

Digging out the roots of affective fallacy

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The importance of the parallelism of affective and representational intentionality has been and is still underestimated, when not simply mocked, although Husserl repeatedly insisted on the fact that it is *deeply motivated* - not only historically and accidentally, but intrinsically grounded on the nature of the thing itself. This means, from a phenomenological point of view: rooted in the deep structure of consciousness itself, as it appears throughout the group of manuscripts gathered under this title and to be published very soon. Consequently, a sound and coherent phenomenology should not take it as a superficial, but instead as a “radical and continuous analogy”¹.

How deep must this parallelism be pursued? As soon as one starts reflecting upon this question, one stumbles over two classical (in phenomenological commentaries) objections, which are, to my view, symptomatic of a resistance in a peculiar sense, I mean a resistance to the practice of transcendental phenomenology and is the source of innumerable misunderstandings.

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1. According to the Brentanian axiom - that all *acts are either representations or based on representations*, the first objection asserts that all founded acts of the third class (*feelings, wishing and willing*) are founded on objectifying acts². Modulo a more complicated formulation, this proposition is currently attributed to Husserl. Although Husserl says that it is not only terminologically ambiguous (see Fifth Logical Investigation, [B 391]), but also confusing and misleading ([B. 394]), I have pointed out elsewhere the discrepancy between Husserl’s position and Brentano’s, on that particular instance. In order to contrast more clearly the position of the former to that of the latter, I even ventured a formulation of a “phenomenological theorem”: “For

1 *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre*, Husserlian Volume XXVIII, Kluwer, p. 3 and p. 44-sq.

2 “This act of presentation (*Vorstellen*) forms the foundation (*Grundlagen*) not merely of the act of judging, but also of desiring and of every other mental act. *Nothing can be judged, desired, hoped or feared, unless one has a presentation of that thing*. Thus the definition given includes all the examples of mental phenomena which we listed above, and in general all the phenomena belonging to this domain”, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint*, New translation, by Antos C. Rancurello, D.B.Terrell and Linda L. McAlister, New York, London, 1995, Routledge, p. 61; *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, Erster Band, Oskar Kraus (éd), 1973, Felix Meiner. Hamburg, p 112. See also definition of “presentation” (*Vorstellung*), respectively, in *Psychology*, p. 60 and *Psychologie*, p. 111.

every founded act, the founding acts (whatever they maybe: representations or judgements) can function as foundation of practical acts, and more generally of affective acts (of valuations), if and only if the latter are deactivated”³. This situation is analogous to that induced by the modification called nominalization within the sphere of objectifying acts. Formally speaking, let p be a contradictory, hence invalid statement, and correlatively, $[p]$ the state-of-affaire presumed by p , be an impossible one; the judgment “ p is contradictory” or “[p] is impossible” are valid and the state-of-affair “[p] is impossible” a true one; this implies that the nominalized and founding judgment p has deactivated, i.e. is deprived of its “assertive force” (or in phenomenological terms, deprived of its “thetic”, “positional” or else “qualitative” character). In an *analogous* way, “a wish of a better professional situation” is founded on the representation (perception, recollection, etc.) of my actual professional situation and that of some hypothetical (possible) one, or – in order to avoid falling back into some form of Lego-like form of association –, the first representation is modified through the second to form a new “sense”: a new possible professional situation diverging from my (presumed) real one. But as long as we remain within the sphere of representations, neither the “combination” of both representations, nor their fusion (the latter functioning as a modification of the first) suffice to produce the new intentionality called “wish of a better professional situation”, and correlatively “an improved personal professional position”. Within the first an axiological and, the correlative affective deceptive mode must come into play, if one wants the act to function as a full and adequate foundation (and motivation) for a wish. The resulting founded act itself transforms and orientates the founding act (the motive) into a new correlate: “another professional position”. Now the same modified representation, with its affective modes, could function in various ways: as a basis for a will and a practical project of improvement (if it is perceived as practically accessible), or of a simple expectation (*Erwartung*) if I think that the circumstances will by themselves provide the desired opportunities, of a mere thought (*bloße Umdenken*), eventually a wishful thinking (if it is perceived as practically inaccessible, because I am too old, too lazy, the social order opposes strong limits, etc.), or else of a pure imagination (*reine Phantasie*), if I just take the all process as a pure example for the sake of a phenomenological analysis in the perspective of a philosophical argument. At a closer look, what is maintained throughout this series of variants is a “modified” matter of

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3 See L'apriori affectif, *Alter*, n° 13, 2005, p. 52. A recent commentator (Mariana Chu, *L'expérience de l'autre dans l'éthique de Husserl et Scheler*, PhD Thesis, Louvain, Juin 2010, p. 119) confronted this thesis with John Drummond's interpretation: “To say that one experience is founded upon another means (1) that it presupposes something as necessary and (2) that it builds itself upon it so as to form a unity with it” (Drummond, John J., “Moral objectivity: Husserl's sentiments of the understanding”, in: *Husserl Studies*, n° 12 (1995), p. 170). But Drummond's statement, which explicates formally the notion of *Fundierung*, does not at all contradict the theorem, which points out to the functional (and better “operational”, i.e. *leistenden*) aspect of the “foundation” (the *Fundierung*, that Gian-Carlo Rota explored so suggestively). To take a mathematical parallel, this is as if one pretended there were some conceptual contradiction between the definition of a set and that of a group, or that the metric structure of space is contradicted by its topological structure.

the act of representation (its *Materie* or its intentional sense), yet deprived of its positional actual character (its proper *Qualität* or *Modalität*).

2. The second proposition asserts that, constitutively, *every activity and thus every act is ultimately founded in passivity, thus in affectivity*; and, genetically, that every activity can be traced back to passivity. In this proposition, *passivity*, whatever the synthesis understood under this title, is usually taken as a mere synonym for an elementary mode of affectivity⁴. *Modulo* some nuances, this passive stratum is sometimes equated with the Brentanian *physical phenomena*⁵, i.e. some kind of sense data (sensation or primary affective modifications).

It would be too easy a task to show that these two statements contradict each other. But such formal refutation would be inefficient, since each thesis could still be - and in fact has been – sustained separately. Following another narrower path and according to the analogy just mentioned, I should establish that there is a resistance, which should be brought back to its affective grounds and could thus be described as an exemplary case of *affective fallacy*. This affective mode of “mistake” or “misinterpretation” presupposes, as a basis, an unmodified form of affective “take” and “positing”, (*Stellungnahme* and *Setzen*) with its optimal (or teleological) form: that of an affective evidence – which is *de jure* irreducible to and independent of any theoretical evidence⁶. But in order to do so, it is required, first, to show that these propositions are both explicitly contradicted by Husserl and, secondly, to sketch the parallelism far enough in order to locate the point where both lines of interpretations start diverging from Husserl’s position. Yet, my purpose will be limited here to giving some indications on the way how this parallelism should be continued, that is to the point where it could become if not evident, at least plausible to a charitable reader of Husserl (not of my paper):

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⁴ *Logical Investigations*, V, [B 394]. See my commentary in “*L'a priori affectif*”, *op. cit.* p. 53.

⁵ Although he rejected any pretension to give a definition according to the formal rules of logic, the ambiguity remains according to Husserl. This ambiguity does not concern the distinction between “physical phenomena” and “external objects” (cf. Editors’ note 3, p. 61), but that of the word *feeling* (*Gefühl*). In a note related to A. Bain, Brentano talks of «*rein passiven Gefühle*», pure passive feelings. For Husserl, Brentano’s distinction between *sensations of pain and pleasure* and the *feeling of pain and pleasure as acts of feelings* is perfectly valid. Nonetheless he still disagrees with Brentano’s “axiom” which leads him to introduce an act of sensation (*Empfindung*) and to the “theory that the acts of feeling should be founded on acts of representation (*Vorstellen*) under the form of acts of sensations of feelings”, see *LI*, [B394], note **.

⁶ This affective evidence is hailed as a great Brentanian discovery, in *Husserliana XXVIII*, p. 344. But must be followed strictly avoiding misleading analogies, such as those to which, under Brentano’s influence, Husserl has partially succumbed in the first edition of the Fifth Logical Investigation (precisely § 29, A [421-423]; *Logische Untersuchungen*, *Husserliana*, vol. XIX/1p. 466-468), mentioned in *Husserliana*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 344. — See also the rewritings of the Fifth L. I, *Logische Untersuchungen*, *Ergänzungsband*, *Zweiter Teil*, *Husserliana* Vol. XX/2, éd. U. Melle, Springer, 2005 (Text 15, p. 225-232, as well as the all section VIII). —

1. That *passivity* must be sharply distinguished from *affectivity*, for affectivity can be active as well as passive, and in turn passivity can be either affective or pre-objectifying.
2. By the same token, and independently of the modifications and complications involved in the foundation of acts, this will imply that, according to Husserl, it is at least *possible* (and eventually necessary) to find affective and pre-objectifying elements in the first layers.

I

Let me start with a typical objection, which we shall confront to Husserl's analysis.

"As for Husserl, he thinks he has a guarantee for the possibility of this movement of disengagement. It lies in the *irreducible and privileged character of theory*, which is one with man's freedom vis-à-vis the world. Husserl never adopted the thesis that vision, cognition, knowledge, and theory are but a residue of action [i.e. this is Levinas' thesis]. He always maintained the contrary opinion: *every positing of being by consciousness, every thesis, whether it proceeds from the will or from feeling, contains a theoretical modality* [sic], a *doxa*, as Husserl calls it. This modality can be disengaged. *'Every (mental) act or every correlate of a mental act explicitly or implicitly harbours the logical'*. As Descartes Husserl sees within the 'I doubt', 'I will', 'I feel' — an 'I think', a theoretical attitude, consequently already free vis-à-vis the world in which it is involved; or, more precisely, a possibility of withdrawing from engagement, of disengaging oneself from history, in which consciousness is nonetheless at once situated" (The Permanent and the human in Husserl, *Discovering existence with Husserl and Heidegger*, M.B. Smith and R. A. Cohen, Northwestern U. Press, 1998, p 134).

