

CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-IDENTITY

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEW ON A COGNITIVE ISSUE

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From a phenomenological perspective, one has to be able to offer a *description* of the pre-reflective, primal internal state, i.e., to set it in a discourse as a theme of inquiry through the reflective gesture of the method. Here emerges what Gallagher and Zahavi properly call the “gain” and the “loss” of the phenomenological method, which, as reflective, “does not merely copy or repeat the original experience; rather, it transforms it.”¹ Entrance into the methodological reflection marks the passage from the self-consciousness (pre/non-reflective self-awareness) to the proper consciousness (reflective awareness) and puts in play the egological-subjective feature of the inner life. The coming out of the Ego becomes a help to the description (I *as I* can now not only feel but also know, i.e., consciously recognize my self-consciousness experiences as mine), while at the same time it provides an additional complication of the question: Is there no Ego in the pre-reflective sphere? *Who* then feels self-consciousness as *her own*?

The question of the reference of the reflecting act to its pre-reflective root is of basic importance from a phenomenological standpoint, because it deals not only with the essence of the method, but also with the status of Ego as performer of such a method. If one identifies the egological level only with the reflective one, it becomes hard to affirm that the pre-reflective sphere is self-aware: how is it possible to talk about a self, which in turn is not an I? But on the other hand, if one attributes the egological trait both to the reflective and to the pre-reflective consciousness grade, it is possible to question not only the legitimacy, but also the necessity of something like the phenomenological method: why should I carry on a reflection on myself, if I am self-aware already as pre-reflecting?

To exit from this antinomy, one has to come back to the fundamental distinction Gallagher and Zahavi make between *feeling* and *knowing*,

where only the latter is linked to the authentically egological level of self-awareness (the one of the method), while the former describes the immediate experience of self: “When I am aware of a current pain, perception, or thought, the experience in question is given immediately, non-inferentially, and non-criterially as *mine*”; it means that “I am usually able to respond immediately, i.e., without inference or observation, if somebody asks me what I have been doing, or thinking, or seeing, or feeling immediately prior to the question.”² The central mark of pre-reflective self-awareness is thus its *present* occurring, which involves simultaneity of experiencing (perceiving, being in pain, thinking) and being aware of it.

If I cannot doubt a self as mine when I am currently experiencing something I am living now, because I feel prior to knowing that *I* am experiencing, what happens to past experiences? If to the question “are you in pain?” i.e., “are you as your-self in pain?” I am able to answer immediately “Yes I am—as my-self,” since I am simultaneously feeling in pain, can I show the same confidence to the question, “Are you—as yourself—the one *who was* in pain?” In this case I am not feeling in pain, but I should remember having been in pain, and so I should know that I as myself am the same one who was before in pain and remembers it now, and that the pain was and is always mine. From where does this knowledge derive? What is its legitimacy, considering that it lacks the grounding trait of immediacy? This question is linked to the former one about time, which has elapsed between the experienced pain and the remembered one, and so such a question must find a solution related to its temporal mark.

Edmund Husserl dealt with a similar issue in his *Time-Lectures* regarding what he calls the “most important matters of phenomenology,” which he treats in §39 of the text, where he works out the fundamental notion of the *double intentionality of retention* and the connected

question of the *constitution of stream of consciousness*.³ “The duality in the intentionality of retention gives us a clue to the solution of the difficulty concerning how it is possible to be aware of a unity belonging to the ultimate constituting flow of consciousness.”⁴ The difficulty is due to the involvement of temporal determinations like “now,” “before,” and “after” also for the description of the time-constituting flow. There is the risk of an infinite regress, because the determination of these temporal features needs a new time-consciousness, which in turn needs a new time-consciousness and so on (see Husserl 1991, 80).

