


Article

Will, Original Teleology and the Divine Entelechy in Husserl's Thought

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Abstract: The central intention of this paper is to explore original teleology and to solve the riddle of matter based on the analysis of the flow of absolute consciousness. The paper unfolds in four steps. Firstly, it analyzes the origin of teleology in terms of Husserl's theory of intentional acts. Since Husserl's phenomenology itself contains teleological ideas, the creativity and goal-direction of the will reveals the intrinsic connection between will and teleology. Secondly, the relationship between the will and original teleology is discussed around the riddle of matter raised by Husserl, and the reason why teleology originates in the act of will is explained. Thirdly, the paper reinterprets the divine entelechy from the perspective of the creativity of the divine will, and points out that Husserl's concept of God is not only the idea of the highest good, but also an entelechy that is constantly engaged in creating and becoming. Finally, in order to further argue for the important role of the will in solving the problem of teleology, this paper discusses the intrinsic relationship between transcendental reduction and the will.

Keywords: phenomenology; will; original teleology; God; transcendental reduction

1. Introduction

It is often assumed that the first major text in which Husserl discussed teleology was *Ideas I*, and that in this period Husserl bracketed the transcendent being of God by introducing suspension and reduction, that is to say, God is a transcendent Being, "but would obviously also be transcendent to "absolute" consciousness" (Husserl 1976, p. 125). However, Husserl discussed the problem of teleology and theology as early as 1911 in his *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory* (1908–1914) (See Husserl 1988, pp. 170, 172, 176, 180–82, 225–26). To explore the ultimate grounds of teleology, Husserl then introduced God as an idea and brought it onto the path of the teleology of transcendental phenomenology. How exactly does this happen? In the Lectures, Husserl points out that the doctrine of absolute being includes not only the doctrine of scientific theoretical principles, but also the doctrine of axiological, practical principles, and ultimately the ideal of teleology, or one might also say the ideal of theology, in combination (See Husserl 1988, p. 180). Thus, viewed from the perspective of Husserl's science of absolute being, the idea of God is embedded precisely in his phenomenological Philosophy. According to Husserl, the idea of divinity is accessed through the volitional act. Both in Husserl's theory of intentional acts and the implementation of his phenomenological method, i.e., in suspension and reduction, the will plays a central role as the teleological "I can" act. The transcendental reduction is essentially performed and accomplished by the will.

However, in the *C-Manuscripts*, Husserl states that phenomenological reduction means a reduction to the living present flow of evident experience. In this regard, based on Husserl's theories of time-consciousness, especially the living present, several scholars, such as Jacques Derrida and James G. Hart, have argued that there is an intrinsic relationship between Husserl's conception of God and transcendental phenomenology. However, I believe that the "living present" of internal time-consciousness is not sufficient to explain Husserl's concept of God, and here I would like to enrich it from another perspective,



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namely the absolute flow of volitional consciousness, and thus expand our understanding of Husserl's conception of God.

This study explores Husserl's ethical pathway to God from the perspective of the genesis of will and teleology. According to Husserl, telos is not just a static ultimate goal, an ideal pole, but something that is made up of different levels of acts. Based on the theory of monads¹, Husserl's teleology is essentially embodied in the history of the subject's creation, development and self-achievement through the will (See [Husserl 2013](#), pp. 165–68). The monad represents a universal transcendental subject that constitutes the world. For Husserl, the monad itself contains the entire life of consciousness, both potential and real. The world constituted by the monads is a spiritual world, and its basic law is motivation. In other words, teleology itself is a mental event triggered by the motivation of the will.

For Husserl, teleology is not merely an idea of the highest good, but the creation and self-fulfillment inherent in the act of monads, and this act of creation and self-fulfillment is a manifestation of the original force of the monads. "The originary force of monads finds its basis in God: 'God is not simply the totality of monads but also the entelechy that finds itself in the totum as the idea of the telos of infinite development, that is, the idea of humanity as absolute reason, understood as that which necessarily regulates monadic being and does so according to a free decision. Insofar as this is intersubjective, this process is necessarily expansive; without it, notwithstanding episodes of decadence, universal being could not exist, etc.'" (Ales Bello 2009, p. 45; [Husserl 1973](#), p. 610).

The reason for associating the idea of divinity with the theory of the will here is not only that both are related to the theory of absolute teleology, but that both are related to the theory of original teleology. What is original teleology? According to Husserl, the understanding of original teleology is the most difficult problem (see [Husserl 1988](#), p. 226). On the one hand, original teleology belongs to absolute consciousness, on the other hand, it belongs to absolute being, involving the ancient riddle of the matter. The riddle of matter had troubled Plato and Aristotle; Husserl encountered it again when he thought about teleology and the idea of divinity. The so-called riddle of matter is, in a word, how can the idea of a divinity that exists in its most perfect form regulate an irrational matter? This question relates to the manner in which Husserl developed the divine idea in his thought. Seeing from the perspective of original teleology, this paper combines this teleology with the absolute flow of volitional consciousness to further understand the divine idea in Husserl. On how to understand the relationship between teleology and the divine idea, I adopt Husserl's solution, which combines Aristotle's theory of entelechy with Leibniz's theory of monad (see [Husserl 1988](#), pp. 181–82). However, this paper attempts to show that Husserl's divine idea cannot be understood as traditional dogmatic metaphysics. It is an idea based on the theory of absolute consciousness. Even if Husserl's divine idea still has traces of metaphysics, this metaphysics is a "metaphysics in a special phenomenological sense".

The central intention of this paper is to explore original teleology and to solve the riddle of matter based on the analysis of the flow of absolute consciousness and according to Husserl's manifold theory (Mannigfaltigkeitslehre) of consciousness. My thoughts in this paper are as follows. Firstly, through Husserl's theory of intentionality, I will reveal the origin and modality of teleology in the flow of absolute consciousness, that is, the intentionality of the will and its creative characteristics. Original teleology belongs to absolute consciousness, and the flow of volitional consciousness, like the flow of time consciousness, belongs to absolute consciousness; therefore, the flow of volitional consciousness not only has the original process form of the absolute flow, but also has the original creative character. Secondly, I will discuss the inner relationship between original teleology and the flow of volitional consciousness, and reveal the relationship between original teleology and primal matter. The third step starts with the phenomenology of the genesis of the will and solves the question of how the ideal form of original teleology regulates the matter. Here, the drive (Trieb) is introduced as the lowest stage of the will, because the drive carries the matter. The divine entelechy that belongs to the highest stage of the absolute consciousness is the total consciousness; the flow of volitional consciousness such as drive belongs to

the lower stage of the absolute consciousness. Fourthly, to further solve the problem of original teleology and the riddle of matter, the will is linked to the divine entelechy through “absolute consciousness”, the absolute consciousness here being the absolute flow as the original process, which is constantly becoming and creating. Finally, in order to fully demonstrate that Husserl’s transcendental reduction is a teleological path created and fulfilled by the will, the intrinsic relationship between transcendental reduction as a path and the will is discussed.

