

THE QUESTION OF INTERIORITY AND EXTERIORITY: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This article has the purpose of overcoming the dualism of interiority/exteriority in order to provide ethical-phenomenological perspectives. Thereby, I will analyze from Wittgenstein's contributions on private language to the phenomenological conceptions of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and the current studies of Fuchs and Waldenfels. In this perspective, I will find a passage from bestowal of meaning (Husserl) to a complicity of meaning (Merleau-Ponty) and, thus, to a threshold zones of meaning in Waldenfels). This will give ethical-practical perspectives for a possible sociogenesis (Srubar) through a *responsive Ethos* in Waldenfels.

Keywords: Interiority; Exteriority; Responsiveness, Ethics.

Introduction

The issue of interiority orbits around an aura of mysticisms and superstitions or, simply, in opposition to exteriority, understood as a representation of reality. After all, what is the relationship between what is inside and what is outside a person? Is there a private sphere? Am I a copy of the real? These questions are on the agenda in the great philosophical debates and their conclusions allude to ethical conceptions.

Understanding interiority as a private sphere can lead me to believe that I have something unprecedented that only I can know and that, therefore, I have a privileged mind in relation to others, where I constitute an internal monologue, not needing any external interference. Understanding interiority as a simple construct of reality, in turn, would mean disregarding any originality that may arise from my conceptions or any reflection that may contribute to theoretical transformation.

The authors Ludwig Wittgenstein and Thomas Fuchs will criticize theories related to the possibility of an internal construct of reality or the idea that it is reality instead that circumscribes immanent content. In such

a wise, it will raise questions about the certainty of interiority and exteriority. Merleau-Ponty will also launch criticisms in relation to objectivity, however, he will highlight a certain subjective and objective originality in the lived experiences within the world, establishing, for that, a relationship between painting and the painter.

Edmund Husserl had already laid the foundations of a constitutive theory in which he mischaracterized solipsistic pretensions. For the author, the process of constituting meaning brings with it a *noematic* and *noetic* structure, through which it makes any psychologism or absolute objectivism unfeasible. The understanding of the human being as an intersubjective being, who interacts with her environment, with all its limitations and possibilities, brings ethical implications that question reductionist and unidimensional preconceptions. An attitude that considers the forms of constitution of meaning *per se* put objectifications in brackets, to wit, it suspends them so that the phenomenon appears in its originality. Thus, I find myself immersed in possibilities, namely, opening myself to new perspectives.

In the wake of these discussions, Waldenfels will analyze the structure of the responsive event. How do I respond to challenges, to the alien, to myself, namely, to the event that comes to me? As a responsive being, I inevitably respond and the way I respond, alludes to ethical issues, fosters the responsive *Ethos*. My attitude now becomes, through possibilities, responsive.

The private language problem

Ludwig Wittgenstein contests the mind as an internal theater and the assimilation of the mental to the physical world. For the author, it is not a case of pure interiority, nor of pure exteriority. As a consequence, the Austrian philosopher questions some strands of idealism, rationalism and phenomenologism that dispense the physical world, clinging to the image of the mind as a private immaterial theater to which we have immediate access. Regarding a pure exteriority, he questions strands of materialism that materialize the mind itself, making it a product of the brain.

In accordance with the author, it makes no sense to say that only I can know about my pain, since my behavior attests that I feel it and others can conclude that I actually feel it. Nor does it make sense to maintain that I cannot see my pain, but only the behavior that expresses it. Hence, it does not follow that the mental sphere is a fiction for not seeing it, nor that it hides itself behind what is external. For Wittgenstein, the mental sphere infuses itself in my behavior and it is there that it gains expression. Nor

does it make sense to object that others are lying or pretending about their pain, on the grounds that the mind is thus occult. This only reveals that there is the possibility of faking pain, disguising it through a language game. The point here is not that our sense impressions can lie, but that we understand their language. And this language, like any other, founds itself on convention (Wittgenstein, 1986, § 355). By no means does it follow also that there is a private language which only I can know.

There is a *language game* (Wittgenstein, 1986, § 7) suitable for the internal and another that aims itself more at the external, as there is a *language game* for every sport or for love relationships and so on. However, it does not result that there is the possibility of forming an internal theater, of establishing feelings and pains that only I can have. In agreement with Wittgenstein, such assumptions make no sense, because when I externalize them, I enter a linguistic context that is understandable in a specific grammatical structure.

