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AN UNSOLVED QUESTION
Husserl's Path toward Genetic Intersubjectivity

Abstract

The problem of intersubjectivity has an ambiguous fate within phenomenology, since it is the object of a contradictory attitude: on the one hand, the question of intersubjectivity seems just to be an application of phenomenological theories and methods to a particular matter of fact. On the other hand, the issues related to intersubjectivity are loaded with high expectations due to their manifest practical, existential and personal meaning. This is what inspired the French tradition (J. P. Sartre, M. Merleau-Ponty, E. Levinas and today J.-L. Marion and J.-L. Nancy) to draw substantial existential consequences from the Husserlian epistemological analysis. In this paper I try to reconstruct Husserl's path towards a theory of intersubjectivity that can be appropriately defined as "genetic." To this end, I will consider two crucial textual moments within Husserl's large body of work: a very early manuscript on intersubjectivity from 1905 and Husserl's lectures in Paris, the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929).

Keywords: Phenomenology; Intersubjectivity; Identity; Alterity; Genetic; Evidence

1. *Introduction*

The problem of intersubjectivity has an ambiguous fate within phenomenology, since it is the object of a contradictory attitude: on the one hand, the question of intersubjectivity seems just to be an application of phenomenological theories and methods to a particular matter of fact. For this reason, it seems reasonable to remove it from consideration until we have at least achieved a good definition of more fundamental epistemological problems. Husserl himself seems to proceed in this way in his first large philosophical work, the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1). On the other hand, the issues related to intersubjectivity are loaded with high expectations due to their manifest practical, existential and personal meaning. This is what inspired the French tradition (Jean Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas and today Jean-Luc Marion and Jean-Luc Nancy) to draw substantial existential consequences from the Husserlian epistemological analysis.

In this paper I try to reconstruct Husserl's path towards a theory of intersubjectivity that can be appropriately defined as "genetic." To this end, I will consider two crucial textual moments within Husserl's large body of work: a very early manuscript on intersubjectivity from 1905 and Husserl's lectures in Paris, the *Cartesian Meditations*¹

1 E. HUSSERL, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge* (1950), *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, bzw. Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band I, hrsg. von S. STRASSER; transl. by Dorion CAIRNS: *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague/Boston/London: 1960.

(1929). These texts refer to radically different historical and biographical contexts. By contrasting them, I aim at investigating the development and fractures Husserl faced in his enquiry into concrete intersubjectivity. This approach does not necessarily imply a steady continuity in Husserl's theoretical path. Husserl's work style, based on a relentless zigzag movement between contrasting perspectives, rather forbids us to imagine a continuous construction of a systematic and exhaustive theory of intersubjectivity. Nevertheless, I claim that we can identify a persistent urge in Husserl's investigation into the relationship between subjects that allows us to compare his first approach with his later research. Such a ceaseless urge is the question about the irreducible individuality of the subjects. It is this individuality that makes the mutual relationship between subjects at one time highly problematic and profoundly effective. The individuality of the subjects and followingly of their relationships distinguishes the intersubjective connection from the iterative succession of the "series" (Sartre) as well as from the linear causality of nature. Particularly the difference with natural relationships, however, raises the question of the origin and status of such intersubjective individuality.

At first, Husserl tries to make sense of such individuality in a formal sense, as showed by the manuscript from 1905 that I will analyze in what follows. After the discovery of the passive constitutive performances of consciousness, he becomes interested in the individual experiential history of the subjects and in all the non-thematic tendencies (pre-reflexive intentionality, instincts, expectations) that are constitutively part of it. This direction of interest leads to the establishment of the genetic research program within phenomenology, which, however, does not imply either the replacement of the former static approach to phenomenology or a definitive and crystalized configuration of the phenomenological method.

2. *Identity and Alterity*

The first text chosen by Iso Kern as the opening text of the first Husserliana volume dedicated to intersubjectivity (1973) is a manuscript written in Seefeld in 1905, which belongs to the context of the re-elaboration of the *Logical Investigations* and slightly precedes Husserl's famous lectures on time-consciousness. Because of its strategic position, this text can attest to the process that will lead Husserl to develop his transcendental phenomenology in *Ideen I*.

This manuscript describes what can be defined as a dialectical movement taking place between individual subjects, the expression "individual subjects" meaning already defined and determined subjects. Husserl writes:

Ich bin derselbe im Wechsel „meiner“ Gefühle, Wollungen, Meinungen, Vermutungen. Was ist der Anhalt für diese Identität? Doch nicht die sinnlichen Inhalte und nichts was aus den sinnlichen Inhalten durch phänomenologische Identifizierungen zu gewinnen ist: das Dauern des Rot, das Sich-verändern desselben usw. Ich bin derselbe im stetigen Auffassen

dieses Rot, im stetigen Identifizieren, im Erfassen dieser und jener Erscheinungen, im Vorstellen dieser Dinge, im Urteilen über sie, im Vermuten, im Zweifeln, Fühlen, Wollen. Was ist das Fundament für diese Selbigkeit, und welche Individuation liegt hier konstituierend zugrunde?²

