than compensate for one or two weaker papers. Finally, the only substantial fault of the book is its organization. The division of the anthology into three parts might have been arranged, less in terms of broad themes, which were conflated and abandoned within the articles anyway, but according to the very specific content of the contributions. Many of the essays agree in overt ways, and many of the authors’ conclusions pose serious challenges to one another via their respective interpretations of Nietzsche and Levinas. A reader might have benefited from reading a rejoinder to a given contribution in the subsequent essay in the collection. Despite this minor flaw, this collection is highly recommended to anyone interested in the approaches to ethics and morality of Nietzsche and Levinas and the relation between the two.


Review by Patrizia Manganaro, Pontifical Lateran University. Translated by Antonio Calcagno.

“Harmony” means the impossibility of keeping separate that which is distinct; it is concerned with the important sense of the unity of distinct parts, namely, ontological unity. On one hand, we find ourselves reflecting on the question of difference or, following a more traditional way of speaking, of the relation between the one and the many: What does it mean to say that difference is constitutive of reality? On the other hand, we turn to “doing philosophy” and methodological criteria: Is it the subject that brings about harmony by carrying out some kind of balancing between conflicting poles that are distinct and distant from one another or is harmony individuated, already found and understood to be in reality? Is it possible, in some way, to hold the various perspectives firmly together?

I maintain that one of the great merits of Husserl’s phenomenology is that of liberating us from the traps of many rigid and abstract dualisms: I/world, subject/object, representation/reality, spirit/matter, body/soul. He individuated an area of investigation that banked, perhaps in a way not yet seen for that epoch but also incredibly effective then as today, on the originary sense of the experiential relation and correlation
in the wide-ranging philosophical programme of an Erkenntnistheorie. The influence of Husserl on Stein is widely acknowledged and I do not think that Husserl’s philosophy can be interpreted through the lens of harmony. Harmony, however, is a pertinent and fitting descriptor for his most faithful student, Edith Stein, as noted by Angela Ales Bello in her most recent book, which we are discussing here. This claim is neither a juxtaposition nor a simplification; neither is it naïve. Rather, Ales Bello’s book argues this position with the rigour of Husserlian phenomenology, which she has taught us over the past years.

Proceeding, first, with the interpretative criteria for harmony, I think that we must keep in mind the relation between Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein in terms of the possible foundations of a philosophical school. In particular, I would like to look at the dependence and/or filiation of Husserl and the original position of phenomenological thought. This has to do with the reflection on the meaning of a “community of researchers,” understood as “spiritual body”—a decisive theme in the then contemporary history of philosophy that, among other things, demonstrates in Edith Stein’s work a possible and concrete consonance between “thinking” and “living.” In an important paragraph from Finite and Eternal Being titled “The inner soul,” Stein writes that the intellectual search for sense or meaning is a free act. The personal and spiritual life is inserted in a great signifying togetherness, which is, in its own turn, also a cohesion of action: every sense, once understood, requires a comportment that corresponds to it. In order to indicate the “putting into movement” toward a corresponding comportment the phenomenological school uses the term “motivation.” To do philosophy is, in fact, a making: thinking is acting, an intellectual acting that is free, responsible and motivated. Here, “theory” and “practice,” coherently harmonised, find their equilibrium.

Ales Bello’s beautiful essay unfolds in three chapters whose titles are problematic not only for contemporary philosophy but also for Western thought in general: (1) Judaism and Christianity; (2) The Unity and Complexity of the Human Being; (3) Philosophy and Religion. If we were to condense the content of the book, we could say that harmony revolves around the unique connection between anthropology and religion, which is the salient moment that emerges in the intersection of the human and the divine. This is confirmed by the title of the first part of the third chapter, “The Human Being and Her Other.”
We find ourselves, then, with one big title: phenomenological anthropology and religion. This is not reductive because it does signify that there is no account of the breadth that lies between the questions, the analysis of which pushes, first, to the moment of the social and political as well as to the moment of the sacred, mystical and the Christological-Trinitarian. Second, it pushes us to important considerations on the social, political, theological, historical and philosophical planes (for example, the encounter of the Middle Ages with the present day, between the thought of Thomas Aquinas and Husserl, a theme to which Stein intensely devoted herself and which produced original results—all of which Ales Bello underlines in her work.)

Given all the questions raised, an important theoretical difficulty arises; it is constituted by the tertium or third, namely, religious indifference and political neutrality. The former is located between the acceptance and the refusal of God (87), whereas the latter is somewhere between peace and war, good and evil. (95) Here, harmony appears to be interrupted. How ought we resolve this point? What is the speculative value of the tertium?

I believe that an accurate philosophical-phenomenological analysis of difference can confirm this, as mentioned at the opening of my reflection. And this is why to “place in harmony” does not only occur between two antinomous or conflicting poles, but precisely between many and the many. Existentially, we encounter difference, plurality, determination and, therefore, the non-I. It is surprising how a philosophy that has assumed the centrality of consciousness and/or the subject—an egocentric philosophy, undoubtedly—could reveal a sense of difference and its internal articulation in alterity, diversity, foreignness, thereby throwing light on the value for human beings of hetero-centric experience.

