

Phenomenology and the Social Context of Psychiatry

Social Relations, Psychopathology, and Husserl's Philosophy

Edited by Magnus Englander

Bloomsbury Academic

An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

The I and the We

Psychological Reflections on Husserl's Egology

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Introduction

This chapter seeks to contribute to answering the following question: How can a Husserlian phenomenology, which at first might appear to focus exclusively on first-person meanings given to the consciousness of individual subjects, contribute to psychiatry's understanding of and ability to work within the field of social interrelatedness – that which is lived by a *we*, not merely by an *I*? The approach I will take is to begin with first-person description in an interpretive dialogue with Husserl's writings on egology and its relationship to the 'you' and thus the 'we.' In explicating the data so given, I will rely upon both Husserl's static and genetic phenomenology. I will work with personal, experiential data because the data of phenomenological psychological research is intimate – and in seeking to bring Husserlian insights down into the soil and messiness of everyday psychological lived-experience, we work in a primary way with raw, first-person narratives. This chapter is not intended as a full-fledged psychological study – for example, eidetic findings are not sought – it is intended in part to exemplify how data opens to the phenomenological eye. In this case the narrative material is my own, but the data might just as easily come from an Other – in any case, our personal lives are the flesh without which the εἶδος (*eidos*) would be disembodied, lacking life and warmth. For psychological researchers, the embodied lived-experiences given to us in the form of narratives are more than mere raw material for the scholarly ascription of essences – they are the human setting through which the *eide* are clarified in order to return to us, incarnate, pregnant with meaning for future living. This chapter aims to contribute to illuminating a

Husserlian sense of the 'we' by exploring the layers of the 'I' and its origins and embeddedness, for Husserl, in I-You relations – that is, within the we-world of companionship (*socius*) and community.

Sociality refers to our companionship (Latin: *socius*) with fellow human beings, the living-together-with within which the work of psychiatry and psychology is situated. To shed light on the meanings of *socius* for psychiatry and psychology, I will not address the 'we' or we-intentionality in isolation – as might be an appropriately sharp focus for philosophical phenomenologizing – but rather seek to ground a sense of the we in a Husserlian understanding of the 'I's' that encounter each other in living the 'we'.

My guiding assumption is that in order to grasp the 'we' phenomenologically, it is necessary to first grasp who and what are the subjects who encounter each other in an already-given intersubjective world as *persons*. Consequently, I will seek to situate we-intentionality within phenomenology's overall account the constitution of egos. A reader who is new to Husserl or the tradition he initiated might imagine that a phenomenological understanding of consciousness, ego, and community could be easily grafted onto mainstream psychological conceptions – for example, the assumptions held by psychodynamic, object-relations, or cognitive-behavioral theory. However, this would be a fundamental flattening and impoverishing of the phenomenological tradition, neglecting its radicality, and therefore miss what it can offer social psychiatry. Without bracketing mainstream psychological assumptions about the origins and meaning of the 'I' – that is, without bracketing, one might say, the natural theoretical attitude of mainstream clinical psychology – we are likely to replicate the hegemonic occidental conception of ego within which as Cushman (1995, p. 69) writes, the ego is envisioned and indeed idealized as individualistic, 'bounded', and 'masterful', in a manner inseparable from systems of diagnosis and social control. Phenomenology demands that we regard such normative scientific conceptions as *constituted* and *historically situated*, rather than accept them as givens, because to take this conception as given would be to lapse into a kind of naïveté towards which Husserl (1970, p. 48) wrote, every methodical science tends, observing in the *Crisis* that 'to the essence of all method belongs the tendency to superficialize itself in accord with technization'. To leave unquestioned dominant theoretical conceptions of ego in a phenomenological approach to psychiatry would amount to colluding with an impoverished psychological praxis lived as τέχνη (*techne*). Instead, phenomenology has a radical task in relation to egology and sociality; as Hart (1992) has written, this task does not stop at bracketing the natural attitude in order to unfold how that which appears appears for us; in

a sense this would render us mere spectators. Rather, Hart writes, 'phenomenology's ultimate task is to uncover this anonymous pre-personal, pre-egological "to which" – to which appears all that appears' (p. 194). That this more radical task has immense importance for psychology should be immediately clear.¹

This chapter seeks to introduce the reader to Husserl's investigations of consciousness that provide the context for the field of I-You relations within which sociality arises. I hope to provide readers with a basis for progressively bracketing mainstream psychological assumptions concerning conscious contents as the exclusive possession of egos envisioned as enduring and strictly bounded entities whose selfhood is entirely narrative, and the view that the social realm is an amalgamation of interrelated but fundamentally divisible, isolated egos.

En-worlded Relationality and Primordial Relationality

For Husserl our relational life is complex and multilayered. Phenomenologically, the encounter with otherness is critical in two quite different ways: in the active shared constitution of a common world by subjects, which I will refer to as *en-worlded relationality*, and in a primordial, passive manner close to the very origin of the 'I', which I will refer to as *primordial relationality*. The term 'collective intentionality' is most frequently used in reference to the former: the intentional relations and co-intending lived by subjects in community. I will begin with a short discussion of we-intentionality as co-perceiving, en-worlded relationality, and then move to the primordial origin of the 'I' in relationship.

From a phenomenological perspective, in everyday consciousness experience objects are given to a perceiver both directly and indirectly. In biting into an apple, its *taste* is directly given to me as a *presence*. In contrast the genuine manner of the givenness of some objects of consciousness is indirect, and this applies to my consciousness of the ego of the Other: for phenomenology, the conscious life of the Other transcends my consciousness (Husserl, 1973). The alter ego is given to me in worldly life as *alter* precisely because I encounter her as a fellow being whose conscious interiority I do not access and live with the same *kind* of immediacy as I do my own (*ibid.*). This is not to say that the Other is not encountered genuinely and in a compelling way – my interiority is not privileged in this view, the Other's presence *as Other* is not *deficient* compared to my self-presence. However, what is given to me is by necessity only a partial view of the Other. Yet despite this partiality I nevertheless encounter her as a whole being – in her entirety as an Other, in Husserl's terms, she is both *presented* and

appresented to me (ibid.); an analogy is the way in which I see a *whole house* before me, even though all that's given to me is the facade. The facade is presented, the back of the house is appresented.

