

HUSSERL'S NOTION OF THE OTHER AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Introduction

The notion of the other, also called social philosophy or intersubjectivity is a difficult problem to examine. For an empiricist, the notion of the other is a non-issue, for he commences with a plurality of existents. However, for any philosophy that affirms the superiority and supremacy of consciousness over the mundane realm and material existence, this is a serious problem, all the more so for phenomenology, since it affirms the primacy and primordially of consciousness, in the sense that consciousness not only assigns meaning to experiences, but also gives them their being or mode of existence. Consciousness is the fulcrum around which phenomenology turns. Phenomenology insists on the primacy of consciousness, which being the case, it is a serious problem to speak of an alter ego. It is all the more so when Husserl speaks of a solitary, absolute wordless, transcendental ego in *Ideas I*.

To elucidate the formation and development of a community is not an easy task. There are two elements within each person, 1) the body presented and perceived directly, identifying him as this individual and, 2) the consciousness appresented and apperceived pointing towards self. When I perceive the body, I can only have an apperception of his consciousness. Inasmuch as the other person has his body and consciousness, I also have the same, which implies that all of us, be it the other or myself, confront the same situation. If consciousness and body remain two distinct elements, we are said to suffer from a psychological problem. But consciousness and the body constituting the very same reality also lead to serious and unending problems, reflected upon by Husserl, in the V Meditation of *Cartesian Meditations* (CM) (Husserl, 1977f), discussed below.

Consciousness announces itself through the body, and while the two are not

identical, they are inseparable. There is unity in multiplicity here, maybe a contingent unity that lasts until the death of the individual. The issue is not the unity of body and consciousness, but instead, as to how the other, who has unity of body and consciousness, appear to me? Husserl continues his discussions on the other, post-publication of *Cartesian Meditations*, some of which include horizontal intentionality, open intersubjectivity, concrete experiences of the embodied other, *a priori*, and *a posteriori* consideration of transcendental intersubjectivity, etc. He wrote a great deal on the subject in his post-Crisis manuscripts, which he did not publish during his lifetime. Husserl's winter semester lectures of 1910-11, published as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, discussed the issue of the other in some detail (Husserl, 2006g).

This article has three parts; in the first, I elucidate the notion of the other, from the point of view of *CM*, followed by examination of the notion of intersubjectivity based on post-*CM* writings, and finally draw out my conclusions from Husserl's writings.

Part 1: The treatment of intersubjectivity in CM (V Meditation)

Husserl gives a transcendental phenomenological treatment of the other in the V Meditation of *CM*, the longest of them all and almost as long as all other four put together. The V Meditation is the culmination and the touchstone of transcendental intersubjective phenomenology. There are five points that stand out in the same, namely,

1. Solipsism and transcendental phenomenology (CM 42-43) (Husserl, 1977g).
2. Sphere of ownness (CM 44-47) (Husserl, 1977h).
3. The other from an analogical angle (CM 48-54) (Husserl, 1977i).
4. The other and myself (CM 55) (Husserl, 1977e).
5. The individual and the community (CM 56-58) (Husserl, 1977j).
6. Solipsism and Transcendental Phenomenology

Solipsism, from Husserl's *Ideas I*, exemplified the culmination of transcendental phenomenology. It is an integral part of idealistic philosophies, inviting common sense objections. Common sense conceives a plurality of egos; the others are distinct from me; they are other egos. Husserl's transcendental philosophy accepts a certain kind of solipsism. Here Husserl's phenomenology is confronted with two problems, the first, *CM*, being an integral part of transcendental phenomenology, must follow reduction to the end. The second problem is that constituting the other from perspective consciousness, and precisely as the other without inconsistencies is a major task. Constitution refers to the constitution of a thing, and here, it refers to the constitution of another human being, i.e., the difference between the modes of givenness versus experience of the other. In other words, it means that givenness of the other cannot be reduced to the level of givenness of a thing. This paradox has three levels; at the first level, I alone am the subject, while I am with the other. But the other is neither a psycho-physical object nor a thing, but in himself, a subject of experience like me. In the second layer, the world is not private, but instead a phenomenon experienced, the world within the domain of experience of a subject. In the third level, the world is not just a physical phenomenon, but a cultural object, referring not just to my constitutive capabilities, but in addition to those of a community constituting us all.

