

Intersubjectivity in Husserl's Work

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Abstract

In this study, the author develops an original reading of the Fifth Cartesian Meditation. This text, far from giving rise to a “transcendental solipsism”, as classical commentators (Ricœur, Lévinas, Derrida, etc.) claim, leads to a constitution of intersubjectivity on various levels (“primordial”, “intersubjective” et “objective”). In its center, a “phenomenological construction” operates, i.e. a methodological piece that masters the genetic approach of intersubjectivity. Closely following the “almost mathematical” rigour of this crucial text of Husserl's phenomenology, the author equally tackles the issue of the constitution of the experience of the other and the truly intersubjective structure of transcendental subjectivity. The article concludes with the metaphysical results of the analysis of the experience of the other.

Keywords: Husserl, intersubjectivity, Ego, alter ego, transcendental, apperception, phenomenological construction, phenomenological method, pairing, body

Introduction

In what follows, we will try to clarify the meaning and the status of the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity, supporting our interpretation on the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*. This text remains the most important reference in the field – although it implicitly sends us to volume 8 (*First Philosophy*, second part & other important additions) and especially to volumes 13-15 of the *Husserliana*, dedicated to intersubjectivity, which, we have to admit, bring elements that clarify the meaning in a decisive manner. Therefore we will refer to those texts that belong to *all* the periods of Husserl's philosophical work.

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First, we will draw the plan that guides Husserl in his analysis of intersubjectivity.

Initially, the issue is to establish the fact that the meaning of objectivity is constituted within and starting from the *immanence* of the transcendental *ego* – which requires the introduction of the methodological procedure (that we will deal with in detail) of the “primordial reduction” – immanence on which the sphere of intersubjectivity is then founded. The latter brings into play two *intimately connected* meanings of “*transcendence*” (that characterizes the ego in relation with what transcends it): the primary transcendence (regarding the *ego* alone) and the secondary transcendence (regarding the *alter ego*) – a double constitution *that, first of all, makes the constitution of objectivity stricto sensu therefore possible.*

The primary transcendence brings into play a “*primordial*” world (or nature) (made possible by the self-mundanization of the *ego*). The secondary transcendence constitutes the “*objective*” world. Husserl takes several steps to establish all that. First, he aims at shedding light on the specificity of intentionality that is an open one and *in which* the being of the other is constituted and completed. Then, the concrete experience of the other is analyzed according to its constitutive moments. In this case, intentional analysis, in terms of “empathy”, brings the real ingredients of this experience of the other – Husserl aims at solving in this manner the problem of “thereness for me” (*Für-mich-da*) of the other.

Finally, the issue of “thereness for everyone” (*Für-jedermann-da*) is posed for the objects (be they “natural” or “cultural” – Husserl also says: “spiritual”), which is therefore the objective “actuality” (*Wirklichkeit*) itself.

I. The meaning of transcendental intersubjectivity

How could transcendental intersubjectivity be defined? And what architectonic function does it fulfill in the economy of phenomenology in general? In order to be able to understand its

content, it should not be taken in a metaphysical sense, nor in a psychological (or psychoanalytical) sense, nor even in a sociological sense, but in a sense which draws on phenomenology understood as transcendental idealism. Actually, this is neither a systematic structure that *grounds* consciousness, nor a “*collective consciousness*” (or a “*superego*”). Moreover, it does not characterize a “social” (*mundane*) relationship that would be noticed *from the outside*. Transcendental intersubjectivity – and this is a completely original and new perspective – is a *relationship between Me and the other* that can be analyzed only *within* this relationship, *starting* from the *ego*.

Methodological considerations

If phenomenology aims at contributing to solving the problem of intersubjectivity – in a way corresponding to the prescriptions it gives itself – it should first answer the question that regards, as always in phenomenology, the *mode of access* to intersubjectivity (and its legitimacy). Here, two pitfalls should be avoided: on the one hand, the other should be acknowledged *as the other* otherwise the experience of the latter could not be distinguished from self-experience. On the other hand, it is impossible to have access to intersubjectivity “from the outside”, from an external perspective – as, from a phenomenological viewpoint, intersubjectivity does not allow its comprehension from a sort of meta-level beyond any egoic experience. This triggers the following question: how can *otherness* be attested starting from the intentional life of the *ego* without being condemned to a solipsistic perspective and without adopting, at the same time, an external perspective that cannot meet one of the “minimal constraints” (*cf.* J.-T. Desanti) of phenomenology – that of phenomenological attestability? Or, in other words: how is it possible to keep together two apparently contradictory statements – i.e. one according to which the world is presented “for everyone” (*für jedermann*), therefore *objectively*, and another according to which any sense is constituted within the life of the consciousness *ego*¹, that is, in the transcendental *subject* (which

implies the opposition between the subject that experiences the world, on the one hand, and the world as it is in itself, on the other)?