The solution to these difficulties begins with the conceptual—rather than merely terminological—distinction between *Erinnerung* and *Retention*: if at first sight it seems to be shocking, if not absurd, that the same consciousness-flow constitutes the temporal unity of a tone and at the same time (*Zugleich*) the unity of itself, this shock or absurdity can be overcome if one understands the time-consciousness has two kinds of intentional regards (*Blicke*) to pay attention to its own internality: “Our regard can be directed, in the one case, *through* the phases that ‘coincide’ in the continuous progression of the flow and that function as intentionalities of the tone. But our regard can also be aimed *at* the flow, at a section of the flow, at the passage of the flowing consciousness from the beginning of the tone to its end.”⁵ To this duplicity of the regard corresponds the double intentionality of retention: “one serves for the constitution of the immanent object, of the tone; it is this intentionality that we call ‘primary memory’ of the (just sensed) tone, or more precisely, just retention of the tone. The other intentionality is constitutive of the unity of this primary memory in the flow.”⁶ If each memory is as such also a retention, not every retention is a memory, i.e., an intentional ray apt to the constitution of a temporal objectivity, but it is also always a retention of this memory itself and thus of the original sensation, of which the primary memory is a memory: “the retention of a retention has intentionality not only in relation to what is immediately retained but also in relation to what, in the retaining, is retained of the second degree, and ultimately in relation to the primal datum, which is objectivated

throughout the process.”⁷ Precisely since it is able to grasp two conscious acts in their intentional interrelation, the retention guarantees the coincidence of the flow with itself, i.e., its unity: “Thus there extends throughout the flow a horizontal intentionality (*Längsintentionalität*) that, in the course of the flow, continuously coincides with itself,”⁸ and from which the unity of consciousness-flow itself derives.

The *horizontal/longitudinal* intentionality⁹ is what Husserl calls also “retention of retention,” that is, retention of primary memory, because it goes through along the length of consciousness’s flowing, and in this way it makes an operation of coinciding homogenization; on the other hand, the simple memory (*Erinnerung*) is called also “transversal intentionality” (*Querintentionalität*), in which “I direct my interest towards the tone,” which, as a lasting tone, extends along its duration. “If I focus [instead] on the “horizontal intentionality” and on what is becoming constituted in it, I turn my reflective regard away from the tone (which has endured for such and such a length of time) towards what is new in the way of primal sensation at one point in the retentive being-all-at-once and towards what is retained ‘all at once’ with this new primal sensation in a continuous series.”¹⁰ Though it is structured in a double mode, there is one retention, which is, according to its intentional feature, sometimes *Retention als Erinnerung* and sometimes *Retention der Retention*. The unity of retention allows precisely the unity of the flow, a unity which has to assume the peculiar form of the self-reference, in order to exorcize the ghost of the infinite regress. Since it is always one and the same retention, which refers, on the one hand, to a constituted temporal object and, on the other hand, to the constituting consciousness’s mode, we can talk about one and the same consciousness, which is sometimes a consciousness as flow of constituted objectivities and sometimes consciousness as a flow which constitutes itself.¹¹

This very complex consciousness process is possible thanks to the fundamental figure of *coincidence* (*Deckung*) between the different features of this consciousness. This coincidence is in turn possible only within a structure like the in-

tentional one, which has its way of being in *de-presentation* (*Ent-Gegenwärtigung*), that is, in an *un-timing*—constant because inborn—and so in the *relation* of every own moment with itself, i.e., with its own having just elapsed. This having-elapsed is not necessarily destined to oblivion, but, on the contrary, is subject to a recovery, to a memory, to a retentional and always also self-retentional memory. As Husserl explains in a passage of the *Bernau Manuscripts*, this self-awareness of such consciousness is possible “because the flowing is not in general only a flowing, but in the flowing there is also a *consciousness of the flowing*, a consciousness of the transformation from a phase of the flow to the phases of the flow, which are only points of the constant transformation, just of the same flow which exists as an *aware-existing flow*.”¹²

