

# THE MEANING OF MYSTERY FOR RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON

IOAN DRĂGOI

**The Meaning of Mystery for Religious Phenomenon.** Starting with L. Blaga's 1942 definition of religion, this essay articulates an intelligible structure of three elements which I understand herein as intentional components of a question: (1) mystery as the object of inquiry, (2) consciousness, always stylistic-determined, as the subject who asks the question, and (3) the ideal correlation between the previous two as the act of inquiry, seen as well as self-totalization and self-exceeding of human condition. Following this structure, this essay aims to reconcile Blaga's perspective with phenomenology. The main difficulty that will arise here concerns the understanding of Christian Revelation within stylistic patterns.

**Key words:** Blaga, phenomenology, mystery, consciousness, ideal correlation, style, Revelation.

## **The articulation of question concerning religion**

I am concerned here with a phenomenological interpretation of religious phenomenon, rather than with a strict definition of religion in a metaphysical manner. This choice has two specific, connected grounds: (1) one must be aware that each and every attempt to define something is possible only following a methodical abstraction. This abstraction is also present implicitly in the field of religion, in questions like what is the common essence for a large number of religions? or what is the common element of all experiences that make possible the perception of Divine?; (2) it is obvious that the plurality of aspects implied by religion cannot be separated from every personal religious experience. One of the ways to arrive to this is to investigate how this complex phenomenon deals with our consciousness. In other words, the question is how is it possible to say that an individual takes part in one of the expressions of the mystery of existence. Has it revealed once, as a miracle or is it a cultural object, grounded in a tradition as it determines the historical evolution of mankind?

This decisive alternative has to be sketched using the method of the phenomenological reduction. In respect to its etymology, phenomenology refers to every modality in which something appears to us. In a broad sense, everyone who describes the appearance of something thinks in a phenomenologic way. This difficulty shadowed phenomenological inquiry since its very beginning. However, one's religious experience is always the experience of a comprehensive tradition which has to be also understood as phenomenon. Therefore, it is not a mistake to take the metaphysical point of view as a material for a phenomenological inquiry.

Despite its alleged objectivity, the venerable metaphysical thinking, which is equivalent to natural attitude (pre-phenomenological rather than opposing to it) had always something to say in reference to the problem of religion and consequently it could not be ignored. Based on theological grounds, metaphysics proposed several definitions for religion. For example, the opinion widespread in Romanticism and expressed by Schleiermacher is that religion is the intuition and feeling of the infinity of the Universe, which is a “feeling of absolute dependence”. In his legacy, but somewhat in opposition, Tillich argued for religion as a tendency for unconditional, an ultimate concern which qualifies all other concerns. Other thinkers link religion with morals (in the formulation “religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands”, Kant proposes a rational religion based on morality); with our own conceptions and emotions (Feuerbach); even in analogy with neurosis (Freud); or as a protest or response against suffering (Marx or Dewey).

Each of these thinkers have been articulated a point of view starting from a prevalent element, every time different from consciousness: feeling, concern, morality, anthropomorphism, neurosis, suffering. Therefore, they could not be considered from a phenomenological approach, at least not from the orthodox one, sketched in Husserl’s non-hermeneutic ample considerations. However, there is something suitable for phenomenological ontology which is very valuable for all interpretations that could be brought to these contexts and which also guides my approach, as a technical proposal: *the tripartite formal structure of any interrogation*. As we have learned from the most famous phenomenological constructions, if we agree that Husserl’s philosophy has not this systematic aspect, each question<sup>1</sup> assumes three elements: (1) what it asks about, (2) what is interrogated and (3) the interrogation itself, grasped as a correlation between these two previous: an attitude adopted by the questioner in order to reach the object in question. This correlation is the meaning of every question, from the most common ones to those that articulate the entire gravity of existence.

