Phenomenology of Religious Experience IV: Religious Experience and Description

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Some Moments of Wonder Emergent within Transcendental Phenomenological Analyses

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Abstract: There is a distinctive wonder bordering on and awakening to the philosophy of religion within Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This is not primarily a wonder directed to how things are or that they are, but rather the wonder connected to the most fundamental principle of transcendental phenomenology. That principle is the ancient principle of the convertibility of being with what is true or the inseparability of being and manifestation. Phenomenological wonder is primarily at the correlation of being as what is true or made manifest with consciousness. And yet there is an even more basic phenomenological wonder which founds this correlation, and that is the manifestness of first-person experience within which all other wonder emerges.

Keywords: transcendental phenomenology, wonder, manifestness, metafact, Edmund Husserl

1 Introduction

This paper is a sketch of some aspects of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which offer occasions for philosophical wonder bordering on religious wonder. They also verge on fundamental issues in the philosophy of religion. We will not here engage in Husserl's philosophy of religion¹ or a phenomenology of wonder, but assume the noun and verb have prior sufficiently rich meanings for the reader. Suffice it to say that what is meant by wonder here is that quasi-gracious interruption of the familiar, routine, and every day that is more than an unwelcome puzzle or problem which has to be overcome in order to return to the project at hand. And, of course, it itself is an interesting problem bordering on wonder that we may not decide in advance whether the problematic is merely a nuisance to be surmounted, a puzzle to be solved, and not an invitation to a distraction from the mundane opening unto depths of wondrous meanings. Wonder properly is what begins and sustains the life-work of creativity in both theory, foremost philosophy, and art. In this sense much of both theory and art are instigated by facing a limit-situation or confronted with something that is better captured by the term "mystery" rather than a problem. (Parenthetically, it would seem that the increasing and nearly universal understanding of a university as possible without a liberal arts core, i.e., without that which sustains wonder, creates a culture without its most sustaining and nurturing form of consciousness.)

In traditional discussions of wonder we find the distinction between Aristotelian wonder, which also pervades Husserl's phenomenology and which may well border on mysticism, of *how* things are, from the

¹ For a start cf. Hart, "A Précis of a Husserlian Philosophical Theology"; Hart, "I, We, and God: Ingredients of Husserl's Theory of Community"; Hart, "Entelechy in Transcendental Phenomenology"; Hart, "The Truth of Being and God"; Hart, "Husserl and the Theological Question".

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more obviously mystical-theological wonder *that* things are, which are basic for Abrahamic traditions and Wittgenstein.² But the distinctive transcendental-phenomenological wonder is that awakened by considering that the other forms of wonder are possible only if *how* and *that* things are is manifest; this is wonder *that* there is manifestness.

2 The Wonder of Manifestness

A seventeenth century version of this wonder is that of Thomas Hobbes: “Of all the phenomena or appearances which are near to us, the most admirable is apparition itself, *to phainesthai*.” It is this, the manifestation of manifestation or manifestness, the showing of showing, that I want to dwell on. Hobbes’s own wonder focuses on the consideration that some natural bodies (i.e., human beings) have in themselves “the pictures of almost all things, and others none at all.”³ Here we have an acknowledgment of the human “body” somehow as an agent of manifestation⁴ and we have a philosophical wonder by a materialist at manifestness. Hobbes explains phenomenality and manifestness by the capacity of something like a likeness-making device. Here it would seem the wonder at phenomenality is absorbed in a resolute third-person reductionist objectivist account of interacting bodies. We might say that Hobbes is a forerunner of the battle today to have a heterophenomenology of brain events be the proper philosophical dimension which best analyzes and explains an autophenomenology which alleges lived first-person experience is the core and self-authenticating consideration.

In Husserl there are numerous sources of wonder, but he claimed once that *the most wonderful fact, die wunderbarste Tatsache*, is how the world stands in correlation with one’s agency of manifestation.⁵ And perhaps we may say that he comes upon the transcendental reduction as a way to sustain this wonder, i.e., by putting all of life in quotes or parentheses in order that we may not be absorbed first of all with what appears rather than its manifestation to us. On the other hand, precisely because the reduction removes us from the immediacy of the mysteries and surprises of life, and thereby removes us from the quasi-gracious interventions of wonder, one may at least reflect on whether its practice might seem to interfere with the moments of grace, the unconditional demands and depth of wondrous experience of which we are capable and which emerge out of an immediate engagement with life. Again, this paper will not deal explicitly with these questions, but will deal with what for the author are some wondrous aspects and topics of transcendental phenomenology.

