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The unity argument: Phenomenology's departure from Kant

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Abstract

Phenomenology questions the centrality that Kant attributes to the "I think." It claims that on the pre-reflective level experience is selfless as unity is given. I call this the "unity argument." The paper explores the significance of this claim by focusing on the work of Edmund Husserl. What interests me is that although the unity argument claims that we can account for the unity of experience without appealing to the an "I think," Husserl agrees with Kant that experience must be owned. Moreover, he endorses Kant's dictum that 'the "I think" must be capable of accompanying all my presentations'. The aim of the paper is to explore how Husserl can consistently appeal to Kant's account of the "I think" and at the same time contend that on the pre-reflective level experience is selfless. The thesis I wish to advance is that although the unity argument acknowledges that experience is necessarily mine, it reveals that it is a necessary feature of self-reference that I have never taken absolute ownership over my experience. This may explain why our sense of self can often be out of tune with the way we live our lives.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Within the phenomenological tradition there is a strong sense that pre-reflective experience questions the centrality that Kant attributes to the "I think" or self.[1] This is especially the case when it comes to phenomenology's founding figures. They argue that what defines pre-reflective experience is that it is not self-directed but directed to the

world. It is 'translucent' (see Sartre, 1960, p. 41). Part of the impetus that drives these thinkers is their belief that the function or role that Kant attributes to the "I think"—namely, its capacity to synthesize, that is, to bind together one representation with another—is superfluous.

The claim is that experience does not need to be synthesized as we experience, or better, perceive the relations representations have to one another. When we listen to music, for instance, we do not hear individual notes that we need to bind together. We hear a melody. The same holds when we perceive objects: we do not arrive at the concept of a unitary object by adding up the different perspectives that we have of one and the same object over time, but we necessarily perceive (in one flash) a unitary object as soon as we perceive it from a particular angle. Indeed, the argument is that all our conscious experience is necessarily unified. In the same way as I cannot but see a unitary object, I cannot but see objects in relation to other objects which I necessarily see as being part of a unitary world. Unity is not a result of the combination of its parts. So while Kant asserts that "we cannot represent to ourselves anything as combined in the object which we have not ourselves previously combined" (CPR B130), phenomenologists maintain that we perceive objects as combined. Synthesis, in other words, no longer indicates that it "can be brought about by the subject alone, because it is an act of self-activity" (CPR B130, translation slightly altered) but synthesis can be passive (cf. Hua XI). I shall call the argument whereby the unity of experience is given without the impetus of the "I think" the "unity argument".[2]

For the purpose of this paper, I shall focus on the work of Edmund Husserl to explore the significance of the claim that unity is given.[3] In general, Husserl's position with respect to Kant is characterized in the following way: The unity argument shows that the function and role of the "I think" is redundant, as a result Husserl initially advanced what Aaron Gurwitsch calls the non-egological view of consciousness (Gurwitsch, 1941, p. 326). Namely, the view that experience "belongs to no-one" (Husserl, 1997, Sec 13, p. 41/34). However, after a detailed engagement with Kant and neo-Kantians, Husserl concluded that he had been mistaken. Experience must be egological after all. The impetus for this change of heart lies partly in the fact that Husserl realized that we cannot give an adequate account of self-attribution if experience belongs to no-one.[4] Were experience not owned, we would not be able to attribute experiences reliably to ourselves. It is the problem of self-attribution that leads Husserl to endorse a version of Kant's dictum that "[t]he 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all my presentations" (Hua III Sec .57, pp. 109–10/132–33). For Husserl, this means that there must be an "I" or "Ego" that is conscious of the unity of experience, which is not identical with the unity.[5]

This presentation of Husserl is not very controversial.[6] However, where the claim gets contentious is in assessing what exactly Husserl's "egological turn," and his endorsement of Kant, involves. Many contemporary phenomenologists spearheaded by the work of Dan Zahavi, believe it leads Husserl to argue that we must operate with a sense of ownership, even on the pre-reflective level, however minimally conceived (Drummond, 2021; Jacobs, 2016a, 2016b; Zahavi, 2011, 2014). Elsewhere I have questioned this view (Alweiss, 2022), arguing that even when Husserl endorses the egological view of consciousness, he upholds the claim that experience is translucent and involves no self-referring thought whatsoever. On the pre-reflective level experience is mine but nonetheless selfless as I have not yet ascribed experience to myself. The aim of this paper is to develop this argument by exploring how Husserl can consistently maintain that experience is egological and, indeed, appeal to Kant's account of the "I think" to develop this claim, but at the same time contend that on the pre-reflective level experience is selfless. The thesis I wish to advance is that although the unity argument acknowledges that experience is necessarily mine, it reveals that it is a necessary feature of self-reference that I have never taken absolute ownership over my experience. This, I believe, may explain why our sense of self can often be out of tune with the way we live our lives.

2 | KANT: A PROTO-PHENOMENOLOGIST?

Although Husserl realizes that experience must be egological, he never questions the unity argument. He holds fast to the view that the ego has no explanatory power of experience: unity is given and not brought about by the "I

think." So, the claim that experience is necessarily mine should not be confused with the assumption that an ego needs to account for the unity of experience. When Husserl thus concurs with Kant that "[t]he 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all my presentations" (Hua III: Sec 57, pp. 109–10/132–33), he adopts only one aspect of Kant, namely the observation that all experience must belong to one and the same subject. Kant calls this the "original-synthetic unity of apperception" (SUA) (cf. B133n). All that this claim involves is that experience must be subject to the general form of reflexivity (cf. Kraus, 2020, p. 115): it must be mine.[7] But Husserl does not adopt the second aspect of Kant, namely the view that "something can only be an object for me" (CPR B138) when I am conscious of myself as an identical selfunifying or synthesizing my representations.[8] Kant calls this consciousness of myself as an identical self over time, the "analytic unity of apperception" (AUA) (CPR B133). The unity argument thus questions what I would like to call Kant's "reciprocity thesis" namely, the assumption (or what Kant treats as an analytic "truism") that representations only function as representation for me, if I am conscious of them as mine, that is, conscious of having synthesized them through the use of concepts in judgment (see CPR A68-9/B93-4).[9]