Though it represents a deeper analysis of the peculiar moment of constitution of self by the self, this “self” which performs such a constitution is identified by Husserl with “consciousness” as a temporal-intentional feature, but not with the Ego, precisely because this constitution occurs spontaneously, i.e., passively and so without an Ego’s act. Here the “self” of the constitution doesn’t mean the conscious life of subjectivity, rather its *conscious’s* life, namely, the natural formation of consciousness by itself through the temporal lasting of experience. It is a pre-reflective self-awareness, which as Zahavi properly remarks “is nothing but the perpetual self-manifestation of the flow,”¹³ but which as such is not enough to describe an authentic and full egological awareness, since again in Zahavi’s words, “self-awareness is merely a necessary and not sufficient condition for *I-consciousness*.”¹⁴ Thus Husserl’s account of self-constitution is a very good explanation of the auto-constitution of consciousness, but only under the condition of not mixing that “auto-” up with the self as I-self, because it indicates a not yet conscious, i.e., reflective or egological awareness of self. It is a passive, non-attentive awareness, which needs to become a not only aware but also *awake* consciousness of itself (a “*waches Ich*” in Husserlian terms).¹⁵ However, this constitution does not seem to be able to bridge the temporal gap be-

tween past and present, meaning as *fully* aware to bridge this gap, and so to answer the question concerning self-identity as arising out of a context of immediacy. It is a self-constitution which should allow such an answer, but it is not sufficient to perform it. If to remember myself as *mine* (and as *I*) requires knowing more than feeling, one cannot find this knowledge within the self-constitution described here by Husserl.¹⁶

Memory, Language, and the Self

Gareth Evans in his sharp remarks on “Self-Identification” stresses this link between memory and knowledge precisely as regards the elapsed time of personal experiences.¹⁷ This link is supported by Evans’s statement about the judgment-basis of self-consciousness that assumes the form of “the persistence of a belief,” according to which “if a subject has at *t* a belief which he might then manifest in judging ‘I am now *F*,’ then there is a non-negligible probability of his having, at a later time *t*, a disposition to judge ‘I was previously *F*.’”¹⁸ Nonetheless, Evans clarifies that memory is a way to *retain* albeit not to gain knowledge, and, for this reason, this propositional remembering has to be grounded not only upon a judgment in the past-tense but also and first of all upon a past perceptual experience. But this is to deal with the case in which memory develops following an earlier informational state of the subject, the perceptual one that allows the I to refer to its past as a part of its present experience, and to identify itself as the one and the same who not only has judged but who has lived that elapsed state. It is the “non-conceptual informational states involved in perception [that] put a subject in a position to acquire present-tense self-knowledge by the exercise of his conceptual capacities, so these non-conceptual informational states put a subject in a position to acquire past-tense self-knowledge by the exercise of his conceptual capacities.”¹⁹ What it is very interesting in Evans’s reflections is the rooting of self-identity in the continuity of personal experience, which the author expresses by jointing perceiving state and remembering state inside the same subject as a grounding trait precisely of this continuity (and not as its result): “If a subject has, in

virtue of the operations of his memory, knowledge of the past states of a subject, then that subject is himself,” which allows saying that “it is of the essence of an ‘I’-Idea that it effects an identification which spans past and present.”²⁰

To put these assertions in phenomenological terms, one can say that the passive self-constitution of consciousness (of perceptual and retentive states) allows the development of an egological awareness of it (remembering and judging memory). A question, in any case, still remains open: where, i.e., in which point of self-consciousness, is there something like becoming Ego? Prior to finding a phenomenological answer to it, let me follow briefly a very pertinent neuroscientific approach, relying upon the fruitful interconnection between both accounts.

In their compelling study on consciousness, Gerald Edelman and Giulio Tononi offer a very detailed and analytical account of mental life, in which they underline its being as process rather than as thing, what they call a “dynamic core,” which is “both continuous and continually changing.”²¹ Along the path of this ceaseless course a subjective existence develops, that is identifiable through its multiple expressions, which take place at every moment of the consciousness continuum: “Given the number and kinds of processes that are going on in parallel in any individual at a particular moment—perceptions, images, feelings, beliefs, desires, moods, emotions, plans, recollections—it is easy to become confused.”²² The only way to exit from this confusion is to distinguish a “primary consciousness” and a “higher-order consciousness,” where the former corresponds to the non-linguistic life (mental life I), and the latter to the linguistic life (mental life II); despite their clear, essential, and irreducible difference, both forms of consciousness “coexist, overlap, and feed each other.”²³ The modality of these interactions between the two spheres of mental life is decidedly temporal and it determines as such the emergence of a self as subjectivity:

Ascending value systems—the locus coeruleus, basal forebrain nuclei, raphé nucleus, and hypothalamus—send out a particular combination of

neurotransmitters that reflect the salience of these various signals. The core must register the neural consequences of this activity—feelings as well as perceptions and recollections. *At this point*, a clear elicitation of language and of the true subjective (and emotional) life may emerge: an inner paraphrase . . . and with this paraphrase, the entire memory system of language is engaged. . . . With the emergence of a higher-order consciousness through language, there is a consciously explicit coupling of feelings and values, yielding emotions with cognitive components that are experienced by *a person—a self*.²⁴

This neurobiological description suggests a clear image of a consciousness where the pre-reflective level, i.e., the pre-egological one, contributes fundamentally to the formation of the authentically subjective one, the level of the awakened awareness of a person; but, on the other hand, this formation is not unidirectional, since the higher level of consciousness comes continuously back to the primal one in order to raise and enrich it with the linguistic side of the same lived experience, in what Edelman and Tononi properly describe as the “mixture of mental life I and mental life II.”²⁵ Rather than representing an obstacle to self-identity, the temporal feature of mental life allows the self-recognizing of the subject: only because of the last of experience am I able to feel and to know this experience as mine, since I *have time* to recollect my past life and to join it with the present one, thanks to a process which I undergo (mental life I), but which I can also consciously master (mental life II). This passage from the pre-reflective life to the reflective shows precisely the emergence of self-consciousness not only as Ego, but properly as becoming Ego, as Ego *in fieri*.

Phenomenological Sight

With regard to this egological trait of inquiry, Eduard Marbach develops a very helpful point of view, which is able to incorporate the findings of neuroscience within a phenomenological perspective.²⁶

When I speak of “egological trait” of inquiry I mean the central role played by the subjective feature of research both as method (first-person

perspective) and as matter (the conscious side of experience). With regard to the former, Marbach claims that a veridical description of mental life cannot renounce studying consciousness with regard to its own nature, which involves emphasizing its subjective core, since “to be interested in consciousness phenomenologically, i.e., studying it in its own essence (*Eigenwesentlichkeit*) or in its purity (*Reinheit*), is to be interested in something *subjectively available* only.”²⁷ It is precisely this subjective access to a subjective experience that is worth stressing, because of its relevance for a legitimacy of the first-person account: for an inquiry into consciousness, one needs to analyze the consciousness of the inquirer, which means that to understand experience, one has to understand the experiencer, and it is possible to gain such an understanding from an inner point of view only.²⁸ As Husserl taught, and Marbach accurately reaffirms, the subjective standpoint is a view by the subject on the subject, the mental life of which has to be studied in its multiply intentional structuring.

The so called “phenomenological notation” allows grasping the different moments of the subject’s life both in their own aspect and in their continuous and essential interaction, focusing always attention on the intentional feature that characterizes the case under study. To recognize the intentional essence of every aspect of mental life means being able to see its compound reference, which is oriented (1) to an object, (2) to other acts of consciousness that contribute to the experience of this object in various ways (such as remembering, imaging, expecting and so on, i.e., the re-presenting mental processes), and (3) to the environment that constitutes the surroundings of the lived and analyzed experience. In this way Marbach clearly shows that to consider the steady flow of consciousness as perceiving, to talk about perception, does not exclude treating the other spheres of experiencing, but rather necessarily requires speaking of them.²⁹

It is salient to note that as he deals with the consciousness side of experience alone, i.e., with the egoless side of it, Marbach does not speak of the I as the performer of perceiving (or others’ mental activities), just as Husserl did not talk of