Husserl starts his investigation with the question about the individuation and the *identity* of the subject who feels, thinks, perceives etc.. He wonders about the possibility to establish the identity of a subject who, however constantly different and committed to different grasps of the world, is nevertheless still the same throughout all these plural performances (*Leistungen*). In this context Husserl resorts to the German term *Anhalt* (*support* or *basis*) suggesting a non-substantialized description of the subject in terms of a supporting point, a cross point, and/or a permanent element in the flowing stream of consciousness. Further, in the manuscript, he also refers to the crucial notion of ‘person’. Here, the person is not meant as a metaphysical entity, but rather a factual, corporeal and living subjectivity rooted in a social and historical context.

Husserl’s argument advances as the individuated, identity-loaded subject suddenly chances upon a stranger, another subject, a subject who bears a different identity:

*Nun mache ich auch Erfahrung in Beziehung auf Andere. Zunächst: Von Wahrnehmungen ausgehend führt mich das Denken zur Annahme eines empirischen Seins, das nicht wahrgenommen ist und nie wahrgenommen werden kann*³.

In this first account of intersubjectivity, the Other (*der Andere*) is ‘something’ that I happen to find on my way; it is something given in an unexpected experience. The Other appears as an already individuated, determined subject, exactly as I am. We could say that the Other makes his appearance in phenomenology as an adult, as I am. To me, he/she is an “*Annahme*”, a hypothesis, a challenge. This last term reveals a further aspect of this first “static” account of intersubjectivity. Characteristic of this account is not only (1) that the encountering subjects are complete, structured subjects, but also (2) that they result as mutually inaccessible exactly by means of their defined profile. The main characteristic of the Other is the disturbing fact that I cannot directly perceive his/her thoughts and feelings. He/she is lost to my perception even if he/she is given to me as a perceptual object⁴. On the basis of my actual perception of him/her, I must state his/her

2 E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Erster Teil: 1905-1920*. In *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, bzw. Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band XIII, hrsg. von I. KERN, 1973, p. 1.

3 E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Erster Teil: 1905-1920*. In *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, bzw. Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band XIII, 1973, hrsg. von I. KERN, p. 2.

4 The otherness and perceptual inaccessibility of the Other has been investigated and interpreted in several classical studies on intersubjectivity: M. THEUNISSEN, *Der Andere. Studien zur Sozialontologie der Gegenwart*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin 1965; K. HELD *Das Problem der Intersubjektivität und die Idee einer phänomenologischen Transzendentalphilosophie*, in *Perspektiven transzendentalphänomenologischer Forschung. Für Ludwig Landgrebe zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Kölner Schülern*,

invisibility. His/her internal life, all that makes him/her what he/she is, is unreachable for me. In this phase of his elaboration, Husserl's strategy to bypass the inaccessibility of the other subject relies on the concept of "hypothesis": I cannot directly perceive what he/she feels, but I immediately begin to suppose, to speculate, I take my chance to guess what he/she is actually thinking.

The limits of such an approach seem clearly connected with the intellectual and potentially representational character of the described connection which contrasts our everyday experience of uncomplicated, pre-reflective, and even non-verbal comprehension of the gestures and behaviours of other persons. If my capacity to perceive and interpret the intentions and actions of the people I meet every day depended on high level intellectual activities, I would not be able to achieve any simple task since I would permanently be busy speculating and guessing about other's intentions. This is not only a disturbing dystopia, but also a misleading description. We enter into an immediate relation and resonance (also in the negative sense of conflict and dissonance) with the Others without any need to formulate a hypothesis and verify assumptions⁵.

In later descriptions Husserl himself will feel the inadequateness of such a thesis presupposing a cognitive engagement that contradicts our common experience. An important step in this direction is taken already in 1916 in a text published as appendix to the text nr. 2 (dated before 1909) in *Husserliana* XIII⁶. Here, Husserl explicitly criticizes Lipps' as well as his own precedent approach to intersubjectivity based on analogy. Indeed, the analogy-based approach does also take into consideration the bodily constitution of the encountering subjects. However, the static description risks to focus only on the recognition of bodily similarity. In 1916 (at this time Husserl is working with Edith Stein on the manuscript of the second book of *Ideas*) he shifts his attention toward the typical performance (*Leistung*) of the body, its functioning, and the dynamics of bodily life as an effective source of experience⁷. The analogy becomes here something quite different from static and intellectualistic similarity. It requires the peculiar performance of presentification in order to grasp the non-thematic, pre-reflective functioning of the body.

Due to this tension between a more intellectualistic and a bodily-centered and finally pre-reflective approach, intersubjectivity remains a crucial problem for phenomenology long after Husserl's first attempt to clarify it in cognitive terms. Nevertheless, what he will preserve of his first approach is the awareness of the essential mediation, of the im-

hrsg. von U. CLAESGES und K. HELD, *Phänomenologica* 49, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag 1972; J. IRIBARNE, *Husserls Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, Alber, Freiburg 1994; D. ZAHAVI, *Husserl und die transzendente Intersubjektivität. Eine Antwort auf die sprachpragmatische Kritik*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1996.