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The whole objection rejects the possibility of pure reflection and the quotation, most frequently advocated, is taken from the *Ideas I*, § 117. This quotation is ordinarily slightly twisted and misses the deep parallelism between two separate ranges of modalities (axiological and ontological), or which amounts to the same: the deep parallelism between objectifying acts and non-objectifying acts, or else between "logical acts" and "affective acts" in the broadest sense of both terms. Against such inference and interpretation, we can advocate:

1. That Husserl uses the term "logical" between inverted commas, which means at least that the word *must not be taken here in its strong or strict sense*. The same thing holds for the word "proposition" (*Satz*) and the adjective "thetic" (positional) which refer to the "larger sphere of positionality"⁷.

⁷ We have the same analysis for the word "objectivation", a bit further in the same paragraph: "Resulting from all that is the fact that any acts whatever — even emotional and volitional acts — are 'objectivating' 'constituting' objects *originaliter* and therefore necessary sources of different regions of being and their respective ontologies. For example: valuing consciousness constitutes the unique

2. Husserl distinguishes clearly between *doxic* and *thetic* characters of acts. The whole sphere of the *thetic* (the positional) is opposed to that of the neutral not to that of the affective or the axiological (acts of pleasure, acts of feeling) or that of passivity. All acts, in their proper modalities are “*theses* in an extended sense of the term, and only in a special sense belief-theses or modalities of the same” (*Ideas I*, § 117, trans. Cairn, p. 303). The larger sphere is *not opposed* to that of affectivity, in any (large or narrow) sense of the term, but strictly opposed to that of “*neutrality*”

Let us develop both points.

1. *Logical* being taken in its broadest sense, this allows statements concerning affective intentionality such as: “It is not that representation alone brings about the relation with the object, feelings and desires also contribute to it, are associated with it and colour it” (note 67); affective states *harbour intentions* in their inner dynamism: “they owe their intentional relation to certain underlying representations. But to say that they owe is to affirm rightly that they themselves *have* what they owe to something else” (p. 68). Thanks to this broad sense of “*logical*”, this quotation is taken as expressing the quintessence of Husserl’s work:

“All of Husserl’s work undergoes this. (...) The positing of value, the affirming of will, harbours, according to the *Ideas*, a *doxic thesis*, *the positing of the object which is the pole of synthesis of identification*. There is thus the possibility of these acts appearing in their turn as theoretical notions. What is desired appears as an object having the attribute of desire, a desirable object. To be sure, these attributes belong properly to the object; they are *not due* to reflection on the reactions of the subject, but conform to the inner sense of desire, will, etc. *But* to Husserl the desirable and the willed are *open to theory and contemplation*”. (*ibid.*)

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2. But, once again the possibility for an affective act or even a passive layer of an act to be *thematized* does not imply, but rather *excludes* that it is something else than that *as what* it is thematized. Let us read first the extensive passage in Cairn’s⁸ translation:

‘axiological’ objectivity in contrast to the mere world of things, a ‘being’ of a new region in so far as precisely by virtue of the essence belonging to any valuing consciousness whatever actual doxic positings are pre-delineated as ideal possibilities which single out objectivities of a unique content-values, as ‘intended to’ in valuing consciousness. In emotional acts they are intended to as emotional; by actualization of the doxic content belonging to these acts they come into doxic and, furthermore, into logical-expressive, meant-ness. Every non-doxically effected act of consciousness is in this fashion *potentially objectivating*; the doxic cogito alone effects actual objectivation.” (Engl. Translation by Kersten). This quotation is still taken literally, and without quotation marks.

8 *Ideas I* (transl. D. Cairn, Macmillan Pub. Co. 1962, p. 303) — Kersten’s translation runs as this: “Let us make it clear, first of all, that acts of liking (‘effected’ or not), likewise emotional or volitional acts, of every kind are precisely ‘acts’, ‘intuitive mental processes’ and that belonging to them, in every case, is the ‘intention’, the ‘position-taking’ or, expressed in another way, they are ‘positings’ in a widest but essentially unified sense, although not doxic positings. We said above in passing, quite correctly, that, taken universally, act-characteristics are ‘positings’ — positings in the extended sense and only in the particular belief positings or their modalities. The essential analogy of specific liking noeses with the belief-positings is obvious, as is the case with wishing noeses, willing noeses, etc. Even in valuing, wishing, willing, something is ‘posited’ *apart from* the doxic positionality ‘inherent’ in them. That is indeed also the source

“Let us first be clear on this point, that acts of pleasure (whether ‘performed’ or not), likewise acts of feeling (*Gemüt*), and will of every kind, are ‘acts’, ‘intentional [lived]-experiences’ (*Erlebnisse*) and that thereto belongs in its place the ‘*intentio*’, the ‘attitude’ [position-taking: *Stellungnahme*]. Otherwise expressed, they are in a very wide but essentially unitary sense ‘positings’ (*Setzungen*), only *not* of the doxic kind”. (*Ibid.*) (Emphasis on the “*not*”, mine).

The negative reaction we are here analyzing is so strong, that instead of the last sentence, Ricoeur has translated: “en d’autres termes, on peut dire en un sens très vaste, mais non dénué d’unité essentielle, que ce sont des ‘positions’, *mais précisément des positions doxiques*” (sic) (*Idées I*, p. 369, Gallimard, 1950) (Emphasis mine). Which would be in English: “in other words, one may say in a very broad but not deprived of an essential unitary sense, that they are positions, *but precisely doxic positions*”.

The mistake is obvious. Husserl says, in other words, that every act with a doxic or with an axiological character is *thetic*, i.e. actually or potentially positional, but that the reverse does not hold. This mistranslation has triggered an endless chain of misinterpretations, far beyond the French phenomenological tradition⁹. And the confusion between *thetic* and *doxic* seems so strongly rooted and pregnant, that even Merleau-Ponty in 1945, and so many of his followers since then, who yet recognize and maintain to some extend the parallelism between feeling and opinion, still infer from this proposition (“that *every act* [be it affective or not] harbours explicitly or implicitly a doxic thesis”) that “every thesis is doxic” (sic). So much so that, following this confusion, in the expression “doxic *thetic*”, the adjective *thetic* functions always – strictly speaking – as a useless redundancy for the term *doxic*¹⁰. Now this inference is wrong, even formally speaking. Inside many acts (if not all), explicitly or implicitly, possibly or necessarily, there is room for *non-doxic thesis*. And this is precisely the case, since, at least in non-doxic acts, there *must* necessarily and actually be non-doxic thesis, and talking of founded affective acts, they must be founded at least on non-doxic passive syntheses. Otherwise, says Husserl, we would have no means to make any distinction (be it

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of all parallelizations between the various species of consciousness and the classification of those species: one properly classifies the species of *positing*.” Husserl, *Ideas I*, Kluwer Pub., 1983.

9 I have analysed some of them somewhere else (*Pour introduire à une phénoménologie des syntaxes de connaissances*, in *Annales de phénoménologie*, 2010, pp. 118-163). Let me add to the passages already listed, the note 2, which commenting the distinction between belief positions and non-belief positions, states: “Le but de ce paragraphe est de montrer que l’agréable, le valable contiennent implicitement une certitude, une position certaine qu’on peut en extraire, comme on a appris à le faire pour les modalités de la croyance dans les représentations simples [sic]. Et ainsi la notion de thèse prend une extension encore accrue qui déborde désormais largement le cadre des croyances existentielles [sic] et englobe celui des croyances pratiques et affectives [sic]” (*Idées I*, note 2, p. 296)

10 See, for instance, Sarah Heinämaa’s otherwise kin commentary on Merleau-Ponty: “The primordial attitudes, or postures, that Merleau-Ponty thematises are affective attitudes, passions in Descartes’ sense: sensations, sense perceptions, and emotions ([1945] 1995, 198-199). They have an original intentionality, which differs from that of the *doxic thetic* attitudes (*Auffassung-Inhalt, noesis-noema*) (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1995, xviii, 152, 243ff). They do not allow for reduction in the sense of a suspension of the thesis.” (op. cit. p. 54).

just psychological and empirical) between say a perception and a wish, a pure and apathetic anticipation and an affectively charged expectation such as a hope or a wish.

“The essential analogy of the specific pleasure-noeses with the belief-positings is manifest, likewise that of the wish and will noeses, and so forth. In valuing also, in wishing and in willing, *something is posited quite apart from the doxic positionality, which ‘lie’ in them*. That indeed is the source also of all the parallel relatings of the different types of consciousness and of all classifications of the same; *strictly, the modes of positing were the thing classified.*” (*Ibid.*)

In the key quotation, the German verb translated in English by “harbor” – and in American by “harbour” – is *bergen*. But what is the modality of this harboring? It does not mean that the specific non-doxic thesis have *melted into* the doxic ones, but that in all acts, whatever their composition, a modality of doxa is *stuck along* non-doxic modalities. Husserl writes:

“In all thetic characters are stuck in this way doxic modalities, and, if this modality is that of certainty, primitive doxic theses recovering with thetic characters the noematical meaning” [“*In allen thetischen Charakteren stecken in dieser Art doxische Modalitäten, und, wenn der Modus der der Gewißheit ist, doxische Urthesen, sich mit theticischen Charakteren dem noemarischen Sinne nach deckend.*”]. (*Ibid.*)

Taking the problem the other way round, if the axiological or affective primitive theses (*Urthesen*) did not stem along with these primitive doxic theses (*doxischen Urthesen*), there would be neither affective acts nor expressions of feelings at all (including grammatical modes as *optative*, or *imperative*). Moreover the fact that doxic position plays, for positing acts, the role of *a stake* does not mean that the “growing” and essence of the value-positions are made of the same wood. The wall plays a role of a stake for ivy, but nobody would say that it as grown up *as a wall*, but only *along the wall*¹¹. The same holds in the present case.