As Carr (1973) explains, for Husserl, we-perception and the grasping of intersubjective objects occurs when two or more people share overlapping presentations and appresentations. For example, if my friend and I watch Sorrentino's film *La Grande Bellezza* and discuss it afterwards, what occurs is a co-seeing, each from our own angles, with different but related presences and absences – features of the film that he sees I may not have seen, and vice versa, yet there is a we-seeing. It is *not* that we have two fundamentally separate perceptions, each sealed hermetically so to speak within our skulls – that each of us sees so to speak a 'different' film, and we 'compare notes' to identify commonalities between these two different films, 'mine' and 'his'. Rather, we are engaged in a shared act of perceiving *La Grande Bellezza as such*, an intersubjective object, each from our own perspectives – the unity of the act contains its multiplicity. Hence in Carr's words,

[F]rom the point of view of *either* presentation – mine or the other's – it is the *same* act that is constituted. And, if we take the concept of sameness seriously here, the perception 'as such', which corresponds to 'the whole *intersubjective* object', can only be considered *our* perception. The perception is a constituted act that cannot be ascribed totally to either of us, but only to both of us, to the *we*. (p. 30; emphases in the original)

We need not agree in the least regarding our interpretations of the film to nevertheless co-see it; it is an object that invites a multiplicity of readings, but the film is the object of *our* perception and *our* conversing. Furthermore – and this is particularly important for the present investigation – Carr writes,

The establishment of the *we* in common perception is the simplest form of what Husserl calls the *Vergemeinschaftung der Monaden* [communalization of monads] when two subjects confront one another and stand in relation to the same objects they form, to that extent, a rudimentary *community* that can itself be considered as performing an act (*cogitamus*) through 'its' diverse (and in this case simultaneous) presentations. (p. 30; emphases in the original)

Here we must take the word *community* quite seriously: it is not meant metaphorically, but rather, practically and foundationally, because the genuine meaning of community – of *socius* or companionship in living – is founded upon the shared living of a common world, not merely formal correspondences between my perceptions conceived of as 'my reality' and 'yours'; as if we

inhabit private universes within which we each possess a kind of Lordship! Furthermore, Carr (1987) observes, fidelity to the phenomenon of 'we-ness' means that we cannot describe community as an 'it' without falsifying the lived-experience. Our meeting in the intersubjective field is an event, a co-living that implicates our subjectivities, that can only be named an 'it' – as in, 'It was a moving funeral service', through a distancing that falsifies the lived-meaning of the event itself.

For Husserl the implications of we-intentionality are so far-reaching that as Carr (1973, p. 30) writes, they lead 'to a whole theory of experience, constitution and the world whose point of departure is no longer individual consciousness but such a community at whatever level it may be found'. For example, as Carr (1986, pp. 290–1) explored in a chapter entitled 'Cogitamus ergo Sumus', communities 'can be considered intentional subjects, analogues in some ways to individual subjects', hence the 'we' can be understood as a kind of 'subject or agent', and just as a person has her own narrative, so can a community; 'certain groups we call communities are subjects for themselves of a kind of life-story, just as an individual is'. The implications for social psychiatry of the first kind of relationality I mentioned above, *en-worlded relationality*, begins to stand out as it becomes clear that a phenomenologically informed social psychiatry can examine both the co-constitution of communal experience and life at multiple levels – in intimate relations, families, cultures, and subcultures, in a way historically and linguistically situated – as well as examining the breakdowns or ruptures in communality, the obstacles or fissures in co-constitution and co-living that makes full use of Husserl's work, largely neglected by psychologists thus far on affective intentionality, which will be addressed below.

Everything we have traced so far in terms of relationality is centered upon the layer of everyday lived experiences in which 'I' am already named for myself as 'this person', with a personal history, identity, name, and so on – I have termed relationality so situated an 'en-worlded relationality'. As we will see, Husserl (1989, p. 128) refers to this layer of being-an-I who has relations with others as the 'personal ego' or the 'empirical ego', and this is the layer of the ego properly named '*the real psychic subject*'. But for phenomenology this is but one layer of being an individuated locus of consciousness. It is clear that en-worlded relationality already offers a perspective on the life of consciousness that emphasizes its embeddedness in communities and shared narratives as constitutive of psychological life not centered on the individual human person in isolation. Perhaps even more radical a shift away from the *solus ipse* is pointed to by Husserl's work on primordial relationality and its place in constituting the 'I'.

While phenomenological philosophical inquiry is rightly regarded as emphasizing a first-person perspective, it is sometimes for this reason misconstrued as neglecting intersubjectivity and narrowly focusing on 'private' experiences in a way that risks solipsism and a fatal devaluation of interrelatedness (cf. Zahavi, 2003).² Were it the case that phenomenology exclusively grounds its claims in the private experiences of a self-contained, solitary I, and from this *solus ipse* proceeds to deduce the alter ego as a mere analogue to its own primacy, phenomenology would invite the charge of solipsism, since it would reduce the otherness of the Other to, as Hart (1992, p. 179) puts it, 'simply a declension of me'. In fact as Hart maintains, rather than inviting the charge of solipsism, Husserl argues that the core of one's sense of being an 'I' – by which is meant in this instance being an empirical, personal ego – derives from the originary, primary experience of being recognized by an Other: 'in a genetic-constitutional sense I am, first of all, The Other to Others' (ibid.). That is, I-ness arises within a relational matrix; moreover, Hart argues, for Husserl the ego's primordial sense of its 'I' is in a sense given to the ego through its encounter with the Other as 'the first personal "I"' (ibid.). That is to say: the You is the first 'I', I 'learn' my 'I' through the encounter with the You. As Hart puts it, 'the original sense of "I" is *not* what I refer to but to what I perceive the Other to refer when self-referring' (ibid.).