5 The immediate resonance among subjects has been described by Jagna Brudzinska who introduces the concept of *Mitvollzug* (see J. BRUDZINSKA, *Mitvollzug und Fremdverstehen. Zur Phänomenologie und Psychoanalyse der teilnehmenden Erfahrung*, in "Phänomenologische Forschungen" 2013, Thema: *Soziale Erfahrung*, PhäFo 2014, 45-76).

6 E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Erster Teil: 1905-1920*. In *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, bzw. Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band XIII, 1973, hrsg. von I. KERN, pp. 38-41.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 40.

possibility of an immediate real contact with the Others.

As a result of these conflicting issues, the topic of intersubjectivity appears as a resisting enigma requiring contradictory formulations. Husserl seems provocative as he gives some kind of definition only then to retreat from it at the same moment. This is the case in definitions such as “analogon which is not analogon” or “accessible inaccessibility” or even “immanent transcendency”⁸ which turn the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929) and the connected manuscripts into a puzzling challenge. In the first manuscript about intersubjectivity from 1905, however, Husserl is not accidentally struck by the “impossibility” of this experience. His focus on the hypothetical character of the encounter with Others is the direct consequence of the chosen starting point of the analysis. The already individuated I, a subject who already has a complex inner life on his/her own and a long history behind him/her, is obviously difficult to be comprehended and unveiled. Nevertheless, the individuated I works as a solid ground to hypothetically reconstruct the manifold aspects of the changing experience. The individuation of subjects; their being profoundly different and incompatible in space and their different perspective on things, provides at the same time the chasm between them and the condition for a possible recognition:

Sollen wir so sagen: Halte ich die Erscheinungen, so wie ich sie habe oder mir vergegenwärtige, fest, dann schliesst ihr Wesen die Vereinbarkeit aus; nehme ich aber einen unbekannten Unterschied an [...], so besteht wiederum Vereinbarkeit. Dieser Unterschied ist der Unterschied der Individuen. Also die Kontinuität von Zeit und Raum ist noch nicht das voll Individualisierende. Vielmehr die Ichindividualität⁹.

If we remained on the flowing level of experience, we would face a complete inaccessibility. Each lived experience is singular and cannot be communicated or shared in its immediateness. Only as subsequent experience of somebody, only as manifold expressions of his/her life can individual experiences reach their full sense. This is the reason why the conclusion of the manuscript identifies the individuation of the subject as an “unknown difference”, as something that eludes definition and still represents the necessary basis for every definition. The Other and I are not interchangeable. Our difference marks a real incompatibility – the incompatibility of our realities in space and time. At the same time, this same distance makes possible our mutual hypothetical recognizing.

8 «Der Andere verweist seinem konstituierten Sinne nach auf mich selbst, der Andere ist Spiegelung meiner selbst, und doch nicht eigentlich Spiegelung; Analogon meiner selbst, und doch wieder nicht Analogon im gewöhnlichen Sinne» (HUSSERL, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, op. cit., p. 125). «The ‘Other’, according to his own constituted sense, points to me myself; the other is a “mirroring” of my own self and yet not a mirroring proper, an analogue of my own self and yet again not an analogue in the usual sense» (*Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, cit., p. 124).

9 HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Erster Teil: 1905-1920*, op. cit., p. 3.

3. *The Transcendental Attitude: Constitution and the Theory of Evidence*

In Husserl's first approach to intersubjectivity, the individual character and the identity of the confronting subjects are given as a matter of fact. They play a central role, but are not further questioned. They remain as the unknown difference between us produced by our real position in space and time, by our individual constellation of experiences, preferences, feelings, sensibility etc. The further step in Husserl's understanding of the encounter between subjects will lead him to question such a separating reality on the transcendental level. This will be the task of the transcendental-idealistic approach presented in the *Cartesian Meditations*¹⁰.

As is well known, Husserl dedicated the five lectures held in 1929 in Paris to the French philosopher and father of the modern thought, René Descartes. This was however not a mere gesture of politeness and respect. As he states in the introduction, his decision to give to the lectures the form of a subjective meditation is the response to a central challenge of phenomenological philosophy. According to his own experience – Husserl claims – philosophy is a personal matter¹¹. This means that it is inseparable from our condition of human subjects. Philosophy in its essence has to be developed as an investigation that goes into the depths of the structure and performances of subjectivity.

Clearly, the awareness of the risk implied by such an operation – i.e. the risk of solipsism, the risk to come across subjectivity not only as the legitimate source of all philosophical problems, but also as a “cage”, as a self-sufficient, isolated identity point – belongs to this reflection. To respond to such a challenge, Husserl unfolds his characteristic transcendental idealism¹².

