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FROM THE *IDEALTYPUS* TO THE *ARCHÉTYPE*: SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GERARDUS VAN DER LEEUW'S RELIGIOUS PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY AND MIRCEA ELIADE'S MORPHOLOGY?

As it is generally known, the so-called “religionist” approach within the study of religions refers to Friedrich Schleiermacher and his *Reden über die Religion* from 1799, where religion is defined as “Sinn und Geschmack fürs Unendliche” and placed on the same level of rational knowledge and morality, as a cognitive modality proceeding not through reason, but intuition and sentiment.¹ On the one hand, the scientific study of religion – namely history of religions – gradually develops as a secular discipline in the wake of historical and philological sciences and inspired by Auguste Comte's, Émile Durkheim's and Marcel Mauss' sociology and anthropology; on the other hand, a trend enhancing the vital and irrational dimension of human existence in all its historicity spread between 19th and 20th century: think of the thought of a Henri Bergson or of Georg Simmel's and Wilhelm Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie*.²

In particular, Dilthey intends to affirm the autonomy of the *Geisteswissenschaften*: the genetic explanation characterizing natural sciences, named *Erklären*, is totally inadequate in order to work within human sciences; these pretend a deep and sympathetic understanding, the *Verstehen*. The goal is “das Leben aus ihm selber verstehen zu wollen”,³ with a methodic rigour setting life as all-embracing horizon, as a totality that can only be interpreted.⁴ The “religionist” approach within *Religionswissenschaft* is grafted onto this trunk; Ernesto de Martino, an Italian ethnologist with Marxist bents, went as far as calling this school, in the phase of its acme, “equivocal family”, an ambiguous scholars group having, in his opinion, scientifically questionable claims.

History of religions enjoys an enormous development beginning from the second half of the 19th century, when the philological and the historical critical method becomes successful and contributes creating, thanks to comparison, imposing systematisations of religious phenomena in many respects of evolutionistic (more rarely involutionistic) character: monotheism, myth, rite, sacrifice, etc., without either sparing Christianity, with the rise of biblical exegesis. Nevertheless, the attempts to systematically describe religious phenomena resorting to comparison fail for want of a coherent methodology and because of consequent philosophical difficulties; at least Schleiermacher's "Sinn und Geschmack fürs Unendliche" as well as Dilthey's historicism pave the way for a discipline that will declare itself "phenomenology of religion", a "science of phenomena" applied to religions, in the same logic as life is to be comprehended on the basis of itself.⁵

The extent of the "Schule des Verstehens",⁶ the religionist approach more or less directly referring to a "phenomenology of religion", as well as the question whether and to what extent its currents are compatible urged us in this paper to liken the actually original tendency, Gerardus van der Leeuw's one, with Mircea Eliade's "religious morphology", that going a innovative way and doomed to great success and great discussions.⁷ This comparison concerns a central aspect in the methodology both of the one and of the other, namely the construction and use of typologies, ideal types and archetypes respectively; here, the main question we will try to answer is whether Eliade conceives his *archétypes* – at least in so far as he considers them as instruments of his methodology – in a similar way as Van der Leeuw conceives his *Idealtypen*. In order to do this, we will treat the approaches of both authors by stressing the conformation of the ideal types and the archetypes in the light of the underlying epistemologies and influences and finally detecting continuity as well as discontinuity elements.⁸

Gerardus van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion

The proper phenomenology of religion rises thanks to the talent of a Dutch *Religionswissenschaftler* (and reformed pastor), Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950).⁹ In 1925, he publishes an *Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*,¹⁰ followed eight years later by his masterpiece *Phänomenologie der Religion*.¹¹ In the wake of scholars like Nathan Söderblom and Rudolf Otto, which raise the sacred to an

almost ontological category and emphasize the centrality of religious experience as a lived one, Van der Leeuw first of all intends to understand this experience. Influenced by *Gestaltpsychologie*, above all where this tendency affirms the importance of the structural element and of the whole, by Max Weber's understanding sociology and particularly by Dilthey's hermeneutics through Karl Jaspers' work, with its emphasis on the need of a sympathetic comprehension, based on the capacity of *nacherleben*, reliving what it tries to interpret, Van der Leeuw applies to religion the "science of phenomena" even because religion is par excellence a dimension escaping purely rational, objectivistic explanations.

The name of the new discipline refers to Edmund Husserl's philosophical phenomenology, the gnoseologic approach that wants to go "zurück zu den Sachen", with an anti-metaphysical and realistic effort aiming at investigating reality through the suspension of judgment called *epoché* as well as the grasping of the essence of things (eidetic vision), in the conviction that this method gives best reasons for the complexity of what exists, also and above all for human life and history. However, there is a widespread consent among scholars about considering Van der Leeuw's phenomenology only indirectly close, on the epistemological level, to transcendental phenomenology and thus seeing it as something autonomous.¹² Someone even contests as wrong and deceptive every similarity between the one and the other.¹³ We will discuss afterwards this question, also with reference to Eliade.

What is in fact, according to Van der Leeuw, this "science of phenomena"? Etymologically, the phenomenon is "was sich zeigt", and this implies 1) that something exists, 2) that this something shows itself, and 3) that this something, even because it shows itself to someone, is a phenomenon. Therefore, the phenomenon is not a mere object, something existing objectively and independently of us, nor something purely subjective, namely an impression of consciousness: it is the meeting between object and subject or, as Van der Leeuw explains, "ein subjektbezogenes Objekt und ein objektbezogenes Subjekt".¹⁴

Even because the phenomenon is not a simple object, it is not immediately and completely knowable; on the contrary, it is relatively hidden, and comes progressively to manifest itself, until it becomes relatively transparent. The phenomenologist, on his part, experiences this process in a similar way: he or she has a lived experience, an *Erlebnis*, of the phenomenon, tries to understand and to relive it – *Verstehen*, *Nacherleben* – and gives finally a testimony of it (*Bezeugen*). As Van der

Leeuw explains with a metaphor, the phenomenologist is like a skilled swimmer, profoundly knowing of the river of life and therefore able to dive and swim without passively being carried away by the power of stream.¹⁵

The first level is classification, *Namengebung*: phenomena are 'baptised' and put in a certain category: sacrifice, purification, myth etc. The second stage is the *Einschaltung*, the insert of such phenomena in my own life: in fact, it is impossible to give any interpretation of a phenomenon, of what appears, without having lived it, and this process, as Van der Leeuw recognizes, is "mehr eine Kunst als eine Wissenschaft". The third level is the *epoché*, the suspension of judgement. Phenomena are never perfectly transparent, so it is necessary to put in brackets everything else than the phenomenon and to just consider what appears without falling in metaphysics on the one hand and without restricting the process to the mere empirical observation on the other hand: to stay in the middle between object and subject, where the phenomenon even takes place. Subsequently, there is the *Klärung*: putting together what is similar and pulling apart what has a different nature, on the basis not of causal or genetic links, but of *Sinnzusammenhänge* showing the relations of phenomena among each other within a broader whole.¹⁶

These four stages form together the *Verstehen* process. As Van der Leeuw makes clear:

Die chaotische, starre 'Wirklichkeit' wird damit zu einer Kundgebung, einer Offenbarung. Das empirische, ontische und metaphysische *Faktum* wird zu einem *Datum*, das *Ding* zu einer lebendigen *Rede*, die *Starrheit* zum *Ausdruck*.¹⁷

According to Van der Leeuw, science is and cannot but be hermeneutics: in itself, understanding the Egyptians of the first dynasty, he writes, is not more difficult than understanding our neighbour. Very important is moreover that the phenomenologist should always have an attitude of humility, for the understanding process always needs constant adjustments, above all by means of the philological and archaeological sciences. The goal of the *Verstehen* is in fact the "reine Sachlichkeit", an objectivity then excluding every metaphysical 'infiltration'.¹⁸

[Phenomenology] steht ab vom modernen Denken, das uns lehren möchte, 'die Welt als ungeformten Stoff zu betrachten, den wir erst zu formen haben, und uns als die Herren der Welt aufzuspielen'. Sie will nur Eins:

Zeugnis ablegen von dem, was ihr gezeigt worden ist. Sie kann das nur auf indirektem Wege, durch ein zweites Erlebnis des Geschehenen, durch eine Rekonstruktion hindurch.¹⁹