Curiously, we have to recognize this structure of interrogation in the Romanian philosopher and poet Lucian Blaga’s 1942 paper on religion. Despite all his radical opposition against phenomenological method (certainly indebted to the philosophical pride of the one who reached an unseen conception, expressed in form of a metaphysical system), Blaga’s definition is suitable for us to apply the aforementioned phenomenological structure of every interrogation. His definition of religion states:

“in each of its forms, religion circumscribes the tendency of self-totalisation and self-exceeding of human being in correlation with all existence, but mostly in an *ideal correlation* to the ultimate elements of the *mystery of existence*, which the human being *reveals* or considers as been revealed through *stylistic creations*.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. by J. Stambaugh, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996, p. 4; J.-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness. An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, transl. by H.E. Barnes, Routledge, 1969, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> L. Blaga, *Religie și spirit*, în *Opere 10. Trilogia valorilor*, Editura Minerva, București, p. 470 (my translation, my italics).

In spite of its aspect of classical, metaphysical definition which tries to gather different aspects that fit to every religion, from Hinduism to Christianity and from Tao to Kierkegaard's religious trembling and Goethe's daemonic, this determination of religion might be repositioned also in the manner of a phenomenological attempt. In this essay, I will limit myself to behold the three underlined elements of the question from this quotation (*ideal correlation*, *mystery* and *style*), by integrating them in a reversed phenomenologic reduction in order to illustrate from this perspective one of the most tantalizing and most likely unsolved contradiction of religion: is this a form of culture or it is a mysterious Revelation, the unique Jewish and Christian Revelation? Let us start with the meaning of the *ideal correlation*.

### **'Ideal correlation' and the phenomenon of faith**

Everyone may easily find out what an ideality is by thinking at something which is not real, despite being experienced in an act of speech. The first model of understanding the ideality might be found in Plato's Idea of the goodness or Kant's Ideas of the Reason (God, liberty, immortality of soul). Traditional transcendent values, in the metaphysical perspective, are also idealities because they do not appear as phenomena, except only in a certain community. An ignorant person will see in an art masterpiece an object *inter alia*. In this first meaning, an ideality is something unreal, but which may be normative for one's behaviour. Obviously, this is not the meaning to be associated with Blaga's notion of 'ideal correlation' that is part of his definition of religion.

Moreover, an ideality might be something resulted from an act of abstraction (or formalization, as in logics), as an essence. Even a very large (or irrational) number, about which we could have no intuition may be understood as such an ideality. Given a class of objects, we have the ability to organize them with respect to one another based on the criteria that could be operated: we collect objects on the criteria 'books' or, if we prefer, on the criteria 'red'. Strictly speaking, even the second model of understanding an ideality, as something resulting from our abstractive capacity does not correspond completely to Blaga's meaning.

Hence it is not sufficient only to say that an ideality refers to something not real or an essence resulting from an abstractive process. Every conscious or unconscious act is, in a broader sens, an ideality, because one cannot ever reach the completeness of the object that one refers to. This enigma has always preoccupied philosophers, under several notions, from Pascal's 'infinitely small', going through Kant's 'thing in itself' and finally reaching Husserl's 'adumbrations' (or 'hyletic data'), which refers to the way to perceive a certain object under a certain aspect in a certain spatial perspective. Therefore, a perceptive act that has in its content the thing in its complete aspect (exhaustively perceived) is impossible to occur. Because the extensive experience of an object has no other domain of possibility except an infinite experience<sup>3</sup>, we are forced

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<sup>3</sup>J.-Y. Lacoste, „Percepție, transcendență, cunoaștere a lui Dumnezeu” în *Fenomenalitatea lui Dumnezeu*, trad. I. Ică jr., Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2011, p. 36.

to admit that every sensation presents us with only fragments of reality. We ourselves, as *self-totalities* of our acts of knowledge, affectivity, volition, forebodies, intuition, imagination, hopes, desires or even premonitions are those who correspond to this last meaning of 'ideality'. If I feel myself as being familiar to myself is because I have an intentional consciousness of myself, even if incomplete, on the specific horizon. In Blaga's words, for myself, I am a mystery who follow the 'saturated horizon' of existential mysteries of transcendence. But the perception of the self or *self-totalisation* does not refer only to ourselves as unattainable wholes. It concerns even the intentional field of revealing the mystery: religion, grasped simply as an unification of all human faculties: knowledge, sensibility, volition, foreseeing, presentiment, hope. In this respect, *self-totalisation* designates the lower limit of religion.