The Austrian author creates a linguistic paradox between internal and external that seeks to make impossible the possibility of a private language that only I have, to wit, a pain, a feeling, a thought that only I can have. To be private, it needs to externalize itself and, therefore, I use a language that has a specific game in the context in which it inserts itself. To exemplify, if I have a toothache, that pain is me who is feeling it at that moment and no one else. However, it is a mistake to infer that only I can feel that pain and no one else. It is one thing for me to say that I am feeling pain, it is another to say that only I can feel that pain. Similarly, I am thinking does not mean that only I can think what I am thinking. It is one thing for me to be experiencing a feeling, it is another to say that only I can experience that feeling. What I feel others can also feel, what I think others can also think. There is a variation in complexity and intensity with regard to thoughts and feelings, but the exteriorization needs to be within a *language game*.

Faced with such assumptions leveraged by Wittgenstein, how do I know that both interiority and exteriority are real? In other words, is what I see and feel real? How can I prove that the subjective and objective world are real? After all, what creates the link between interiority and exteriority?

The intersubjective way

Against the current assumptions of neuroscientists and neurophilosophers that people live in an illusion created by the brain, Tomas Fuchs, in his work *Ecology of the brain*, elaborates defenses against such

projectionist theories, namely, that the brain is what produces reality, that everything boils down to something inside the skull (Fuchs, 2018, p. 3).

The author will present three criticisms: the first is called embodied perception. According to this criticism, I only perceive from somewhere, I perceive from a body situated in a position. When I perceive, I am always situated in the same world as the perceived things, to wit, I perceive them as available for my interaction with them. In order to perceive I must be physically in the world, be related to it, be able to move and act in order to perceive something. In this degree, the act of perceiving involves having a part within the world, touching and being touched by it, being intertwined in it, based on an embodied practice (Fuchs, 2018, p. 11).

The second criticism, as stated by the author, refers to the objectivity of the phenomenal world. As reported by Fuchs, perception does not occur in a vessel called consciousness, in which sensory stimuli comes from outside. I do not perceive visual sensations, paintings or representations, but rather the desk, the window or the sky. I do not hear sound sensations either, but voices and music. In such manner, perception establishes a direct relationship between the people who perceive and the perceived object (Fuchs, 2018, p. 19). Following Husserl, Fuchs adds that our experience with an object depends on a horizon of possible further experiences with objects, a horizon from other previous ways of dealing with the object and a common horizon, - intersubjective (Fuchs, 2018, p. 20). Thus, through other people and my handling of things in the world through my body testifies to the objectivity of things within the world.

The other criticism concerns the quality of the colors. Fuchs questions himself about the colors, sounds and odors through which the world becomes familiar and habitable. Are they just internal constructs that have no existence outside my brain or my consciousness? Although I do not see light waves and do not hear sound waves, but colors and tones, should I consider this as an illusion created by the brain (Fuchs, 2018, p. 23)? In conformity with the author, the fact that light waves are not colored and sound waves are not noisy is not a reason to refute the reality of colors and tones. Such qualities are part of a shared lifeworld. According to Fuchs, colors are not objective characteristics of the material world, nor a mere product of an internal world; they are, on the contrary, an expression of a complementarity of living beings and their environment (Fuchs, 2018, p. 25). In view of this, the author makes use of the common perception of colors and tones to argue that what I see is not a construct of the brain or something that belongs only to my private perceptual projection, but something that is shared and that confirms its objective veracity.

In accordance with Fuchs, there is a growing choir of materialist neurophilosophy, which needs to be questioned, which announces the message that our subjective experience is nothing more than the user interface of a neurocomputer, which creates the illusion of the user herself. Our experience of being the authors of our thoughts and actions is only part of this grand illusion. Real reality consists of the computational processes of the neuronal machinery behind my thoughts and actions (Fuchs, 2018, p. 29), as if I were just a dream within a dream, in the sense that the brain was a simulator of the world and at the same time self-simulating. As stated in Metzinger's self-model theory, subjectivity conceives itself analogously to a pilot who believes she is experiencing reality, but what happens is that she is in a flight simulator, of which she is just a product of this simulator (Fuchs, 2018, p. 30).

