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Einfühlung, Body, and Knowledge: Phenomenology of the Intersubjective Cognition

ABSTRACT: The article is an attempt to phenomenologically describe the act of social cognition. By "social (or intersubjective) cognition" the author means a special act of consciousness that constitutes knowledge about other subjects as other subjects. It is argued that the description of the act has to answer the question of how social cognition is possible, and as a result, to define the character of the object constituted in the epistemic relation of social cognitive act. The author shows how Husserl's analysis of the lived body grounds his phenomenology of social cognition, and he claims that one has to understand the act precisely as spontaneous, but essentially indirect act of co-presentation.

KEYWORDS: phenomenology • intersubjectivity • knowledge • body • empathy • Scheler • Stein • Husserl

Introduction

The problem of intersubjectivity was often regarded as a challenge for Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) phenomenology. Especially if one considers his *Méditations Cartésiennes* (1931), it seems that the main aim for a phenomenological inquiry is to a r g u e that intersubjectivity e x i s t s, and its justification is grounded in the apodictic evidence of a solitary ego. The argumentation seems to go here as follows[1]: (1) reduction requires a solipsistic standpoint where the other subject can be justified o n l y by the reference to egological lived body; (2) in order to justify intersubjectivity, one cannot presuppose that it is reducible to the solipsistic sphere; (3) however, one presupposes that existence of the ego is more evident than the existence of other subjects; thus (4) a solitary philosopher has to justify

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[1] Cf. S. Judycki, *Uwagi o filozoficznym "problemie 'alter ego'"*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne", 1988, XXXVI (1), p. 151.

the existence of other subjects on the basis of a solitary experience. This approach, promoted by Alfred Schütz, Hermann Zeltner, and popularized by Michael Theunissen in his *Der Andere* (1965, revisited edition: 1977)[2] – can be called a t r a n s c e n d e n t a l - a r g u m e n t a t i v e interpretation of the problem of alter ego in Husserl's philosophy. Though the transcendental-argumentative approach was very popular in the 1960's and 1970's, it was grounded on a limited range of Husserl's works, and for this reason it did not present his theory adequately. After a publication in 1973 by Iso Kern of *Husserliana*, vol. XIII–XV on *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjectivität* it was evident that Husserl's approach is significantly more complicated than the transcendental-argumentative one. As a result, Theunissen's interpretation has met with an acute critique leading to the "intersubjective turn" in studies on Husserl[3].

Given this background, one has to accept that the critique of Theunissen's interpretation leads towards a suspension of the transcendental-argumentative approach. In the present article I suggest to contrast the transcendental-argumentative approach to Husserl's t r a n s c e n d e n t a l - p h e n o m e n o l o g i c a l approach. The latter approach refers to descriptions of essential structures, rather than to argumentative-regressive way of justifying theses. Thus, the main aim of the present study is to describe structures and character of the act of intersubjective or social cognition. In a word, I offer to focus on the phenomenon of social cognition. What is meant by "intersubjective (or social) cognition" is a particular act of consciousness that constitutes our knowledge about other subjects a s other subjects[4]. E.g., if someone sees

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[2] Cf. M. Theunissen, *Der Andere. Studien zur Sozialontologie der Gegenwart*, Berlin–New York (NY) 1977², p. 246. See also A. Schütz, *Das Problem der transzendentalen Intersubjektivität bei Husserl*, "Philosophische Rundschau", 1957, 5 (2), pp. 81–107; H. Zeltner, *Das Ich und die Anderen. Husserls Beitrag zur Grundlegung der Sozialphilosophie*, "Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung", 1959, 13, pp. 288–315.

[3] Cf. D. Zahavi, *Husserl und die transzendentale Intersubjektivität. Eine Antwort auf die sprachpragmatische Kritik*, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 1996; *idem*, *Husserl's Intersubjective Transformation of Transcendental Philosophy*, [in:] *The New Husserl. A Critical Reader*, ed. by D. Welton, Bloomington (IN)–Indianapolis (IN), 2003, pp. 233–251; P. Reynaert, *Intersubjectivity and Naturalism – Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation Revisited*, "Husserl Studies", 2001, 17, pp. 207–216; N. Depraz, *The Husserlian Theory of Intersubjectivity as Alterology. Emergent Theories and Wisdom Traditions in the Light of Genetic Phenomenology*, "Journal of Consciousness Studies", 2001, 8 (No. 5–7), pp. 169–178; S. Gallagher, *Phenomenological Contributions to a Theory of Social Cognition*, "Husserl Studies", 2005, 21, pp. 95–110; A. Schnell, *Intersubjectivity in Husserl's Work*, "META. Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Practical Philosophy", 2010, vol. II (1), pp. 9–32.

[4] In other words, I do not want to refer to other important discussions regarding the question of intersubjectivity of cognition, e.g., the question of the status of first-person

the other subject who reads a scientific article, he or she comprehends him or her a s someone, despite w h a t they do. Speaking phenomenologically, the subject is given in the act in a particular mode of presentation, i.e., in the "h o w" of presentation. By describing the phenomenon of social cognition, I provide a study in the field of what I suggest to call, following Husserl, phenomenology of knowledge (*Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*). The main problem of phenomenology of social cognition can be formulated in the following way: H o w i s s o c i a l c o g n i t i o n p o s s i b l e?