But at first sight it may appear questionable whether we should refer to a departure from Kant. After all, it seems that Kant also treats the synthetic unity of apperception, the fact that all representations are mine, as distinct from the analytic unity of apperception. In view of this, he does not seem to endorse the reciprocity thesis. Indeed, Kant only argues that the "'I think' *must be able* to accompany all my representations" (CRP B131, emphasis added) and does not claim that it *de facto* accompanies them. Kant's position does not sound that different from that of Husserl. He also argues that experience must be structured in such a way that self-ascription is possible, that is, it must be mine (SUA). But this does not seem to commit him to the view that we have already ascribed it to an "I think." This, indeed, is a line of interpretation that Jean-Paul Sartre pursues in the *Transcendence of the Ego* (Sartre, 1960). Rather than understanding phenomenology as departing from Kant, he contends that we should see Kant as providing the path to phenomenology (see Sartre, 1960, p. 35).[10]

There is some justification for this interpretation. Kant does, indeed, treat the synthetic unity of apperception as distinct from the analytic one (see CPR B133; Sartre, 1960, p. 34). Moreover, he argues that the representation of the synthetic unity "cannot […] arise out of combination" (CPR B131) but makes the spontaneous act of combining possible. It is therefore not surprising that Sartre comes to argue that Kant provides the way to phenomenology, given that Kant seems to endorse the unity argument: The "I think" does not contribute to the SUA, rather the unity of consciousness is what makes it possible for the self-same "I think" to accompany all my conscious representations, that is, it makes self-ascription possible. Sartre's observation seems justified: Kant would agree with phenomenology that the "I" does not "*in fact* inhabit[..] all our states of consciousness and [does not] actually effect[..] the supreme synthesis of our experience" (Sartre, 1960, p. 32).

But this has to be read with caution. We should not forget for Kant the SUA is not only the enabling condition for an "I think" but, moreover, for cognition [*Erkenntnis*][11] (see CPR B138). Kant does not claim, as Sartre suggests, that my experience is already meaningful, rich and structured, but the argument is that it is only possible to have meaningful experience if it is structured in such a way that it can "fit" the categories. The original SUA is thus prior to any particular act of combination by means of the categories. It provides the structure that makes it possible for me to categorize the given, but as long as the categories are not employed, I cannot cognise something as unified. The synthetic unity of apperception is thus an enabling condition for the "I think" to "cognise something as an object" (CPR A92/B125 translation slightly altered) but as long as it is not accompanied by an "I think," the representations remain meaningless, cognitively speaking. The synthetic unity of apperception thus does not only provide the ground for self-ascription (as Sartre claims) but it also provides the general condition for referentiality,[12] it makes it possible for me both to recognize experience as my own and to cognise something as an object (see Kraus, 2020, §3.4.2). This leads Kant to articulate the reciprocity thesis namely, the view that experience can only be for me if it is recognized as mine (see CPR A96ff).

A closer look at the A version of the CPR illustrates best why this is so. Here, Kant explains that we can only cognise something as an object if three forms of syntheses are in place: Kant begins with the assumption that when I count, draw a line in thought or see a box from different angles, I refer to consecutive acts. I add one unit after the other. Kant calls this the "synthesis of apprehension." Contrary to phenomenology, Kant is thus committed to a form

of data sensualism:[13] he believes that whatever is given appears in time but is essentially unconnected (see CPR A97). However, the problem is that I can only refer to consecutive acts, if I do not only experience one moment after the other *in time* but also experience them *as temporal*. This is because I can only refer to a continuity of perceptions if I can see each moment in relation to the previous one. What is required is the "synthesis of reproduction": I must be able to reinstate previous perceptions. Kant attributes this to the capacity of the imagination, namely, our ability to present directly a sensory content that is not presently being apprehended (see CPR B151), be it the previous units when we count, or previous points when we draw a line in thought.[14]

Important for my analysis is that Kant realizes that these two syntheses taken by themselves do not provide cognition. The problem is that it is not sufficient that all these moments are present to one and the same subject (SUA), but I must also recognize that these subjective representations are of one and the same object. What is required is a third synthesis: the "synthesis of recognition." I need to recognize how these representations hang together. Namely, that they are not arbitrarily assorted but all necessarily refer to one and the same object, be it that we see the different perspectives of the box as part of the identical box or the dots on the line as part of the line. The concept of the box or line structures the way the different perspectives of the box or dots on the line are being combined. It provides the rule that structures or orders my experience.

For Kant, the synthesis of recognition is central for cognition. It provides the grounding for the other two syntheses. Indeed, Kant claims that without the concept "all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain" (CPR A103, translation slightly altered). That is, without the recognition of the rule (or concept), I would not recognize how all these moments are necessarily connected and thus would not recognize, for example, that the different sides of a cube are of one and the same object. More generally speaking, without the synthesis of recognition, I would not recognize something as an object and my experience would have no cognitive import whatsoever.[15] This is why Kant believes that I cannot ("blindly") intuit unity but I must be self-conscious, that is, I must recognize the rule (or concept) that allows for the combination of its parts.