Therefore, making phenomenology does not mean just compiling a catalogue of phenomena, classifying them as they appear in space and time, but realizing a psychological description, and here the adjective 'psychological' is to understand in an extensive sense, since it has even to do with the *Erlebnis* and the ability to comprehend it by reliving and reconstructing it.²⁰ Beginning from the single understanding experiences he has by observing phenomena, the phenomenologist tries to insert them in broad structures and typologies having their own autonomy and general, ideal meaning. These ideal types have an intrinsic normative character, because they are to some extent the patterns, the archetypes or prototypes on which the empiric reality of religious phenomena turns; they are the way leading the phenomenologist to the goal of his research, i.e. grasping the essence of religion.²¹

Religion is a phenomenon par excellence. Of course, phenomenology deals with religion not in so far as it is revelation, but inasmuch as it is "verständliches Erlebnis" needing to be reconstructed, a visible answer man gives to an actually invisible revelation. According to Van der Leeuw, religion is an universal and coherent phenomenon, deep-rooted in human life, determined not so much by its content but by the attitude it presupposes in human beings.²²

Religion ist Ausweitung des Lebens bis zu seiner äußersten Grenze. Der religiöse Mensch wünscht sich ein reicheres, tieferes, weiteres Leben, er wünscht sich Macht. M. a. W.: der Mensch sucht in und an seinem Leben eine Überlegenheit, sei es, daß er sich dieser zu bedienen, sei es, daß er sie anzubeten begehrt.²³

Man looks for *power*, he tries to find in life a sense, and in order to do it he "wirft über die Buntheit des Gegebenen sein regelmäßig gearbeitetes Netz", "aus dem Stein macht er sich ein Bild, aus dem Trieb ein Gebot, aus der Wildnis einen Acker", without ceasing to look for "einen immer tieferen, weiteren *Sinn*", the religious sense of things, their extreme sense, "der Sinn des Ganzen", "das letzte Wort".²⁴ This is the reason why, to use Jan Hermelink's words, Van der Leeuw's hermeneutics can be

summarized in this sentence, taken and adapted from one of the principles of Protestantism: *religio suae ipsius interpres*.²⁵

Van der Leeuw's *Idealtypen*

As Jürgen Kehnscherper with reason argues, Van der Leeuw's methodology is fundamentally "verstehend", "idealtypisch" and "hermeneutisch", and the second adjective, "ideal typical", is here central on the conceptual level as well. Van der Leeuw makes use of ideal types in order to understand the inert mass of reality, and does it with a philosophically prophetic hermeneutic approach, given the success it will enjoy from the middle of the 20th century on.²⁶

Original reality, the thing in itself, as we saw, is impossible to reach: we can approach a phenomenon only by applying the understanding method, that is to say, we try to make experience of a phenomenon – and this is the *Erlebnis* – and to relive it putting it in a broad structure, a *Sinnzusammenhang*.²⁷ With this 'bath' in the sense, we are able to identify categories, types, even ideal types that are not real in themselves, but have nevertheless their own life and their own laws.²⁸ Van der Leeuw shows it with an example:

Die 'Seele' kommt als solche nie und nirgends vor. Es wird immer nur eine bestimmte Art der Seele geglaubt, die, in dieser ihrer Bestimmtheit, einzig ist. Ich kann sogar sagen, daß die Seelenvorstellungen zweier Menschen, sogar im selben Kultur- und Religionskreis, nie ganz und gar dieselben sind. Es gibt aber einen Typus der Seele, einen verständlichen Zusammenhang verschiedener Seelenstrukturen. Dieser Typus ist zeitlos. Er ist nicht wirklich. Aber er ist lebendig und zeigt sich uns.²⁹

Therefore, the *Idealtypus* is a creation of the human thought, aiming to disclose the sense of the single *Erlebnisse* as well as of the broad context where they are put, the *Sinnzusammenhänge* or *verständliche Zusammenhänge*. They are based on experience, but do not coincide with it. On the other side, they are neither metaphysical elements, having an ontological or dogmatic consistency. Nonetheless, they are universal and have universal validity.³⁰ Van der Leeuw's phenomenology is indeed a "bewusste und methodisch kontrollierte Anwendung der idealtypischen Methode in der Religionsgeschichte"; without such an application there is no historical research.³¹

Van der Leeuw relies explicitly on Weber's and Jaspers' ideal types, although, on the strictly religious scientific level, he honours Rudolf Otto as the inventor of typology.³² To be precise, we have to consider Jaspers' theoretics as the most important source of Van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion and to notice the transition of the *Idealtypen* from the Weberian understanding sociology to the Jaspersian understanding psychology.³³ Weber makes clear that the ideal type, far from being the goal of knowledge, is just an instrument, not utilized for describing empirical reality, but for utopically constructing a reflection of it in our imagination in order to help such description:³⁴ "Um die wirklichen Kausalzusammenhänge zu durchschauen, konstruieren wir unwirkliche", he says.³⁵ With the *Idealtypus*, Weber intends to solve the aporetic problem arising from the necessity to bring together the generalizing (systematic) knowledge and the individualizing (historical) one within science, namely to reconcile the study of the universal with that of the particular. The ideal type is a pattern, a scheme, a way to think and to organize thought, first of all, although not exclusively, based on the rationality principle.³⁶

On his part, Jaspers conforms to Weber and adopts his notion of *Idealtypus*,³⁷ by emphasizing its aspect as unit of measurement meant to 'photograph' that "endloses Gewebe von Sinnhaftem und Sinnfremdem" which reality is.³⁸ Whereas the Weberian ideal type, employed on the sociological level, investigates in the first place acting, with its essentially rational structure and open to the sense, and stops where the evidence (i.e. the rational grasping) and the *Verstehen* diverge, the Jaspersian one, put in a psychological context, aims to grasp "das Seelische", and it does it not only by understanding "Zustände", that is thanks to a "statisches Verstehen", but also by understanding "Zusammenhänge", that is thanks to a "genetisches Verstehen".³⁹ In the wake of Dilthey and his notions of *Erlebnis* as "gestaltgewordenes Leben" as well as of *Strukturzusammenhang*, Jaspers 'de-empirizes' and renders dynamic the understanding structures constructed both by Dilthey and Weber, and does it in order to get to the heart of the "seelische Zusammenhänge":⁴⁰ "Verstehen, wie Seelisches aus Seelischem hervorgeht, wie Handlungen aus Motiven entspringen, wie Stimmungen und Affekte aus Situationen und Erlebnissen hervorgehen", he writes.⁴¹

Therefore, Van der Leeuw appropriates Weber's ideal types 'dipped' in Jaspers' understanding psychology and turns again to history by bearing in mind Dilthey's lesson. In an essay from 1926, Van der Leeuw associates psychology and *Religionswissenschaft*, asserting that in both disciplines

are present similar tendencies and both have to face similar problems; nevertheless, psychology is a few steps further than history of religions.⁴² By involving also the theoretics of another psychologist, Ludwig Binswanger,⁴³ Van der Leeuw establishes the basis of the religious phenomenological method and speaks on the one hand of the analysis and 'cataloguing' of phenomena – "zur Gegebenheit bringen" –, which corresponds to the "statisches Verstehen", and on the other hand of "Einfühlung"/"Einschaltung in das eigene Leben" through the identification of "verständliche Zusammenhänge" à la Jaspers,⁴⁴ identified with the "genetisches Verstehen": the *Idealtypen* have the task to subsume the *verständliche Zusammenhänge* in "ein lebendiges Ganzes", to render them "zu einem Erlebnis [...], das der 'Wirklichkeit' als Norm gegenüber steht".⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion evolves – its height is represented by the *Epilegomena* at the end of his masterpiece – towards a form privileging the methodological unity, so that both these stages, the static and the genetic one, are founded in a phenomenological whole stressing above all the ideal typical character of every phenomenon.⁴⁶ The phenomenologist realizes he cannot keep apart the different steps of his analysis, since everything manifesting itself is already permeated of sense and is already reconstructed. Speaking of essence or sense of the phenomenon, of structure, of a *verständlicher Zusammenhang* or of an *Idealtypus* means ultimately speaking of the same thing or at least putting these different steps in a sort of simultaneity, what is closely related to the hermeneutic circle and its working.⁴⁷