To answer these questions, Husserl conducts his analyses starting from two different points: a problematic and a methodological one. The *problematic* starting point – that does not formulate a *presupposition*, but “has in view” what a *phenomenological construction*² would build – is that subjectivity is structured inter-subjectively (precisely because my experience is not really an experience unless it testifies a point of view that transcends my own sphere). Such a phenomenological construction will establish the sense and the being-sense of this intersubjectivity. In order to verify this, it is necessary for *me* to be given an account of the concrete experience of the other. This will attest a transsubjective status of experience, starting from which objectivity will be established. And the *methodological* starting point will be precisely the *ego* – the only possibility (in order to avoid a purely dogmatic position) provided by transcendental idealism that, as we know, aims at accounting for the constitution of any sense and being-sense starting from the manifestations of “functioning” (*fungierend*) transcendental subjectivity.

II. “Intersubjective reduction” and “primordial reduction”

Does Husserl make use, in order to have access to the other, of a reduction that *directly* reveals intersubjectivity? In other words: is there an intersubjective reduction? In certain texts, this seems to be a possibility actually taken into consideration. For instance, the end of text n° 4 of the *Husserliana XV* reads that “starting from intersubjectivity, it is possible to establish the intersubjective reduction by placing between brackets the world in itself and thus achieving the reduction to the universe of the intersubjective that includes in itself all that is individually subjective” (*Husserliana XV*, 69; Husserl 1972, 188 *sq.*, 272). However, this is not the option Husserl chose in *Cartesian Meditations*. Here, he sticks to a strictly Cartesian

path, and for a good reason: if we want to provide ourselves with the being-sense of the other (and, then, of the objective world), we must first delimit properly what characterizes the Self – a “solipsistic fiction” caused therefore “by healthy method reasons” (Husserliana XXXV, 281)³. For this purpose, it is necessary to use, as Husserl mentions in § 44 of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, an entirely new methodological process – that of a specific reduction that consists in putting out of play any constitutive function of intentionality as reported to *another* subjectivity. This reduction – that Husserl calls “primordial reduction” – brings us in the presence of, or rather reduces the Self, in what concerns its relation to the world, to what Husserl calls the “primordial sphere” of the *ego*, in its irreducible *immanence*, that is, to the intentional sphere – actual and potential – where the *ego* is constituted in his “peculiar ownness” (*eigen*).

However, it should be stressed that primordial reduction is methodologically different from classical phenomenological reduction. While the latter brings us back to the constitutive transcendental subjectivity, the former (that implies the latter) should be understood as a “dismantling reduction” (*Abbaureduktion*) (that is however essential to “phenomenological construction”) whose role is determined by genetic phenomenology and goes beyond the frame of a purely descriptive phenomenology.

The primordial Ego

How is it possible to characterize more precisely the *ego* thus reduced? It does not go back to a mundane Self that would be from then on “alone in this world” as if a “universal pest” had wiped off all other human beings. In fact, the abstraction is here even more radical: this does not consist solely in ignoring the other subjects, but also in what gives the mundane, objective character (and, therefore, intersubjective) of my own Self. What should be ignored is my Self as it is considered according to the form of what it is – and of what is true – “for everyone”. Again: what is then this primordially reduced Self?

First of all, the primordial *ego* can only be characterized *negatively*. The primordial sphere *grounds* – from a constitutive point of view – the experience of the other as well as the meaning of the experience of the objective world (Husserl 1982 § 44, 92 *sq.*). In a passage from *Krisis*, Husserl warns us, in relation to the *method*, against the idea of “jumping” directly into the transcendental intersubjectivity, and thus “over the original Self (*Ur-Ich*), the *ego* of my *epochè*, that cannot, in fact, ever lose its uniqueness nor the fact that it is personally impossible to decline” (Husserliana VI, 188). In this late text, all Husserl does is actually repeat what he had already stated at the beginning of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, that is, that in any constitutive phenomenological questioning – be it that of intersubjectivity – it is impossible to neglect the fact that every constitution, of any kind, belongs to the originally constitutive transcendental subjectivity, i.e. “my” intentional life and the constitutive syntheses of this life “of mine”. Of course, this is not a “transparent” consciousness, since it encloses the potential and “anonymous” functions, pertaining to the “pre-immanent sphere” and to “passive syntheses”. How should then this “original Self” be conceived? “But, in my spiritual ownness, I am nevertheless the identical Ego-pole of my manifold ‘pure’ subjective processes, those of my passive and active intentionality, and the pole of all the habitualities instituted or to be instituted by those processes (Husserl 1982 § 44, 98).” More precisely – and this is the feature that concerns primordial reduction here – it is possible to isolate by abstraction, at the center of the intersubjective sphere, a “pole of any affection and of any action” (Husserliana XIV, 170). According to phenomenological analysis, the subjective pole is not a predicate but a functional center to which all predicate or attribute is related and that is the reason of every possible individuation. Any subjective process, any experience, is the experience of a Self. This fundamental characteristic remains true to the ultimately constitutive level of intersubjectivity – although this original egoic pole can only be grasped by abstraction, according to a “dismantling reduction”.