This implies, firstly, the fight against the unquestioned authority that hides beyond scientific results and even philosophical theories¹³. To go back to the experience in its whole concreteness we have to put in question the very basis of what we already think to know about reality. For this reason, Husserl substitutes the standard difference between inner and outer world with the phenomenological difference between constituted, given factuality and the constituting-producing subject. Our experiential world is no longer organized along the difference between inner (mental) representations and outer objects (things, matter of facts); rather, it is the dynamics of an experiencing, feeling, seeing, hearing and touching life that come to the foreground, and the objects appear as the

10 A recent commentary to this unpublished Husserl's work is provided by A. D. SMITH, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, Routledge, London/New York 2003.

11 HUSSERL, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 44.

12 Recently, the interest for the transcendental meaning of phenomenology has been renewed: S. HEINÄMAA, H. MIRJA & M. TIMO (eds.), *Phenomenology and the Transcendental*, Routledge, London/New York 2014. Two special issues of *Metodo* with contributions by Vittorio DE PALMA, Julia JANSEN, Sophie LOIDOLT have been dedicated to this topic: cfr. *Metodo. International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* Special Issue 1(2). <http://www.metodo-rivista.eu/index.php/metodo/article/view/192>.

13 HUSSERL, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 48. This point is also important to verify the continuity between the *Cartesian Meditations* and the critique of science presented in the *Crisis* (1935), as we will see in our conclusive remarks.

(constituted) unities of sense, as the experienced, felt, seen, heard, touched objects that inhabit my own world.

This shift of the reality's polarization reveals the great potential of transcendental idealism¹⁴. This is not meant to be a metaphysical system, but a heuristic model for understanding factual reality. Husserl does not hold abstract idealistic claims. He rather assumes an idealistic attitude to unfold the permanent activity of the subject beyond the stable appearance of reality. With this move, the essential structure of our relation to the world requires a new consideration. This leads to a further fundamental element of Husserl's transcendental idealism: a renewed *theory of evidence*¹⁵. In § 6 of the *First Meditation*, he describes evidence as an insight, and even as a manifestation of things that reveal a wide range of possibilities:

But here, at this decisive point in the process of beginning we must penetrate deeper with our meditations. The phrase *absolute certainty* and the equivalent phrase *absolute indubitability* need clarifying. They call our attention to the fact that, on more precise explication, the ideally demanded *perfection of evidence becomes differentiated*. At the present introductory stage of philosophical meditation we have the boundless infinity of prescientific experiences, evidences: more or less perfect. With reference to them, *imperfection*, as a rule, signifies *incompleteness*, a one-sidedness and at the same time a relative obscurity and indistinctness that qualify the givenness of the affairs themselves or the affair-complexes themselves; i.e. an infectedness of the "experience" with *unfulfilled components*, with *expectant and attendant meanings* (*Mitmeinungen*)¹⁶.

Why is this step important for a theory of intersubjectivity? Because it shows that no adjustment of the basic structure of the experience is necessary to make sense of the strange experience of Others. The experience of Others is not a radical exception to how we normally experience the world. It provides no objection to the general structure of the experience analyzed from the phenomenological perspective. The uncertainty, the mix of clarity and obscurity, of self-givenness and simply guessed or completely missed elements is not a peculiarity of the experience of other subjects. It rather is our specific

14 The recent volume edited by Luft und Fabbianelli individuates the crossing points between German Idealism and phenomenology, thereby stressing the originality of Husserl's approach (F. FABBIANELLI, S. LUFT [Hrsg.], *Husserl und die klassische deutsche Philosophie. Husserl and Classical German Philosophy*, Springer, New York 2014).

15 George Heffernan has reconstructed the different meanings and sources of Husserl's concept of evidence in G. HEFFERNAN, *A Study in the Sedimented Origins of Evidence: Husserl and His Contemporaries Engaged in a Collective Essay in the Phenomenology and Psychology of Epistemic Justification*, *Husserl Studies*, 16, 1999, 83-181.

16 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 14-15. «Die Rede von absoluter Sicherheit oder, was gleich gilt, absoluter Zweifellosigkeit bedarf der Klärung. Sie macht uns aufmerksam, dass die ideal geforderte Vollkommenheit der Evidenz bei genauerer Auslegung *sich differenziert*. Wir haben Evidenzen: *mehr oder minder vollkommener*. *Unvollkommenheit* besagt dabei in der Regel *Unvollständigkeit, Einseitigkeit, relative Unklarheit, Undeutlichkeit in der Selbstgegebenheit* der Sachen oder Sachverhalte, also Behaftung der Erfahrung mit Komponenten unerfüllter Vormeinungen und *Mitmeinungen*.» (HUSSERL, *Cartesiansche Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, op. cit., p. 55).

way of grasping reality.