While considering the question of possibility of social cognition, one has to refer to at least some aspects of investigations of Max Scheler (1874–1928), Edith Stein (1891–1942), and Husserl. With this regard, the main thesis of the article is that in order to understand phenomenological conception of empathy (*Einfühlung*) properly, one must abandon its argumentative interpretation. It is widely known that one can interpret a phenomenological argument from analogy as follows: (1) if someone has a lived body, they are a subject; (2) the other has a body; (3) therefore, the other is a subject. This interpretation infers the existence of the other from the primordial experience of the lived body, however, it collapses into a categorical error. In contrast to this argumentative approach, one has to describe empathy as spontaneous, immediate, but at the same time as an indirect relation with the other subject. The main aim of empathy, as I will try to show below, is to understand the other a s the other, and not merely as a variant of ego. In order to do so, this article is divided into three parts. At the very beginning I reconstruct the main concepts, methods, and aims of phenomenology of knowledge. Although the project of phenomenology of knowledge was formulated over 100 years ago by Husserl, it is still relatively less know, than other theories of knowledge[5]. Nonetheless, it presents an important supplementation of

reports of mental states, or the problem of collective intentionality. Cf. N. Praetorius, *Intersubjectivity and Language: Principled Reasons Why the Subject May be Trusted*, "Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences", 2004, 3, pp. 195–214; E. Chelstrom, *Social Phenomenology. Husserl, Intersubjectivity, and Collective Intentionality*, Lanham–Boulder–New York (NY)–Toronto–Plymouth 2013.

[5] Cf. H. Pietersma, *The Problem of Knowledge and Phenomenology*, "Philosophy and Phenomenological Research", 1989, 50 (1), pp. 27–47; *idem*, *Phenomenological Epistemology*, New York (NY)–Oxford 2000; W. Hopp, *Phenomenology and Fallibility*, "Husserl Studies", 2009, 25, pp. 1–14; G. Heffernan, *On Husserl's Remark That "[s]elbst eine sich als apodiktisch ausgebende Evidenz kann sich als Täuschung enthüllen…" (XVII 164: 32–33): Does the Phenomenological Method Yield Any Epistemic Infallibility?*, "Husserl Studies", 2009, 25, pp. 15–43; W. Hopp, *Perception and Knowledge. A Phenomenological Account*, Cambridge 2011; R. Sowa, *Episodic and Non-episodic Intentionality: On the Constitutive Function of the Episodic Habitualities of Knowledge and Belief in Edmund Husserl*, "Phenomenology and Mind", 2014, 6, pp. 180–202.

contemporary cognitive phenomenology[6]. In the second part some aspects of Scheler's and Stein's contributions to the theory of empathy are considered. In the last part I present a description of the act of social cognition following Husserl's transcendental analysis of the lived body (*Leib*), and its movements. I argue that the act of social cognition can be understood as the act of essentially indirect presentation of the alter ego in its otherness.

Elements of Phenomenology of Knowledge

Phenomenology is mainly regarded as a theory of subjective experience. This seems to hold also for phenomenological theory of knowledge. And so, for Henry Pietersma, "Phenomenological epistemology […] breaks with that [i.e., natural] attitude and focuses its attention differently: not on objects, but on their experience"[7]. The thesis that phenomenology shifts its research interests from object to subject is rather an oversimplification, but the thesis shows clearly that a phenomenologist brakes with naturalism in theory of knowledge. This aspect of phenomenological theory of knowledge was well analyzed, e.g., by Li Zhongwei and Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl[8]. However, as already claimed, it is an oversimplification, because the thesis does not refer to the specific phenomenological claim that phenomena are constituted in c o r r e l a t i o n . Therefore, the concept of knowledge has to be redefined. As a result, while considering the question of knowledge, one has to accept that k n o w l e d g e   i s   n o t   a   s u b j e c t i v e   e x p e r i e n c e ,   b u t   r a t h e r   i t i s   c o n s t i t u t e d   i n   t h i s   e x p e r i e n c e . Hence, one has to redefine noetically oriented phenomenological theory of knowledge, and refer also to the noematic aspect of epistemic relation. When Husserl asks in "The Train of Thought in the Lectures" of *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907): "how can knowledge be sure that it corresponds to things as they exist in themselves, that it 'makes contact' with them?"[9], he in fact asks about the correlation of

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[6] Cf. P. Jacob, *What is the Phenomenology of Thought?*, "Philosophy and Phenomenological Research", 1998, 58, pp. 443–448; D. Pitt, *The Phenomenology of Cognition or "What is It Like to Think that P?"*, "Philosophy and Phenomenological Research", 2004, 69 (1), pp. 1–36; *Cognitive Phenomenology*, ed. by T. Bayne & M. Montague, Oxford 2011; E. Chudnoff, *Cognitive Phenomenology*, London–New York (NY) 2015.

[7] H. Pietersma, *Phenomenological Epistemology, op. cit.*, p. 3.

[8] Cf. L. Zhongwei, *Toward a Husserlian Conception of Epistemology*, [in:] *Advancing Phenomenology: Essays in Honor of Lester Embree*, ed. by T. Nenon & P. Blosser, Dordrecht 2010, pp. 119–128; S. Rinofner-Kreidl, *What is Wrong with Naturalizing Epistemology? A Phenomenologist's Reply*, [in:] *Husserl and the Sciences: Selected Perspectives*, ed. by R. Feist, Ottawa 2004, pp. 41–68.

