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THE YO-YO OF THE EGO: AFTERWARDNESS IN GENETIC PHENOMENOLOGY

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1. The Discovery of the Pre-Egoic

Genetic phenomenology is, in E. Husserl's words, an «inquiry into the radically pre-egoic» (*Rückfrage auf das radikal Vor-Ichliche*) [Hua XV, 598; cf. Taguchi 2006, 118]. But even at the pre-egoic level, any thought or feeling observed must be recognized as *mine*, and in this sense, as part of my «ego». Here, the genetic sense of ownership must be distinguished from a common-sense conception of personhood. A thought is not mine in the same sense that my toes or my nose are mine. From a common-sense perspective, a thought naturally belongs among the various properties of my person, just as, in an extended juridical sense, a toaster or a kettle counts as «mine». But genetic phenomenology reverses this whole common-sense approach, as it makes *the ego an instance within the flow of experience*. The genetic standpoint thus vindicates, in its own manner, F.W.J. Schelling's preference for «Es denkt in mir, es wird in mir gedacht» over R. Descartes's *cogito* [Schelling 1966, 28]. There is already thought prior to the intervention of the ego, which appears within the flow of thought. The egoic

is founded on the pre-egoic, in the sense that pre-egoic thought can occur without the ego, but not vice versa.

Genetically, the active ego *reclaims* passive thoughts, integrating them into its own sphere of activity: the melody in the back of my head becomes a specific earworm; the pain in my upper back diagnoses as «upper back pain». We can compare the ego here to a flashlight lighting up the walls of a cave, making bats fly away simply by exposing them. The ego modifies experience not through action, but by observing and, as it were, accidentally illuminating a flow of experience that would otherwise have continued of its own accord. Husserl modifies I. Kant's famous axiom, «Das: Ich denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können», by emphasizing the word *können*, which he takes to mean «daß es auftreten und auch nicht auftreten kann» [Hua IV, 108; cf. KrV B131]. The ego thus appears intermittently rather than continuously. This does not mean that I get to pick and choose when to activate my ego. The dreamer can at most set an alarm clock while not yet dreaming; he cannot awaken himself at will, for such an act would presuppose that he is already awake and freely able to choose whether to dream or not. (No doubt, this is how some people assess their own supposed skills in «lucid dreaming»; yet it is far from clear that such a state is even possible).

The ego retrieves the life of passivity «after the fact» and re-frames it as its own. It is the waking person, not the dreamer, who claims the dream as his own, despite the fact that his intervention spelled the end of the dream. Here we begin to discern how the manifesting ego can be connected with the psychoanalytic concept of «afterwardness» (*Nachträglichkeit*, *l'après-coup*) [Laplanche & Pontalis 1967, 33]. Though its elevation to a technical term owes much to J. Lacan, S. Freud already employs not only *nachträglich* but also its substantivized form, *Nachträglichkeit* [GW I, 511]. Afterwardness is, most generally speaking, the idea that later events reshape the meaning of earlier memories. Stated paradoxically, it is an intervention of the present into the past. The origins of this notion can be traced to J.-M. Charcot's theory of psychological shock [Chervet 2021, 770]. We think back, for instance, to the «railway spine» controversy, in which trauma was reported by train passengers despite the absence of any physical injury. Between the traumatic event and the onset of

