

Las paradojas de la subjetividad en la autoconstitución responsable de la identidad personal

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Resumen: La paradoja de la subjetividad (*Crisis* §§53-54) expresa no solo dos perspectivas metodológicas distintas provenientes de la Modernidad (la perspectiva de la tercera persona, presuntamente objetiva, y la de la primera persona), sino también la dualidad esencial de los seres humanos como “sujetos para el mundo” y “seres en el mundo”, es decir, entidades entre entidades. A continuación exploraremos dos dimensiones de la autoconstitución de la identidad personal tal como se discuten en la literatura sobre el tema y que pueden observarse en la vida social y política: por una lado, la constitución reflexiva, narrativa y responsable de uno mismo y de los otros; por otro lado, el entrelazamiento “inmanente” e intersubjetivo entre las esferas vividas de las emociones, los deseos y las sensaciones encarnados y su desarrollo ontofilogenético desde los instintos hasta la razón. Asimismo, subrayamos la presencia silenciosa de motivaciones (pasivas) irracionales en las “racionalizaciones” (activas), su impacto en la autoestima y el alcance de la *responsabilidad humana*.

Palabras clave: fenomenología trascendental; Husserl; subjetividad; paradojas; sujeto para el mundo; objeto en el mundo; pasividad; motivaciones; responsabilidad

The Paradoxes of Subjectivity *vis-à-vis* the Responsible Self-Constitution of Personal Identity

Abstract: The paradox of subjectivity (*Crisis* §§53-54) expresses not only two dissimilar methodological perspectives that stem from Modernity (the alleged objective third-person one, and the subjective first-person one), but also human beings' essential duality as “subjects for the world” and “beings in the world”, namely, entities among entities. We explore two dimensions of the self-constitution of personal identity examined in current research, also tangible in social and political life: on one side, the reflexive, narrative, and responsible constitution of oneself and others; on the other side, the “immanent” and intersubjective intertwinement among the lived spheres of embodied emotions, desires, sensations, and their onto-phylogenetic development from instincts to reason. We highlight the silent presence of irrational (passive) motivations in (active) “rationalizations”, their impact on self-esteem and the reach of *human responsibility*.

Keywords: transcendental phenomenology; Husserl; subjectivity; paradoxes; subject for the world; object in the world; passivity; motivations; responsibility

Can we be satisfied simply with the notion that human beings are subjects for the world (the world which for consciousness is their world) and at the same time are objects in this world?
(Crisis §53).

§ 1. *The Ecological Crisis and Human Responsibility*

The authors of *The Systems View of Life* remind us that, “As the twenty-first century unfolds, it is becoming more and more evident that the major problems of our time—energy, the environment, climate change, food security, financial security—,” “crisis in healthcare,” and their scientific-sanitary, social, and political upshots (religious, and/or political, *i.e.* migrations triggered by famine or wars), “must be seen as just different facets of one single crisis” (Capra and Luisi 2014: xi, 322-338 *passim*). There are solutions, but we need a change of perception, a radical change of the prevailing worldview in science and society, a new “systemic point of view.” Over the past forty years a new paradigm, rooted in a “new conception of life,” has gradually been replacing the mechanistic view of the material universe, where the mind supervenes as a separate entity or property, or is merely reduced to deterministically causal (linear) neural functions. Thus, there is an increasing awareness that “the planet as a whole is a living, self-regulating system,” of “interconnected and interdependent” elements, whereby even every cell is understood as a cognitive system (Capra and Luisi 2014: xi) within complex, highly nonlinear networks from the “biological, cognitive, social, and ecological dimensions of life” (Capra and Luisi 2014: xii). Thus, human existence—as another “being-in-the-world,” yet with a higher-level cognition—is viewed as the upshot of a dynamic universe whereby “networks and patterns of organization, [...] creativity, and the constant emergence of novelty are driving forces” (Capra and Luisi 2014: xi).