Transcendental phenomenology is deeply and classically metaphysical in so far as its foundation is the ancient thesis of the convertibility of being with what is true, which phenomenology renders as the inseparability of being and display or being and manifestation. Getting an initial hold on this requires relinquishing certain empiricist and/or idealist presuppositions in so far as they move us to think of appearances as intervening media from which we must make inferences or which themselves must be overcome or gotten beyond. In which case knowing something would only happen when we have to do with the thing itself quite apart from its appearances. Thus aspects of these traditions have lured us into thinking of appearances as “mere appearances.” Thus the paradigmatic status of the famous straight stick under water appearing as bent. Upon the surfacing of the suspicion that there is a distortion in my perceiving, I might strive to overcome the distortion by getting beyond appearances. I might be moved to surmount the merely apparent insurmountability of mere appearances and embrace the non-manifested immediate thing-in-itself, uncontaminated by being in the relationship of appearing-to-me-or-us, by, e.g., saying “the thing itself is what I know of the thing in its underlying physical reality as described in mathematical formulae.” But Husserlian phenomenology urges us instead to go back to a more basic sense of appearing as manifestation, which is the showing of the thing, the self-givenness of the thing to the honest investigator. There is no

² Cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.44.

³ Hobbes, *De Corpore*, 213.

⁴ This fundamental term for transcendental phenomenology I get from the work of Robert Sokolowski who describes the transcendental I also as an agent of truth and meaning. See, e.g., Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 115-119.

⁵ Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie* Vol. I, 401.

getting beyond manifestation, truthful disclosure. The physicist cannot describe a nature that has not been manifested to her, and the confirmation of her mathematical account of quantum “phenomena” itself will be verified in forms of perceptual appearings. Thus our concern with truth is inseparably concern about the way something shows itself. The concern extends to saying this is so in such a way that it is evident that it is so. There is no truth or error apart from their being manifested as such.

However, in a proper sense every appearing reality is through perception in space and time and this is only perspectival. What appears appears only partially in the obvious sense that only so many aspects, e.g., sides, of something are given at once and to see “the whole thing” one must in the course of time see the sides which at any one moment are hidden. In knowing anything truly and with relative adequacy the work of manifestation must be patiently sustained. This is as much true for ideal objects, like the essence of promising, and for actual objects in space and time, as it is for the meaning of something past for which the avenues of access, e.g., witnesses, documents, etc. might be unknown and needing to be brought to light.

All rendering something evident, all showing or manifesting, is an illumination of it. This is the tradition of the both Plato and Aristotle. In this sense classical Greek philosophy is transcendental. The very sense of the agency of manifestation is that the light of the mind is in play and actuated. If we think of light as what manifests, the light of the mind is not metaphorical, and every other sense of light as manifesting is derivative and metaphorical. Natural light only manifests things if there is a wakeful mind for whom the natural light illuminates. Thus, e.g., the path in the darkness is indicated to me (not to the path, rocks or trees) by the moon’s illuminating. Nevertheless it is also evident that the mind’s illumination of the world in terms of its manifestability and/or intelligibility, e.g., its sounds, colors, natural laws, forms of necessity and contingency, etc. does not *create* these visible, intelligible, manifesting features but shows them forth. In themselves, in their very actuality they have a kind of visibility and/or intelligibility, a kind of luminousness, captured often in our saying, “now I see it,” “now I get it,” awaiting the mind’s actualization. As Aquinas put it “the measure of the reality of something is the measure of its light” and “the actuality of things is itself their light.”⁶ It is our agency of manifestation that brings their inherent intelligible and visible luminosity to light in the world of created minds. Aristotle and Aquinas use the example of how the sun or moon sheds light on things, which before were in the dark, and thereby brings out their features, e.g., colors, shapes, and shadows for us. But these natural bodies do not create these features, i.e., the things already have them, and the light from these bodies (or artificial lights) brings forth what before was only potentially intelligible, e.g., that this prior obscure dark silhouette is a tree. That is, the inherent intelligibility, here visibility, of the colors, shapes, etc., is there already, waiting, so to speak, to come out of the darkness. But nevertheless, in the absence of mind or some sensible presence, there is no manifestation. This is a sense in which, for example, Conrad-Martius can say “light must meet light in order for there to be light.”⁷ The light involved is not merely that of the intrinsic intelligibility of things and, in the case of visual perception, the illuminating ambience of natural or artificial sources of illumination. In the absence of the light of the mind or at least forms of sentience nothing is manifested. Again, the flashlight and moonlight illuminate nothing if there is no mind or at least percipient being for whom, e.g., the path is illuminated. Indeed, for the unsighted person the illumination of the world is utterly independent of the light of natural or artificial lights. Again, if light is taken to be what manifests, only the light of the mind is the proper non-metaphorical sense of light.