the symptom there is an «interval», an incubation period, so to speak. The meaning of the accident is continuously enriched, until a symptom is formed that encapsulates the whole. But the afterwardness discovered in such traumatic cases may indeed be extrapolated toward mental functioning as a whole. This is itself another example of afterwardness, in which the apparent exception to the rule turns out, *ex post facto*, to have exemplified the rule. Psychoanalytic afterwardness shows an affinity with the ego's intervention into the temporal flow sketched earlier. But to explore this similarity further, it is essential to draw a distinction between 1) the ego's retrieval of passivity and 2) the retrieval that operates within passivity itself, without the ego's intervention. Freud's psychoanalysis shares Husserl's concern with the passive and the active, the pre-egoic and the egoic. It has its own name for the pre-egoic, namely the «id» (*das Es*). We recall the statement by Schelling quoted earlier, «Es denkt in mir»: there is already thinking underway before the ego pulls out its pocket flashlight to illuminate the train of thought. Perhaps both Freud and Husserl drew on the theories of their common teacher, F. Brentano, who had himself rediscovered the role of the «passive intellect» (νοῦς παθητικός) in Aristotelian philosophy [Brentano 1967, 165]. This is a surprisingly traditional precursor to Freud's shattering discovery that «das Ich nicht einmal Herr ist im eigenen Hause» [GW XI, 295]. But the interaction between the pre-egoic and the egoic is not that of two external objects or persons. There is no separate person called «Ego» who comes home to find their spouse with another partner.

How are we to tell the difference, then, between the pre-egoic flow operating upon itself and the intervention of the egoic into the pre-egoic? Consider the case in which I scratch my back without ever thinking that it is itching and therefore needs to be scratched. Yet the flow of experience is coordinated within itself, for it is not a stranger's hand that I am feeling but my own: my present experience harmonizes with the past. The itch on my back becomes, *ex post facto*, the itch that was about to be scratched. Husserl would speak here of the continuous «fulfillment-revelation» (*Erfüllungsenthüllung*) of an instinctive urge [Hua Mat VIII, 273; cf. Lee 1993, 181]. Now compare this to the scenario in which a spouse intervenes to ask, «Why are you always scratching?». Here we'd have an intervention analogous to the ego's intervention in

the passive flow of experience. The ego's intervention does not merely cohere with past experience and add to it; it *defines* past experience, and this definition is tied to a sense of *ownership*. What is new here is the discursive dimension of choice, the dimension of λόγος ἀποφαντικός.

This does not imply that my previous, automatic activity was therefore «unfree» or «involuntary». One of Husserl's students referred to the passive life as neither free nor unfree, but «pre-free» (*die vorfreie Sphäre*), a designation that is particularly apt [Reiner 1927, 7]. Such conceptual liberties might go a long way toward explaining the paradox that «free association» in psychoanalysis goes hand in hand with a thesis of psychological determinism. We are under the illusion that we associate freely, whereas what arises always carries its own kind of necessity, as the analysis seeks to demonstrate. One seems carried by the wind to the right destination through the most random thoughts. The «freedom» in association refers to freedom from the ego's censorship: «daß man ohne Kritik alles mitteilen sollte, was einem in den Sinn kommt» [GW VIII, 373]. But to this condition, Freud adds the determinist thesis that «what we deem arbitrary in the realm of the mind rests upon laws that are as yet only dimly intuited» [GW VII, 33]. In trying to theorize the nature of association, we move from freedom to its opposite without resolution: the freedom is merely felt and deceptive, while the underlying «law» remains only a postulate. The dilemma suggests that the question of freedom in analysis must be framed differently.

2. *Felt Connections in Thought*

In Husserl's view, any supposedly «random» association may ultimately reveal an inner connection. Passivity itself seeks to expand upon what is initially only a mysterious, «palpable connection» (*fühlbarer Zusammenhang*) [Hua XIX/1, 36]. Someone's remark reminds me of a beach by the lake, «eine herrliche Seelandschaft», which I visited last summer, though the remark itself has nothing to do with it [Hua XI, 122]. But the key to the puzzle is simply that, during that beach walk, someone else made the same, or a very similar, remark. D. Hume had already referred, in his theory of association, to the «*apropos* of discourse», «that thread, or chain of thought, which a man naturally sup-

ports even in the loosest *reverie*» [Hume 1978, 662]. Only he mistook this connection for a *mechanism*, on a par with billiard balls colliding. Husserl teaches «that association is not really a kind of attraction or cohesion [...] but rather another form of motivation, already marked by an elementary intentionality» [Hua XXXVII, 180; cf. Rang 1973, 242]. Seeing someone riding a Yamaha, I switch the topic to Omaha Beach; and my friend and I quickly arrive, as we so often do, at a discussion of Hitler and the Second World War. But even if such a regularity can be observed, as indeed described by «Godwin's law», there is no evidence of a mechanical connection.