Every conscious and even unconscious act targets a peculiar domain of this horizon. For example, the structured knowledge acts reveal the existential mystery through science; the concrete intuition reveals it through arts; our 'animate' representations reflect this disclosure through myths; finally, the abstract thinking reveals the existential mystery through metaphysics.

Unlike all these domains in which mystery reveals itself, only religion has the tendency for *self-totalisation* aiming to open this horizon of mysteries on a multiplicity of spiritual plans<sup>4</sup>. For Blaga, any existent religious conception follows this multiplicity of cultural fields. It is sufficient to look at the artistic value of sacred texts or ceremonies, the ethical value that articulate religious principles socially engaged, the mythical stories involved in every ritual, the metaphysical implications of Indian Buddhism or Chinese perspective on Tao, as well as the European Christian tradition to understand why religion means a dialogue between all kinds of cultural creations. Consequently, the guiding role of religion is to unify all these conscious and unconscious acts that guide both our daily and cultural experience. This unification is to be considered the first understanding of the terms linked by the 'ideal correlation' which in Blaga's definition, refers to the 'ultimate elements of the existence'. The other one is the *self-exceeding*.

If the unification of human faculties and also domains in which they manifest, *self-totalization* is the lower limit of religiosity, *self-exceeding* must correspond to its higher limit. Unfortunately, Blaga's considerations about the *self-exceeding* are quite restrained and somewhat vague to be taken into consideration for a phenomenological analysis. He describes *self-exceeding*<sup>5</sup> as the encounter between spiritual powers and the obscure forces from the depths as a crossing over the human self in the sense of creating a spiritualized being.

In order to find a correspondence to this enigmatic transcendence of self in the area of the acts of consciousness and their correlates (and not something as complex like the structure of the existential project), one should limitate to a unique and specific phenomenological act. In this sense, we acquire an unexpected help for this direction yet in one of the strongest and most consistent critics which have been

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<sup>4</sup> L. Blaga, *Religie și spirit*, în *op. cit.*, p. 476.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 472.

brought to Blaga's position on religion: that of Father D. Stăniloae. When he comments this passage from Blaga's book, he noticed that faith is totally absent from the definition of religion. His theologic statement, that there is no religion without faith<sup>6</sup> is not such as to disturb our phenomenological task: the necessity to find fundamentation of religion, *qua* consciousness act. If we identify the *self-exceeding* with faith, we have to find the way in which faith relies on consciousness. But as a kind of belief (an outwardly, transcendence-oriented belief), faith is not a simple act, as faculties mentioned above (knowledge, volition, affect etc.), but it defines the primal structure of consciousness.

We have to recall that consciousness is always intentional, that means that it is a consciousness of something. Regarding its noematic contents, consciousness keeps always its thetical, positional character of belief. In the first volume of the *Ideas* (1913), Husserl states that this fundamental character of consciousness posits the existence of the objects to which correspond intentionally and also to the world (grasped as totality of objects): "belief-certainty is belief simpliciter in the pregnant sense. It has, in fact, according to our analyses a highly remarkable special place in the multiplicity of acts which are comprehended under the title of belief"<sup>7</sup>. The 'highly remarkable place' of this kind of certainty lies in the judgment we apply when we 'take' something as existing (in the noematic plan) with all its 'doxical' modifications, given in perceptive acts. So everything that we consider as existent is a consequence of this primal structure of consciousness: certainty. What about religious faith, grasped according to Blaga's words as *self-exceeding* of human existence?