But, unlike other living beings, as “subjects-for-the-world,” humans are also *morally* responsible, not only for themselves and others of their kind, but for the world as a whole. Indeed, in the Preface to the English edition of *The Imperative of Responsibility, in Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (1984), Hans Jonas warned us that “Modern technology, informed by an ever-deeper penetration of nature and propelled by the forces of market and politics, has enhanced human power beyond anything known,” and “raised the material estate of [...] the industrial ‘West,’ to heights equally unknown in the history of mankind” (Jonas 1984: ix). He also already warned that “the other side of its triumphal advance has begun to show its face, disturbing the euphoria of success with threats that are as novel as its welcomed fruits,” threats that are the result of “the overtaxing of nature, environmental and (perhaps) human as well,” to a possible “point of no return.” In sum, the “altered nature of human action,” “the lengthened reach of our deeds,” raises “moral issues for which past ethics [...] have left us unprepared” (Jonas 1984: ix-x). Moreover, due to “the insufficiency of our predictive knowledge,” Jonas proposes an ethics, whereby “responsibility is a correlate of power” (Jonas 1984: x).

Suddenly in 2020, this “ominous side of the Baconian ideal” (Jonas 1984: 140) has struck humanity with the Covid 19 pandemic,¹ with untold scientific-medical,

¹ Increasing public awareness has awoken regarding “zoonosis,” specifically “zooanthroponosis,” as any infectious disease naturally transmitted from animals (mostly vertebrates) to humans, and vice versa. In the

psychological, social, economic, and political consequences. Thus, our issue today is to ponder, from a transcendental phenomenological perspective, the deep paradox of human subjectivity: its radical, vulnerable, and contingent *insertion* in living nature as a “being-in-the world”, and the spiritual *reach* of its *responsibility* and agency upon it as a “subject-for-the world” (*Hua* VI: §53)—constituting its sense, retrieving the sedimented meanings of past generations, transforming them, and modifying our perspectives regarding their validity.

§ 2. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity: as Being an “Object-in-the World” and Being a “Subject-for-the-World”*²

When interviewed by Stephen Colbert (Oct. 11th, 2019) and asked what he thought about his famous *persona*, Paul McCartney answered, “him and me.” Indeed, there are two ways in which we can deal with human subjectivity. Husserl deals with these two ways in §§ 53 and 54 of the *Crisis* (*Hua* VI), as well as in several other texts, after referring to “the emergence of paradoxical enigmas” (*Hua* VI: §52) when attempting to introduce his own new approach to an “ontology of the life-world.” In the *natural attitude*—that of our daily life or of any usual scientific and philosophical endeavors—we are naturally engaged in worldly interests and/or, eventually, in the theoretical establishment of objective truths and validities, including those regarding human dimensions. We can do this, as well, either from a “naturalistic” perspective, whereby varied natural sciences (such as psychology, psychiatry, medicine, zoology, physiology, empirical anthropology, and even certain more naturalistically oriented-philosophical theories) deal with human subjects as “*theoretically posited* OBJECTS” of study (*Hua* IV: 288 [301]); or, we can do this from a “personalistic” perspective, as a “theoretically posited human personality,” or a human person as a moral “subject of rights” (*Hua* IV: §§62, 49, 51 *ff.*, *passim*), as in varied human or cultural disciplines or therapies that deal with individual or social subjects (as in law, psychoanalysis, cultural anthropology, literature, history, and the like). As against the other view, the transcendental sphere would be the one discovered by phenomenology’s *first-person* perspective.