What is important here is to take the theory of manifold theory of consciousness as the theoretical basis for analyzing the problem, and to analyze the relationship between original teleology, the will and the divine entelechy from the perspective of the self-constitution of the flow of absolute consciousness. The inner relationship between them is revealed through the motivation of the will, and the relationship between the will and the divine entelechy is revealed through the hierarchy of the flow of absolute consciousness. Through such research, the paper will on the one hand show how Husserl solves traditional metaphysical problems through his analysis of absolute consciousness and transcendental monads, and on the other hand expand the understanding of the divine idea.

2. The Creativity of Will and Original Teleology

Does original teleology derive from the consciousness of internal time or volitional consciousness? For Husserl, original teleology belongs to “absolute consciousness” (See [Husserl 1988](#), p. 226). How is “absolute consciousness” to be understood here, and is it time-consciousness? According to Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of the will in 1914, although volitional consciousness is within the flow of time-consciousness and has the basic characteristics of an act of consciousness of internal time, it has its unique phenomenon, which is its original creativity.

According to Husserl, intention is divided into intention in a narrow sense, which refers to the aiming intention, and intention in a wider sense, which includes both the aiming intentions and other acts such as achievements or fulfilments (see [Husserl 1984](#), p. 393). Since the aiming-at is the character of the will, it is through will that the intentionality of consciousness is practiced. As Nam-In Lee points out, “Due to the fact that aiming intentionality is an essential part contained in every intentionality, this can be characterized as a willing intention” ([Lee 2000](#), p. 55). Thus, in light of Husserl’s analysis of intentionality, willing intention fits precisely into the narrow concept of intention. If there is no aiming-at of the volitional act, neither the intention nor the fulfillment of the intentional act in a wider sense can be accomplished.

Although Husserl argued in *Logical Investigations* that the volitional act, as a non-objectivating act, is founded in the objectivating act, this standpoint encountered difficulties in analyzing the original phenomenon of the will. In his analysis of the phenomenon of willing, he found that the will is an independently specific and creative act with practical intentionality. One cannot reveal the original phenomenon of the act of the will if he adheres to the objectivating acts and applies the theory of perception directly to the analysis of the volitional act, because the will is not directed towards a ready-made object, but towards a real goal that is ought to be. As Husserl points out: “The ‘I will’ at the beginning is obviously directed to the whole process. It is objectivated (*vorgestellt*). Is it intuitional objectivated? The intuitional objectivation of a process, which of course cannot be a perception here (since perception, that <that> is, and will, that <that> ought to be, exclude each other, and therein consists the very essence of will, that it is directed at non-being, but being-becoming as willingly being-ought to be)” ([Husserl 2020](#), pp. 13–14). In other words, the will is a practical act towards reality; it does not point to the object of knowing through the eidetic intuition of the objectivation, but to a non-ready practical goal through an intuition of the process by which the action is performed. That is, the will must be based on an intuitional objectivation of the process (See [Husserl 2020](#), p. 14), and volitional intentionality is the intentionality about the process of acting, so that we cannot reveal its original phenomena by means of objectivating perception.

Husserl states that the will in its origin is an analog of a definite belief. Acts of belief are intentional acts towards being, whilst will is a creative act towards what should be in reality. As Husserl points out: “The will in the original sense is the analog of certainty, I put it absolutely and practically as ought to be: ‘let it be! (Es werde!)’” (Husserl 1988, p. 114). This creative positing of “let it be” is a positing towards reality, i.e., the becoming of being (Sein-Werden) through will, and therefore the will is directed towards a non-ready-made being.

Furthermore, Husserl distinguishes three different types of will-act: the resolution, *fiat*² (Es werde), and will-action (Handlungswille), with *fiat* belonging to a central act of the will. “It just so happens that in real action, the *fiat* imparts practical agreement to this representation” (Melle 1997, p. 180). Seeing from its characteristics, the will is a practical intentional act, and the practical “shall-be-consciousness” is originally located in the intentionality of it. The intention of the will does not point to ideally unattainable goals, but rather to goals that can be realized practically (see Husserl 1988, p. 106). The fundamental characteristic of the will is its creativity, which can be revealed through the *fiat*. The concept of *fiat* is derived from the *Genesis* and means promise, command, and let-it-happen (See Hart 1992, p. 86). “Because the Latin third-person subjunctive, *fiat*, or Husserl’s German ‘Es werde!’ as ‘let it happen,’ appears to reduce the specific sense of will to a consent, they are better rendered by ‘I do’ because it is the I realizing the action which brings about that which is envisaged as possible and desirable” (Hart 1992, p. 86). Husserl understands *fiat* not in the sense of command, but as the creative practice of ought, or, in Husserl’s words, “the practical ‘it ought to be!’” (Husserl 1988, p. 157).

The concept of *fiat* plays a very important role in Husserl’s analyses of willing. He discusses it in the context of the theory of intentionality, and sees it as a purely experiential element of the will, which embodies the essential character of the will. The *fiat* not only expresses the mind’s approval of the practical act, but also expresses the attitude of the decision on what the practice should be. This decision of the *fiat* is the spontaneous decision of the will, and every act begins in the mode of creative genesis. Thus Husserl argues that *the fiat* is an original act of the self, which is the originating point of will and action. “The creative positing of the *fiat* is from the very beginning such an action, i.e., it sets in motion what is to be and what should be in practice in the first place. The positing of the will, i.e., the positing of the *fiat* in practice, is necessarily laid on the basis of a positing of being. Furthermore, it is a positing of what is to be and what should be” (Husserl 2020, p. 13).

For Husserl, *fiat* belongs not only to a spontaneous and creative will, but to an empty act of practical intentionality. The positing act of will stems first and foremost from the creative positing of the *fiat* that contains no content. Since it is a beginning point for any act, it has the character of being an original point for the act. Therefore, it is of great importance in Husserl’s phenomenology of will.

The will’s positing of should-be does not mean that the will points to ideally impossible goals, but rather to goals that are practically possible in the present and the future. In his analysis of the will in 1914, Husserl specifically distinguished the will from the wish. He argued that wish can point towards either ideally impossible goals or realistically possible goals. The will, however, is directed towards realistic goals in the present and the future (Husserl 1988, pp. 103–4). The will is directed towards the positing of reality, the creative “let-it-be”, the “so-be-it!”

In a way, the consciousness does not say: “It will be, and therefore I will it”, but: “Because I will it, it will be.” In other words, the will speaks its creative “so-be-it! (Es werde!)” The positing of the will is positing of realization. But the realization here is not a mere becoming real, but a making real, a achievement of realization. But this is something original, which has its source precisely in the peculiarity of the volitional consciousness and can be understood only there (Husserl 1988, p. 107).

The creativity of the will is not only reflected in its creative beginnings in the present, but it is also directed towards the entire temporal horizon and its content to be realized.

The creative present is one with the creative future. The subject of the will in action is thus constituted in this way within peculiar originality (see Husserl 1988, p. 110).