Naturally, there are different types and degrees of certainty. The most widespread is the perceptive certainty: I suppose that 'the sky turns dark and it started to rain' is one of them. Opposite to it is the perceptive illusion: what I have taken to be a possible man could be a tree in the darkness of the forest, as in Husserl's example. There are also mathematical certainties, those we call necessary, as 'in a circle all the radii are equal'. Even death, according to Heidegger's existential analysis has a character of certainty, even though 'everydayness' evades this certainty, avoiding it through language and covering it in the urgencies of preoccupation: "one says that death certainly comes, but not right away. With this «but...» the they denies that death is certain"<sup>8</sup>. Historians also confront different facts in order to establish which of them are certain and which pass only as opinions. We have to be aware that the ascertainability of a historical fact cannot transgress its content, which is a historic situation rooted in a succession of facts. That is to say that the certainty of a historical fact (i.e. the Fall of Bastille) and its expressible content ('French people took Bastille on July 14, 1789') belong together to the same level of things, which is equivalent to

<sup>6</sup> D. Stăniloae, *Poziția domnului Blaga față de creștinism și ortodoxie*, Editura Paideia, București, 2010, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First book. General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, transl. by F. Kersten, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague/Boston/Lancaster, 1983, p. 252.

<sup>8</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time, op. cit.*, p. 239.

say that the historical fact does not exceed its expressible content, but the second it is only an explanation of the first (a tautology).

Hence, none of these refers to the certain character of religious faith, which expresses its tendency for *self-exceed*, and this happens because the phenomenality of faith is different from all of these. For a suitable explanation of the difference, we have to turn back a few years earlier prior to the publishing of *Ideas*, when, in the lecture *Idea of phenomenology* (1907), Husserl formulated one of the basic principles of apparition in the essential correlation between *appearing* [*Erscheinen*] and *that which appears* [*Erscheienden*]<sup>9</sup>. According to this relational *a priori*, every phenomenon in its manifestation might be highlighted by its originary appearance, showing itself from itself.

Although this correlation is fundamental for any phenomenological approach, reflecting the absolute simultaneity of the two sides (there is not first the fact of appearing and after it its modes of appearance), it is also destined to remain an ‘ideal’ one in all the situations of certainty and belief described above, with a single exception: the religious faith and its intentional noetic correlate, the horizon of Revelation, which is entirely neglected in Blaga’s analysis on religion, as it will be shown below.

### The excedent mystery of Revelation

All mundane appearings (*Erscheinen*), their rank or topic – perceptive, mathematical, historical – have no significance in the logic of certainty, are conditioned by the fact of their apparition (*Erscheienden*). Solely the event of Revelation highlights the intimate unity between these two regions of phenomenality. But how can a historical fact (described in the New Testament) to dissolve this phenomenal duality? First, because only this event is able to abolish the exteriority between the phenomenon and the fact of its appearing, the ‘exterior’ relation in which all mundane phenomena are doubled by flow of time<sup>10</sup>. Thus, with the manifestation of Christ the correlation does not remain merely an ideal one, in the form of a tautology. Secondly, because only this event had the possibility to saturate the entire visibility horizon without letting one’s consciousness think and to conceptualize something about its occurrence. In this respect, Revelation is the maximum extent of *self-exceeding*, being the most complete expression of mystery - the *excess*.

Undoubtedly, the mystery (also including the Revelation) is not foreign to phenomenological thinking, even if it is grasped as absolute transcendence. The question ‘how can an experience of transcendence be constituted by human consciousness?’ remains a serious difficulty for any phenomenological approach. Husserl has spoken in his 1907 lecture about the ‘enigmatic’ character of transcendence, which “is in principle not experienceable”<sup>11</sup>, even if the relation to it

<sup>9</sup> E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1969, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> For more details, confront the first two chapters from M. Henry, *Eu sunt adevărul. Pentru o filozofie a creștinismului*, trad. I. Ică jr., Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> E. Husserl, *Idea of Phenomenology*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

might be conceived as something distinguishable in the pure phenomenon. This difficulty is maintain a couple of years later, in the first volume of *Ideas*, where he suggested that we need to exclude God (grasped in a teleological manner) from any phenomenological inquiry, but not also the relationship of the consciousness with the Divine.