“Harmony” means being in agreement with, proportion, consonance (of voices, instruments, sounds and tones): I am not sure how much Ales Bello had music in mind when she chose this register of harmony to explain the work of Edith Stein, but one can certainly claim that it is possible to uncover here a “technical” sense insofar as there, like in both the theory and practice that go into one’s musical formation, there is a concatenation of agreements in the organisation of range of sounds as well as the function of the unified order of tonality. If one considers that in order to explain the way phenomenology proceeds, one often uses the
pertinent image of concentric circles that expand and contract; one has to conclude, then, that harmony is traceable even between the spaces and times. But what does this mean?

In philosophical terms, this means bringing sense into relief. “Bringing harmony” means both individuating harmony theoretically as well as understanding it in reality, and this is obtained through the critical exercise of reason through the discipline of philosophy as explained by Husserl. Harmony is not attributable to an impulse or a subjective psychic instant, but to an exigency that founds itself in reality. This establishes an equilibrium between “clarifying” and “grounding,” between “comprehending” and “explaining,” which constitute the conflicting dualisms that have marked, even wounded, the philosophy of the 20th century. Phenomenology, through its analytical analysis of lived experience resolves these dualisms—an exercise that neither ends with itself nor is a self-indulgent intellectual achievement. It is, rather, a foundational, originary and clarifying exercise. There is no doubt that this very egological philosophy is also at the same time a philosophical analytic.

When in the concluding *Paths of Research (Linee di ricerche)* Ales Bello underscores that harmony is not merely an accord, but “is made possible because it founds itself in an authentic unity of an ontological type that is the basis of diversity and plurality” (234), she understands with great clarity that the question of harmony coincides with the phenomenological question of sense. And this is proven by the fact that there are continuous references and that signifying connections are traceable, impeding, in fact, the possibility of keeping separate that which is distinct.

I would like to make explicit reference here to a document that is paradigmatic of what has been said above, namely, Edith Stein’s handwritten letter sent to Pope Pius XI a few months after the Nazis assumed power in Germany, which contains many of the binomials mentioned above. Some of the dualisms include: Judaism and Christianity, divine and human, body and soul, philosophy and mysticism. In her essay, Ales Bello has inserted a narrative where one hears the words of Stein: “Holy Father! As a daughter of the Jewish people, who through the grace of God has now been a daughter of the Catholic Church, I would like to ardently express to the Father of Christianity that which preoccupies millions of Germans. For years, the leaders of National Socialism have preached hate against Jews. Now that they have obtained power and
have armed their followers, among which there are many criminals, they are harvesting the fruit of the seeds of hate. All that has occurred and occurs daily comes from a government that defines itself as ‘Christian.’ Not only the Jews but also thousands of faithful Catholics of Germany, and around the world, have been waiting for weeks hoping that the Church of Christ will make its voice heard against such abuse of the name of Christ. The idolatry of race and the power of the state that the radio hammers away at the masses every day, are these not an open heresy? This war of extermination against Jewish blood, is this not an outrage against the most holy humanity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles? Does this not lie in absolute opposition to the comportment of our Lord and Saviour, who prayed for his persecutors while on the cross?” (128–29)

These words attest to a sort of short circuit. They are biting, cutting like sharp blades. In this concerted denunciation, that which hits and surprises us, leading to an overturning of perspectives, is the explicit reference to the Jewish blood of Christ. This blood is of a “most holy” humanity, says Stein; it is a blood that is sacrificial, the blood of the Agnus Dei. It is also the blood of the unstained victim, of the suffering servant, of the unjustly persecuted, of the pure and of the innocent. It is the blood of the Son of God and the Son of Man: et-et. The wound of the Jewish people is the wound of God, the Word of God made flesh, both in a most disconcerting and illuminating way. Here, even the distance between temporal and eternal is annihilated because the being of God is understood as pathos.

A last consideration, even a distraction: In this essay, Angela Ales Bello maintains that harmony is an interpretative key for understanding the thought of Edith Stein. This hermeneutic proposition seems fitting with regard to the relation of phenomenological anthropology and religion, as I tried to demonstrate by the expanding and contracting of the concentric circles of the phenomenological method, between fides and ratio, reason and revelation, philosophy and mysticism. But that which seems to flee from harmony is the relation between the exact sciences and phenomenology, quantity and quality, between the empirical and the logical, the factual and transcendental. Is this a question of method, of the gradations of knowing? How can one think here the inseparability of the distinctions?
Traditionally, there is bad blood between phenomenology and the empirical sciences. Most notably, there is Husserl’s critique of the attempt to “naturalise” consciousness. The 19th-and early 20th-century debate over the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften*, fueled by German historicism’s criteria of unity of method, left behind certain conceptual dichotomies, including *Verstehen* (“understanding”) versus *Erklären* (“to explain” or “clarify”), “rigorous” science versus “exact” sciences and, more recently, “continental” versus “analytic” philosophy. Are these either merely academic distinctions or do they indicate, respectively, a *forma mentis* that is irreconcilable with its counterpart?