How can we understand the relation between this primary Self to which we have access due to this “dismantling” reduction and

the transcendental *ego* to which the “classical” phenomenological reduction leads us back? In order to answer this question, we now have to clarify the relation between the reduced phenomenological sphere and the – mundane – sphere of the concrete and objective world.

Actually, in the transcendental attitude, the *constitutive* correlate of reduction blooms and becomes visible: in the same way that reduction guides us back from the objective world to the transcendental *ego*, it is possible, conversely, to identify the constitutive act that allows us to acknowledge the constitution of the objective world starting from *this transcendental ego*. What is this constitutive act – which has a crucial importance (as shown in § 45 of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*)? Husserl calls it the “*mundanizing self-apperception (verweltlichende Selbstapperzeption)*” of the transcendental *ego*. Due to this self-apperception, the transcendental *ego* “becomes” world (see also Husserl 1972, 107 sq.). It is because of this that we witness the constitution of the world starting from the transcendental *ego*⁴. Thus, the relation between the transcendental *ego* and the primordial *ego* becomes clearer. What ties the transcendental *ego* to the mundane (concrete, objective) Self is the apperception of the world (*Weltapperzeption*). And to the extent to which the transcendental *ego* constitutes the world as a phenomenon, it can reach such “mundanizing self-apperception”. From now on, we can point out the following correlation: on the one hand, we have the mundane Self, within which we can make a distinction between the “souls” and the bodies and, on the other hand, the transcendental *ego*, within which we have to make a distinction between what is related to the sphere of his ownness and what is related to the sphere of what is alien⁵. What is related, at the mundane level, to the “soul” corresponds, for Husserl, within the transcendental *ego*, to the sphere of ownness, whereas what is related to the body corresponds to the sphere of what is alien. However, this does not mean that the sphere of ownness does not include *consciousness, the mode of appearance, of what is alien!* Now, let us explain and detail this difficult point.

Through the *positive* analysis of the primal Self – to which we will continue at present – a meaning of transcendence is revealed, which Husserl calls “primary” or “primordial”

transcendence. This belongs to a constitutive stratum *beyond* the objective world and constitutes – being at the same time a determining component of the concrete *ego* – an “immanent transcendence”.

Let us then clarify what this mode of appearance or this consciousness of what is alien that belongs to the primordial sphere consist of. Such a clarification requires the explication, the experiencing-explicating regard, *of all that belongs to* the transcendental *ego* and this, in a new and original intuition that constantly and continually gives in its identity. So what belongs to the *ego*? It seems first that this donation is problematic: is not the *ego* given – in a living present – only in an *actual* perception, *present* in its turn? And isn't past given only in re-collections and the future in “fore-memories” (*Vorerinnerungen*), therefore in the *presentifications* and not in *presentations*? Of course, but – and this is accepted even since *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1905) – *there is* definitely a way of original givenness that is not related to *perception*: that of the primary memories (“retentions”) and of primal anticipations of the future (“protentions”) that belong to the “*form* [that relates to an ‘apodictic *a priori*’] of the continuous constitution of the *ego* from its own life experiences as temporal (*zeitliche*) in universal time (Husserl 1982 § 46, 103)”. But the “original sphere” (which is that of the original self-explicitation) is not limited to this pure *form*: “Manifestly (and this is of particular importance) the own-essentiality (*das Eigenwesentliche*) belonging to me as *ego* comprises more than merely the punctualities and potentialities of the stream of subjective processes” (Husserl 1982 § 47, 103) (which, of course, can only be applied to the units that are *inseparable* from the original constitution). To be more specific, Husserl refers here to three types of phenomena: the sensitive *data* which are constituted as “immanent temporalities” specific to the *ego*; the habitualities and sedimentations constituted as “abiding convictions” (*bleibende Überzeugungen*), which determine precisely the Self as a *concrete* egoic pole; and the “transcendent objects” (given either actually or potentially) – with the condition to take into consideration exclusively what appears (spatially) according to

my own sensitivity (and to the apperceptions that are inseparable from the sensitive modes of appearance, that is, inseparable from my “own life”).

This way, even before approaching the constitution of the concrete consciousness of the other, Husserl was able to set the distinction, “within” the transcendental *ego* – more specifically: within the sphere of what is specific to it – between what is related to the actual *ego*, that is, the immanence specific to the concrete *ego*, and what is related to a first type of transcendence (“immanent transcendence”) that, although it belongs to the *ego*, concerns (but does not constitute) the *consciousness* it has of what is alien. Now, the issue is to clarify this constitution of the consciousness of the other, which, as we have already mentioned, will apply a second meaning of transcendence – i.e. secondary transcendence.