Sphere of Ownness (CM 44-47)

The domain of ownness also involves two major difficulties. To elucidate the notion of the other, we subject him to a special kind of reduction that is similar yet different from eidetic reduction, namely, the reduction to the sphere of ownness. In the ordinary, non-phenomenological sense, the other exists as an ordinary human person or being. but in the present case, I take into consideration only that which is my own. But one can question this sense of ownness. Everything in the world speaks of the other; the world is one of culture, it is for everybody to share, and hence a world of the other as well. One can then assume that there is a world prior to

intersubjectivity, or in other words, the world is an *a priori* necessary condition for intersubjectivity. Insofar this is the case, the genesis of the other cannot be myself. The sense of the other, however, arises from me, since I first assign a sense to myself, only after which can I bestow a sense to the other and the world at large. This constitutes the other as a phenomenon. But caution needs to be exercised, as the other as a phenomenon is very different from things as phenomena. Although Husserl does not surrender himself to the temptations of ontology, one cannot ignore the ontological differences present in his philosophy between a chair, a material physical object, and a human, a living meaning-giving person, though they are both merely phenomena from the perspective of phenomenology. The sense of the ego is transferred from myself to the other, which is *a priori* for the other to be an alter-ego. This reduction to the sphere of ownness in no way constitutes a dissolution of the other into me, rather the other remains a distinct entity, which implies that there is another constituted ego, unidentical to me, mirroring and reflecting my ego.

Husserl uses the expression 'going beyond' (encroaches on) and 'mirroring' as two terms to explain the constitution of the other. They imply that 'I go beyond myself to the other,' or to use Husserl's term, 'I encroach into the other', which may be an imperfect way to explain the expression. It would imply that I transcend myself to go to the other in the context of intersubjectivity. The second term, 'mirroring' is the act of viewing myself reflected on or going beyond myself to the other in the context of intersubjectivity. In the natural sphere, devoid of reduction, I am as I am. The world is also real. But everything transforms in the phenomenological attitude; the world becomes the world for *me*, with a sphere of ownness. But this own sphere is one of abstraction and poses a serious difficulty. While I am concrete, the other is also concrete, then where does abstraction occur? According to Husserl, abstraction does not have an Aristotelian meaning or a Lockean sense, rather, it is the commencement of methodological separation, i.e., abstraction is an isolable totality. The world as a phenomenon is abstracted from or separated from the world as a spatio-

temporal existent. From this perspective, the notion of abstraction does not create any contradiction. This isolable totality is the lived body (*Leib*) that is mine, the body that facilitates my movement and perception, and facilitates the expression of myself; it serves as a referent pole for all other physical bodies (*Körper*). Hence *Leib* is also abstracted from *Körper*. *Leib* indicates a primordial nature, an owned nature from where ownness arises. With reference to *Leib*, Husserl states that this reduction is to my transcendental sphere of peculiar ownness (Husserl, 1977v). The own sphere is autonomous and a positive totality, furnishing the other with an antecedent foundation.

The Other from an Analogical Angle (CM 48-54)

How can the sphere of ownness go beyond oneself to the domain of the other? It is here that Husserl introduces the most important theme of analogy, namely the analogical grasping of the other as the other ego, which also forms the core of the V Meditation. Three key points that stand out in the V meditation are the following.

1. Respect for the other and his otherness.
2. Transcending the sphere of ownness, and
3. Rooting my experience of the other in my primordial transcendental self.

Due to the analogical apprehension of the other, I overcome solipsism without sacrificing my ego. In my experience of the other, the other announces himself as a person in flesh and blood. But what about his life? What about himself as a person? On account of his flesh and blood, i.e., in the light of what he presents himself to me, I apprehend his life, I apprehend him as a person, I perceive his body and blood, thereby perceiving his life and himself as a person. But do I perceive his life, perceive him as a person in the same way that I perceive his body and blood? The answer is no. I perceive that which is directly and immediately given to me, i.e., his body and blood. His life and himself as a person cannot be directly and

immediately perceived. Husserl goes on to say that, while I have perception of his body and blood, I have apperception of him a person. His body and blood are rooted in his life, in himself as a person, on account of which, I have apperception of him as a person and as a self. So, how can I relate my perception of his body, flesh and blood, with the apperception of him as a person, or in other words, how are perception and apperception related to each other, and used to identify the presented with appresented? Husserl's answer to this query comes in terms of the development of the notion of analogy in three stages. I develop only the first two stages since the third stage is only hypothetical, with a lot of ifs and buts.

