

HEGEL'S ANTICIPATION OF FREGE'S AND
HUSSLERL'S PRINCIPLES
IN HIS *LECTURES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF
RELIGION*

Miguel A. Badía Cabrera
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras
miguel.badiar@upr.edu

Resumen: Hegel razonablemente se puede considerar como el fundador de la filosofía de la religión contemporánea pues ha influenciado a pensadores importantes del siglo XX al proveerles de un acercamiento novedoso al estudio de la vida religiosa del género humano. En este artículo, sostendré que en sus *Lecciones sobre filosofía de la religión*, Hegel también prefigura doctrinas clave asociadas a Gottlob Frege, el fundador de la filosofía analítica, y Edmund Husserl, el fundador de la fenomenología. En la Introducción a las *Lecciones* del 1824, Hegel, al distinguir dos significaciones de la expresión “Dios”, está a punto de formular la notable distinción semántica de Frege acerca del sentido (*Sinn*) y la referencia (*Bedeutung*) de las expresiones lingüísticas. En el mismo texto, cuando discute la manera en que la filosofía de la religión procede para conocer la esencia (*Wesen*) de Dios, él también anticipa aspectos capitales de la actitud fenomenológica y el método de Husserl para la captación de las esencias (*Wesensschau*) de los objetos que son dados a la consciencia. En la filosofía contemporánea, la influencia “silenciosa” de Hegel se advierte en el enfoque fenomenológico de la religión que asume Paul Tillich.

Palabras clave: Hegel, *Wesen*, Frege, *Sinn*, *Bedeutung*; Husserl, *Wesensschau*, Tillich

Abstract: Hegel may reasonably be conceived as the founder of contemporary philosophy of religion because he has influenced important twentieth-century thinkers by providing them with a new approach to the study of the religious life of humankind. In this paper, I will argue that in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel also prefigures key insights that are connected with Gottlob Frege, the founder of analytic philosophy, and Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. In the Introduction to the 1824 *Lectures*, Hegel, in distinguishing two meanings of the expression “God,” comes close to formulate Frege’s notable semantic distinction of the sense (*Sinn*) and the reference (*Bedeutung*) of linguistic expressions. In the same text, when discussing the approach taken by the philosophy of religion in order to gain knowledge of the essence (*Wesen*) of God, he also anticipates main aspects of Husserl’s phenomenological attitude and method for the apprehension of the essences (*Wesensschau*) of the objects that are given to consciousness. In contemporary philosophy, the “silent” influence of Hegel is noticeable in Paul Tillich’s phenomenological approach to religion.

Keywords: Hegel, *Wesen*, Frege, *Sinn*, *Bedeutung*; Husserl, *Wesensschau*, Tillich

*To the memory of my friend and colleague,
José R. Silva de Choudens, a lover and
defender of rational philosophy*

Introduction

Occasionally it happens that in a great work that marks the end of a philosophical period key insights and ways of philosophizing are anticipated that will be characteristic of, and predominant in the immediately succeeding epoch. This, I do think, is what happens with Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.¹ With this work, one could

¹ Hegel did not publish a book that would have been a definitive and systematic version of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* which he read in 1821, 1824, 1827, and the year of his death, 1831. References to volume 1 of Hegel's *Lectures* (abbreviated as *LPR* 1) are to these editions, abbreviated as follows: E: *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 1. *Introduction and the Concept of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, translated by R. F. Brown, Peter C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of J. P. Fitzer and H. S. Harris (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984); G: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Teil 1, *Einleitung über die Philosophie der Religion - Der Begriff der Religion*, neu herg. von Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1993); S: *Lecciones sobre la filosofía de la religión*, Vol. 1. *Introducción y Concepto de la Religión*, edición y traducción de Ricardo Ferrara (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984). Hereafter references to this work are cited in the text between parenthesis in the following order: *Lectures* Vol. 1 (*LPR* 1), part of the work (Introduction or Concept of Religion), year in which the lectures series was read (1821, 1824, 1827, or 1831), page number in the English translation (E 3), German original (G 3-4) and Spanish translation (S 3); for instance, (*LPR* 1 Introduction 1821, E 83, G 3-4, S 3) refers to the Introduction of Vol. 1 of the *Lectures* given in 1821, page 83 of the English translation, pages 3-4 of the German original, and page 3 of the Spanish translation. I will follow the same conventions when citing volume 2 of the *Lectures*, *The Determinate Religion*, for example, (*LPR* II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion 1824, E 338-39, G 242, S 216).