the subject when he dealt with the self-constitution of consciousness. This is because here what is in question is what Edelman and Tononi call mental life I, i.e., the purely pre-reflective (self-awareness instead of I-awareness) level of experiencing. But when Marbach has to treat the third level of mental life, the one involving the environment (*Umgebung* or *Umwelt* in Husserlian terms) which surrounds conscious acting, the description develops in such a way that it becomes necessary to highlight the purely egological level of the studied experience. The reason is that, in a phenomenological perspective, dealing with the surroundings (the world of experience, the *Welterfahrung*) means talking about the consciousness structurally open to the world, as consciousness of something, and the core of this conscious opening to the world lies in the subjective center of experience, namely, the Ego as aware performer of acts.³⁰ Accordingly, Marbach clarifies that “what is called ‘I’ can, in a first approximation, be said to be a constituent part of one’s surface awareness . . . when an activity mentally representing something occurs.”³¹ Having acknowledged the link that ties the I-level of experience to the bodily position of subject,³² Marbach can then establish the equivocal position of the Ego due to its becoming status, since this Ego is both the actor of the first-person inquiry (the reflective level) and, more originally, the center, although unaware, of consciousness’s performances (the pre-reflective, primal level): “in its very surface awareness, i.e., *independently of*, or prior to, being reflected upon, an activity of mentally representing x involves the operative I-subject.”³³ In this way, from an authentically phenomenological standpoint, Marbach succeeds in unifying both levels of experiencing by means of the notion of Ego as being *in fieri*, i.e., thought not “in isolation from mental activities,”³⁴ but rather as a center of mental operations which shares with all of them the temporal-intentional flow of experiencing:³⁵ “The overlapping activities can be said ultimately to be rooted in the fact that there is no part at all within the unity of performing one’s mental representation that would not *at any given moment be related to the operative I*.”³⁶ This centrality of the Ego within

the development of consciousness as experiencing life justifies the validity of a phenomenological account also with respect to the recent findings of the neurosciences, since “on the basis of the best of our current scientific knowledge I also keep believing that ‘something’ has been selected in virtue of the development of the nervous system that can originally be experienced as what it is and what it is like *solely from the experiential perspective of experiencing creatures themselves*—namely, conscious experience.”³⁸

The inquiries elaborated by Eduard Marbach, as well as ones recently developed by other phenomenologists, such as Francisco Varela, Dan Zahavi, and Dieter Lohmar, who are search-

ing for a fruitful connection among neuroscience, cognitive fields of study, and the philosophical outlook, show one of the fruitful ways in which phenomenology can unfold its basic issues by taking into consideration new scientific findings.³⁹

To tell the story of the Ego from a philosophical standpoint does not mean ignoring or excluding the scientific perspective; rather it involves understanding such a perspective and attempting to frame it within a rigorous conceptual scheme.

Phenomenology, philosophy as “rigorous science,” is naturally called upon to carry out this complex but at the same time very fascinating task.

NOTES

1. Sean Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 63.
2. *Ibid.*, 54.
3. Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, trans. John B. Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 84–88.
4. *Ibid.*, 84.
5. *Ibid.*, 84–85.
6. *Ibid.*, 85.
7. *Ibid.*, 86.
8. *Ibid.*, 85.
9. As regards this double translation, see *ibid.*, 85n9.
10. *Ibid.*, 87.
11. The fact that the two intentionalities are aspects of the same reality must not seem to be paradoxical, “if it is kept in mind that according to Husserl, the flow simply is the experiential awareness of the immanent object, and thus that there could be no awareness of the elapsed immanent object *as elapsed* apart from our present (implicit) awareness that we had been aware of it earlier. But such present awareness of our having been aware of the object just *is* awareness of the flow. If one were not thus aware of the flow, one could not be aware of the elapsed object or *any* temporal object at all. There is reason, then, for the claim that the two intentionalities are two sides of the same thing.” John B. Brough, “The Emergence of an Absolute Consciousness in Husserl’s Early Writings on Time-consciousness,” in R. Bernet, D. Welton, and

G. Zavota, eds., *Edmund Husserl. Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, volume 3 (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 268. As regards this central issue, see the remarks by Brough in his analytical Translator’s Introduction to *the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*: “It was the notion of the absolute flow with its double intentionality that finally enabled Husserl to explain how each phase of consciousness was intentionally related to the phases preceding and following it, and through them to the phases of the temporal object. Through its double intentionality, the flow as a succession of phases is at once the consciousness of its own succession and of the succession of its objects” (liv).