[9] E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. and introduction by L. Hardy, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 1999, p. 61. In the German edition the passage goes as follows: "wie

knowledge in its subjective aspect understood as cognition (*Erkenntnis*) to things, so he asks about constitution of knowledge from a subjective perspective with regard to noematic aspect of experience (*Sachen*). To be precise, by phenomenology of knowledge I understand – following Husserl – a subdiscipline of phenomenology in general[10] that aims at systematic descriptions of phenomena related to broadly understood cognition (noesis), and its correlate – knowledge (noema). To phrase it differently, knowledge is not a proper object of the act of cognition, but it presents the object of cognition as a part of knowledge. So, knowledge is to be understood as a moment of the object. E.g., if I perceive a white paper, I can say: "I know that the paper is white"; the sentence expresses someone's k n o w l e d g e of the paper, however, what he or she perceives is the paper and not knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is a way of presentation of objects and for this reason it can be the object of a phenomenological description. After all, phenomenology concerns the ways in which phenomena present themselves, and it concerns the "how" of presentation rather than the "what" of presentation[11].

Phenomenology of knowledge is (1) descriptive, (2) eidetic, and (3) transcendental inquiry into cognition and knowledge. To understand this broad definition, one can contrast phenomenology of knowledge with contemporary theory of knowledge. As it is well known, theory of knowledge is a contemporary theory of epistemic justification that attempts to demonstrate our beliefs to be true. The *terminus a quo* of theory of knowledge is in principle the traditional, tripartite concept of knowledge as justified true belief. This definition, however, is for some philosophers too broad and for others too narrow or simply inadequate. In any case, it is controversial. For this reason, the *terminus ad quem* of theory of knowledge is to state the conditions that are (individually) necessary and (collectively) sufficient for understanding "knowledge". In other words, the proper objects of theory of knowledge are propositions that report someone's knowledge, e.g., the proposition "Smith knows that Jones owns a Ford", and the main purpose

kann Erkenntnis ihrer Übereinstimmung mit den an sich seienden Sachen gewiß werden, sie ,treffen'". *Idem*, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, hrsg. v. W. Biemel, The Hague 1973², p. 3.

[10] "The m e t h o d of the critique of knowledge is the phenomenological method, phenomenology as the general doctrine of essence, within which the science of the essence of knowledge finds its place". E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 61; *idem*, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, op. cit., p. 3.

[11] Husserl's analysis of correlation of transcendence and immanence is an example of inquiry into the ways of how knowledge constitutes itself in the act of cognition. See, e.g., E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 26; *idem*, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, op. cit., p. 38.

of theory of knowledge is to define the term "knowledge"[12]. Husserl would regard this approach as naïve, since knowledge is here constructed "from the top down" (*von oben her*). A genuine theory of knowledge, on the other hand, should be critical, which results in a claim to analyze knowledge a s knowledge "from the bottom up" (*von unten*)[13]. Phenomenology is such a theory of knowledge, where knowledge is understood "from the bottom up". On the one hand, analysis of knowledge "from the top down" means to define it in a deductively connected system of theses, and to investigate propositions that express someone's knowledge. On the other hand, a n a l y - s i s   o f   k n o w l e d g e   " f r o m   t h e   b o t t o m   u p "   m e a n s   t o   g r a s p k n o w l e d g e   a s   k n o w l e d g e ,   a n d   t o   d e s c r i b e   i t   a s   i t   p r e s - e n t s   i t s e l f , so that here we investigate not propositions, but, so to speak, "the thing itself", i.e., knowledge.

Both approaches, as it seems, can be developed as theory of knowledge in at least three ways. I want to suggest that one has to distinguish between three different senses of "theory of knowledge", that is, s t r o n g , m o d e r - a t e , and w e a k : (1) "Theory of knowledge" in the s t r o n g sense grasps "theory" as a logical system of systematically connected theses concerning knowledge; in this case "to justify knowledge" is synonymous with "to present a logical, deductive argument for knowledge"[14]. (2) "Theory of knowledge" in the m o d e r a t e sense identifies "justification" with "description"; here "to justify knowledge" means "to describe the conditions of its possibility". (3) "Theory of knowledge" in the w e a k sense denies the justificatory condition, and by doing so also denies a normative character of the analysis of knowl- edge in general; in this context, a theoretician does not aim at systematic descriptions, but rather at exemplary descriptions of the individual cases of

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[12] Cf. E.L. Gettier, *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*, "Analysis", 1963, 23, pp. 121–123. The postulate of analisis of the term "knowledge", mainly in the context of common language was formulated, e.g., by Jaakko Hintikka. See J. Hintikka, *Epistemic Logic and the Methods of Philosophical Analysis*, "Australasian Journal of Philosophy", 1968, 46 (1), pp. 37–51.