rightly say, Hegel culminates the last important movement of late modern philosophy —German Absolute Idealism, while at the same time he opens up new approaches and thematic fields to philosophical research. In a recently published article,² I have tried to show that his original approach to the knowledge of God in his *Lectures* makes Hegel not a forerunner, but really the founder of contemporary philosophy of religion. In what follows, which is a sort of dialectical spinoff of that article, I will argue that in that work Hegel also formulates conceptual distinctions and delineates argumentative forms which are associated with the founders of the two main traditions of twentieth-century philosophy, analytic philosophy and phenomenology: i.e., Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). This is made manifest by a long passage in the Introduction to volume I of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* which he read in 1824 (LPR I Introduction 1824, E 117–18, G 34–36, S 32–34).

Hegel on two meanings of “meaning”

According to Hegel, even though within his metaphysical philosophy God may be ideally determined or conceptualized as the Absolute, he emphasizes that “what we call the *absolute* and the *idea* is still... not synonymous with what we call *God*.” This abstract definition “does not correspond to our representation of God”; that is to say, it does not correspond to the mental representation that in religion the devout or faithful have when the Divine being appears, presents itself to them, or reveals itself to their

² Miguel A. Badía Cabrera, “Hegel’s Approach to the Knowledge of God in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*,” *Diálogos*, LII 107 (2021), 80–98.

conscious experience. In order to make palpable the difference between these two meanings of "God" —as the object of philosophy in general and as the subject with which the philosophy of religion deals with—, Hegel asserts that we should first make clear "what 'meaning' itself means" (*was >Bedeutet< selbst bedeutet*):

In the first place we call what we have in mind—the significance, purpose, or general thought of the expression or work of art in question— "the inner." This is what we are asking for. But the inner is *universal* representation or determinateness; it is *the thought* in general. When we ask in this way what God is, what the expression "God" means, we want the thought; it is the thought that is supposed to be delivered up to us—the representation we no doubt have. Consequently it signifies that the concept should be delivered up, and so what we call in philosophy the "absolute" or the idea is of course the meaning. What we want to know is the absolute, the idea, the conceptualized nature of God, the nature of God grasped in thought, or the logical essence of the same. This is one meaning of "meaning," and to this extent what we call the "absolute" is synonymous with the expression "God" (*LPR I* Introduction 1824, E 117-18, G 34, S 32).

But if instead of beginning with the representation of God in order to elevate ourselves to the conceptual formulation of his universal essence, our point of departure is rather the essential determinations which are enunciated by pure thought, even if we could separately understand each and every one of those general traits, it is still possible that we may lack a clear idea of what is meant by the totality formed by the union of those features. In this way, Hegel

asserts that although the thought that determines God as “the unity of the subjective and objective” and “the unity of the real and ideal” may be right and those elements, i.e., “unity,” “subjective,” “objective,” “real,” “ideal,” and so forth, are intelligible when considered apart, something more is needed in order to be able to understand the meaning of those determinations of pure thought that refer to God:

What is wanted here is an intuition or a representation of the thought-determination (*Gedankenbestimmung*),³ an example (*Beispiel*) or an accompaniment (*Beiherspielendes*) of the content that has so far only been given in thought. Our expression “example” contains the representation and intuition of this already (*LPRI* Introduction 1824, E 118, G 35, S 33).

In Hegel’s philosophy of religion, the search for the meaning of “God” begins with the representation or particular form in which the mind characterizes the Divine being when it appears or is given to us as an object of immediate awareness, i.e., intuition. Only then it is possible to arrive at a complete and adequate comprehension of the meaning of the expression “God is Spirit,” which does not designate God’s essence in so far as it is understood by means of an abstract concept, or God in himself, but God in his concreteness, as the infinite Spirit that reveals itself, that is, that reality that becomes the object the human mind is aware of, and to which it renders devotion in religion: “That God is spirit consists in this: that he is not only the essence that maintains itself in thought but also the essence that appears,

³ I here follow the German original, “*Gedankenbestimmung*,” and not the English translation: “thought-category.”

the essence that endows itself with revelation and objectivity" (*LPR I* Introduction 1824, E 119, G 35, S 33-34).