In terms of the intentionality, the will is not an objectivating act: its primordial phenomena cannot be described basing on a perceptual model of objectivating intention, but rather on an objectivation of process intuition. In Husserl's words: "The intuitional objectivation is no longer there: as a constituting objectivation. But I have an objectivation that goes to the process at the moment when that has proceeded." (Husserl 2020, p. 18) Therefore, the will is not only a creative act of practical intentionality, but also an act of intentionality towards the process of action. As Husserl points out:

In action we have a distinctive structure of will; for each stage of action there is a current point of creativity, i.e., each present point with its present accomplishment, with which a prominent stage of will is associated, in which the will shows its creative originality. There is, however, a universal double horizon of each point of peculiar volitional change, in which creative past and future creations, completed things and unfinished things are consciously constituted. Two other points stand out: firstly, the point of origin of the *fiat* with its initial and somewhat creative original impetus (Uranstoß); and secondly, the endpoints with its "completed" character—that is, the two points are highlighted through the correlative one-sidedness in their horizons. In this process, will emerges from will again and again, and this situation is then transformed into reproduction, so that the individual elements of a will belonging to each point in time do not exist side by side with each other, but in a continuous relationship of mutual emergence. The same applies in a somewhat different way to the entire continuum of will in the order of points in time: each new continuum of will, in the process of transformation from the present to the next new present, does not merely gush out from the past present, as it does in the time-consciousness of the origin, i.e., the present gushes out from the past present, but gushes out from it by virtue of its own creation of will (Husserl 1988, pp. 110–11).

From the above passage we can conclude that volitional consciousness has its characteristics of volitional flow, i.e., the continuity of the will, which is not only rooted in the flow of time-consciousness of the living present, but also springs from the creative moment of will. Among the creative moments, the *fiat* or original point of the will and the creative endpoint, that is, the character of the accomplished intention, are distinctive. Each creative point carries the character of the intention of the will, namely the "practical intention" (See Husserl 2020, p. 28). The intentionality of the will is not only an intentionality of horizon, like time-consciousness, with its continuity and constitutive character, but also has its original creativity in its continuity. The volitional flow itself has a universal double field of horizon, namely the creative past and the future creation, in addition to the *fiat* as the primordial driving force and future creation. Of course, as far as the temporal horizon of the will is concerned, it includes not only the creative past and future creations but also every present creation from the past, and all creative elements of the will have a continuity of their constitution. This continuity also derives from the constitution and creative elements of the flow of volitional consciousness. Since *fiat* is based on an intuitive understanding of the process of the action, the "let it be!", "it ought to be!" is based on the whole process of the act of will (see Husserl 2020, p. 13). "Make a decision, let it happen, and put it into action!"; these are three steps in the process of volition. Each new continuity of will involves a transformation from one past present to the next future present, and this process of transformation is a horizon of will, which is a constant process of creation and generation.

3. Original Teleology and the Riddle of Matter

The creativity and continuity of the flow of volitional consciousness mean that volitional consciousness has a spontaneous I-can, that it is spontaneously directed towards a future creation, and therefore has an original teleological orientation. We might even say

that the flow of volitional consciousness is itself a constant creative outpouring from the creative past to the creative present, to its future completion, a creative flow with telos. It is a constantly occurring flow of will that gives life and telos to the world. The world happens from this creative will.

Teleology lies thus primordially in the intentionality of the will. Original teleology is derived from will as original creativity. Creative will cannot be explained through natural causality; it is independent of the change of physical cause. It is a creative act of the spirit and can only be explained through the causality of the will³. As Husserl points out: “We know that the will is not a natural object and not a natural process, so it does not practise causality in the sense of natural causality” (Husserl 2020, p. 64). What the will wills, here, is the flow of action, the absolute consciousness in its monadic form. As Husserl states:

A supreme spirit would be the creator of nature, the creator of the world with all its spirits, as a teleological world. In what sense is it a creator, and how can a spirit be a creator? To create is to work. What is the meaning of “work” here? Of course, not working in the sense of natural causalities as functional dependencies of matter changes. To work here is to do. What is willed is what takes place, and what is willed, the flow of action, is here absolute consciousness in the form of the monads (Husserl 2013, p. 166).

It follows that the formation of the world is essentially the result of the creation of will and action, this creation is a teleological-intentional act, and that teleology has its origins in the creative act of will. In this regard, Hart also states that: “All acts are acts of will in the extended sense in which Husserl uses will to describe the teleological-intentional character of the life of the mind” (Hart 1992, p. 105).

From the perspective of transcendental phenomenology, the creation and occurrence of the world is the result of the common constitution of transcendental subjects. The driving force of this constitution derives from the universal will of the monads. The occurrence of the world is not following a natural causal law in the sense of an empirical motivation, but with a causal law of the will, i.e., a motivation of the will. In the constant creation of the will, the meaningful horizon of the world presents itself, so that the creativity of the will accompanies the happening of the world. This world is the spiritual world, the world created by the universal will.

From the above analysis we can conclude that teleology has its origin in the intentional act of the will, and the flow of volitional consciousness belongs to absolute consciousness. Can the flow of volitional consciousness account for original teleology then?

According to Husserl’s phenomenology of consciousness of internal time and his idea of pure phenomenology, the pure flow of time-consciousness also belongs to absolute consciousness. Thus, should the original teleology here be revealed in the flow of volitional consciousness or in the flow of time-consciousness? Since these two flows of consciousness are intertwined, how is the original teleology to be revealed more clearly? Furthermore, the question of original teleology involves the question of how the ideal form regulates the matter of consciousness. For Husserl, therefore, the understanding of the original teleology and the riddle of matter is the most difficult problem of all. As Husserl pointed out in his *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory* (1908–1914):

The greatest difficulty is the understanding of the original teleology that belongs to absolute consciousness. Causality is a constituting form of reality within constituted being, and thus at the same time belongs to teleology under the aspect of the constitution of consciousness. But does the idea, the ideal form, regulate the matter of consciousness? Does it, in other words, regulate the matter that determines the content of being and the forms of being? So we come up against the riddle of Platonic and Aristotelian matter, the “irrational” matter⁴ (ἄλογον). (Husserl 1988, p. 226)

It follows that the riddle of the matter here is directly related to original teleology, which is not a natural causality but rather a volitional causality of absolute consciousness.

I have pointed out these two causalities in the analysis of the creative character of will above. Since original teleology belongs to absolute consciousness, natural causality does not belong to absolute consciousness, whereas it is the motivation of the will that can be attributed to absolute consciousness.

From Husserl's analysis of the creativity and teleological characteristic of the will, we can see that the original teleology actually originates in the flow of volitional consciousness. The flow of volitional consciousness is not only characterized by the general flow of time-consciousness, but also by its peculiar creative and purpose-oriented character. The will is directed not only towards the creation of the living present, but also towards the creation of the future (see [Husserl 1988](#), p. 110).