More specifically, being seen by the Other – being recognized *as* an Other by the Other, is that which grants me a full sense of my 'I', the Other's extending himself toward me in what Hart (1992) refers to as 'gracious regard', because in this view, I-ness is a kind of gift given through a caring, even a primordially loving relationship. Hart describes this as occurring developmentally in infancy, for an 'I' who has not yet arrived at self-reflecting and position-taking acts of consciousness (ibid., p. 180). Here, we are engaging with the genetic dimension of Husserl's phenomenology, because we are seeking to reconstructively trace our way back (the *Rückfragen*) to the grounds of lived intentionality in its ongoing flowing between passivity and activity – in Hart's words, to 'the awareness of an infant or waking monad', which static phenomenology, focused exclusively upon the examination of active intentionality's cognitive achievements, cannot access (p. 185). Hart's linking of the infant to the 'waking monad' alerts us that the I's reliance upon the Other is in principle not limited to infancy, but also is embedded at a primordial level in all relating-in-awakening, since as we will see below, for Husserl every monadic, streaming locus of consciousness that awakens to 'find' itself as *this* person in the world is simultaneously, at a deeper stratum, an anonymous, pre-reflective, and not-yet-self-recognizing hyletic flow.

When the 'I' awakens in meeting an Other, the way in which the Other transcends my consciousness of her is most fully realized when I relate to the Other as a You rather than as a thing, an *it* (Hart, 1992, p. 40; cf. Buber, 1970). The Other's presence for me is characterized by a kind of absence of my perceiving ego's centrality and self-immediacy – instead, the Other is privileged.³ Hart (1992, p. 179) names this shift – which is constitutive of the Other *as other* and thus makes interrelatedness possible – a 'self-displacement'. This self-displacement is not affectively neutral, but reflects a primordial love; in making this case Hart (1992) draws upon Husserl's discussions of love – a dimension of his phenomenology foreign to most phenomenological psychologists.⁴ Love require alterity, and Phenomenology's examinations of otherness do not imply an undifferentiated, muddy merging of ego and alter, but rather, a primordial interdependence that requires we abstain from reifying the boundary between ego and its Other. As Carr (1973, p. 29) notes, for Husserl, 'the alter ego is not posited *outside* my own experience; rather, he is *brought into* the sphere of my own experience through the broadening of the concept of experience and of the concept of a monad' (emphasis in the original).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a full presentation of the primordial reliance of the 'I' on the 'You' in Husserl's phenomenology; a brief discussion of Hart's (1991) work on primordial communalization and primordial empathy will serve as a provisional indication of the implications. As Hart (1992, p. 186) writes, Husserl concluded that at the limits of phenomenologizing, if the inquirer attempts to perform the most radical, primordial reduction possible by stripping away every trace of alterity from the passive streaming life of consciousness, leaving only *ownness*, the attempt to fully bracket Otherness proves *impossible in principle*. Hence the co-presence of the Other is an inescapable constituent of consciousness as such. Husserl likewise proposes the existence of a 'primal empathy' or 'instinct of empathy' that is a form of communalization occurring on the transcendental egoic layer and underlying the empathic perceptions of personal egos in everyday life. In 1932 Husserl writes, 'in the primordial sphere we have already empathy – but disengaged from functioning and itself anonymous' (C 16 IV, 28; cited in Hart, 1992, p. 185). Husserl calls 'the communalization (analogous to retention) prior to empathic perception a primal empathy or instinct of empathy' (*ibid.*, p. 236).

Another way to say this might be that what we observe as lived-experiences of *empathy* between en-worlded, personal egos have, for the empathizing empirical ego, an anonymous, pre-empirical nucleus that is enfolded within the actively intending and self-narrating flow of the personal ego. This would also imply

that for an inquirer to discover the primordial ground of his or her empathic relations would require genetically tracing the instinct back to its pre-egoic ground. Moreover, I would like to argue that the primordially of the *finding oneself* in relating to the Other has a strong purchase on the human person *precisely because its ground is pre-egoic* in the sense of prior to and constitutive of personal selfhood. For this reason the call to attend to the empirical Other is never solely a factual one, it is always also a primordial call: it calls to the person at a level that is prior to the constitution of the narrative so often taken, in a natural attitude, as his or her essential self.⁵ Or, otherwise put, the You is not something encountered by an already self-aware 'I': instead I-ness arises for a locus of consciousness *finding itself as an I in the midst of its encounter with a You, a finding prompted by the presence of that You*. Husserl questions precisely what kind of identity, if it is an ego-identity at all, can be associated with the ground of empathy? 'Is it already I?' he asks, 'Is it not rather the case that only through the transcending of its subjectivity in the non-memorial representings, those of empathy, that the "I with the Others", I and Others as existing, comes to be?' (D 10 IV, 18, cited in Hart, 1992, p. 186). So the ground of community and human interrelatedness for a phenomenologically informed social psychiatry is to be found in this direction – the inquirer's genetic tracing back beyond the empirical ego to her pre-egoic source. Hart's argument, strongly relevant for social psychiatry or psychology, is simultaneously ontological, axiological, and erotic: 'there is a basic analogy and symmetry of love as self-displacing and self-communalization which are the conditions for self-consciousness (wakefulness) and the presence of Others through empathy' (p. 231). Drawing out the implications of these three intertwined levels is a matter for future work.