[13] E. Husserl, *Formale und transzendentale Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*, mit ergänzenden Texten hrsg. v. P. Janssen, Den Haag 1974, p. 169; *idem*, *Einleitung in die Philosophie. Vorlesungen 1922/23*, hrsg. v. B. Goossens, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 2003, p. 274. "Habe ich es mir zur Lebensaufgabe gemacht eine Philosophie ‚von unten' min- destens für mich, zu meiner (s e h r schwer zu gewinnenden!) Befriedigung zu begründen, so strebe ich doch unablässig von dem ‚Unten' hinauf in die Höhen". *Idem*, *Briefwechsel. Bd. III. Die göttinger Schule*, in Verbindung mit E. Schuhmann, hrsg. v. K. Schuhmann, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 1994, p. 160 (Letter to Hocking, July 7, 1912).

[14] This approach seems to accept Rodrick Chisholm in his *Theory of Knowledge*. See R. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, Englewood Cliffs (NJ), 1966, 1977², 1989³. See also *idem*, *Evidence as Justification*, "The Journal of Philosophy", 1961, 58, pp. 739–749.

knowing that do not appeal to any systematization. This w e a k theory of knowledge can be developed also as a form of complex critique of epistemology in general, however, without a clear alternative research project that can omit main objections[15]. One can say, of course, that descriptive analysis does not represent theory of knowledge if the term "theory" is taken in a rigid sense as referring to a more or less complex system of deductively connected sentences[16]. I argue, however, that phenomenology is theory of knowledge in the m o d e r a t e sense, that is, it is descriptive, and, in addition, eidetic and transcendental.

Phenomenology understood as theory of knowledge in the moderate sense offers descriptions of knowledge. But why should one d e s c r i b e knowledge? Husserl emphasizes: "The existing sciences are essentially neither enhanced nor downgraded by the truths of critique of knowledge". As he concludes: "T h e y h a v e b e c o m e t h o r o u g h l y u n d e r s t a n d a b l e"[17]. The aim of the description is then to u n d e r s t a n d knowledge a s knowledge. With this regard, one can claim that the process of the phenomenological description is endless, and cannot find its final formulation in the system or complete theory of knowledge. As Rinofner-Kreidl emphasizes,

> Transcendental phenomenology supports a descriptive *a priori* which is akin to empirical research in one important respect: it is work in progress. Phenomenological descriptions do not reach a final state of enclosure in a so-called philosophical system[18].

One does not want to e x p l a i n how knowledge becomes knowledge by formulating arguments that justify our beliefs, or by reconstructing a chain of causes that produces belief; rather, we are interested in u n d e r s t a n d i n g knowledge, i.e., in the question of the essence of knowledge. Thus the main difference between phenomenology as theory of knowledge in the moderate

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[15] Richard Rorty's critique of classical epistemology presents, as it seems, the weak form of theory of knowledge. See R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton (NJ) 1979. See also his critique of phenomenology: *idem, Epistemological Behaviorism and the De-Transcendentalization of Analytic Philosophy*, "Neue Hefte für Philosophie", 1978, 14, pp. 114–142.

[16] The objection was formulated and analyzed critically by Rinofner-Kreidl. Cf. S. Rinofner--Kreidl, *What is Wrong with Naturalizing Epistemology? A Phenomenologist's Reply*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.

[17] E. Husserl, *Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge. Lectures 1906/07*, trans. by C.O. Hill, Dordrecht 2008, p. 18; *idem, Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesungen 1906/07*, hrsg. v. U. Melle, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–Lancaster 1984, p. 189.

[18] S. Rinofner-Kreidl, *What is Wrong with Naturalizing Epistemology? A Phenomenologist's Reply, op. cit.*, p. 49.

sense and phenomenology as theory of knowledge in the strong sense lies in their differing approaches. The phenomenologist is not interested in arguments, but in "elucidation" of knowledge. Following Husserl,

> For critique of knowledge is not about theorizing. What it is about does not lie upon any path of mathematics, or natural science, even psychology. It is about 'elucidating'. It is not about deducing anything, not explaining anything by laws as explanatory grounds, but simply understanding what is implied in the meaning of knowledge and its objectivity[19].

As Husserl insists, "elucidation" discloses an *a priori*, i.e., transcendental level of knowledge, but *a priori* knowledge does not equal deductive arguments; those arguments lead toward unjustified theorizing[20]. Here lies a first and crucial misunderstanding of Husserl's moderate theory of knowledge, namely, it does not aim to formulate theory in a deductive-argumentative way. In my opinion, Scheler's and Stein's analysis of empathy shows why phenomenology of social cognition cannot be developed in the deductive way.

Scheler and Stein on Social Cognition

In contemporary philosophy the problem of social cognition is expressed by the following question: How does one get to k n o w others[21]? To phrase it differently, the problem of social cognition is regarded mainly in the context of human action, and the main question concerns here a possibility of our understanding (knowledge) of action. How is it possible that, e.g., "I k n o w t h a t s o m e r e a d s a n a r t i c l e"? To interpret the way in which one gets to know others means to ask about character of the act of social cognition. In a word: is it direct (i.e., a perception-like act), or indirect (i.e., an act founded on inference)? With this regard, in recent years two main theories were formulated to solve the problem of social cognition: t h e o r y t h e o r y (TT), and s i m u l a t i o n t h e o r y (ST).

TT claims that human understanding of others, i.e., his or her ability to get knowledge of others, relies on adopting a theory that enables one an

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[19] E. Husserl, *Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge. Lectures 1906/07*, op. cit., p. 187; *idem*, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesungen 1906/07*, op. cit., p. 190.