The English translator of the *Cartesian Meditation* resorts in this context to the expression “attendant meanings” to convey the sense of the German word *Mitmeinungen*, thus choosing an univocal interpretation of this term as associated, connected meanings, as content-unities belonging to the individual I. On the contrary, I think that in this context *Mitmeinungen* (co-intentionalities) are not only the different things or aspects I can associate with the present perception, but also the correlated intentionalities – all intentionalities that refer to or come from other subjects. In the *Fifth Meditation* these will place the focus on the analysis and the turning point from solipsism into a more realistic description of the world. The subject will then become aware of the fact that it simply cannot give up all its co-intentionalities. They are not merely additional information, separable from the core of the actual experience. The meditating subject is faced with the impossibility to restrict itself to its own singular perspective on the world. This is not only an unquestionable existential truth; it is also the consequence of the inner structure of the experience unfolded in the *First Meditation*. Dieter Lohmar has recently explicated this point stating that the primordial reduction, given its necessity for clearing the field of analysis from unnoticed presuppositions, is probably not to be fully achieved¹⁷. By completely giving up the contribution of presentification the ego would end up in an impossibly abstract world. Primordial reduction therefore performs its function by revealing the centrality of presentification in the living experience. This can however become clear only in a genetic account. From the static point of view, presentification only adds hidden information (unseen aspects of the thing, past givenness, future possibilities) to the present experience. The experienced object would then appear as a sum of clear and less clear profiles, and following the experience of the Other would remain two-layered: a perceived bodily appearance, more or less similar to myself, and a hidden and merely represented inner life. Evidently, this does not correspond to the personal experience of Other’s we live with.

Quite different is the picture if we switch from the static into the genetic perspective. By better anchoring presentification to the stream of consciousness, by seeing presentification itself as an ongoing temporal process, we can better explain how perceptual and non-perceptual aspects of the thing belong together, and together produce a unitary and informative experience. Lohmar describes this as “short experiential history”¹⁸ thereby stressing that the genetic view based on the idea of the history of consciousness can actually help realize the meaning of the experiential structure of the “apperception of the Other”. Apperception plays a crucial role in Husserl’s argument in the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, thereby providing a further clue to elucidate the problematic intertwining of genetic and static method in this fundamental text.

17 D. LOHMAR, *Eine genetische Analyse des Zugangs zum Anderen*, “Gestalt Theory”, 39, 2/3, pp. 134-5.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

4. The Genetic Attitude: The Constitutive Intertwining of the Subjects

Husserl concludes the above quoted passage on the problem of evidence as follows: «Perfecting then takes place as a *synthetic course* of further harmonious experiences»¹⁹. The reference to a “course” (*Fortgang*) of the evidence makes it clear that late phenomenology is interested in the becoming of evidence, more than in finding a standing, steady “supporting point” (*Anhaltspunkt*) as the earlier static attitude attempted. Following this new interest for the process that allows experience to arise, in § 8 Husserl identifies as result of the epoché not the identical and already individuated I, but rather the flowing stream of consciousness. This is not intended as natural life, as the empirical succession of isolated states of mind and actions, but as the transcendental, constitutive life of experience.

However, the reference to consciousness not as a static structure, but as a flowing life-process implies the recognition of the fact that even one’s own inner life is not given at once in a complete and exhaustive insight. This means that the uncertainty and relative obscurity of experience does not only regard the inner life of Others, but even its own life is given to the subject in a variety of forms and degrees of clarity, of which only a minimal part can be experienced in full concreteness. The individual subject itself is not a fully defined and self-evident singular pole, but a growing and evolving interconnection of experience embedded in the present living time²⁰.

The elaboration of the transcendental approach to the question of the subject and intersubjectivity is completed in the next paragraph, where Husserl explicitly gives up the former necessity of a supporting point, claiming “in this connection, furthermore, it must by no means be accepted as a matter of course that, with our apodictic pure ego, we have rescued a *little tag-end of the world*”²¹. The elements of the inner life that can still be experienced with full evidence are not separable from the whole stream of consciousness; they are not isolable pieces of information that can be held onto. They are intertwined with the manifold dimensions of the whole consciousness in a lively and necessary way. They influence the very identity of the subject²². The search for identity

19 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 15. «Vervollkommnung vollzieht sich dann als *synthetischer Fortgang* einstimmiger Erfahrungen». (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 55).

20 «But at any particular time this experience offers *only a core* that is experienced “with strict adequacy”, namely the *ego’s living present* (which the grammatical sense of the sentence *ego cogito* expresses)» (*Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., pp. 22-23). «Aber nur einen Kern von eigentlich adäquat Erfahrenem bietet jeweils diese Erfahrung: nämlich die *lebendige Selbstgegenwart*, die der grammatische Sinn des Satzes *ego cogito* ausdrückt». (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 62).

21 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 24. “Im Zusammenhang damit darf es auch keineswegs als selbstverständlich gelten, als ob wir in unserem apodiktischen reinen ego ein kleines Endchen der Welt gerettet hätten”. (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 63).