But Husserl’s phenomenology is interested in unveiling the “universal *a priori* correlation” (*Hua* VI: §46) presupposed in our lifeworld experiences and in every

past, rabies and the plague were notorious. Many pathogenic viruses have been identified the last thirty years, triggering diseases such as Ebola, salmonellosis, influenza, etc. The most recent one, Coronavirus 2 (Covid 19), is not the most lethal one, but the one that expands exponentially by aerosol contagion. Journals and social media (Vidal 2020; Robbins 2012) refer to fairly recent studies that already acknowledge what was previously suspected: that both this last scourge as previous ones, such as Ebola, AIDS, and dengue, have had their origin in tropical forests and natural environments with exotic wildlife that harbors hosts of viruses and lethal pathogens for humans. By invading those habitats in densely populated zones of the planet (such as Wuhan in China, or West Africa), where wild animals are hunted and slaughtered in “wet markets” for human consumption, those pathogens are set free, transmitted to human hosts, and rapidly spread to other parts of the earth. These demographic global changes have given rise to quadruple emergent diseases for the past twenty-five years, such as the Avian and Swine influenzas. Human destruction of nature is indicated as responsible for Covid 19, and an emergent discipline (“Planetary Health”) focuses the increasingly visible connections among the wellbeing of humans, other living beings, and whole ecosystems.

² A useful introduction to this topic is found in David (1999).

scientific and philosophical human endeavor. This correlation starts with our basic perceptual and kinesthetic relation to the world, whereby it appears to us in ever changing multiplicities, and thus also *alter* their validity. The intentional correlation also involves the fact that “in every perception [...] consciousness of the individual thing is not alone,” in the sense that what is actually focused (perceived) is *always* experienced in a horizon-consciousness, *i.e.* in a perceptual “*field of things*” that finally points to the world-horizon (*Hua* VI: §47). Thus, phenomenology is interested in unveiling “the ground of objective knowledge,” which can only be done within the *epochē*. Indeed, this method claims to unveil the “transcendental life” embedded in the natural attitude but unbeknownst to it when we live in it. For while living on in the natural mode, the transcendental life that forever constitutes the meaning of the world for humans, remains anonymous. In the natural attitude, in which we live straightforwardly, the natural world is given as merely existing (“persisting object-poles anticipated in ontic certainty [...] against the possible modalizations of certainty”), and we are not aware of the constituting complexities of our meaning-giving and configuring correlation with the world horizon (*Hua* VI: 179-180 [175-176]). So, the phenomenological method has *another interest* and *another approach* to all “natural human life-interests.” A common misunderstanding is that we turn away from them. We do not.³ This would be phenomenology’s *first-person* perspective.

The paradox—that phenomenology unveils—is that within the phenomenological attitude, after the *epochē*, every straightforward *object-oriented* (common sense) interest is “put out of play” to unveil the complex nexus of meaning-constitutive processes whereby the world—in manifold “subjective manners of givenness” and “appearances and views”—is constituted as a “transcendental phenomenon.” But how is it that “component part of the world” (mankind, human subjectivity), “constitute the whole world [...] as its intention formations [...] while [...] <subjects> are themselves only a partial formation within the total accomplishment?” (*Hua* VI: 183 [179-180]).⁴ Indeed, seen naïvely, it would seem that the subject, as a component part of the world, contains the whole world, and simultaneously contains itself. The theoretical question is *how is this possible*. The problem is the permanent tension between the evidentiary force of the *naturally* oriented objective attitude, and the phenomenologist’s evidence, which is initially appears suspiciously enigmatic. The paradox is partially resolved if we consider that as transcendental subjects and intersubjectivities, we are not considered as worldly, natural-objective realities, but as “ultimately functioning-accomplishing subjects,” whereby, our beings as psycho-physical unities, *persons*, or social communities “in-the-world”, are *also* precisely *constituted*, among other natural and social entities, with our worldly meanings. But this also means that the *first-person* perspective adopted by

³ “How could we take perception and the perceived, memory and the remembered, the objective and every sort of verification of the objective, including art, science, and philosophy, as a transcendental theme without living through these sorts of things as examples and indeed with [their] full self-evidence? [...]. Thus, in a certain sense the philosopher within the *epochē* must also ‘naturally live through’ the natural life; yet <with> the *epochē* [...] we go back [...] to the ways in which this *subjectivity* has ‘brought about,’ and continues to shape the world through its concealed internal ‘method’” (*Hua* VI: 180 [176-177]).

