

# The Problem of Rigorous Science in Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology

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**Abstract :** *In this paper, I intend to grapple with the idea of philosophy as rigorous science from the point of view of Husserl's phenomenology, in order to show that there is a natural conjunction between Science and Metaphysics in Husserlian thought, provided that these two concepts are considered in their fundamental or transcendental sense (Kant). Science is synonymous with metaphysics when it becomes a condition of possibilities of itself. Under the banner of phenomenology, Husserl intends to base the first philosophy as a rigorous science, in an apodictic sense, in two essential moments. The first moment is that of logic, and the second moment corresponds to the setting up of the vocabulary of transcendental phenomenology as the first science.*

**Keywords:** rigorous science, logic, phenomenology, epistemology of science, metaphysics, theory of knowledge, Human Sciences

## 1. Introduction

The articulation of metaphysics and rigorous<sup>1</sup> science finds unheard-of illumination in the works of Husserl, recognized by the philosophical tradition as the founder of the contemporary phenomenology. The essence of Husserl's reflection on metaphysics as a primary science is found in his text *Philosophie première*. This text is published for the first time by Rudolf Boehm, in Volume VII of the *Husserliana*, Edmund Husserl, *Gesammelte Werke*<sup>2</sup>.

In this work, Husserl's task, according to his own words, is to elevate phenomenology to the dignity of a first philosophy. Such an ambition can only be realized in a refoundation of all human knowledge, in its principles, structures, functioning and methods. It begins with an analysis of the historical origins of early science in Plato and Aristotle; he then presents the emergence of the science of subjectivity with Descartes, Locke's essay of an egology, with the reactions of Berkeley and Hume; it finally leads to the articulation between metaphysics and the theory of knowledge.

Our objective here is to analyze this text and to show that there is a natural conjunction between Science and Metaphysics in Husserlian thought, provided that these two concepts are considered in their fundamental or transcendental sense (Kant). Science is synonymous with metaphysics when it becomes a condition of possibilities of itself. Under the cover of phenomenology, Husserl intends to found the first philosophy as a rigorous science.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy as Rigorous Science (Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft, 1911)* is the title of Husserl's famous article published in Paris, in 1989. In this work, in the style of Descartes' *Discourse on the Method*, Husserl criticizes the contemporary thought and the whole philosophical tradition, in the form of a general assessment from the beginning. It proposes a reorientation of philosophy and its method, based on the great options of phenomenology.

<sup>2</sup>The original title is: E. Husserl, *ERSTE PHILOSOPHIE* (1923-19124), Erster Teil: *kritische Ideeengeschichte*, Herausgegeben von Rudolf Boehm, La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff, 1956.

From the notional point of view, the concept of phenomenology is the association of two terms, namely *phenomenon* and *logic*. It is therefore right that his last work, published in Prague in 1939 is entitled: *Experience and Judgment, Research for a genealogy of logic*. The problem of fundamental science or of metaphysics is, in this direction, the judgment and the nature of the predicative proposition. For Husserl, it is a question of questioning, in a genealogical sense, the *antéprédicative* experience, which is at the origin of predicative activity and language.

Thus, to better understand the scope of metaphysics as a rigorous science in Husserl's first Philosophy, we will first examine the reasons why Husserl takes logic as the starting point of science; we will then analyze the passage he makes from the symbolic to the intuitive; we will finally treat the first philosophy as such.

### Logic as a propaedeutic to rigorous science

To found his reason, Husserl operates an etiology of the history of philosophy and puts a nosological diagnosis of his crisis in these terms: « *at no time of its development has philosophy been able to satisfy the ambition to be a rigorous science, not even in modern times, from the Renaissance to our days, where its evolution is essentially homogeneous despite all the diversity of philosophical orientations and their oppositions.* » (*Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, 1911).

To remedy this endemic crisis of philosophy, Husserl does not resort to reasoning in the manner of geometry as Spinoza; nor does he seek universal mathematics like Descartes. Husserl is more oriented towards the emerging logic, in which a rigor of reasoning hitherto unsuspected is stated. The logical sources of rigorous science at Husserl are to be found in a particular way in his interpretation of Lotze and Brentano.

It was Lotze's reading that led Husserl to conceive of scientific logic in the sense of a theoretical and apriorical science, of a metaphysics that refers to ideal meanings. In this regard, Husserl wrote as early as 1903:

"Although Lotze did not go far beyond the stage of contradictory inconsistencies and the level of psychologism, his brilliant interpretation of the Platonic theory of ideas made me see a first great light, and had a decisive importance on all my subsequent studies. Lotze already spoke of truths in itself, and the idea immediately came to mind of moving all mathematics and a major part of traditional logic into the realm of ideality. "

Why did the Lotzian interpretation of ideas have been decisive for the development of Husserlian phenomenology? To answer this question, we must examine the Chapter 1, Book III, in the *Logic*<sup>3</sup> of Lotze.