For the phenomenologist, this is a matter of *a priori* necessity. Even if I could look inside someone's brain and see all the cogs and wheels, or their analogue, moving a picture of the *Führer* into the frontal lobe, I would still not be able to «see» a thought. No matter how accurate our model of the brain may be, it acquires mental meaning only because we project our mental vocabulary onto it. This mental language is never itself derived from a scientific model, but from our everyday dealings in the lifeworld, which Husserl, like W. Dilthey, calls the *geistige Welt* [Hua IV, 172]. For the connections between thoughts Husserl reserves, like A. Pfänder, the term «motivation», as opposed to «causality» [*ibid.*, 220]. It is motivation, not causality, that shapes the inner life, weaving meaningful connections continuously. Each thought is loaded with «surplus meaning» (*Mehrmeinung*) and refers beyond itself [Hua I, 84]. Whenever a meaning is uttered, others are implied: «Die Explikation setzt die Implikation voraus, und diese Implikation ist Sedimentierung» [Hua XLII, 23]. But we are in no position to say how many meanings are involved: meanings are not visible physical objects like the marbles in someone's pocket. Thoughts do not lie around «in a box (*als wie in einer Schachtel einfach da*), ready to be found and grasped» [Hua XIX/1, 169].

What Husserl calls *Mehrmeinung* is known in psychoanalysis as «overdetermination» (*Überdeterminierung*) [GWII/III, 289; cf. Laplanche & Pontalis 1967, 467]. Both concepts express how everything that is thought condenses multiple meanings into one, its simplicity being but apparent. Overdetermination points to the fact that the «analysis» in psychoanalysis is inherently synthetic. Attempting to isolate a problem to a single, central issue is like bailing water from a leaking

boat or fighting a fire with gasoline. Every utterance calls for a new explanation, which unpacks meanings that were only implicit in the initial statement. Human intentionality is therefore, at base, «intensionality», in the sense of G.W. Leibniz's *intensio*; but meanings are never reducible to ultimate «atoms», as in his calculus. Logical positivism likewise tried to reach those ultimate marbles, which soon became gooey and began to melt away. Every meaning that is explored draws us into a quagmire of multiple, interrelated meanings, not unlike the much-be-moaned «forever wars» of the United States. Like G.A. Romero's zombies, meanings multiply, recalling the words of the devil in the Gospel of Mark: «My name is Legion, for we are many» [Mark 5:9, NIV].

For the retroactive sense-making inherent in the thought process itself, Freud introduced the concept of «regard for representability» (*Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit*) [GW II/III, 344ff.; cf. van Stokkum 2025, 184]. Explanations of this notion usually center on visibility (*Darstellbarkeit*), but the temporal, retrospective factor (*Rücksicht*) must be taken into account as well. The consistency of visuals within a dream is not a stand-alone feature, but depends to a large extent on the implicit «narration» guiding their succession. If in my dream I ring the neighbor's doorbell to return the kettle I had borrowed, but in the next moment I'm again holding it in my hand, I conclude that the neighbor was not home or, alternatively, did not want to take back the kettle. This retroactive sense-making «rescues», as it were, the visual scene in which I'm still holding the kettle in my hand. The *Rücksicht* is an intuitive process, understood by Freud to be distinct from the «secondary revision» (*sekundäre Bearbeitung*) exerted by the ego [*ibid.*, 492ff.]. Secondary revision reflects the impact of the ego's censorship on the manifest dream. One might compare this dynamic to garden gnomes returning to their ceramic poses at dawn, so that the sleeper remains unaware of their midnight activity. Though no longer «Herr im eigenen Hause», the ego must still be made to feel like a master.