The concrete *constitution of the other*

In the analysis of the *concrete* constitution of the other, two pitfalls should be avoided, as previously indicated: the reduction of the primordial sphere to a *solipsistic* psychologism and the *dogmatic* position of a universal community of egos. Husserl's purpose is to present intersubjectivity as a community of monads (a notion regarding the *ego* in its relation to the objects that are constituted in its intentional life, as well as to other subjects) – knowing that, as we have already said, this project serves to found *objectivity*. Nevertheless, objectivity cannot be simply supposed or stipulated – otherwise we fall into dogmatism. *We should therefore start from the transcendental ego*. But, on the other hand, this *ego* should not be considered as private or as “solipsistic” either – because *otherwise, it is impossible to escape it*. Husserl simply tries to account for the phenomenological *factum* of the “in itself for me” – where the being in-itself of the objective world is no less phenomenologically attestable, and effectively attested, than this being(-in-itself) *for me*. As Husserl states in § 46 of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*: “So much illusion, so much being...” (Husserl 1982 § 46, 103).

But the analysis – which we have just reconstructed – of primal transcendence (that is, what is still related to primordially) and of secondary transcendence *are the two sides of the same coin!* – this means that it is not a substruction, nor an invention, nor a metaphysical hypothesis: what we have just seen “is itself part of the explication of the intentional components (*Bestände*) implicit in the fact of the experiential world that exists for us.” (Husserl 1982 § 49, 108). What should we understand by this?

We might think that in order to explain intersubjectivity, Husserl posits dogmatically its constitution, without actually delivering its genesis. This is not true. In fact, it is enough to pay attention to his *methodological* prescriptions: “Here again it is to be noted that, as has been repeatedly emphasized, the ideas referred to [the world and its correlate – the intersubjectivity (Husserliana VIII, 480) – itself ‘constituted as having the ideality of endless openness’] are not phantasies or modes of the “as if”, but arise constitutionally in integral connexion with all objective experience and have their modes (*Weise*) of legitimation (*Rechtgebung*) and their development (*Ausgestaltung*) by scientific activity” (Husserl 1982 § 49; Husserliana I, 138). Here, two aspects are decisive. Intersubjectivity is not at all *posited* or *stipulated* in advance, nor is it constituted *subsequently*, but it is constituted *genetically*, that is, it blossoms *at the same time* as the objective experience. From then on, in order to bring it to the stage of unquestionable truth, a type of *specific legitimation* is required: it is not revealed in a simply descriptive manner, nor in a speculative way – as imposed by the phenomenological constraint. *This “type of legitimation” required is that of the phenomenological construction, which is always the construction or genesis of a factuality. This factuality is here that factum of the “world of experience” quoted above, as constituted in an intersubjective manner.*

And what constructs this “phenomenological construction”⁶? Actually, it constructs precisely that phenomenological *Einsicht* (view or comprehension) that allows seeing that, first of all, the experience of the other makes possible the fact that the primordial Self, although irreducibly one and singular, *enters*

the monadic community, that is, it is one and singular only *to the extent to which all the other Selves are, too*; and, secondly, that the intersubjective community “deposits itself (in a stratum)” uniquely *on* the “world” of the primordial Self. There is no speculative dialectic here: the experience of the other transforms the appearance of the world for the Self, in what characterizes it specifically, into an appearance of an “objective” world, as it is “for everyone”. And all the “mystery” of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity resides exactly in this “addition of sense (*Sinnesaufstufung*)” due to which the experience of the other gives to the own world precisely the characteristic objectivity of the single and unique world of everyone.

The constitution of this monadological intersubjectivity – that Husserl calls a “communarization (*Vergemeinschaftung*)” and where no *ego* (not even myself!) remains absolutely singular – means at the same time the constitution of a sphere specific to intersubjectivity that, as we have already mentioned, is no other than the “subjective” (actually: “*intersubjective*”) correlate of the objective world. Just as within the peculiar sphere of the *ego*, that is, upstream the intersubjective constitution, Husserl has made the distinction between what is specific to the *ego*, strictly speaking, and what constitutes the consciousness of an otherness, he now makes the distinction, within the *intersubjective* sphere, between the “transcendental we” and the objective world. And in order to characterize this relation, he uses here again, just like before, the term of “immanent transcendence”: the objective world does not transcend the “intersubjective we” in an absolute manner, but – precisely – in an “immanent” manner.

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“Analogical apprehension” and “pairing»

In order to actually account for the constitution of the other, we will currently develop on the intentional determinations that characterize the experience of the other.

The analysis of the other *as other* requires the clarification of the manner in which it *appears* in a constitutive consciousness.

Or, he could never give himself to another as he gives to himself, unless “it would be merely a moment of my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I myself would be the same” (Husserl 1982 § 50, 109). In order to emphasize this state of affairs, Husserl introduces a new concept (that we have already used above): that of *alter ego*.