⁴ This paradox is reminiscent of a mathematical paradox that Husserl’s colleague in Göttingen, Zermelo, formulated and communicated to Husserl in 1902, almost simultaneously to Russell’s formulation of the “class of all classes that contain themselves”, and that Husserl noted down (*Hua* XXII: 399; xxi).

“bracketing the natural attitude” with the *epochē* precisely unveils the fact that the *third-person* objectively-oriented perspective or attitude is, in fact, a concealed accomplishment of “ultimately functioning-accomplishing subjects” (*Hua* VI: §54). This “Janus-faced” uniquely-singular *ego*, is first pointed out by Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 150, 155) (Lerner 2018: 13-31; Carr 1999: 39-46).⁵

§ 3. A Glance from Without, and its Limits

There are many misunderstandings and paradoxes involved in the attempt to interpret within a *third-person* objectively-oriented (natural) attitude the transcendental domain that Husserl claims to unveil with the *epochē*. A good simile, for starters, is Husserl’s reference to Helmholtz’s well-known image of a cylinder projecting its shadow from two of its sides upon two plane surfaces (*Hua* VI: 121 [119]): from one of the cylinder’s sides the projected shadow appears as a rectangle; from its bottom, it appears as a circle. None of the cylinder’s surface projections represents its true nature. Only the “life of depth” promises to unveil the primary sources of meaning, “the realm, never before entered, of the ‘mothers of knowledge’,” according to a myth of Goethe’s *Faust* (*Hua* VI: 156 [153]). So “positive knowledge [...] lies on the [...] ‘patent’ life of the plane” whereas transcendental phenomenology aims to uncover the “‘latent’ life of the depth” (*Hua* VI: 121-122 [120]).

Husserl was inspired by Franz Brentano for his “subjective turn.” His teacher had thought that since the psyche and its mental experiences are found at the basis of all possible theoretical, normative, or evaluative concepts, the philosophical task of founding all other sciences, including logic—a popular notion in the nineteenth century—belonged to a descriptive psychology, indeed, a *positive* science. But Husserl rapidly detected the flaws involved in this attempt, the main one of which consisted in the risk of falling prey to *logical* and *ethical psychologism* (in sum, to a subjective skeptical *relativism*). Since Modern empiricism, psychology is deemed a natural science of the psychic cognitive processes, experiences, and mental data, thus of *mental* nature in general, parallel to *physics* as a discipline that deals with physical, bodily nature. *Knowledge* has thus been dealt with as a *causal* thing-like relation between an immanent-mental reality and a transcendent one. A fallacious argument was implicit in psychology’s claim as a founding discipline (Aristotle’s *hysteron-proteron*), whereby the proposition to be proved is assumed as the premise, for—molded after physics and deemed a *positive* natural science—psychology not only claimed to ground all other disciplines, but also itself—much like one of Baron von Münchhausen’s outrageous tales, narrated in the first person, regarding his exploit that, when caught in a swamp, he rescued himself by lifting himself up by his pigtail.

In sum, “mind-body” dualism led to Husserl’s famous formulation of the “paradox of transcendence” (*Hua* II: 27 [22] *passim*), which cannot be solved by natural science. For, how can the *ideality* of universal (ethical, axiological, or logical) concepts or laws,

⁵ “Granted that these two descriptions are very different from each other, are we entitled to speak of two different selves, a ‘transcendental’ and an ‘empirical’ self? Kant himself says they are ‘the same subject’ (B 155) but admits to great difficulty in reconciling the two descriptions” (Carr 1999: 44).

become *subjective* when “apprehended,” “presented,” or “given” in knowledge or experience, and thus “enter” the flux of *real* mental states and become the epistemic possession of the thinking, valuing or acting persons, without simultaneously losing their *objective* “being-in-itself”? (*Hua* XIX/1: 12-13 [169]). Additionally, how can psychology claim to offer *apodictic* validity for its own theses, and a solid grounding for the *objective* validity of all scientific disciplines, if it only infers them *inductively* from individual and *contingent* psychic processes?

Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology attempted to solve the “enigma of all enigmas” (*Hua* VI: 12 [13]) related to the correlation between transcendence and immanence in general, yet free not only from a crude positivistic naturalism, but also, in general, from the *objectively oriented* “natural attitude.” This required him to delve into the transcendental origin of all sense and validity of being, revealing science, culture, ethics, axiology, history, and the like, as correlates of humanity’s spiritual achievements.

Since Modern science, there is a reason why the transcendental achievements remain concealed in the natural (*third-person*) attitude. It is mainly due to the fact that, for essential reasons, scientific skills do *not* enter as components of natural sciences. Scientists produce de-contextualized data using instruments that only register *variables* independent of their contexts (colors, weight, electric charge, etc.), for natural scientific objective laws rule over these. They also eliminate all reference—in the final product of their work—to the subjective activities that consist precisely in producing de-contextualized data (Dreyfus 1986: 3-22). Furthermore, as previously intimated, in spite of the unprecedented possibilities that Modern science and technology have offered to humanity, liberating it from its natural chains, it also put in its hands previously unsuspected means for its own destruction. Husserl read this antagonism and tension as an immanent crisis of ethical and philosophical order: as an oblivion of the sciences’ source of meaning in the subjective-relative lifeworld, where human beings are the ultimately responsible subjects. Thus, the crisis of the Western sciences stems from their having forgotten that human responsibility lies in their genesis and constitution, a perilous oblivion that leads sciences and technology—comfortably settled in their alleged autonomy, moral *anomie* and axiological neutrality—to turn against humanity itself. But, in general, our current lifeworld is also throughout permeated by the overwhelming impact of Western sciences, whereby all human affairs seem to succumb to objective, technological, and economic approaches, and thus are being reduced to mere quantifiable commodities. Individuals and members of communities are likewise increasingly regarded as mere objects in a world of things, losing their personal and spiritual density.

Now, there are current attempts to reverse these reductive, objectifying approaches, by proposing narrative accounts of the constitution of personhood, thus using a *third-person* approach. Some are overtly narrative accounts (Jacobs 2013). Some incorporate to this account a more fundamental dimension of selfhood, and the self-awareness of the experiential self; and, finally, others purport self-reflection or self-interpretation as constitutive of personhood, whereby if we acknowledge to be the same person throughout the course of our lives, it is foremost due to our permanent intentional awareness of things, others, and the world (Jacobs 2013: 1). But their common denominator is the conviction

that “personal self” is the upshot of an active, conscious and even *rational* organizing of our lives, through its cultural, cognitive, and linguistic shaping. Some of these accounts seem to reverse the relation between personhood and narrative, yet it is not by telling stories of our lives that we become persons, but rather it is because we are persons that we can tell those stories. Others deem that our pre-reflective, sentient life is impersonal and unorganized, but if this were true reflective meanings and narratives could never arise thereof. And still others fail to recognize that the unfolding of our lives is not a merely linear *continuum* but, due to the retentional and protentional structure of our time-consciousness, it is permanently recast, enabling *multiple* possible narratives being projected into the past and future from any given present (Jacobs 2013: 5). Some narrative accounts exclude intentionality, so they forget that we are born *into* socio-historical worlds, that we experience them from the start, and that within this horizon we *become unique*, irreplaceable persons. Some even hardly mention the embodied character of our personhood.