Hegel and Frege

In the article already referred to I tried to clear up Hegel's preceding assertion about the concept of God as infinite Spirit.⁴ Here my purpose is to show that in that particular passage of the Introduction of the 1824 *Lectures*, Hegel, in his discussion about the two meanings of "meaning," appears if not formulating, at least prefiguring important doctrines of contemporary philosophy. In the first place, he seems to be pointing to the famous distinction made by the ancestor of analytic philosophy, Gottlob Frege, of the sense (*Sinn*) and the reference (*Bedeutung*) of linguistic expressions.⁵ According to Frege, expressions such as "the evening star" and "the morning star" have the same reference (*Bedeutung*): "the planet Venus." However, these locutions do not have the same sense (*Sinn*). On the one hand, a person who says that the morning star is the same as the evening star is not making a tautological judgment like "The morning star is identical

⁴ See Badia Cabrera, "Hegel's Approach to the Knowledge of God," pp. 82-91.

⁵ Gottlob Frege, "Sinn und Bedeutung" *Einleitung in die Logik* [August 1906], *Schriften zur Logik und Sprachphilosophie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1978), pp. 83-90. Guillermo E. Rosado Haddock asserts that Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848) was on the verge of making this distinction, and more importantly, that Husserl's version— independently obtained from Frege—is much more fruitful than Frege's version. See Rosado Haddock, "The Fine Structure of Sense-Referent Semantics," *Unorthodox Analytic Philosophy*, Texts in Philosophy Vol. 27 (UK: College Publications, 2018), pp. 31-56. In page 31, he points to Bolzano's *Wissenschaft der Logik*, second revised edition 1834 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1967-1969), Chapter II, Part C(c), pp. 132ff., especially p. 133.

with the morning star.” We could say that the meaning of the expression “the planet Venus” is the product or achievement of scientific, physical–mathematical thought upon which the non-trivial truth of the sentence “The morning star is identical with the evening star” is founded. On the other hand, the different significations (*Sinne*) of the other two expressions rather allude to the manner in which Venus appears to sensible intuition, as the brilliant heavenly body that is seen on the horizon at daybreak and the other equally radiant one that does it at dusk. I think that in the quoted passages of the 1824 Introduction this distinction is implicit in Hegel’s reflection on the essence or nature of God when he differentiates two different meanings of “meaning”:

1) “meaning” as the reference (*Bedeutung*) of an expression that points to a content of rational or pure thought, the first principle of Hegel’s speculative philosophy, God as the “Absolute,” — the concept (*Begriff*);

2) “meaning” as it refers to the manner in which that content appears or reveals as an object of intuition to innumerable human communities and is represented in diverse forms by them as they progressively become conscious of God as “Spirit” — the representation (*Vorstellung*).⁶

⁶ For a more detailed account of the difference between the central Hegelian notions of concept (*Begriff*) and representation (*Vorstellung*) in the context of his philosophy of religion, see Badía Cabrera, “Hegel on the Knowledge of God,” pp. 93–94. Eliseo Cruz Vergara systematically focuses the notion of concept in a much wider context, ontological as well as epistemological, in a highly original and profound article: “Hegel: El concepto en cuanto fundamento del saber filosófico” *Diálogos*, LII 107 (2021), 99–134. See also Cruz Vergara, *La concepción del conocimiento histórico en Hegel* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997), where he emphasizes the historicity that pertains to the Hegelian concept itself, which is the self-becoming of the universal

With respect to Frege's notable distinction, it must be emphasized that even though the expressions "the morning star" and "the evening star" point to the same astronomical object and thus have the same reference (*Bedeutung*), they, however, do not have the same sense, and so are not equivalent expressions. This is clear because somebody could deny that the morning star is identical with the evening star (as it did happen for quite a long time in many cultures) whereas another person could affirm their identity as the same heavenly body (as in general occurs nowadays). Even though the former assertion is false, it is not contradictory like the sentence "The morning star is not the morning star." And the latter assertion is not obviously true or tautological like "The evening star is identical with the evening star."

In the same fashion, according to Hegel, the names "Yahweh," "Allah," "Brahma," "Tao", and even "Buddha" designate the same being, the "Absolute" that God is. Nonetheless, these are not equivalent expressions. This is shown by the doctrinal disagreements between the different religious traditions that respectively proclaim their devotion to Yahweh, Allah, Brahma, Tao, and Buddha. These names immediately refer to the diverse forms in which these religious communities represent God, or more properly, to stages in the historical process in which God as Spirit progressively reveals to the spirit of human beings, and in this sense how the divine Spirit is present in those diverse communities. A few passages of the second volume, *The Determinate Religion*,⁷ of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of*

principle from the abstract to the concrete (be it God, nature, freedom, and so forth), a feature which is crucial for an adequate understanding of Hegel's concept of God.