12. Edmund Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/18)*, *Husserliana* XXXIII, ed. by R. Bernet and D. Lohmar (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 148–49; translation and emphasis mine. (“Das Strömen ist nicht nur überhaupt Strömen, sondern im Strömen besteht auch ein Bewusstsein vom Strömen, ein Bewusstsein des Übergangs von Stromphase zu Stromphasen, die bloß Punkte des stetigen Übergangs, eben des bewusst seienden Stromes selbst sind.”)
13. Dan Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 80.
14. *Ibid.*, 150. See also the analogous statement uttered by T. van Gelder, that time-consciousness is “an essential element of a fully aware self.” T. van Gelder,

- “Wooden Iron? Husserlian Phenomenology Meets Cognitive Science,” in J. Petitot et al., *Naturalizing Phenomenology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 265. Though it is about just an “element,” it deals anyway with the element “essential” to understand the genesis of the Ego, since the analysis of this level of consciousness’ constitution “touches more than any other on the ground of self, pure ego, or basic consciousness.” F. J. Varela, “Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 3 (1999): 295. Both van Gelder and Varela stress dissimilarly the “dynamical” hallmark, in a scientific cognitive sense, of the double intentionality worked out by Husserl.
15. For this reason, I disagree with observations by Gallagher and Varela, in “Redrawing the Map and Resetting the Time: Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences,” in E. Thompson, ed., *The Problem of Consciousness: New Essays in Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), that link this pre-reflective self-awareness to a form of the I-self (115–16). I think that the “sense of ownership” of which they speak does not yet emerge in this phase of the consciousness’ constitution (though it is grounded on such primal constitution), but only as regards to an I-consciousness’ constitution, which adds to the purely and *passively* spontaneous consciousness’ formation the basic egological trait of *active* participation to a construction of personal identity. In regard to Varela, one can remember his previous remarks that distinguish more clearly a “conscious self” from a “pre-reflective, affective substrate” within the temporal process of consciousness (“The Specious Present,” in *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, 304). As Robert Hanna and Evan Thompson correctly point out, the spontaneity of consciousness is “constituted by the fourfold fact that the precise, qualitative character of conscious states (1) is not determined by anything external to the conscious subject; (2) is self-generated; (3) is not self-generated by a prior conscious intention; and yet (4) can under some conditions be controlled by a conscious intention.” “Neurophenomenology and the Spontaneity of Consciousness,” in *The Problem of Consciousness*, 147. Though they speak at point (1) of “subject”, I guess here it is about an egoless spontaneity, since it regards the consciousness (hyletic) background that is a fundamental grounding part of the I, but that does not require an active involvement by the I. It is significant that the authors join this spontaneous consciousness with the behaviour of animals (155), of which if it is possible to talk about a sort of consciousness, it is very hard to speak of something like an “I.” On passivity as non-egological process, see Edmund Husserl, *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929–1934): Die C-Manuskripte*, Husserliana Materialien VIII, ed. D. Lohmar (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006), 179.
 16. A more complex and exhaustive correlation between consciousness and Ego as *unity* of self emerges in the very intriguing latest Husserlian manuscripts, the so-called C-manuscripts.
 17. Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 235–48.
 18. *Ibid.*, 237.
 19. *Ibid.*, 239.
 20. *Ibid.*, 245 and 246. See also William James, *The Principles of Psychology I–II* (New York: Dover, 1950), 330–42.
 21. Gerald Edelman and Giulio Tononi, *A Universe of Consciousness: How Matter Becomes Imagination* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 152.
 22. *Ibid.*, 201.
 23. *Ibid.*, 203.
 24. *Ibid.*, 204–05; emphases mine.
 25. *Ibid.*, 203.
 26. E. Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness: Towards a Phenomenological Theory of Representation and Reference* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993); “Wie sich Bewusstsein mit Hilfe der Husserlschen Phänomenologie in die (Neuro-)wissenschaft einbeziehen lässt,” in D. Lohmer and D. Fonfera, eds., *Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven der Phänomenologie* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2006), 203–34.
 27. *Ibid.*, 19; emphasis mine.
 28. See Iso Kern, *Idee und Methode der Philosophie: Leitgedanken für eine Theorie der Vernunft* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 245; Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness*, 210–11; “No Heterophenomenology without Autophenomenology: Variations on a Theme of Mine,” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 6 (2007): 76 and 84. This condition of mutual reference between the I as subject and the I as object of investigation can be found also in the cognitive sciences, which “form a singularity in science: no other science has this self-involving structure that co-implicates observer and observed.” N. Depraz and N. Cosmelli, “Empathy