This is how Kant arrives at the reciprocity thesis. Experience can only be meaningful for me if it is recognized as mine (see CPR A96ff) because I must be able to recognize that I combine these different moments (which are in each case mine) according to a rule. This is why the "I think" is central for cognition for Kant. The claim is that we cannot recognize something as an object without being conscious of the steps we have taken and thus without being able to recognize the rules that have led us to bring about the unity. The point is not that the "I think" must be able to accompany all my representations but it must accompany all of them because only by synthesizing them do I recognize something as an object. This is why Kant believes that, without the "I think," "the representation would be impossible or at least would be nothing to me" (CPR B131-32).[16]

3 | PERCEPTION AND JUDGMENT

Phenomenology departs from Kant insofar as it argues that experience has (as Heidegger aptly put it) a certain "as structure" without any input of the "I think."[17] It thus questions the reciprocity thesis: it shows that experience can be mine (SUA) and meaningful for me without recognizing it as mine (AUA). This is the unity argument.

Phenomenology questions the reciprocity thesis on two fronts. First, by showing that perceptual experience is not grounded in judgment (1) and second, by arguing that judgment, taken by itself, is not a form of self-consciousness (2). Let me look at them in turn.

3.1 | Perceptual Experience is not grounded in Judgment

Phenomenology is a descriptive method. It argues that if we describe the manner in which phenomena constitute themselves, without presupposing in advance that what is given is impoverished and "blind," (CPR A21/ B35) then

we realize that phenomena constitute themselves exactly in the way as Kant describes them: We can only see a side of a box if we see it in relation to other possible perspectives and we can only see different perspectives in relation to one another because we see them as perspectives of one and the same box. Husserl would thus argue that Kant's three syntheses merely illustrate how experience is necessarily intentional, guided by a "fundamental form of synthesis, namely identification" (CM Section 19: 79, see Alweiss, 2023a). But for this no judgment, and thereby no synthesis of recognition, is required because the concepts, rules, and structures (the synthesis of identification) are operative within the given or, as Strawson aptly puts it, "given with the given" (Strawson, 2011, p. 47; cf. Alweiss, 2023b). We see the unity of an object in one flash.

The problem is that Kant assumes that whatever is given is necessarily particular and unconnected. As a result, he fails to describe what shows itself. Indeed, Kant's argument is "regressive" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. 44). He starts with experience and then asks how it is possible to account for it (see CPR B1). This leads him to articulate the reciprocity thesis, namely, the view that "I could not possibly apprehend anything as existing unless I first of all experience myself as existing in the act of apprehending it" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. x). But what Kant forgets is that he can only account for experience if he operates with the assumption that experience is meaningful. In other words, he seeks to prove what he already understands pre-reflectively. Without such an understanding any search would be in vain (cf. Heidegger, 1962: Section 2; Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. 28). The criticism is that Kant's transcendental approach (asking for the conditions of possibility of experience) loses sight of its own beginning "and offers, in place of an account, a reconstruction" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002b, p. x).

The unity argument reverses the order of description. Perceptual experience is not judgment (see Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. 48). The world is not an object whose laws of constitution must be read back into our synthetic activity; rather, the world, and so the given, are already infused with meaning. As Merleau-Ponty puts it aptly: "Instead of begetting […] the object, [phenomenology] brings to light its fundamental unity" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. x). We realize as much if we do not attempt to reconstruct what was given all along, but remain with the given and describe how it unfolds itself as structured. The unity argument thus questions the reciprocity thesis: we experience the world as structured without needing to appeal to the "I think" that is without reflective thought or judgment (see Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. 48).

3.2 | Judgment taken by itself is not a form of Self-Consciousness

The unity argument further questions whether judgment itself is necessarily a form of self-consciousness. For Kant it is. There is no judgment without an understanding of myself as the self who is making the judgment. As Sasha Golob notes: "judgment consists in taking on a series of commitments, in Kantian terms, [it means] giving myself rules: To judge that 'if p then q', as opposed to simply parroting out the words, is to understand myself as committed to various inferences (CPR A104–46)" (Golob, 2021, pp. 274–275). In short, when I judge I am not only conscious of what I am judging, but I am conscious that I am judging, asserting, claiming something and have reasons to do so. I am self-conscious, that is, conscious of the reasons that have led me to the judgment (cf. Rödl, 2018).

Let me illustrate why the unity argument questions this view by drawing on Sartre's example of counting cigarettes:

> If I count the cigarettes which are in that case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: they are a dozen. This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting. […] at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity. If anyone questioned me, indeed, if anyone should ask, "What are you doing there?" I should reply at once, "I am counting." This reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but at

> those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not-reflected-on in my immediate past. Thus reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito.
>
> (Sartre, 2003, p. 9)

The passage suggests that I can pre-reflectively count and thus combine different moments in a lawful manner. The point is that Sartre neither has paid attention to his activity, nor is he conscious of the rule that he is applying. He is simply, or, as we may wish to say, "mindlessly" counting. He is conscious of counting without being conscious of himself as a self who is applying certain rules (say "+1") to experience.

Kant would not be entirely adverse to this account. He acknowledges that when I count it is possible that I am only faintly conscious of the steps I am taking (see CPR A103-4), but he insists that when I arrive at the judgment "there are a dozen cigarettes," I must be conscious of having carried out certain operations (e.g., adding units) according to such a rule ("+1"), as it is only on the basis that I am conscious of having carried out these steps according to such rules that I can arrive at this judgment. In other words, when I judge, I not only judge for reasons but I am consciousness of those reasons as reasons. (cf. Kitcher, 2017, p. 162).