Rudolf Hermann Lotze is undoubtedly the most famous German philosopher of the second half of the nineteenth century. He had a great influence on Frege, who was his student. In the first part of this book entitled *Skepticism*, Lotze opposes the absolute character of skepticism, and thinks that even doubt is possible only if one first recognizes any truth. It is from this Lotzian conception of doubt that Husserl draws his critique of skepticism, which boils down to this: to deny the existence of a truth implies the minimal belief in the truth of the proposition by which the existence of that truth is denied. Truth. Skepticism is crossed by an internal contradiction to the extent that denying a truth implies a minimal belief in the truth of the proposition by which the existence of truth is denied. It is a matter of recognizing that the comparison can be made only between two known realities, that is to say between two representations. It is not possible to compare a representation with the thing represented.

In other words, our knowledge of the outside world is based on the representation we have of the world. Representation is the only mode by which we have the immediate gift of knowledge. In this sense, trust in reason, as an entity capable of reaching the truth, is the foundation of all scientific research. And doubt, therefore, is to be understood as a way of representing the world and things or a type of reasoning. To doubt is to represent an idea and its opposite; doubt is the negation of what is posited and, as such, it is the representation of opposites. It is therefore in a form of reasoning that the human mind opposes two representations and, therefore, establishes the knowledge of doubt. Lotze concludes: "Doubt itself is only possible under the condition of knowing a certain truth." (p. 486).

The knowledge is the fact of the representation and not the seizure of the being of the thing, it means that, for Lotze, only the phenomenal is accessible to the human intuition. Such a view is intended to eliminate the metaphysical problem of the relation between representation and the thing represented, between being and being. What would be the color *per se* for example when it is not perceived by anyone? Is it something other than nothing? For Lotze, representations are not beings, so that our knowledge does not reach the being of beings in truth. It is here that Husserl distances himself from Lotze, greeting him in the manner of

a ship breaking its moorings to take off. Indeed, in § 45 of the *Ideen I*, Husserl rejects the possibility of the knowledge of things in itself, because the human intuition is limited to the knowledge of the phenomenal. But it expands the Kantian concept of intuition sensitive to the categorial dimension: sensitivity already opens us to the knowledge of the category of the felt object.

In order to elaborate a theory of knowledge that brings into play the heritage of metaphysics, Husserl recognizes the inseparability between the original intuition and the derived intuition, and poses the idea that intuition, because categorial, reaches the thing itself in *flesh and bone*. Categorial intuition represents, to a certain extent, by itself, the method of *eidetic* phenomenology as a central and radical phenomenology. In this, phenomenology is a turning point in the history of philosophy in that it ends the separation between sensible intuition and categorial intuition.

For Husserl, categorial intuition is the completion of the self-giving of being. It is through sensible intuition that the very principles of being are found which melt the uniqueness of the world. It is in intuition that the subject becomes aware of the gift of the world, so that intuition is the act by which the subject has a world. From then on, categorial intuition is not understood as one experience among many, but as the very truth of experience. Thus, the return to the sphere of absolute subjectivity does not leave the world, but shows that the relation of oneself to oneself passes through the world since the task of the subject is to reveal this being who gives himself to him. In the 6th *Research of Logic*, Volume III (§45), Husserl writes this: "For it will be held from the outset to be obvious: just as any concept (an idea, a specific unity) can not be born that is to say, can be given in itself only by virtue of an act that puts us under the eyes, at least imaginatively any singular thing that corresponds to it, likewise the concept of being can not arise only if any being is actually or imaginatively placed before our eyes. "

According to Husserl, therefore, there are representations that are not sensitive and, as a result, categorial intuition is an act of knowledge that gives an ideal object. To say that A resembles B already supposes the category of resemblance. And the extension of intuition to the category dimension aims to open the field of logical grammar, prolegomena to a metaphysics of transcendental subjectivity. It is in this respect that Martin Heidegger, in his habilitation thesis of 1916 on Duns Scot's doctrine of categories and meaning, makes this remark: "Husserl has emphasized the idea of a pure grammar and shown that there are laws a priori of meaning, which still abstract from the objective validity of meanings ".

In the fourth logical research, Husserl shows that formal logic presupposes a logic of meaning called transcendental logic. It is called transcendental because it prevents nonsense, and has no connection with objective validity; but it is dealing with the a priori laws which base the conditions of the unity of meaning. For Husserl, logical laws concern the object and not the meaning, and constitute pure logical grammar or formal apophantics. By dealing with

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Lotze, *Logik, Drittes Buch*, Vom Erkennen, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1989.

propositions as simple meanings, formal apophantics prepares the field of formal ontology, which examines the objectivity of propositions. Husserl writes:

"That, in the representations of words accompanying and supporting my silent thought, I imagine every time words spoken by my voice, that on this occasion, sporadically, the signs of my stenographic writing or normal is usually presented, etc. these are my individual peculiarities and they are only part of the psychological content of my experience of these representations." (p. 114).

It can be seen that the truth of the act of expressing is in the intention of meaning and not in the figurations. Intentionality thus rests on the idea that every psychical phenomenon has a mental existence determined in relation to its content, which is its intentional object. It is a question of distinguishing the psychic acts according to their specific objects, so that the principle of the intentionality can serve as an analytical guide to traverse the psychic field, and classify the acts of conscience by cognitive category, without one being obliged to resort to spiritual postulates such as the thinking substance of Cartesians.