3. Toward Apophantic Judgment

We now proceed to contrast the intra-intuitive process with Husserl's description of «the foundation of judgments in pre-predicative

evidences» (*die Fundierung der Urteilsevidenzen in vorprädikativen Evidenzen*) [EU 45]. The pre-egoic flow of experience is not devoid of judgment, but insofar as judgment is there, it remains implicit. When the traffic light turns green, I start my car, which can be explained as an instance of *modus ponens*: an «unconscious inference» in H. v. Helmholtz's sense, an ἐνθύμημα in the sense of Aristotle. At the same time, we must recognize that no actual propositions are involved, so that «thinking» here remains synonymous with «seeing». This does not mean that the environment with which I engage intuitively is not already, in itself, shaped by language. For Husserl, the use of language trickles down into intuition to constitute a «secondary sensibility» (*sekundäre Sinnlichkeit*) [Hua IV, 332]. This unrecognized use of linguistic connections resembles Lacan's concept of the imaginary, which is constituted through a repression of the symbolic [cf. Bergande 2002, 35]. (Though we mention Lacan, we do not share his alignment of the ego (*le moi*) with the imaginary; but let us set that matter aside).

The transition from the pre-predicative to the predicative must take place not merely with respect to the external object, but also with respect to thought itself. In becoming situated within λόγος ἀποφαντικός, thoughts take on an objective, «itemized» character: a blooming, buzzing confusion of holiday yearnings crystallizes into «the Italy plan», standing as both a summary and a new creation, ready to be proposed to others. The proposer of the proposition is seeking «Einverständnis mit den Anderen», not merely an occasion for self-expression [Hua IV, 194]. Two friends spend hours in free association, as enthusiastic as they are unfocused, until one of them adopts a more serious stance and begins recording the Italy plan on a sticky note. The distinction between the non-linguistic and the linguistic is, in this sense, internal to language itself: after hours of discussion, we finally arrive at a real declaration (ἀπόφανσις), something like a letter of intent. Though language existed prior to that moment, much of it was spent «dancing around the issue». This describes the dynamic between «empty» and «full» speech (*parole vide, parole pleine*) that Lacan saw at work both in and out of the analytic setting [Lacan 1966, 247ff.].

However, there is more than meets the eye here. For does not the habit of using post-its for every minor issue, in many cases, constitute a clear example of avoidant behavior? These may be metaphoric ac-

tions that do not recognize themselves as such; they take themselves literally. Surface appearances alone, then, provide no guarantee that we have reached a genuine declaration (ἀπόφανσις). What could guarantee that I'm making a real declaration rather than blabbing away, or writing things down to appear serious? We are trying to understand the relation between «der Geist und sein seelischer Untergrund», where the lower level is already informed by the upper level [Hua IV, 332]. The ψυχή is already a νοῦς, which the Aristotelian tradition has playfully termed νοῦς παθητικός: a «feeling intellect». What is actually at stake in the implicit negotiation between our two friends may not even be the Italy trip as such. They eventually settle, among other things, on spending five days at Lake Como with no further schedule. The neurotic planning with sticky notes is now contrasted with an image of sunbathing on the beach. But it is this «image», and not the endless list of bullet points, that shows greater intellectual maturity. Paradoxically, therefore, the text was «imaginary» and the image «symbolic», in the Lacanian sense.

As communication between two different subjects, language presupposes this *Aufhebung*, in which the endless flow of thought is transformed into an actual declaration. This movement toward the ἀπόφανσις is never restricted to a single moment in history; it is always underway. Husserl understood the copulative «is», connecting subject and predicate, as the «Urstruktur des eigentlich apophantischen, prädikativen Urteils» [EU 254]. This reveals the primacy of metaphorical identification over sheer metonymic succession. The endless list of bullet points expresses the metonymic claustrophobia in which «there is nothing outside the text» (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*) [Derrida 1967, 227]. This river of text belongs to the imaginary order, despite surface appearances, whereas the task of a genuine declaration is not merely to produce words but to tie them together. «Copulation» is one obvious metaphor for this union, which is more than the conjunction of two people who happen to be sharing the same bed [Lacan 1966, 692; cf. Bergande 2002, 38]. The Italy plan, scattered frantically across various lists, resolves into a singular, sun-shaded vision of Lake Como. The frantic list-making, in retrospect, comes to count as mere «foreplay». This is because the list-making was covertly metaphorical but did not yet recognize itself *as such*; it took itself to be lit-

eral, and this «symbolic equation» impeded «symbolic functioning» [cf. Segal 1957].