The First Stage

By virtue of analogy, the sense of the other moves from me to the other, i.e., the sense of the ego is transferred from myself to the other. Husserl's text in *CM* can be summarized as follows. Someone enters my perceptual domain; as such, it (may he) is a *Körper*, but I am a *Leib*; but for the world around me and the other, I am also a *Körper* constituted as an organism. Therefore, it is clear that only a resemblance connecting the other's body with mine can provide foundation and motive to conceive by analogy that the other's body is also a *Leib*, like mine. If this is the case with me, so is the case with the other, implying that I attribute to the other, what I have, i.e., making it impossible to reject the same to the other. The following are certain characteristics of analogy, according to Husserl:

1. Analogy is pre-reflective, moving from one object to another in the normal course. For example, God is faithful, husband is faithful, wife is faithful, a dog is faithful. God, husband, wife, dog, etc., are those in which faithfulness is rooted, and this analogy moves from one object to another, i.e., from God to husband to wife to dog. But Husserl's analogy differs from the above in that, analogy moves from subject to subject (i.e., from

2. myself, a subject, to another person who is also a subject from his own perspective).
3. In every analogy, there is a pairing, i.e., God's faithfulness is compared with or paired with that of the husband's or wife's or dog's faithfulness, providing associative support to analogy.
4. In the bodily presence of the other, I recognize my reflection in the other, extending my sense of ego to the other, i.e., akin to a transfer taking place. In terms of analogy, I anticipate the other, I presume the presence of somebody else out there. But this transfer needs to be confirmed by signs that confer fulfilment and being-status from the other. In other words, I behave in a certain manner expecting a response or communication from the other.

The Second Stage

I am aware of myself as a *Leib*, a lived body. I am also aware of my body as a *Körper*. However, I am also aware that there is an identity between my *Leib* and my *Körper*, for it is I myself as a subject (*Leib*) with a body (*Körper*). Inasmuch as I perceive my physical body (*Körper*), I apperceive my lived body (*Leib*), acquainting me (by way of apperception) of my own subjectivity. My *Leib* is one with my *Körper*. But how do I verify his subjectivity, his *Leib*, from the experience of his *Körper*? Or in other words, how do I identify his *Leib* with his *Körper* merely by experiencing his *Körper*? I am aware that my physical, bodily (*Körper*) experiences are expressions emanating from my *Leib*. I experience his bodily experiences or expressions in my personal domain. But these spring, not from my *Körper*, but from my *Leib*. Therefore, analogically, insofar as my bodily expressions originate, not from my *Körper* but from my *Leib*, his bodily expressions also originate, not from his *Körper*, but from his *Leib*, i.e., if mine is like this, then his cannot be different from mine; I cannot deny what I have to the other. I grasp expressions of his *Körper*, knowing fully well that they originate from his *Leib*. This understanding is as a result of the analogical knowledge that expressions of my *Körper* cannot exist unless they originate from my

Leib. Analogy certifies that the other is an ego, like me. All that belongs to my ego is grasped by myself, having a privileged access to myself, so is the case with him as well.

The Other and Myself (CM 55)

Husserl is well aware of the fact that he has not been able to demonstrate conclusively the existence of the other, for various reasons, namely,

1. The analogical grasping of the other does not account for reciprocity amongst egos.
2. The other is a projected and modified ego, which implies that there is no symmetrical relation between the other and me.
3. Pairing is unidirectional, from myself to the other; there is no reverse pairing, i.e., from the other to me. Consequently, the apodicticity of existence of the other remains derivative from mine.

To solve this problem, Husserl suggests that we need to coordinate empirical realism (where everybody is a real person) with transcendental idealism (where everything has a meaning assigned by me). The fulcrum of the problem is the human body. How is the body of the other the same for him, who lives it here and now, and for me who perceives it as my there? Note: everybody has a body. Remember what Gabriel Marcel said: "I am my body. Devoid of body, there is nobody." I call out the name of a student, 'Suresh'. The boy lifts his hand up and responds: "I am here." The hand is a part of the body, and the body (hand, here) stands out for the self. The name reflects the self, which means that there is an identity between the body and self. A few things need to be clarified here.

1. Initially at least, there is a chasm between the other and me.
2. There are many worlds corresponding to each subjectivity, for the world is dependent on it.