Both Wittgenstein and Fuchs question the possibility of an internal construct of reality manufactured by the brain, and also the idea of realistic determinism, which argues that it is reality that circumscribes immanent content. However, for Wittgenstein, certainty finds itself in the *language game*, which grounds itself in hinge propositions that do not require justification, such as: "The earth exists for a long time". According to Wittgenstein, such hinge prepositions constitute the framework around which our questions and doubts revolve - the inherited frame of reference that allows me to distinguish between true and false (Wittgenstein, 1969, §94). Since the collaborations of language as well as the contributions of intersubjectivity are crucial for the witnessing of internal/external content, how could we relate them to life and thought?

The originality of life and the originality of thought

Merleau-Ponty in his writing *The eye and the spirit* establishes a certain originality in thought that goes beyond the mere recording of things recorded by my brain apparatus (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 10). Thus, the author seeks to criticize the absolute artificiality, the objectifying generality, the fly-over thinking. Science needs to relearn how to look at the world as it is for our body, not as an information machine, but this actual body that I call mine, the sentinel that stands silently beneath my words and my actions. And with that, awaken other bodies that harass me, that I harass. In the following terms, a primordial historicity will emerge, the cheerful and improvising thought of science that will learn to insist on its own things and on itself, becoming philosophy (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 11).

Merleau-Ponty will find ways through the art of the painter who has no other technique than that which her eyes and hands give each other, for

the strength of painting. As a result, the author asks herself: what secret science is this that she has or seeks? That dimension according to which Van Gogh wants to go further? This fundamental of painting, and perhaps of all culture (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 15)?

The author searches for a primordial thing that the sciences forget, which is my interweaving with the world. Reflection on painting, the art of painting, reveals precisely this most fundamental aspect in which I find myself in full entanglement. The painter does not make a copy of the world; - she brings a world to the screen. What appears on the screen has a life of its own and raises questions for me and for the world itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 28-29). The painter's visibility is an extension of her own being that moves in the visible with her sensitive body that is challenged and that challenges the vision itself. This fundamental shock transubstantiates itself on the canvas. As explained by Merleau-Ponty: "quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our body, because this makes them welcome (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 22)". There is, for the author, an internal equivalent that allows this acceptance of the world and its access. Such an internal equivalent, recalls Fuchs, founds a use in medical science under the name of homeostasis of the body (Fuchs, 2018, p.124), revealing itself as an open system, especially of living beings, regulating their internal environment in order to maintain a stable condition through multiple dynamic balance adjustments, controlled by interrelated regulatory mechanisms. In fact, there is something in my being that makes communion and that is capable of sharing with the world in such a way that there is a mutual affectation, that there is an imbrication.

According to Fuchs, I experience feelings, thoughts, perceptions and actions as subjective corporeal beings and, at the same time, as physical beings (Fuchs, 2018, p. 77). Along the following lines, I cannot say that I am, as a living organism, autarchic, but, on the contrary, I can say that I am a self-organized living system (Fuchs, 2018, p. 84) that is always in dependence on the environment. The very metabolism of a living organism is its primary connection with the environment (Fuchs, 2018, p. 89), through which it necessarily interacts through an exchange system with the ecosystem that favors life. There are several factors that attest to this dependence, from *biotic* to *abiotic* factors. The living organism, in this regard, is in constant exchange with the environment, interacting in such a way that it will remain as a living being on this planet.

Although there is a dependency that makes life and thought itself possible, attested to by a certain internal equivalent or homeostasis in the organism, it does not follow that there is no originality. On the contrary, dependence rightly attests to the possibility of several unique and

biodiverse styles of life and thought. In line with Merleau-Ponty, there is no vision without thought, but thinking is not enough to see, because vision is born from what happens and excites the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 51). By these terms, together there is an activity of thought, there is a passivity characterized by a style or a tradition in thought. As my body does not devoid itself of thought, whether active or passive, I have a peculiar way of temporalizing and specializing myself; which makes evident an originality of its own, a body of its own from which my being is in the world.

It is not possible to make a faithful copy of the real in a painting, nor to build such a copy in my cerebral apparatus, what I do is simply to transcend, to give something more, to exceed and suppress infinities, - this is how I give meaning, that I build meaning, that I am complicit in meaning, - the *Ego*, the others, the world through the accessibility of my body that is *reflective* (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, p. 2010) and, at the same time, that this brings accessibility, makes everything so inaccessible.