In order to see what this mystery consists of it is sufficient to briefly recall the four features of the J.-L. Marion's saturated phenomena<sup>12</sup> to argue that Revelation is something that paradoxically exceeds Husserl's duality in conceiving every form of phenomenality: (a) *unforseeable*: the arrival of Christ is both surprising even for Himself as for all human consciousness, since He comes intrinsically as the "he who must come"<sup>13</sup>. Also, His return, equivalent to the end of the time (and consequently the absolute end of the whole flow of all consciousnesses, grasped even as Hegelian road from sensible certitude to absolute knowledge) is something unforseeable for the Son, as He submits to the Father<sup>14</sup>, albeit His presence contradicts and transcends every possible human genealogy ("before Abraham was born I am born"<sup>15</sup>); (b) *unbearable*, the suspension of every possible perception and every touch, as in many miracles which Christ performed Himself as in the episode of Transfiguration for His disciples or the experience of Resurrection, lived contradictory with fear and joy by the women which left His tomb; (c) *absolute*, because the manifestation of Christ as the Embodiment of Logos in flesh and His unlimited acts revokes every worldly relation (as finite horizon), and even any exhaustive written record: "the absolute mark by the paradox of Christ's flesh can be deployed in the limited visibility of wordly horizon only by their indefinite temporal and spatial proliferation in so many fragmented and provisional approaches to the same bursting absolutely without compare, common measure or analogy"<sup>16</sup>; (d) *irregardable*, because every time He constitutes the other (as His faithful witness) and the constitution does not commence from a transcendental *ego*, as in Husserlian constitution of alterity.

The manifestation of Christ, recorded in the Scriptures not only unifies the experience of phenomenality, making real and personal the 'ideal correlation', but also establishes a sum of paradoxes impossible for us to exceed: His double nature (Divine and also human), the unbearable character of His presence, His plurality of names, none of them being able to express His essence. As we are acquainted with the unlimited character of Revelation, it is surprising why a philosophy built on paradoxes, as Blaga's metaphysics chooses to ignore the decisive importance of Revelation and does not treat it as an existential mystery. Father Stăniloae observes this absence in the philosophy of his contemporary publisher: "since the human existence, there is faith,

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<sup>12</sup> J.-L. Marion, *Being Given. Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. by J.L. Kosky, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2002, pp. 234-241.

<sup>13</sup> John 1:15, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Mark 13:33; Matthew 24:36.

<sup>15</sup> John 8:58.

<sup>16</sup> J.-L. Marion, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

since human presence he has taken part in Revelation. Humanity without faith is not possible. And neither faith without Revelation<sup>17</sup>.

However, there are certain reasons why Romanian philosopher pushed aside the Christian Revelation, even by aligning to other religions analysed in his book. First, the exigence formulated in the 'Introduction' of *Religie și spirit* places the analysis under the philosophical viewpoint, by means of philosophical methods. However, Blaga is aware that, unlike philosophy, theology always starts from the thesis that only a certain religion is privileged as the unique and the true religion, mainly thanks to a special 'divine revelation'<sup>18</sup>. Hence, Blaga's assumption that there is indeed a conflict between philosophy and theology identifies without hesitation the latter with Revelation, by excluding it from any possible philosophical approach. In this order, the philosophical goals announced are trifold: (a) to show the variability of religious phenomena, under their stylistic features; (b) to sketch the aforementioned definition of religion and (c) also to prove that even strange and uncommon mystical phenomena are mere style-problems. Moreover, the design of Blaga's metaphysical perspective interdicts us to conceive this privileged event of Revelation. If we agree that Christian Revelation is only a possible, relative expression (as manifestation of disclosure of the mystery existence among others and not the mystery as itself), what shall we call the mystery which corresponds to the phenomenologic order which has been proposed initially, the intentional correlate of the *ego* that addresses the question? Before asking this question, we are considering another aspect of *mystery*.