3. As I am a subjectivity in myself, the other is also a subjectivity in himself.
4. How do two subjectivities intend the same object in the very same way (e.g., this is a chair both for the other and me) i.e., how can an object be the same for a plurality of subjectivities? It all boils down to this, how can a body perceived by me over there, be apperceived by him, the other, as his own? My experience tells me that the body over there indicates another subjective life. This implies that it is apperception that brings about the identification of what is over there, with that is here; apperception refers to the subjective life of the other (as grasped by me).

Perception refers to grasping of his body (by me), while apperception refers to grasping aspects such as person, subject, subjectivity, etc., aspects not directly and immediately perceivable. However, perception is grasping the externals, like the body grasping what is directly and immediately perceivable. Similar notes can be attached to presentation and appresentation. Now the question is, can we overcome the distance between perceived and apperceived to arrive at their identity? This division exists, not just in me, but also in the other. I know for sure that, despite this division within me, I am not a divided self, there is intimate personal unity in me; this is my experience. I also attribute the same to the other, for analogically, it must be the same with the other as well. Consider the example of a magnet; while we speak of separation and distinction, the south and north poles of a magnet cannot be separated, although there is a distinction between the two, and similarly with either sides of the palm. In such cases, if one is given, the other must definitely accompany it; one cannot exist without the other, there being an *a priori* necessary requirement for the other to be present when the first is present. Similarly, so is the case with the presented and appresented and the perceived and apperceived.

This implies not just a reciprocity of consciousness, but also a synthesis of association, and the identification of both presented and apperceived, perceived and apperceived. From my perspective of the other, there is synthesis of association between his body and subjectivity. But from his perspective, there is synthesis of identity between his body and subjectivity. So is the case with me, from his perspective. To grasp the other phenomenologically, the synthesis of association and identity must be recognised as one and the same.

The Individual and the Community (CM 56-58)

Communities are made up of persons. It is in the nature of persons to work towards the formation of a community. Formation of a community, i.e., a common world is the first step towards the formation of intersubjective or intentional communities. Sociology originates from a group. Unlike sociologists, Husserl grounds the possibility of human relationships upon intentional creative community. In connection with community, Husserl speaks of two different notions, reciprocity of standpoints and objectifying equations. What do they mean? For transcendental phenomenology, I am I, while all others are others. But by way of objectifying equations, I become the other; I am another amongst others. Then we have equalization by way of reciprocity, abolishing the privileges of the (single) I, the ego. Objectifying equation with reciprocity lets us understand that there are only others, i.e., I am another amongst others. Thus, equation in conjunction with reciprocity makes possible a community. Husserl also speaks of psychic communities brought about by psychic constitution. This implies that ego must appear in the world, not merely constituting flesh and blood, but by way of psychic characteristics. Intersubjectivity has psychic character. This means that my friendship with the other is not a bodily relation, but a mental or psychic one, a relationship of love and friendship, a bond of concern and solicitude. And this psychic relation, friendship and care, is much more than every other kind of relationship. Psychic relationship is a relationship of heart, mind and spirit. Had it been a relation of mind alone, it would have been a simple Platonic relation. Husserl also speaks of higher levels of

communities, a community that can be considered personalities of higher order, and higher-level people corresponding to the cultural world.

The Treatment of Intersubjectivity after CM

Husserl's examination of intersubjectivity, post-*CM*, is treated at three levels: 1) the *a priori* level, 2) the *a posteriori* level and, 3) the pre-theoretical or pre-reflective or the pre-active or instinctual level. The *a priori* consideration consists of two notions namely, 1a) the horizontal notion of intersubjectivity and, 1b) open intersubjectivity, while *a posteriori* level consists of 2a) generatively handed down normality, 2b) conventionality and 2c) tradition. And, finally, intersubjectivity based on the pre-theoretical or instinctive level is much more primordial and fundamental in comparison to *a posteriori* level. I shall combine together 1a) & 1b) of *a priori* consideration. I do not deal with 2) *a posteriori* consideration, but I have a few words for 3) the pre-theoretical or instinctual consideration.