The concept of “*alter ego*” is in fact chosen by Husserl in order to emphasize the “thing itself” properly characterizing the phenomenological experience of the other: “the second ego, however, is not simply there, and strictly given to himself; rather is he constituted as ‘alter ego’ – the ego indicated as one moment by this expression being I myself in my ownness” (Husserl 1982 § 44, 94). And this “other” “according to his own constituted sense, points to me myself; the other is a ‘mirroring’ (*Spiegelung*) of my ownself and yet not a mirroring proper, an analogue of my own self and yet again not an analogue in the usual sense” (Husserl 1982 § 44, 94). The other is not *directly accessible* – hence a certain “mediatedness” (*Mittelbarkeit*) in the constitutive intentionality of intersubjectivity. This mediatedness expresses a certain *combination* (*Verflechtung*) between two intentionalities: in the consciousness of the other, intervenes at the same time a givenness of the self (of the ego) and an appresentation of another ego. This combination is that of an apperceptive transposition which is not an analogical reasoning (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 404) but, the quote from § 44 of *Cartesian Meditations* indicates it, an *analogical apprehension* (Husserl 1972, 87). (The different terms of a reasoning are related with each other through an act of the faculty of thinking, while, in the *apprehension*, the transposition occurs in a direct manner, without any intervention of an intellectual act). “But the analogy is not in full force and effect (*voll*); it is an indication, not an anticipation (*Vorgriff*) that could become a seizure of the self (*Selbstgriff*).” What does then specifically ground the apprehension or apperception of *another*?

What does specifically characterize the apperception of the other, is that the “original”, meaning the ego – remains constantly present (contrary to the apperception of whatever object – for example this lamp – which does not require the original one, in which the lamp has been constituted for the

first time for me in a “primal instituting”). The “primal instituting” is accomplished in a continuous manner! This means that the ego and the alter ego are always – and necessarily – given in a primal “pairing” (*Paarung*), as the (transcendental) condition of the analogical apprehension.

Or, this pairing designates the primitive form of the “association” between two (or more) data – the one of “passive syntheses” studied by genetic phenomenology – by virtue of which a “couple or a “plurality” (*Mehrheit*) of data is constituted, data which are certainly different, but passively recognized as “similar” (*ähnlich*). In the case of the experience of the other, these similar *data* are those of the appearance of the living body of the other and of the *ego's* body as well. The pairing is therefore characterized by an intentional overreaching (*Übergreifen*) – “an overlaying of each with the objective sense of the other” –, knowing that the meaning of one could “awake” this same sense in the other (and we will come back to this), that it can re-cover it, etc. and that, this involves a “transfer of sense” (*Sinnesübertragung*) (which is neither a simple analogy nor a projection) of what is thus paired.

Harmoniousness

“The experienced animate organism (*Leib*) of another continues to prove itself as actually (*wirklich*) an animate organism, solely in its changing but incessantly harmonious “behavior” (*Gebaren*). Such harmonious behavior (as having a physical side that indicates something psychic appresentatively) must present (*auftreten*) itself fulfillingly in original experience, and do so throughout the continuous change in behavior from phase to phase” (Husserl 1982 § 52, 114 *sq.*). Husserl claims here that the *Leib* does not really manifest itself as *Leib* but for the harmoniousness of its expressions, gestures and behaviours (idea that Merleau-Ponty will also recall). In other words, there is something – and we will see below what it is – that allows to recognize the other in the manner in which this something indicating the existence of an alter ego allows to be constantly verified in a substantial manner.

The apprehension of the other is in effect well grounded, for Husserl, in “this kind of verifiable [or attestable] accessibility of what is not originally accessible” (Husserl 1982 § 52, 114).

In order to clarify this, Husserl proposes an analogy – which is based on the term of “intentional modification” between the experience of the other and the consciousness of *time*. The other is a modification of “my self” (*mein Selbst*), just as the consciousness of the past is that of a past present – thus demanding an intentional modification of the present. In the same way that the past demands a “harmonious synthesis” (*Einstimmigkeitssynthese*) in order to be verified as passed, the other is verified in harmonious experiences. And in the same way that the present can be aware as such only “after the fact”, that is in contrast with the (only just-) passed, the Self cannot be “mine” except in contrast – in the pairing – with the other⁷. As Husserl says elsewhere – and we would not be able to highlight it enough: “*the other man is constitutionally the intrinsically first man*” (Husserl 1982 § 55, 124).

“Potentialities” of the primordial sphere in the apperception of the other

Could we really be satisfied with this review of the notion of “harmoniousness”? Does it not already involve a regularity governing the course of mundane experience and, all of a sudden, the achievement of the constitution of the objective world (*that we should however account for*)?