Thus, Van der Leeuw's ideal type is characterized as a *Doppelerlebnis*, a lived experience made *a posteriori* within the *Nacherleben* and the reconstruction, tasked with the support of phenomenology of religion by taking seriously the unicity and individuality of human beings as well as of their history, but without giving up systematics. The matter is the solving of the "aporetisches Problem" subsisting between the study of the general and that of the particular; like the Weberian one, Van der Leeuw's ideal type tries to reach this conciliation being individualizing without being arbitrary and generalizing without being abstract.⁴⁸

Within *Phänomenologie der Religion*, then, *Idealtypen* of various kind arise: the different forms assumed by the *power*, which according to Van der Leeuw is the drive of religious life; the human attitudes toward the sacred (worship, faith, conversion, mission etc.); the concrete manners through which man organizes his own religiosity and regards the world. The ideal types of the various universal religions are particularly interesting:

the religion of distance and escape (for instance Confucianism); the religion of fight (Zoroastrianism); the religion of quietness (mysticism); the religion of restlessness (in same respects, the Old Testament religion); the religion of compulsion and form (the Greek polytheism); the religion of infinity and asceticism (Indian religions); the religion of the nothing and of piety (Buddhism); the religion of will and obedience (Judaism); the religion of majesty and humility (Islam); finally, the religion of love, i.e. Christianity, structurally considered by Van der Leeuw the acme, the accomplishment, the central *Gestalt* of all historical religions.⁴⁹

Mircea Eliade's religious morphology

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986)⁵⁰ is often considered as an eminent representative of phenomenology of religion or at least as a notable exponent of the *Schule des Verstehens*. His disciple Ioan Petru Culianu calls him "one of the mythical figures of history of religions", an insuperable barrier laying in front of every new attempt to study religious facts. On his part, Eliade considers himself as a "morphologist",⁵¹ a scholar of religious forms at the centre of which is situated, like in Otto's opinion, the famous-notorious "sacred". The sacred is scattered in man's history, in his myths, rites and symbols, and in particular within the so-called archaic societies. At the beginning of his most famous book, *Traité d'Histoire des religions*, Eliade writes:

[...] Un phénomène religieux ne se révélera comme tel qu'à condition d'être appréhendé dans sa propre modalité, c'est-à-dire d'être étudié à l'échelle religieuse. Vouloir cerner ce phénomène par la physiologie, la psychologie, la sociologie, l'économique, la linguistique, l'art, etc... c'est le trahir ; c'est laisser échapper justement ce qu'il y a d'unique et d'irréductible en lui, nous voulons dire son caractère sacré.⁵²

As in Van der Leeuw's opinion, also according to Eliade there are not pure religious phenomena, that is existing out of history. But it is fundamental to consider them in themselves, in their irreducibility and originality, even in their sacred character; in their nature as expressions of the sacred. Though, what is the sacred (or holy)? Eliade qualifies it as "an element in the structure of consciousness, not a stage in the history of consciousness".⁵³ This means that the sacred represents a perceptive

modality of human being to some extent of primordial nature, based on concrete and widespread forms. These forms are called “hierophanies” and consist always of three elements: a natural object, an invisible reality and an intermediary object, filled with sacrality. A sacred stone, a sacred source are hierophanies, but also the Son of God, the Word Incarnate in Christianity or even the cosmos in itself are hierophanies. Eliade says:

Der Mensch erhält Kenntnis vom Heiligen, weil dieses sich manifestiert, weil es sich als etwas vom Profanen völlig Verschiedenes erweist. [...] Man könnte sagen, daß die Geschichte der Religionen – von den primitivsten bis zu den hochentwickelten – sich aus einer großen Anzahl von Hierophanien, d. h. Manifestationen heiliger Realitäten, zusammensetzt. [...] Wir stehen immer demselben geheimnisvollen Vorgang gegenüber: das ‘ganz andere’, eine Realität, die nicht von unserer Welt ist, manifestiert sich in Gegenständen, die integrierende Bestandteile unserer ‘natürlichen’, ‘profanen’ Welt sind.⁵⁴

The sacred is antithetical to the profane, and this dialectics characterizes the so-called archaic ontology, the way being, thinking and acting within the ‘primitive’ societies, societies without history inasmuch as they want to escape it, by resorting to myths, rituals and symbols. On the contrary, in Eliade’s opinion the modern man is the historical man par excellence, the man having left myths and symbols, fundamentally irreligious or at least convicted to be it.⁵⁵

Like Van der Leeuw, Eliade thinks that *Religionswissenschaft* should make use of comparison: the presupposition is that the similarity among religious phenomena is to refer on the one hand to the identity among the human beings making the experience of the sacred – such a human being is *homo religiosus* – and on the other hand to the identity of the sacred manifesting itself in such experience. In Culianu’s opinion, Eliade’s religious morphology adds to Van der Leeuw’s phenomenology of religion (as well as to Otto’s idea of the sacred/holy) a hermeneutic dimension that ‘transfigures’, so to speak, the phenomenological analysis: Eliade aims at acting on several levels, in several dimensions, ultimately in order to reach an original philosophical anthropology, although he does not explicitly intend to create it.⁵⁶ His hermeneutics is not so much a method, but above all an attitude, a way of thinking, consisting in considering religion as a whole, as something undivided, primordial, and in seeing

the sacred/holy not only as an object of knowledge, but also as a subject and instrument of knowledge.

Therefore, a hierophany is the main place where the sacred manifests itself. Its main vehicle is the symbol, a *locus* revealing and hiding at the same time, the place that only by hiding can do a revelation. The symbol has always a religious character, since it always refers to the 'true' reality, that is the sacred one, and has always an existential value, since it involves man in his whole being.⁵⁷ Eliade affirms:

The religious symbol translates a human situation into cosmological terms and vice versa; more precisely, it reveals the continuity between the structures of human existence and cosmic structures. This means that man does not feel himself 'isolated' in the cosmos, but that he 'opens out' to a world which, thanks to a symbol, proves 'familiar'.⁵⁸

The comparative method used by Eliade strives to describe – for instance in the *Traité* – basic religious phenomena, that is to say hierophanies: sky, water, earth, stones; moon, sun, vegetation, sacred time and sacred space, chosen because of their ability to reveal a structure referred to the relation between man and cosmos; later, he lists some examples in the different cultures and stresses their similar structure. The structure of phenomena is then identified with an archetype, put in the dialectics between sacred and profane,⁵⁹ as we will see.

According to Eliade, history of religions is a total hermeneutics. It is the key permitting to access to the existential structures belonging to human being, among whose characteristics there is always – even if it seems to be lost, like in modern times – religiosity. Man is ever *homo religiosus*, he is always involved in the dialectics between sacred and profane, between the earthly, mortal, finite dimension and the one opening to him the doors of a Further, of a dimension that – to use Otto's well-known definition – shows him the *ganz Anderes*. The "authentic" man – authentic because religious – is therefore the "archaic", the unhistorical man. History of religions has a humanistic function; it is a sort of spiritual propaedeutics for modern man.⁶⁰ Eliade argues:

It is solely insofar as it will perform this task [i.e. understanding the meaning of a religious form] – particularly by making the meanings of religious documents intelligible to the mind of modern man – that the science of religions will fulfill its true cultural function.⁶¹

Eliade's archetypes

Eliade begins to systematically employ the notion of archetype quite early, and he does it in a very ambiguous way, although it is a central one in his religious scientific approach. In fact, this notion remains indefinite and equivocal, based on the idea that "behind religious phenomena there are symbolic nets", structures associating religious phenomena besides their relation of historical kind; like the sacred and the symbol, the archetype is "at the beginning and at the end of comparison".⁶²

Natale Spineto explains that Eliade's systematic use of the notion of archetype begins after reading *Einführung in das Wesen der Mythologie* by Carl Gustav Jung and Károly Kerényi, published in 1941,⁶³ a book having him probably stimulated and encouraged: the *Religionswissenschaftler* and mythologist Kerényi shows to Eliade the applicability of the Jungian arguments to religious facts, although without accepting every psychological or psychoanalytic implication of them, in order to emphasize their unicity and universality elements.⁶⁴ The influence of the Spanish art historian Eugenio d'Ors, promoter of a morphologically intended historical science charged with the attempt to reconcile historical facts and meta-historical constants by using the notion of archetype as a meeting point between real and ideal, is particularly relevant as well.⁶⁵