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology of reduction and constitution in *Ideas I* led to the problem of solipsism, for which he proposes a solution in *CM*. Husserl overestimated the constitutive powers of transcendental ego in *Ideas I*, though he was aware of the notions of intersubjectivity, empathy, etc., long before *Ideas I* (1913) and *CM* (1936), already during the 1910-11 Winter semester lectures. The major issues of these lectures, along with the results of *Ideas I*, disturbed Husserl so much that, after the publication of *CM*, Husserl worked on solutions to those issues at a higher level, published in his post-1936 writings. They are examined here.

A priori Capacity

Husserl begins his new consideration of intersubjectivity by stating that the potentiality to constitute intersubjectivity within me is *a priori*, implying that the constitution of the other is possible only if a certain kind of constitutive capacity for intersubjectivity already exists in me. My experience of the other does not make him an object of intentional experience, but instead, the other is already present in my horizontal

intentionality. And, this horizontal openness is the condition for the possibility of my concrete experience of the other. Since the other is constituted, that kind of constitutive power of intersubjectivity must definitely exist. This is not to presuppose the existence of the other dogmatically. According to Husserl, my capacity or potentiality for intersubjectivity is prior to my encounter with the other, implying that intersubjectivity is not a contingent relation, but which occurs due to the capacity already existing or present in me. Therefore, intersubjectivity belongs to the very *a priori* structure of the constituting subjectivity.

Horizon of Perception

The analysis of the notion of temporality reveals the role of the horizon with respect to perception. Present profiles have an intimate relation to absent profiles, i.e., relation between the past and the one about to occur. This implies that no perceptual awareness of the object (i.e., the present) is possible without an intuitive grasp of past and future profiles. So, for a perception to be the perception of the present object, it must be permeated by the horizon of the past and future. Husserl goes on to state that absent profiles (of the past and future) are *noematic* correlates of my present perception. In other words, at any given moment, the object possesses a plurality of coexisting profiles. Although the past and future are as such absent, they would appear to be intentionally present, since the temporal dimensions of the object (the primal impression, retention and protention) are a unified whole. In other words, the past and future, though presently absent, are conjointly given with the present horizon; the reality of absent horizons are determined by the present perception.

Present Perception and Correlative Apperceptions

Perception of the object implies that we have perception of its present (the now phase) and apperception of its past and future. The latter is not an imaginative or fictitious act, but an intentional perception. This apperception is a correlative of perception (of the present), compatible with actual perception.

From the Perception of Objects to Persons

Inasmuch as the object is given in perception with its horizons or profiles, the other person is also given to me with horizons of his past and future. To clarify his position further, Husserl brings in the notion of open intersubjectivity.

Open Intersubjectivity

Every object of perception (of present profiles) implies a reference to the co-perceived past and future profiles. Husserl transfers it from the realm of objects to that of subjects. The analysis of horizons seems to refer to the perception of a plurality of possible subjects, from which Husserl derives the notion of open intersubjectivity, which he explains as follows. The transcendent perception (of an object) is permeated with reference to absent profiles; these perceptions are of other people as well (inasmuch as we speak of perceptions of objects). This being the case, every perception, due to its horizontness, presupposes a reference to open intersubjectivity.

Human Compatibility

According to Husserl, perception and apperception are co-relative; apperception is compatible with actual perception. Similarly, a human being is said to be compatible with or co-related to another human being. I perceive an object; it is compatible with another object. Traditional epistemology describes compatibility between a human being and a thing/object. Correspondence theory speaks about the compatibility between the human being (mind) and the object. In contrast, Husserl's notion of compatibility, which is strictly phenomenological, is not between human beings and things, but amongst human beings.

Any Contradictions between 1913 & 1936 and post-1936 writings?

Transcendental phenomenology establishes the exclusive existence of I (transcendental ego), whereas, open intersubjectivity (post-1936 writings) proposes a plurality of subjects. Though apparently contradictory, they are not so in fact, because they are statements of two different periods, one from

the transcendental, static phenomenological period, while the other is from the genetic phenomenological period. One should keep in mind that Husserl covered a lot of intellectual miles in formulating these two phases, and these two statements are indicative of Husserl's journey through his phenomenological expedition rather than contradictions.

Objectivity in the very Heart of Subjectivity

Husserl firmly considers our concrete bodily experience of the other to be the foundation of the constitution of open intersubjectivity. This is emphasized by his detailed account of empathy in considering the concrete bodily experience of the other, a constitutive condition for the possibility of our reference to open intersubjectivity. In addition, this experience of the other furnishes our life with a universal intersubjective horizon. On account of open intersubjective experience, I am given to the other, as the other is given to me. I myself am the other with respect to the perception of an alter ego; I realize that I am only one among others. This realization dethrones my ego pole, implying that objectivity can be constituted only when the ego perceives itself to be one among others. Therefore, constitution of objectivity becomes a collaborative activity, wherein objectivity attains a subjective agreement amongst multiple egos.