Thus, Kant would argue that for Sartre to know that there are 12 cigarettes, he must recognize the rules as rules (i.e., how he arrived at the number 12). This is because when we judge, we employ rules and are conscious of having applied rules which allow us to arrive at our judgments. We become aware of this when we are asked how we arrived at our judgment. It is then that we are able provide reasons, for example, make inferences (mostly in a non-philosophical way). But this means that we were conscious of those reasons as reasons all along, even if we did not pay attention to them.[18]

But does this really reflect our experience? It seems a rather tall order to assume that when I see a box from various angles, or draw a line in thought, that I have, even if only implicitly recognized the rules that have made cognition possible (synthesis of recognition). It is here that the unity argument gains momentum. It warns against any form of what Tyler Burge aptly calls "hyper-intellectualizing" (Burge, 2013, p. 26ff). That is the danger of attributing to the cognitive subject something that is part of a philosophical account of the cognising subject which however does not seem to reflect how we actually do experience things. That I can justify how I arrived at certain observations when I reflect does not prove that a rudimentary form of justification is already in place on the pre-reflective level.

Sartre seems to acknowledge this when he says that when I am asked what I am doing the "reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but [also, LA] at those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not-reflected-on in my immediate past." (Sartre, 2003, p. 9). I am able to retrace my steps, and the fact that I can retrace them, means that they were mine all along (SUA).[19] But, and this is where the unity argument departs from Kant, this does not mean that I have ascribed them to myself and have been conscious of these rules as rules all along (AUA). On the contrary, the unity argument claims that we can follow rules blindly (cf. Wittgenstein, 1953, §219) without endorsing and recognizing them as the right way of reasoning.

4 | FOLLOWING RULES

I believe that Sartre's example of counting suggests that Kant is missing a step. There is a difference between having a propositional thought or making the judgment that "there are 12 cigarettes" and regarding myself bound by this judgment. As Sartre says in the above passage, when I am "mindlessly" counting, the number 12 "presents itself as an 'objective property'" (Sartre, 2003, p. 9). I take this to mean that I can naturally be conscious "that there are twelve cigarettes" without regarding myself as committed to the reasons that led me to that judgment. "Mindless"

here does not mean that there are no reasons, or, that Sartre's activity was a matter of chance, but the claim is that experience is infused with intelligibility and reasons which I have not yet attributed to myself. I believe this is what Sartre has in mind when he says that "pre-reflective cogito is the condition of the Cartesian cogito" (i.e., reflection) (see Sartre, 2003, p. 9).[20]

When Sartre claims that we can pre-reflectively count, I read him as saying that often we make judgments such as "$2 + 2 = 4$" or that "π is an irrational number," without identifying ourselves with the reason. Neither do I regard myself necessarily as committed to these judgments, nor do I recognize them as the right way of reasoning. I am merely judging in accordance to rules. There is no awareness, not even an implicit one, of the rule as a rule. My thought in these instances may have been just as little self-referring as it is when I am engrossed in reading a novel.

The problem is that Kant interprets judgments as a form of conscious commitment, namely as the recognition of the right way of reasoning. When we judge we do not only entertain a proposition, but Kant believes that judgment is an act that involves the taking of an attitude regarding the truth of the proposition. He thus believes that every judgment necessarily has a modality and the suggestion seems to be that as soon as there is an attitude, we are conscious of ourselves as selves committed to the judgment in a particular way. In other words, when I judge, I judge for reasons and am as a result conscious of these reasons as reasons. This leads Kant to assume that all my judgments are necessarily inferentially related as they all form part of my course of reasoning. As every judgment is not only mine (SUA) but recognized as mine (AUA), I necessarily regard myself as committed to all my judgments and recognize a necessary connections between my judgments.[21]

But phenomenology thinks otherwise. We can make judgments without regarding ourselves as selves committed to the judgments in a particular way. We thus do not necessarily regard all judgments as inferentially related and as part of our course of reasoning. Indeed, phenomenology claims that any "'theory of judgment'" or better, any purely phenomenological characterization of the judgment, which identifies its peculiar quality with an assent or acceptance, or a denial or rejection, of some presented state of affairs (or of some presented object in general), is not on the right path (Husserl, 1970, Volume II, V Section 29: 142). First and foremost, judging is not, as Kant seems to suggest, a matter of evaluation but judgment is about the content of one's judgment. Judgments present us with states of affairs that are open to approval or assent.

Phenomenology thus argues that assertoric judgments taken by themselves are not evaluative. When I judge "S is p," I do not regard myself as committed to various inferences. Something additional is required for this to happen: there must be a need to justify my judgment. This need only arises when something goes wrong or when something is put into question, or when we feel that we may be held accountable. Judgments are a form of self-consciousness only if we regard them as problematic and are forced to take an evaluative stance. It is then that we evaluate the reasons and as a result regard ourselves as selves committed to the judgment in a particularly way.[22]

This shows that judgments are only a form of self-consciousness when they are what Kant calls "problematic." According to Kant, a problematic judgment "is thought only as an optional judgment, which it is possible to assume" (CPR A75/B10). Problematic judgments thus understood evaluate the validity of our judgments. They force us to commit ourselves in one way or another. As Husserl puts it, when judgments are problematic, we realize we need take a critical attitude (*Stellungnahme*).[23] Problematic judgments do not contradict assertoric judgments, but they put them into question and force us to assume a *point of view*; I either endorse or reject a judgment. Phenomenology thus claims (contrary to Kant) that in assertoric judgment I just take it that "S is p"; it is only when a judgment is problematic that I am concerned about the possibility or impossibility that "S is p," and it is only then that I must make a choice either to commit to the truth of "S is p" or to suspend my commitment to the truth of "S is p." In other words, it is only when a judgment is problematic that I understand myself as a self committed to the inference.