The Eliadian concept of archetype has a conflicting and obscure relation with the one developed by Jung. On the one hand, Eliade stresses the distance between him and Jung, so that in *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour* (subtitle: *Archétypes et répétition*)⁶⁶ he wants to specify that with this term he does not intend to refer "to the archetypes described by Professor C. G. Jung" and to use it "in an entirely different meaning".⁶⁷ On the other hand, according to Culianu there is a unquestionable closeness between both notions: inasmuch as it is possible to distinguish, within the Jungian archetype, between an objective and a subjective aspect, the objective one has the same meaning for both Eliade and Jung, namely being "a performative pattern of consciousness, a categorial possibility of consciousness".⁶⁸ In Spineto's opinion, this is a open-ended question; the only thing we can reasonably say is that both scholars follow hermeneutically "parallel lines".⁶⁹

In Eliade's writings, the notion of archetype has basically three meanings. In the first one, it qualifies the "exemplary model", the pattern which, within archaic ontology, men and things have to conform to. Thus, it is a descriptive concept, ascertaining within archaic societies the

presence of a “Platonic” structure. According to Culianu, this concept should be rendered with the term “prototype”. Eliade writes for example in *Comentarii la legenda Meșterului Manole* (1943): “For the archaic man, a thing or an action possess significance as long as they partake in a prototype, or repeat a primeval act”. This notion is therefore limited to the archaic man and cannot be extended to *homo religiosus* nor to human beings at all nor to the historian nor to Eliade himself.⁷⁰

In its second signification, the notion of archetype is not a merely describing one, but a component of human existence. In this sense, an archetype is a historical product, a cultural reaction to natural facts assuming an existential value. To some extent, this meaning associates Eliade – at least according to Angelo Brelich – to Kerényi.⁷¹

The third Eliadian sense of archetype has a more epistemological character and is to see as “a structural and structuring element of the religious fact”, seeming to be on the one hand an effective structure of reality, but to have on the other hand a methodological function: being “an auxiliary concept that accounts for the similarities among several religious forms”.⁷² In Culianu’s opinion, it is a “preformal and preformative unhistorical category, a model which something refers or conforms to”, contrasting thus with history.⁷³ Spineto remarks:

If [...] archetype is no longer a useful word to describe the religious reality of ‘archaic’ civilizations and becomes the very structure of phenomena, as well as the conceptual net with which we apprehend it, the ‘Platonic structure’ of the ‘archaic ontology’ expressed by the archetypes becomes a ‘Platonic’ structure of a *tout-court* reality.⁷⁴

Therefore, referring to this third Eliadian meaning of archetype it would be crucial trying to keep separate its strictly methodological function from its quality as “Platonic” element of reality. Is it possible to make such distinction? In order to do it, Spineto attempts to reconstruct Eliade’s epistemological debts.

The most important author to mention here is Goethe. In his *naturwissenschaftlich* writings, he deals with the *Urpflanze* and supposes that in the variety of the plant kingdom it is even possible to find the original plant as a model or picture summarizing the ideal and the sensible level, drawn from the ability to observe phenomena and to reconstruct them. Eliade connects the Goethian morphology with the works of intellectuals like Vladimir Propp and his countryman Lucian Blaga and is convicted

that the historian of religions “pour y voir clair dans cet océan de faits, de figures, de rites” should “en son domaine chercher ‘la plante originelle’, l’image primordiale, c’est-à-dire ce qui résulte de la rencontre de l’homme et du sacré”.⁷⁵ Goethe’s influence, consequently, is exerted on Eliade both directly (Jonathan Z. Smith and Mac Linscott Ricketts stress that Eliade’s young production, although implicitly and ambiguously, is permeated by Goethe’s thought) and indirectly, i.e. through Blaga’s writings as well as Goethian morphological notions such “original phenomenon”.⁷⁶

Nonetheless, Eliade studies philosophy at the University of Bucharest and is thus disciple of Nae Ionescu, a thinker having studied at the University of Munich, where Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology was very influential. In Spineto’s opinion, Goethe’s method, aiming at looking for a pattern or an image able to put together the ideal and the real, shows several analogies with the Husserlian phenomenology, particularly the sixth *Logische Untersuchung*. Ionescu thinks that the *Logische Untersuchungen* are “an epoch-making book”⁷⁷ and puts transcendental phenomenology – at least in the background and in a mediate way – in Eliade’s methodological horizon, since he is convinced that the essences, a crucial Husserlian notion, can be known both on the logical level, with the use of categories, and on the mystic one, with the use of general forms, independent on space and time, forms Ionescu considers stable. Thus, the phenomenological method, according to Ionescu, looks for the “immutable essence” of phenomena.⁷⁸

Not actually unexpectedly, the relation between Eliade and Husserl’s phenomenology is quite ambiguous. While Eliade accurately avoids openly espousing the Husserlian approach, he appears to need its help when it is necessary to react to the historicistic criticism.⁷⁹ In *The Quest*, Eliade writes: “For the historicists [...] to seek for ‘essences’ is tantamount to falling back to the old Platonic error”; however, “the historicists have, of course, neglected Husserl”.⁸⁰ According to Spineto, Eliade answers to those criticizing him for running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, i.e. referring the archetype both to the interpretative method and to the interpreted object, by disavowing every metaphysical or Platonic interpretation of his work as well as by reconnecting the concept of essence – on its part linked with the concept of archetype – to the Husserlian one.⁸¹ Eliade shows in this manner a certain proximity to Van der Leeuw, particularly when this one argues that “die Struktur ist sinnvoll gegliederte Wirklichkeit” and “der Sinn [...] gehört teilweise der Wirklichkeit selbst an, teilweise dem ‘jemand’, der sie zu verstehen sucht”.⁸²

Spineto's conclusion is that "there is a fundamental coherence amongst the morphology" of Eliade, a coherence involving not only Goethe's and Husserl's approaches, but also post-Gadamerian, especially Ricœurian hermeneutics, although it remains very vague as well as different both from each one of these approaches and from their systematic synthesis.⁸³

Ambiguities

It seems then that Eliade takes very seriously Van der Leeuw's phenomenological approach, with its merging, within the phenomenon, of the subjective and the objective dimension. His review of the revised and extended French edition of *Phänomenologie der Religion*,⁸⁴ despite its criticism of the Leeuwian notion of *Macht*, considered too simplistic,⁸⁵ is enthusiastic about the book ("nous ne connaissons pas une meilleure introduction à l'histoire générale des religions que la Phénoménologie du savant hollandais"),⁸⁶ above all because of its efficacy in showing the whole epistemological and methodological validity of the "religionist" approach, that is of the use, against historicist, sociologistic, psychologistic reductions, of a genuine "échelle religieuse".⁸⁷ Eliade significantly writes in this review:

Avant de pouvoir prétendre connaître telle ou telle religion, l'on devrait se sentir tenu de bien se rendre compte de ce qu'est un phénomène religieux. C'est seulement après avoir compris ce que 'veut dire' un mythe, que l'on peut attaquer un problème précis dans le cadre d'une mythologie quelconque.⁸⁸

But, as he explains elsewhere, Van der Leeuw "sometimes" is content with an "impressionistic approach"⁸⁹ and tends to a more general reductionism (seeing dynamism, animism and deism as three *Grundstrukturen* of religious phenomena)⁹⁰ disinterested in the historical conformation characterizing every structure.⁹¹ "As a matter of fact, van der Leeuw never attempted a religious morphology or a genetical phenomenology of religion", he argues.⁹²

On his part, Van der Leeuw reviews early Eliade's works and calls *Yoga*⁹³ already in 1939 "a very original, well-informed and fascinating survey" of such phenomenon.⁹⁴ About the *Traité* he writes in 1950: "This is a phenomenology in the best sense of the word", an "extremely important

book” showing an in-depth understanding of religious phenomena both in particular and in general; “hierophany”, he remarks, is by all means an “useful general notion”;⁹⁵ the *Traité* is to understand in the light of *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, similar, according to Van der Leeuw, to Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History*.⁹⁶

Whilst Van der Leeuw's words of course restrict themselves to a concise presentation as well as to a generic, although firm, praise of Eliade's first books – already a *sui generis* historicist like Raffaele Pettazzoni will put the Romanian scholar, at least at the beginning, in a methodological continuity with Van der Leeuw, although with several reservation⁹⁷ –, from the Eliadian words dedicated to *Phänomenologie der Religion* emerges the need to go on the way started by the Dutch scientist. On the one hand, Eliade's goal is giving back to the historical dimension what belongs to it, with at the same time, as Kurt Rudolph observes, a remarkable philosophical increase of the notion of history;⁹⁸ on the other hand, he develops so to speak a defining urgency *de facto* ‘substantializing’ the essences and structures, though without feeling the need to characterize them with some precision.