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Two different things that Husserl repeatedly distinguishes are thus clearly mixed up: (1) the possibility for an affective act or an affective correlate, or more deeply an affective component, to be object of a theory, i.e. of a description, or simply named; (2) the constitution of the affective act itself which can be either founded on objectifying intentionality, or simply built up or grown up *along* pre-objectifying acts, i.e. *along* (potentially) doxic positions, i.e. characters of belief.

II

After this first technical and terminological clarification, let us follow the parallelism a bit deeper and enter the sphere of “transcendental aesthetics” (i.e. that of passive synthesis). This

¹¹ We come here very close to a subtle distinction, which stroke the reader of the *Logical Investigation*, easily expressible in French and German, but not so much in English: that between acts with the function of « carrier » (*Träger*) and those with a function of support (*Stütze, Anhalt*). (cf. § 28 c) of my book, *Le Phénoménologue et ses exemples*, 2000)

sphere is obtained through an exclusion of *all activity functions*, such as those, which enter into judging activity, but also into volitions and active feelings (such as wish, hope, fear, etc.). But other confusions threaten here.

The expressions *passivity*, *passive synthesis*, or *receptivity*, are not synonyms either for *affectivity* (Gemüt) or for *sensibility*. According to the distinction just recalled, the parallelism of acts is extended to the sphere of passivity under the form of a parallelism of two classes of passivity: that of *representation* (Vorstellung) and *sensibility*, on the one hand, and that of *feeling* (Gemüt) and *desire* (Begehr), on the other. But given the fact that representations in all their modalities exercise a *stake*-function, so to speak, the analysis of passive synthesis can and must be carried out in a certain abstraction, i.e. putting aside, for the sake of analysis, passive feelings and striving functions. In order to prevent such confusions, Husserl has given some clear definitions, which should not be neglected.

Affection (Affektion) taken in its larger sense embraces *pre-objectifying* passive synthesis and passive synthesis of *emotions or feelings*. This term is opposed to *Aktion*, which refers, in this context, to all kinds of *active syntheses* (not only judgments, but also feelings and volitions)¹². Thus under the title of affection (*Affektion*), we must understand *passive feelings as well as blind strivings* (blind desires) even though they have been provisionally put aside in the *Passive Synthesis Lessons*¹³. The abstraction of all *upper sphere* of activity (including active feelings and volitions) and of the lower sphere of feeling and desiring affectivity is methodologically justified, but must not lead to forget that, at all levels, the sub-spheres are *co-original and co-dependent*.

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We come thus to the following definition:

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“By affection (*Affektion*) we understand *the allure given to consciousness, the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego; it is a pull* that is relaxed when the ego turns toward it attentively, and progresses from here, striving toward self-giving intuition, disclosing more and more of the self of the object, thus, striving toward an acquisition of knowledge, toward a more precise view of the object.”¹⁴.

¹² Under certain conditions, “acts” and “activity” can be referred to a volitional dimension of the ego, and active intentionality to a fundamental and constitutional mode of “will”, but this entails other important and difficult issues that cannot be tackled here. I proposed a brief survey of this complicated problem in *Le temps de vouloir – la phenomenology de la volonté*, in *Annales de Phénoménologie*, N° 6, 2007, pp. 29-83.

¹³ The distinction *Aktion* and *Affektion* gathers, in Husserl’s late works, the whole group of affective, volitional and judicial intentionality, in other terms, objectifying and non objectifying intentionality, because of the confusion afore mentioned has been also misunderstood. For further clarification see for instance: *Krisis*, op. cit. Husserliana Vol. 6, 109, 111, 147, 152 ; *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität, Zweiter Teil: 1923-1928*, Husserliana, Vol. 14, M. Nijhoff 1973, The Hague, p. 30 ; *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis (1918-1926)*, Husserliana ; Vol. 11, Nijhoff, 1966, p. 84-85, p. 148, p.166.

¹⁴ (PS, p. 148).

The exclusion of feeling-passivity is thus just provisory and even the methodological reasons justifying this abstraction seem dubious at a closer reflection¹⁵. And some complementary analysis of passive elements belonging to the sphere of feelings are announced and required:

“In our considerations of the lowest genetic level we formulate the problem *in an abstract manner that is necessary for a systematic [phenomenology of] genesis*: We do so as if the world of the ego were only the *impressional present* and [i] as if transcending apperceptions arising from further reaching subjective lawful regularities did not play any role at all, as if there were no modes of knowledge acquired in the life of the world, aesthetic and practical interests, values, and the like. Thus, *we consider functions of affectivity that are founded purely in the impressional sphere*. Accordingly, [ii] we may only take from the sphere of the heart some feelings that are co-original with the sensible data, and say: On the one hand, *the emergent affection is functionally co-dependent upon the relative size of the contrast*, on the other hand, *also upon privileged sensible feelings like a passionate desire founded by a prominence in its unity*.”¹⁶.

The privilege of *presentative sensuous* consciousness within passivity is justified by its constitutive role, but at the same time, the other passive strata is co-original and brings into play a new material which couldn't produce any contrast, any sensation if they were not primarily and blindly felt. Both are indispensable to produce associations and contrasts, and then to support and constitute active feelings. Constituting means thus: bring to a higher degree of consciousness something, which is not produced at and by this upper level¹⁷. We can thus distinguish lower-level passive feelings and higher-level active feelings. Passive feelings, since “what is *constituted within passivity as identical, as an object, can lead to a feeling already within this passivity; it can be characterized as pleasurable or un-pleasurable, as agreeable or disagreeable*”. Active feelings, which of course are mediated by some *doxic*

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15 “Up to now we have left out of consideration *affect consciousness* and its constitutive accomplishments, even though it also already plays its constant role in the passivity of the life of consciousness. At this time we want to say a few words about it so that we can reach a better understanding of the sphere with which we are occupied. It was the sphere of presentation (*Vorstellung*), a term that is unfortunately extremely ambiguous, a term taken in a certain sense that is now determinative, the sphere of objectivating consciousness in the specific sense”, (*Aktive Synthesen. Aus der Vorlesung “Transzendentale Logik” 1920/21, Ergänzungsband zu “Analysen zur passiven Synthesis”*), ed. Roland Breeur. Kluwer, 2000, § 2, corresponding to § 50, in Steinbock, *Passive Synthesis*. — Husserl handwrites afterwards: “Why sphere of representation (*Vorstellung*)? *Sensuous sphere* would be better.”

16 (*Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten 1918-1926*, Husserliana XI, ed. Margot Fleischer, 1966, M. Nijhoff, [hereafter P.S.], p.124. Emphasis mine.) Trans. A. Steinbock: *Analyses concerning Passive and Active Synthesis, Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, Husserl's Collected Works, Vol. XL Kluwer, 2001. — Husserl suggests an extension to non-rational monads, using the method of reductive *Abbau*: “We may even allow originally instinctive, drive related preferences. Naturally, these would be unique themes of investigation whereby a suitable *experimentation (not an inductive-objectively oriented one)* would be quite possible: It would have the task of producing favourable conditions for the production of pure cases of the kind in question” (A.S. pp. 150-151).

17 “The object is constituted in and through the objectivating that underlies the intentionality of feeling, and is progressively constituted in a distinctive path of identifications, a path that is trodden by means of this objectivating and that is prefigured according to further possibilities. The intentionality of feeling as such has nothing to seek down this path.”(P.S. p. 168)

thesis, some objectifying intention, but presuppose a non-doxic sense. Such is precisely the feeling of a lack¹⁸.

Consequently, the feeling in the founded act (an active feeling of joy or hope) is *not transformed* into any objectifying act, unless it is objectified, i.e. taken as an object of a new act, an objectifying act (inner perception, imagination, memory, reflection, etc.). And the underlying constitutive moment within the passive sphere neither creates nor produces the passive affective component, but presupposes it. This process is that of foundation. This *transposition* of the parallelism of the first level is described in the following passage. First value predicates and cultural works, hence objective values and higher order objects, are constituted. Subsequently, second stage feelings can be founded on first level objects constituted as correlates of first stage objectifying acts, but this never occurs as a simple juxtaposition, “but rather the founded has its objects in that which the other consciousness” (the founding) “has *instituted* as object”; then and then alone “this object gets a new character”. That means that something of the founding objectifying act as been infused by something of the founded feeling act, namely its sense¹⁹.

“Owing to this, the sense contents that have arisen from non-objectivating lived-experiences *can be intertwined with them in higher objectivations*; object-like formations like *objective values*, like, e.g., works of art, economic goods and so forth that are given to consciousness as matters *that are laden with objective value predicates*. The latter are predicates that obviously *arise from the intentionality of feeling*. These value determinations are not the arbitrarily varying characters of feeling, they *are predicates*, that is, *elements that are identifiable*; but the sources from which the objectivation for these predicates are drawn are the feelings and the contents of them accruing to the matters in question.” (P.S., p. 66)

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18 “That is to say, the consciousness of the object *finds a novel consciousness: a layer of consciousness of the intentionality of feeling* [168], which exhibits a novel intentionality. Certainly, even this new layer yields an accomplishment with respect to the object, the object that was *already constituted in the lower level* as the object of such and such sense. *Sedimented in it, or rather, in the noema, is a new moment precisely as the character of feeling, for instance, as "pleasurable," or in the case of frustration, as "painfully lacking,"* and the like. The same thing occurs noematically with respect to what is given to consciousness as being or what is given to consciousness in the corresponding modality of being. It is something that is *already there* and discovered with a turning toward directed [to it] in a fitting manner, in its own way, *constituted once more in the manner of an object*, like consciousness as a whole and all its noematic contents. But if we hold firmly to the directedness toward the underlying object in relation to the self-contained objectivation through which it is given to consciousness – toward the object to which feelings relate – then it is evident that *its objective sense does not undergo any enrichment through the process of objectivation*, that nothing at all enters into the objective sense, that it is not determined more closely, like what happens precisely through the fulfillment of its empty horizons or by virtue of its connection to other objects by means of relative predicates”. (PS, p 167-168)

19 “If an objectivating consciousness is already at hand, if an object is, so to speak, already instituted, a feeling consciousness can be built upon it and can enter into a peculiar relation with it, into a relation that only a consciousness relating to another consciousness can enter: namely, in such a way that *neither are juxtaposed to one another, but rather in such a way that the one consciousness, the founded one, has its object in that which the other consciousness has instituted as object, and that now this object gets a new character*; this new character itself becomes an identifiable one by virtue of this essential feature of every founded consciousness: only to be able to relate to an object through [the relation of] foundation by accomplishing something for it, *by precipitating something on its noema, and simultaneously by objectivating the latter as sense*.”