- and Openness: Practices of Intersubjectivity at the Core of the Science of Consciousness,” in *The Problem of Consciousness*, 169.
29. “Husserl carefully analyzed what he called phenomena of *overlapping* (*Verdeckung*) or *conflict of intuitions*, which is connected with the fact that in the stream of consciousness nothing is thinkable in isolation from the rest of the stream. Whatever is given seemingly in isolation, such as a phantasy, in truth *overlaps* (*verdeckt*) something in the actually given world.” E. Marbach, “Re-presentation,” in Lester Embree et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 607.
 30. See Eugen Fink, *Studien zur Phänomenologie 1930–1939* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).
 31. Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness*, 89.
 32. Evans remarks also on the fundamental link that ties the temporal side of the I-Idea with its bodily state: “a subject’s possession of an adequate Idea of himself depends upon the same capacity that underlies his ability to use ‘here’-Ideas – the capacity to determine his position in the objective order. . . . If we imagine a subject who cannot retain information for more than a few seconds, or, equally, a subject who refuses to argue from such retained information as he possesses to propositions about *his* past position, then we have imagined a subject who just does not have the practical capacity to locate himself in space” (*The Varieties of Reference*, 243). Evans reinforces his already agreeable standpoint, talking about the “perennial nightmare” of the brain in a vat, as he observes “that the reason we do not find the ‘disembodied brain in a vat’ case very disturbing, conceptually, is that the brain is also the last remaining part of the subject’s body” (*ibid.*, 255).
 33. Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness*, 91.
 34. *Ibid.*, 89.
 35. Albeit as “supra-temporal” (*überzeitlich*) Ego. See Husserl, *Die Bernauer Manuskripte*, 277; Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness*, 90–91.
 36. Marbach, *Mental Representation and Consciousness*, 92; emphasis mine.
 37. Marbach, “No Heterophenomenology without Autophenomenology,” 78. This consonance between neurobiological account and the phenomenological one proposed by Marbach is stressed also by Gallagher and Zahavi, in particular, with respect to the issue of remembering: “As Marbach’s notation makes clear, phenomenological analysis confirms and supports this neuroscientific model of memory; and reciprocally, the neurological evidence supports Marbach’s description” (*The Phenomenological Mind*, 31). Another relevant effort to tie phenomenological instances with the scientific and cognitive ones has been recently suggested by Dieter Lohmar, *Phänomenologie der schwachen Phantasie: Untersuchungen der Psychologie, Neurologies und Phänomenologie zur Funktion der Phantasie in der Wahrnehmung* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2008). Considering these relationships regarding both methodologies and approaches of neurosciences and phenomenology, underlined in a notorious way by Varela (“Neurophenomenology”) and more recently by Hanna and Thompson, “Neurophenomenology and the Spontaneity of Consciousness,” though I find Marbach’s remarks about the consideration on James expressed by Edelman (“No Heterophenomenology without Autophenomenology,” 85n8) very easy to agree with, I complain about the fact that Edelman (and Tononi) not only *do not* consider *at all* Husserl and his inquiries, but they also wrongly identify phenomenology with introspectionism as two objectionable forms of subjectivism (*A Universe of Consciousness*, 217). For the mistake related to this identification see Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, 19–21, and J. Parnas and Dan Zahavi, “Phenomenal Consciousness and Self Awareness: A Phenomenological Critique of Representational Theory,” in Sean Gallagher and J. Shear, eds., *Models of the Self* (Exeter and Charlottesville: Imprint Academic, 1999), 268–69.
 39. However, one should consider that as regards the basic and classic issue of consciousness it is not only philosophy that gives importance to bridge the gap with the current scientific outcomes, but it is science itself that seems to want to make up for lost time. See for instance the statement expressed by Edelman and Tononi at the very beginning of their book: “We suggest that consciousness can be considered a scientific subject and that it is not the sole province of philosophers” (*A Universe of Consciousness*, 3).

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