I believe this is why Aristotle contrasts virtue as a *hexis meta tou orthou logou*, a habit to act with the right concept, with a *hexis kata ton orthon logon*, a habit to act in a manner that fits the right concept (cf. Aristotle, 1983, 1144b, 25–27; translation altered).[24] For Kant, a habit to act with the right concept, just is a habit to act in a manner that fits the right concept. But Husserl has shown that this is not the case. On the pre-reflective level, we have the habit of judging and acting with the right concept without evaluating if we are acting in the right way. We thus do

not regard ourselves as committed to various inferences and recognize them as the right way of reasoning. This is why we do not judge or act self-consciously, that is, with an understanding of judging and acting in the right way. It is only when judgments are problematic, that I not only act in accordance with the right logos but I act self-consciously; that is, I act in a manner knowing that it fits the right reasons.[25]

As Husserl has it, it is therefore one thing to follow rules and quite another to endorse them consciously, or to recognize the rules as rules. We can follow rules of logic in the same way as an artist can create beautiful works of art. Each is possible without having recourse to logic or knowledge of aesthetics respectively (Husserl, 1970, Volume I, Prolegomenon, Chapter 3, Sec. 19: p. 44).[26] To endorse the rules, I first need to recognize the rules as rules. It is only then that I no longer simply act according to rules but for rules (ibid.), or to follow Steven Crowell's wording: I no longer act in accord with norms but act in light of them (Crowell, 2013, p. 195). Acting in light of them means to identify myself with the reasons why it is right to be committed to this judgment in a particular way.

To quote Christopher Peacocke out of context, phenomenology thus shows that "[w]e need to distinguish two different ways in which I can "account for my reasons". The first would be binding my representations in a way that is reason-sensitive. The second would be: binding my representations in a way that involves at each step, my explicitly attributing to myself reasons for so binding them" (Peacocke, 2019, p. 743). Pre-reflective experience is reason-sensitive. This means I am not yet conscious of the rules as rules. I only act in accordance to the rules, but I do not consciously endorse them and identify myself with the reasons why it is right to be thus committed. To put it otherwise, pre-reflective experience furnishes us with "the text which our knowledge tries to translate into precise language" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002a, p. 20). There is thus a form of "comprehension" in place that precedes reflection. Or as Ludwig Wittgenstein observes fittingly: "any kind of explanation of a language presupposes a language already" (Wittgenstein, 1975, Section 6, p. 54).[27]

Phenomenology tells us that this is true about all experience. We only ascribe reasons to ourselves when experience is problematic. It can problematic in various ways: One is when we are held accountable and need to justify our actions or form of reasoning. Another is when perceptual experience questions our expectations, as in the case of illusions or hallucinations, or when things simply go wrong or "break down" (Heidegger, 1962, Sec. 16ff).[28] In each of these instances, we can no longer act "blindly" according to the rules that structure our experience, but we become aware of the rules as rules. We see a need to take a stance and endorse the rules as rules. It is then, and only then, that we are conscious of ourselves as selves, namely conscious of ourselves as (freely) committing ourselves to certain judgments, actions or our take on the world.[29] In a nutshell, my experience may well be lawful and reasonable, but this in itself does not mean that I am self-conscious in the Kantian sense and see myself as a self committed to this form of reasoning.

5 | THE EGO AND MY EGO

Contrary to Kant, Husserl thus believes that we only regard *those* judgments as part of our course of reasoning which we have endorsed in one way or another. But for this to be possible, judgments first need to present us with states of affairs that are open to approval or assent. Endorsement is thus a second-order act. We can now understand why Husserl questions the reciprocity thesis. The argument is that the "I think" (AUA) is not identical with the Ego that accompanies all my representations (SUA). Husserl expresses as much when he argues that we should not confuse the "I think" with the Ego pole, pure Ego or "I." The pure Ego refers to the synthetic unity of apperception, it expresses the mere fact that experience is reflexive: It is in "relation to me" (Hua III: Sec 56), and "nothing more" (Hua III: Sec 80: p. 191/161). Nothing more here means without any self-ascription (AUA). The pure Ego which accompanies all my representation in this sense is an empty accompaniment of every thought or experience, it is self-less as it does not entail self-ascription. We should therefore not confuse the formal identity of the Ego qua Ego pole (SUA) with the self (AUA). As Husserl says tellingly in an unpublished manuscript, "I-pole is not I."[30]

As we have shown above, I only become conscious of myself as a self (AUA) when I become conscious of myself as an Ego that is committed to judgments and experiences in a particular way. The "I think" is to this extent personal: It does not refer to our capacity to make judgments as such (i.e., the pure Ego) but to the *de jure*—both the commitment and recognition of the right way of reasoning (the personal Ego). This is why Husserl insists that I can repeatedly make an identical judgment about a certain state of affairs, without regarding it as an enduring feature of my thinking as such (see Husserl, 2020, pp. 341–342),[31] or as part of my course of reasoning. Judgments are only enduring and shape my course of reasoning when I have evaluated them as the right form of reasoning. Contrary to Kant, phenomenology thus argues that I do not regard myself as committed to all my judgments. I do not understand *all* my judgments as inferentially related. On the contrary, I only regard those judgments as part of my course of reasoning which I have consciously endorsed in one way or another. It is thus not the pure Ego but only the personal Ego that presents me with an "abiding property" (CM IV, Sec 32: p. 100/66). Husserl refers to the personal Ego as having a "substrate of habitualities" (CM IV, Sec 32: p. 100/66). What Husserl has in mind here is the abiding habit or disposition to act in a manner that fits my particular commitments. It refers, to return to Aristotle's definition of virtue, to a habit to act in a manner that fits the right concept. Namely, the abiding habit or disposition to act in a manner that fits my commitments which I have freely endorsed.

The reference to habits is helpful here. On the pre-reflective level, we also refer to habits which are formed passively. These refer to what Aristotle calls the habit to act with the right concept without regarding ourselves as committed to these habits. We are referring to selfless habits as we are acting and judging "blindly" or "mindlessly" insofar as we do not count these habits as an "enduring feature of our thinking as such." This is why pre-reflective habits are owned (SUA), but not yet recognize as owned (AUA). We do not regard them as inferentially related to our course of reasoning.