Unlike these narrative accounts that implicitly operate with an impoverished theory of consciousness, Paul Ricœur’s *Time and Narrative* (1983-1985) and *Oneself as Another* (1990) purport that the questions of “personal identity” and the “constitution of the self” ought to articulate the *temporal* dimension of human existence and the “narrative theory” (Ricœur 1990: 138). The “what” (*quoi*) of *personal identity* concerns *permanence* through *time*, thus *sameness* (*idem*, *mêmeté*, *Gleichheit*) as *numerical identity* and *resemblance* in uninterrupted continuity. But, the “who am I” (*qui suis-je*) of personal identity regards *ipseity*, *selfhood* (*ipse*, *ipseity*, *Selbstheit*). Both constitute the *personal character* of humans whereby their abiding acquisitions and dispositions (“habitualities”) refer back to a sedimented history that tends to abolish the preceding *innovating acts*. In this dialectical process between the *idem* and the *ipse*, the “narrative identity” entails the “covering up of the *ipse* (selfhood) by the *idem* (sameness)” (Ricœur 1990: 146). Yet the *idem* of the person is never entirely thought without the *ipse*, for not only the selfhood of personal identity coincides with the active “position-takings” that according to Ricœur define the “ethical aspect of character, in Aristotle’s sense” (Ricœur 1990: 147), but also “oneself’s ipseity implies alterity in such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought without the other” (Ricœur 1990: 14).

In this account, Ricœur not only acknowledges the preeminence of *time* and *temporality* in the constitution of personal identity, the presence of *alterity* at the heart of the *ipse*—manifest “in the loyal perseverance of holding to the given word” (Ricœur 1990: 148), but also seems to echo Husserl’s distinction between, on one side, the intersubjective *constitutive* achievements of “subjects *for* the world” and, on the other, the *constituted psychophysical* and the *personal egos* as “beings *in* the world.” But only apparently, for his is mostly a “glance from without,” and fails to recognize its limits.

§ 4. A Glance from Within, and its Possibilities

Thus, despite its undisputable merits, Ricœur’s narrative account of personal identity fails to grasp the Husserlian sense of a radical “philosophy of subjectivity,” for he conflates and equalizes the empirical and the transcendental *egos* as belonging both to

the “*philosophies of the Cogito*,” for both are “relative,” and conceived “without confronting the *Others*” (Ricoeur 1990: 148).⁶ He is particularly impervious to Husserl’s essential notion of “constitution.” Ricoeur believes that prior to any description and prescription, only the narrative account is *constitutive* of personal identity. But what he deems a narrative *constitution*, seems to be only a merely narrative *reconstruction*—(*construction*?)—of personal identity, whereby he overestimates his reflective, metaphorically-linguistic, and “active ratiocination.” And, albeit his strategic references to the “broken cogito” with Nietzsche and Freud, Ricoeur perhaps underestimates the limits of his own endeavors.

However, it would be inaccurate and unfair to ascribe Ricoeur’s narrative theory of personhood a mere third-person, objective “Glance from without.” For his “philosophy of ipseity,” is conceived as a “dialectics of possession and dispossession, [...] of the self’s assertion and the self’s deletion,” and, in his view, by “breaking the closure of the same, the other reencounters the complicity of the movement of self-deletion whereby the self becomes available to another self.” (Ricoeur 1990: 198) And yet he appears to overlook and misunderstand the *possibilities* that a radical “glance from within” opens. This is why Ricoeur misses, in my view, the essential meaning of Husserl’s “subject-*for*-the-world,” as *responsible*, “ultimately functioning-accomplishing subjects,” namely, as primal egos that constitute their “horizon of transcendental others as cosubjects within the transcendental intersubjectivity which constitutes the world” (*Hua* VI: §54). This is also why he remains blind to subjectivity’s temporal genesis that starts *from within* the developmental *depths* of the “obscure underlying basis” of sensibility in our distant childhood (*Hua* IV: §61), and even in the pre-egological life unfolding in our mother’s womb (*Hua* XV: 604).