If we shift our focus from the primordial to the context of everyday life in a natural attitude, the I's embeddedness within a world given to me *with my fellow men and women* is so emphasized by phenomenology that Merleau-Ponty (1996, p. xi) remarks in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, '[T]here is no inner man, man is in the world', and it is helpful to consider that the *world* meant here is in Husserl's words a 'we-world', a *Wir-Welt*, or a 'with-world', a *Mitwelt* (Moran, 2012, p. 288). Hence being in contact with *world* cannot be conceived of as a private affair; rather, Husserl (1973, p. 91) claims phenomenological praxis discloses that 'I *experience* the world (including others) – and, according to its experiential sense, *not* as (so to speak) my *private* synthetic formation but as other than mine alone [*mir fremde*], as an *intersubjective* world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its Objects to everyone' (emphases in the original). I will next examine in greater detail the layers of the 'I' discussed

by Husserl, which appears to resemble less and less the strongly bounded ego Cushman (1995) characterizes as postulated by mainstream American clinical psychology.

Husserl's Egology: The Pure and the Personal Ego

Husserl (1989) frequently describes consciousness using the metaphor of geological strata or layers. The two layers we are interested in here are the Pure or Transcendental layer of the ego, and the personal or empirical ego, the individual psychic human subject with his or her personal habits, characteristics, history, surrounding community, and cultural context.⁶ Husserl argues that these layers of conscious life can be discerned and described by phenomenology, and it is precisely for this reason that '[w]e distinguish, ever faithful to what is given intuitively, between the pure and transcendental ego and the *real psychic subject*' (p. 128; emphasis in the original). However precisely in making these distinctions Husserl warns against conceiving of them in a naive way, as if the layers of ego were disconnected or strictly separable. On the contrary, 'as transcendental ego, after all, I am the same ego that in the worldly sphere is a human ego' (1970, p. 264; cf. 1973, p. 37).⁷

For Husserl (1989, pp. 116–17), 'pure Ego' designates the unique locus of a streaming conscious living, 'the center of all intentionality whatsoever', that constitutes a given personal ego and her world through the intentionality of consciousness. Hence flowing life of the pure ego is a layer of conscious living that exists 'prior' to its constituting (finding) itself as a personal ego with her habits, character, autobiography, history. To express the constitutive event as a *finding* is consistent with Husserl's own language of 'encounter': the constitutive relationship between the pure and personal layers of ego is such that, he writes, 'I must encounter myself constituted as personal Ego', because 'the course of the lived experience of pure consciousness is necessarily a process of development in which the pure ego must assume the apperceptive form of the personal ego, hence must become the nucleus of all sorts of intentions' (p. 263). I find myself as a personal 'I', yet it is the pure, pre-subjective layer of my 'I' that is the nucleus of 'my' ongoing intentional acts. That the pure ego as a layer of conscious life is 'prior' to the empirical ego is meant ontologically, not temporally, because temporality is constituted along with and therefore only arises *for* the personal ego: it is only an 'I' who awakens and recognizes herself as existing *in this spacial location at this time*, for whom temporality exists.⁸

Thus the layers of pure and the personal or empirical ego are in constant interplay as constituting and constituted; as the pure ego intentionally grasps its living as the life of an empirical identity, the layer of personal subjectivity coalesces as the person names her objects and herself, with the world-for-consciousness emerging in simultaneous and differing ways for each layer. In relation the world as spacio-temporal setting, Husserl (1989, pp. 116–17) notes, ‘the empirical Ego in the form, I as man, functions as the phenomenal-real central member for the constitution, in appearances, of the entire spatio-temporal world’.

For Husserl (1989, p. 264), the arising of the personal ego within the streaming life of a given monad does not occur in a self-contained, solipsistic way through self-perceptions and self-experience, nor is it assembled so to speak associatively through actively intended actual experiences. Rather, the personal ego arises ‘out of life’ – in Husserl’s words; *life* ‘is what it is not *for* the Ego, but it is itself the Ego’ (ibid.). In other words, the ego is a locus of *living* and located empirically in time and space – it is not a composite of associations *about* life. This living is not solitary, hence the development of the personal ego is shaped by one’s interrelationships with others, both individual others and the communal context in which one lives, including ‘the demands of morality, of custom, of tradition’, which can be taken on either passively, or through active position-taking – that is to say, through the reasoning and ethical choices one makes in relation to the social context in which one finds oneself (pp. 281–2). The ego’s choices are formative in that through its chosen behaviors ‘the Ego exercises itself, it habituates itself, it is determined in its later behavior by its earlier behavior, the power of certain motives increases, etc. The ego “acquires” capacities, posits goals, and, in attaining these goals acquires practical skills’ (p. 265). Hence the personal ego ‘is constituted out of one’s own (active) position-taking, and out of one’s own habits and faculties, and consequently is an externally apperceptive unity, the *kernel of which is the pure Ego*’ (p. 278; emphasis in the original).

Simultaneously the pure layer of the ego is a strata of one’s conscious life that demonstrates unity and uniqueness, in that ‘[t]he pure Ego is . . . numerically one and unique with respect to “its” stream of consciousness’ (Husserl, 1989, p. 117). We can say the pure ego is *individuated* in that there is a sense in which ‘every human-ego harbors its transcendental ego’ (Husserl, 2001, p. 471). In itself the pure layer of ego is not a person with a personal identity; rather, it is the constituting source of that personality: it is the ongoing ‘nucleus’ of a conscious life that is required for the sense of a personal ego to continue to arise and change as an identity that undergoes changes in time. In contrast to this mutability:

In itself the pure Ego is immutable. It is not the kind of identical something that would first have to manifest and prove itself as identical by means of properties remaining permanent throughout manifold states as these are determined by changing circumstances. Therefore it is not to be confused with the Ego as the real person, with the real subject of the real human being. It has no innate or acquired traits of character, no capacities, no dispositions, et cetera. It is not changeably related, in real properties and states, to changing real circumstances, and thus it is not given in appearance with reference to appearing circumstances. In order to know what human being is or what I myself am as a human personality, I have to enter into the infinity of experience in which I come to know myself under ever new aspects. (Husserl, 1989, p. 110)

'Immutability' might appear otherworldly; instead I would argue that, since the pure ego has its own habitus, it is not envisioned as frozen: stasis is by no means Husserl's intention here – what does not change is the wholeness characteristic of the monad. In contrast to this unity, the ego as the real person, real subject, is always living changing circumstances and its life is in constant flux. And it is largely at this layer of the ego that I name, recognize, and know myself as a subject having a kind of endurance and describable character: Husserl writes, 'I know what my own character is like: I have an ego-apperception, an empirical "self-consciousness". Each developed subject is not just a stream of consciousness with a pure ego, but each has accomplished a centralization in the form, "Ego"' (p. 277).

The pure layer of ego does not disappear when the personal ego is constituted; instead, a wide range of daily phenomena are the lived experiences that belong to this or that pure ego. Hence the bodily experience of warmth of the sun upon my arm is not exclusively lived by the personal subject – on the contrary, in the breadth of human experience the widest range possible is in the flow of the pure ego, and only a limited constituted subset of that flow pertains to the personal subject. Hence from this perspective, most of what we live is lived in its foundations pre-personally, and only a sliver of our lives, which are already personally being lived, are further constituted as feature of the life of 'I the man', or 'I the woman', with all the distinctness of my life.

The life of the psychic subject is highly fluid and dynamic, yet this does not mean that the psychic ego itself, for Husserl, is nothing but a locus of flow lacking enduring qualities. The personal, psychic ego is a unity-in-change, an identity which, while always being constituted by the pure ego, is nevertheless characterized by an important degree of unity:

What is meant by this psychic Ego . . . is not the monadic flux belonging to this Body experientially, nor it is something that occurs as a real moment of this flux, but rather is a unity indeed essentially related to the flux, though in a certain sense transcending it. The subject is now a substrate of properties (personal properties in a determinate, very broad sense) analogous to the way a material thing is a substrate of thingly-real properties. (Husserl, 1989, p. 129)

Descriptive Example of the Interplay of Pure and Personal Ego

As noted above, we would misunderstand Husserl if we were to view the pure and personal egoic layers as walled-off from each other or strictly separable, since as the center of constitutive life, the transcendental layer of ego is dynamic and ongoingly constitutes the personal ego and its world.⁹ As modes of the flowing life of the monad, the pure and personal layers of ego are co-present in varying degrees in everyday experience. To give an example of their interrelatedness and constant intertwining, I will describe an actual experience of the following phenomenon: *struggling to remember something that felt important*. In so doing I will rely on Husserl's accounts of active and passive intentionality, affective intentionality and awakening, and hence both the static and genetic dimensions of Husserl's phenomenological praxis. My aim is to convey the complex layers of Husserl's egology, the dynamism characterizing individual egoic life – a life always situated among and in relation to others – and begin to suggest the way individual agency is grasped phenomenologically. Now, to the description:

During a period of time in which my family was struggling to cope with my father's deepening Alzheimer's, one day the image of an actress came to mind, but I was unable to remember her name. In trying to remember the name of this actress, a remembering which felt emotionally compelling, I began to search in a memorial way for her name, which was present to me as a kind of frustrating absence. It was as if the name of the actress was somehow 'in' me but I could not grasp it: her image both as a young girl and a woman was easily available to me in memory, yet the name eluded me. Searching in an associative way, I ran through multiple roles she played in film: as a young girl opposite Jean Reno in *Leon the Professional*; as a princess and mother of Luke Skywalker in several of the *Star Wars* sequels, even as a ballet dancer in *Black Swan*, a film I have never actually seen! More than that, I remembered easily that like me she is of Jewish background, and I had some additional associations of her having married

a Frenchman . . . but with all that, her name still escaped me. This ongoing inability was not a neutral experience – I was troubled; feeling stuck and unable to remember was worrisome, though at first I was only vaguely aware of the emotional tone of faint anxiety in the background of my frustrated efforts to remember, and which I only later connected to fears provoked in me for my own future memorial health by my father's worsening dementia. In fact, I chose not to pull out my smartphone and use Google, which would have instantly given me her name, because the presence of the missing name for me convinced me that somehow I 'had' it, but was unable to grasp it, and I did not want to shortcut 'really remembering'. Instead I chose to struggle with the present absence.

Let's pause in this narrative and reflect on the layers of ego that are already evident, which I will consider as if it is an Other's story, using the third person. What's most evidently highlighted is the personal ego, I the man, the individual subject, the son of a father who was in the midst of losing his memory. It's the subject's personal ego who is striving to accomplish an action: to remember a name. But did this task and all the urgency that surrounds it – which clearly relates to the story of that personal ego, his identity, and questions about his identity and mortality in relation to intimate others in his life – arise from the personal ego in the first place? In other words what was occurring *before* he recognized and seized upon the task of trying to remember the actor's name, *as* an emotionally laden task?

There was a flow of streaming consciousness in a natural attitude in which only at a certain point self-reflection entered, when the flow was obstructed by his inability to remember her name. Prior to the obstacle being encountered and recognized as an obstacle, he was in was a largely hyletic, passive flow – a series of associations which were almost entirely un-reflected upon. The personal ego in this condition was largely latent, while the constitutive streaming which is the life of the pure ego was of course ongoing and mostly passive, a largely anonymous moment in a natural attitude.