Consequently, Husserl proposes to begin the logic with a study of expressions and meanings, because our ideas are at the foundation of our judgments on the one hand and, on the other hand, we must admit the existence of existential propositions. Intentionality, from a more general point of view, is based on the idea that consciousness is the origin of any gift of meaning. According to Husserl, in fact, representation in general is not worthy of interest. What is important is to move towards the object represented as the one that is specifically referred to and named, and to pose it for us as such: "The logical formations (...) are given exclusively from within thanks to spontaneous activities and in them." (p. 112).

As we can see, the use of transcendental logic allows Husserl to give philosophy new starting points. He thus escapes the method of positive sciences based on verification, which seeks to confirm hypotheses by a return to the given or to the object. Philosophy, on the other hand, is the science of the foundation last or first, it is itself its justification. From this point of view, philosophy, as metaphysics, is the idea of science, it is science par excellence.

That philosophy is science in its general character, Husserl draws this idea from the teachings received from Franz Brentano. In 1866, Brentano published in Latin the 25 theses that he supported during his habilitation. The first thesis states: "philosophia negare oportet sciencias in speculativas et exactas dividi posse; what if not right negaretur esse eam ipsam ius non esset. (It is important for philosophy to protest against the division of sciences into exact sciences and speculative sciences: this challenge constitutes the reason for its being.)". Brentano protests here against the idea that opposes philosophy to science; he advocates the application of knowledge and empirical methods in philosophy.

Brentano notes that the cultural climate of his time is opposed to the idea that philosophy can claim to be a science, for four essential reasons: the diversity of the positions of the principles underlying the reasoning of philosophers; the repetition, through generations, of the upheaval in the philosophers' points of view; the impossibility of carrying out the tasks of philosophy by means of experimentation; the impossibility of applying the results of philosophical reflections profitably. To overcome these obstacles, Brentano begins with a list of four sciences - the other disciplines that are not sciences - namely, mathematics, physics, chemistry and physiology. Each of these sciences deals with what he calls "phenomenon", and each has developed at a given time. According to Brentano, mathematics has already developed in the Greeks (Euclid, Archimedes), physics has developed only since Galileo, chemistry since Lavoisier, physiology in the time of Brentano himself. It is for this reason that he thinks that if there are phenomena which relate to physiological phenomena, the science which deals with them must not yet reach the maturity of its development.

Consequently, philosophy as a science that deals with human physiology can only assume the destiny of psychology which, according to Brentano's vision, encompasses all nascent human and social sciences. Psychology is therefore the fundamental science in philosophy. He writes, for this purpose, his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, in which he fixes the conditions of philosophy as an empirical science. Philosophy should not be the science that deals with the essence of things, but with the psyche. It is as metaphysics that psychology deals with facts that are given both by inner experience and by inner experience. As such, she is the science of psychic phenomena, and not the science of the soul.

Insofar as interior observation is impossible, Brentano proposes inner perception as a method in psychology. It is a question of analyzing the psychic life in its different states. And psychic phenomena being of the inner individual life, they are externalized by the word and the acts posed on the outside. In this sense, the external behavior is the signifier and the psychic phenomenon is the signified. The work of the philosopher thus consists in discovering the general laws concerning the general properties of psychic phenomena, their varieties, and the regularity of their becoming. And these laws are obtained by the inductive method, on the basis of the analysis of the properties that come into play in particular individuals.

#### **Philosophy as a first science**

How is the phenomenology of Husserl as metaphysical a fulfillment of the general idea of science? This question refers to the problematic of *Krisis*, in which Husserl criticizes the objectivism of mathematical physics that is born with Galileo. *Krisis* revives the meaning of universal philosophy as the logic of being. According to Husserl, *Krisis* means a philosophy in which the very act of philosophizing places us in the pursuit of an infinite task. This task corresponds to the opening of a reasoning site, to philosophy as science. For it is as a science that the task of philosophy is infinite. Now, the assignment of such a task to philosophy is an acknowledgment by Husserl of the ethical

and metaphysical function that philosophy is called to play for the benefit of humanity.

In Husserl's metaphysical conception, man's humanity is essentially determined by his reason. Now, according to this determination, philosophy and science are the historical movement and the manifestation of universal reason. From then on, the crisis of science and philosophy announce a crisis of human reason; and which says crisis of the reason says crisis of the humanity all at short.

However, in Krisis, this crisis of humanity through the crisis of reason is related to the history of modernity through a rational anthropology: that which proceeds by historical figurology. But what about the first science? As E. Fink suggests, the first science in Husserl is accomplished according to the "idea of an original theoretical state".

The search for a universal science suggests the idea of returning to the "one", to what brings together in unity, the diversity of particular sciences. And the foundation of the plural being is in the unit itself: it is the unity which, by traversing itself, is particularized, so that the particular is only in relation to unity. The quest for universal science is therefore the effort to turn to the immemorial background where the conditions for the possibility of knowledge are woven, before knowledge (knowledge) comes to the surface, in the diversity of knowledge, different sciences.

What is at stake here is the accomplishment of the (return to) reduction of the "primary science", in order to arrive at a consciousness which should correspond to the way Husserl accesses the theme of "first science", in showing his appearance as such, below the appearance of its meaning.