In fact, if we compare, as Carl Olson does, Van der Leeuw's and Eliade's notion of power, we see that both scientists fundamentally “disagree [...] on the extent to which *homo religiosus* can manipulate the symbols and myths to gain control over the world”, that is to freely make use of the contact points with the sacred. According to Van der Leeuw, power is “the central organizing principle” of the religious dimension, it provides access to it and accounts for it, while Eliade's conception is underlain by the distinction between sacred and profane and, within it, by the “accommodation of *homo religiosus* to power by conforming to the sacred archetypes”.⁹⁹ Van der Leeuw thinks, as mentioned above, that “Religion ist Ausweitung des Lebens bis zu seiner äußersten Grenze” and the human being is constantly looking for a power disclosing to him the “Sinn des Ganzen”, “das letzte Wort”; in Eliade's opinion, on the contrary, *homo religiosus* has to some extent to ‘suffer’ the presence of a sacred reality moulding everything.

The concept of history, even more than the one of structure or typology, is in my view the point distinguishing Eliade from Van der Leeuw. According to the latter, history has first of all to do with sense and value, with the spirit, and is characterized as the “divinatory” ability to interpret reality, or rather to approach as close as possible – through the *Nacherleben* – something primordial got lost for ever (as it happens with

everything being there), but that should be to some extent recuperated.¹⁰⁰ “Das ‘Leben’ selbst ist unfaßbar”, as Van der Leeuw writes in his *Phänomenologie*.¹⁰¹ The centre of such reality is religious experience as lived by man in his existential quest.¹⁰²

Instead, in Eliade’s view history is characterized as the culturally determined ‘covering’ of structures, typologies, categories, mechanisms being in themselves basically unhistorical and primordial.¹⁰³ Of course, such cultural covering is not less pervading and inherent to human being and his identity, but it is even what marks it and stimulates his creativity; with all its variations, such creativity is then a testimony of the fact that under the historical covering there is a sort of transcendent fundament.¹⁰⁴ This is the reason why, as a well-known Eliadian statement states, “the historicity of a religious experience does not tell us what a religious experience ultimately *is*”.¹⁰⁵

The lack of historical sense Eliade reproaches Van der Leeuw with, in reality, is the reproach to limit the hermeneutic work to purely human quest for sense, while it is on the contrary necessary, according to Eliade, interpreting history in the light of the underlying original structures. Emphasizing the so-called “archaic ontology” encourages the contrastive analysis of man as *homo religiosus*: comparing such ontology, defined by Culianu as “a world which *reality* is not given by the simple being of things, but by their participation to paradigmatic patterns, to celestial archetypes”,¹⁰⁶ with the situation of modern man implies a sort of ‘meta-historization’, inasmuch as the modern man is bearer of a historicist reductionism that is on its part to historicize: modern man’s areligiosity, if regarded in the right light, is in Eliade’s conviction a substantial exception, magnified by a warped perspective.

It is quite unquestioned that Eliade, in general, prefers not to be too bound to certain thought tendencies; on the contrary, he is inclined to leave wrapped in mystery, so to speak, the philosophical choices he directly or indirectly does. On this subject, Liviu Bordaş speaks, referring to Culianu, of “Eliadian irony”.¹⁰⁷ Spineto points it out as well: Eliade’s methodological reluctance, probably practiced in order to make ‘invulnerable’ his own work by avoiding to ground it to particular currents, runs the risk, for want of “strong theoretical choices”, of opening a door to every kind of interpretations, even the most incoherent or deceptive.¹⁰⁸

Calling it a “creative hermeneutics”, completely open to the sense as well as to the interplays of the most different “logical hypotheses” and projected on dimensions variously exceeding the hard facts – a sort of ‘meta-

hermeneutics', if we may – as Culianu does,¹⁰⁹ continues, in my opinion, Eliade's ambiguity legitimization's work. Indeed, Culianu follows closely the behaviour patterns of his master and resorts to Husserl's phenomenology for the purpose of philosophical ennobling and interpretative 'discharge': since the hierophanic structures "represent 'primordial phenomena' *moulding* consciousness instead of being moulded by them", he argues, although he ignores "whether Husserl would consider phenomenologically correct such a position", it is "undeniable" that "the premises of Eliade's conclusion lie in the *Logische Untersuchungen*".¹¹⁰

Recurring to Husserl by dealing with phenomenology of religion or, in general, with religionist tendencies, is always a quite sensitive subject. Although there are in Leeuw, as we said, some Husserlian inspiration motives (and it is also worth here mentioning Husserl's well-known letter to Otto from 1919, stating that *Das Heilige* is the beginning of a, of course still deficient, phenomenology of the religious),¹¹¹ the attempts to put together transcendental phenomenology and phenomenology of religion seem sometimes – notwithstanding the good will and the rigour – keen but in a way inadequate,¹¹² particularly when, as in Leeuw's case, Husserl is mentioned in an unsystematic way.¹¹³ Kehnscherper argues that, while in his essay of 1926 Van der Leeuw seems to be sensitive to the use of the Husserlian notion of *Wesen* as well as to its derivatives, in his following works it is laid aside and replaced, at least partially, even with the concept of *Idealtypus*; the same can be said about *epoché*, assumed from Husserl by Van der Leeuw in a reduced way.¹¹⁴

In Eliade's case, where the Husserlian notion of *Wesen* is involved as well, such a recourse seems particularly inappropriate. In fact, it is not sufficient putting together the notions of sacred and consciousness in order to magically get a Husserliantly understood essence; an operation like this would contribute by no means to dissipate the methodological fog surrounding Eliade's concept of archetype. Saying, as Eliade does, that the sacred is "an element in the structure of consciousness, not a stage in the history of consciousness" does not automatically render at all the sacred and its structures transcendental categories, since within the hierophanies and their conformation the sacred and its structures are anchored to metaphysical objectification. The Eliadian ambiguity is not accidental, but a deliberate and substantial one. Indicative of this is the remark Eliade makes in *Fragments d'un Journal*, asserting that Husserl's phenomenology "implique l'abolition de l'expérience profane, de 'l'homme naturel'", so that the phenomenological method is elevated to a door aiming the access

from the “*état profane*” to the sacred, to ‘authentic’ reality, as it happens within initiations.¹¹⁵

On his part, Van der Leeuw is not completely free of ambiguity either. Nonetheless, his ambiguity is differently shaped, since it lies, so to speak, in the splitting of his scientific personality. Van der Leeuw, in fact, is both *Religionswissenschaftler* and theologian and sees phenomenology and theology as two different ways to reach the same end:

For the theologian, who exists between the two realities of Revelation and world, there open two roads which lead him to the goal and which he travels all through his life: the road from Revelation to the world, thus the road going down; and the road from the world to Revelation, going up. These two ways are not one way which is traversed in different directions. There are two of them, and both are equally necessary and lead to the goal, where God and Divine matters can be discussed. The two ways neither cross nor run parallel [...] The first road is the properly theological one. [...] Only from the event of Revelation can we direct ourselves to the happenings of the world. [...] The second road we call that of the science of religion, that is, human knowledge concerning religion [...].¹¹⁶

Van der Leeuw calls both roads the “vertical” and the “horizontal” ones. The latter is gone by phenomenology by contemplating the religious effort of human being, the quest of power, life and sense. But parallel to it is the vertical way, the way of theology as science of revelation. The one is the way of understanding, the other the way of being understood.¹¹⁷ Although the revelation is invisible and indemonstrable, although it is not a phenomenon (Van der Leeuw writes: “Die Rede Gottes können wir nicht verstehen”; “was wir verstehen können, ist nur unsre Antwort”),¹¹⁸ it is the drive of the whole phenomonic world; it is something unquestionably real and objective, as religion and *homo religiosus* real and objective are.¹¹⁹ Van der Leeuw explains:

Der Mensch, der im Leben die Macht sucht, gelangt nicht nur zur Grenze, er weiß sich auch in fremde Gegend versetzt. Er erreicht nicht nur die Stelle, von wo sich ihm eine Aussicht in unendliche Fernen auftut, – er weiß sich auch während er noch auf dem Wege ist, jeden Augenblick von wunderbaren, fernen Dingen umringt. Er ahnt nicht nur das Überlegene, er wird auch direkt von ihm ergriffen. Er hat nicht nur *von ferne* den Thron des Herrn erblickt, und hätte gerne sein Herz vorausgeschickt, – er weiß auch, daß *diese* Stätte furchtbar ist, weil sie ein Haus Gottes und eine

Pforte des Himmels ist. Vielleicht sind es Engel, die auf seine Lagerstatt hinuntersteigen, vielleicht sind es Dämonen, die seinen Weg einengen. Er weiß aber ganz bestimmt, *daß etwas ihm in den Weg tritt*. Es kann der Engel sein, der vor seinem Angesicht geht, der ihn sicher geleiten wird. Es kann der Engel mit dem Blitzenden Schwerte sein, der ihm den Weg verlegt. – Aber ganz sicher ist, daß etwas Fremdartiges den Weg seiner eigenen Mächtigkeit durchquert.¹²⁰

Jacques Waardenburg actually argues that the Leeuwian phenomenology of religion “should not be seen as an empirical, inductive and verifiable science”, but as “a method determined by theology and philosophy, for describing human experience in general and religious experience in particular”;¹²¹ moreover, Hubertus G. Hubbeling stresses that in Van der Leeuw’s thought structure it is necessary to distinguish between an “Anfang” and a “Mitte”, where the former is historical and phenomenological and the latter, that is the heart, is “rein theologisch” and to identify with Jesus Christ’s incarnation, although interpreted in a inclusive and not exclusive sense.¹²² An illustrative example of this is Van der Leeuw’s most mature theological work, *Sacramentstheologie* from 1949, structured in three levels (historical, phenomenological and theological).¹²³

Conclusion

In this context, not without reason considered by Paul Ricœur as a sort of eschatology of the subject,¹²⁴ Van der Leeuw’s ideal type is characterized as the bridge connecting the horizontal and the vertical way: it is not only an investigative structure, a hermeneutic instrument, but also a trace, a flash of this *Fremdartiges* that gets in the way of man.¹²⁵ This means that, seen in the context it intrinsically belongs to – i.e. theology –, the Leeuwian phenomenology of religion shows several ‘hidden’ contact points with Eliade’s morphology, and within it the notion of ideal type with the one of archetype. By the way, Leeuw’s conception of the so-called primitive mentality – notoriously inspired by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl –, postulating in a way the ‘holism’ of the primitives (a “considerably shorter distance between subject and object”; a possible “unity in the deepest fundament” of the beings) got irreparably lost in modern man,¹²⁶ seems from another point of view to round off all this.

Van der Leeuw's theology is always founded on revelation, on a sort of primordial revelation not coinciding with the Christian one; rather, the Christian revelation is, so to speak, the ideal type of revelation.¹²⁷ And Van der Leeuw reaffirms categorically the unknowableness of revelation, whose presence can be perceived only indirectly and thus hardly comparable to Eliade's archaic ontology. The only possible access, in fact, is not phenomenological, but theological: in a way, in order to get the "Rede Gottes", "unsre Antwort" has to already be within a faith context. So, Pietro Angelini, a scholar belonging to a historicist current, can argue, comparing Leeuw's *Phänomenologie* and Eliade's *Traité*, that the former, by following "a fan-shaped outline" reflecting the progressive intensity degree of the relation between man and power, "offers a dizzily consistent survey", whilst the latter, by sketching out "a sequence of 'stalactites' illustrating the 'descending' history" of the hierophanies, limits itself to tell "the metamorphoses of the sacred as if they were myths", so that the "history of the sacred" and the "sacred history" become identical.¹²⁸

This is the reason why on the one hand Leeuw's *Idealtypen* can at most show the *Fremdartiges* overwhelming the consciousness of *homo religiosus*, but on the other hand Eliade's archetypes solidify, ontologize this *Fremdartiges* till it comes out of the consciousness of *homo religiosus* and conditions even the instruments measuring them. And this is the reason why it is not possible to affirm, in conclusion, that Eliade conceives his archetypes – at least inasmuch as he considers them as instruments of his morphological approach – analogously to Leeuw's conception of the ideal types. Eliade writes:

C'est cette même tendance vers l'archétype, vers la restauration de la *forme parfaite* – dont un rite, un mythe ou une divinité quelconque ne sont que des variantes, souvent assez pâles – qui rend possible l'histoire des religions. Sans elle, l'expérience magico-religieuse créerait continuellement des formes fulgurantes ou évanescentes de dieux, de mythes, de dogmes, etc., et l'observateur se trouverait devant un foisonnement de types sans cesse nouveaux, qui ne permettraient aucune mise en ordre. Mais, une fois 'réalisée', 'historicisée', la forme religieuse tend à se dégager de ses conditions de temps et de lieu et à devenir universelle, à retrouver l'archétype.¹²⁹

According to Eliade, the archetype is even the possibility condition of a history of religions or *Religionswissenschaft*; otherwise, religious

phenomena would only be changing and evanescent forms, impossible not only to understand, but also to grasp. Nevertheless, it is a possibility condition intrinsic to the phenomenon itself, and so it should be sought, identified, comprehended, interpreted on the basis of the structure where it manifests itself. Eliade's defining urgency issues from here, the more it is willing, so to speak, to remove every encrustation from the archetype, so that it can shine in all its pureness and eternity, the more it is forced to shut up the archetype in a methodological labyrinth without any way out.¹³⁰

The sacred tree, treated both in the *Phänomenologie* and in the *Traité*, is a good instance of all this. Van der Leeuw emphasizes first of all the fact that the tree is "Machträger" and has then "ein ganz eigenes Verhältnis" with human life. He writes:

[...] Es [ist] das Erlebnis der Baumacht, in ihrer immer wiederholten Überwindung des Todes, welches sich dem Menschen aufdrängt und ihn sich der festen gesicherten Baumexistenz als der mächtigeren anschließen macht. Der 'Miteinanderwuchs' des Baumes und des Menschen [...] ist somit keine rationelle Parallele, sondern ein mystisches Band [...].¹³¹

The examples he gives illustrate these ideas: in the Greek mythology, the Amadryads, vegetation nymphs living the same life of the trees; in old Egypt, the sycamore containing gods; the newborn placenta buried near to a young tree in Northern Germany; the lindens planted on the occasion of the birth of the king's son; everywhere speaking or bleeding trees; the cross of Christ as life tree; Yggdrasill, the world tree in the Old Norse mythology, representing "den mächtigsten Ausdruck" of the ideal type "heiligen Baum".¹³² In short, Van der Leeuw creates the ideal type of the sacred tree on the basis of functional analogies, stressed through the *Verstehen* and the *Nacherleben*; it is not only the lighting and adding up of several specific aspects of the "sacred tree" type, but the building of multidimensional sense connections.

On his part, Eliade wonders from the beginning:

Par quelle synthèse mentale de l'humanité archaïque, et à partir de quelles particularités de la structure de l'arbre' comme tel, un symbolisme si vaste et si cohérent [i.e. that one of the sacred tree] s'est-il établi? Il n'est pas question ici de préciser la genèse d'une valeur religieuse, mais de découvrir les plus anciennes et par conséquent les plus pures intuitions de cette valeur.¹³³

Also in Eliade's view the tree represents a power, due both to the tree in itself and to its cosmological implications. He continues:

Un arbre s'impose à la conscience religieuse par sa propre substance et par sa forme, mais cette substance et cette forme doivent leur valeur au fait qu'elles se sont imposées à la conscience religieuse, qu'elles ont été 'choisies', c'est-à-dire qu'elles se sont 'révélées'.¹³⁴

Thus, it is "en vertu de sa *puissance*", "en vertu de ce qu'il *manifeste* (et qui le dépasse), que l'arbre devient un objet religieux".¹³⁵ Eliade perceives first of all the archetype and makes sure to obtain from it its purest form, present somewhere and sometime – *in illo tempore* – within the history of mankind, representing something manifesting itself in it and exceeding it.