In all that the distinctions between passive and active feelings, and the parallelism of objectifying and non-objectifying acts has not at all been suppressed:

“But in the final analysis, one must distinguish here *between the intentionality of feeling itself, and the objectivating—be it passive or, in higher levels, active—the objectivating that objectivates the contents arising in the intentionality of feeling* and that makes use of them in order to constitute new predicate layers with respect to matters that are constituted in other ways.”²⁰.

At that stage, in the frame of this (non-Kantian) “transcendental aesthetics”, it is worth noting that we obtain a first definition of *nature in its transcendentally reduced sense* (through the methodological abstraction of feelings). Nature “*is constituted as mere physical nature* in manifolds of a pure objectivation without the interlacing of the accomplishments of feeling”

“If we go back to the genetically most primitive series of development, what is carried out in an manner entirely independent from all accomplishments of feeling is a graduated objectivating, beginning with the hyletic data coming into relief, up to things of the senses like visual things, then to intuitive material things, *whereby the varying feelings do not even enter into the unity of identity of the respective constituted objects*. In this way, *nature is constituted as mere physical nature in manifolds of a pure objectivation without the objectivating interlacing of the accomplishments of feeling. A concept of presentation, precisely as mere, pure presentation, is characterized through this kind of pure objectivation (presentation—feeling—will).*”²¹

This first concept of nature must be distinguished from another one, with which it intersects, I mean “nature” within the primordial world, i.e. the world considered in its abstract proper sphere (as the world attached to a monad as such) deprived of the axiological strata brought about by feelings (including the most temporary ones). Only they are deprived of any intersubjective sense. But since the presentation of this concept of nature presupposes another distinction, which is transverse to those of *passivity vs. activity* and *representational vs. affective*, we must take into account the new strata of positionality, that which is traditionally linked to empathy. While entering the question of empathy, we shall get also closer to the core of the objection against Husserl’s phenomenology: the antipathy vis-à-vis the “pure ego” or “monad”.

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III

One of the most typical examples of affective fallacy and an exemplary illustration of the way this kind of fallacy is connected with logical (judicial) fallacies can be found in the way the theoretical presentation of the “pure ego” at the core of Husserl’s phenomenology is rejected by commentators. This is particularly the case for that radicalized form of “pure ego”

20 A.S., p. 7

21 *Active Synthesis*, trans. A. Steinbock, A.S. p.7. As for P.S. page number refers to *Aktive Synthesen. Aus der Vorlesung “Transzendentale Logik”, 1920/21. Ergänzungsband zu “Analysen zur passiven Synthesis”*, ed. Roland Breeur. Kluwer, 2000, as they are reproduced in the translation.

appearing in the *Cartesian Meditations*,” reduced abstractly to its narrower sphere presented in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation: the monad. For various explicit and clearly stated reasons, the position and the presentation of this monad (considered as “solipsistic”) appears generally as *antipathetic* to the commentators. Why is it so?

My main hypothesis will be that what is called often in a very confuse and ambiguous way the *pure ego* as been rejected on pure affective grounds, i.e. prior to any clear perception or representation. One of them is that it has been affectively apprehended as *deceptive*, i.e. as *other* than desired or wished. This affective reaction concentrates often on the *Cartesian Meditations* (thereafter: *CM*), motivated, among others, by the wrong assumption that this text *should* have offered a true presentation of a *fully pathetic ego* and, supposedly, presented instead an *apathetic and antipathetic monad*.

Now, this general reaction must be considered as *unfair*, for the following reasons: it is possible (1) to analyse this peculiar affective reaction using the sole resources of transcendental phenomenology, and doing so, (2) to show that affectivity was fully taken into account by Husserl, and (3) to give evidences of the fact that this affective reaction was inappropriate. In other words, by showing that the monad reduced to its nucleus is *intimately pathetic* and should have been fairly recognised as such, the phenomenological analysis of this negative reception *refutes* the main objection against the monad and the method of transcendental phenomenology and, consequently, *confirms* the latter.

A fair presentation of the monad as it is really disclosed and described by Husserl, is thus not only intellectually charitable, but opens up to a better understanding of the phenomenological grounds of the *ethical relation*. More precisely, the *abstract phenomenological drama* of the *Fifth CM* entails, among the different layers described by commentators, an affective and ethical dimension providing us with underexploited resources by the phenomenological tradition for a foundation of the *golden rule* more acute and satisfactory than those attempted until now with restricted phenomenological resources²².

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Talking of the *CM*, we should reffer to the French phenomenological tradition, starting from the actual generation²³ and going up to the first one (Levinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur). This tradition is of course heterogeneous and indebted in many ways to the first German phenomenological circles (Geiger, Heidegger, Scheler, Stein, etc.). Yet through translations and commentaries, something as a French phenomenological tradition emerged and imposed itself as a necessary mediation to any audible interpretations of the *CM*. We can easily verify that it represents still nowadays a crossing point for any phenomenologist be it a French or non-French, a “pure”, or “mixed”, a “radical”, or “tempered” one²⁴.

22 See for instance Ricoeur, in *One self as another*, Seuil, [Soi-même comme un autre], Seuil, 1990, pp. 214-215; pp. 221-226; p. 254 sq.; p. 309 sq.; pp. 373-376; pp. 380-389.]

23 Cf. the recent commentaries edited by J-F. Lavigne, *Les Méditations cartésiennes de Husserl*, Vrin, 2011.

24 By “tempered” phenomenologists, I refer to cognitivists working at a translation of some pure phenomenological concepts into the natural language of neurology or empirical psychology such as Evan

At a closer look, this mediation appears on the main as a *negative* one. I don't mean that the *CM* have had a *bad influence*, as if they were responsible for some evil, nor do I say that the *CM* have had *no influence* at all. The text has been read, the analyses commentated, the method and many thesis exposed and criticised and all that has produced and goes on producing very strong effects. *But* this text, which can be regarded as a climax in the series of introductions to phenomenology which Husserl has published throughout his career, has not produced its due effect: instead of instigating *a scientific and ethical renewal*, the *CM* produced a negative influence, i.e. an almost unanimous rejection²⁵ and motivated from the start the nowadays so-called "ethical turn of phenomenology", a turn which has something to do with what has been analysed and discussed previously as a "theological turn"²⁶. What is meant by the partisans of the ethical turn, which take up again the "transcendental" claim of phenomenology, is something else, something more ambitious: substitute to an intellectual version of transcendental phenomenology a more ethical one. This goes from a plea for more generous and fair attitude vis-à-vis the affective, sensitive and emotional dimensions of subjectivity, up to a hyperbolical promotion of ethics to the rank of a first philosophy²⁷.

By *negative influence* I mean thus that the *CM* have been rejected *before* they could be properly and fairly understood. Consequently the main theoretical objections against Husserl's analysis and thesis rest on misunderstandings which are not attributable to any lack of intelligence, but, rather and *prior to any logically articulated thought*, to an obscure and obstinate *affective rejection* and more precisely a *negative empathy*, blindly and strenuously directed against something felt as threatening.

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As one can easily guess, this something in question is nothing else than the subject matter of the text itself: the Husserlian subject itself, that is, (1) the *reflecting phenomenological subject* as well as (2) the *reflected and thematized subject* called "monad". This affective rejection is itself based on a deceptive experience, i.e. a painful experience of a *lack*. As Bergson expresses it deception is the affective modality at the root of our concepts of negation and negativity. And as one knows: the higher the expectation, the deeper the deception. Later one, I shall try to analyse phenomenologically this deception and try to

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Thompson, (1999), *Empathy and Consciousness*, 'The Intersubjectivity of Human Consciousness: Integrating Phenomenology and Cognitive Science' (September 24–27, 1999); Gallese, Vittorio Gallese. 2003. *The Roots of Empathy: The Shared Manifold Hypothesis and the Neural Basis of Intersubjectivity*, Psychopathology, 36: 171–180. Basel: Karger.

25 With an exception, to my knowledge, that of Derrida who from the article on Levinas, *Violence et métaphysique, L'écriture et la différence*, Seuil, to later texts such as *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, always resisted to make his such an assumption, and while fighting strive to preserve what he calls «the Husserlian truth» (cf. *Violence et Métaphysique*, p. 129)

26 By Dominique Jannicaud, *Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française*, L'éclat, 1991.

27 This shift is clearly stated by Levinas: "La corrélation entre la *connaissance* entendue comme contemplation désintéressée, et l'*être*, c'est, conformément à notre tradition philosophique, le lieu même de l'intelligible, l'occurrence même du sens. La compréhension de l'*être* (...) serait ainsi la possibilité ou la chance même de la sagesse et des sages et, à ce titre, *philosophie première*." *L'éthique comme philosophie première*, Rivages, 1998, p. 67.

understand how it can be modified into a negative affective rejection and consequently provide a basis and give way to negative discursive position-takings, to objections.

Among these, we find a major objection, which has become almost common sense. The advocated reasons are diverse, but converge and could be summed up as the intellectualist-objection. This objection is the following: compared to approaches such as those of Lipps, Scheler, Stein, etc. although original, fascinating, radical and subtle, Husserl's treatment on the problem of *empathy*, and more generally on the related problems of affectivity, sensitivity and passivity would be *too intellectual*. The phenomenon of *empathy*, through which a common world is constituted, following this line of interpretation, appears in Husserl as an active, cognitive and intellectual "operation", and not an affective, passive, sensitive and emotional one. Even though some commentators acknowledge that Husserl did try to give phenomenological descriptions of passive, sensitive and affective dimensions of consciousness, they all agree in one same point: he failed. Of course, this objection holds only if we understand the term *intellectual* largely enough to consider that the static descriptions of non-intellectual intentionality as well as that of the diverse layers of passivity were from the start pre-orientated and pre-informed by the model of objectifying intentionality, and that this model continues to dominate the genetic analysis of the *CM*²⁸. To sum up: The negative reaction and the lack of empathy with the monad presented in the *CM* is motivated by the supposedly unbearable "intellectualism" of the so-called Husserlian subject, i.e. both the epistemic subject called "transcendental phenomenologist" (say the ego-spectator) and the main object of its description, the constitutive subject, named monad (say the ego-worker).