In the moment an obstacle was encountered, the personal 'I' named itself and the problem he faced and came to the fore in so doing – that is, the personal ego came to the forefront as he named the problem he faced and his sense of himself arose with that obstacle: the elusive object of consciousness, the missing name. All of this marks a shift from largely passive intentionality to active intentionality, with the frustrated 'I' as the subject of consciousness over and against the object, the unremembered name. And as that personal ego shifted to the foreground, a history, a narrative, and a horizon all come into play – his horizon in this case is colored by the fear of a far more serious losing of his

capacity to remember, just as his father was increasingly losing it. Importantly, that fearful horizon is present even though it is not being fully reflected upon in that moment – because the personal ego always brings with it its context, its horizon, and its history, which is not merely a cognitive horizon and history but an affective one as well.

Indeed, the faintly fearful quality of being unable to remember something was a fairly recently sedimented habitual way of living the phenomenon of failing to remember something, in his life, because it was only the past seven years since his father's Alzheimer's diagnosis, and as he approached the age of fifty himself, that the meaning of being unable to remember had become something fearful for him rather than merely inconvenient and unremarkable, a mere fact that would likely trigger nothing more than Googling 'Leon the Professional'! Previously he might simply have pulled out his phone or asked a friend for the actress's name; now remembering becomes its own task. Thus far we have seen a moment in the passive flow of consciousness in everyday life in which the layers of ego are present but the personal ego is only indistinctly so, followed by a shift to an emphasis on active intentionality and the personal ego as the subject that so to speak coalesces in facing an obstacle, and in relation to that object of consciousness his ego-identity as a subject is evoked. As we will see, remembering is seized upon as a task by the personal ego, yet the inability to remember is subjectively frustrating because it points to an act which transcends the personal ego's capability and is beyond the scope of the personal ego's agency.

I will now return to the first-person narrative:

I discovered no matter how much I searched memorially, I could not grasp the name of the actress. I withheld myself from solving this problem technologically or socially; instead, I chose to live with the absence of the name indefinitely in order to find out if I remembered later. I then let go of the struggle and, for days and maybe weeks I would occasionally recollect the actress's image and return to the question of her name, which continued to evade me. An indefinite number of days later, again in the midst of the flow of everyday life, with the question coming in and out of my awareness, the name 'Natalie Portman' suddenly came to me, I think not even in a moment in which I was aware of searching for it. Once the name was there, I felt relief and joy! The way the name stood out was precisely *not* as the outcome of my effort in that moment; on the contrary, it seemed that her name was suddenly present for me, disclosed to me, and I merely witnessed it and felt the ongoing question answered and the absence fulfilled by a meaning which had somehow been present with me all along, but absent. To say that 'I remembered' is only partially descriptive of my experience,

because 'remembering' was not an experience of 'my' accomplishing 'my' task. Instead, an answer was given to me.

To shift perspectives again, it appears that one for whom the name was suddenly present was indeed the personal ego – or swiftly *became constituted as* the personal ego – but the agent who *found* that name, to whom the name was disclosed, was not the personal ego, because the subject experiences the name as 'given to him', as if something already presented to him is *then* recognized as fulfilling the previously unfulfilled intuition – and this is phenomenally different from the personal ego's so to speak 'owning' the entire process of remembering. Instead it seems that the name Natalie Portman was pre-egoically retained and sedimented; hence it is a passive, pre-subjective, and pre-objectified locus of consciousness that regains contact with this retained memorial object via passive intentionality, making it disposable to being grasped by active intentionality. And as the name Natalie Portman is grasped by active intentionality, the subject, the personal ego, co-arises but as if slightly afterwards, since the name appears first and *then* there is an 'I remember!'

To explicate the meanings of this description for our inquiry, I will turn to Husserl's account of *awakening* through affective intentionality. Why specifically *affective* intentionality? Ferrarello (2016) has argued that Husserl is frequently misread as offering an exclusively *cognitivist* conception of consciousness life, whereas Husserl in fact asserts that affective and sensuous consciousness are the ground of constitution. In refuting the cognitivist reading in favour of a broadly hyletic account, Ferrarello (2016) turns to Husserl's discussions of affect consciousness (*Gemütsbewusstsein*) and affective intentionality (see Husserl, 2011, p. 277). Taking seriously Husserl's claim that '*affect-consciousness*' plays a 'constant role in the passivity of the life of consciousness' (*ibid.*), some brief comments will be offered here in order to prepare the way for a description and explication of an example of the centrality of feeling (*Gemüt*) in awakening.

Husserl (2011, p. 277) argues that whenever consciousness constitutes an object through its intentional acts, that object 'exercises an affection on the ego'. Husserl claims affect-consciousness is the *sphere of presentation*, specifically, '*the sphere of objectivating consciousness*' (*ibid.*). This is because the way an object is *felt* pre-egoically stimulates consciousness, immersed and so to speak 'sleeping' in its hyletic flow, to turn towards that object. Once this turning has begun, wakefulness arises, then the object's 'objective sense has emerged from the obscurity of passivity' (*ibid.*). In other words, through the passively intentional constituting of predicate layers, what Husserl calls *feeling* arises. At this