To show the appearance of the "first science" is to go beyond a theoretical intentionality. To do this, we will resort to a method introduced by Emmanuel Lévinas, called "emphase". Emphasis is an "other way" of doing phenomenology. It consists in passing from an idea to its superlative, in an excess of expression, an exaggeration of meaning, to make an idea gain weight. Such a phenomenology no longer proposes to see and describe what appears in the light of knowledge, but tries to approach, in an oblique or transversal movement, the beyond all vision. The return to the very things, as they are given in the original intuition, is accomplished in an effort always begun again to allow to pierce the non-given or the "non-donable" of any donation.

A phenomenology of the "first science" goes back to the body, because it discovers the insufficiencies of the theoretic and of what makes it possible: the body is before science, more scientific than science, it allows itself to be seen in the emphasis of knowledge.

Indeed, knowledge, to the extent that it is fixed to be transmitted, to a link with the present that presents it as knowledge. To have a link with the present means, at least, to follow the logic of what begins. And the beginning always supposes a past which, without being the present of what begins, conditions and determines it. The body, in the horizon of the path, is the immemorial past of knowledge,

and knowledge is knowing from the latency of the body. To think of knowledge as emanating from the body is to be situated a thousand miles from an ingenuous elevation of the body towards eternal essences or the temptation to withdraw it from the world destined to become. It is rather to welcome the event of the body as uniqueness originating in the signifiante and, as such, as the first.

The event of the body makes all science possible. And the scientific universal, as a gathering of knowledge in "the one," resonates in this uniqueness of the body as such; the uniqueness of the body is the nurturing mother of all that can fit the boots of the sensible, because the body is the requirement and the measure of what is realizable.

But we must start from Husserl, his theory of the transcendental ego. To go where ? To start from, without going somewhere, if not to certain recesses of the Husserlian thought, in order to open to the gaze and make speak the unthought until then asleep in the oblivion of the common places of the phenomenology.

If phenomenologists, after Husserl, continue to treat the question of the mutual origin of man in his finitude and the world in its transcendence, that of the first philosophy was as if forgotten for several decades, to resurface among the phenomenologists of the most recent generation, in the last ten years or so. However, Husserl's concern was first and foremost to provide solid foundations for science as such.

The question of a basic science must be repeated in order to unfold, at new expense, the possibilities it contains. It must be put again, giving it another orientation, probably less scientific, but more fundamental. If consciousness (conscience) is the place of the elaboration of transcendental phenomenology, it is the human being in his body that gives a seat to consciousness. We must therefore analyze the body below the consciousness, to ask the first philosophy.

In a passage in his text entitled First Philosophy, Husserl considers it as "a discipline proper dependent only on itself, endowed with a problematic proper to the beginning (...). By an irreversible intrinsic necessity, this discipline would precede all other philosophical disciplines and should assume the methodical and theoretical foundation. The gateway, the beginning of the first philosophy itself, would henceforth be the beginning of all philosophy in general. Husserl directs his attention to the problem of the first philosophy, in order to elucidate the problematic of the methodical and theoretical foundation of other sciences. Such a task has certainly a theoretical and epistemological character, but it is above all a propaedeutic, insofar as it is necessary to begin by laying the foundations of the first philosophy itself, it is necessary to found in reason what can serve as a foundation for other sciences. It is probably in this context that the term "first" should be used.

Primacy is here a priority and a base on and from which can be elaborated the whole architecture of science. The first philosophy therefore has a beginning, that is to say, a moment and a place where it comes to light, it passes into the element of its method and its own object and, through this passage, it inaugurates all science, in the manner of a

source which, while remaining its own source, is the source and starting point of the streams it allows to flow beyond it. To speak of a beginning presupposes, at least, that the first philosophy has not always been, that it is not self-evident, that it is distinguished from what it is not, by qualities peculiar to it, and allow him to decline his identity in truth.

In short, the first philosophy, opening up and offering itself under the species of path, opens the way to philosophy or science in general. But who decides on the method and the object? Who posits the primacy and priority of a philosophical discipline in relation to others? The question "who?" "Questions in relation to the very one who questions and seeks, namely the subject: what about the subject himself?"

The problem of the foundations of the first philosophy, the mother of herself and the mother of all sciences, the future is the incarnated subject questioning about knowledge. And transcendental phenomenology is the work of an incarnated consciousness. It is important to emphasize the meaning of the incarnation to better understand what is at stake here.

The incarnation is not an external juxtaposition of objects, but is the fact of "being in another than oneself," as the "in" indicates. However, being "in" does not correspond to a container-content relationship, it is not contained in the body like a liquid in a vase. It is the body itself, in its unfolding, lets the consciousness emerge.

Consciousness, insofar as it is no expanse, is an event of the body, it occurs when the body becomes conscious of itself, when it is experienced as a body already there, posited, where the "already" indicates the time of the position domiciliation in the field of being. Consciousness always and already late compared to the body which carries it, consciousness in spite of itself. Self-awareness is not the exhibition of knowledge or the fact of being born with oneself (knowledge), but a test of sensitivity: to become aware of one's body is to feel oneself at home, to make oneself body body with its body incarnation is the advent of consciousness in the flesh.