4. *Yo-yoing Back into the Pre-Egoic*

We have sought to describe a movement from intuition to intellect, from the imaginary to the symbolic, to shed new light on the meaning of ἀπόφανσις. In this sense, we have undertaken an ἀπόφανσις of ἀπόφανσις itself: a «declaration of declaration». A concern with clarity is operative within the term «phenomenology» itself, which is not just about appearance, but about «shining», «bringing to light» (φαίνειν). The teleology of clarity remains important as a guiding thread, even as phenomenology critiques reliance on the merely sensory given. Rather than dismissing the project of Enlightenment, it renews its ambitions by insisting that the φαινόμενον stands in need of λόγος [cf. SZ 34; Vajas 2001, 186]. The λόγος sustains the φαινόμενον; it does not oppose it, but *contains* it. This basic trust in words fits with the psychoanalytic project, which from its earliest formulations has affirmed that «das Reden eben selbst der adäquate Reflex ist, als Klage und als Aussprache für die Pein eines Geheimnisses» [GW I, 87]. The effort to say what is on our minds is fundamentally different from just looking into a garden shed and counting the tools stored there. We articulate something new that was, in retrospect, «already there», much as a secret can be identified only once it is out in the open.

This teleology toward articulation, always underway and always awaiting its beginning, has so far been depicted by us as a one-way street: as in a detective story, what lies in the dark must be brought to light. There is another sense, however, in which the pre-egoic is an enduring current rather than an unwanted darkness. This dynamic of tapping into the source is hinted at in the familiar emphatic-empathic follow-up question from everyday life: «But how do you *feel*?». We are invited, then, to turn the pocket flashlight inward and explore the Lascaux-like cave walls, to travel back in time and to seek something beyond the here and now. Whoever denies such time-traveling ends up denying reflection itself; but whoever denies reflection must deny that there is even a substrate on which to reflect. «Ein solches Ich fände also

nur Fiktionen von cogitationes vor, seine Reflexionen wären, bei der Natur dieses Erlebnismediums, ausschließlich Reflexionen in der Einbildung. Aber das ist offenbarer Widersinn» [Hua III/1, 97]. If the egoic is, in principle, unable to reflect upon the pre-egoic, then we must deny the pre-egoic itself, along with the entire attempt at reflection. But this point is lost, of course, on vitalist philosophies that oppose intellect to intuition, framing «der Geist als Widersacher der Seele» [Klages 1960].

If my travel partner now asks me how I imagine this Italy trip, I must re-engage with the underlying thought process, eventually responding, «I've always wanted to visit Naples». We can refer to this interplay between the passive and active levels of experience as «the yo-yo of the ego». The ego must be able to extend into its pre-egoic substrate and then eventually reel itself back in. To sever this tie would be to lose the foundation of its own evidences. A thought without anchoring in a pre-egoic process would be a free-floating Fregean *Gedanke*, achieved in abstraction from the subjectivity that arrives at the thought [cf. EU 37]. This adds a new dimension to the Kantian formula, «Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer», by situating it within a dynamic account of egoic reflection [KrV A48/B75]. We are trying to find out here how new ideas can be injected into the Italy plan. The ego is receding into its underlying associative process, which generates the material for a new statement. But this means that *reflection is of a piece with the actual unfolding of the associative process*, since the effort to listen to oneself is what first initiates this process. The pre-egoic blossoms in the trust that the ego will be able to receive those thoughts. There is a surprising sense, therefore, in which intellect becomes foundational for intuition, not just the other way around.