For Merleau-Ponty, painting reveals a certain space-time opening through which it becomes impossible to establish a character of universality to painting, as it is part of the world in motion, in transformation, it is an extension of the dimension of being itself. In the words of the author: "the idea of a universal painting, of a totalization of painting, of a fully realized painting, is meaningless. Even if it lasted millions of years, for painters, if the world remains the world, it will still be unpainted (...) (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 90)".

It seems that I am in a constant process of construction of meaning and that absolute certainty escapes the framework of scientific and human sciences. Despite this, would it be possible to draw indubitable and definitive determinations?

What is inside and what is outside?

Bernhard Waldenfels, in his work *Sting of the alien* talks about an objective knowledge of what would be part of the threshold zone (*Abgrenzung*) and what would be outside the threshold zone (*Ausgrenzung*) (Waldenfels, 1990 p. 29). Along these lines, someone arbitrates on spatialities and temporalities, tracing differences between here/there, now/later, this side/that side, inside/outside. In the words of the author: "what is inside is outside, what is outside is inside, what starts somewhere ends nowhere" (Waldenfels, 1990, p. 34). These thresholds zones relate themselves to my body, things or circumstances. Anyway, something is very big, very small, it is very far away, very close in relation to my body, to a certain object and to certain circumstances, but both objects and

circumstances also have a subtle relationship with the body. Thus, I agree on determinations in order to order my practical life and not enter into unprecedented chaos. However, they are only determinations to guide myself communicatively through a unified linguistic pavement. These determinations, for example, reach other levels in an ocean, in the middle of a desert, in a large forest or in the vast universe. In such a way, when I say that one galaxy is close to another, it probably means that such distance is much greater than any distance ever measured on Earth. Hence, it is necessary to use different measurement units, scientific notations, so that we can encompass them in our conventional science. However, what about the question of certainty? Can we be sure about something?

René Descartes is the author who departs from doubt to undoubted evidence which, in turn, will become the basis for all science. Edmund Husserl, on the contrary, starts from the evidence presented by the world for its constant updating. In other words, doubt for Descartes is a problem that must be extinguished, for Husserl, on the contrary, doubt is in the very process of updating the evidence. Due to the reality of the world, I cannot force an objective judgment on it. The world claims its own being (*Seinsanspruch*) (Husserl, 1973, §8, 58), however, not the world as a *static block*, but the lived world (*Lebensumwelt*) (Husserl, 1973, §8, 59), with which I live. The evidence of the world comes to me as a field of presence (*Gegenwartsfelde*), so that I can perceive it as it appears to me.

Edmund Husserl already explained that I have a constitutive structure responsible for objectifying and for dynamizing such objectifications. Thus, at the same time that I obtain a constitutive structure of which objectifications are necessary, I also obtain a continuous flow that dynamizes them. Along these lines, Husserl presents his method called *epoché* or *phenomenological reduction*. This method consists of a universal deprivation of acceptance (Husserl, 1973, §8, 60) of what is taken for granted objectively and subjectively. In the process of reduction, I refrain from a natural attitude that takes something for granted, to wit, an attitude of placing something in an objective abstract sense. From this *phenomenological reduction*, namely, to refrain from objectifications, placing them between parentheses, so that the phenomenon appears as a phenomenon, I find myself in possibilities, to wit, the horizon of understanding opens up to new perspectives.

For further clarification, Husserl will bring the example of a die. If we take a look at a die, it leaves open a wide variety of things pertaining to the invisible faces; however, it is already interpreted beforehand as a matrix, in particular as colored, rough and the like. According to Husserl, each of these determinations always leaves other details open. This leaving open

(*Offenlassen*) (Husserl, 1973, §19, p. 83), before further determinations, is a moment included in the given consciousness itself; it is precisely what makes up the horizon. In the constitution process, the *Ego* experiences a determined/indeterminate structure (*noetic/noematic*). From this perspective, the object itself, as a given, will never be fully apprehended. Notwithstanding, I have a predelineation of the die. However, this predelineation is never present in current consciousness as a finished given, it becomes clarified only through the explanation of the given horizon and the new horizons continually awakened. The stream of consciousness carries with it the implication of an elusive reality from which constantly new possibilities can emerge. As Husserl points out, intentional consciousness implies its horizon (the lived world in its broad sense), the flow of consciousness itself (*noetic/noematic*), and a surplus meaning (*Mehrmeinung*) (Husserl, 1973, §20, p. 84).