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Now we could trace back this objection, through major figures of the French phenomenological tradition (among which those of Ricoeur²⁹ and Merleau-Ponty³⁰),

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28 Cf. *L'empathie: réflexions sur un concept* Empathy: *Reflexions on a concept* C. Boulanger, C. Lançon; *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, 164 (2006) 497–505, p. 498. — The same statement in Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*, taken up again in Sara Heinämaa, in *Merleau-Ponty's Modification of Phenomenology: Cognition, Passion and Philosophy*, in *Synthese* 118: 49–68, 1999, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, «Merleau-Ponty's criticism consists of two different but related arguments. First, he claims that Husserl takes for granted the act-object distinction in his description of intentionality. Second, he points out that Husserl treats beliefs and statements as the paradigmatic case of experience when describing intentionality.» — Cf. N. Depraz: «Pour Husserl, la dimension éthique ou affective n'est pas plus constitutive de l'expérience que la dimension langagière. Sa démarche est alors dominée par le souci de connaître, sa conception de l'intersubjectivité par le souci de connaître autrui. Max Scheler a critiqué cette vision en insistant sur le caractère fondamentalement éthique et affectif de l'expérience d'autrui.» Autrui chez Husserl, novembre 2001. And Depraz N. The Husserlian *Theory of Intersubjectivity as Alterology: Emergent Theories and Wisdom Traditions in the Light of Genetic Phenomenology*. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2001;8: 169–78.

29 See *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, Aubier, 1967, *Introduction générale*, *Questions de méthode*, p. 7; *Méthodes et tâches d'un phénoménologie de la volonté*, in *Problèmes actuels de la phénoménologie*, DDB, 1952, p. 114 sq. And above all his translation and annotations to the *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie pure*, 1950; and my critical comments in *L'a priori affectif* (I): *Prolégomènes à une phénoménologie de la valeur*, *Alter*, 2003, p. 37–68. And more recently: *Pour introduire à une phénoménologie des syntaxes de conscience*, *Annales de phénoménologie*, 2010, pp. 117–162.

Levinas's seminal article from 1940, on *The Work of Edmund Husserl*, which represents obviously, if not an origin, at least a starting point for this tradition. Because of its importance, I shall quote rather extensive passages, inserting some brief and marginal comments within the citations themselves.

“In the theory of experience of immanent time, and in his investigations of predicative experience — the primary experience — this *primordial role of representation* is likewise affirmed. And it is not by chance that the theory of intentionality is developed starting with verbal significations. Thus, in Husserl, theoretical consciousness is at once universal and primary³¹.

“Here we touch on one of the most characteristic points of Husserl's philosophy - one that gives his work its own physiognomy in the midst of the phenomenological movement that has developed out of it. *Perhaps it would be unjust to qualify it as intellectualism*, since the primacy, accorded to the notion of meaning over the notion of object to characterize thought, *prevent this*. The intention of a desire, the intention of a feeling, qua desire and feeling, harbour an original meaning, *which is not objective in the narrow sense of the term*³². For it was Husserl who introduced into philosophy the idea that thought can have meaning, can intend something even when this something is absolutely undetermined, a quasi-absence of object, and we know the role this idea has played in Scheler's and Heidegger's phenomenologies. — *But what is the significance of the presence of the act of identification at the basis of intentions that have nothing intellectual about them?*³³” (Discovering existence with Husserl, trans. Richard A. Cohen, Michael Bradley Smith, pp. 60-61, *En Découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, p. 34)

Levinas feels that this objection is to some extend *unjust* and violent. Nonetheless he not only maintains it, but reinforces it. This reproach is indeed repeated later on, less cautiously, when, instead of commenting and criticising the *CM*, Levinas prefers to denounce and condemn *the monad* as potentially solipsistic and thus as a figure of intellectual domination (*op. cit.* p. 68-69). This grief does not make any clear distinction between the pure reflecting subject and the monad itself which is reflected upon, as if the first was just a mirroring (*Spiegelung*) of the second or/and *vice versa*. As if, the long and minute analysis on affectivity and passivity could be suddenly reduced to nought and as if all the keen and subtle distinctions implied in natural and transcendental reflections could be erased on one stroke. The “philosophical position of Husserl” is indeed identified with that of the pure reflecting phenomenological subject (whoever he is) and this in turn identified with that of the anonymous constitutive ego, the monad itself, as if its only conceivable attitude was that of a pure scientist. The one and the other are primordially a thinking ego.

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³⁰ See his critique of intellectualism, in *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 1945, pp. 251-265, and that of solipsism, pp. 412-419.

³¹ Despite the amphibologic use of the word *Vorstellung* (exposed in the *LI*), the logical sense (coming from Bolzano) and the Brentanian one are here mixed up, and taken as synonym of “theoretical”.

³² While conceding that the term is not taken in its strict sense, the main thesis is wrongly attributed to Husserl and left out of discussion: i.e. that the correlates of feelings are being and posited as such, hence that feeling are doxic modes of intentionality. Which is simply false.

³³ The distinction between the narrow and the larger sense is forgotten, that between passive and active modes of identification is overlooked, and the foundation of acts is reduced to a simple superposition of secondary characters of acts to fundamental logical ones.

“In this sense Husserl *posits the subject as a monad*. In its inner recesses, the subject can account for the universe. (...) It is important, in conclusion to this survey of the *Cartesian Meditations*, to indicate Husserl’s philosophical position, which this work helps to clarify. For Husserl there is no superior force than thought itself that dominates it prior to its exercise. Thought is an absolute autonomy.” (Op. cit. p. 82- 83)

Intentionality is primordially, “thought having meaning”. Thus any transcendent relationship (be it to God, or to another man) “is the meaning of a thought”.

“The social relationship — *before being an involvement of the subject prior to thought*, and consequently an exceptional situation of the mind – is the meaning of a thought. Commerce with the other is constituted in a play of intentions. I, myself, as a concrete, historical man, am a *character in a drama that constitutes itself for a thought*. There is in me a *possibility* of solitude, despite my actual sociality and the world’s presence for me. Precisely as a thought, I am a monad, a (always) possible monad in a (always) possible remove from my involvements. I am always in the process of going toward the whole in which I am, for I am always outside, entrenched in my thought.” (Op. cit. p. 84.) (Emphasis mine.)

According to essential laws of reflection³⁴ be it pure or not, the subject reflecting on and the subject reflected upon, are not properly speaking and really separated. Even in natural reflection, such as that which takes place in a remembrance, it is absurd to transfer the actual dispositions and feelings of the reflecting *I*, to the remembered *I*. Many feelings, such as regrets, imply explicitly that they are different. According to its intentional sense, a regret *implies* the distinction between the *I* doing in the past something wrong that was not considered as such at that time, but instead as *worth-doing* and the actual *I* feeling sorrow, and considering it now as worth-avoiding. This is all the more the case in a pure theoretical reflection, and even still more, in an abstractive theoretical reflection such as that which takes place through the reductive abstraction in the *Fifth CM*. It is *thus* absurd to posit actually and really the monad reduced to its primordial sphere as actually and really isolated from any transcendence, such as that which we ourselves represent. But, consequently, it would be absurd and ethically problematic as well to deny to anyone the *possibility* of accomplishing such an *abstraction* for this would sum up to deny him any kind of interiority. To make things simpler: The interiority of the other is necessarily and properly inaccessible for me, as mine is inaccessible for him. Conversely, I cannot consider myself, in any kind of reflection, as actually other or otherwise than I actually and really am, but only through an *imaginary modification of myself*³⁵. To say that the other is absolutely other means precisely this. It is

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34 §§ 38. *Reflexionen auf Akte. Immanente und transzendente Wahrnehmungen*, pp 77-78, as well §§ 76-86 which are the true introduction to the phenomenological analysis of consciousness. It is not surprising, that those analyses face as well the traditional objection against introspection (Selbst-beobachtung), of *Ideen Zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, (Erstes Buch, Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie, Neu herausgegeben von K. Schuhmann, O. Halsband, Text der 1-3 Auflage, p. Kluwer, 1976). See also the *Vorlesung 40: "Reflexion als Ichspaltung und die Identität des Ich in stromend lebendiger Gegenwart*", p. 89-92 & *Vorlesungen 41-43*, pp. 106-110. *Erste Philosophie (1923/1924), Zweiter Teil, Theorie der Phänomenologischen Reduktion*, ed. R. Boehm, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1959

35 See Husserl’s manuscript : Variation und Ontologie, with my “Introduction à l’inédit K III 12, *Variation et ontologie*”, *Annales de phénoménologie*, 2006, pp. 191-213

thus rather unfair to say that properly speaking the monad has no real interiority and to present it almost as a danger for my (supposedly real) interiority (op. cit. p. 46).

As I said, this reaction is motivated, in Levinas's case, by a deception, which follows the expectation, that arose after the reading of the announcement in the *Ideas* of a genuine theory of empathy, and that has not been dissipated by the reading of unpublished manuscripts.

"This idea, found in but a half-page outline in Ideas, becomes central in the later development of Husserl's thought. A theory of '*Einfühlung*' promised in the first volume of Ideas and worked out in Husserl's unpublished works, describes how the individual consciousness, the ego, the monad that knows itself in reflection, leaves itself, to find, in an absolutely certain way, an intersubjective world of monads around it. *But this intersubjective world is to real society understood as part of nature, what transcendental consciousness is to psychological consciousness.*" (*On the Ideas*, 1929, op. cit. p. 30, emphasis mine).