[20] "The entire investigation is thus an *a priori* investigation – but not, of course, in the sense of mathematical deduction". E. Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 43; *idem*, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, op. cit., p. 58.

[21] Cf. S. Gallagher & D. Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind. An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*, London–New York (NY) 2008, pp. 171–172.

explanation of others' action. According to TT, one has to possess a theory of h o w o t h e r s u b j e c t s a c t, in order to interpret their actions. An example of such a theory is so-called folk psychology; of course, folk psychology is n o t a psychological t h e o r y of how people think and act. It is rather a set of common-sense explanations of human behavior[22]. Briefly, folk psychology is instantiated by a kind of innate ability to explain others' behavior. For instance, if one meets a friend who is sitting in a lecture hall, and – as it appears to him – is listening to a lecture, he supposes that the person has arrived at the lecture, b e c a u s e they wanted to know something new about the object of the lecture. Therefore, as TT claims, one can justify his or her knowledge of others by employing a secondary act of consciousness that infers other's behavior from his or her mental state. In contrast, ST does not require a strong theoretical component of social cognition. ST is called so because it claims that someone's cognition of others is based on his or her ability to simulate other's beliefs. ST is based on the argument from analogy. (1) I can understand others, the argument goes, because I can imagine myself in an analogous situation; since (2) I can imagine myself in a certain situation, I can also define beliefs that I can posses in the situation; therefore, (3) I can – by analogy – explain others' behavior (in an analogous situation) by referring to the beliefs I defined. Both theories, TT and ST, meet with criticism on the side of phenomenology[23].

In *The Nature of Sympathy* (1923) Scheler considers a theory that can be regarded as a version of ST. He discusses an "argument from analogy", and a hypothesis that one has to imitate other's action in order to understand it[24]. Indeed, Scheler analyses in his book a theory that claims that one understands others by reproducing their actions, beliefs, desires, and emotions. For Scheler, any attempt to understand empathically others as others presupposes k n o w l e d g e of others. As he writes,

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[22] As Søren Overgaard states, "The best explanation argument requires us to stake our conviction that any of us have mental lives at all, on the ability of some 'folk-psychological' theory to explain and predict behavior". S. Overgaard, *The Problem of Other Minds*, [in:] *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, ed. by S. Gallagher & D. Schmicking, Dordrecht 2010, p. 258. About the problem of "folk psychology" in philosophy of mind, see *Folk Psychology: The Theory of Mind Debate*, ed. by M. Davies & T. Stone, Oxford 1995; *Folk Psychology Re-Assessed*, ed. by D.D. Hutto & M. Ratcliffe, Dordrecht 2007.

[23] For a more detailed reconstruction, see D. Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, Cambridge (MA)–London 2005, pp. 149–151; *idem*, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*, Oxford 2014, pp. 115–132.

[24] Scheler also discusses Lipps' theory of "mimetic impulse". Cf. M. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, London 2008, p. 9–11. Zahavi presents a broad context of Scheler's discussion, also in connection with contemporary cognitive science. See D. Zahavi, *Empathy and Other-Directed Intentionality*, "Topoi", 2014, 33, pp. 129–142.

> But it should be clear […] that any kind of rejoicing or pity p r e s u p -
> p o s e s, in principle, some sort of k n o w l e d g e of the fact, nature
> and quality of experience in other people, just as possibility of such
> knowledge presupposes, as its condition, the existence of other con-
> scious being[25].

According to Scheler, ST is false, because (1) it runs in a vicious circle, since
it presupposes what it has to justify, i.e., reproducing of an action is possible,
only if one already knows something about the action[26]; (2) ST cannot explain
how it is possible that one is able to get to know non-human animals; e.g., one
can be certain that his or her dog is happy with the food, or a walk, because
every dog e x p r e s s e s happiness by wagging tail[27]; (3) there is no necessary
relation between intention (belief) and action; action can be accidental or
spontaneous, i.e., it does not have to be connected with mental life[28]; (4) ST is
inadequate, because it cannot explain how our understanding of actions we
have never experienced is possible; to sympathize with someone who lost his
child, we do not have to lose our child[29]. Scheler concludes that ST is false,
and it cannot justify theory of social cognition. Scheler formulates analogous
arguments against TT. In effect, he argues that each attempt to formulate
theory of social cognition leads towards solipsism.

Stein disagrees with Scheler, by arguing that Scheler does not differ-
entiate between two acts of consciousness: the act of perception of ego and
the act of empathy which is directed toward others[30]. Both acts constitute
different forms of knowledge. Whereas the former act constitutes direct
knowledge of myself, the latter one presents another life only indirectly.
Any intentional act that discloses or presents other's subjectivity, and other's

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[25] M. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy, op. cit.*, p. 8.

[26] As he writes, "the qualities (i.e. the character) of expressive phenomena and those of
experiences exhibit connections of a unique kind, which do not demand at all on previous
acquaintance with real experiences of our own, plus the other's expressive phenomena,
such that a tendency to i m i t a t e the movements of the gesture seen would first have
to reproduce our own earlier experience. On the contrary, imitation, even as a mere
'tendency', already presupposes some kind of acquaintance with other's experience, and
therefore cannot explain what is is here supposed to do". *Ibidem*, p. 10.