NOTES

- 1 Schleiermacher (1958), p. 30.
- 2 Cf. Filoramo (1984), pp. 35-36.
- 3 W. Dilthey, *Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften*, G. Misch (Ed.), "Gesammelte Schriften" 5, Teubner, Leipzig 1924, p. 4, quoted in Kehnscherper (1998), p. 31.
- 4 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 31-34.
- 5 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), p. 32.
- 6 Expression adopted from Hermelink (1960), p. 15.
- 7 About this supposed compatibility cf. for instance Festa (1986), p. 212 and, from the point of view of Raffaele Pettazzoni's historicist criticism, Spineto (1994), p. 54.
- 8 I wish to cordially thank Dr. Liviu Bordaş for his helpful advices and tips as well as Dr. Hylarie Kochiras for her kind and attentive revision of the manuscript.
- 9 About Van der Leeuw's biography cf. Waardenburg (1978), pp. 187-192.
- 10 Van der Leeuw (1961³).
- 11 Van der Leeuw (1956²).
- 12 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), p. 3; Filoramo (1984), pp. 36-37.
- 13 Cf. Becke (1999).
- 14 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 768.
- 15 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 768-769; Van der Leeuw (1961³), pp. 8-11; Van der Leeuw (1926), p. 6.
- 16 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 772-775.
- 17 Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 775-776.
- 18 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 775-777.
- 19 Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 777; Van der Leeuw quotes from E. Brunner, *Gott und Mensch. Vier Untersuchungen über das personhafte Sein*, Zwingli-Verlag, Zürich 1930, p. 40.
- 20 He remarks in retrospect, on the occasion of the awarding of a honours' degree: "Je me suis aperçu que cette phénoménologie de la religion comportait non seulement une inventarisation et une classification des phénomènes comme ils se montrent dans l'histoire, mais aussi une description psychologique qui nécessitait non seulement une observation méticuleuse de la réalité religieuse, mais aussi bien une introspection systématique; non seulement la description de ce qui est visible du dehors, mais avant tout l'expérience vécue de ce qui ne devient réalité qu'après avoir été admis dans la vie propre de l'observateur." (Van der Leeuw [1954], p. 10).
- 21 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 771.
- 22 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 778.
- 23 Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 778.

- 24 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 778-779. Cf. on this Hirschmann (1940), p. 100.
- 25 Cf. Hermelink (1960), p. 60.
- 26 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 3-4.
- 27 Eva Hirschmann speaks here of “ein Vordringen vom subjektiven zum objektiven Geist” (Hirschmann [1940], p. 97).
- 28 Cf. Hirschmann (1940), p. 98.
- 29 Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 772. Hermelink’s commentary: “Mit der Bestimmung des Phänomens in seiner eigenartigen Mittelstellung zwischen Objekt und Subjekt, zwischen gegenständlicher Erforschung von Daten und schöpferischer Phantasie des Individuums, un in seiner Zugehörigkeit zu einem dritten Bereich, dem des Sinnes, präzisiert van der Leeuw die Stelle, auf die sich das Verstehen richtet. Gleichfalls ist hierdurch noch einmal in subtiler Form deutlich gemacht, wie schlechthin alles zum Phänomen werden kann und wie auf der anderen Seite das Phänomen als verstandenes, d. h. eingeordnet in seinen Strukturzusammenhang und rekonstruiert nach seinem Typus, so etwas wie eine universale Gültigkeit besitzt. Es zeigt sich an dieser Stelle die besondere Umsicht van der Leeuws, der durch seine Bestimmung dessen, was ein Phänomen ist, jede ontologische oder auch theologische Festlegung unter allen Umständen zu vermeiden bestrebt ist” (Hermelink [1960], p. 31).
- 30 Cf. Festa (1986), pp. 207-208. Filoramo does not agree and argue that Van der Leeuw’s *Idealtypen* are “ideal realities corresponding to the hypostatized ideas the Ottian Sacred manifests in history” (Filoramo [1985], p. 283).
- 31 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), p. 73-74.
- 32 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1974), p. 81.
- 33 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), p. 42.
- 34 Cf. Pfister (1928), p. 166.
- 35 M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Mohr, Tübingen 1922, p. 287, quoted in Pfister (1928), p. 164.
- 36 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 58-59.
- 37 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), p. 60.
- 38 Cf. Jaspers (1958), p. 53.
- 39 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 54-64.
- 40 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 769, Van der Leeuw (1926), p. 11. Cf. on this Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 11-12, 73, Miegge (1964), p. 1022, Filoramo (1984), pp. 38-39, Kippenberg (1997), p. 191.
- 41 K. Jaspers, “Kausale und ‘verständliche’ Zusammenhänge zwischen Schicksal und Psychose bei der Dementia praecox (Schizophrenie)”, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* XIV, Berlin 1913, p. 160, quoted in Kehnscherper (1998), p. 56.
- 42 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1926), p. 1. Cf. on this Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 44-45.

- 43 In particular *Einführung in die Probleme der allgemeinen Psychologie*, Bonset, Amsterdam 1965 (orig. 1922), especially pp. 30-102.
- 44 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 67-68.
- 45 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1926), pp. 8, 10.
- 46 Cf. Hirschmann (1940), p. 99.
- 47 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 68-69. With this aspect is connected Becke's criticism. He wonders whether the "Grundriß", the structure arising thanks to the *Nacherleben* is "schon vor der 'Einzeichnung' vorhanden" or emerges "erst durch die Arbeit des Religionsphänomenologen". "Van der Leeuws Formulierungen – he argues – sind vage, manche sogar unklar: der Leser weiß letztlich nicht, ob der Religionsphänomenologe den 'Grundriß' hineinkonstruiert oder bloß nachzeichnet; ob die Wirklichkeit an sich schon gegliedert ist, oder ob der Religionsphänomenologe diese 'Gliederung' erst vornimmt; o die Struktur tatsächlich erlebbar ist, oder vom Religionsphänomenologen einfach erfunden wird" (Becke [1999], p. 18).
- 48 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 74-75.
- 49 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), *Gestalten*, pp. 669-767; Van der Leeuw (1930²), p. 1894.
- 50 About Eliade's biography cf. for example, very synthetically, Berner (2004²), pp. 343-344. About the 'character' Mircea Eliade – called "Faustian", "Odysseic" and "Dionysiac" – cf. the very enjoyable Casadio (2011).
- 51 Eliade says it explicitly answering to Ernesto de Martino: cf. M. Eliade, *Mémoires*, vol. II, 1937-1960. *Les moissons du solstice*, Fr. trans. by A. Paruit, Gallimard, Paris 1988, p. 135, quoted in Eliade-Pettazzoni (1994), p. 201, footnote 1.
- 52 Eliade (1986), p. 11.
- 53 Cf. Eliade (1969), p. i.
- 54 Eliade (1957), p. 8.
- 55 Cf. Eliade (1957), pp. 10-11.
- 56 Cf. Culianu (1978), pp. 116-117, 160. Richard Reschika remarks: "Im Unterschied zu den reinen Phänomenologen, die sich der Arbeit des Vergleichens versagen, um das Wesen, den Sinn eines Phänomens zu erfassen, bedient sich Eliade einer komparatistischen Vorgehensweise, vergleicht religiöse Phänomene mit möglichst vielen anderen, um so auch das 'Transhistorische' eines religiösen Faktums zu entziffern. Für Eliade vereinigt die Religionsgeschichte mithin historische, religionsphänomenologische und religionsphilosophische Methoden" (Reschika [1997], p. 83).
- 57 Cf. Eliade (1959), pp. 98-103.
- 58 Eliade (1959), p. 103.
- 59 Cf. Eliade (1986), pp. 46-343.
- 60 Cf. Eliade (1969), pp. 1-3.
- 61 Eliade (1969), p. 2.

