos), gift-giving (Monito-Monita, Pamamasko), the novena Masses (Simbang Gabi

or Misa de Gallo) and the Christmas Midnight Dinner (Noche Buena). The mechanics of the abovementioned practices shall be elucidated and transcended with the help of Hans-Georg Gadamer's phenomenological hermeneutics, specifically focusing on the concept of Play and Festive. With play's primacy to consciousness as meaning unfolds in the very act of playing, the study aims to explain how a Filipino, could be taken out by the "Christmas phenomenon (i.e., play)" of which religious symbols bring out this overlooked yearning for peace, prosperity and reunification of families. With the help of Gadamer's concept of festive, it will be shown how the abovementioned religious expressions, through suspension of time and the diversion of subjectivities, are thereby directed towards communal articulations. With such deep and silent wish for good tidings throughout the burdensome year, the Filipino "Christmas play and festival" makes the Yuletide season begin as early as September and has even become very enticing to the natural hardworking Filipino in the locale or overseas, and even extensive among different religions in the Philippines.

Turning Towards Goodness: Levinasian Forgiveness and Filipino Lenten Practices

Patrick Andre C. MENCIAS, Dpt. of Philosophy, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

This paper aims to explore Filipino Lenten Practices in the context of Emmanuel Levinas' notion of Forgiveness. Given the three centuries of Spanish colonization in the Philippines, certain Filipino practices highlight notions of repentance as a form of turning away from sin in various forms such as Penitencia, Visita Iglesia, and the Cenaculo. Meanwhile, forgiveness for Levinas can be understood in its religious and phenomenological aspects. Religious when referred to the concept of Teshuva which explains the moral duty of repentance during the Day of Atonement thereby turning towards goodness; and Phenomenological in the emphasis that forgiveness that is part of the ethical event where there is an "undoing of" the "time" of transgression. The discussion of the paper shall first explain the dynamics of Levinas' concept of forgiveness that is towards the ethical responsibility. This will be followed of an account of the different Filipino practices during the Lenten season and a reading on the role of the concepts of repentance and forgiveness in Levinas' ethics. In conclusion, the discussion shall concentrate on the Levinasian notion of repentance found in the practices mentioned and how they manifest the Filipinos' turn towards Goodness.

November 4, Sunday, Parallel Session B7

13:30 pm - 15:00 pm

Section: Mysticism—Negative Theology

The Imaginative Expression of the Mystical Event of Experience (St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross)

Guillermo FERRER, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Philosophisches Seminar, Germany

The aim of my paper is a phenomenological analysis of the role of images on the mystical experience of St. Therese of Avila and St. John of the Cross. "Mystical experience" means here an event (Erfahrungsgeschehen, as defined by László Tengelyi)

that imposes a certain sort of “real transcendence” or “supernatural reality” upon the subject of this experience.

The phenomenological difficulty consists in the description of the “transcendent” or “supernatural” element of the mystical experience – it is anyway constitutive of the event that St. John and St. Therese refer of-. On the one hand, it is required the suspension of any belief in God’s reality and therefore that of his supernatural action upon the mystic – it rests only the “intentional” object God. On the other hand, the sense of the mystical event of experience implies the exercise of a radical passivity or passive-becoming of the mystic itself to allow a new, religious event in the deepest, etymological sense of the word (re-ligare). I will emphasize the phenomenological sense of images to express an original, not just individual but intersubjective event of experience, instead of just searching a new kind of intentional evidence for it. I will lean mainly on Husserl’s phenomenology of image-consciousness, but considering too outstanding researchers of the mystical phenomena: H. Bergson, M. Blondel, G. Walther, A. Steinbock. But I will refer especially to thinkers from Spain and Latin America whose contribution to the phenomenological understanding of the Spanish mystic is not yet well known: Miguel de Unamuno, María Zambrano, Juan David García Bacca, José Gaos, Xavier Zubiri and Joaquín Xirau.

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“All Shall Be Well”: On Sin, Antinomies, and Transformation of Images in Julian of Norwich

Jana TRAJTELOVÁ, Department of Philosophy & Center for Phenomenological Studies, Trnava University in Trnava, Slovakia

This paper presents a phenomenological-metaphysical reflection of spiritual experience of Julian of Norwich (1342 – 1416) from her Revelations of Divine Love. In several interrelated issues I investigate mutual relations among immediate spiritual experience of the Divine, transformation of spiritual images, understanding of sin and guilt and self-transcendence. I first describe an antinomical character of reality to depict the basic ontological situation in which “sin” may appear; for its better philosophical articulation I implement Karl Jaspers’ philosophical observations (–his specific variant of

phenomenology is close to heideggerian phenomenological approach but arises out of his own existential analyses of human experience in the world). For better understanding of the limited and limiting human situation I also benefit from the notion of existential horizon which elucidates psycho-somatic meanings of the problem. I point out a deep experiential discrepancy between the essentially unlimited divine nature of a man (according to Julian) and existential limitedness he or she normally experiences. In this context I may finally elaborate the notion of sin from Julian's Revelations which is qualified as pain, discordance, isolation, delusion and having no essence. Next I show how religious images must transform all together with a deep personal transformation (mystical reborn). Julian does not encourage us to take mere "negative way" and to abandon all images for the sake of an unknowable divine alterity. But she encourages us to give up certain specific stagnant images (of God, self, others, reality) and the related concepts (sin, guilt, and wrath). This way she invites us to transcend the conditioned and limited existential horizon of the antinomical human reality toward unbound possibilities of divine goodness which may be found and activated in one's own inmost being. Finally, out of this Julian's phenomenological and ontological picture, one can deduce very radical meaning of incarnation.