[27] "Further evidence against Lipps' theory of imitation lies in the fact that we can understand
the experience of animals". *Ibidem*, p. 11.

[28] With this regard, Scheler emphasizes that imitation of an action does not have to corre-
spond to the original, *resp.* real experience of the other. Cf. *ibidem.*

[29] "But one who 'understands' the moral terror of a drowning man has no need at all to
u n d e r g o such terror, in a real, if weakened form. This theory therefore contradicts the
observable fact that in the process of understanding the thing understood is in no way
experienced as real". *Ibidem.*

[30] See E. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, Washington, D.C., 1989[3], pp. 27–34, 68–71.

psychic life from the second-person perspective counts as empathy. Here empathy cannot be reduced to any form of presentational act. It represents its object indirectly in its essence. Let me emphasize that Stein focuses on the living body as on an important element of empathy. In general, she accepts Husserl's view on the lived body as a zero point of orientation[31]. She argues that the act of empathy constitutes our understanding of others, because we are able to grasp other's lived body movements as expressions of other's life and her will. Thus, empathy concerns lived body. According to Stein,

> We have become acquainted with the foreign living body as the bearer of a psychic life that we 'look at' in a certain way. Now there is still a group of phenomena that disclose a further domain of the psyche to us in a peculiarly characterized way. When I 'see' shame 'in' blushing, irritation in the furrowed brow, anger in the clenched fist, this is still different phenomenon than when I look at the foreign living body's level of sensations and feelings of life with him. In the latter case I comprehend the one with the other. In the former case I see the one through the other. In the new phenomenon what is psychic is not only co-perceived with what is bodily but expressed through it[32].

For Stein, therefore, the lived body is given as a unity with other's life. So, the body expresses mental life, and it is given directly. For Husserl, however, Stein's description needs a supplementation, since although the other's lived body is given directly, the character of givenness has to be described as "indirect". Thus, Husserl presents a slightly different description of social cognition.

Husserl on *Einführung*, Lived Body, and Social Cognition

Husserl's theory of empathy is a complex theory that serves to clarify both the possibility of social cognition and the constitution of objectivity. Husserl emphasizes the fact that Scheler's exposition of empathy fails because, as he states, "it has never been recognized that the otherness of 'someone else' becomes extended to the whole world, as its 'Objectivity', giving it this sense in the first place"[33]. In a word, the theory of empathy has a transcendental

[31] "The living body as a whole is at the zero point of orientation with all physical bodies outside of it". *Ibidem*, p. 43.

[32] *Ibidem*, pp. 75–76.

[33] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. by D. Cairns, The Hague–Boston (MA)–London 1960, p. 147; *idem*, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, hrsg. v. S. Strasser, Haag 1950, p. 173.

meaning. By contrast, for Scheler empathy seems to be only a phenomenon of eidetic, i.e., intentional psychology. Husserl offers a transcendental reading of this theory. This does not mean, however, that Husserl's theory of empathy is limited to the question of objectivity of sciences, but rather objectivity equals here intersubjectivity. Furthermore, for Husserl, the question of objectivity concerns, e.g., the question of understanding other cultures[34].

Let us move on to Husserl's question of social cognition in the context of his theory of empathy and the project of phenomenology of knowledge. It is obvious, that the t r a n s c e n d e n t a l question of how social cognition is possible cannot be understood as the question of the n a t u r a l, i.e., psychological process of empathy. Rather, empathy is comprehended here as a complex phenomenon, or as an act that needs a descriptive clarification. As I pointed out above, the aim is to describe a character of the act of social cognition. On Husserl's view, the act of social cognition has to be described as a spontaneous act of knowledge that is expressed by non-inferential "I know". From the perspective of the theory of intentionality one can say that the act is directed toward others. However, this general description does not express its essence entirely. For Husserl, the ego "knows" that he or she is a subject among other subjects. A proper object of phenomenological description is the phenomenon of the spontaneous and non-inferential "I know". In *Ideas II* he binds the act of social cognition with a common world:

> In the c o m p r e h e n s i v e e x p e r i e n c e o f t h e e x i s t e n c e o f t h e o t h e r, we thus understand him, without further ado, as a personal subject and thereby as related to Objectivities, ones to which we too are related: the earth and sky, the fields and the woods, the room in which 'we' dwell communally, the picture we see, etc. We are in a relation to a common surrounding world – we are in a personal association: these belong together[35].

Husserl describes this spontaneous experience also as an act of understanding of others which constitutes pre-reflective knowledge. He emphasizes that in this act ego understands others "without further ado". This means, however, that empathy does not constitute any additional act that bridges the gap between ego and the other. It has rather a spontaneous character

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[34] See *ibidem*, pp. 134–135.

[35] *Idem*, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book. Studies In the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. by R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 1989, p. 201; *idem*, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch. Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, hrsg. v. M. Biemel, Haag 1952, p. 191.

and constitutes our understanding of the surrounding world as the common world, i.e., as a common field of intentional activity of subjectivities. Let us move on to the constitutional description.