"In a correction of his earlier theory of consciousness of internal time—the origin of the genetic constitution of the ego—Husserl emphasizes that the intentionality, which is prepared as protention and modified as retention, but preserves its unity, should be understood as an egoical intentionality of the will: With this, the ego becomes the functioning pole and the universal motivation of acts as a teleology of self-development" ([Claesges 1972](#), p. 74). Moreover, the unity of the flow of time-consciousness in its retention, original impression and protention is inseparable from the volitional consciousness of "I can". The creativity of the will derives from this "I can". As Claesges points out: "So the reason for this matter-mediating motivation is not to be found in the matter itself, but in the point of transition in my body, whereby original intentionality comes into its own as the teleological power of 'I can'" ([Claesges 1972](#), pp. 75–76). As far as the will as "I can" is concerned, Husserl states in *Ideas II*: "The consciousness 'I can' is a central act in relation to me" ([Husserl 1952](#), p. 257). This "I" is not only a pure ego at the center of conscious experience, but also a personality with a body and habits. The "I can" is expressed in the fact that I have conscious control over my body and that my limbs stretch freely in all directions. I can feel, judge, evaluate and engage in any practical activity. "I can" means that "I know and I am aware of what I can do for myself, that this is a practical possibility, that I can only 'decide' between the practical possibilities, and that only the practical possibilities can be the theme of my volitional action. I cannot desire that which I do not see in my consciousness, that which is not within my power" ([Husserl 1952](#), p. 258). The "I can" is thus the original form of the will, the fundamental sign of the will as a practical empowering and creative act.

Thus, in summary, teleology has its origins in the creative flow of volitional consciousness as "I can". However, the flow of volitional consciousness also contains different levels: it includes not only will but also the deeper stages of drive, desire, affection and other motivated acts. Focusing on these different levels, how to solve the riddle of matter in original teleology? A pure *fiat* is an empty act of intentionality which carries no matter; then how does the primordial flow of telos derive from the flow of volitional consciousness? We can only solve this question in terms of Husserl's genetic phenomenology of the will. In his *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness*, Husserl addresses this question by means of the motivation of consciousness and the genesis of volitional consciousness, which relates to the origin of self-consciousness. He argues that the will is an act of self-consciousness with active initiative. The problem of the genesis of volition involves the original will and the drive. In a certain sense, drive is the original phenomenon of the will (see [Husserl 2020](#)); "it is the will in its depth stage" ([Husserl 2020](#), p. 80).

Drive belongs both to the sphere of volitional action and to a characteristic and expressive form of the mind. At any stage of its process drive carries matter. The drive, as a lower faculty of desire, always desires something, although this "something" is not a definite object. The matter provided by the drive can not only be the content of the will's desire, but also the direct motive of the will. More than that, however, the drive, as the driving force of the will, always pushes the will towards the goal of pursuit. Since the activity of the will begins as an empty position-taking, without the content of a practical object, the prominent manifestation is the *fiat* as the original source of creativity and action, an empty practical intentionality. Thus, the *fiat* has no matter. It is through the original drive that the matter of volitional consciousness is provided, but the matter directly

provided by the drive is not what the will affirms and seeks, due to the arbitrary, contingent and indeterminate nature of the drive. According to the theory of intentionality, drive intentionality is a “dark intentionality” (Husserl 2020, p. 81). As such, it requires the guidance of the act of will. Moreover, drive provides a matter that is still a potential and not yet a reality; the will makes the potential matter reality. The transformation from matter to real form, of course, also requires a final cause, that is, the will necessarily selects and prescribes the matter provided by the drive.

We can use Aristotle’s doctrine of potentiality and realization to explain the matter here. In his *Metaphysics*, when explaining the grounds and principles of the existence of the world, Aristotle puts forward the famous doctrine of the four causes: the formal cause, the efficient cause, the final cause, and the matter cause. The four causes can be grouped into two basic causes, namely the formal cause and the matter cause. The final cause and the efficient cause can be united with the formal cause (Aristotle 1928, 983a25–983b5). Aristotle sees the highest pure form as entelechy, i.e., the perfect form to be realized. This also means that Aristotle unifies the final and efficient causes when explaining the cause of being. Later, in order to more fully explain the cause of being, Aristotle put forward the doctrine of potentiality and realization. In the process of transforming potential into realization, Aristotle believes that desire or will is important, even decisive (see Aristotle 1928, 1048a 10–15).

Now the question is how to interpret original teleology—does it derive from the will or drive? Although drive carries the matter, although it has a primordial power in the constitution of the world, and even an original place in the structure of a priori teleology (See Pugliese 2009, pp. 141–57), this power of drive is still a potential power, not yet a power of reality. It still requires an act of will as “I can”. What makes a final cause a final cause is that it is a form of realization towards reality, and therefore must be the becoming of matter towards reality, which only the will has the power to realize. It is therefore not enough to ascribe original teleology to drive alone. Both for Aristotle and for Husserl, the final cause is essentially a formal cause, the cause of realization towards reality.

Moreover, the drive is arbitrary and contingent, and even has the potential to lead to evil, so it can only act as an efficient cause, not as a true final cause. The final cause is the end and the original good, which is the ultimate aim of all creation and development (Aristotle 1928, 983b). In addition to *fiat*, which has an original impetus (Uranstoß) and the function of initiating an act such as “agreeing, affirming, letting it happen”, will itself has the function of performing an act. And furthermore, the will is directed towards the goal that should be in practice, and this “it ought to be!” is itself the good, the final cause.

Since the motivation of the will is formed within the flow of time-consciousness and has the general character of consciousness of internal time, the volitional act with teleology has different levels of genesis within the flow of time-conscious experience. The flow of time-consciousness has three immanent temporal objects: retention, original impression, and protention. In *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893–1917) Husserl points out: “The original impression is the absolute beginning of this production, the primal source, that from which everything else is continuously produced. But it itself is not produced: it does not arise as something produced but through genesis spontanea; it is primal generation. It does not spring from anything (it has no seed); it is primal creation” (Husserl 1991, p. 106). In the original impression, the volitional intentionality manifests itself in the form of motivation, which is the “primal satisfaction of the instinctive desire” (Husserl 2006, p. 283). Volitional causality belongs to the motivation of the will, i.e., spiritual causality, rather than natural causality. It can be divided into active motivation and passive motivation. The drive belongs to the passive stage of volition, which is contingent and spontaneous. According to Husserl’s theory of the monad, it is from the original contingency that the monad first unfolds, but it is also the intentionality of the will, and this original contingency is the original motivation of the will. As Claesges points out: “The unfolding of the monad proceeds from this primeval contingency (Urzufälligkeit), and at the same time the teleology is now the form of all forms, here in the foundation

of the monad as inevitable freedom and original motivation" (Claesges 1972, p. 75). The motivation of the will is precisely the expression of teleology in the intentional act and is "the form of all forms" (Husserl 1973, p. 380). Teleology is therefore pervasive in the constitutive activity of the transcendental subject.