We come here to the core of the objection. The genetic reconstitution of the empathy process proposed by Husserl is an abstract and intellectual drama (p. 69). The proper world of the monad disclosed by the abstractive reduction is *only a pure nature and excludes any real affective dimension and consequently any real and concrete intersubjective relation*. Of course, Husserl has proposed in the 20s richer descriptions of various passive synthesis which still hold for the proper sphere and, through intentionality, the monad is opened to the outside in various modes (no only on the theoretical ones, but also affectively and voluntarily) (p. 71), but the intellectual mode remains predominant (p. 73).

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What was then expected? Who would have been the right person? Answer: The typical profile would be an individual consciousness *ignoring itself, opaque to itself, uncertain of itself, affectively and passively really linked to the others — as part of nature* and originally determined by and through his affective and dissymmetric relation to the Other.

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IV

The ego opposed to Husserl's monad is strangely similar to that what we could read in Husserl, at least with a more charitable understanding of his descriptions. For, what is exposed by Levinas is this not precisely the *monad reduced to its primordial sphere such as it is described by Husserl* (maybe in a more laborious and rigorous style)? My answer is clearly yes, and I shall endeavour now to establish the monad in its own rights.

For almost a century, we have been facing a strange drama in which a subject – let us call it the *refined pathetic ego* – refuses, on pure pathetic grounds to recognize another ego, which is according to his own heavy sayings a pathetic ego too, but is denied as such from the part of the first, for the simple reason that the second pretends precisely to *know* that he is so and works hard to prove it. In this strange play, he who says the first *I feel* and try to justify it

has lost and is straight away denied his pretension. Putting aside any refinement, the only way to overcome this puzzling and ridiculous situation would be to show that the unanimously and unfairly rejected monad and the supposedly real subject are in fact and typically one and the same – *modulo* the possibility that they can be so while ignoring it. By getting rid of some confusion, it would become possible to clarify the affective roots of this negative empathy and understand the motivations of such an affective fallacy.

The denial statement does not ignore any rationality, and as been explicitly motivated, by two major grieves: 1/the monad is fundamentally logical or intellectual and consequently 2/the monad is fundamentally apathetic and active. According to the letter or the spirit of Husserl's descriptions, these statements are manifestly wrong. Once explained why they are so, I shall proceed to a deeper phenomenological analysis of the pathetic roots of negative empathy.

1. *The monad is not apathetic.* Why is the monad portrayed as theoretically dominating and *consequently* apathetic? For this simple reason that the general analysis of the monad and of the human monad, are haunted by the question: How rational activity in general and knowledge activity in particular stem from the depth of subjectivity? What are the subjective resources of those activities, including the psychological and phenomenological reflection and thematization of affectivity and passivity? This questioning belongs to what is called “questioning back” (*rückfragen*). The intellectualist-objection amounts to a subtle kind of sceptical doubt stating: “It is impossible to know anything about passivity or affectivity without ceasing to be affective and passive or without substituting to it a theoretical construction”. Now is not this fully unfair? Independently of more formal refutations, such as that contesting the validity of the consequence, we would be entitled to ask, reciprocally: how do *you* know that? Whence do you know that knowledge modifies the known into something other than *as what* it is known? Is not that the old sophistic trick, already pinned up by Aristotle³⁶? We have already given above some quotations of this constant trial, and indicated some arguments against it.

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2. *The nature of the monad and empathy.* Let us turn out now more positively onto the monad that we are, reduced to its own sphere, and try to portray it more loyally. The § 44 of the *CM* presents the result of this abstraction in the following terms:

“Let us observe more closely the result of our abstraction and, accordingly, what it leaves us. From the phenomenon world, from the world appearing with an Objective sense, a substratum becomes separated, *as the “Nature” included in my ownness, a Nature that must always be carefully distinguished from Nature, pure and simple that is to say*: from the Nature that becomes the theme of the natural scientist. This Nature, to be sure, is likewise a result of abstraction, namely abstraction from everything psychic and from those predicates of the Objective world that have arisen from persons. But what is acquired by this abstraction on the part of the natural scientist is a stratum that belongs to the Objective world itself (viewed in the transcendental attitude, a stratum that belongs to the objective sense: ‘Objective world’) and is therefore itself Objective just as, on the other hand, what is abstracted

36 Aristotle, *On the soul*, I, 5, 7-13.

from is Objective (the Objective psychic, Objective cultural predicates, and so forth)." (CM, § 44, D. Cairns)

And to go straight to the point, we must posit the question: What is the *real nature* of the monad? By the word *nature* we could understand of course the “essence”, since all expressed descriptions are in phenomenology descriptions of essences and essence-relations. But this is just a formal definition. Since the monad is formally speaking an ego-centred sphere, what is disposed *around* it is precisely its proper nature. Following the § 44, it appears that this sphere of own-ness (this primordial world) can also be reduced to his “proper nature”. Consequently: The primordial world is not reducible to the *abstract layer* of perception or presentation (that of passivity in the sense defined above). Are included within the primordial sphere: (1) The whole range of passive synthesis i.e. of affectivity in the wider sense of the term, *plus* (2) the layer of real components of lived experience (i.e. hyletic sensuous and affective constituents of *Erlebnisse*), *plus* (3) the layer of activity *qua* my own, i.e. properly performed activity, (4) *minus* the layer of *unreal* components, i.e. of *imaginary components*, those supposing intersubjective modes of co-position, and presupposing thus that the whole previous activity of consciousness have been modified by the intersubjective intentionality.

For we know that the primordial sphere is obtained by the abstraction of every transcendence, and, correlatively, of every activity presupposing factually and ideally the Other as an alter ego posited as distinct from any of my own possible and effective self-modifications³⁷. Are thus excluded the whole range of the “objective”: cultural and natural objectivities, objective beings and objective values and works, in short every meaning entailing strata of meaning and constitution implying intersubjectivity. So the world, within the primordial sphere, is no more reducible to the “proper nature”, than the common world is moulded into the physicalist abstraction called “nature”. Both include the whole sphere of value-positions. In the case of the solipsistic world all the affective acts and correlatives values, *minus* the objective dimension of values presupposing intersubjectivity. Conversely, the primordial sphere is not suppressed but goes on functioning when the intersubjective constitution comes into play (and correlatively the so-called “objective values”).

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“Accordingly this peculiar abstractive sense-exclusion of what is alien leaves us a kind of ‘world’ still, a *Nature reduced to what is included in our own-ness and*, as having its place in this *Nature* thanks to the bodily organism, the psychophysical Ego, with ‘body and soul’ and personal Ego utterly unique members of this reduced ‘world’. *Manifestly predicates that get significance from this Ego also occur in the reduced world for example: ‘value’ predicates and predicates of ‘works’ as such.* None of this is worldly in the natural sense (therefore all the quotation-marks); it is all exclusively what is mine in my world-experience, pervading my world-experience through and through and likewise cohering unitarily in my intuition. Accordingly the members we distinguish in this, my peculiarly own world-phenomenon, are concretely united, as is further shown by the fact that the spatiotemporal form as reduced, however, to the form included in my own-ness also goes into this reduced world-phenomenon.” (*Ibid.*)

³⁷ For an attempt of characterization of the modal dimension of this position, i.e. the positional sub-sphere see my contribution: “Self-variation and self-modification”, (ed. Dermot Moran and Rasmus T. Jensen), *The Phenomenology of Embodied Subjectivity*, (Collection, Contributions to Phenomenology), Springer, 2014, pp. 263-284.

To sum up, the primordial sphere is larger than that of transcendental aesthetics in so far as it does not exclude the stratum of activity (whatever its kind) according to which the activity is *mine*. Moreover, nature and culture appear as co-dependent sides of the primordial sphere. Considered in this abstractive limitation, the monad has all the forms of passivity (that of the affectivity as that of representation) as well as all kinds of activity (judgment, will, wish, pleasure, expectations etc.), everything that holds in our ordinary world and everyday life holds in the primordial sphere – but deprived of the layer of constitution that gives to them their sense of objectivity, “exteriority” or “transcendence”. Here comes into play intersubjective constitution and empathy³⁸.

Of course empathy, understood as a constituting process, or more precisely, “apperception of the other” plays a key role as we know. This monad carries all modes of empathy, including the modes of feeling, co-originated in its passivity. Moreover, this empathy concerns not only the body of the other, but more generally every thing that can be apprehended as an *expression* of another interiority (tools, cultural works, writings, signals, etc.). Before entering into the description of other modes of empathy, such as negative affective modes of empathy, it is necessary to add a remark concerning the constitution of the transcendence, and consequently of the pairing occurring in empathy.

What is analogized and paired with the primordial reality (interiority) of my monad is necessarily another reality, which is posited as *impossibly mine*. More precisely, this impossibility affects every mode of this reality, and the Other is posited as *co-real*, as the first exteriority, in so far as each of the modes in which it appears to me is taken as an expression of a mode of being, which can't be actually mine, or more precisely, which is incompossible with the modes which are actually (passively or actively) mine. We enter here into the “complex” dimension of constitution, i.e. into the accomplishments of phantasy and the way *non-thetic, non-positional, neutral modes of consciousness are combined with ‘elements’ from the sphere of positionality in the broader sense, to constitution the meaning of real transcendent natural and spiritual realities*, which would remain otherwise incompletely constituted³⁹. “They already play a role in passivity”. Phantasy, as Husserl defines it, plays in phenomenology an analogous role as the imaginary in complex arithmetic⁴⁰. They are required, from a structural point of view, in order to restore the *possibility* of a symmetric

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38 The transition to these phase of genetic constitution was anticipated in 1920, cf. A.S. p. 101.