This surplus sense creates unity in all consciousness and which, *noetically* and *noematically*, constitutes the unity of the objective sense and avoids the chaos of the flow of intentional synthesis. The impossibility of objective thinking in the strict sense arises as a possibility of apprehending reality in its essentiality, to wit, reality as a flow; as it is essentially. However, unity of consciousness is important as an essential moment in the process itself. The *Ego* creates ideal types to build a unity of consciousness. Such ideal types arise due to the immanent conception of time, namely, our determination of past, present and future. Each type brought by these clues must question itself about its *noetic-noematic* structure, (Husserl, 1973, §21, p. 87) it must systematically explain and establish itself in relation to the modes of intentional flow that belong to it. Ideal types are essential to build a regulatory ideal (Husserl, 1973, §22, p. 90), avoiding chaos in the constitution process.

Despite a constant process of reduction, permanent convictions may remain. Such volitions, acceptances, beliefs and so on, develop a particularization of the *Ego* itself, which Husserl calls *personal character* (Husserl, 1973, §32, p. 101). Notwithstanding, the attitude of openness to the possibilities brought by the *epoché*, lived by our immanent conscience of time, forming its ideal types (*noematics*) together with its implicit flow, also develops our *personal character*. Thus, my personal character is constituted by my own attitude towards the process itself; it can be an open attitude or a natural attitude. As a result, each *Ego* has its own particular constitution (Husserl, 1973, §41, p. 117), forming a concrete *Ego*. The concrete *Ego* also includes all actual and potential conscious life; includes all constitutional problems without exception. Husserl showed the implication that represents a transcendental subjectivity in relation to the

flow of consciousness (the immanent consciousness of time), to the process of genesis between passive and active constitutions (passive synthesis), to the constituted and constituent dynamism of consciousness (*noetics/noematics*), and to the horizontality of the world itself with its constancy and claims (the original world). Such implications involve themselves in a transcendental subjectivity by their intentionality. In this fashion, intentionality encompasses the intentionality of the world (objects) and the intentionality of consciousness in which a unit is constantly realized.

Additionally, what about the other *Egos*? They are just like me, no more or less special than me. Consequently, in the process of reduction (*epoché*), how not to forget the others and, inevitably, fall into a transcendental solipsism? How the other implicates itself in transcendental subjectivity? Husserl draws the conclusions that transcendental subjectivity is transcendental intersubjectivity.

Transcendental subjectivity as transcendental intersubjectivity against solipsism

There is an existing-for-me (*für-mich-da*) of others, and consequently, as the subject of a transcendental theory of another person's experience, a transcendental theory of so-called empathy arises (Husserl, 1973, §43, p. 124). This theory contributes to the foundation of a transcendental theory of the objective world due to an exist-for-all (*Für-jedermann-da*). Husserl mentions spiritual objects (books, tools, works of any kind, and so on), which are elaborated by a cultural community, being there for everyone, all of whom belong to the corresponding cultural community. In experience, I experience something that is not me, like the world, objects and the other in its mode of donation. Nevertheless, such modes of bestowal imply itself in our *concrete Ego* (Husserl, 1973, §48, p. 136). Although the transcendental *Ego* is the giver of meaning, it is not bound by transcendental solipsism. Static analysis (themed, constituted) confronts itself with the genesis of the flows of the world, of the other and of our conscience. Under these circumstances, the solipsistic *Ego* is split in its concreteness by the temporal flux itself. This means that the other, the world and objects are included/implicated in each one. Now, the surrounding world only constitutes itself jointly with the others. Thus, a transcendental subjectivity can only conceive itself as transcendental intersubjectivity. Therefore, objects, others, the world and even ourselves understand themselves only intersubjectively. What excludes itself from our *Ego* (Husserl, 1973, §49, p. 137), namely, what is not our *Ego*, includes itself transcendently. Despite the fact that I have my own originality as

Ego, such *Ego* lives in a kind of harmony (Husserl, 1973, §49, p. 138) with the world owing to the fact that there is an existing-there for everyone.