Failing to Think God. Paradoxical Images and Transformative Experience in Negative Theology

Rico GUTSCHMIDT, Universität Konstanz, Germany

There is a problem about the status of religious or mystical experience in the tradition of negative henology or theology in Neoplatonism and Christianity. On the one hand, the *via negativa* is supposed to lead to the experience of henosis or *unio mystica* and is understood as an attempt to approach the One or God. On the other hand, both traditions emphasize that the One or God are inconceivable and do not even exist. According to Plotinus, the One is not even "a something" and there is thus, strictly speaking, nothing that can be approached. What, then, is the religious experience of the *via negativa* all about? In my paper, I will argue that the religious experience in negative henology or theology can be understood as a transformative experience that leads to a new understanding of the human condition. Both traditions represent the absolute (the One or God) with paradoxical images that are incomprehensible when taken literally. They employ, for example, visual metaphors as 'brilliant darkness' or a spatial imagery according to which God is within the soul and at the same time above. On my reading, these images can be understood as an expression of the failure of the attempt to understand the absolute. Moreover, this failure evokes experiences that transform our understanding of the human condition with respect to the incomprehensibility of the absolute. Accordingly, I want to suggest that the One in negative henology and the religious god-talk in negative theology refer to these transformative experiences.

November 4, Sunday, Parallel Session A8

15:30 pm – 17:00 pm

Panel continues: Reading Filipino Expressions of Faith and Collectivity

Traslación, A Religious Experience? An Existential Phenomenology of the Black Nazarene Folk Religiosity in Manila, Philippines

Rhocie Avelino E. MATIENZO, Dpt. of Philosophy, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

In 1521, the Spaniards brought Christianity to the Philippine archipelago. Throughout the centuries, this faith is infused with the indigenous culture that paves way to the "Filipino folk religiosity." One of the most famous (and perhaps, infamous) practices in this kind of faith is the Traslación devotion in honor of the Black Nazarene. This refers to the procession commemorating the 1787 transfer of the life-size wooden and dark image of a suffering Christ from its original church in the old city to its present Basilica in the nearby district. In a span of more than a decade, a soaring 4,000% increase in participants was recorded during its annual feast. This unique Filipino kind of faith, however, also incurred more than seven thousand injuries and nine lives lost since 2004. Despite these alarming figures and widespread criticism of irrationality, fanaticism, idolatry, and paganism, the devotion shows no sign of decline in years to come. This paper aims to phenomenologically understand the religious experience during the feast of the Black Nazarene. In doing so, the study invokes the existentialist views on faith by Soren Kierkegaard in order to contribute to the existing discourse and broader understanding on the religious phenomenon.

Section: Theology of Images

The Phenomenology of the Word and the Mexican Immigrant Experience of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Vincent J. PASTRO, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, CA USA

The image of Our Lady of Gaudalupe (La Guadalupana, Santa María Tonántzin, La Morenita, Nuestra Señora de Gaudalupe) has been an indispensable part of Mexican reality—civil and religious—since the formation of modern Mexico. From the Conquista and its consequences, to the repression of indigenous culture and faith, to the Mexican Revolution, to the formation of the United Farm Workers Union by César Chavez and Dolores Huertas, to the experience of the Mexican immigrant people in the United States, the Gaudalupana has been integral part of la identidad Mexicana. It would not be an over-exaggeration to say that every Mexican person, no matter what their belief or where they reside, is "Guadalupano/a" and that it is "something essential" to being Mexican, in the words of the popular hymn to our Lady of Guadalupe, an integral part of the Mexican imagination.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe can help us reflect on the "Phenomenology of the Word." Emmanuel Levinas, in his analysis of the "said" and the "saying," sheds much light on what such a vision might look like. Levinas is strongly influenced by Franz Rosenzweig and his theological and philosophical writings on the importance of the Word and

Revelation. This essay will use the philosophy of Levinas and Rosensweig as a medium of reflection on the praxis of Our Lady of Guadalupe, for Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP, defines theology as "a reflection on praxis in the light of the Word."

Contemporary Mexican indigenous theology affirms that the Christian faith was not "brought" to Mexico by the first Franciscan friars. It was, rather, Santa María Tonantzin, in the heart of the Mexican people, who formally "preached the Gospel"—a message ever old yet ever new not based on traditional European culture, mores, and norms, but founded in the indigenous Word present in Mexican culture long before the arrival of the Spaniards. This Word is proclaimed to the people in the Guadalupe event.