The active motivation belongs to the higher stage of the volitional act. "The will in this stage directs the constitution of the self and the world, it is not arbitrary. The will in this stage is understood as intentionality itself, it assumes the goal and works towards the realization of the destination, so that the will can drive the self to constitute the world. . . . The teleological world is in certain sense constituted according to the will of a transcendental subject, since the origin of teleology is located precisely in intentionality. The teleology must be understood as a way of will, and plays a role in the constitution of all consciousness" (Lo 2002, pp. 201–2). From this we can also conclude that the act of will governs the whole direction of intentional acts and plays an essential role in the constitutive activity of the world. In other words, "The different forms of volitional intentionality run through the whole flow of consciousness of the transcendental intentional act" (Lee 2000, p. 55).

4. The Will and the Divine Entelechy

The riddle of matter is a problem that Husserl raises in his discussion of God as an idea (see Husserl 1988, pp. 225–26). If God is the ideal form, the idea of the most perfect being, does this idea regulate the matter of consciousness? In other words, how do the forms of ideas belonging to absolute consciousness regulate the matter of consciousness? This is the riddle of matter that needs to be revealed. Here in fact Husserl encounters the same dilemma as Plato and Aristotle had encountered when they dealt with the relationship between idea and matter. That is to say, this dilemma that has plagued the history of philosophy cannot be solved if God is understood only as the idea of the most perfect being. Therefore, it seems to me that to solve this riddle Husserl is not satisfied with the concept of God as an idea and ideal form, but develops it further in terms of the system of phenomenological philosophy.

According to Husserl, the transcendental reduction ultimately aims at the experiential flow of time-consciousness of the "living present". "In the transcendental reduction, the living stream of the presence of consciousness becomes the primal phenomenon, the primal field of experience for transcendental phenomenology" (Husserl 2006, p. 9). It is precisely based on the fact that the living present is the source of primordial intuition and the eternal presence; Derrida regards the "living present" emphasized in Husserl's phenomenology as a metaphysics of presence, and understands Husserl's conception of God as a mere ideal pole of "absolute idealism" (Derrida 1989, p. 147). According to Derrida, Husserl's 'living present' is the "eternal present", Husserl's idea of divinity. As Derrida points out: "The Living Present is the phenomenological absolute out of which I cannot go because it is that in which, toward which, and starting from which every going out is effected. The Living Present has the irreducible originality of a Now, the ground of a Here, only if it retains (in order to be distinguishable from it) the past Now as such, i.e., as the past present of an absolute origin." (Derrida 1989, pp. 136–37). The true essence that Husserl is tracing is the "living present". Everything ultimately flows from the fountain of this "living present" (Derrida 1989, pp. 86, 109). Thus, for Derrida, this "living present" is already a variant of God (See Rayment-Pickard 2003, pp. 22, 27). It is in this sense that Derrida refers to the concept of "living presence" as "theological".

In *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida also links the 'living present' to the expression of meaning in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, criticising Husserl as a speech-logocentrism and classifying Husserl's phenomenology as a traditional metaphysics. In this book, although Derrida sees an intrinsic connection between Husserl's theory of intentionality and volitional intentionality, and even equates the two (see Derrida 1973, pp. 34–35), he connects the voluntary intentionality directly to Husserl's doctrines of signification (*Bedeutung*), and criticizes Husserl's view as the logo-centrism of language. In Derrida's words, "The essence of language is in its telos; and its telos is voluntary consciousness as

meaning [covime vouloir-dire]" (Derrida 1973, p. 36). This indicates that Derrida confuses Husserl's distinction between objectivating and non-objectivating acts. For Husserl, the will is a non-objectivating act, essentially a practical act towards reality, rather than a theoretical act towards an ideal object. Thus, the will is not a statement-signification (Aussagebedeutung). According to Husserl's phenomenological analysis of the relationship between the will and time, the act of will is directed not only towards the "living present" but also towards the future. It is therefore problematic that Derrida understands Husserl's "living present" as the "eternal present" and attributes Husserl's phenomenology to the traditional metaphysics of presence. In fact, Husserl's emphasis on the "living present" is a search for a primal source of meaning for the world and a new foundation for metaphysics.

Moreover, for Husserl, every "living present" is a form of process. The absolute flow of consciousness refers not only to the "living present", but also to the primordial process (Urprozess). In his *Bernau Manuscripts* he uses the term "Urprozess" in place of the "living present", which is focused on in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*. This also means that the absolute flow of consciousness is the original process. "This primal process is process, but no longer constituted in the same way as the objects belonging to immanent time" (Husserl 2001, p. 122). This implies that if we understand the absolute stream of consciousness only in terms of the "living present", and interpret Husserl's concept of God on this basis, then we fall into the dilemma of the "metaphysics of presence", but this is a non-Husserlian understanding.

To illustrate the idea of God in greater depth, Husserl invokes Aristotle's doctrine of entelechy, as well as Leibniz's monadology. As he points out:

But what are these remarkable convictions, which have appeared again and again in the history of philosophy? Are they adumbration of religious superstitions or are there not necessary problems here? And can <we> not find valuable prescient intuitions in their historical solutions? Is there perhaps in the Aristotelian doctrine of entelechy, in his talk of creator (ποιεῖν), active Nous (νοῦς ποιητικός) an instruction on possible solutions, or in the Leibnizian myth of a central monad which makes all monads emerge from itself? (Husserl 1988, pp. 181–82)

Thus we can deduce that the idea of divinity in Husserl is not a religious superstition; it is a prominent and necessary philosophical problem. The solution to this problem can be found in the related thoughts of Aristotle or Leibniz. In this respect, Husserl first accepts Aristotle's theory of the entelechy. In Husserl's words: "God is the entelechy and apart from him there is 'nothing'; he is the all-forming (All-Gestaltende), and the irrational stuff is not a ready-made thing, but precisely stuff. And the world has its being from God and is otherwise 'nothing'" (Husserl 2013, pp. 336–37).

Additionally, explaining the original teleology in the context of the act of will helps us to understand Husserl's idea of God in a new light. For Husserl, divine existence is an absolute reality, the form of perfect fulfillment, the entelechy proposed by Aristotle. This absolute reality can only be attained by the creative divine will, since the essence of the will lies in the creation of reality. It is therefore only through the will that we can understand the idea of God. It is also only through the will that we can understand the grounds and origins of the teleology discussed by Husserl. Here we can draw on Descartes' thought to understand the intrinsic relationship between the will and the idea of God. As Descartes in *Meditations on First Philosophy* puts it: "I experienced that within me alone the will is so large that I could not comprehend that there could be anything else larger or broader than it. This makes me realize that what makes me bear the image of God and the likeness of God is primarily the will" (Descartes 1956, p. 67). Since the will is a teleological act, then it must be intrinsically linked to the divine teleology. The essence of the will lies in its capacity to create reality, and the teleological path of the will is also the path of creation and becoming.