Psychoanalytic notions like W. Bion's «containment» and D. Winnicott's «holding environment» describe the kind of support needed in human relationships, from infancy to therapy [Winnicott 1945; Bion 1962]. They point to the paradox of «support from above», which makes little physical sense under the laws of gravity. And yet in social life, this is an ordinary dynamic, most evidently in the support parents provide to their children. The «ground» is in the sky, reaching down and flattening its hand into a plateau, like the Big Friendly Giant. But what if a comparable division of roles defines the subject's inner life? That is fundamentally what is already at stake in Freud's so-called «structural

model», according to which the psyche is formed through the internalization of parental relationships [GW XIII, 251ff.]. Freud's model is commonly regarded as speculative, empirical psychology rather than a transcendental theory. And yet a similar line of thought emerges in Husserl's description of the «von Instinkten regierten Entwicklung von der Urkindlichkeit bis zur Weltkonstitution» [Hua XLII, 219]. This *Urkind* is not a developmental stage but a permanent structure: a «transcendental childhood» [Pugliese 2009, 145].

It is a pre-egoic permanence that requires the ego as its support; and if neglected for too long, it may begin to plot its revenge. Horror stories such as *The Ring* allegorize the return of this «inner child», which comes knocking to interrupt the protagonist's sanitized ego. The fresh, clean apartment represents the ego's defensive structure, painful memories swept neatly under the rug. The pre-egoic does not break through this pristine layer out of malice, but from a simple need *to be heard*. But if we listen, what will it say? It is of little use here to oppose «poetic» and «prosaic» speech: that would be a Romantic notion in which the child creates and the adult merely stands by, perhaps only to ensure that it does not paint outside the lines. And if, as W. Wordsworth famously said, «the child is the father of the man», this in fact betrays a certain seriousness on the part of the child. This «little father» may speak with a sense of urgency the adult can only faintly recall. How, then, does the pre-egoic manifest in the egoic if it manages to get through? What is important to remember is that the pre-egoic precisely does not say «I». «L'enfant se fond avec la situation», writes M. Merleau-Ponty [1964, 303]. It includes itself in a situation it takes to be absolute, and hence can never be «egocentric» in the sense often supposed.

We suggest here that language retains a trace of this transition through the preservation of the impersonal verb, as seen in a statement such as «It's raining». The early Husserl made several attempts to reduce this form to a subject–predicate structure [Byrne 2022]. We have already discussed Husserl's view that makes copulation the core business and *Urstruktur* of the λόγος ἀποφαντικός. This treatment is distinct from that of Brentano and A. Marty, who maintained the primitiveness of simple (or «existential») judgments [Marty 1894; cf. Funke 1924, 51]. A tension thus arises between the simplicity of «It's raining» and the introduction of a subject, such that «Zeus is making it rain». And

this tension is mirrored in the statement by Schelling quoted at the start: «Es denkt in mir, es wird in mir gedacht». Even more radical on this point is an aphorism by G. Lichtenberg: «*Es denkt*, sollte man sagen, so wie man sagt: *es blitzt*. Zu sagen *cogito*, ist schon zu viel, sobald man es durch Ich denke übersetzt» [Lichtenberg 1971, 411]. But this would imply that I am not the one who is thinking, so that the most one could say is that «thought is going on». Perhaps it was this concern with the thinking subject that motivated Husserl to grant primacy to the subject–predicate structure. Or perhaps the existential judgment, an «is» without copulation, was deceptively simple and not to be trusted.

More promising in this regard is L. Vygotsky's account of «inner speech» (внутренняя речь) as a predicate-only, abbreviated form of thought [Vygotsky 1986, 236]. On this solution, the subject remains implicit while being tacitly carried along. As in a compressed WinRAR file, the currently invisible subject can be unpacked at any moment. The subject pops up, like a jack-in-the-box. But doesn't Freud's notion of the «id» (*das Es*), borrowed from G. Groddeck, point in the same direction [GW XIII, 251]? For we are used to thinking of the id and the ego as oppositional forces, even though the id is developmentally the ancestor of the ego: «das Ich muß entwickelt werden; die autoerotischen Triebe sind aber uranfänglich» [GW X, 142]. If we think the matter through, the id's organization does begin to resemble Brentano's simple judgment, which does not respect the distinction between subject and object; all that matters is that «it's raining». No distinction is drawn here between the perceived and the perceiver. This is similar to a dream, in which the dreamer is not represented as such but coincides with the dream itself.