22 «The bare identity of the “I am” is not the only thing given as indubitable in transcendental self-experience. Rather there extends through all the particular data of actual and possible self-experience a universal apodictical experienceable structure of the Ego» (*Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to*

that characterizes the early static approach is revised here. What grounds the constant exchange of the subject with the surrounding world is not its well-defined identity, but rather its flowing correlation, its presence in time, its manifold performances. This is the proper meaning of the transcendental of the subject. We observe a subject in its transcendental meaning when we focus on its passive and active constituting of the world, on its experiential relationships, and its permanent engagement in shaping the sense of the surrounding world. The transcendental vision of the subject finally provides the proper frame to deal with intersubjectivity:

The consequential elaboration of this science [egology], in accordance with its own sense, leads over to a phenomenology of transcendental intersubjectivity and, by means of this, to a universal transcendental philosophy²³.

Intersubjectivity is not a mere supplement or addition to transcendental philosophy. The issues related to intersubjectivity are not irrelevant to transcendental philosophy. On the contrary, transcendental philosophy implies the struggle with the difficult problem of intersubjectivity as a constitutive element for an adequate investigation of subjective life. In the transcendental perspective, reality is not a matter of fact, it is not a collection of self-evident objects, and cannot therefore provide an unquestionable starting point for the analysis. Reality is rather a central result of the process of ‘constitution’, i.e. of perceptual, intellectual, emotional, corporeal elaboration constantly performed by the subject. This process necessarily implies the co-functioning, the *Mitmeinungen*, of Others, their point of view, their particular grasping of the world, their active and experiential contribution. This assumption leads to a new formulation of the problem of intersubjectivity. According to Husserl’s new interest for the process of becoming implied by the subjectivity as well as by the life-world, the focus of the argument in the *Fifth Meditation* shifts, therefore unfolding manifold ways of production of the experience of Others:

We must, after all, obtain for ourselves insight into the explicit and implicit intentionality wherein the alter ego becomes evinced and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego; we must discover [how – left away] in what intentionalities, syntheses, motivations, the sense “other ego” becomes fashioned in me²⁴.

Phenomenology, op. cit., p. 28). «Nicht die bloße Identität des „Ich bin“ ist der absolut zweifellose Bestand der transzendentalen Selbsterfahrung, sondern es erstreckt sich durch alle besonderen Gegebenheiten der wirklichen und möglichen Selbsterfahrung hindurch – obschon sie im einzelnen nicht absolut zweifellos sind – eine universale apodiktische Erfahrungsstruktur des Ich» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 67).

23 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 30. «Ihre [der Egologie] konsequente Durchführung gemäß ihrem eigenen Sinne überleitet zu einer Phänomenologie der transzendentalen Intersubjektivität, und mittelst ihrer sich entfaltend zu einer Transzendentalphilosophie überhaupt» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 69).

24 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, cit., p. 90. «Wir müssen uns doch Einblick verschaffen in die explizite und implizite Intentionalität, in der sich auf dem Boden unseres

The arising of the transcendental perspective changes the phenomenological attitude toward intersubjectivity. Not the *real*, factual, empirical identity of Others is at stake, but rather their constitutive potential. The Others are not investigated as poles of static identity, but with regard to their performances (*Leistungen*). Intersubjectivity assumes a pronounced dynamic and genetic character while the focus shifts from the I who is presenting itself toward the dynamics of *becoming* another ego for me. This is an immanently regulated process that can be traced back to the motivations that move us to constitute the Other. Taking motivation as the fundamental lawfulness of subjective and personal life, we have to trace back the experience of the stranger to our own stream of consciousness by observing the manifold twines that connect our experience to that of the Other. In this way, the latter can no longer be considered as a mere cognitive hypothesis, but as the bearer of a practical life, expectations, and goals, which is announced to us by our own desires, fears, needs and disappointments. Such a reference to the practical and factual life of the subjects is a characteristic of genetic phenomenology which in the years immediately following the work on the Cartesian Meditation will lead to the detailed and scattered analyses of the *Bernauer* manuscripts, C-manuscripts and *Lebens-welt*-manuscripts²⁵.

5. The intersubjective World as a Cultural World

According to his new interest for the practical dimension of life, Husserl no longer individuates the way out of solipsism starting with the abstract notion of subjective individuation, but rather begins his reflection with the notion of corporeality in its double experiential constitution. The *5th Cartesian Meditation* seems therefore to entail two lines of argumentation. The first reaches the Other through the experience of the own body intended as a living, sensitive body and as material body in the shared space. We touched on this widely criticized argument before when we discussed the structure of *Vergegenwärtigung* and the problem of the primordial reduction²⁶. Now, I will rather

transzendentalen ego das alter ego bekundet und bewährt, wie, in welchen Intentionalitäten, in welchen Synthesen, in welchen Motivationen der Sinn anderes ego sich in mir gestaltet.» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 122).