Accordingly, the process of *noetic/noematic* constitution carries with it the sense of harmony and transformation. I, as original *Ego*, live harmoniously in a community of *Egos*. The process of experiencing the other lacks access in relation to its originality, so that the revelation of the other will only be possible through presentation (Husserl, 1973, §50, p. 139), through which my relationship with the other reveals openness. This presentation will go beyond the manifestation of the physical body, made as an object, but as a lived body that motivates me in a different, deeper and more challenging way, bringing a diversity of new possibilities to my concrete *Ego*.

The *alter Ego* presents itself as accessible from what is not originally accessible (Husserl, 1973, §53, p. 144). Here, Husserl is trying to avoid any identification between me and the other, instead he tries to reveal a kind of association, analogy that motivates the sphere of my own identity. This motivation gives itself by the presentation of the other, who I see as accessible, because she is in front of me. Nevertheless, she is inaccessible, due to her own originality. In Husserl's words, our *Ego* constitutes itself as *Here* (in relation to my psychophysical body) and the other as *There* (in relation to her psychophysical body). Hence, I am able to transfer each *There* to a *Here* (Husserl, 1973, §§53, p. 146), however I am not able to discover its originality, its temporal flow structure. Therefore, although I have the characteristic of objectification, I am prepared to apprehend the temporal flow. This means that an original presence will always be inapprehensible, although, by perception, it experiences itself through our transcendental subjectivity. What is primordially incompatible, in simultaneous coexistence, becomes compatible: because my primordial *self* constitutes the *self* that is other for me by a presentative apperception (Husserl, 1973, §§54, p. 147).

A transcendental solipsism is impossible, because of two basic factors: the surrounding world and the other. The surrounding world, for the reason that it is already there beforehand, sustaining our thoughts; the other, due to the fact that it breaks my pretensions of objectification. The accessibility/inaccessibility of the other allows a challenge for the opening of my conscience. The world gives itself to me only as a cultural world and as having meaning: accessible to everyone (Husserl, 1973, § 58, p. 160). Such a world for all has an *a priori* ontological structure, which is natural, psychophysical, social, and cultural (Husserl, 1975, §59, p. 164). Although transcendental subjectivity gives meaning, this constitutes a union of monads (*community of Egos*) in relation to a common world. For Husserl, it

is inconceivable (Husserl, 1973, § 60, p. 167-168) to create a second world, rather, even our fantasies are related to the original world, on which all senses are based. Therefore, psychology cannot lose its implication with the world, and with the other, as it encloses itself in a solipsistic noematic objectivity. Husserl comes to the conclusion that the phenomenological explanation does nothing but explain the meaning that this world has for me, before any philosophizing.

It seems that there is a constitutive base intertwined with the *self*, the body, the other and the world. I am dependent on this interweaving in such a way that solipsism becomes unfeasible, however, each dimension of the constitution is original and manifests itself originally. In the following terms, there is a constitutive base conducive to thinking ethical values, but how to include such values in practice? How to respond ethically to social problems?

Homo respondens

In Waldenfels' view, for his practical or responsive philosophy, human access to the world does not only open itself by the active *Ego* that reaches the world, but also represents a response to the force of attraction that generates the alien, that attracts and connects the human intentionality. Alienness seems to always involve itself in the constitution of reality and, as a source of what happens to people (*was dem Menschen widerfährt*), it intervenes in the construction of reality. It is a *responsive intentionality*. Responsive phenomenology thus reveals the ambivalent character of sociability, which results from this interaction of the own and the alien in sociogenesis. The alien happens beyond any order, it represents an indispensable condition for the constitution of order. This means that the alien intertwines itself into my constitution of meaning. In such terms, sociability is unthinkable without alterity. Alterity thus opens the world on the one hand, but at the same time closes it by its alienness (Srubar, 2018, p. 23).

The alien understands itself here only as an attribute of the other or as the unknown and incomprehensible that disturbs the known order. The traces of the alien in itself - whether in the social order or in the subjective experience - can find itself where the phenomenological analysis finds significant moments whose origin cannot attribute itself to the subject's own activity, but to the response to the call of the alien. Therefore, in the intermediate domain between phenomenology and sociological theory, it is a question of tracking which traits of the alien become visible in the autogenesis of the social (Srubar, 2018, p. 24).