Thus, it is only through an understanding of original teleology that we can access a completely new conception of God. The divine existence of God as the supreme divine purpose is not understood in the sense of a static, purely ideal pole; it is necessarily

understood in terms of absolute creativity and absolute reality. The riddle of matter can be solved only when God is understood as a divine creative entelechy in the sense of becoming and creating. If God is understood merely as an idea of the highest good without the power to create, then the matter cannot be transformed from potential into realized forms of reality, and the idea of God, which is the absolute source of teleology, is an empty and powerless guarantee in terms of the prescription of the matter, that is, the idea of God cannot have absolute power over the reality. The idea of God, therefore, must have an absolute power to create. It is through the divine will that this absolute power is realized. The will of God is the perfect form of the individual will, and the *fiat* Husserl discusses is itself derived from the idea of God's creation. On the question of the idea of God, Husserl stated in his *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory* (1908–1914) as follows:

And here, concerning the factually given reality, which we already think of as theoretically recognized, there arises a final problem of being, to which mankind found itself forced from early on: namely the problem of the real meaning of the idea of God or the problem of creation, the problem of the realizing power of absolute ideals... According to the Platonic view, God is the idea of the good; that is, it is an idea. But therein lies: God is not a reality in the true sense, not a thing among things, in no place, in no time, and of course also not the universe of things themselves, quite different from the overall spatio-temporal reality.... It should be a realizing power, therefore in a certain sense "reality", even ultimate, absolute reality, the ultimate reason for all empirical beings and teleological reason for being (Husserl 1988, pp. 180–81).

It follows for Husserl that the idea of God is not merely an idea, even an idea of the good. The real meaning of the idea of God is creation (Schöpfung), the realizing power of the absolute ideal. Although God is not a temporal reality of being, he is an absolute reality, the ultimate ground of all empirical and teleological existence. The idea of God provides the ultimate ground of being for all empirical and teleological existence. In other words, Husserl understands the idea of God as a divine entelechy in the sense of creation and generation, as creative divine will. Through the analysis of the creative character and the teleological act of the will above, it is clear that only through the will can man understand the creative power and the supreme teleological conception of the divine entelechy. In this sense, the idea of divinity embodies a creative force. Thus, according to Husserl, God is an absolute being in the sense of eternal creation. The idea of God does not represent a perfectly developed endpoint, but rather the power of eternal creation. Rather than being the end of perfect fulfillment, God is the beginning, the source of telos. As Husserl points out:

God as an idea, as the idea of the most perfect being.... The most perfect life creatively develops from itself the most perfect cultural world concerning a most perfect nature.... Measured and considered against this idea, whether and to what extent absolute being can be regarded and recognized as being God or as the self-development of the idea of God in existence.... whether this can be an absolute point, an absolute goal in the sense of a resting being or of a flow persisting in ever-constant forms, or whether it belongs to the essence of the divinity in existence that it is the development of value-level in such a way that an absolute last value-level is not even conceivable, but rather the highest value is conceivable only in the progress of such a development. But would we not then arrive at Aristotelian metaphysics, that is, at the ποιοῦν as the animating purpose-idea of the whole development of the world, which would at the same time have to be conceived as a Platonic idea? But this is not the case insofar as an ideal goal is not actually posited (according to the scheme of the completed tree as the final telos of development) (Husserl 1988, pp. 225–26).

From the above passage man can deduce that Husserl, using a phenomenological method, redeveloped a new idea of God. In his view, God is not a static, perfect end of

ultimate existence in the traditional sense, but a super being that develops infinitely in itself, has a creative meaning, and gives vitality to the world as a whole. God's power is manifested in the vitality he gives to the world, for God himself is not in the causal chain of space and time, and does not belong to the empirical reality. In a word, Husserl sees God as a creative divine will.

In his *Lectures on the Introduction to Philosophy* (1916–1920) Husserl states that all things are in the process of being created. This creative will, with its ultimate telos, derives from a divine will, or rather, the divine will is embodied in the individual will to “let the world happen” and to be born. According to Husserl, God is both an idea of the good and the source of the world's constant vitality. Here he accepts Heraclitus' view—in Husserl's words, “Heraclitus' more important and richer doctrine: ‘All being is becoming’ (Alles Sein ist Werden)” (Husserl 2012, p. 191). Husserl argued that God and the generation of the world must not be separated, and that God represents both a divine rational order⁵ and the absolute power of the world to be constantly generated and created. The order of logos and the activity of generation are inseparable. As Husserl points out: “But we do not have a God in a separated sense, in that of a spirit; he, <the Logos>, is the title of an order of reason which cannot be separated from becoming par excellence and which immanently governs as eternal law” (Husserl 2012, p. 192).

Husserl's numerous references to the creative god in Plato's *Timaeus* could also help us to understand his conception of divinity (See Held 2010, p. 726). According to Husserl, Plato's conception of God is not only an idea of the highest good and the ultimate source of existence, but also the divine rational order and the absolute power that created the world (See Husserl 2012, p. 192). Husserl insisted that God was the creator of the world. This world should not be understood in the positive sense of natural causality, but in a supra-real, eternal teleological sense. This divine entelechy is understood in the context of an infinite field of meaning, and it is the source of all movements of ideas (See Husserl 2012, p. 198).

According to Husserl, the will is not only a creative will, but also a will that should absolutely be directed towards the good. God is not only a creative absolute power but also represents the idea of the highest good and absolute value. The will of absolute ought is directed towards the absolute value. One of the fundamental laws of Husserl's phenomenological ethics is “Do the highest good that can be achieved!” which is an ethical imperative performed by the will. Therefore, the highest goal of the will is the highest value. Of course, the divine value represented by God and the idea of the highest good are different from the highest good achieved by the individual will, but both need to be achieved through the will to do good. As Husserl points out:

All experiential reality and all finite spirituality are the objectivation of God, the unfolding of divine action. The last sense of being is the good, and that is the divine deed, to which all divine action is directed. But the divine deed is the real-being-will of God. God as the will to the good is the last reality, receives last realization, if just the good is. And so the realized good is the fulfilled will of God, the fulfilled realization of God. Everything else is good as an action towards this goal. In all that is noble and good that I realize in myself, I am therefore realized God, fulfilled God's will, mere nature that has become God, fulfilled God. God as entelechy, God as $\nu\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$.” (Husserl 2013, p. 168)

It follows that Husserl on the one hand explains the existence of God in terms of infinite universal consciousness. He argues that all empirical realities and ultimate spirituality are manifestations of God's acts and are objectifications of divinity. The ultimate meaning of existence is the good, and the good is an act of divinity. God, as the will towards the good, is the ultimate realization of reality. On the other hand, Husserl explains the idea of God in terms of a theory of empty intentional acts and fulfillment. God is not an empty ideal, but an ultimately fulfilled absolute reality.

Related to the divine idea is the question of absolute ought, which is only a powerless guarantee if God is seen as merely the ideal form of perfection (See Held 2010, pp. 737–38).

For Husserl, absolute ought is based on the fact that on the one hand we take the existence of God as the source of our absolute power in the realization of the good, and on the other hand we need to make progress in ethical reflection to fulfill the idea of divine existence in terms of the transcendent realization of the personality. Husserl argues that we need to achieve a radical transformation of the attitude of personality from a naturalistic attitude to a phenomenological attitude. Following the spirit of phenomenology and transcendental reduction, this transformation is an ethical act of will, a self-realization of personality. In other words, the realizing of the phenomenological personality demonstrates the absolute ought. Only through the will of the absolute ought can we move towards a higher divine personality (See [Hart 2006](#), pp. 223–40).