This leads Husserl to argue that there are distinct habits pertaining to the "I think" that should not be confused with the passively endorsed habits that define pre-reflective experience. The habits pertaining to the "I think" are what we may wish to call "intellectual habits" that fit the right concept. These habits involve what Husserl calls "a conviction in the proper sense." They are based on the decisions I have freely made. They refer to the reasons which I choose to adopt (cf. Hua IV: Sec 59: p. 255/267) which, as a result, manifest abiding habits or dispositions that fit my course of reasoning. When Husserl says that "I think" has a certain substrate of habitualities, the claim is thus that the choices I have freely made become sedimented and constitute me as a "fixed and abiding personal Ego" (CM IV, Sec 32: p. 101/67), an "Ego who is thus and so decided" (ibid.). We are referring to habits which form an "enduring feature of our thinking as such" (AUA).

The personal ego thus has a certain history. Each time when I reflect, I understand myself as a self that is committed to the decisions and judgments I have freely endorsed in the past. It refers to the "I think" (AUA), that is conscious of itself as an identical self committed to its judgments and actions. What makes the self distinctive, indeed, is our capacity to remember. The memory in question is of a peculiar kind. It is not about the ability to recall what I did in the past, or my ability to memorize facts. Both of them can be exercised without being conscious of myself as self. The memory that is distinctive of the self is, to borrow an expression from Burge, a "preservative one" (cf. Burge, 2017); that is, it refers to the capacity preserve our commitments to a certain course of reasoning and, indeed, a certain take on the world. This constitutes the abiding habit (substrate of habitualities) that inheres in the self that makes me conscious of being "one and the same" (CPR B 132) subject over time. (cf. CM IV, Sec 32).[32]

6 | THE PERSONAL SELF AND THE LIFE WE LIVE

We can now understand how Husserl can consistently claim that pre-reflective experience is both mine and selfless. It is selfless because I have not yet ascribed judgments and experiences to myself and claimed ownership. I believe this has repercussions as to how we should understand the self (i.e., my personal Ego) in relation to the life I live (which is mine but not necessarily recognized as mine). It is because experience can be mine without any self-ascription that we experience a chasm between the life we live and the life we endorse. The life we live is informed by our

habits and conventions which create lasting patterns and inform how I find myself in the world and in relation to others. That life is mine, shaped by my first-person perspective, but it is not yet (and some aspects of it may well never be) recognized as mine. It is selfless, or, as Heidegger would put it, disowned as I have not yet taken over ownership.[33]

As I have argued, the question of ownership and, with it, my sense of self, arises only when experience is problematic and we are forced to take a stance. Taking a stance we said does not mean making explicit the rules we have tacitly endorsed all along, but it means expressing a commitment to rules *for the first time*. This is why reflection can also be transformative.[34] It is transformative because it introduces a *point of view*. This is particularly true when we think of our personal identity. When I think about my life, I look out for patterns and evaluate my life in accordance with a normative vantage point which shapes my understanding of who I am. I come to recognize that a certain way of living has a force on me.

Sartre illustrates this well in his *War Diaries* when he observes that as a young man he thought of his life as an "oeuvre," that is to say, "…a series of works related to each other by common themes and all reflecting my personality" (Sartre, 1984, p. 79). Life was like a novel: it had a unified narrative structure. Past, present, and future were all intimately linked and affecting each other. He thus assumed that, when we reflect on our experience, we simply recount the commitments that have informed our lives all along.[35] To put it another way, he assumed that the way we live our lives just reflects how it is inferentially related.

But we have questioned this. Reflection does not make explicit what I have already tacitly endorsed but reflection forces me to take a stance for the first time. This is because pre-reflective experience is selfless insofar as I have not yet endorsed it in one way or another, not even tacitly. It is only when I regard the life I have lived as problematic that I take an evaluative stance and am forced to take a position. It is only then that it matters to me how I live my life.[36]

But this shows that our life is not like a novel where we simply recount our experiences and make explicit the underlying commitments. Indeed, Sartre himself later recognized that his young self was mistaken to see his life as an oeuvre. He was caught in the "biographical illusion," according to which "a lived life can resemble a recounted life" (Sartre, 1984, p. 81; cf. Levy, 2013). When we reflect, we do not just recount our past, but we choose and thus determine how we wish to understand our lives and how we wish to narrate them and give them meaning. What is normative are not our personal histories (i.e., the content) or the way we live our lives but the stance we take. This is why a lived life does not resemble a recounted one.

This is well expressed by Shakespeare's character Richard III when he says:

> Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
> What do I fear? Myself? There's no one else by.
> Richard loves Richard: that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No.- Yes, I am.
> Then fly. - What from myself? - Great reason why –.
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself? […].
> O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself.
> For hateful deeds committed by myself.
> I am a villain. Yet I lie, I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.
>
> (Shakespeare, 2016, Act 5, Scene 4: lines 161–173: 633)

When I reflect upon my life and try to understand who I am, I become aware of myself as a self; a self that is however split. On the one hand, as a critical onlooker, I am distinct from the empirical self whose life I am evaluating. On the other hand, when I look at myself, I am not an object of representation just like any other, but there is an immediate identification with this object. I am assessing a life that is necessarily mine.[37] The paradox is that I do not feel at one with myself, but at the same time I see myself as joined to myself at the hip. When I reflect, I necessarily

recognize myself, the experiences I had, or the life I have lived. After all they are all mine. "Richard loves Richard: that is, I am I." They are mine but selfless insofar as I have not yet attributed them to myself and taken ownership.