- 62 Cf. Spineto (2006), p. 179.
- 63 Cf. Jung-Kerényi (1941).
- 64 Cf. Spineto (2008), p. 367.
- 65 Cf. Spineto (2006), pp. 184-185; Spineto (2008), p. 367.
- 66 Cf. Eliade (1949a).
- 67 Cf. Spineto (2008), p. 368. This note is put beginning from the English translation of the book (1959).
- 68 Cf. Culianu (1978), pp. 56-57. Reschika (1997), p. 41, agrees.
- 69 Cf. Spineto (2008), p. 369.
- 70 Cf. Eliade (1949a), pp. 207-240; Eliade (2004), p. 9. Cf. on this Spineto (2006), p. 188; Spineto (2008), p. 369; Culianu (1978), p. 56.
- 71 Cf. Spineto (2008), pp. 369-370.
- 72 Cf. Spineto (2006), p. 192; Spineto (2008), p. 370.
- 73 Cf. Culianu (1978), pp. 56-57.
- 74 Spineto (2008), p. 370.
- 75 Cf. Eliade (1978), p. 162; cf. on this Spineto (2006), p. 194; Spineto (2008), pp. 370-371. Kerényi, in the *Einführung* written with Jung, refers on his part to Goethe's *Urpflanze* in connection with the relation between the historical multiplicity of reality and the unity of its forms and structures (cf. Kerényi in Jung-Kerényi [1941], pp. 37-38; cf. on this Spineto [2008], p. 371).
- 76 Cf. Spineto (2008), pp. 371-372.
- 77 Cf. M. Vulcanescu, *Nae Ionescu. Așa cum l-am cunoscut*, Humanitas, București 1992, p. 24, quoted in Spineto (2008), p. 372. E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Teil. Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, Niemeyer, Halle 1900; *Zweiter Teil. Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, Niemeyer, Halle 1901.
- 78 Cf. Spineto (2008), p. 372.
- 79 Cf. Spineto (2006), pp. 197-198.
- 80 Eliade (1969), pp. 37-38.
- 81 Cf. Spineto (2006), p. 199; Spineto (2008), p. 372; Bianchi (1970), p. 156.
- 82 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 770.
- 83 Cf. Spineto (2008), pp. 372-373.
- 84 G. van der Leeuw, *La religion dans son essence et ses manifestations. Phénoménologie de la religion*, Fr. trans. by J. Marty, Payot, Paris 1948. The second posthumous German edition (Van der Leeuw [1956²] is based on this French version.
- 85 Cf. on this Olson (1988), p. 43: "Eliade does not [...] share van der Leeuw's conviction about the universality of power and its manifestation as the essence of religion". Afterwards, this article became a chapter of C. Olson, *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade. A Search for the Centre*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1992, pp. 122-138 ("The Phenomenon of Power").
- 86 Eliade (1949b), p. 110.

- 87 Cf. Eliade (1949b), p. 109. Spineto remarks: "Eliade [...] ne lit l'ouvrage principal de Van der Leeuw qu'en 1939; dans une lettre du 14 mai 1939, où il remercie le savant hollandaise de son compte rendu de *Yoga* [see below], il écrit: *J'ai reçu de votre éditeur anglais Religion in Essence and Manifestation* [sc. the English edition of *Phänomenologie der Religion*], *ouvrage que je connaissais seulement par ouï-dire. Je vous félicite sincèrement. C'est un livre magnifique, que je lis avec un vif intérêt*" (Eliade, Pettazzoni [1994], p. 177, footnote 5).
- 88 Eliade (1949b), p. 110.
- 89 Cf. Eliade (1969), p. 29.
- 90 This approach is especially visible in *De primitieve mensch en de religie* (cf. Van der Leeuw [1937]); according to Culianu, this book is, more than *Phänomenologie*, Leeuw's one "having given rise in Eliade to the most profound and enduring interest" (Culianu [1978], p. 148).
- 91 Cf. Eliade (1969), p. 35.
- 92 Eliade (1969), p. 35.
- 93 M. Eliade, *Yoga. Essai sur l'origine de la mystique indienne*, Geuthner, Paris – Fundatia regala Carol I, București.
- 94 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1939), p. 114.
- 95 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1950), p. 113.
- 96 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1950), p.114. K. Löwith, *Meaning in History. The theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1950.
- 97 Cfr. Nanini (2003), pp. 89-96.
- 98 Cf. Rudolph (1984), p. 56.
- 99 Cf. Olson (1988), pp. 47, 49, 45.
- 100 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1926), pp. 12-13, 20-21.
- 101 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 769.
- 102 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1937), pp. 159-160.
- 103 Cf. Allen (1984), pp. 112-114; Culianu (1978), p. 128.
- 104 Cf. Eliade (1969), pp. 51-53.
- 105 Eliade (1969), p. 53.
- 106 Culianu (1978), p. 107.
- 107 Cf. Bordaș (2012), pp. 86-87.
- 108 Cf. Spineto (2006), p. 200; Spineto (2008), pp. 372-373. Cf. also Reschika (1997), p. 93.
- 109 Cf. Culianu (1978), pp. 116-117. Cf. also Berner (2004²), p. 347.
- 110 Cf. Culianu (1978), p. 129. However, the fundamental question remains topical, formulated by Dario Rei in this way: "Is the consciousness of such structures [i.e. the archetypes and, in general, all religious forms] a mere heuristic and operative hypothesis or rather do they stress and show, beyond

- the historical, social, and cultural conditioning where religious phenomena are situated, a meta-historical ‘more?’” (Rei [1972], p. 556).
- 111 Cf. Becke (1999), pp. 9-10; Terrin (1978), pp. 77-78.
- 112 Cf. for instance Terrin (1983), in particular pp. 170-177; Nanini (2000), for which I now wish to ‘repent of my fault’.
- 113 Cf. Nanini (2000), p. 697, footnote 67.
- 114 Cf. Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 95-98. Cf. also Hubbeling (1983), pp. 4-5; Hirschmann (1940), pp. 126-129.
- 115 Cf. Eliade (1973), p. 222.
- 116 G. van der Leeuw, *Inleiding tot de theologie*, H. J. Paris, Amsterdam 1935, pp. 163-165, quoted in Waardenburg (1978), pp. 205-206, footnote 1. Cf. also Van der Leeuw (1961³), pp. 11-12.
- 117 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1928), pp. 335-336. Cf. on this Hirschmann (1940), pp. 101-102.
- 118 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 780.
- 119 Cf. Nanini (2000), pp. 698-700; Hermelink (1960), pp. 29-30; Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 109-111. Italo Mancini stresses that both roads, in reality, on the religious philosophical level cannot be considered as completely independent (cf. Mancini [1983], pp. 452-453).
- 120 Van der Leeuw (1956²), p. 780.
- 121 Cf. Waardenburg (1978), p. 224; Waardenburg (2004²), p. 270; see his reproach to Van der Leeuw to practice “a natural theology” (Waardenburg [1978], p. 234; Waardenburg [2004²], pp. 273-274; cf. also Filoramo [1984], p. 42).
- 122 Cf. Hubbeling (1983), p. 6. About the problematic relations between *Religionswissenschaft* and theology cf. for instance Antes (1979), pp. 278-282.
- 123 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1959); cf. on this Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 107-108.
- 124 Cf. Ricœur (1965), pp. 547-554; cf. on this Kehnscherper (1998), pp. 116-117; see also Ricœur’s notion of symbol (cf. Ricœur [1965], pp. 19-29; cf. on this Nanini [2000], p. 703, footnote 80).
- 125 Cf. Nanini (2000), p. 699.
- 126 Cf. Van der Leeuw (1937), pp. 31, 50; cf. on this Nanini (2000), p. 447, footnote 34; Kippenberg (1997), pp. 257-258.
- 127 Cf. Hirschmann (1940), p. 106.
- 128 Cf. Angelini (2001), p. 35. Another historicist *Religionswissenschaftler*, Dario Sabbatucci, argues about the difference between Leeuw’s and Eliade’s masterpieces: “[...] Both Van der Leeuw’s *Phänomenologie* and Eliade’s *Traité* tend to an objectification of religion [...], but whilst Van der Leeuw does it by objectifying ‘religious experience’ [...], Eliade does it by objectifying the character and the functions of the ‘hierophanies’ [...] (Sabbatucci [1987], p. 93).

- ¹²⁹ Eliade (1952), p. 159; cf. also pp. 227-228.
- ¹³⁰ In his review of *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, de Martino speaks regarding this of a "'subtractive' method" (cf. de Martino [1951-1952], p. 151).
- ¹³¹ Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 43-44.
- ¹³² Cf. Van der Leeuw (1956²), pp. 42-46.
- ¹³³ Eliade (1986), p. 231.
- ¹³⁴ Eliade (1986), p. 231.
- ¹³⁵ Eliade (1986), p. 232.

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