Another often overseen point is in order here in regard to the essence of manifestation or appearing. This has to do with the proper phenomenological sense of manifestation as both illuminating agency and luminous medium. Prior to the basic indispensable appearing as the showing or being shown of things, there is the sense of manifestness as the medium in which I am luminous to myself and within which things appear or are luminous, whether or not truly or adequately so.⁸ Husserl makes equivalent the unity of consciousness, the lived life of the I, and the intentional *medium* through which and out of which one lives. Life is lived in a medium of manifestness, the articulation of the kinds of

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, cited in Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas*, 56.

⁷ Conrad-Martius, *Schriften zur Philosophie*, III, 262.

⁸ Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität II*, *Husserliana XIV*, 45-46; 51.

which manifestation is the work of transcendental phenomenology. This manifestness, this appearing medium, is rooted in the I as a unique appearing, a constant being and self-appearing through an absolute appearing wherein what appears must necessarily be.⁹ But this appearing, this manifestness, is not only a self-appearing but always also a manifestness manifesting being, i.e., of what there is to be known or manifested which is not-I.

Experience as *Erleben*, living through our agency of manifestation, is having a world. This is a conscious having of objects within a wider horizon. It is furthermore being-conscious through an ongoing passive synthetic unifying streaming of life. Husserl very often speaks of this unity of experience as a *medium*, a medium of manifestness, in which the I lives out its life actively and passively and whose manifestness irradiates from the self-shining of the I. What we call consciousness, as the life medium of the I, is uniquely egoic/*ichlich*; but this illuminated-illuminating medium enjoys an objectivity and truthfulness through being illuminated by the I's agency of manifestation. As Husserl put it:

But the world, and as well, in accord with its basic structures, nature, is the non-I, which is given for me as a unity of my consistent experience; therefore it is given as an egoic medium, without which for me nothing would be. It is given in a medium, which is not itself nature, but which is purely egoic.¹⁰

3 Transcendental Consciousness as a Metafact

There are many startlingly wondrous aspects to this position, so startling that one might be tempted to see them as “Luciferian.”¹¹ Although there are many more, here I want merely to mention nine. Clearly each is worthy of an extensive separate treatment, the beginnings of which at least are to be found in Husserl's writings.

1. The first is that no form of world-presentation, not even that of the scientific world for which, in its most reductionist forms, there is no place for consciousness and mind, is possible without what we want to call the “metafact” of mind and an I. (What “metafact” means here is the original manifestness of mind; see below.) Indeed, the potential and actual intelligibility of nature and anything else stand in a metaphysically necessary, not merely contingent, correlation to some sense of mind. In this sense we have to do with mind as a necessary consideration without which there are no manifest facts for any scientific narratives, even those about the world and nature prior to mind.
2. The manifestness of the world and other minds is always a manifestness to the transcendental I, and whereas all the other forms of evidence are evident to me, to what I refer to with the first-personal pronoun, “I,” the evidence for this referent is the strongest, the most necessary, and phenomenologically prior. This is not necessarily in the form of reflective evidence of me to myself, but as the pre-reflective, non-intentional lived self-presence.
3. Furthermore this evidence of this transcendental I, both in terms of its non-reflective sense as well as its reflective sense, is apodictic and *absolute* in the sense that its manifestness is not in need of any other consideration for it to be manifest.
4. Further, as my colleague and friend Hector-Neri Castañeda pointed out, even the amnesiac inerrantly self-refers with “I,” even if he does not know who in the world he is.¹²
5. Further this I, as what is meant in the first-personal indexical, even by an amnesiac, is a unique non-sortal essence, thus not an individual individuated by anything else or by any acquired properties. Thus my non-ascriptive reference with “I” is to my non-sortal, non-identifiable unique essence which is not totally coincident with this identifiable person in the world, JGH.