⁷ References to volume 2 of Hegel's *Lectures* (abbreviated as *LPR 2*) are to these editions, abbreviated as follows: E: *Lectures on the Philosophy*

Religion serve to illustrate these diverse senses (*Sinne*) of God in Frege's sense, or different representations (*Vorstellungen*) in Hegel's sense (italics in those passages are mine):

Thus *Brahman* and the *Jewish God* are defined in the same way, but they also differ in that the *Hindu God, being God from the standpoint of consciousness*, is just the One, just neuter, not a personal One. *Brahma*, defined as personal subject, is determined as one of the three persons of the Trimurti, or trinity ... On the other hand, the God of Judaism is defined as the personal One, exclusive [of others], as subject, who will have no other gods beside him. (*LPR II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion* 1824, E 338–39, G 242, S 216).

God's creating is very different from procession, wherein the world goes forth from God. *For the Hindus, the worlds go forth from Brahma.* (*LPR II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion* 1827, E 672, G 564, S 492)

It is noteworthy that the older portions of the Vedas do not speak of Vishnu, even less of Shiva; there *Brahma, the One, is God* altogether alone (*überhaupt allein*) (*LPR II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion* 1827, E 592, G 488, S 428).

of Religion, Vol. 2. *The Determinate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987); G: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Teil 2, *Die bestimmte Religion*, neu herg. von Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1994); S: *Lecciones sobre la filosofía de la religión*, Vol. 2. *La religión determinada*, edición y traducción de Ricardo Ferrara (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987).

In the Chinese empire there is *a religion of Fo or Buddha*, which was introduced in A.D. 50. Then there is *the ancient Chinese religion of Dao* [Tao]—this is *a distinctive god*, reason. (*LPR II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion* 1827, E 548, G 445-46, S 392).

The Buddhists come principally from the Kingdom of Burma, India, and Ceylon. *Their God Buddha* is venerated as *Gautama* (*LPR II Immediate Religion, or Nature Religion* 1824, E 314, G 217, S 194).

Hegel and Husserl

These two different significations of “meaning” noted by Hegel also foreshadow key elements of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. Like analytic philosophy, phenomenology is an inquiry that focuses its attention in the exact determination of the meaning of the primary categories of thought and being. However, in contradistinction to analytic philosophy, it emphasizes that in order to clarify these meanings it is necessary to go beyond the linguistic terms and propositions, and concentrate on the psychical acts (*Erlebnisse*) by which the objects to which those expressions refer are given to consciousness. In this fashion, it strives to discover, examine, and describe the essential structures (*eide*) of these objects, that is, to arrive at an intuition of the essences (*Wesensschau*) of the objects that appear to us (the phenomena), whether these are real, possible, or imaginary.⁸ It is true that Husserl rejected

⁸ Marvin Farber characterizes phenomenology as “the descriptive science of experience and the objects of experience, with interest restricted on their essential structures.” Here the term “experience” only marks a resemblance with sensible perception or intuition, which gives us

Hegel's construction of an idealist metaphysics out of his "phenomenology," that is, out the analyses of the objects that are immediately given to consciousness and the subject to which these appear. In spite of this, the affinity of Husserlian phenomenology with the Hegelian is not merely nominal, but material as well as methodological.

With respect to first point, Quentin Lauer is right in asserting that like Hegel, for Husserl "only phenomena *are given*."⁹ Thus their subject matters are the same: i.e., the objects that they study are not "things in themselves" —in the Kantian sense of things as they are outside their relationship with consciousness—, but "things themselves" that reveal to consciousness. Nonetheless, I think that interpreters such as Lauer are wrong when they affirm that contrary to Hegel (and to Kant and the positivists as well), Husserl "will claim that *in* them [the phenomena] is given the very *essence* of that which is."¹⁰ Such assertion appears somewhat odd in light of Hegel's well-known critique and rejection of the Kantian notion of the "thing-in-itself," and more so if one takes into account his remarks about God's essence in the passage in his *Lectures* that we have cited, which make it clear that the essence of what is does not lie beyond, but is in the objects that appear to us. Even God's essence "is the essence that appears, the essence that endows itself with revelation and objectivity" (*LPR I* Introduction 1824, E 119, G 35, S 33-34).

immediate access to matters of fact or real things, with eidetic experience, which is not a perception of factual things, but an "intuition of essences" (*Wesensschau*), that is to say, an experience of ideal objects (*eide*). See Marvin Farber, *The Aims of Phenomenology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 10-11.