What is the subjective status of the impersonal sentence? Why is «It's raining» a sentence but «raining» just a word, lacking the dummy or expletive «it»? We have suggested that this facet of grammar must be connected to the interplay of the egoic and the pre-egoic. It is through an act of «secondary revision» that the pre-egoic thought process is molded into a subject–predicate structure. While this entails a deformation of the original process, it is necessary for producing a proposition that can be submitted to the judgment of others. What appears as a deformation from one point of view, however, is sublimation from another. We are raised to produce full sentences, just as a child is raised to eat its vegetables, or to

ask «Can I have a glass of water?» instead of just exclaiming «Water!» The former statement introduces the «I», whereas the latter absolutizes its situation. But at the same time, the inarticulate remains a permanent structure that can never be assimilated into the egoic, for in such a case we would have only communication and no longer the underlying thought process: «Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer». Abolishing intuition ultimately means abolishing intellect as well, reducing it to «empty speech» (*parole vide*), an endless stream of *Gerede*.

5. Declaration on Afterwardness

We begin to see why the concept of *Nachträglichkeit* ought to be recognized as a *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον*. For there is, on the one hand, the self-corrective movement of temporal flow, driven by the demand for coherent meaning, and, on the other hand, the afterwardness of the ego in relation to the pre-egoic process. There is, in other words, *Rücksicht* in the pre-egoic, and there is an interplay between the egoic and the pre-egoic (*sekundäre Bearbeitung*). We have not even begun to consider, in the small space allotted to us by the gods, whether there is a higher level that in turn supports both the pre-egoic and the egoic, although Husserl certainly pointed in this direction. It is the level of «comprehensive thought» (*das begreifende Denken*) that comes to attain primacy, not chronologically but logically [EU 381; cf. Hua XXXI, 69]. We wanted to preserve this thought for the end, more as a cliffhanger than as a concluding summary. We also underline the concept of the *Über-Ich* in Freud and how well it dovetails with all these additional concerns. We recall, moreover, that Freud originally referred to it as the *Ich-Ideal*, which brings the concept into closer proximity to the eidetic realm envisioned by Husserl [GW XIII, 256].

When it comes to the interplay of the egoic and the pre-egoic, afterwardness should not be conceived on the model of a wall painter or plumber returning to correct a poor job. The pre-egoic is not a sloppier version of the egoic; to think so would be to misunderstand its functioning. *The pre-egoic is an anticipation of the egoic*. The pre-egoic is not an Augean stable into which Hercules suddenly intrudes to clean up the mess; it is not an external realm but part of the

ego's own personality. When you were young, you left your dirty socks lying around your room not out of a desire to create disorder, but in the expectation that someone else would pick them up; in time, that other person became *you*. Many have succumbed, not least Freud himself, to the temptation to hypostatize a will to disorder. To the Dionysian in F. Nietzsche, or to A. Schopenhauer's Will, corresponds the Freudian *Todestrieb*. Thus, the pre-egoic is projected outward and construed as a separate force attacking the ego, much like the monster in a child's drawing. This exercise in splitting may seem like a necessary step for the ego to assert its independence, but it is ultimately futile, as the pre-egoic must in the end be integrated («listened to»).