As we will see below, this is not the case: the constitution of the objective world is not presupposed since the sense of the objective world is in itself tributary of the self-mundanisation of the transcendental subjectivity understood as transcendental intersubjectivity. Actually the constitutive operation (*Leistung*) characterizing the experience of the other demands something else: namely the constitutive function of the *potentialities* of the primordial sphere in the apperception of the other. What are these potentialities? In order to answer this question, we must analyze the status of the living corporeity (*Leiblichkeit*): this is not simply characterized by the fact of having sensations, but

also by its capacity to constitute the *spatial* nature. In fact, to that extent that the ego, which is first of all an “absolute here”, “can” go towards “there” – an orientation that “can be freely changed by virtue of my kinesthesias” (Husserl 1982 § 53, 116) –, it constitutes the kinesthetic horizon of an own spatiality based on which a uniform spatiality, or even orthonormed is built, at a superior constitutive level. However, *in order for this spatiality constituted by kinesthesias to be possible*, the points of view of any “absolute here” of the other are already requested: “to everything alien (as long as it remains within the appresented horizon of concreteness that necessarily goes with it) centers in an appresented Ego who is not I myself but, relative to me, a modificatum: an other Ego” (Husserl 1982 § 52, 115-6)⁸. Or, according to Husserl, *these points of view of the other Me (or of any “absolute here” of the other) reveal potentialities of the primordial sphere of the ego!* The fact that I am in a position to apperceive the objects “as if I were there” means that I do not perceive the other simply as an object, but as an “apperceptive” object – therefore precisely as *an other subject*. Thus, the primordial sphere is indeed already structured in an intersubjective manner.

The Association Intervening in the Concrete Experience of the Other

From now on we can determine very precisely the association which comes up in the experience of the other – analysis that Husserl proposes in § 54 of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*.

There are two types of associations: immediate associations and mediate associations. The immediate associations constitute a direct link between the given term and another one that may be given or not. Concerning the mediate associations, *the link is not direct* – and it is precisely the case of associations constituting the mode (*Modus*) of the “other”. How do we get then the second term of these associations? Regarding this matter, all Husserl's critiques that only see, either a *psychological description*, or a *desideratum* which could only be satisfied by *positing* a mode of consciousness which is not

phenomenologically attested, miss the essential part. We are here in the same case as, for example, that of the constitutive sphere of the immanent temporality (where one could dispose of all the elements of the immanent sphere and where, *in order to account precisely for their creation*, it is necessary to proceed to a *phenomenological construction* descending within the pre-immanent sphere of consciousness⁹). Due to phenomenological descriptions, we dispose of all links between what is “seen” and what is demanded, allowing to account for the phenomenon – except what can be attested with regard to its validity only due to a phenomenological construction. Let us reconstitute the chain of these links within the constitution of experience of the other. The missing link, needing such a construction, is that of the *mode of appearance* of the other as *other* subject, which is not limited, of course, to a pure “body” (*Körper*). Here, there is my living body. There appears a body which is part of my primordial sphere, but which, of course, is not the “other” yet in the proper sense of the term (but in fact just a “body”). But, this appearance “awakens” (expression that we should not understand in the psychological meaning), in a reproductive way, i.e. *starting from the ego*, a mode of appearance “similar” to my living body, that resends to my living body “as if I were there”. I do not live this awakening in a concrete experience (because it does neither concern the Self alone – otherwise we would remain imprisoned by the sphere of the *ego* –, nor *only* the other Self – otherwise we would lose the *Leiblichkeit*) and it does not become phenomenologically comprehensible, except for the only plan where phenomenological construction occurs) of – *possible – modes* of appearance! Pairing is not just something between the “self” and the body apperceived there, but between my mode of apperception and the one which the appearance of the body there awakens (that is between *two* modifications) – thus at a constitutive *inferior* level! I “live” of course the presence of the other, but the sense of this “subjective process” becomes really understandable only through a phenomenological construction.

III. Constitution of Objectivity

Husserl's analysis of intersubjectivity ends with the analysis of the constitution of objectivity. With this one we go beyond the limit that separates the subjective from the objective point of view of the constitution of intersubjectivity (the two aforementioned sides of the coin).

At the end of previous developments, we could renew the objection according to which the primordial *ego* would be separated from the *alter ego* by an unfathomable abyss – despite or mainly: precisely due to the phenomenological construction. Why is such a critique is still unjustified? *Precisely because*, as Husserl rightly says it (Husserl 1982 § 55, 121), *such a distinction supposes that the experience of the other has already accomplished its work!* Taking the primordial *ego* as starting point is a *methodological need*; it is an *abstraction* – whereof the corresponding *epoché* witnesses and gives sense to the latter – for the phenomenologizing spectator who realizes that what is phenomenologically first, is an only and same nature, constituted within the primordial sphere as an identical unity which encompasses both “my” nature and the nature of the other. “I do not have an appresented second original sphere with a second “Nature” and, in this Nature, a second animate bodily organism (the one belonging to the other ego himself), so that I must then ask how I can apprehend my Nature and this other as modes of appearance of the same Objective Nature. On the contrary, the identity-sense of ‘my’ primordial Nature and the presentiated other primordial Nature is necessarily produced by the appresentation and the unity that it, as appresentation, necessarily has with the presentation co-functioning for it this appresentation by virtue of which an Other and, consequently, his concrete ego are there for me in the first place. Quite rightly, therefore, we speak of perceiving someone else arid then of perceiving the Objective world, perceiving that the other Ego and I are looking at the same world, and so forth though this perceiving goes on exclusively within the sphere of my ownness” (Husserl 1982 § 55, 123-4). This way, the sense of the primordial reduction is confirmed here in a very obvious manner: there are two “strata”, the primordial stratum – in which the other is given to me only as a “body” – to which we have access by bracketing the experience