39 This is typically the case for the constitution of objective space and of material nature, see *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy, Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, tr. R. Rojewicz and A. Schuwer, Kluwer, Boston/Dordrecht/London, 1989, p. 88. *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung, Zweiter Buch, Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution, Husserliana Vol. 4*, ed. M. Biemel, M. Nijhoff, The Hague, 1952 p. 83

40 «When the term “phantasy” is understood in the way we understand it here, the accomplishments of phantasy have the significance of a curious general modification that encompasses all types of consciousness with *all of their noematic structures*, a modification that I want to circumscribe in broad strokes in order only later to provide some descriptions of the manner in which phantasy provides the basis for its own formation; and I want to do this by considering the forms of judgment and the categorial concepts proper to them.» (AS, p. 11).

relation to the other, once discovered the deep dissymmetrical nature of the relation to the ego to the other-ego, as the root of any transcendence relation.

The *as-if* modification affects all kinds of consciousness, and as we learned from the *Ideas I*, it is a *sui generis* modification, which cuts consciousness across⁴¹:

“Whatever kind and form it may be, *taken universally, consciousness is traversed by a radical separation*; in the first place, as we know, there belongs to every consciousness in which the pure Ego does not live from the outset as an “effecting” Ego, which therefore does not have the form “cogito” from the outset, the *essentially possible modification* of being converted into this form. There now exist *two fundamental possibilities* for the mode of the effecting of consciousness within the mode of cogito, or expressed in another way: *To every cogito there belongs a counterpart* which precisely corresponds to it such that its noema has its precisely corresponding counter-noema in the *parallel cogito*.” (*Ideas I*, § 112 [227], Cairns, p. 232-233)

Against those who believed in the transparency of consciousness to itself (Brentano called it *intimate consciousness* which conditions the possibility of inner perception), Husserl discovered a strange separation, a general cut or cleavage across the consciousness⁴², which is manifested to some extend in pure imagination, but also in this peculiar mode of inhibition called *époque* or neutrality.⁴³ This constant possibility of doubling my actual experience with imaginary counterparts enables consciousness transitions from one experience to another, to switch off an actual experience whatever it may be, and switch on another kind of activity. This is a deep resource of my transcendental freedom.

As it is presented in *Ideas I*, this modification brings the ego off its centre on the sole mode it can be done, i.e. *imaginarily*, neutrally, without any real modification of its modes of position.

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Considered in its proper reality, consciousness forms a *unique flow*, and consequently no lived experience can be really separated, instead each is a mode of a unique flow, a result of a chain of modifications (§ 83 [167]); no lived-experience can occur twice in this flow, in its full concreteness and in the context of lived-experiences forming the background. From this we can “deduce”, that:

“*Two streams of mental processes (spheres of consciousness for two pure Egos)* of an identically essential content are *inconceivable*, as well that no completely determined mental process of the one stream can belong to the other—which can be seen from what has been said before; only mental

41 § 92 in Cairn’s translation. But this is not the right text. More explicit and undisputable are the § 83 [167], § 112 [227] and § 114 [232].

42 Compared to that cut, the psycho-analytical concept of «cut» appears as a way to absorb the trauma, a way to deaden the incommensurable pain induced by this cut. Another way of solving the problem of the *De Anima* and interpreting Aristotle’s sentence: no thought without imagination. That means now: no real knowledge without phantasy (understood as a *sui generis* kind of modification).

43 Taken in its broadest sense, this very specific modification enters in many different ways into complex syntheses and plays a constitutive role, for example in foundation of acts, or in the institution (*Stiftung*) of attitudes (*Einstellungen*): see the role of accomplishment epochai (*Vollzugsepoché*) in the institution of a professional attitudes (*Berufen*) in the *Crisis*.

processes of an identical inner characteristic can be common to them (*although not common as individually identical*), but not two mental processes which, in addition, have a ‘halo’ absolutely alike.” (*Ibid.*)

The shift of the ego outside himself, be it for a theoretical or an aesthetic contemplation, or for a constitutive coupling with another real ego always occurs through a *complex synthesis*, which like imaginary numbers⁴⁴, combines imaginary counterparts of lived-experiences with actual real ones.

To the question: *how many parallel cogito has an actual cogito?* The answer is: *a potential infinity*. The situation is the following: on the one hand, it is *impossible* to have twice the same lived-experience not even in the same consciousness for each one is absolutely individualised because it is intimately linked to the *totality*, not as a fragment of that totality but as a dependent part (a “moment”); on the other hand, there is no single individualised lived-experience which is *not ideally repeatable*; not as a *real repetition* for this is impossible; this possibility is based on the *possibility*, for any consciousness, at any rate, to freely phantasy, that is to neutralise the actual lived-experience; of activating in the mode of as-if, as one pure imaginary variant among an infinite extension of equivalent counterparts (counter-possibilities).

This does not produce straight away another real ego, but discloses one of the basic resources in the “perception of the other”, and of all the subsequent modes of consciousness related to the other (representational, affective and volitional). 1. We know that the other is a separate flow. 2. And we know that the alter ego corresponds to a inaccessible counterpart of my ego. *The Other is always and for every kind of spiritual activity a counter partner.* If I push this idealisation further, I can imagine a totally identical flow (that is a completely impossible *double*), but between the two limits (the real flow which is mine which is a close but unfulfilled flow, an ego in an open and endless process of modification on the one hand, and the ideal perfect double which is the climax of in-compossibilities) we have the infinities of pure variants, pure counter-parts, providing the resources for empathy. This provides the background and basic of potentialities for any act of empathy implying the *position of another real ego*, but also for a rich variety of modes of empathy, since any actual wishing, willing, desiring, pleasure, deception, perception, presumption, and correlatively any actual worth-wishing, worth-desiring, pleasurable, object, probability, etc. has its phantasy-counterparts.

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3. *The phenomenological roots of negative affective empathy.* In order to grasp the difference let us apply the analytic resources of the phenomenological transcendental aesthetics to our present case. And try to understand how empathy is possible through a peculiar mode: that of a *negative empathy prior to any clear positive and objectifying*

44 See. Husserl's broad definition of *imaginary*, *Das Imaginäre in der Mathematik*, in *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, Husserliana XII, M. Nijhoff, 1970, pp 444-451. Cf. also a good and clear presentation by Whithead, *An Introduction to Mathematics*, NY, Cambridge University Press, Chap. VII, p. 87 sq.

empathy. In order to reconstitute the scene and an evidence of the unfair character of this rejection, I shall use exclusively materials taken from Husserl's works.

First, a monad can feel a lack in the passive processes of representation. This lack is a passive synthesis of which can be associated, and is ordinarily associated with a feeling of a lack, i.e. as a modality:

“Just as objectivating consciousness has its own syntheses, which on the active level are the specific cognitive syntheses, judgments, so too does the consciousness that carries out the intentionality of feeling have its own syntheses and likewise its own modes of modalization as well, modes that accord with modalities of being through the relation of foundation. Belonging here, to give just one example, is the sense of *lack that is founded in the modality of non-being*, the lack of what would be given to consciousness as gratifying for the feeling ego in the modality of being” (*Analysis concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, tr. A. Steinbock, p. 281)

A deception is a perfect example of this intertwining of functions and layers of consciousness. In order to understand this, and propose a fair and precise diagnosis of this deceptive experience, and even its modes of socialisation, let us trace back some analysis and distinctions.

Second. Husserl's readers have rejoiced to discover that the monad was intimately and always, in varying modes, desiring and feeling. *Passively*: “everywhere an intentionality of feeling” was at work “in the mode of striving that, unlike the tendency of turning toward, is *striving after*, or *driving away from, shunning*», which “has its positivity and negativity, like feeling in general”; which could be modified by “its fulfilment” into “a relaxation that results from realizing in the change into the corresponding joy of fulfilment”; that “at root, joy lies in the arrival of what was lacking.” *Actively*: The monad in its wakefulness carries out of course perceptive functions in the broad sense, but is also “inclined, to love, to cherish, to respect someone” he has “in mind”, or turns “against him in hate and contempt”. Generally speaking,

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“In such wakeful lived-experiences of experiencing, taking cognizance, drawing conclusions, valuing, willing, we find the ego as the peculiar centre of the lived-experiencing, as the one being worried in it, or the one suffering, it is the identical pole, the centre of actions and passions – the latter corresponds to conditions like: *I am sad, I am delighted, I am happy*. The term ‘I’ here is not empty, and on the other hand, we mean ‘I’ neither as a corporeal human being, nor as the entire psychic life (...) Rather here the ego is identified in reflection as the centre of life and lived-experiencing, the centre to which are related *perceiving, judging, feeling, willing*.” (PS, p. 362-363)

Third point, which is not the least: *prior to any theoretical interest*, the striving of desire toward something more valuable, or more pleasurable, etc. can passively motivate the ego and pull its activity in a certain direction.

“Interest is a feeling and a positive feeling, but only apparently is this feeling a sense of well-being with respect to the object. It can be that the object itself also stirs our feeling, that it is of value to us and that we therefore turn to it and dwell upon it.” (PS, pp. [16-17])

But, “cognitive interest can be fleeting and secondary insofar as it is obscured by other interests, and where it reigns, *<it can>* also have from the very beginning the character of a transference of feeling.” (AS, pp. 17-18).

It becomes thus, from a phenomenological point of view, *understandable* how a reader of Husserl, apparently moved by pure theoretical interests, can possibly be driven, from the beginning, by a *transference of feeling* that ends up in the deceptive experience which from the start stops the process of the striving, seals the horizon of “possibilities and expectations for ever newer enrichments”. This deceptive experience can have as correlate a “real lack”, but also some imaginary lack, that of an imaginary counterpart or counter-partner impeding from the start any charitable understanding and full empathy of the other, and producing eventually an *affective fallacy*.

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The lack can also happen through a new modification, as an affective modality of reception of the cut evoked; in other words, as a direct affective retaliation against the absolute danger associated with the apperception of the other, since the other whatever he maybe (human or non-human, rational or irrational) designates, from a genetic point of view (in the ‘history’ of the monad), the first accomplishment and actualisation of a cut (complex synthesis combining an imaginary to a real modification of mine).