⁹ Quentin Lauer, *Phenomenology: Its Genesis and Prospect* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1965), p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

Concerning the second issue, even though Husserl reflected in *Logical Investigations*¹¹ about the foundations of logic, mathematics, and science in general, the initial object of his analyses were the things or objects in so far as they are given or present immediately to consciousness, i.e., the phenomena. He procured to temporarily suspend or “put between brackets” all questions about the real existence, truth, and value of the objects that appear to consciousness and the causal explanation of how these mental states are produced, and even of the conscious subject as an existent being among others within the natural world. For Husserl, phenomenology instead of being a doctrine, is a method—in fact, the method of philosophy—, and the suspension of judgment or “reduction” of belief (*epoché*), which I have sketchily described, is just its first stage. By way of this “phenomenological reduction” the attention is not focused on the objects that present to conscious experience as factual matters or actually real things, and even less as existing outside consciousness, but rather on the universal essences (*eide*) or ideal structures that are embodied in objects with a determinate description with certain characteristics and attributes that allow us to identify them as a number, a figure, or a corporeal thing, and so forth. This method thus consists in examining these objects and describing them as accurately as possible in so far as they are clear cases or exemplars of some class of real or possible beings in order to apprehend their universal essence, or as Marvin Farber aptly puts it, “to bring to evident consciousness the essence of that which is experienced.”¹²

¹¹ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols., trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970); *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1900-1901).

¹² Farber, *The Aims of Phenomenology*, p. 44.

The apprehension of the universal essences (*eide*) that those typical examples instantiate is denominated by Husserl “intuition of essences” (*Wesensschau*).¹³ “Eidetic variation” is the procedure employed to reach the apprehension of their essence. It consists in the free variation or aleatoric modification in imagination of the diverse features exhibited by the object, that is, of the material and qualitative content with which it initially appears to consciousness. In such a fashion we generate innumerable imaginary objects some of which will not be specimens of the initial object whereas others will continue to be so only if they maintain themselves within certain structures that remain invariable across the whole process of free variation. Such constant structures, which the phenomenologist will attempt to describe as exactly as possible, will constitute the “essence” or “eidos” of this class: that is to say, they will specify the necessary conditions for any particular object whatsoever, be it real or merely imaginary, to be an exemplar of this species of objects. By proceeding in such a way, we attain a definite and fundamental knowledge of the universal essence that we had made the subject matter of our investigation.

I have no wish to deny the significant differences between the philosophies of Hegel and Husserl. For many

¹³ The most succinct rendition as well as faithful to Husserl’s thought of the method of eidetic variation, and to which I am much indebted, is provided by my old teacher Aron Gurwitsch in *The Field of Consciousness* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1961), pp. 189–97. He asserts (page 91) that although Husserl employed the method of “free variation” even in *Logical Investigations*, he did not give a systematic treatment to it until *Experience and Judgment*, which is a work that was published posthumously: *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Prague: Academia Verlag, 1939). See *Experience and Judgment*, trans. Ludwig Landgrebe (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), § 87. The method of essential seeing [*Wesensschauung*], pp. 340–48.

scholars it appears as a matter of course that Hegel's "dialectical" movement for apprehending the essence is different from Husserl's "eidetic reduction" or "free variation." But even with respect to this presumably obvious point there is room for disagreement, for Lauer, for instance, claims something which I am not competent to judge of – that "there is even in Husserl's thought a dialectic" although a more static one like Fichte's, not "the dynamic dialectic of Hegel."¹⁴ On the other hand, Husserl does not explicitly claim that Hegel is a predecessor of his phenomenological philosophy, at least not in the same clear and enthusiastic way in which he acknowledges that a version of the "phenomenological attitude" and the "suspension of judgment" (*epoché*) is upheld by Descartes in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* and other modern philosophers as well, particularly Hume.¹⁵ Again, even this

¹⁴ See Lauer, *Phenomenology: Its Genesis*, p. 36. He bases this claim in the well-known fact that "Husserl occupied himself seriously with Fichte for several years at Göttingen" (Ibid., note 33).