stage the intentionality of *feeling* is yet 'without active egoic participation'; so there is a '*turning towards in feeling*' which is not yet *actively* intentional, hence not yet egoic, and *becomes actively intentional and egoic* as the pre-egoic locus of consciousness awakens *as this ego* amid its feeling-ful turning-toward its object (pp. 280–1). Contrasting the sleeping and wakeful states, Husserl (1989, p. 265) writes: 'In contrast to the waking ego, the sleeping [Ego] is complete immersion in Ego-matter, in the *hyle*, is undifferentiated Ego-being, is Ego-sunkenness, whereas the awake Ego opposes itself to the matter and then is affected, acts, undergoes . . . the Ego unceasingly constitutes its "over and against", and in this process it is motivated and always motivated anew, and not arbitrarily' (emphasis in the original). Since 'Ego' refers to two distinct layers, pure and personal, the use of 'Ego' can be confusing. Since it is the pure layer of the Ego that constitutes, and the personal Ego that is among the constituted, Husserl's statement above of necessity refers to objects exercising affection upon the pure Ego. Regarding this aspect of the passive life of the pure Ego, which is pre-egoic in the sense of being prior to the personal Ego, Husserl (2001, p. 278) writes: '[W]hat is constituted within passivity . . . as *an object*, can lead to a *feeling* already within this passivity.' This is to say, the passive life is already an affective life, because its objects are grasped 'as pleasurable or unpleasurable, as agreeable or disagreeable', which 'founds a *novel* consciousness: a layer of consciousness of the intentionality of feeling', and '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' (ibid.). Hence, 'the object is constituted in and through the objectivating that underlies the intentionality of feeling' (ibid.). The implications of this claim for the psychology of embodiment far exceed the scope of the present inquiry, but in reading Husserl here, we are clearly not in the presence of a cognitivist: affect (*Gemüt*, sometimes translated as 'heart') and affect-consciousness (*Gemütbewusstsein*) are foundational. Embodiment is central here: as Husserl notes in the midst of discussing affect-consciousness, 'sensuous consciousness underlies all valuing . . . matter, and in a higher level . . . nature' (note 166, p. 277).

The descriptive example we have taken up exemplifies affective intentionality in a case of a frustrated inability to remember, and the reawakening of the memorial object. Clarifying his use of the term 'awakening', Husserl (2001, p. 221) writes, '[B]y awakening we understand and distinguish two things: awakening something that is already given to consciousness as for itself, and the awakening of something that is concealed.' The awakening occurring here is of a meaning that was given to consciousness, retained, but then became concealed, and

hence was present as a lack. What is this lack, for Husserl, and what kind of 'affective accomplishment', in his words (p. 222), is exemplified in the preceding description?

It is seizing upon an object of consciousness, a retention – meaning an object that was present in the subject's consciousness multiple times before in the flow of his daily life and retained therein, in this case the name Natalie Portman, but which had no particularly strong affective meaning for him, *until the experience described above*. However, that previously unremarkable object, the actress's name, *became* important for him in the context described above – namely, as a seemingly lost memorial object that in its lost-ness, perhaps *precisely* as an unimportant but widely known datum, the name of a famous actress – seemed to challenge his ego-image of himself as someone healthy, with intact memory capable of easily recollecting such daily details, in the shadow of his father's failing memory and decline towards death. Remembering something previously unimportant to him – Natalie Portman's name – suddenly became emotionally charged for him – he now had feelings about the name, due to the emotional-impressional horizon within which he was living the forgetting. Husserl (2001, p. 222) writes that this 'influx of affective force, which naturally has its primordial source in the impressional sphere, can enable a retention (which is poor in or completely empty of particular affective content) to restore what is concealed in it concerning an overcast content of sense'.

Husserl (2001, p. 222) refers to this kind of shift in the affective meaning of a previously innocuous object when he notes, '[I]f the object constituted in the flux has taken on a special affective force, then the process of the retentive transformation may continue to progress, the process of *affective* clouding over going hand in hand with it is halted' (emphasis in the original). A new force is directed by consciousness towards the object because it now matters to me emotionally, and 'so long as the new force lasts, the objectlike moments that have attained a special affection are affectively preserved in the empty form of the presentation, thus sustained longer than without this new force' (ibid.). Here we have Husserl's precise way of describing the *lack* – as *the empty form of a presentation*, and his accounting for the way in which the subject's repeated seeking for the name occurred intermittently for days, due to the '[r]adiating back of affective force into the empty consciousness . . . and with this a tendency toward the identifying transition of the empty presentation into a self-giving, which renews "after a fashion" the constitutive process in the mode of remembering, and therefore "re"-covers the identical objective sense in its explicit differentiation' (ibid.). The re-emergence of the name this way is in the 'form of a disclosive

awakening' (p. 224), which is why remembering the name was not merely the presence of a neutral datum but had the sense of disclosure and greater awokenness, with 'awakening' characterized as a moment in which 'what is implicit becomes explicit once more' (p. 223). So what sort of affective accomplishment is the remembering of Natalie Portman's name? It is 'the accomplishment of awakening the element shrouded in implicit intentionality' (p. 222) thanks to the emotional reaching towards the object, which was lost to the personal Ego, retained in passive intentionality, and thus *implicitly* intended.

An implicit intentionality is lived passively, and this means pre-egoically, in a felt and bodily way that is not yet grasped by an 'I' who in that instant awakens as a personal Ego. And as we have seen this awakening from pre-egoic passivity is lived in dialogue with the impressional life of the personal Ego: stimulated or 'irritated' by the failure to remember, there is an affective turning-back towards the passively retained ground of sense, which in turn *can* in a certain way renew constitution.¹⁰ Husserl (2001, p. 125) carefully qualifies his statements: there is a *tendency towards* the transition from empty presentation to self-giving in the present; awakening is never guaranteed, nor is remembering a literal/factual recovery of a past sensing in the sense of a factual repetition; as he points out, 'an absolutely complete remembering' is an 'ideal limit-case'. Husserl emphasizes that 'waking up sedimented sense' is *motivated*, and 'the motives must lie in the living present where perhaps the most efficacious . . . are "interests" in the broad, customary sense, original or already acquired valuations of the heart [*Gemüt*], instinctive or even higher drives, etc.' (pp. 227–8).

It is impossible to conclude the discussion of the description without commenting briefly on the desire that animated the subject's struggle, and the relief that followed its fulfillment. In his discussion of striving and desire in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* Husserl (2001, p. 282) describes desire as not simply a 'turning toward' but a 'striving after'. 'Desire', for Husserl,

is a tendency that occurs in the way that both passivity as well as activity are carried out, everywhere an intentionality of feeling in the mode of striving... [and] has its positivity and negativity, like feeling in general. Its fulfillment is a relaxation that results from realizing [the striving, etc.], in the change into the corresponding joy of fulfillment: At root, joy lies in the arrival of what was lacking. (Ibid.)