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The first transcendence is the first constitutive trauma. It is also the threatening and promising announcement of an infinite number of them. From now on, every “encounter” means from a phenomenological point of view an actualisation of a *new cut*, i.e. the constitution of another radiating centre⁴⁵, with its sphere of lived-experience constituted for me through the pairing of an actual proper modification of my primordial sphere and a free imaginary modification of mine in-com-possible with the former. As a result of this pairing: 1) the first strata (that of effective modifications of my primordial sphere) acquires immediately the general function of expression of a real transcendence; 2) my primordial sphere itself acquires the new meaning of the interiority of a real transcendent individual that I am, but which, according to essential laws of individuation of lived-experiences, is never

⁴⁵ Cf. for example, *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre* (1908-1914), Husserliana, volume 28, ed. U. Melle, Kluwer, 1988, page 98: “Fingieren wir folgenden Fall: Es existierte in der Welt eine edle Persönlichkeit, deren Wert sich in der Zeit immer Persönlichkeit, deren Wert sich in der Zeit immerfort unverändert erhält. Im allgemeinen wird sie ein Ausstrahlungspunkt bedeutsamer Wirkungen für die Umwelt sein und die von ihr ausgehenden Wertströme werden in gleichen Zeiten im allgemeinen sehr ungleich sein.” “Let us imagine the following case: There exist in the world an noble personality whose value remains unchanged through time. In general, she will be a radiating point of important effects upon the environing world, and the flows of values proceeding from it, will be in general very unequal in equals times.” (Translation and emphasis mine).

perfectly accessible to me. What is called “own body” (*Leib*) and has been at the core of so many important phenomenological contributions appears clearly in Husserl’s perspective, as the knot or cross-point of this manifold modes of *expression*⁴⁶. The modalities of this transcendence are themselves manifold, as past (dead), as away, as to-come, as deeply-changed, in-good-or-bad-dispositions, locked-up-in-its-interiority, or opened-to-the fore, and to others, to the world, eventually to my-self, etc., hostile or friendly, but also probable, etc.

The monad is not intrinsically *egoist*, and the mirroring of the Other is not primarily specular (representational), nor is it the sole mode of re-covering at a distance. As a pathetic empathetic ego he is and can be in relation to other in many different modes. And its full individualisation requires the mediation of the Other. With the means of pure phenomenology it is possible to investigate more finely into the foundations of the *ethical relation* without sacrificing either the dimension of rational universality (equality and individually and commonly consistent freedom) or into the affective dimension (solicitude or compassion). Husserl’s repeated critique of the modern ethical axiom, following which individuals are naturally egoist (Hobbes, Kant, Smith, etc.) are highly suggestive and stimulating and are still waiting for an elaboration in the general perspective of Husserl’s project of a theory of individuation. That critique is central in the constant confrontation of the two great trends of moral reflexion (feeling based ethics *vs.* reason based ethics).

Through manifold modes of empathy it becomes possible to get a more richer and acute understanding of the *golden rule* as a traditional and naïve expression of the phenomenological foundations of ethics and justice. The golden rule, as noticed recently, can itself be interpreted as a naïve formulation of a rational principle of practical universality (and equality) or as a discursive expression for affective and feeling processes. According to the

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46 This notion of *expression* traces back to a discrete revolution occurred in the field of aesthetics at the turn of the XVIIIth century. Adam Smith was the first, to our knowledge, to distinguish between two modes of aesthetic pleasure and fine arts related respectively to recognizance and imitation on the one hand, and to free and direct expression on the other hand. In the *Critic of Judgement*, as a leading threat for the disentanglement of the diverse modes of presentations of aesthetics ideas and of classification of fine arts, Kant proposes a generalisation of the discursive notion of *expression*. The whole field of artistic presentations acquires accordingly the status of a sphere of *expression* — imitation becoming thus a secondary character. The genius itself as a specific nature-like mode of technical and productive skill is referred usually to the body. But at a closer reading, the body is here only an index for a source of *expression* irreducible to concept and logic. “Art regarded as human skill differs from science (as *can* from *know*) as a practical faculty does from a theoretical, as Technic does from Theory (as mensuration from geometry) (...) Only that which a man, even if he knows it completely, may not therefore have the skill to accomplish, belongs to Art” (§ 43); this skill is not incompatible with a certain share of *mechanism*, i.e. of constraints: “it is not inexpedient to recall that in all free arts there is yet requisite something compulsory, or, as it is called, mechanism, without which the Spirit, which must be free in art and which alone inspires the work, would have no body and would evaporate altogether; e.g., in poetry there must be an accuracy and wealth of language, and also prosody and measure.” The specificity of fine (free) arts compared to fine arts lies in the fact that the body, which is the locus for the constraints and rules, becomes purely and freely expressive (§44). — Transcendental aesthetics encompasses the whole sphere of expression, and within this enlarged frame, the mimetic phenomenon, more precisely *mimesis*, within empathy, becomes one mode among other of expression, of transference of meaning. The larger mode is called *covering* (*Deckung*).

second interpretation, it can be seen as a fundamental mode of knowledge of one-self and the other, through a kind of *inner imitation* (as Lipps) or of a pathetic communication. According the first, it can be seen positively as a correct formulation of the general principle of “good will” (love) (Leibniz)⁴⁷ or, negatively, as a trivial but potentially disastrous expression of the categorical imperative, exposing it to a pathological misinterpretation and subversion (Kant)⁴⁸.

What is traditionally known as the “Golden Rule” is a common sense principle. In his last book, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Ricoeur called for a more charitable consideration of this principle and he tried to give a phenomenological interpretation in a rich and suggestive dialogue with different philosophical traditions, phenomenological (Levinas, Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler, etc.) and non-phenomenological (Hume, etc.). He enumerates requirements that can be articulated within the frame of transcendental phenomenology⁴⁹.

In order to avoid any kind of *affective fallacy* and well-intentioned injustice, this rule must be empathetically articulated in order to preserve and render intelligible the constitution of a ethical metric, and for a start, of the ethical distance: that of *respect*. Ricoeur points out formally some requirements: this empathy must respect different and potentially contradictory “principles”: *reversibility* of the roles, *similitude* and *non-substitutability* (op. cit. p. 225 sq.). The Golden rule in its positive and negative forms expresses a transitory level of ethical intersubjectivity (*ibid.*) avoiding the symmetric dangers of emotional confusion or identification and legal and formal distinction, yet preserving the affective proximity of the former and the legal distance of the later. As regards its modality, the golden rule is between a formal imperative and an affective pull

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It voices out a *call*. “Act as if you were at the Other’s places”, says the Rule. *Place* is here, of course, a metaphor, and even the metaphor of all metaphors, since the spatial or local meaning of the term designates all kind of *positing* within diverse spheres of position-taking,

⁴⁷ Leibniz, *Le droit de la raison*, textes réunis par René Sève, Vrin, 1994, pp 90-105 et pp. 208-210. And GRUA, Gaston *La justice humaine selon Leibniz*, PUF, 1985, Comparatively, see Husserl, *Husserliana*. 28, p 48.

⁴⁸ On the question of the categorical imperative, see *Husserliana*, 28, p. 127-138. This critic is the strict parallel to that of the most primitive a priori synthetic principles, and contrary to many of Kant’s followers Husserl has clearly noticed that the so-called “moral laws” (as categorical, absolutely obligatory, and universal, and affirmative) are the analogues, in the metaphysics of morals, of the metaphysical principles of nature. In other words, Husserl noticed clearly that the “formal” in Kant is synonym of (synthetic a priori) transcendental, not of analytic.

⁴⁹ The rehabilitation of the morals of feelings starts page 224, but the requirement of a morals of understanding is maintained throughout, because, if reason does not provide anymore the foundation for obligations and norms (cf. note page 224: “Under this respect, feelings of pity, compassion, sympathy, promoted in the past by English philosophy deserves to be rehabilitated”), still reason must be promoted in all spheres (theoretical, practical, affective) and leads to a spiritual renewal in all fields of spiritual activities. Ricoeur greets Scheler’s essay on sympathy, and regrets that, to the exception of Stefan Strasser (in his book *Das Gemüt*, Utrecht, Vitgeverijet Spectrum, 1956), phenomenologists do not devoted any effort in describing feelings, as if they were afraid of falling into some kind of affective fallacy; before adding: “C’est oublier que les sentiments ont été aussi puissamment travaillés par le langage, et portés aussi haut que les pensées à la dignité littéraire”..

diverse manifolds of feeling and belief. This rule presupposes thus no strict identity, no strict negative or positive reciprocity. On the contrary, it excludes and forbids that I intend in any case to take or occupy his place, for this is really and essentially impossible, and is even the source of all injustices. This *impossible and forbidden* substitution can only be carried out in pure imagination, i.e. by drawing from the fund of my pure counter-possibilities, of my pure ego variants, the one singular variant congruent with that, which is manifestly expressed by the other. Doing and feeling as he does has nothing formally absurd, and can't prevent me from arming him. The same can happen, could or may have happened me, and this possibility does not ground any positive or negative imperative. As we learned from Husserl, this endless stock of pure variants forms the ideal extension of the *eidos ego*. In this sense, the eidetic reveals once more as the resource of every self-modifications and the foundation for any norms. More precisely, it is the root of the ethical distance and of all ethical measure, for all subjective and objective acts of valuing.

Consequently the newest engagement with the *CM* should sum up to an affectively and intellectually appropriate repetition of Husserl's analysis. This implies a fully articulated reading of each proposition and terms, distinctions, etc. i.e. a reading fulfilling each logical intention with its proper intuitive sense. This in turn cannot be achieved unless we articulate within ourselves, *in our proper sphere*, and as a pure example, what is meant on each instance. No phenomenological description of joy or deception, wish and fear, in all their infinite modalities is understandable unless we re-produce within ourselves the corresponding dispositions, feelings, etc. Since we are not naturally properly in such or such disposition, etc. this reproduction is necessarily an imaginary one. I don't have to become alien to myself, but accept to produce within myself imaginary alter egos. Hence, I am not condemned to any kind of solipsistic and specular confinement. On the contrary, this purely imaginary feeling introduces us to the real affective dimension of intersubjectivity and to the roots of the feeling of the affective interpersonal distance on which is founded the ethical sense of respect and dignity.