Henceforth, the search for the beginning of all of the above, is in the first place, but it is a question of how to define the axiomatic, in which the meanings that attempt to transcend an axiom are based on this axiom. The ambition of the subordination of all philosophy is based on this function of logical deduction, whose axiomatic displays legitimacy. But the meaning, which comes directly from the structures of the body, interrupts the axiomatic deduction, so that the relation first philosophy / second philosophy no longer rests on a dialectical structure of the propositions. It is the excess of the body, more than the deduction of categories, which gives a foreword to the philosophical discourse, and, therefore, is prime.

How to accommodate this statement before the letter, this disproportion of the body, as the primordial plate of philosophy? We must, once more, walk in Husserlian thought to establish it.

Husserl showed that intentionality, as an act, is a gift of meaning. The relation to intentionality is essentially an act

of service of meaning, in that it is the identification of a unity through the multiplicity of its modes of manifestation and the noetic acts which aim at it: the donation of meaning is the foundation of all meaning. Thus, the hermeneutic structure of intentionality is based on a semantic paradigm: to think is to identify something as something. We must ascend that the thought of the body is not an identification, so that there is no objectifying intentionality of the body.

To this end, Husserl intends to elaborate the foundations of transcendental phenomenology as a new true and authentic science, elevated to the dignity of the first philosophy. This science has as its object the concrete transcendental subjectivity, which is present in an actual or possible transcendental experience. In addition, she is concerned with extending the analysis of the transcendental ego to the dimension of transcendental intersubjectivity. In other words, it is a question of assuming, in a rational approach, the three following projects:

- 1) The idea of a universal doctrine of science ;
- 2) The theoretical synthesis of rational life ;
- 3) The elaboration of a universal theory of theoretical reason.

The realization of these three projects, according to Husserl, would make it possible to "reform all our scientific activity (...) to free us from the tyranny of all the scientific specializations". (*Krisis* § 6). This reform consists in bringing out from the sole soil of transcendental phenomenology all the roots of science in general and of the particular sciences.

In logical language, the question to be solved is that of the articulation between the universality of a matrix science and the particularization of this universal science in the different sciences, an articulation to be assumed and presented in a purely theoretical discourse. The universality of the first philosophy is not realized as a peculiarity in the other sciences, regulating them or conferring to them the elements which mark their difference from each other. Universality is to be understood rather as a singularity removed from particularistic determinations, although, of course, it proceeds in and through these determinations.

In this way, the singularity of a particular science or of the primary science itself, is a singularity of the universality of the first philosophy. It comes as initiating one of its singular "procedures" of universalization and constituting that one. Thus, the first universal philosophy, in its constitution, is intransitive to the peculiarities of the formulation of each science, for it gives them contours and ensures the space where they can exist in truth.

But can one reform the totality of scientific activity by going through the invention of another scientific activity, even if it were first, without falling into the trap of particularism? The first philosophy, indeed, must be one, in the singular, whatever universal. Is not the gathering in "one" a unification and a standardization in a general concept encompassing?

The integration of the particular into a scientific discourse is, since Aristotle, an assimilation of the particular into the

general: there is science only general. Now the general himself is "one". It is because he is one that the general can bring together individuals in a single concept and elevate them to the rank of science or "his" science, since there is science only of the general.

These remarks show this: universal science can only be considered as a science of the universal, uncontaminated by the power of science. Science is the science of the non-scientist, and the universal of science is unscientific.

Thus, would the scientific universal or that which unites the scientist in the "one", would it not be below the science as such, to the unique of the body? Would not the non-scientist of the body be that towards which the scientific gaze should orient itself to contemplate, with a watchful eye of the gathering, its original background?

That philosophy is the search for the essence of knowledge and its self-justification, Husserl attributes to the Platonic dialectic. It serves as the dawn of a philosophy that gives itself the preliminary task, the justification of itself and the clarification of its own approach.

Plato's originality lies in the fact that he has erected the universal methodology of self-justification of self as the starting point of philosophy. With Plato, for the first time, latent reason is brought to the understanding of one's own possibilities, according to a coherent apodictic method. Plato inaugurates the idea of a philosophy that gives itself the preliminary task of clarifying the principles of all philosophy.

The qualifier "first" in "first philosophy" therefore translates the idea of a philosophy understood as universal methodology, a theory of knowledge, which sets the limits and contours of the thinkable. Consequently, the first philosophy is a priori system of the rational method in general, which plunges the foundations of its self-justification into the evidence of apodictic necessity. And what is a priori is required as a standard, without prior demonstration. It is the aprioric character of the method which establishes the primacy and priority of the first philosophy.

But Plato's concern is to elaborate a corpus of knowledge that leads, in a necessary way, to a just life. Plato's universal science is therefore not an evasive quest towards ethereal theoretical realities, but rather a wisdom capable of provoking, in those who practice it (the philosophers), the capacity to bring about an organized community life according to the norms of justice. It has a practical and social purpose. Husserl points out, from this perspective, that the formulation of an apodictic science in Plato is inseparable from an ethical and social responsibility. He bases himself on this Platonic orientation to criticize the Western sciences and to propose transcendental phenomenology as a new science: it is the problematic of *Krisis* mentioned above, which reconnects with the meaning of universal philosophy as the logic of being.