Perhaps we should conclude by asking: who, exactly, is being yo-yoed here? Is it the ego letting loose, opening a window for five minutes to let in some fresh air? Or is the pre-egoic yo-yoing its ego: playing with its food, drawing on the wall to provoke its wrath? Does the yo-yo belong to the ego, or is it the other way around? We think back to the game of a boy named Ernst, a name that means «seriousness» [GW XIII, 12]. Freud thought that Ernst threw the wooden toy out and reeled it back in as a way of mastering the distress caused by his mother's absence. On a deeper level, however, the toy represents not just the mother but Ernst himself: the toy is the child at the mother's mercy, whereas the child occupies the position of a «mother» in control. The paradox of self-control, however, is that the controlling agent is not itself controlled, yet the price paid is complete subjugation. The question of «who is in control», or «who is being yo-yoed», can be posed only from a pre-egoic angle, as the division and strife that anticipates the ἀπόφανσις. Strictly speaking, the ego *has* no yo-yo; it is not control but *reflection*. Precisely in order to think clearly, it must allow the associative flow to vent its anger without attempting to restrain it. But for some reason, the most apt metaphor I could find to describe this tolerance is the masterful act of letting the yo-yo spin. Perhaps this is simply how the child in me sees it, transfiguring even relaxation into mastery over an object.

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Keywords

Genetic Phenomenology; Pre-egoic Experience; Afterwardness (Nachträglichkeit); Passivity and Activity; Apophantic Judgment

Abstract

This paper develops an account of genetic phenomenology that clarifies the relation between pre-egoic experience, egoic reflection and linguistic articulation. While Husserl characterizes genetic phenomenology as an inquiry into the radically pre-egoic, the thoughts thus discovered are nevertheless invariably my own. The ego is considered here not as the totality of subjectivity, but as an instance that emerges to reflect on the pre-egoic flow. The ego receives passive thoughts after the fact and integrates them into its own sphere of activity, translating loose associations into determinate thoughts. Such retroactive integration of the pre-egoic into the egoic must be distinguished,

however, from the kind of afterwardness that operates within passivity itself, without the ego's intervention. We link these two forms of afterwardness to two mechanisms Freud identified as responsible for the dream-work: secondary revision and the regard for representability. Within the buildup of passive experience, there is already an internal corrective that shapes loose events into a more or less coherent narrative.

The transition from pre-predicative intuition to apophantic judgment is then analyzed as an internal transformation of thought rather than its mere external expression. Language plays a constitutive role in this movement by objectifying thought into subject-predicate form. In pre-egoic thought, the ego is not absent but implicit, and must be made manifest. Ultimately, this is less a dynamic of intervention than one in which reflection gathers pre-egoic thought back into itself, so as not to oppose but rather to contain its own opposite.

Questo articolo sviluppa una descrizione della fenomenologia genetica che chiarisce la relazione tra esperienza pre-egoica, riflessione egoica e articolazione linguistica. Sebbene Husserl caratterizzi la fenomenologia genetica come un'indagine sul radicalmente pre-egoico, i pensieri così scoperti sono comunque invariabilmente miei. L'ego è qui considerato non come la totalità della soggettività, ma come un'istanza che emerge per riflettere sul flusso pre-egoico. L'ego riceve pensieri passivi a posteriori e li integra nella propria sfera di attività, traducendo associazioni vaghe in pensieri determinati. Tale integrazione retroattiva del pre-egoico nell'egoico deve tuttavia essere distinta dal tipo di posteriorità che opera all'interno della passività stessa, senza l'intervento dell'ego. Colleghiamo queste due forme di posteriorità a due meccanismi che Freud ha identificato come responsabili del processo onirico: la revisione secondaria e la considerazione della rappresentabilità. Nell'accumulo di esperienze passive, esiste già una correzione interna che modella eventi vaghi in una narrazione più o meno coerente. Il passaggio dall'intuizione pre-predicativa al giudizio apofantico viene quindi analizzato come una trasformazione interna del pensiero piuttosto che come una sua mera espressione esterna. Il linguaggio svolge un ruolo costitutivo in questo movimento, oggettivando il pensiero nella forma soggetto-predicato. Nel pensiero pre-egoico, l'ego non è assente ma implicito, e deve essere reso manifesto. In definitiva, si tratta meno di una dinamica di intervento che di una dinamica in cui la riflessione riassorbe il pensiero pre-egoico in sé stessa, in modo da non opporsi ma piuttosto contenere il proprio opposto.

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