But “this rational faith⁶ gives the ultimate meaning of my absolute ought differently. That is, it is only through belief in God and living in a world guided by God that I am able to resist this despair... Faith in God is the very condition of possibility for self-realization and self-maintenance” ([Melle 2002](#), p. 247). Only by believing that God is with us can we endure despair and misery. Faith in God is faith in pure perfection and absolute immortality, and it is in this faith that we can preserve and realize the idea of our pure selfhood. Belief in God thus embodies the highest requirement of the personality, namely the will to have absolute goodness in the first place. It is thus clear that rational faith in God is achieved through the will to absolute ought.

For Husserl, “God can be no object of experience (as in the sense of a thing or a human). But God would be ‘experienced’ in each belief that believes originally-teleologically in the perpetual value of that which lies in the direction of each absolute ought and which engages itself for this perpetual meaning” ([Hahn 2014](#), p. 307).

5. The Will and Transcendental Reduction

According to Husserl’s *Ideas I*, God is suspended as a transcendent being in a transcendental reduction. In other words, a phenomenology of God is impossible. However, in the discussion of the “The Transcendence, God, Excluded” in §58 of *Ideas I*, Husserl points out: “In all this, since the rationality made actual by the fact is not a rationality demanded by the essence, there is a marvelous teleology” ([Husserl 1983](#), p. 134). On the question of the being of God, Husserl further states that what concerns us here is this divine being is not only the transcendence of the world but apparently also the transcendence of ‘absolute’ consciousness (see [Husserl 1983](#), p. 134). In short, Husserl excludes God as a transcendent being in *Ideas I*, but he also finds that this transcendent being contains an astonishing teleology, which cannot be avoided. In other words, although in the reduction of transcendental phenomenology Husserl leaves the question of the being of God in suspense, the question of the teleology associated with it ensures that it remains.

Moreover, it is important to note that the transcendental reduction discussed by Husserl in *Ideas I* is primarily based on epistemological and strictly scientific goals. For Husserl, although the question of the being of God does not fall within the realm of scientific evidence, it belongs to the ethical-religious question of faith. Thus it is clear that the teleological question of God’s being is unresolved.

Understanding transcendental reduction epistemologically, the phenomenology of God seems impossible. However, transcendental reduction has not only epistemological but also practical teleological significance. Man can understand transcendental reduction at different levels. It contains both the result of reduction and the process of reduction, and it has not only the epistemological meaning of pursuing scientific evidence but also the practical meaning of pursuing ethical and value truths. In terms of the process of reduction and the ethical sense of reduction, the will plays a key role.

The will plays an essential role in the entire implementation and operation of transcendental reduction. Reduction consists of two aspects, namely the suspension of something and the “return” to the direction of the remaining something. In the case of reduction, transcendental suspension involves the subject’s reflection on his ideal goal in life. Although this reflection is the preparatory stage of transcendental suspension, it takes place originally

in the will. What is necessary for suspension is that the philosopher, as the performer of suspension, makes a decision of will to give up a naive intellectual life and interests. Suspension is an active volitional suspending (Ausschaltung). “I do not suspend the whole of interest and all the ‘implementation’, for as the ‘waking’ me I am often active; but I make the whole of world life ‘invalid’, I engage in a new activity of universal contemplation and of thinking of myself, no longer simply continuing to live as I have lived, no longer continuing to exist as I have existed” (Husserl 1954, p. 471). By means of the will, the world of phenomenological attitudes acquires a “universal validity”.

According to Husserl, the “reduction” itself is an operational concept which contains an inherent teleology. On the one hand, Husserl states that we have to reduce to the purest and “living-present” flow of consciousness; on the other hand, he also states that we have to go back to the beginning, to the origin of the world, to establish the most universal science of origin. Both understandings are interpreted in terms of the ultimate end or result to be achieved by the reduction. The original teleology discussed above also concerns the question of how the origin of meaning in the world is to be understood. For Husserl, however, transcendental reduction is not just about pursuing the result of the eventual realization of this end, because it is also a path, a path of genesis guided by teleology. In fact, the result to be achieved by transcendental reduction, i.e., the absolute flow of consciousness, is a flow of evident experience that is not just a “living present” but a primordial form of process that contains the past and the future within the flow of experience of the present. This is something that Husserl emphasizes in both the *Bernau Manuscripts* and the *C-Manuscripts*.

For Husserl, this path is the path of fulfillment and realization through the will. Husserl metaphorically refers to “reduction” as the implementation of the path. The metaphor of a path implies the goal of present and future realization. According to Husserl, transcendental reduction is a path back to the origin of meaning. Husserl acknowledges the literal meaning of the path in his *Lectures on Ethics and Value theory* (1908–1914). He discussed an inner relationship between the will and the path. In Husserl’s words, “Every willing, we can at least say, goes towards a goal, and in the conception of the goal is given along and necessarily given along to be the end of a path towards it” (Husserl 1988, p. 52).

Moreover, the origin of the world is begun by the will as the *fiat*, because the *fiat* is not only the beginning of the act itself, but it also relates to the future becoming being. Every act presupposes the *fiat*. The *fiat* can be described as the creative character of the will. In *On the Phenomenological Reduction* Husserl holds:

The intention has a beginning: I decide, I give my *fiat*, my yes. The intention is now a continuing will, but not a continuing act of will in the concise sense; it is directed into the “future”. A becoming is anticipated as the end of a “path”, an “action”, which begins with a *fiat*, a “Now I take hold, I set in motion”, and in every phase is a continuous keeping going, a willing letting go until the end, where it ends with the “finished” (Husserl 2002, p. 355).

The will is not an objectivating act but a non-objectivating act, which is a process conception. The realization of the will does not show an object of perception, but a process representation. The will is not only concerned with the future goal, but also allows itself to make a present decision. According to Husserl, phenomenological reflection is primordially a reflection that takes place in the will (Husserl 1959, pp. 6–7). Transcendental reduction is an act that points to itself and is itself reflexive. In Husserl’s words: “The subject, in determining itself to be a philosophical subject, makes a decision of will directed towards its entire future life of knowledge.... from this reflected will arise the determination of the meaning of this goal and the possibilities of its realization. The contents of these reflections form the necessary first beginning of the path to philosophy.” (Husserl 1959, p. 154) Here it is clearly shown that the will plays an essential role in the transcendental reduction.

The transcendental suspension concerns a radical turn in the attitude and worldview of the person, which is the necessary step in the transcendental reduction. As Husserl pointed out in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*:

“Perhaps it will even turn out that the total phenomenological attitude and the suspension belonging to it are first of all called upon to bring about, by their very nature, a completely personal transformation, which could be compared first of all to a religious conversion, but which, beyond that, contains within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation that is given up to humanity as humanity” (Husserl 1954, p. 140).