Phenomenology thus explains how I can experience myself both as distinct and identical with myself. In the example above, Richard experiences the chasm in a dramatic way. He realizes that he does not love himself, because he has never done anything good that merits love. He hates himself for the evil he has done to others. He expresses abhorrence about himself—the villain and murderer—. When he reflects upon himself, he realizes that he himself is the most frightening person he could ever come face to face with. He shudders from himself. Although he seeks to reject his identity by asking rhetorically whether there is a murderer in the room with him, he realizes that there is no escape from himself. He is who he is—a villain—. In his fear, Richard tells himself to run away, but he knows that he cannot flee from himself. I am I. Experience is necessarily owned! But he need not regard himself as committed to this kind of life. Experience is owned but we have not yet taken over ownership, that is, it is not yet recognized as mine. Taking ownership involves—endorsing or recognizing experience as mine. As we have shown this does not mean making explicit my ownership but taking ownership for the first time. It involves a choice on how we want to understand the life we have lived This is why the understanding of myself as a self may well be out of sync with the way I live my life and, indeed, why a lived life does not resemble a recounted one.

The unity argument thus shows that we are not just beholden to the situation and our history as though they determine who we are. When we reflect, we see our lives as optional and are forced to take a stance and endorse what we regard to be correct. This is exemplified by Richard III. When he reflects, he regards himself as accountable for the life he has lived. Richard III is what he is—a villain—(facticity). But he also sees himself as distinct: He is free to endorse who he is in different ways (possibilities), be it by affirming, rejecting or doubting. To this extent, he is also not what he is. It is precisely because he can take a critical stance (i.e., reflect), that he can be afflicted with moral loathing and self-doubt.

The example shows how our facticity (experience is mine) and freedom (to recognize experience as mine) are essentially entwined. Richard is a villain but when he reflects, he realizes that he has to be responsive to his facticity and has to take a stance (freedom). He is forced to be responsive to who he is. Indeed, the twist of the play is that, while initially his aim was to "prove a villain" (Ii: 30), once, he recognizes that he has become one, he does not feel he has achieved his goal but sees himself at odds with what he now believes is right. Even if for only a brief instance, he has become untrue to this conviction. However, he is still the same self. His past conviction remains, as Husserl would put it, as struck through or crossed out. (cf. LU II/1V Sec 27: pp. 442–443; LI/2: p. 137f.) This shows that our commitments entail a sense of fragility. The way we see ourselves, our take on the world, is never completely decided; rather it is in principle always open to revision. This is because any commitment is based on a choice which I can revoke at any time. As Eliot observes so tellingly: "In a minute there is time for decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse" (Eliot, 1915, p. 132).[38] Each decision and revision shapes me. They form the substrate of habitualities that inform my understanding of myself as a self.[39]

What Richard III describes is true for all reflective experience about ourselves. We see ourselves both as one and as distinct from the person we are. Though my commitment is based on a free decision, it is necessarily responsive: I reflect on my experience and my life, the life I have lived. Indeed, I can only reflect because there is something I can reflect upon (cf. Hua IV: p. 248). This is why the "pre-reflective cogito is the condition of the Cartesian cogito (i.e., reflection)". Because experience is mine, it can be recognized as mine. Reflection thus articulates our dependence on pre-reflective consciousness. It is responsive to the way we find ourselves in the world. Sartre characterizes this well when he refers to ourselves as both being-in-itself (our facticity) and being-for-itself (our freedom) (see Sartre, 2003). A better way of putting it in this context is to say that experience is both mine (pre-reflective) and can be recognized as mine (reflective). It is because we can be self-conscious without self-ascription that we can be both identical with, and distinct from ourselves. This is why we can be at odds with ourselves and come to express feelings such as hope, regret, despair, or remorse. We are able to fail ourselves or outlive all our expectations. Self-knowledge is thus both the awareness that we are distinct from who we are (we are free and see the life we live as optional) and an identification with who we are (the life we live which is mine but not yet recognized as mine).

Something important has come to light. The self emerges in the reflective space. It is necessarily distinct from pre-reflective consciousness. It is distinct because, on the pre-reflective level, I have not yet endorsed my experiences, not even minimally. Yet the potentiality of commitment is entailed in pre-reflective experience. Because pre-reflective experience is mine, self-attribution is possible: I can come to recognize it as mine. Reflexivity is thus a necessary condition of self-ascription. This explains how we can both experience ourselves as "other" to ourselves and at the same time as identical with it. The empirical self is experienced as other to me as it is selfless (i.e., not yet endorsed by an "I think"). But at the same time, I can recognize it as mine, precisely because it was mine all along. Reflection thus does not lead to a break with pre-reflective experience; rather it is necessarily responsive to the way I find myself in the world. Reflection expresses both our dependence on our facticity (the way we are bound to our body and experiences) and our freedom to transcend it.

We can now understand the significance of the unity argument. It explains why our recounted lives can be at odds with the way we live our lives. When we are conscious of ourselves as selves, we no longer regard ourselves as fixed by our identity, history, habits, practices, and past (facticity) but we regard ourselves as free to choose how we are to understand ourselves. Reflection forces us to take a stance. When I reflect, I am conscious of myself as an epistemic agent. I evaluate the way I am. I see myself in a certain way and decide what counts as reasons for my practical identity. It is only when I reflect that I regard myself as committed to certain norms or standards of correctness. It is then that my life matters to me and I see myself forced to commit myself in one way or another to who I am.

The unity argument thus shows that experience and, indeed, the life we live is not something for which we automatically regard ourselves accountable. Most of the time we live our lives without providing reasons or endorsing the reasons which shape our lives and experiences. The normative force is not derived from the life we live but from the self who evaluates its life and renders it into a life that matters. That my life matters to me is not based on how I happen to live, my personal history and experiences but on my understanding of myself as a self. After all, to cite Emerson out of context, "it makes a great difference to the force of a sentence whether there be a man behind it or no." (Emerson, 1903/1904, p. 282). The "man" behind it is my personal self, through which a certain take on the world has a force for me. It is because I have an understanding of myself as a self that my life matters to me.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The literature tends to refer to pre-reflective consciousness and not experience. But as consciousness here just stands for conscious experience, I prefer the term experience.