⁹ Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, *Husserliana VIII*, 412.

¹⁰ Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie*, *Husserliana IX*, 52; see also Taguchi, *Das Problem des ‘Ur-Ich*, 194-197; 202-204; 208-210; 245. Husserl moves the medium of light from an Aristotelian environmental medium to the transcendental I.

¹¹ Cf. Hart, “From Moral Annihilation to Luciferism”; also Hart, “Transcendental Pride and Luciferism.”

¹² Castañeda, *The Phenomeno-Logic of the I*, 232; cf. also Hart, *Who One Is*, Vol. I, especially Ch. II.

6. Furthermore, each I as a transcendental I is implicitly before everything else self-aware and aware of itself in a uniquely necessary way: I cannot conceive that the manifest extinction of all manifested facts and manifested necessities necessarily requires the extinction of my manifesting I. It is unthinkable that I, in my entertaining the prospect of the dissolution of me this identifiable person, JGH, and the world I inhabit, not be.
7. And as a corollary: Because, in this transcendental perspective of manifesting the world's coming to be, and in manifesting its annihilation, it is unthinkable that there be no manifesting I, it is thus in general not thinkable by me or for any other I that there be no I.
8. And because I am only in my ineluctable self-awareness in my agency of manifestation, I myself and my agency of manifestation are through me and there is not manifestable a cause of me and my agency of manifestation beyond me. This means at least that if there is such a causality of this phenomenological absolute, and this would seem necessary, given my not being the cause of my existence merely by reason of its necessary dependence on my non- and intentional awareness of it, the otherness or transcendence of this second absolute must be somehow commensurate with me or me with it, both in terms of specific nature or essence as well as my unique essence of being me.¹³
9. And finally: I, as transcendental I, am present to myself as beginningless and endless. This is to say: As I, as transcendental I, cannot make present a cause of me myself outside of myself or make present a cause (or transcendent illuminating light) of the light of my mind transcendent to my agency of illumination, so I cannot make present my beginning or ending.¹⁴

Recall that for Husserl the “most wonderful” wonder of phenomenology is the manifestation of things through our agency of manifestation. The questions we must raise here, but not answer, is whether the manifestness itself might not be dwelled on as prior to its tie to the agency of manifestation and what would be the cause of manifestness, the cause of the light of intelligibility, possibly be? For Husserl it would seem the most captivating wonder is subsequent to this presupposed manifestness. He was struck with a “*most wonderful fact (wunderbarste Tatsache)*” that the world is determinate, i.e., manifest and meaningful, and this determinacy stands in a necessary correlation to my agency of manifestation.¹⁵ But this agency of manifestation itself which so captivated Husserl assumes the actuality of manifestness, both of oneself and the world as the prior condition for this state of astonishment as well as the agency of manifestation. If we think of manifestness as an (albeit problematic) equivalent of “consciousness” we move near Fichte’s claim in the *Science of Knowing*,¹⁶ e.g., 1804 and 1805, that it is not the I which gives rise to consciousness/reason/light but light, as even constitutive of reason, which gives rise to the I. Consciousness as luminous medium

¹³ Husserl had something like this in mind when, in regard to attempts to found the achievements of mind or spirit on mental laws that were indistinguishable from natural physical laws, i.e., the way laws of association may be considered analogous to laws of nature, and how these function as unintelligible forms regulating actual existence, and thus how, “from out of completely soulless elements there is supposed to be built up a soul, an I, who thinks, knows, values, posits goals,” he protested: “This is *pure nonsense*. It is the most absurd *generatio aequivoca* that has ever been conceived. Only from spirit can there be spirit, only out of elementary consciousness can there be higher consciousness, only from sense can there become novel sense.” Husserl, *Einleitung in die Ethik*, 178. Cf. also Hart, *Who One Is*, I, Ch. VI, §4 for a discussion. If one has a unique essence then avoiding an absurd *generatio aequivoca* would require accounting for not merely *what* one is but *who* one is, if this latter itself is *not* a matter of individuation either from one’s freedom or from one’s insertion in nature, culture, etc. For a discussion of the theological metaphysics that emerges out of these considerations, see Hart, “Die Individualität des wahren göttlichen Selbst”; also Hart, *Who One Is*, Book 2, Ch. 7.