Therefore, transcendental reduction implies a transformation from a naturalistic attitude to a personalistic attitude, a transformation that requires the will to make a decision, to obey the rational imperative of “Do the highest good that can be attained”, which embodies the truth of the will. For Husserl, the path of the will to the idea of God requires rational faith. It is directed toward a divine value and the highest good. Divine values are self-given in this rational faith through absolute love.

Furthermore, this transcendental path is not only a path initiated and realized by the will but also a path leading to the ultimate goal guided by the divine entelechy. As Ales Bello points out:

The conception of divine entelechy is certainly suggested by the idea of Leibnizian “force”, and Husserl enthusiastically accepts it because the finality present in the spiritual world, as this text suggests, refers back to an origin of such finality. ... The whole is not without sense; it has its ultimate meaning in God. Divinity seems to be understood as both immanent and transcendent, for it has the immanent function of guiding the process of development and it is transcendent “because God is not simply the totality of monads” (Ales Bello 2009, p. 45).

6. Conclusions

The path to divine existence consists of the path of historical revelation and the path of philosophical reflection, and Husserl uses phenomenological reflection and phenomenological methods to follow the teleological path of philosophical reflection, or rather the teleological path of ethics. “Corresponding to the reflective will is this contemplation of the meaning of its goal and the possibility of its realization” (Husserl 1992, p. 7). Therefore, based on the reflection on Husserl’s teleology, this paper discusses the origin, foundation and path of teleology from the teleological intentional act, that is, the will, to the highest teleological conception of divinity. In fact, the will as a teleological act not only has a reflective capacity that can regulate itself, but it is also, according to Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of the will, a creative act towards a realistic goal. The phenomenological description of the origin of the will is intended to reveal the origins of teleology.

According to the above research, it is from the will that primordial teleology originates. However, the most difficult problem Husserl encountered is how to understand the original teleology that belongs to absolute consciousness, which is also a central problem addressed in this thesis. A key question involved in primitive teleology is, “How does the idea or ideal form regulate the matter?” The question of original teleology or the ultimate source of teleology does not only involve philosophical teleology itself, but already involves theology, for it is asking about the origin of the will. Since the will is essentially a spiritual act triggered by motivation, it is not an act of natural causality but of spiritual causality, and the world happens precisely as it happens in the spirit. This question ultimately leads to the origin and happening of the world. In order to solve this riddle of matter, on the one hand we see God as the source of creative force with divine will, and on the other hand we cannot see matter as a ready-made thing. Actually, in the case of absolute volitional consciousness, its matter is the objective process, the event (Ereignis) that comes to creation (see Husserl 2020, p. 28). The riddle of matter can only be explained by seeing the idea of divinity as simultaneously the purposive creative force of the monad’s development and world constitution, i.e., the divine will that can only work on and regulate the matter through the monad’s will.

It is through the will that the divine entelechy reveals its original creative force and the most perfect form of realization. The reasons are as follows: firstly, the will, as “I can”, plays a central role in the intentional acts of consciousness. Secondly, the will has a primordial

creativity that initiates the act and makes the world happen. The constitution of the world by the transcendental subject cannot be achieved without the “I can” act of the will. Thirdly, for Husserl, the will is essentially an active act of self-consciousness, with the capacity not only to create reality but also to work towards the realization of the highest good. Thus, will has the capacity and quality of access to divine entelechy.

On the path to God, we need to distinguish not only between the historical path of revelation and the philosophical path, but also between the epistemological and ethical paths within the philosophical path (See Mall 1991, p. 3). It is difficult to reach the path to God merely through the epistemological path of philosophy. The central act of ethics, the will, can and must also play a crucial role on the path to the divine idea. In his *Lectures on the Introduction to Philosophy (1916–1920)*, Husserl states that: “Ethical truth is the highest truth” (Husserl 2012, p. 186). As a spiritual act, the will is indispensable for the constitution of the spiritual world, and the idea of God as an absolute spiritual power is intrinsically linked to the will. The creativity of the will demonstrates the power of the divine will.

As far as the relationship between the will and the divine will is concerned, the following passage may provide a conclusion:

All levels of human achievement along the path of history find their justification in God. Husserl writes, “The absolute universal will that lives in all transcendental subjectivities and which makes possible the individual-concrete being of the total transcendental subjectivity is the divine will; this divine will presupposes all of intersubjectivity not because it precedes the first intersubjectivity and would not be possible without it (not even in the sense that the soul presupposes the body), but rather because there is a structural strata without which this will could not become concrete”. A profound relationship between human beings and the divine is established, which does not present itself as distant and foreign; rather it is close and active (Ales Bello 2009, p. 52; Husserl 1973, p. 38).

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Notes

- ¹ Husserl received the theory of the monad from Leibniz. The formulation of it marks a new stage in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. In later Husserl, the transcendental subject after the reduction is a community of monads interacting with each other. The origin of meaning in the world thus arises from the constitution of the community of monads, but the harmony and unity among the monads have a primordial teleological force. This force derives not only from universal will and reason, but also from a divine Entelechy that drives them. In this regard Hart points out: “The phenomenological monadology is not a naïve mythical-metaphysical In Itself, but rather is what is comprised of the self- and world-constituting agent of manifestation, and as such can stand its ground in the face of an ever more hegemonic materialistic natural-scientific world view” (Hart 2015, p. 249).
- ² Husserl’s concept of *fiat* was directly influenced by the thought of William James. James discusses this concept in his *Principles of Psychology*. According to James, *fiat* refers to the permission and approval of “so-doing” (See Melle 1997, p. 176).
- ³ In his *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins (1902–1934)*, Husserl distinguishes between two kinds of causality, the causality of nature and the causality of will. The former is the natural necessity followed by natural objects in natural processes, which belongs to empirical motivation; the latter belongs to the volitional motivation of the primary action (see Husserl 2020, pp. 21, 64).
- ⁴ Here, Husserl’s concept of matter has two basic meanings. On the one hand, Husserl understands this irrational matter as the stuff or Hyle of consciousness; on the other hand, in his phenomenological analysis of volitional consciousness he considers the matter of the will to be the objective process, the event that happens (see Husserl 2020, p. 28). My interpretation of matter here is in terms of the matter of consciousness in general, which is not a ready-made stuff (see Husserl 2013, pp. 336–37).
- ⁵ The rational order discussed here is a logos order and an expression of the idea of divinity. According to Husserl, this rational order cannot be separated from becoming (Werden) at all. The rational order as an eternal law inherently rules the world. Husserl here accepts Heraclitus’ worldview. (see Husserl 2012, pp. 191–92).
- ⁶ The rational beliefs discussed here by Husserl are related to his proposal of love as an absolute ought. For Husserl, it is only through faith in God that the conflict between reason and love can be overcome. Only through rational faith in God can we

endure the anomalies and despair brought about by accident and irrational factors. I must rationally believe that the world we live in is meaningful. Here, the rational faith Husserl discusses is actually a love with an ethical will, or a rational love.

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