### On a footnote of *Religie și spirit*

In addition to the reasons for which Blaga contested the event of Revelation present in his philosophy on behalf of *mystery* in an enigmatic and also intriguing footnote located in the chapter dedicated to the definition of religion. In this insignificant footprint, Blaga refers to his metaphysical perspective developed in other works and relates it to its climax: the mythical-daemonical concept through which he designates the *mystery* as the center of existence – the Great Anonymus, the one who has to be taken as the object of inquiry. It must be said, returning to the act of certainty discussed above, that even this metaphysical point of view seems to be the correlate of an act of belief<sup>19</sup>, indeed, not in the religious meaning of faith, but an act which exceeds itself in the direction of the transcendence.

“since, based on our point of view, all the care of the Great Anonymus is oriented precisely to prevent the human being (through transcendent censorship and transcendent breaks) to interpret in adequate and positive terms the mysteries of existence, we do not understand the role the revelation initiated by the same Great Anonymus might have. We

<sup>17</sup> D. Stăniloae, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>18</sup> L. Blaga, *Religie și spirit*, în *op. cit.*, p. 342.

<sup>19</sup> “The thesis about the existence of the Great Anonymus has the character of a metaphysical perspective, and we know that metaphysical perspectives are not the result of an absolute logical urgency, but of a leap. To the efficiency of this leap always contributes decisively an act of belief”, Idem, *Censura transcendentă*, în *Opere 8. Trilogia cunoașterii*, p. 450 (my translation).

can not imagine that the Great Anonymus gives with one hand and takes away with the other.”<sup>20</sup>

In what way could the Revelation be the object of such an ‘useless offer’ or even its opposite, an ‘unuseful exchange’, if the cessation of the donation makes both acts identical? Let us presume that the Revelation is indeed the useless gift of the transcendence, in other words, only a simulacrum, as the exchange in the economic interpretation of the gift. As J.-L. Marion observed following Descartes (*Passions of the Soul*), the gifter always receives in exchange as much as he has given, in a narcissistic return to the self, manifested as the ‘self-contentment’ of generosity<sup>21</sup>. Even if the gifter is empirically absent, passing to the givee the responsibility of his gift – the one no longer alive who cannot even receive the gratitude for his inheritance or just prefers to remain anonymous<sup>22</sup> – there is always a shadow of satisfaction in his act, which is not recognizable in the situation of Blaga’s Great Anonymus. The ‘egocentrism’ of the Great Anonymus, which could be described as both the one who offers something (the generation within divine differentials), and the one who takes the gift back because it periclitate its condition, ends any narcissistic act.

Why to portray Blaga’s ‘existential centre’ in such a mundane perspective? His intention to conceive the Great Anonymus not in a theologic manner (as the Christian concept of God), but simply as a suggestion. As same as God, the Great Anonymus could wear a lot of masks, have a lot of names, even a lot of ways to de-nominate itself. Blaga’s suggestion of the Great Anonymus is useful in taking advantage of all its metaphorical determinations. Therefore, the Great Anonymus might be interpreted in the light of human specific acts: it has not only the possibility to reproduce itself, but also the supreme possibility to create beings of the same complexity. The Great Anonymus’s only care must be that of preserving its existential centralism, by refraining itself from creating similar beings. However, one of the multiple features of the ‘existential mystery’ consists of the paradox of “the danger of its own nature that generates identities” and being “the only existence which saves all by its unmerciful will”<sup>23</sup>. Subsequently, if the Great Anonymus thinks itself in the way in which the Greek and Jewish cosmology considered God the only being which can exclusively create by thinking – the examples of creation of world, or the Aristotelian Prime Mover as ‘thinking of thinking’ are often quoted by Blaga – it would find itself in the difficult and unsafe situation of a dangerous theo-anarchy: the possibility that its creations usurpate its position. Therefore, “the Great Anonymus should refuse the pleasure to think itself in the way a philosophical Narcissus «thinks himself»”<sup>24</sup>.