¹⁴ Again, for much regarding these nine themes in Husserl see, e.g., Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität* II, 151-157; cf. my discussions in n.10 and also Hart, *Who One Is*, Book 2, Ch. VII-VIII, Book 2, Ch. II.

¹⁵ Husserl, *Ideen I*, 401.

¹⁶ Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre* (1805), 45. We can note that already in the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1804) Fichte argued that the reason as manifesting is inseparable from a sense of “light” and although the agency of manifestation is egoic when one attends to the light by prescinding from the manifold manifested one sees that light is itself supremely absolute and one and the I can see intuitively how it itself is negated in the light by reason of proceeding completely from the oneness of its manifestness (Lecture 8). In Lecture 28 the “I” is presented as an effect of reason. But this it is a peculiar one because inconceivable in the sense that this insight presupposes the I’s agency of manifestation.

or manifestness may appear to go in advance even though it can be shone subsequently to be ineluctably “*ichlich*” or egoic.

The philosophical disclosure of this would have to reconstruct the (quasi-) I-less field of manifestness. Any claim to experience or manifest it would presuppose the I. This seems to be the case in the reconstruction of the initial development of consciousness in the infant: It seems that it is only in the agency of manifestation and what motivates the child to self-reference that the anonymous tacit presence of the I comes to light. A kind of evidence for this is that the child may initially self-refer with third-personal terms and only eventually come to a mastery of the first-personal pronoun. But even if we grant this belated surfacing of the I, and granted that the beginning mind is not actually anything but potentially everything or all of being, and if this all must be manifest and be manifested through its agency of manifestation, is there not in this first encounter with manifestness an initiating sense of the light of being which might to be said to have infinite extension and null intension or comprehension?¹⁷ Here the proposal is not to regress to infancy or childhood, but rather that we, as adults, should pause long enough to find wondrous the originating original manifestness as that which is anterior to everything else and upon which everything else is dependent.

J.V. Valberg nicely captured this wonder occasioned by the original manifestness with the term “metafact.” Clearly for Valberg the manifestness is not to be separated from my first-personal consciousness, i.e., awareness of the manifestness of my existing within a factual horizon of consciousness. In our day, Dieter Henrich, Manfred Frank, and Michel Henry have shown with elegance and precision how the reduction of manifestness to intentional (reflective) consciousness makes self-consciousness impossible. And, as analogous reflections in both Fichte and Schelling compelled them both to observe, this metafact of ineluctable self-manifestation and manifestness thwarts any explanatory regressive reflection. That is, in reflecting on this original intellectual light or manifestness one does not come up with an objectively present grounding truth or consideration which transcends the manifestness or manifestation itself. Or, as Valberg puts it: “Manifestness like truth, does not give rise to a hierarchical series of referentially linked elements or acts. The manifestness of the manifestness that p, like the truth of the truth that p, is just the manifestness (truth) that p.” This metafactual manifestness is the first truth which all others presuppose and the one than which none other is more basic.

Valberg formulates the original wondrous metafact or first truth as: There is SOMETHING, not NOTHING, i.e., it is necessary that whatever is there (SOMETHING/BEING), is within the luminous clearing, and this is inseparable from my being-conscious. This clearing or horizon is inseparably one’s self-manifestation, and this prior luminous field in which everything becomes manifest, whether objectively or non-objectively, cannot itself be something manifested, for it cannot but be always already manifest.¹⁸

Again we must note, with Husserl’s help, that this fact, *wunderbarsste Tatsache*, is a not a contingent fact that we experience but a necessary fact. And it is a puzzling fact because assigning it a cause among what we may make present to our minds phenomenologically does not seem to be possible without presupposing it. And as a metafact it is only factual in the sense that we are ignorant of it only because of our transcendental naivety.

4 Metafact as Both Being-Conscious (*Bewusst-sein*) and Being-Consciousness

As a conclusion I want to submit a promissory note in the form of a proposition: At the heart of what here is named “metafact” is an understanding of consciousness as at once being-conscious, *Bewusst-sein* and being-consciousness. Consciousness is always already consciousness of being; *Bewusstsein ist immer schon Seinsbewusstsein*.

¹⁷ With this we draw near to the metaphysics of nineteenth century philosopher and theologian, Antonio Rosmini. In the twentieth century there are numerous excellent disciples and creative presentations of his thought, none better than those of Michele Sciacca. An especially helpful introduction to Rosmini’s basic ideas is Manfredini, *Essere e Verità in Rosmini*.