¹⁵ Husserl emphasizes this point in many places, more conspicuously perhaps in these two works: 1) *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960); first German edition: *Cartesianische Meditationen* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1977). In the Introduction, § 1 and § 2, pp 1-6, he presents Descartes' *Meditations* as "the prototype of philosophical reflection" which discloses "the necessity of a radical new beginning for philosophy." 2) *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, Book 1: General Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 2014); first German edition: *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1913). In sec. 2, ch. 4, § 62 Epistemological Anticipations: The "dogmatic" and the phenomenological attitude, pp. 113-14, he asserts that phenomenology is "the secret longing of all modern philosophy," which "the wonderfully profound, fundamental consideration of Descartes is already pushing towards it," and afterwards, within the psychologism of Locke's school,

claim has been recently challenged by Sebastian Luft. For him, even if one allows that of the German Idealist philosophers from Kant to Hegel, Husserl only exhaustively studied Fichte, Husserlian phenomenology as first or foundational philosophy should be considered as a development in the history, and an integral part of classical German philosophy.¹⁶

After this brief survey of Husserl's phenomenology with Hegel in view, I have to make something clear. It is not the totality of the Husserlian phenomenological method that I claim that Hegel prefigures in his preceding observations

Hume again almost steps into its domains, although with "blinded eyes" [probably due to Hume's initial sensationism]. Finally, in the Epilogue § 6, which is transcribed in the Spanish edition but not in Dahlstrom's edition of *Ideas I*, Husserl asserts that in Hume's *Treatise [of Human Nature]* one finds the first systematic draft of a pure phenomenology, although not eidetic, and particularly in its first book [*Of the Understanding*] a complete phenomenology of knowledge. See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas relativas a una fenomenología pura y una filosofía fenomenológica*, traducción de José Gaos (México-Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica), Epílogo § 6, p. 389.

¹⁶ Sebastian Luft, "Phenomenology as First Philosophy: A Prehistory," *Diálogos XLIV*, 93 (2012), 167–88. According to Luft, the problem from German Idealist philosophers after Kant, especially in Reinhold, Fichte, and even Schelling "at least until 1808," was

finding and defining precisely this first principle, which is not something logical, as, e.g., in Aristotle (the law of non-contradiction), but which, after the transcendental turn, must hang together intimately with the problem of *subjectivity* and concerns the very task of what transcendental philosophy is to accomplish. As the historian of post-Kantian philosophy immediately recognizes, this was the project of the early reception of Kant's critical philosophy, especially in Reinhold and Fichte (*Ibid.*, p. 170).

Hegel sought to solve this problem by turning what he called the "subjective idealism" of his predecessors, into an "absolute idealism" by means of his dialectical method (*Ibid.*, note 9).

about the two meanings of "God," but only this crucial aspect —the need of an *exemplar* as the point of departure for apprehending the universal essence of objects that are given to consciousness. As we have seen, in order to elucidate the precise meaning of the expression "God" and clearly apprehend the determining features of the divine essence, Hegel affirms that it is necessary for the philosophy of religion to begin its inquiry with an example (*Beispiel*) that may clarify to us this meaning. And we must look for the exemplar in the representation (*Vorstellung*) of God, that is to say, in the manner in which God appears or reveals to consciousness (the finite, human spirit) as an object and the diverse ways in which the human mind represents him (the infinite Spirit).

Concluding observations

All in all, I believe that in the preceding fragments of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel intertwines strands of thought that later on will be conceptually pieced together into the theoretical fabric that confers their distinctive stamp to the dominant tendencies in contemporary philosophy. With his last work Hegel culminates an important period in modern philosophy that, dialectically speaking, preserves and at the same time supersedes previous philosophizing, for it contains the germs of key principles associated with seminal thinkers of a later era like Frege and Husserl.

At this closure, it is perhaps pertinent to point to an example of a twentieth-century theologian and philosopher of religion, Paul Tillich, who, by his own admission, assumes a phenomenological outlook in Husserl's sense, while at the same time, without explicit acknowledgement, states this

view in a poignant way that reproduces the doctrine of Hegel's philosophy of religion which has been discussed here. Tillich claims that in the application of Husserl's phenomenological method to the determination of the meaning of concepts which refer to logical species or even to those of the natural world, the election of the exemplar of any of those species is really irrelevant. But with respect to "spiritual realities," such as those that religion deals with, the choosing of an example is "critical" [principally in the sense of "crucial"] because "spiritual life creates more than mere exemplars; it creates *unique embodiments of something universal*" (italics added).¹⁷

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¹⁷ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, and London: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1953), I, 2, 107. Compare Tillich's thesis with this passage from Hegel's *Lectures*: "These determinate configurations of the idea or of the absolute—nature | finite spirit, the world of consciousness—are *embodiments* (Verleiblichungen) of the idea; but they are determinate configurations or *particular modes of appearance of the idea*. They are configurations in which the idea has not yet penetrated to itself in order to be as absolute spirit" (*LPR* I Introduction 1824, E 119-20, G 37, S 35; italics added).

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