- 25 E. HUSSERL, *Die „Bernauer Manuskripte“ über das Zeitbewußtsein (1917/18)* [*The ‘Bernauer Manuscripts’ on Time-Consciousness*]. In *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band XXXIII, hrsg. von Rudolf Bernet & Dieter Lohmar, 2001; *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916-1937)*. [*The Life-world. Explications of the pre-given world and its constitution. Texts from the estate (1916-1937)*]. In *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Gesammelte Werke*, Kluwer, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1950 ff., Springer, Berlin 2008: 42 Bände, Band XXXIX, hrsg. von Rochus Sowa., 2008; *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte. [Late texts on time-constitution (1929-1934). The C-manuscripts]*. In *Husserliana. Materialienband VIII*, hrsg. von Dieter Lohmar, New York: Springer, 2006.
- 26 Recently, James Mensch has discussed Husserl’s approach to intersubjectivity based on the position of the bodies in space in J. MENSCH, *Social Space and the Question of Objectivity*, “Gestalt Theory”, 39, 2/3, 249-262. Stressing the complementarity of static and genetic approach to social space, he

focus on § 49 and 55 in order to highlight the originality of the position presented in the *Cartesian Meditations* in contrast with the early text previously analyzed.

First of all, here the Other is no longer an experienced object which I simply find on my way. Husserl rather unveils a radical and inseparable intertwining of the subjects that are always and essentially connected into a community:

This constitution, arising on the basis of the „pure“ others is essentially such that the “others” – for-me do not remain isolated; on the contrary, an *Ego-community*, which includes me, becomes constituted as a community of Egos existing with each other and for each other – *ultimately a community of monads*²⁷.

In this final part of the lecture Husserl introduces the term *Vergemeinschaftung* (communalization) as the proper term to describe constitutive, transcendental intersubjectivity. This is not simply considered as the matter of fact of real contacts among real subjects, with their potential capacity to create institutions, cultures, and traditions. The term rather refers explicitly to the harmonic genesis of the intersubjective dimension, which is always already performed by the subjects and at the same time precedes the subjects themselves, making their factual life possible and meaningful. The view of totally unrelated subjects who seem to live separated lives until they casually meet is overcome. If we consider the genesis of the subjects at all, it is clear that the process that leads them to be individual subjects cannot take place in absence of Others. The genesis of the subjects is a common one. It produces and implies at the same time the arising of individual subjects and the shaping of community.

The revision of the analysis of 1905 is nevertheless, clearly, a self-contradiction. The phenomenon of communalization does not imply an indistinct fusion. Husserl rather describes its internal functioning with the term *Paarung* (pairing). This indicates the phenomenon of “occurring in configuration as a pair and then as a group, as a community”. However, the relevant aspect that characterizes *pairing* as a genetic notion is its being a kind of constitution that does not happen once, but is rather always ongoing (*im Gang*), “always livingly present”. It is an unstopped, unexhausted process which can only be observed as a flowing becoming:

On more precise analysis we find essentially present here an intentional overreaching, coming about genetically (and by essential necessity) as soon as the data that undergo pairing have become prominent and simultaneously intended; we find, more particularly, a living mutual awakening and an overlaying of each with the objective sense of the other²⁸.

concludes: «we exist in both Cartesian space and social space. Each offers us distinct possibilities and opportunities in our social relations» (p. 261).

27 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, cit., p. 107. «Es liegt im Wesen dieser von den puren Anderen [...] aufsteigenden Konstitution, dass die für mich Anderen *nicht vereinzelt bleiben*, dass sich vielmehr [...] eine mich selbst einschließende *Ich-Gemeinschaft* als eine solche miteinander und füreinander seiender Ich konstituiert, letztlich eine Monadengemeinschaft.» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, op. cit., p. 137).

28 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, cit., p. 113. «Wir finden bei genauer Ana-

The two egos involved in the pairing do not face themselves frontally; rather, they grow together drawing from one another and relying on one another. They do not simply confront each other face-to-face, but rather develop into a coincidence (*Deckung*), into a simultaneous and constantly exchanging life. However, this description, closer to factual reality than the former, does not simply negate the former static approach. It rather shows the process hidden beyond the “frontal” intersubjectivity. The genetic approach shows the unexhausted subjective path toward a full conscious encounter between two individuals, thus revealing this as a partial moment of a much larger and encompassing development.

At the end of § 55, Husserl explicitly points out the temporal nature of this process identifying the ‘communalization’ as an essential moment of the subjective genesis. To found a community means to establish a common time-form. This implies not only establishing a tradition but also developing a sense for shared time and for the meaning held by the rhythm of time for the members of a community. Through the reference to the temporal dimension it becomes clear that the spatial separation of the subjects is not the only important condition for their encounter. In a dense passage, Husserl deliberately opposes the real separation of the egos to their effective (*wirklich*) communality:

To be sure, they are separate from my monad, so far as really inherent constituents are concerned, since no really inherent connexion leads from their subjective processes to my subjective processes [...]. To that separation there corresponds, after all, the “real”, the mundane separation of my psychophysical existence from someone else’s, a separation that shows itself as spatial, owing to the spatial character of our objective animate organisms. On the other hand, this original communion is not just nothing. Whereas, really inherently, each monad is an absolutely separate unity, the “irreal” intentional reaching of the other into my primordially is not irreal in the sense of being dreamt into it or being present to consciousness after the fashion of a mere phantasy. Something that exists is in intentional communion with something else that exists. It is an essentially unique connectedness, an actual community and precisely the one that makes transcendently possible the being of a world, a world of men and things²⁹.