Because the gift of the Great Anonymus for humanity is irreparably mutilated, it feels the need to compensate for this miscarried gift, in the way in which it instituted ‘transcendent brakes’ limit any human attempt to reach the complete dimension of this

<sup>20</sup> Idem, *Religie și spirit*, în *op. cit.*, p. 479, n. 1 (my translation).

<sup>21</sup> J.-L. Marion, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>23</sup> L. Blaga, *Diferențialele divine*, în *Opere 11. Trilogia cosmologică*, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

unpleasant gift. As the Revelation remains a promise destined never to be accomplished, a simulacrum which cannot bring satisfaction to the giver, the Great Anonymus has to compensate somewhat. The concession, grasped as the most valuable gift for the receiver, although it is painful, is history: “in a supreme perspective, «history» would appear as a *compensation* which the Great Anonymus gives to the world, as a pay-off for its guilt for the creation, the great mutilate”<sup>25</sup>. Both human creation (even religious) and its censorship are possible only due to a historical context. This historical situation of mankind directly regards the event of Revelation. The meaning of Revelation is also controlled by the ‘transcendent censorship’, through which the Great Anonymus defends itself from the aspirations of every human individual knowledge to attain existential mysteries. Also, its decisive importance is concealed by the ‘transcendent brakes’ (the stylistic categories), through which every human being tends to interpret every experience given. In Blaga’s metaphysical construction, the Divine Revelation is degraded to be only a possible revelation of the existential mystery in stylistic patterns. Furthermore, any reiteration of the Divine Revelation, manifested as spiritual ecstasis also participates to historical stylistic constitution.

There is a decisive alternative that stems from this tragic perspective described by Blaga: either Divine Revelation in the person of Christ is the most important event of mankind, or this is only one of the possible revelations that has certain stylistic origins and a stylistic development. Is the truth of Revelation reducible to a historical truth, which can be stylistic apprehended? For an answer to this problem, we have to consider the *ego* from the point of view of the question initially formulated.

### Revelation or/as style?

Let us recall the main steps of the approach described here. Once we have recognized this fundamental ‘ideal correlation’ in the *self-totalization* and *self-exceeding* the human condition in the direction of the mystery of existence, which was grasped in Blaga’s perspective as the Great Anonymus, one is able to find the two ‘correlates’ in the notions of *mystery* and *style*, in a reversed sense of phenomenological reduction. In the case of transcendence, the intentional correlate (*mystery*) is the one that directs the object of consciousness (*cogito*). In such experiences, between them, there is neither a vicious circularity, nor an exteriority as we have seen in reference to Husserl’s phenomenality scheme, but an intimate unity. The question is now about the one who asks, namely the consciousness, which is to be considered as always *stylistically* determined, according to Blaga’s point of view. Moreover, how does consciousness have the intentional access to the phenomenon of Revelation?

In Blaga’s entire works we could find an indication of the style-consciousness where he argues that the *ego* is a ‘complex of a mystery signs’. In a nutshell, it is specific to the consciousness that relates to human horizon of living constituted in the

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<sup>25</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 181.

abyssal-cathegorial patterns<sup>26</sup>. The result of this constitution is the cultural creation. This perspective admits several similarities to Husserl's considerations on the concept of style. Style appears mainly in the last part of Husserl's philosophical work, in *Crisis* (1936), where this notion defines more than the way of a certain theoretical field, such as physics or geometry has constituted, but also the *a priori* structure of the world of our experiences, from which all our hypothesis, abstractizations, forecasts arise. For Husserl, all cultural structures emerge from the 'concrete-causal style of the world', which has been determined as an invariant form, the 'universal causal regulation' that puts together all things that belong to the world<sup>27</sup> and also the way how the life of the *ego* constitutes the relation with this world – its habits. As we observe, there is more than a thematic neighborhood between Blaga's and Husserl's perspectives. The only relevant difference is that Blaga conceives style as unintentional, although there is a paradox in this determination: if the style is non-intentional, how could we explain the tremendous religious conversions or ecstasis which express the *self-exceed* of human consciousness in the Romanian philosopher's perspective?