All of this can be said to be present in the descriptive data – in particular, the coming into play of both passive and active intentionality, stimulated by desire, and joy at the fulfillment of that desire.¹¹

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to convey a sense of the complexity of Husserl's egology and its implications for the psychology of everyday life, and to point to the way in which for Husserl even the most seemingly solitary sense of 'I' is already indebted to a You, that is, to a primordial communalization. To offer descriptions illustrative of lived relationality will be the aim of future research.

This chapter sought to convey that, in contrast to the misreading of phenomenology as verging on solipsism, a careful reading of Husserl demonstrates both that the ego is neither strictly bounded nor ever accurately described as a *solus ipse* – either in its everyday living or in its originary encounter with others and the world. As the phenomenologizing I, I discover I am not the absolute owner of my actions, though as the actively intending 'I', I face ongoing choices, ongoing and intrinsically ethical position-takings – as the 'I' of 'I can' and 'I do' (Ferrarello, 2016). Yet the personal Ego, the 'I' who finds himself as the I who can or the I who must, is already given to himself in a bodily and affective streaming that transcends his personal, narrative identity because it is already given hyletically, already in the flow of an affective, bodily, socially, historically situated life – and it is precisely *within* this pregiven horizon that the 'I' awakens. It is as the life of a locus of consciousness already engaged in the world that the personal Ego awakens in moments of choice, including choosing how I name (predicate) an object of consciousness. Similarly, the attributes with which I can predicate myself in a given moment – as a diligent or a lazy piano student, a loyal or unreliable friend, a grateful or ungrateful son – are each named or recognized by the personal Ego in the flow of an already-present life, in a life shaped not only by the personal Ego's sedimented habits which lead me to repetitive actions in a semi-asleep way, and by the sedimented, shared habits of the multiple communities I inhabit – familial, friendly, communal, cultural – but also by the Transcendental Ego's habitus, *its* habitual way of finding itself in the world, the 'it' which is the constituting nuclear core of the 'me' that I name as a personal Ego.¹² Hence the attributes I can name as mine are only relatively so – I am never the absolute owner of my acts or attributes as a personal Ego; rather, I discover them always already in motion. Finally, as the phenomenologizing 'I', I likewise discover that the constituting kernel of my I-ness transcends my personal Ego, transcends all the ways in which I narrate my life story or describe myself, because the source of my living as *this monad*, this locus of consciousness, transcends my ability to grasp or name it or assign predicates to it – the ground of my

'I' is always a surprise to me in this sense, because '*its*' living always exceeds the grasp of my *cogitaciones*. This '*it*', if we take seriously Husserl's late discussions of alterity, is not a strictly bounded, solitary 'I', but a locus of consciousness that *finds itself as an I* within the relational matrix designated by *socius*, discovering itself primordially in the eyes of the You.

Notes

1. The phrase 'pre-egoic' can be confusing because it refers to the pure or transcendental egoic layer of consciousness that is 'prior', so to speak, to the personal or empirical ego. So the 'pre' is in relation to the personal, empirical ego.
2. Zahavi (2003, p. 109) notes that 'Husserl's phenomenology has very frequently been accused of being solipsistic', that is, 'a position that either claims that there only exists one single consciousness, namely one's own, or that argues that it is impossible to know whether there are in fact any other subjects besides oneself'.
3. For a phenomenological psychological discussion of empathy as following the other, see Englander (2014).
4. Hart (1992, p. 225) argues Husserl's assertion that 'our self-presence is analogously empathic' in its primordial deference to the Other 'occasioned Husserl once to claim that love is a chief problem of phenomenology', by which Husserl meant that love 'is a universal problem for phenomenology because it embraces the depths and heights of intentionality as a driving and productive force'.
5. For a useful phenomenological critique of an exclusively narrative account of selfhood, see Zahavi (2007).
6. For example, Husserl (1989, p. 313) writes, 'The Ego . . . is not an empty pole but is the bearer of its habituality, and that implies that it has its individual history'. Donohoe (2004, p. 182) summarizes the late Husserl's account of ego development in the following way: 'The ego adopts positions on the basis of its preexisting culture. Those positions evolve into habits, thus providing an identity for the ego. The instinctual connection of the ego with the Other(s) lays the groundwork for the higher-order we that takes on an identity of its own.'
7. Cf. Luft's (2011) discussion of Husserl's concept of the 'transcendental person' and the response to Heidegger's critique of transcendental subjectivity.
8. Husserl (2001, 481) writes, '[W]e can say with respect to the primordial present that "unconsciousness" is consciousness in the primordial present; the sensible object of which we are unconscious along with all the other objects of which we are unconscious are "given to consciousness" in an undifferentiated manner in a zero-consciousness.'

9. As Husserl (1989, p. 196) remarks, the intended surrounding world is 'in a certain sense always in a process of becoming, constantly producing itself by means of transformations of sense and ever new formations of sense along with the concomitant positings and annullings'. The same is true for the intended 'I.'
10. For his use of 'irritation', see Husserl (1989 p. 148).
11. As I have argued elsewhere (Applebaum, 2014), the researcher's inviting natural attitude description from a research participant yields data that is in contact with the participant's ongoing flow of both active and passive intentionality. Such data may be said to be both descriptive and ineluctably interpretive in a very particular sense, in that it demonstrates 'interpretive determination' (*Auffassung*) in the Husserlian sense of that term, and emplotment and the representation of the participant's narrative identity, in a Ricoeurian sense.
12. See Husserl (1989, p. 118) for an example of his discussion of the pure ego's habitus.

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