lyse wesensmäßig dabei vorliegend ein intentionales Übergreifen, *genetisch* alsbald (und zwar wesensmäßig) eintretend, sowie die sich Paarenden zugleich und abgehoben bewusst geworden sind; des näheren *ein lebendiges, wechselseitiges Sich-wecken, ein wechselseitiges, überschießendes Sich-überdecken* nach dem gegenständlichen Sinn.» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, op. cit., p. 142).

- 29 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 129. «Zwar sind sie reell von der meinen getrennt, sofern *keine reelle Verbindung* von ihren Erlebnissen zu meinen Erlebnissen überführt. Dem entspricht ja *die reale Trennung*, die weltliche, meines psychophysischen Daseins von dem des Anderen, die sich als räumliche darstellt *vermöge der Räumlichkeit der objektiven Leiber*. Andererseits ist diese ursprüngliche Gemeinschaft nicht ein Nichts. Ist jede Monade reell eine absolut abgeschlossene Einheit, so ist das *irreale intentionale Hineinreichen* der anderen in meine Primordialität *nicht irreal im Sinne eines Hineingeträumtseins*, eines Vorstellig-seins nach Art einer bloßen Phantasie. Seiendes ist mit Seiendem in intentionaler Gemeinschaft. Es ist eine prinzipiell eigenartige Verbundenheit, *eine wirkliche Gemeinschaft*.» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 157).

Even if separated in space and thus in the empirical reality, egos reach out to each other and are connected on the effective level of their practical intentionalities, on the deep level of the constitution of the world, of the shaping of meaning³⁰. The essential insight into the interrelation of the subjects in the temporal, intentional, and constitutive dimension provides the basis for the understanding of an important aspect of sociality. Social life expresses itself by producing a *cultural world*, characterized by the surprising feature: accessibility to anyone. This can appear as a contradiction since we have seen above, the quality of otherness lies in the substantial inaccessibility of Others' inner life. Still, culture represents the necessary form of mediation that makes reality accessible for everybody, but not in an undifferentiated manner. Culture is not generality³¹. It is not an empty theory or a formula. It rather displays universal contents and meanings that are nevertheless mediated by own personal history, position in time, pre-cognition and perspective.

The peculiar embedment in culture finally designs a kind of "social bond" (*soziale Bindung*) that allows the pluralization of human environments. In unpublished manuscripts Husserl describes more extensively the differentiation of the world in cultural environments that assume the character of homeland (*Heimwelt*) in opposition to alien worlds (*Fremdwelten*) – unfamiliar, alien, inaccessible on the communicative and even on the perceptive level³². Such structures of experience can only be understood in a temporal perspective and under consideration of the practical, emotional, even corporeal and instinctive attitudes of the subjects: «That every such predicate of the world accrues from a temporal genesis and, indeed, one that is rooted in human undergoing and doing, needs no proof»³³.

The transcendental turn of phenomenology and the new focus on the genesis and the inner developing processes of the subject lead Husserl to unveil the correlation between intersubjective community and the cultural, life-world. These finally appear as the source of all possible individuation and thus as the *a priori* of every objectivity. This will open the way for the critique of science in the *Crisis*. With regard to the problem of intersubjectivity, Husserl's path in this last work appears characterized by a continuous focus on the dynamic between subjective individuation and intersubjective existential

30 The essential role of the life-world as a practical worldly horizon for the intersubjective encounter has been explored and deeply discussed by Stefano Bancalari in S. BANCALARI, *Intersoggettività e mondo della vita. Husserl e il problema della fenomenologia*, Cedam, Padova 2003.

31 This is the main inspiration of the research in the field of the cultural studies that has been widely influential in the Humanities in the last decades (see S. HALL, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities*, "October", n. 53, 1990, 11-23; F. INGLIS, *Cultural Studies*, Cambridge Mass., Cambridge UP 1993; M. COMETA, *Studi culturali*, Guida, Napoli, 2010).

32 Klaus Held has discussed these Husserlian notions in K. HELD, *Heimwelt, Fremdwelt, die eine Welt*, in *Perspektiven und Probleme der Husserlschen Phänomenologie*, "Phänomenologische Forschungen", 24/25, 1991, pp. 305-338.

33 *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 135. «Dass jedes solche Prädikat der Welt aus einer zeitlichen Genesis zuwächst, und zwar einer solchen, die im menschlichen Leiden und Tun verwurzelt ist, bedarf keines Beweises.» (*Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, cit., p. 162).

context. This however works as a challenging tension, forcing the phenomenologist to incessantly rethink and revise his position on intersubjectivity, preventing him from settling the problem of alterity into a systematic and conclusive theory.