November 4, Sunday, Parallel Session B8

15:30 pm – 17:00 pm

Section: Phenomenology of Images in Asian Traditions

The Great Image Has No Form "大象無形". Pictoriality in Daoism using Qiu Shihua and Other Contemporary Mountain-Water Paintings as an Example

Dagmar DOTING, Charles university Prague | Faculty of Humanities and University Vienna, Institut of Philosophy

Images embody the expression of the logic of cognition of cultures and their own reality of world and spirituality. The Chinese mountain-water-painting depicts the Daoist world emergence, which was recorded in the aphorism collection Taoteking (道德經) in the 6th century BCE under the pseudonym Laoze. World arises from the mutual conditionality of the bipolar principles of yin and yang which form an inherently closed spiritual system. In this system, the basis of the Dao is formed by a constant movement - the way of the Dao. It is therefore also to be understood as "within", whose reason is unfounded, and acts invisibly as the source for each and every appearance. Thus it wraps itself in figurative absence and is therefore present.

Qui Shihua's pictures behave as in Daoteking "the great image has no form" (Chap. 41). The viewer is constantly confronted with new, vague forms based on immanence. The flowing Dao remains formless in its form. In Qui Shihua's "White Field" painting, ontological visibility fades. This allows the viewer to stay in threshold states of perception. The viewer is deliberately denied "living in the picture". This negation of pictoriality pushes the viewer into a field of experiencing his own pictorial experience and reflects less the expressed sense content of the painter than the idea of the viewer's own reality. The change of forms is constantly drawing new world images. Using Qiu Shihua's "White Field" and other Chinese contemporary positions as examples, this article attempts to translate passages of Taoteking into visual worlds and thus refers to a spirit that has its origin in China.

Transcending Emotions and Intentionality: Daisaku Ikeda's Interpretation of Buddhist Meditation and the Mind Body Problem

Vinicio BUSACCHI, Faculty of humanities, Cagliari (Sardinia), Italy

In Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of action the notion of intention is explained, understood and used as having only reference to the rational argumentative and conscious sphere; consequently, there is neglect and misrecognition of the possibility of unconscious and preconscious motivational roots of actions and intentions to act. However, Paul Ricoeur is among those phenomenologists who interpret unconscious as a

pre-intentional reality and a principally affective matter concretely antagonising Freud's biologicistic perspective. In addition, he uses it to solve the mind-body problem via a philosophy of the Integral Cogito through which he finds a (non theoretical but) practical solution. In this paper, the Author try to dialectically intertwine Ricoeur's phenomenology of the will with Daisaku Ikeda's Interpretation of Buddhist Meditation. This philosopher explains how Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhist practice determines spiritual self-reformation, moral emancipation and personal and religious commitment as the keys to fully unleash the creativity and power of renewal of the human being. In addition, by referring to the Mahāyāna doctrine of nine consciousnesses and to Nichiren's 'philosophy' of the Gohonzon he offers an original theoretical and doctrinal base exploring how the 'meditative' process of chanting Daimoku (the mantra) in front of the sacred Gohonzon (the mandala) may modify emotional states, intentions and even more structured tendencies as behavioural habits or character dispositions. The philosophical-speculative effects and result is evident: the power of the prayer may both transform and transcend emotions and intentionality. It demonstrates that there is a deeper unifying source beyond both the unconscious level of psychic life and all dualisms.

Cultural Phenomenology of Self-Transformation among Dang-kis in Singapore

Boon-Ooi LEE, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Laurence J. KIRMAYER, McGill University, Canada

Many ethnographic accounts suggest that spirit mediums experience personal issues in adaptation and distress before initiation. Since they generally are described—and present themselves—as free from clinically significant distress after initiation, there is a possibility that involvement in mediumship is therapeutic. This ethnographic study focuses on dang-ki healing, a form of Chinese spirit mediumship practiced in Singapore. This practice is based on the belief that a deity can possess a human (called dang-ki; 乩童) to offer help to supplicants. We propose that dang-kis experience three interrelated forms of self-transformation. First, there are changes in identity and social role in becoming a dang-ki—from a regular person to a practitioner. People are chosen by deities to be dang-kis based on their abilities to enter possession and behave according to the deities' dispositions. Second, during the possession rituals, there are changes in sense of self through embodied practices based on culturally recognizable scripts. Despite various levels of awareness during the possession experience, dang-kis report they have no control over their actions because they are under their deities' control. Finally, there are more enduring changes in sense of self as a result of the recurrent possession experiences and change in social role and identity. Many dang-kis have negative life issues before initiation. They recount positive changes in their characters and life conditions after initiation. In conclusion, the practice of dang-ki mediumship illustrates how the phenomenology of the self as agent and subjectivity may be constructed and reconstructed through ongoing interactions among body, person, and sociocultural expectations.