A phenomenological-Husserlian understanding of transcendental subjectivity, as “subject-*for*-the-world” requires a retrospective and reconstructive interrogation (*Rückfrage*) that leads from static analyses of the ego’s active, conscious and rational life, to ever deeper genetic analyses—from the active to the passive genesis of transcendental life—all the way back to our “transcendental birth,” or to the “beginning of a transcendental genesis” in early childhood. From thence, the analyses follow *individual* psychophysical development, from the *pre-ego* all the way up to the higher forms of inter monadic communities, driven by a teleological impulse whereby the subjective monads are intentionally related to each other (*Miteinander, Füreinander, Ineinander*), in a universal development and “infinite ascent” (*Hua* XV: 593-597). But they also follow the track of the early constitution of *intersubjectivity* in passive impulsive intentionality (*Triebintentionalität*), both from early childhood, as well as underlying the deeper stratum (*Unterschicht*) of adulthood. They also show that each monad has a transcendental sedimented pre-history that precedes its transcendental birth and that it *receives* as its transcendental heritage. To question this genesis is also to question the monad’s

⁶ For Ricoeur, a “philosophy of ipseity,” is conceived as a “dialectics of possession and dispossession, [...] of the self’s assertion and the self’s deletion,” thus, in his philosophy, “breaking the closure of the same, the other reencounters the complicity of the movement of self-concealment whereby the self becomes available to another” (Ricoeur 1990: 198).

individuation, namely, the genesis of its *egological* dispositions or habitualities. This transcendental birth does not coincide with the human biological birth, but rather takes place in the “pre-infant Monad” (*vorkindlichen Monaden*) (*Hua XV: 595*), or primal infant (*Urkind*) that has kinaesthetic experiences in its mother’s womb. These experiences, once *sedimented*, belong to the newborn child as his abiding acquisitions. “The *ego* in the primal beginning (the primal birth) is already an *ego* with an oriented instinct” (*Hua XLII: 115 ff.*).

Temporality is relevant for the phenomenological account of the self-constitution of the transcendental *ego*, for it connects in a teleological continuity its *passive* life of primal passive instincts, drives, tendencies, sensuous data, sensuous feelings, and the like—instinctively interconnected with that of others (namely, the mother)—, and its *active* life of responsible theoretical, practical, and evaluative “position takings”. Thus, it connects the *primal passive pre-ego* (*vor-Ich*)—as an *irradiated*, affected center (*Einstrahlungszentrum*)—to the *spontaneous* or *active primal ego* (*Ur-Ich*) as an *irradiating* center (*Ausstrahlungszentrum*), whereby it constitutes the meaning of the world of things, events, and other subjects, and of itself as a *personal ego*. Hence, this teleological transcendental continuity—seen *from within*—enables us to better grasp each individual person’s personal history, beginning from innate instinctive life all the way to responsible conscious life.

§ 6. Conclusion. The Role of Responsibility

Two types of motivations are thus intertwined in spiritual life, the *rational* ones, and the *pre-rational*, irrational or “passive” ones (*Hua XXXVII: 107 ff., 331 ff.*). The former, correspond to the spirit’s higher and active spheres, and the latter to the lower, primal and secondary passivity of affections, “innate” instincts and drives, as well as of abiding convictions, habitualities and dispositions—hence, of “acquired” instincts. The latter may be so deeply embedded in the emotional level of our personal identity that subjects with low self-esteem will tend to shut down and go into overdrive when faced with evidences contrary to their inmost convictions that they perceive as existential “threats”. Thus, instincts discoverable at the passive and irrational beginnings of life do not lose their meaning in conscious and rational life, even in science and ethics, for they function as the first blind intentionality directed toward goals, and structure the horizon of our future, in the sense of our *real* and *limited* possibilities. Instinctive life emerges both teleologically and gradually toward a reasonable, responsible life wherein “narratives accounts” of personhood may also be included, as they are themselves products of a *sui generis* type of constitutive, higher-level experience.

In this sense, our “self-responsibility” includes the capacity to understand our own natural roots that tie us intimately to living nature as “beings-in-the-world,” and the capacity to understand our own *responsibility* toward others and toward nature that “we must preserve at all cost,” (Jonas 1984: x) as “subjects-*for*-the world.”

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