In the seventh paragraph (§7) of *Krisis*, Husserl notes that we have become aware, at least in a very general way, that human philosopher and his results have in no way in the

whole of human existence the simple meaning of a private cultural purpose or limited in one way or another. The humanity of man is essentially determined by his reason.

But according to this determination, philosophy and science are the historical movement and the manifestation of universal reason. From then on, the crisis of science and philosophy announce a crisis of human reason; and the crisis of reason corresponds to the crisis of humanity, quite simply. The most universal illustration of science and philosophy as they constitute the movement and manifestation of human reason in history, according to Husserl, has occurred in philosophy and science of the European type.

Thanks to this rationalization of the life of humanity through European rationalism, Europe can be considered, for Husserl, as the prototype of universal humanity. It is through the ethics of a European existence that we can now assess the state of crisis in which science and the whole of European humanity have fallen. If the European sciences, which are the mediating symbol of the whole of European humanity, have been in crisis for a long time, it means at least two things: either Europe has lost the leadership of humanity or, by an effort of fatality that is dragging the whole of humanity in the wake of the European destiny - as is the case of the two world wars that were only two European civil wars - all humanity, by the European crisis, went into crisis. In one case as in the other, the common heritage of European science can only be renewed by a return to a transcendental foundation, thanks to transcendental phenomenology.

Thus, to base transcendental phenomenology as a universal science, Husserl turns to Cartesian Meditations. He admits, following Descartes, that the absolute foundation of science must be realized from an initial apodictic evidence of the ego or the ego, henceforth understood as the firm ground on which universal science can be established. The principle or the keystone of phenomenology is the "transcendental" or "pure" *ego*, considered in itself, without determination of the world, breaking with the bodily dimension of experience, accessible through radical return (reduction) to the phenomenon.

Phenomenological reduction, which sometimes coincides with the implementation of the phenomenological method, will therefore have the task of fulfilling the absolute certainty of the ego and the pure life of consciousness that reveal themselves to the subject. In this way, phenomenology as the first philosophy or universal science, absolutely objective, is a science of the ego or a science of the true essence of consciousness.

To realize such a project, Husserl rejects, initially, the body and the sensitive dimension of the experience, in favor of a superior apodictic evidence, that of the absolute certainty of the ego. This primordial rejection or suspension of the sensible body is linked to the paradox of the body as such. Husserl points out, in fact, that there are two dimensions of the body, namely the sensible body and the voluntary body. This is, it must be emphasized, two dimensions of a single body. And the sensible body also has two levels: the

material body as a phenomenon and the physical body. The voluntary dimension of the body is free and able to move.

The body can both be represented as a reality of the world of things, and as a spiritual reality<sup>4</sup>. In this twofold sensitive / voluntary and world / spirit, the element which makes it possible to establish with more certainty a transcendental rationalism is the spirit, expressed through the notion of the ego or the pure self.

Phenomenology thus assumes itself as a science of the pure self which affirms the absoluteness of the ego on the world. As a result, the question of the body and the world can be reduced to that of the ego and the world. It is then a question of getting rid of the usual representations which determine what is meant by world. Astonishment over the world is not only about what is in the world, but essentially the existence of the world itself, and the presence of the subject in the world, it being understood that the presence of the ego is made effective in the world by his body. From this point of view, the questioning of the possibility of the universal science of the ego requires that the subject and the world be united in one problem. The radical question is this: how can the subject know from himself, a world that is outside of him?

Phenomenological reduction, suspending the validity of the world, calls into question, in the same movement, the existence of the empirical ego as part of the world. The human ego, more than anything else in the world, is not already given. But the questioning of the absolute existence of the world can lead to the shaking of the certainty of my existence as something of the world. According to Husserl, indeed, consciousness must at the same time be the absolute within which all transcendent beings (of the psycho-physical world in its totality) are constituted, and a real and subordinate event within this world. . Because consciousness is on one side the original region of gift of meaning, and on the other hand, by the empirical relation to the body, a consciousness in the world (in something), the reduction is it not a split between a pure and abstract ego without a world, and a contingent empirical ego?

The subject (ego) that constitutes the world will have to objectify itself as an empirical ego, tearing itself away from itself, to appear as the origin of meaning. It is on this condition that the return to the ego does not consist in deducing the presence of the world from one of its elements, and that it is possible to elucidate the identity and the difference of the ego. origin and ego facticiel. Thus, one must begin by tearing oneself away from the apprehension of oneself as a definite subject for all of its dependencies

<sup>4</sup> « *Der Leib als Leib hat danach ein doppeltes Gesicht, zunächst innerhalb der Anschauung. Er ist Realität hinsichtlich der Natur als der anschaulichen Sachenwelt und zugleich Realität hinsichtlich des Geistes. Er ist also eine doppelte Realität, zu der zwei Richtungen realer Umstände gehören. Dabei ist die aesthesiologische Schicht für die Schicht 'Freibewegliches' die Unterlage.* » (*Die Konstitution der geistigen Welt*. Text nach Husserliana Bd. 4, hrsg. Und eingeleitet von M. Sommer, Hamburg, Meiner Verlag, 1984, p. 115.

with regard to the world, nature and society. One must break one's familiarity with one's surrounding world, to appear as ego-origin, for in this familiarity the subject is still understood as something among things.