According to Srubar, Waldenfels (1994) considers the experience, first, as a response to the appeal of the other as strange. In this double event of contingency, appeal and response represent events that open certain possibilities and close others, some being retaken while others remain on the horizon as questionable. On the one hand, the resulting frame of possibilities can have a selective effect on the further course of the interaction, however it always remains open to the unexpected, the unintentional (Srubar, 2018, p. 24-25).

The response to an event does not have to be linguistic in itself, nevertheless can take the form of "word, image, act or work" (Waldenfels, 2015, p. 269). The attraction of the alien does not only affect cognition and language, but starts with the human body, whose responsiveness also determines the shape of the social. Here, corporeality represents the pre-reflective and pre-normative level of experience of the world, from which the regulatory functions of sociability develop. A double selection process is inherent in the response, whereby what is foreign to the appealing claim is almost tamed but not abolished: I interpret it as something that means something to me, and at the same time this meaningful thing becomes the object of my desire positively or negatively. The appeal of the alien not only initiates the effort to interpretively integrate the unknown alien into the known order, but also awakens the physical desire, through which the actor also experiences the alienness of what escapes her (Srubar, 2018, p. 25).

Waldenfels demonstrates this using the example of morality, which appears as a spontaneous pattern of order in sociogenesis (Waldenfels, 2006; 2015, p. 327). The source of duty that binds actors to a moral rule is not morality itself, which is just a regulation of this pre-normative cohesion. The binding force itself arises from the appeal of the alien that happens to me, that I live/suffer and before which I cannot remain indifferent, because that is the reason to act or not (Waldenfels, 2006, p. 109). Even the attitude of not responding is already an attitude, a response (WALDENFELS, 2006, 109). The power of the alien's appellative claim demands a response in any case, and therefore includes a duty as a compulsion to act, the results of which exposes itself to further observation by morality.

As reported by Srubar, Waldenfels will outline a concept that considers the unavailability of the alien, but at the same time shows the penetration of the own and the alien in sociogenesis (Srubar, 2018, p. 30). The appealing claim of the alien considers itself a constitutive element of this framework, in front of whose horizon it occurs. Sociogenesis here does not divide itself into two separate psychic and social cycles, however takes place in a process that includes both moments. Therefore, responsive

phenomenology could provide the impetus to rethink the problem of the structural coupling of consciousness and sociability, examining not only language but also the position of corporeality or intercorporeity (Waldenfels, 2015, p. 96) in this context. On the one hand, the phenomenological perspective sharpens the sociological view by delimiting theoretical, normative, moral and ideological orientations and starting from the antecedent nature of the phenomenon. In that respect, it shows that sociality should not confuse itself with solidarity. Notwithstanding, it also shows that, just as ethics alone cannot be the science of morality, sociology cannot claim to be the only science of the social. Clarifying how *homo respondens* construct her living environment as a cultural and social world requires a transdisciplinary approach supported by the human sciences. This effort also characterizes Waldenfelsian phenomenology, which does not shy away from connecting with this broad field, starting with psychoanalysis, passing through linguistics and social sciences to cognitive science and brain research.

Pathos and answer

Responsiveness, which determines the course of my experience, presents itself as a double event of *pathos* and response. By the Greek expression *pathos* or the German expression *Widerfahrnis*, Waldenfels understands the original fact that something hits me, comes to me, attracts attention or comes to mind, that something manages to reach me and also hurt me (Waldenfels, 2019, p. 6).

The surprising and the unusual can result from small changes that have a profound effect. They significantly manifest themselves as a sudden flash, explosion or shock. My personal history is punctuated by unique events such as birth and maturity, choosing a partner and losing her, starting a career, changing professions and losing a job, illness and death. The invasion or infiltration of the new confronts me with events that escape the usual and, in extreme cases, disturb me. *Pathos* or *Widerfahrnis* do not confuse themselves with observable events, they can only see themselves from the perspective of the participant. What happens to me, you, us or others manifests itself as a bodily effect by affecting me, literally: it hurts me or excites me, and challenges me by exhorting me. Strong effects produce an affective surplus through astonishment, admiration, etc. (Waldenfels, 2019, p. 4-5). Of course, that does not mean that only I can feel this pain or only I can have this thought. The event can happen to everyone, but the way I will respond is very particular, as I create my own (original) style of responding and feeling.