It is obvious that alter ego cannot be included in egological immanence, since this would equal solipsism. In effect, knowledge of others cannot be given in living presence (*lebendige Gegenwart*). As Husserl states, "if it were, if what belongs to the other's own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I myself would be the same"[36]. For this reason, a function of the acts of social cognition consists in constitution of what is non-present. Speaking phenomenologically, the acts have temporal structure. If ego experiences others, they are not given in the "Now" moment. As Husserl describes this phenomenon, others are "co-presented":

> A certain mediacy of intentionality must be present here, going out from the substratum, 'primordial world', (which in any case is the incessantly underlying basis) and making present to consciousness a 'there too', which nevertheless is not itself there and can never become an 'itself-there'. We have here, accordingly, a kind of making 'co-present', a kind of 'appresentation'[37].

This, however, means that the acts of social cognition are mainly passive, what results in describing them as the acts that a l r e a d y present others as others. The crucial thing here is to emphasize that the acts of social cognition transcend immanence of ego, but they e s s e n t i a l l y cannot be fulfilled, since they present other's transcendence a s transcendence.

In the *Thing and Space* (1907) lecture series and in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl formulates an interesting thought experiment to describe the correlation of immanence and transcendence in the acts of social cognition. In both works Husserl understands a lived body in volitional terms[38]. He claims, in fact, that immanence should be described as "mineness" and "I can". This description grasps direct and spontaneous relation of the ego with its lived body. Indeed, ego moves its lived body spontaneously,

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[36] *Idem*, *Cartesian Meditations*, *op. cit.*, p. 109; *idem*, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[37] *Idem*, *Cartesian Meditations*, *op. cit.*, p. 109; *idem*, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[38] See *idem*, *Ding und Raum. Vorlesungen 1907*, hrsg. v. U. Claesges, Den Haag 1973, p. 10; *idem*, *Cartesian Meditations*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; *idem*, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, *op. cit.*, p. 101. See also S. Overgaard, *The Importance of Bodily Movement to Husserl's Theory of "Fremderfahrung"*, "Recherches husserliennes", 2003, 19, pp. 55–65.

i.e., without any further ado. Because of this spontaneity, we can even say that phenomenological experience shows us that ego does not have the lived body, but rather it i s the lived body. There is no phenomenological difference in experiencing movements of lived body and "earlier" experience of the ego. They present themselves as a primal unity. Inasmuch as one has to include lived body in the sphere of volitital immanence, the world has to be described as transcendent, because it cannot be included in the sphere of non-inferential "I can"[39]. In other words, for instance, ego cannot operate with a chair directly, but only t h r o u g h its body. For this reason, transcendence of the world presents itself as the "outside" that crosses egological ability to act. In this context, however, we have to indicate so-to-speak radical transcendence that is different than transcendence of the world: transcendence of others.

To exemplify, following Husserl[40], one can consider a simple thought experiment – a situation where I reflexively comprehend myself as a bodily subject, and later I look at the other's lived body. At the first moment, ego is self-presented directly as being in an absolute H e r e . If I perceive others, I see them as bodily beings (*Körper*). But if others are "out there", there are indeed T h e r e . There is a radical difference between H e r e and T h e r e . We can say, using Merleau-Ponty's notion, T h e r e ego has a completely different intentional arc that constitutes relationship to the world. However, I can be T h e r e just as now I am H e r e . Brief, I can imagine myself as being T h e r e . Therefore, Husserl concludes, the status of others has to be described as a n o t h e r p o s s i b l e H e r e , so – a n o t h e r ego precisely as the o t h e r .

One can indicate two main interpretations of the thought experiment. On the one hand, Klaus Held and his students claim that the experiment

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[39] "The Ego, as unity, is a system of the 'I c a n '. In this regard a distinction is to be made between the p h y s i c a l 'I can' (the Bodily and the one mediated by the Body) and the s p i r i t u a l . I have power over my Body, I am the one who moves this hand and who can move it, etc. I can play the piano. But this does not last forever. I can forget how, I can fall out of practice. I exercise my Body. In the case of the most common activities, I do not generally lose my skill. But if I have been laid up sick for a long while, then I have to learn how to walk again, though it comes back quickly. However, I can also have a nervous disorder and lose the mastery of my limbs; 'I can't do it'. In that respect I have become an other". E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book*, op. cit., p. 266; *idem, Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch*, op. cit., pp. 253–254.

[40] *Idem, Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929–1935*, hrsg. v. I. Kern, Den Haag 1973, p. 651; *idem, Cartesian Meditations*, op. cit., pp. 110–111, 116–117; *idem, Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, op. cit., pp. 140–141, 145–146.

does not have any explanatory force, especially as a phenomenological description[41]. On the other, Antonio Aguirre and Julia V. Iribarne claim that the experiment concerns a possibility of thinking about others, and it does not aim at justifying other's existence[42]. I think that both interpretations are misleading since both do not take the above description of the act of social cognition as spontaneous "I know" into account.