Consider, for example, the well known equation, $E=MC^2$. There is universal agreement amongst physicists regarding its validity, implying that objectivity is constituted, not outside, not besides, but within the very heart of several subjectivities. What it means is this: several physicists, individually and personally, i.e., subjectively considered and examined the validity of the said equation before arriving at a common, i.e., objective and universal agreement regarding its validity and truth. What follows from this consideration is that it is subjectivity that constitutes objectivity; subjectivity is the foundation of objectivity. To put it simply, I can constitute objectivity only when I have constituted myself as one among others, integrating myself with them. Constitution, therefore, is not an individual activity, but a collaborative one. From a phenomenological standpoint, this implies that

objectivity refers to the practical world that I engage with, before theoretical understanding of things and people. In this world, others are subjects like me. Inasmuch as I share a relationship with my surroundings, they share the same relationship. Despite the different lenses with which we view the world, with differing perspectives and varied experiences, we end up in the same objective world, which according to Husserl, is made possible by empathy, the primordial experience of participation in the other person's actions and feelings without actually becoming another person. Empathy, thus, is the non-relational, non-cognitive understanding of the other.

Husserl also speaks of intersubjectivity, prior to any bodily experience of the other, operating at the pre-theoretical, pre-predicative, pre-active level, active, even at the instinctual level. Consider a new-born baby searching for the mother to suckle. How does the baby *know* that there is a mother next to her, willing to feed her; is the knowledge that milk is available to the baby, at the level of instinct?

Conclusions

Intersubjective transformation of transcendental phenomenology indicates a decisive transition of phenomenology from the strict egological, static concept of apodictic certainty of *Ideas I* towards a phenomenology of the other. The explication of the transcendental horizon leads to the actual co-present other and their horizon, making it clear that every ego is characterized by an apodictic universal structure of intersubjectivity. In *Conversations with Husserl and Fink* (Cairns, 1976), Husserl tells Cairns something as follows, apodictic transcendental subjectivity constitutes the world as intersubjective; the other self is necessarily and intentionally co-equal with myself. My transcendental self perceives itself without superiority (or even inferiority) over itself and the other. This follows from the fact that I do intend a world that is necessarily intersubjective. This implies that an analysis of transcendental subjectivity leads to transcendental intersubjectivity. The following are a few salient features from Husserl's treatment of transcendental intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity is more than Shared Mutual Understanding

A mere psychological interpretation of intersubjectivity is problematic, since it is not a mental state, but a person-to-person relation, and therefore, more than mutual understanding. Unfortunately, many commentators interpret intersubjectivity as a transition in our understanding on account of inaccurate translations of Husserl's expressions *Wechselverständnis* and *Wechselverstandung*, derived from *Wechsel*, that refer to change, succession or alteration. This translation, as pointed out by several commentators, is inadequate and unfair to Husserl. The meaning assigned by Husserl to 'intersubjectivity' goes far beyond the scope of the etymology of *Verständnis* or *Verstandung*, wherein, understanding is used as a mental or cognitive process, a kind of knowing. Consider the Biblical excerpt, 'Adam knew his wife...' (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis 4:1). Is this knowing a cognitive act or a mental process? Neither, as it is a very personal, unique, intimate, distinct way of knowing that involves personal concern, intimate solicitude, and deep personal interest. It is a kind of knowing with no reference to mental processes or cognitive attitude. This is referred to as my being for the other, being involved in the affairs of the other and accepting responsibility for the other. Husserl's answer to Cain (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis 4:8-10). is: 'yes, I am my brother's keeper'. This is the sum and substance of Husserl's genetic phenomenological ethics as well, which he developed in the 1920s. Hence intersubjectivity in Husserl involves a sense of sharing, a recognition of participation, an awareness of appropriation, a sense of being responsible for the other. From this perspective, his is the antithesis of Sartre's position regarding the other in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1992). Concern for each other is much more than mutual understanding. It has a unique reference to empathy. To conclude, intersubjectivity, according to Husserl, is an understanding, furthermore, an agreement amongst people of mutual concern, including solicitude for each other, both of which amount to much more than mere mutual understanding.