However, that's just one side of the coin. The *Widerfahrnis* would remain ineffective and unreal if it not expresses itself or not speaks itself. It expresses itself, not as something I talk about, but as something I respond to. In this interstice, the respondent character of the response (*Antwortcharakter der Response*) unfolds, responding from the alien. To speak of a *Homo respondens* does not only mean that someone is a being who can respond and is ready to respond, but that she becomes a person responding, thus creating a responsive *Ethos*.

The people are in a sort of responsive trap. Not giving an answer would also be an answer, as the saying goes. The compulsion to respond does not, of course, mean that I was ready to respond. Each appeal leaves room for maneuver. It is not up to me to decide if I respond, but how I respond. If my experience only exposes itself to the lightning of the moment, I would have no experience. In my responses, the what (*Worauf*) of the response is transformed into the what (*was*) of a response. What happens to me or hits me (*Was uns widerfährt*) takes on a repeatable form, for example, in the form of a contrast of colors or a sequence of sounds; meaning is acquired, it builds rules and a willingness to respond appropriately to changing demands (Waldenfels, 2019, p.6).

An experience that moves between *pathos* and *response* has a specific temporal structure. Surprising events have in them the fact that they arrive very early compared to our expectations, otherwise they would not be surprising. Such temporal discrepancy causes a displacement of time (*Zeitverschiebung* or in Greek *diastasis*) (Waldenfels, 2019, p.7). The experience is literally disintegrated, it is distended, it is not part of what is expected, namely, something elaborated by conscious planning. The event that happens demands a response, as I suffer its action. When these events, which happen to me, are unexpected or intense, such as accidents, illnesses, losses, defeats, etc., I can assume new possibilities of meaning. What was not part of my activism before, like the fight against drugs, for example, can, after suffering from the loss of a loved one, become part of my fight against drugs and their harmful consequences in people's lives. Now, I was touched, sensitized and I do not want other people to go through this, I know how difficult it is. The event touched me, enabling compassion.

Taking into account that I form a responsive *Ethos*, responding, I can equally conjecture that in responsiveness there is an attitude taken passively or actively, more intensely or less intensely, more astutely or less astutely, and so on. The question is to know the scope of this attitude. Would it be an implicative, an intertwined or a threshold zoner attitude? Does this attitude involve ethical-practical aspects?

Conclusion

The dimension of intersubjectivity addressed by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty makes it impossible not to experience the practical decisions that need to take in view of the possibilities that present themselves. However, these assumptions involve much more a concern with the constitutive factors than with an ethical dimension. Therefore, the collaboration of Waldenfels becomes essential, which will emphasize a responsive ethics arising from what happens, which, in turn, demands answers.

Now, when Waldenfels contemplates the thresholds of meaning, proposing to push to the threshold's zones (*Grenzen stösst*) (Waldenfels 1985, p. 29) what constitutes itself, he sees an ethical-practical attitude turned to the possibilities, through my responsive attitude towards the *life-world*.

With Waldenfels I not only interrogate the world, but I respond to it and I need to justify my answers. The responsive character leads me to consider an open/closed character of the phenomena that drives a new ethical vision, in which I am challenged to an ethical attitude. Under these circumstances, I find a passage from the bestowal of meaning in Husserl to a complicity of meaning in Merleau-Ponty and, promptly, from this complicity to a threshold zone of the senses in Waldenfels. The phenomenological attitude expands itself through responsiveness to an ethical-practical dimension that sees phenomena as responsive possibilities.

In accordance with Waldenfels, the problem of alienness plays a very important role in ethical conceptions. What happens among us will give me the possibility of moving towards the threshold zones that is capable of deviating me from the order taken for granted by the history of mankind. Responsive movement is not something that starts in my consciousness, being controlled by it, but comes as a possibility to my consciousness. In such a wise, to whom something happens does not belong to my choice, nevertheless, the attitude towards what happens makes all the difference.

A social ethical theory needs to overcome the internal/external, individual/society dualism in order to avoid contributions of one dimension and exclusivist contributions. In the following terms, understanding the interweaving between the *self*, the body, the other and the world is also understanding inclusive ethical values. I would say that to derive a social theory from one-sided sources as many sociology classics did, such as religion (Weber), the division of labor (Durkheim) and material issues (Marx) would be to abandon a range of other influences that constitutes us as an ethical society. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to ask how society

builds its responsive *Ethos* based on religion, the division of labor and materialism?

Notas

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