This is why phenomenological concept of *style* is in its turn indebted to the Husserlian concept of 'life-world' which corresponds both to the meaning of any culture and to the concrete world, as 'empirical-over-all style' which is taken for granted in all our experiences. The 'life-world' integrates all these ways of *style* manifestations. It is a realm of 'anonymus' subjective phenomena that articulates "a realm of something subjective which is completely closed off within itself, existing in its own way, functioning in all experiencing, all thinking, all life, thus everywhere inseparably involved, yet it has never been held in view, never been grasped or understood"<sup>28</sup>. Hence the 'life-world' also concern even religious phenomena. It might be understood as the origin of spiritual features as the 'communities of hope', rituals, ceremonials, grasped as institutionalized religion.

One might agree that a certain access to the Revelation is to be found in the texts of the Scripture, which recounts the historical-documented existence of Christ. The dependence of the event of His manifestation on a social, economic, ideological or religious context comes doubtless from a stylistic perspective: religion historians such as Renan or Harnack investigated the life of Christ in an allegedly objective way, following clues in the Scriptures. Through *style* one can also reach the validation of mythological motifs, such the ancient mesyanic myth of the Saviour in the Hebrew monoteist tradition, which is mentioned by Blaga. Is the cultural determination of *style* the only able to reveal to us the event of Revelation?

Husserl's phenomenological meaning of the universal concept of *style* overcomes the cultural perspective in the sense of the analysis of the *ego* as a person in the unity of its acts, which might be named the 'style of life', motivated by circumstances which determine the behavior. Curiously, there is an indication of *style*

<sup>26</sup> L. Blaga, *Artă și valoare, în Opere 10. Trilogia valorilor*, p. 503, 507.

<sup>27</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, transl. by D. Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 112.

in Husserl's second volume of *Ideas* which may directly lead to *ego's* perspective of the phenomenon of Revelation. The *style* is also the 'intuitive flair', a term which for Husserl means "the *presentiment*, the pre-seeing without seeing, an obscure, specifically symbolic, often ungraspably empty, premonition"<sup>29</sup>.

Why is the 'pre-seeing without seeing' or the premonition so important for a phenomenological approach to the event of Revelation? The answer lies in the phenomenality of anticipation which bounds together every factual certainty with the *self-exceeding* character of faith, impossible to repeat and also to explain: an experience that cannot enclose itself without losing its sense<sup>30</sup>, obtaining its meaning following a final event – the end of history as the fulfillment of any logic of experience. This fulfilling event, named the *eschaton* is something that has no place in the world, corresponding to the extraordinary experience of disciples in the Gospel episode of Transfiguration. Any consciousness approach to this privileged event is only self-announced, as premonition that certifies every stylistic or historical understanding of the facts described in the New Testament. One could not obtain the ascertainability of those facts except in a corresponding attitude of anticipation of the fulfillment of the entire human consciousness, which, let us admit, is an experience that exceeds even the most documented stylistic approach.

Even when the approach of our initial tripartite question has reached an end, there is still a question which always persists. If more than a metaphysical hypothesis, how does the jealous anonymous 'center of the existence' (the intentional correlate of the *ego's* consciousness) permit this mysterious premonition to human beings? Is the act of creation the only possible explanation? Then any religious attempt to represent the Revelation would be nothing but a failure. A phenomenological encounter with Blaga's metaphysics might take into account this challenge. Or perhaps the extraordinary event which occurred two milenia ago remains indifferent to the *ideal correlation* between the intentional correlate of *mystery* and the *stylistic* determined consciousness.

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<sup>29</sup> *Idem*, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, Kluwer's Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/Boston/London, 1990. p. 286.

<sup>30</sup> J.-Y. Lacoste, „Fenomenalitatea anticipării”, în *Fenomenalitatea lui Dumnezeu*, p. 181.

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Ioan Drăgoi, PhD Fellow, SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/133675 Project, Romanian Academy Iasi Branch. Research for this paper was supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/13367.