As Husserl emphasizes I can imagine others o n l y i f I have transcendent body[43]. As indicated earlier, lived body is experienced directly, nonetheless, it cannot be given adequately. For this reason, lived body is a sphere of both immanent and transcendent experiences. It is given indirect, because experience of movements constitute itself in passive syntheses. In a movement embodied consciousness is a l r e a d y present and at work. Husserl describes this phenomenon as self-consciousness of the body[44] that passively constitutes our conscious movements. Thus, within this immanent experience Husserl indicates a moment of radical transcendence. Precisely here, as he claims, "self-consciousness and consciousness of the other are inseparable"[45]. In this context, one shall also understand a crucial fragment of the *Cartesian Meditations*:

> The character of the existent 'other' has its basis in this kind of verifiable accessibility of what is not originally accessible. Whatever can become presented, and evidently verified, o r i g i n a l l y – is something *I* am; or else it belongs to me as peculiarly my own. Whatever, by virtue thereof, is experienced in that founded manner which characterizes a primordially unfulfillable experience – an experience that does not

[41] K. Held, *Das Problem der Intersubjektivität und die Idee einer phänomenologischen Transzendentalphilosophie*, [in:] *Perspektiven transzendentalphänomenologischer Forschung. Für Ludwig Landgrebe zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Kölner Schülern*, ed. by U. Claesges, K. Held, Den Haag 1972, pp. 3–60; T. Stoelger, *Das ästhetische Apriori des alter ego: Untersuchungen zur transzendetalen Intersubjetivitäts-Theorie in der Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls*, Würzburg 1994, pp. 66–72; H. Gronke, *Das Denken des Anderen. Führt die Selbstaufhebung von Husserls Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität zur transzendentalen Sprachpragmatik?*, Würzburg, 1994, pp. 186–190.

[42] A.F. Aguirre, *Die Phänomenologie Husserls im Licht ihrer gegenwärtigen Interpretation und Kritik*, Darmstadt 1982, pp. 155–160; J.V. Iribarne, *Husserl Theorie der Intersubjektivität*, Freiburg–München 1994, pp. 86–111.

[43] E. Husserl, *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929–1934). Die C-Manuskripte*, hrsg. v. D. Lohmar, Dordrecht 2006, p. 161.

[44] *Idem*, *Zur phänomenologischen Reduktion. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1926–1935)*, hrsg. v. S. Luft, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 2002, p. 212.

[45] *Idem*, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, hrsg. v. W. Biemel, Den Haag 1976², p. 256.

give something itself originally but that consistently verifies something indicated – is 'other'[46].

From a transcendental point of view, therefore, the act of social cognition is a "primordially unfulfillable experience". Only because of this indirect character of givenness, the object of social cognitive act can be grasped as the other, i.e., as essentially unfulfilled intended object. If the act presents the other directly in the fulfilled act, ego would grasp only "my" object, i.e., the object constituted by the subject. Here the other can be merely a variation of ego. Hence, this conclusion corresponds with Zahavi's view that "the fact that my experiential access to the minds of others differs from my experiential access to my own mind is not an imperfection or shortcoming. On the contrary, it is a difference that is constitutional"[47].

Conclusion

In the *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl postulates to undertake the "t a s k o f p h e n o m e n o l o g i c a l   e x p l i c a t i o n " of how the "alter ego" is constituted. "We must", he writes, "obtain for ourselves insight into the explicit and implicit intentionality wherein the alter ego becomes evinced and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego"[48]. This claim, however, seems to lead many researchers to say that within phenomenology there is no theory of social cognition at all. They argue, as it seems, that any philosopher who adopts phenomenological method is unable to ask about intersubjective level of experience. What is phenomenologically justified – one can argue – is at least solipsistic experience that cannot be translated into intersubjective and social experience. After all, Husserl emphasizes that alter ego becomes "evinced and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego". In result, intersubjectivity is reduced into subjectivity, and for this reason, one has to formulate argument that infers the existence of the alter ego from ego.

By contrast, the central claim that I made in this study is that this charge is misleading and false. I think that one has to replace this t r a n -

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[46] *Idem, Cartesian Meditations, op. cit.*, p. 114–115; *idem, Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge, op. cit.*, p. 144.

[47] D. Zahavi, *Empathy and Other-Directed Intentionality, op. cit.*, p. 136. Also for James Dodd, "Husserl poses the problem of solipsism as a p a r a d o x : how can the being-sense of o t h e r   e g o s be constituted i n m e , if 'other ego' means precisely n o t i n m e ?". J. Dodd, *Idealism and Corporeity. An Essay on the Problem of the Body in Husserl's Phenomenology*, Dordrecht–Boston (MA)–London 1997, p. 9.

[48] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations, op. cit.*, p. 90; *idem, Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge, op. cit.*, p. 122.

s c e n d e n t a l - a r g u m e n t a t i v e approach by the t r a n s c e n d e n t a l - p h e n o m e n o l o g i c a l one. Here propositions of Scheler and Stein play a crucial role. The both show that we cannot understand empathy in argumentative terms. In consequence, I was interested in the phenomenon of social cognition from the perspective of phenomenology of knowledge and asked: H o w i s s o c i a l c o g n i t i o n p o s s i b l e ? By asking this question, one asks not for argumentations to justify the way of how one can infer others from ego. The question concerns rather ways of how o t h e r s a r e e x p e r i e n c e d . By describing the act of social cognition, I claimed that one is able to explicate its essence. Nonetheless, from this perspective one cannot understand this act as a second thought that attaches itself to primal spontaneous act. By contrast, we have to understand it precisely as spontaneous, but essentially indirect act of co-presentation. In this context, analyses of the body played a crucial role, since givenness of the body expresses its mediated character. I finally described how the livef body constitutes an interplay of transcendence and immanence. The descriptive analysis of the act of social cognition is phenomenologically justified only because it reveals experience of transcendence in immanent experience of bodily movements.

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