The point of interest is the philosophical program of a theory of knowledge (*Erkenntnistheorie*) based on phenomenology that aims at the unity of knowing. But what kind of unity, especially if each discipline is seen as hegemonic and absolute? Let us take as an example the lived body or *Leib*, which originated in the Husserlian school and was later taken up by French phenomenology and given a more teleological or Christologico-Trinitarian sense. Certainly, lived corporeity may be investigated from a biological and physical aspect as well as a medical and physiological one; it may also be examined from psychological or psychoanalytical perspectives as well as social and political ones. There are also communitarian and religious, sacred and mystical, perspectives. What, then, is the relationship between “nature” and “spirit”?

Here it is necessary to turn to the Father of Phenomenology and his influence on the thought of Edith Stein. In the lectures *Nature and Spirit*, Husserl maintains that we have an experience of the objective world as relational subjects; we have relations of reciprocal understanding or empathy (*Einfühlung*). He deepened his analyses by following this direction of research, affirming that prior to empathy a subject is not a person. The experience of individual others is presupposed by consciousness of the natural world; it is the inseparable preliminary moment. This determines the program of a sharp network of philosophical investigations within the school of phenomenology, which were developed later by Husserl’s most intimate and talented collaborators, all with an eye to the precision of the method and the content. Here, we are dealing with an epistemological investigation of the configuration of knowing in Western culture. In this regard, Ales Bello writes, “The difference proposed by the phenomenologists between *Körper* and *Leib* is well known;
there is the body understood in a material sense and that understood as the living body. The description of both moments begins not from the bottom, that is, from an empirical standpoint that is immediately given as corporeity; rather, one examines the constitution of the lived body from the transcendental viewpoint in order to delineate the complexity of the human being. It is useful here to recall that we are not dealing here with a deduction but a demonstration through essences.” (21–29)

Through an investigation of the lived body is it possible, therefore, to reconstruct the thread that links the sciences of nature with the sciences of spirit? It was said that this is more of a Husserlian question than a Steinian one, but I maintain that it is important in order to understand the role of the phenomenological school in the culture of 20th-century Europe and its importance today. Philosophy is not an empirical knowing, and it is capable of acquiring and elaborating knowledge beyond the “exact” or “positive” boundaries of the empirical, cognitive or neurological sciences. The contemporary interrogation, philosophical or not, of the nature of the human and interhuman demands a profound re-thinking of the equilibrium and/or the harmony of the intra- and intersubjective as well as the subjective and/or egological demands and those of the other proposed by phenomenology. There is a necessity to think personal identity in relation to otherness. A significant treatment of the theme of difference can be found in Edith Stein’s work on empathy. It is not without accident that her work, dating from 1916, is often referred to in contemporary neuroscience. “Nature” and “Spirit” are heavy terms and they require further research and analysis. Ales Bello contributes to this reflection, concluding that the “message of Edith Stein can also be useful for understanding in cultural terms the fragmentation of knowledge that characterises our Western culture, inviting us to not stop at the absolutisation of a particular discipline, but to broaden the horizon of research. This is the case so that we do not only draw only certain droplets of knowledge; rather, we must dig deeply into the profound unity of objects traceable in the objects themselves of the disciplines. A unitary element is the anthropological around which turn the so-called human sciences. Another is nature around which turn physics, chemistry and biology. Unity can be truly reached and not only presupposed through a reflection that maintains the trajectory of philosophy…. This philosophy must be open to examining the contribution of various visions of the
world and other cultures, always not forgetting the role played by religions.” (240)


Review by Robert W.M. Kennedy, University of Ottawa.

Dominant in continental philosophy’s return to religion is the conceptual distinction between the idolatrous God of ontotheology and the iconic God with/out being that reportedly comes after metaphysics. While akin to negative theology, this return to God after God is theorized in cognizance of current philosophical considerations and confrontations with the religious, which were originally emergent in the influential work of such continental thinkers as Derrida, Marion, Levinas and Ricoeur. Richard Kearney’s latest book *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* is one of the most recent additions to this conversation about the (post)metaphysical.

In his new book, Kearney revisits old thematic ground in greater depth, utilizing original and established source material, while ushering in his neologism “anatheism,” or “ana-theos,” which he translates as “God after God.” (3) The book therefore presents Kearney’s attempt to synthesize the greater current of thought/response reverberating in the dialogue between continental philosophy and the religious, while also pointing to various antecedents of the contemporary conversation. In development of these antecedents, Kearney proffers anatheism as a third alternative to the “polar opposites” of “dogmatic theism and militant atheism,” describing it as the “wager of faith beyond faith.” (3) Kearney further explains that anatheism is “what emerges out of that night of not-knowing,” the moment of “abandoning abandonment,” as well as “another way of seeking and sounding the things we consider sacred but can never fully fathom or prove.” (3) In keeping with Ricoeur, Kearney’s faith beyond faith aspires to liberate its audience from the ideologies and mythologies of “first belief,” advancing a “second naïveté.” (10, 130) Thus, liberation is hypothetically accomplishable via the reassessment and reconstitution of religious “truth claims,” which are now put into “brackets.” (11) Through this bracketing, Kearney’s hermeneutic ap-