

I have intentionally hedged my description of possibilities for a phenomenology of religion that is explicitly linked to the actual work of Husserl. My description of such a phenomenology of religion is provisional simply because of the difficulty in constructing such an approach to the study of religion. The difficulty is not to be found in the complex nature of Husserl's thought, although this would be enough to halt the timid. The difficulty is due to the critique that "post-structural" scholars have directed at phenomenology in general and Husserl in particular. This critique has dealt a devastating blow to Husserl's notion of a transcendental reduction and the apodictic value of his notion of the transcendental ego. Foucault, for example, describes his own project as a correction of "the search for origins, for formal a prioris, for founding acts... its aim is to free history from the grip of phenomenology."⁵² It will simply not do for the phenomenologist of religion once again to call this movement a Parisian fashion which is reductionistic in its thought, and nihilistic in its outcome. A new phenomenology of religion will have to struggle with this contemporary intellectual movement. And if it disagrees with it, then it will have to articulate why it disagrees and show where someone like Foucault has gone wrong. This is precisely what the construction of theories is all about.

In the meantime, I would suggest the following set of methodological rules for constructing a phenomenology of religion. 1. The truth of our description of religious meaning does not entail that the intentional object exists, since it is not necessarily the case that meaning entails reference. 2. The suspension of truth regarding religious expressions and statements is a serious mistake, for it may well be the case that the meaning of religious expressions entails truth conditions. 3. Empathy for or experiencing another religion is theoretically irrelevant to an analysis of the meaning of religion. 4. The meaning of religion does not entail whether The Sacred exists or not. 5. The meaning of religion does not entail an inference that we have the ability to intuit the existence of The Sacred. 6. A phenomenological analysis of the meaning of religion entails a theoretical reduction of religious expressions as intentional acts.

The development of a phenomenology of religion from within the above framework would mean an end to the phenomenology of religion

as it is practiced today. If the Husserlian tradition does not provide the proper theoretical framework for phenomenologists of religion, then they should stop referring to Husserl and describe what they think the theory is that leads to objectivity in our understanding of religion. One thing is certain. It is time phenomenologists of religion drop the disguise of "neutrality." Rather than taking a stand on the autonomy of religion and the sui generis nature of the sacred they need to produce an argument that can withstand critical examination.

NOTES

1. Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960).
2. Willard Oxtoby, "The Idea of the Holy," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan, 1987) 436.
3. Douglas Allen, "The Phenomenology of Religion," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 11, 273ff., and "Edmund Husserl," vol. 6, 539. See also J. D. J. Waardenburg's article on van der Leeuw, vol. 8, for a similar assessment.
4. All of these assertions can be found in the publication of a well-known phenomenologist of religion. See C. J. Bleeker, *The Rainbow: A Collection of Studies in the Science of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1975). The fact that he has put them all together in a single publication allows us to keep this note short.
5. G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (London: Allen, 1938) 683-85.
6. van de Leeuw 646, note 1. This note is not in the original German edition and is obviously an afterthought. There are no notes on the use of *epoche* in Chapter