The ego-origin, as the seat of understanding is located and carried by a place, namely the body. We must distinguish here two levels: that of the immanent understanding that integrates the awareness of the ego as existing in a body, and the transcendent understanding that refers to the world outside the subject, and to what is in the world, more particularly to the body of others.

To try to overcome the confinement of the ego in a transcendental monism, Husserl develops a theory of intersubjectivity, which fixes the objective meaning of the world. While Descartes draws the foundation of objectivity from divine veracity, Husserl discovers it rather in the experience of the alter ego. The concept of experience is to be considered here in the sense of the spontaneity of the meeting that we make of ourselves as individuals engaged in a daily trade with others and the world of life in general, the experience as recognition of immediate evidence. Another is a meaning that reveals itself as "other", an alterity which, while constituting itself from the ego, is irreducible to it (alter). But, for Husserl, *alter means alter-ego, and the ego that is involved in it, it is myself, constituted within the sphere of my "primordial "belonging, in a unique way, as a psycho-physical unit (as primordial man), as a "personal" self, immediately active in my unique body and intervening by an immediate action in the ambient and primordial world subject of a psychic sphere relating to it. same and the "world".*

It should be noted that Husserl does not insist on the explicitation of the "alter", but on that of the "ego". This, no doubt, reflects Husserl's concern to remain within the framework of a science based on the transcendental ego, inasmuch as from which any meaning can assume the mantle of the sensible. The science of the ego is, in some ways, the science of myself, always and already riveted to itself, as a pure consciousness. True, Husserl erects pure consciousness in an ontological region, and separates the relative transcendent being from the absolute immanent being. Consciousness as a simple region has no attributes. It is only after its passage to the centrality that will open before it other perspectives. In a word, the principle of phenomenology is, for Husserl, the return to the immediate.

However, this immediate is not naturally given. It is to be understood as an immanent experience of consciousness. In this way, the starting point of Husserlian phenomenology is recognition as the first sense of being. Apart from the immanent phenomenal being, there is neither knowledge nor sense nor being.

Consequently, to bring back alter to alter-ego consists, for Husserl, in thinking of otherness according to selfhood; the otherness of others is thought from the sphere of the self. As a result, the experience of others, as the first transcendence and condition of possibility of the world understood in its objective sense, awakens in the constitution of the ego. And the subject experiences his body, within his sphere, as a physical object alongside other objects in the world.

In these conditions, how can one understand the distinction made by Husserl, according to which the body is not only a physical body, but also a voluntary body? As a reality endowed with will, the body is a reality which is determined from the internal reflexivity of the consciousness, on the basis of its internal relation to the spirit. As such, the body belongs to the sphere of the conscious subject.

Thus, the body is both an object that I meet with others and, as a representation of the mind, a dimension of my experience. The body is what the subject has of its own, within its primordial sphere, so that the experience of the inner world of consciousness depends entirely on the body. My body is the reference of all the physical bodies and all the data of my primordial world. In fact, the reduction to the internal reflexivity of consciousness reveals the body as my body, and the experience I am making of the world refers to myself, at the same time as it is realized in the world. The subject coincides with the world which is reduced to the horizon of his body.

This coincidence is of the order of thought because it is the subject of the phenomenological reduction, the subject that develops science, and not the man who is in the natural attitude, who welcomes the world and his own body in an immediate and first naivety. There would be a scientific way and a non-scientific way of grasping one's body and the world. Is it the same body and the same world? If science aims to seek universal truth, is it not always and already carried by a form of non-scientific naivete?

E. Lévinas rightly remarks: "Husserl we will have learned that any movement of thought has a part naiveté (...)"<sup>5</sup> This remark raises a question: the effort of the subject scientist, who tries to escape the "Natural", is not it an illusion?

This remark shows at least one thing: scientific rigor, when applied to the body, can not be absolute. It is necessary, then, to renew the notion of first philosophy as a rigorous science to the truth of its limits, in order to subject its disturbance to the opacity of the body, as the abyssal and unscientific bottom of all thought. We must therefore scrutinize a notion of first philosophy, rid of all ambition of rigorous science, dedicated to the opacity and paradox of the body. In Husserlian phenomenology, the analysis of the body of others opens this perspective, insofar as the body of others presents a resistance to the capture of the consciousness of the ego.

The ego's experience of the alter-ego is paradoxical in the sense that, through its physical body, others are apprehended, to a certain extent, "in the flesh" in front of me without his experience and his intentional experience being accessible to the consciousness of the ego. If the subjective life of others were directly accessible to me, we would have the same consciousness, in an extension by simple continuity, in the pure linearity of the same without alterity; others would no longer be another (alter), but a symmetrical component of my ego. Let's deepen this idea.

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<sup>5</sup> E. Lévinas, (1978), *Autrement qu'être*, p. 38.