Intersubjectivity is Possible only by Exchanging Places and Positions

In intersubjectivity, I become the other, and the other becomes me. It is the condition through which I maintain the assumption that the world, as it presents itself to me, is the same as the one presented to the other, for I assume that if you were in my place, you would see the world the same way I see it, akin to trading places or exchanging positions, which is possible only by empathy. Empathy is *me* looking at the world from the point of view of the other, which is accepting the feeling of the other as mine, or me assuming the feelings of the other. Intersubjectivity is the existential condition that can lead to a shared understanding, in the light of which, Husserl goes on to say that nature itself is an intersubjective reality. This does not mean that we share a mutual understanding with nature, but that we share the same with other people and the world at large.

Intersubjectivity is the Source of Objectivity

Objectivity characterizes the world of natural attitude in which I engage myself before phenomenological procedures, at the onset of which everything transforms. Therefore, I experience others as subjects like me, who have similar relationships with their surrounding world, namely, the common world, facilitated via empathy, or in other words, participation in the actions and feelings of another person, without actually becoming the other. Empathy is a non-rational, non-cognitive understanding, originating from our experience of their bodies, such as moving and acting in ways similar to our own under similar circumstances. Husserl writes that it is clear that the apprehension of the body plays a special role for intersubjectivity in which all objects are apprehended. Objectively, things are in one objective space, time and world. In every case, exhibition of objectivity requires a relation to the apprehension of a multiplicity of subjects, sharing mutual understanding.

Let me elucidate a little more on intersubjectivity as the source of objectivity, with an example. Consider again for example, Einstein's well-known equation, $E=MC^2$. Those unfamiliar with Einsteinian physics would make offhand comments about it, disregarding it, unlike scholars well versed

in the same. As laymen, we accept the objectivity and truth validity of Einstein's equation based on the knowledge and authority of such scholars. It is the agreement amongst these scholars that gives us firm conviction about the truth, validity and objectivity of Einstein's position. Therefore, objectivity is an intersubjective agreement or, according to Husserl, constituted in the very heart of subjectivity.

Intersubjectivity and Social Sciences

Husserl's work on the notion of intersubjectivity and its implications inspired and paved the way for the development of several related branches in social sciences. Albert Schütz, whom Husserl characterized as a 'banker by day and a phenomenologist by night', realized the significance of his work, and went on to adopt and expand Husserl's views on the centrality of intersubjectivity, referring to it as 'we-relationships', and in doing so, transforming it into the corner-stone of interpretative social sciences. Schütz understood that intersubjectivity was a universal condition for human existence, *sine-qua-non* for humanity through which the world is experienced and derives meaning. Intersubjectivity, or we-relationships, according to Schütz, is the foundational ontological category of human existence in the world. The possibility of self, the discovery of the ego, the capacity to perform epoché, the possibility of communication and establishing communicative surroundings are all founded on the primordial experience of we-relationships. Intersubjectivity is not a product of or an effect of communication, but a necessary condition for the possibility of communication. It is the basis for the use of language and communicative resources, being fundamentally social and collective. It is the achievement of mindfulness for others, and the reason for our daily rituals, activities, encounters, seeking clarifications, initiating or even terminating communication, dealing with children, providing instruction, etc. For Husserl, intersubjectivity is predominantly a theoretical, rather than a practical problem. He wanted to reconcile the intersubjective quality of human experience with subjective foundation, i.e., we all start from individuals. But for Schütz, it was no more a theoretical issue, but a practical programme for everyday life.

Husserl may not have resolved the problem of intersubjectivity to the

satisfaction of all phenomenologists (e.g., Sartre), but paved us a path for its resolution. Intersubjectivity is an existential condition for being human, or being-in-the-world, as Heidegger puts it. It is this condition that informs us of the presence of others even before the commencement of communications. There is intersubjectivity even in the absence of others, for it is *a priori*, or the potentiality present in all human beings for communication. And as Schütz points out, it is already present in Husserl's notion of natural standpoint. A man experiences his neighbours, despite them being not present bodily. Consider the way we ponder the presence of our departed forefathers. Man is surrounded by objects produced by others, not just material in nature, but linguistic, cultural, aesthetic objects, artefacts, systems of signs, etc., all indicative of the close and immediate presence of the other.