of the other, and the stratum related to a community of subjects – where this body appears to me as a “living body” and where it gives itself to me also being given to the other at the same time. But what *guarantees* the *identity* between *my* experience of the world and that of the other *other*? Knowing that there may be “abnormalities”, what would be the “normality” for an intersubjective experience of the world? Husserl answers that abnormality supposes *normality* and that this normality is verified – just like it was already the case with the experience of the other’s *Leib* – in the *harmoniousness* (*Einstimmigkeit*) of experiences (Husserl 1982 § 55, 125). As we have already noticed, harmoniousness is the last mark of the world and therefore of an intersubjective community: «The Objective world has existence by virtue of a harmonious confirmation of the apperceptive constitution, once this has succeeded: a confirmation thereof by the continuance of experiencing life with a consistent harmoniousness, which always becomes re-established as extending through any "corrections" that may be required to that end. Now harmoniousness is preserved also by virtue of a recasting of apperceptions through distinguishing between normality and abnormalities (as modifications thereof), or by virtue of the constitution of new unities throughout the changes involved in abnormalities” (Husserl 1982 § 55, 125 *sq.*). How can we specify the nature of this “harmoniousness”? *It is itself constituted* – constitution that is “similar” to that of the identity of a (temporal) object or to that of ideal objectities (characterized by their “omnitemporality”) and that requires in all cases the “*medium*” of “recollective presentations (*erinnernde Vergegenwärtigung*)”. A connection is really (constantly) established between the primordial sphere of the *ego*, that is the self-experience of the concrete *ego*, on one hand, and the alien sphere *presentiated therein*, on the other hand. This *possible* presentation is the subjective correlate of the *harmoniousness* of phenomena of the world. The experience of the other «effects this, first, by its identifying synthesis of the primordially given ‘animate body’ (*Leibkörper*) of someone else and the same animate body, but appresented in other modes of appearance, and secondly, spreading out from there, by its identifying synthesis of the same Nature, given and verified

primordially (with pure sensuous originality) and at the same time appresentationally” (Husserl 1982 § 55, 128). To the extent that the intersubjectivity – as coexistence of the *ego* and the *alter ego* – constitutes a common time-form (*Zeitform*) (where the primordial temporality is an *original mode of appearance of the objective temporality*), the constitution of the absolute temporal flow (delivered in the *Bernau Manuscripts* (Husserliana XXXIII), *regardless of this intersubjective dimension*) is *eo ipso* tributary to the constitution of the monadological community.

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How to conceive the status of *higher levels* of the constitution of the objective world? The mutual relations characterizing each member of the monadological community involve an “objectivating equalization” (*Gleichstellung*) (Husserliana 1982 § 56, 129) of the existence of the ego and the others. It is not from the empirical experience of the other that I can accede to transcendental intersubjectivity, but, just the opposite, it is the objectivation of the latter that makes me discover the other as having a *Leibkörper* in my field of perception; that makes me discover myself as being situated in his, the others as experiencing the others as others, etc.

Moreover, this objectivation shows me the world transcendently constituted in me is *also, in its essence, a world of men*. And that, not only in this trivial sense that the empirical world is populated with empirical human beings, but with the meaning – strongly reminding of Heidegger’s *Dasein* – that the world entirely derives from the experience of the human *psychè* (*Seele*) (not in a religious sense, of course, but in an existential one): “the psychic (*seelisch*) constitution of the objective world we mean [...] my actual and possible experience of the world, as an experience belonging to me, the Ego who experiences himself as a man” (Husserl 1982 § 56, 130-1). We understand, therefore, the complete meaning of this “mundanizing self-apperception” we have already discussed above. Indeed, the *psychè* or the “soul” is nothing but a self-objectivation (*Selbstobjektivierung*) which is fulfilled in the

monad – this “self” (*Selbst*) being the transcendental subjectivity as it is intersubjectively structured. The parallelism between the two spheres (that of the *psychè* and that of the transcendental *ego*) corresponds to the one between the respective fields of study of the phenomenological psychology, on the one hand, and the transcendental phenomenology, on the other hand.