My body is given to me in a constant self-apperception according to the central "here" mode, that is to say according to "a single spatial nature and this, in intentional reference to my own corporeality that makes perceptions " My body thus appears as the point of reference (the "here") of all the spatial positions of my primordial field.

It follows then that all other bodies, different from mine, as we have emphasized above, are given in the mode of "there." However, the "over there" can nevertheless be transformed into a potential "here" if I move my body towards this place, but without taking the place of the body of others. There would be a "there" specific to the body of others and another "there" relating to the projection of my body in another place.

Through the experience of my body, I can consider myself as being positioned there and experiencing my primordial world in other ways of appearance, but without entering the skin of another. In this way, the appearance of the body of others evokes in me this specific bodily experience: if I were there, instead of the own body of others, I would experience the same world as him, in the same conditions of space and time. On the contrary, the lived experiences and the immanent sphere of others are simply appraised with the presence of his physical body in my spatial field. I can examine the primordial sphere of others in mine by projecting myself in its place.

It follows that others are always given to me from my recognition of their body, but a recognition that always implies a subjective life other than mine. The body of another can not be reduced to a simple physical body, for it is not constituted in the manner of an object, that is to say, as a being immanent to my primordial sphere. It is rather a radical otherness that comes to me from his body, as his own reference.

It should be noted that Husserl's attention is directed to the original structure of the experience of others, in the sense of a transcendental genesis. The connection between the ego and the body of others is determined from within the other element. And the relation of otherness in the perspective of the constitution of others is based on the representation, according to which the alter ego, never present to the ego, is always referred to as the pole of an indirect intentionality, as another me "out there", carried by the body of others, difference of my body.

The experience of the physical body of others as *alter* (other) incarnate is not an awareness of something: the direct presentation of the physical body of others in the experience is accompanied by an appreciation, that is, that is to say, of a gift of mediate or indirect meaning by which this body acquires the meaning of individual and alter or of the different.

The *ego* attributes to the physical body of others the sense of a reference body of space by virtue of an aperceptive transfer of the experience of its own body. A rapprochement is thus established between my body and the physical body of others given in my experience. It is therefore the question of the resemblance and the analogy between my body and



the body of others which is here at stake. The experience of others as a body is thus the result of an apprehension in which the physical body of others evokes the experience of my own body in a unity of resemblance.

But the representation of the body of others can only be maintained by a reaffirmation and a constant confirmation of the transcendental experience of the transfer of meaning. This confirmation is made in the indices expressed by the body of others. These signs constitute the whole of the behaviors diffused by his body, which, by concordant variations, allow me to suppose a life proper to this body.

The bodily experience of others allows us to grasp the way in which the alter ego manages to coexist in my primordial sphere, that is to say, according to Husserl's words, "another monad is constituted appropiently in mine." We must emphasize the idea of "another monad", another and not even. Otherness is affirmed here, to characterize an autonomous entity (monad). The notion of monad suggests the idea of what is each time one, identical to oneself, indivisible and intransitive. That the body of others comes to my consciousness under the species of a monad, that supposes, at least, that its proper feature is radical otherness. This is a form of dualism in Husserl's philosophy because, on the one hand, the pure ego is ontologically different from my body, totally immersed in a disembodied purity and, on the other, the body of another is the object of a form of constitution in the sphere of the ego, while remaining different from the other things of the world.

In this context, the body of others presents itself as an element that disturbs the process of knowledge, insofar as it arises between the pure disembodied consciousness and the world. To overcome this dualism, it is useful to focus attention on a phenomenology of the body which takes as its center the concrete immanence of the original body, where the experience of the flesh or of the uniqueness of the body corresponds to the pure feeling, of an opaque feeling to the thematizing consciousness.

## 2. Conclusion

Husserl's phenomenology presents itself as the only great philosophy that, in the 20th century, by returning to the sources of classical metaphysics, attempted to overcome modern mathematical-physicalist objectivism. He criticizes the ideal of scientific naturalism not from the outside, but by trying to realize it in all these consequences and by giving it an absolute function or dimension. Thus, Husserl avoids the error of positivists without losing contact with the methods and problems of the particular sciences.

Husserl's global work is thus characterized by its concern to participate in the foundation of abstract sciences, in particular transcendental logic, which is comparable to the primary idea of metaphysics as an apodictic science. The program of the eidetic ontologies (essences) that it projects gives the signal of a renewal in philosophy as a concrete discipline; both formally and according to its content. It is by following the problems of intentionality, striving to extract what is given in internal perception with a guarantee

of evidence that Husserl arrived at the phenomenological reduction.

First, an epoch affecting all knowledge transcending the pure phenomenon. Husserl renews during this work many themes of modern philosophy such as the problem of the subject, the problem of time, the relationship of time and the world. The new concept of the world, not only as a set of existing things, but as a meeting place of the object and the subject; the problem of the subject as corporeal, ie living in a clean body conceived not as a thing but as a perspective on things and a possibility to act on them immediately. The problem of intersubjectivity as the proper field of reason which is itself and unfolds in history.

Starting from the problems relating to the foundation of science, Husserl thus opens up the problems of history, of the historico-social being whose crises and turning points are in his eyes at the same time the turning points and crises of science. From now on, it is no longer possible to think of human being without the world and the world without human being.

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