Intersubjectivity, Temporal Structure and the Other

First, I must be able to extend my consciousness beyond myself, implying that I must have a consciousness that goes beyond the momentary present. We find this in consciousness as a living, gnawing or extended present. It is due to the protention-retention-structure of consciousness that I am capable of apperception. Secondly, my experience of the other cannot simply be the experience of the ontological other, i.e., if our analysis remains within the bounds of Husserlian phenomenology, the other cannot be foreign to my consciousness; this is unimaginable. There must be some analogy between myself and the other. It is here that Husserl speaks of the similarities between our bodies, leading to similarities of consciousness. However, it may be noticed that the experience of my body from within is completely different from the same from without. But I know the existence of another consciousness immediately, without reflection, without any originary experience, without any prior learning. I must already be open to the other, who is already a subject, which in turn would imply the recognition of intersubjectivity. In other words, intersubjectivity is the recognition of the existence of transcendental egos before I encounter some individual subject's body. It must already be a part of my consciousness, for me to apprehend the

other individual subjects. Since we find such an openness already in my temporal structure established primarily in my living, primordial present, this is my sphere of ownness; it is I myself. Thus, this link to intersubjectivity rests somehow on myself as temporality. In other words, there must be some kind of intersubjective structure as part of my temporal consciousness that allows me to apprehend the other subject. In fact, Husserl writes that the other is co-present in me. The absolute ego, as living, streaming, existing, concrete present, as appresentatively manifesting itself in me, is also manifesting in the other as an ego, who has constituted me in the co-presence of its living present. In other words, there must be an open intersubjective structure associated with my personal temporal structure that allows my immediate appresentation of another subject's consciousness. This intersubjective structure is actually a part of my personal temporal consciousness, taking my consciousness beyond myself. In other words, inasmuch as temporality carries me beyond myself, intersubjectivity takes me beyond my primordial presence, to the horizon of the co-present other.

This move towards the other is a move away from solipsism, towards the apprehension of another subject, which is direct and immediate, i.e., the other subject is already present in our subjectivity as our open possibility exceeding our own temporal consciousness. This implies that Husserl realizes that earlier attempts at reduction in *Ideas I* were never completely possible. Intersubjectivity is a requirement for my experience; my own consciousness extends beyond myself to the other. The absolute transcendental ego is never solipsistic, it is both I and we together. For this reason, we find the absolute temporal ego both a primordial sphere of ownness and an openness to the other (by way of apperception), which can be understood, not only as an openness to new objects and experiences, but also to intersubjectivity that allows me to know the other subjects immediately as other absolute consciousness.

Husserl's post-1936 elucidation of intersubjectivity definitely goes far beyond *CM*. It culminates in the understanding that subjectivity requires intersubjectivity to complete it, to fulfil it. The other is the fulfilment of my

subjectivity. Temporality, yet again, proves to be the most fundamental concept in phenomenology, for intersubjectivity is an achievement of a deeper understanding of temporality.

To summarize, it should be kept in mind that Husserl was a path finder. He does not claim to have solved all philosophical problems connected with intersubjectivity to the total satisfaction of all and sundry. However, he has indicated the path towards possible solutions. Intersubjectivity is the capacity inherent in all human beings, enabling them to deal with the other. It can be interpreted now that Husserl's position regarding natural standpoint (*vide Ideas I*) has reference to transcendental intersubjectivity, which appears much later in his philosophy. In this context, Schütz writes that, even from a natural standpoint, a man experiences his neighbour. He is surrounded by objects that inform him as to where it was produced (work place or factory), who produced it (workers), how it reached the current place (transport), etc., all of which imply that man, money and other materials were involved. In other words, what is available to us is not merely material things, but they constitute furniture, artefacts, etc., summarized as cultural, aesthetic, linguistic objects, all of which have reference to the other. This indicates that Husserl's concern for the other commenced at the very beginning of his phenomenological career, and not at a later stage, as often some scholars believe.

To conclude, Husserl realized the limitations of his static phenomenology by the time he completed *Ideas I*. His attention thereafter focused on ways and means to overcome these limitations. It took him over two decades (from 1913-post 1936) to formulate and formalize his thoughts and reflections, ever-growing in his mind over that period, the result being the groundbreaking notion of transcendental intersubjectivity. This chapter traces the path by which he arrived at the notion of transcendental intersubjectivity.

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