¹⁸ For all this see Valberg, *Dream, Death, and the Self*, 192-195. On “metafact,” cf. also Hart “From Metafact to Metaphysics in the ‘Heidelberg School.’”

The proper elucidation of the *cogito* illustrates this well. In being aware or saying “I am!,” there is a sense of being antecedent to all thinking and presenting.¹⁹ The epistemic *cogito ergo sum* must also be appreciated ontologically as a *sum ergo cogitor* (I am therefore I am thought), because a sense of manifest being goes in advance in the uniquely indubitable manifestness of me to myself. And this self-being is not such as to enable me to say being is myself, but rather my self-presence is within the larger field of what is manifest and to be manifested.

That is, co-extensive with manifestness there is a sense of already a universally present medium. In a sense the aboriginal wonder and metafact is the originally present SOMETHING, not NOTHING which goes in advance of all the agency of the mind in its manifesting the world but it also is ineluctably a factor in this life, e.g., in the central role of reference, inference, assent, judgment and predication. Of all the facts with which each deals and must deal, it is being’s prior manifestness which subsequently is tied to oneself as illuminating agent of manifestation. Again being-conscious, *Bewusst-sein* is always already being-consciousness: *Bewusstsein ist immer schon Seinsbewusstsein*. It is this fact which is the one not admitting question and all the others of necessity are referred to this “metafact” and not it to them.

We have in St. Bonaventure an adumbration of the transcendental “most wonderful fact.” For this truly to be Husserlian we must be able to make the case that Husserl’s transcendental consciousness too is essentially constituted by the light of being, i.e., an ineluctable awareness of a most general sense of being. Here is how Bonaventure once put his wonder at what we are calling the most wonderful transcendental metafact: “the blindness of the mind is amazing (*mira igitur est caecitas intellectus*): [the eye of the mind], “intent on particular and universal beings,” does not see that light before which and by which it sees everything, and for Bonaventures this is equivalent to not intellectually grasping (he says “notice/*advertit*”) being itself which is outside of every genus which “comes to our mind before all other things which come to our mind through it... Thus we can truly say that the eye of our mind relative to the most obvious things of nature is like the eye of a bat relative to light.” He concludes: “This very darkness is the supreme illumination of our mind, just as when the eye sees pure light, it seems to be seeing nothing.”²⁰

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¹⁹ This is *not* a thesis one finds explicitly in Husserl, but it seems correct. I think, however, Husserl could be nudged into an agreement with the thesis we are proposing on the “metafact” and thus with the assertion: “I am! My I contains a Being (*Seyn*), that goes in advance of all thinking and presenting.” It is in as much as it is thought and it is thought because it is...[*in dem es gedacht wird, and es wird gedacht, weil es ist...*]; therefore, because it only is and only in so far is thought as it *thinks itself*. It is therefore because it *itself* only thinks its thoughts, and it itself only thinks its thoughts, and in this respect thinks itself, because it is. It brings itself forth through its thinking itself, and this from an absolute causality,” i.e., one not absolutely transcendent to absolute transcendent to itself. See Schelling, *Vom Ich al Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedinge im menschlichen Wissen* (1795), in *Schriften* (1794-1800), 57. This claim for an absolute causality is one with the question of how what the human person refers to with “I” is related to the absolute divine I. But later Schelling will make the case for an absolutely antecedent pre- and trans-conceptual presence of Being prior to any explicit agency of manifestation which is the beginning of all conscious agency or thinking. See Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1841-42), 160 ff. The view of the metafact merely indicated here draws close to the later Schelling on condition that his view of what is anterior to everything else may be construed as inseparably in some sense non- and pre-reflective consciousness. The “metafact” position holds that the originary consciousness (what early Schelling may be taken to mean with “my I contains Being that goes in advance of all thinking and presenting”) is always constituted by being-conscious (*Bewusst-sein*) as consciousness of being. *Bewusstsein ist immer schon Seinsbewusstsein*. Again, this is terrain impressively explored by Antonio Rosmini, for whom intellectual consciousness is constituted by the “divine” intuition of the idea of being which is absolutely anterior to all other acts of consciousness. St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas were formative influences for Rosmini’s reaching this position.

²⁰ St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 82-83.

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