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Let us go back again to the notion of “mundanizing self-apperception”. This one is at the same time a “self-mundanization” (*Selbstmundanisierung*) (that is the way the *Leib* gets into the world), a givenness of the world and – it is at this point that intersubjectivity comes up – the institution of an intersubjective community. As Husserl asserts in a text dated from 1937: “I, the *ego*, have the world starting from a performance (*Leistung*), in which [...] constitute myself, as well as my horizon of others and, at the same time (*in eins damit*), the homogeneous community of ‘us’ (*Wir-Gemeinschaft*); this constitution is not a constitution of the world, but an actualization which could be designated as “monadization of the ‘ego’ – as actualization of personal monadization, of monadical pluralization” (Husserliana VI, 417). There is constitution of the world *only if the ego monadizes* – which always means that it actualizes itself and becomes actualized *as* intersubjective community and *in* it. The world is the “result” of the transcendental actualization of the mundanization (or “self-mundanization”) of transcendental intersubjectivity (Husserliana XV, 403). Thus, if there is constitution of the objective world in intersubjectivity, it is not because we would account for the (already constituted) objective world starting from a subjective dimension, but this is precisely the actualization of this “self-mundanization”, that is the “extension” of a peculiar own sphere to what we call the “world” as correlate of the possibilities and potentialities of subjectivity understood as transcendental intersubjectivity.

Conclusion

We have seen that there is transcendence of objectivity only by virtue of intersubjectivity, and that is why phenomenology is a transcendental philosophy or, as Husserl says sometimes, a “sociological’ transcendental philosophy” (Husserliana IX, 539) or even a “transcendental sociology” (Husserliana XI, 220). This means that the phenomenology does not only propose a phenomenological analysis of intersubjectivity, but it is itself intersubjective, delivering valid analyses in an objective manner and for everyone (this is what an analysis of intersubjectivity precisely requires).

It appears indeed that the phenomenology of intersubjectivity, even though it unveils the correlation intersubjectivity-world (see Husserliana VIII, 432, 480, 495 *sq.*), always starts from an individual *ego* and not from a “collective consciousness” (which would go back to a *dogmatic* positing of intersubjectivity). But this is just a methodological starting point: the transcendental *ego* is only a restraint aspect of transcendental intersubjectivity¹⁰, but at the same time it grounds it (*fundiert*). Contrary to Schütz’s assertions which made of intersubjectivity a dimension of the only life-world (which would short-circuit any transcendental and constitutive project of intersubjectivity) (Schütz 1957, 81-107), it obtains its sense and its being-sense only if it is constructed, a construction which is not at all speculative, but which follows from an essential need.

NOTES

¹ For the constitution of the sense of the other in the *ego*, cf. Husserliana VI, 189; Husserliana XV, 39, 369 *sq.*

² The phenomenology of intersubjectivity – like that of time, of the original *hylè*, etc. – carries out a *phenomenological construction* in which purely *descriptive* analyses stop at dead ends or aporias. A phenomenological construction is not a *speculative* construction, but *commanded by phenomena themselves*: it is actualized by the descent in a *pre-immanent* sphere, below the immanent sphere of transcendental conscience, thus explaining the constitutive phenomena of the latter. We have treated the phenomenological construction in more detail in Schnell 2004 a, 33 *sq.*; Schnell 2004 b, 9-14, 202 *sq.*, 250*sq.*, 255 *sq.*; and especially Schnell 2007.

³ In lesson 35 of the *Philosophie première* (vol. II), Husserl evokes another reason (that will not be mentioned again later on) that justifies the need for a

“Cartesian” beginning: only such a beginning actually allows avoiding – *in a case where other subjects would become crazy!* – the situation in which experience is not harmonious.

⁴ And regarding the idea that the passage of the transcendental Self to the natural Self is done due to an *objectivation of the self*, cf. for example *Husserliana IX*, 294.

⁵ What is related to the “psychic” (to the “soul” of the concrete Self) is transcendently “secondary” in relation to the own sphere of the transcendental *ego* (which is therefore transcendently “primary”). And Husserl characterizes this secondary transcendence as follows: it is “transcendence alone which can be called in this way and all that is also called transcendence apart from that – such as the objective world – rests on the transcendence of the other’s subjectivity » (*Husserliana VIII*, 495).

⁶ We insist: this is not a metaphysical or a speculative construction, but a stress of an inter-subjectivity that appears *at the same time* (“in one”) as objective experience.

⁷ See for example *Husserliana XIII*, 6, 244, 247 (but also, in opposition to this, *Husserliana XV*, 351).

⁸ Also see *Husserliana XXXV*, 281 *sq.* Regarding “the open intersubjectivity” discussed here, we can relate to the analyses of Dan Zahavi (Zahavi 1996, 35-40).

⁹ Concerning this matter, we refer to our work Schnell 2004 b (section C, chapter III).

¹⁰ Acc. to the first version of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation* (1929): “Thus transcendental subjectivity spreads all over intersubjectivity or it is rather transcendental subjectivity that is more comprehensive in itself. It is comprehensive as “promordi(n)al monad which intentionally contains in itself other monads that it has to treat like other transcendentals (*transzendente Ander*) [...] » (*Husserliana XV*, 17).

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