[2] There seems to be some confusion as to what the unity argument presents. Some believe that pre-reflective experience refers to the experience we do not attend to (cf. Horstmann, 2010). If this is correct, the unity argument would be severely truncated: we would have lost the right to regard Husserl's examples of being absorbed in our experiences such as reading a novel or solving a mathematical problem as a form of pre-reflective experience (Husserl, 1970, V, Sec 12b:

p. 101). Moreover, we would arrive at the absurd position that all possible conscious experience requires an "I think." For it seems that even our most rudimentary experiences involve attention. I am drawn to certain objects, pay attention to some rather than others and am open to certain phenomena rather than others. Indeed, the structure of attention is not unique to us human animals. I think it would not be a stretch of the imagination to say that all living beings attend to something. A cat attends to the milk she is given and the bee attends to the nectar. In each case, the attention is motivated, structured, or enacted. While I am much indebted to Hanne Jacobs' work on Husserl's account of "Stellungname" (see Jacobs, 2010, 2016a, 2016b), I do not agree with her when she argues that: "All attentive experiences are acts of the self or I in that when attentive the self takes a position, though not in the deliberative sense" (Jacobs, 2020, p. 286).

[3] I shall draw only draw on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre to illustrate Husserl's position.

[4] Cf. Marbach (1974) for an excellent discussion.

[5] Husserl refers to this as a "transcendence within immanency" (Hua III: Sec 57, p. 110/133).

[6] Cf. Gurwitsch (1941) and Zahavi (2021).

[7] For Kant, this is the highest principle (cf. CPR B134fn and Section 17 of Deduction) and for Husserl it refers the deepest ground of transcendental philosophy as it lies at the basis of internal time consciousness (cf. C-manuscripts on time-consciousness Hua X).

[8] As I have shown elsewhere, once we delve deeper and try to understand the synthetic unity of apperception, we realize that the pure Ego is completely undifferentiated and anonymous as it cannot distinguish between an I and thou (see Alweiss, 2022, Section 7). Merleau-Ponty (1964, pp. 174–220); cf. Held (1966, pp. 151–163), Römer (2020), or Grandjean (2020).

[9] I here lean on Allison who refers to the reciprocity between apperception and the categories (see Allison, 2004, pp. 174–175).

[10] It is curious that Sartre makes these claims in the *Transcendence of the Ego* as the aim of the text is to show that experience *belongs* to no-one (Sartre, 1960, p. 37). Just like Husserl, he later changes his view and realizes that it must be owned after all (see Sartre, 2003, p. 259).

[11] Norman Kemp Smith translates *Erkenntnis* as "knowledge" but the term "cognition" seems more appropriate. After all, our cognitions can be mistaken as it is in the case of hallucinations for example (CPR A493/B521). I will therefore use the term cognition for *Erkenntnis* throughout. Cognition, for Kant, is a representation which refers to an object and is brought under a concept (see CPR: A50/B74).

[12] As Katharina Kraus puts it: "reflexivity is a necessary condition of referentiality" (Kraus, 2020, p. 110).

[13] It is a "form" of data sensualism as he recognizes that whatever is given conforms to the forms of intuition.

[14] Phenomenology is interested in these claims as Kant seems to concede that what is given must exhibit rules ("schemata") that come about without the input of the "I think" (see CPR B103). Indeed, Husserl praises Kant for making room for the idea of "the understanding ruling in concealment" (Hua VI: p. 70/104) and Merleau-Ponty praises him for showing that the understanding is *operative* (*fungierend*) in intuition (see Merleau-Ponty 2002, p. xix). Heidegger, in turn, argues that the schemata mediates between concepts and intuitions (CPR A138/B177) and thus points to a more fundamental root that grounds sensibility and understanding. However, they all agree that Kant betrayed his initial insight because he held fast to the claim that understanding and intuitions are radically heterogeneous (CPR A51/B75). As a result, Kant had to attribute synthesis to the function of the understanding alone (see e.g., Hua VI: p. 70/104, Heidegger, 1990, p. 147; Merleau-Ponty 2002a, p. 200).

[15] I side with the conceptualist reading of Kant. Although there are clearly passages which suggest otherwise (e.g., CPR A320/B377 or A89–91/B122–23; A21/B35), I take Kant's claim literally that "intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A89–91/B122–23, A21/B35). For a nonconceptualist reading, see for example, Rohs (2001) and Allais (2009).

[16] Here, I agree with Emundts, who argues that we should read the status of the "I think" in relation to Kant's transcendental idealist position. As cognition for Kant is possible only through judgment, she believes that when Kant says the "I think must be able to accompany all my representations," that they must be accompanied by an "I think." The emphasis is not on the ability or capability of the "I think" to accompany them (cf. Emundts, 2013, p. 57).

[17] For Heidegger, the as-structure is a constitutive feature of the experience of entities in the world (cf. Heidegger, 1962, Sec 32, p. 149).

[18] As Longuenesse puts it there is "an implicit awareness that each relevant step is constrained by the steps that logically condition it and constrains in turn those that logically follow it." (Longuenesse, 2019, p. 762). But this is not what Sartre can have in mind as he clearly states in the same passage that this explains why a child can spontaneously count without

knowing the rules. "Proof of this is that children who are capable of making an addition spontaneously can not explain subsequently how they set about it" (Sartre, 2003, p. 9).

[19] Husserl refers to it as "being at each time mine" (*Jeweiligkeit*) (cf. Ms. C 16 VI, S. 18 (1932) cited by Held, 1966, p. 84) and Heidegger later as being in each case mine (*Jemeinigkeit*) (Heidegger, 1962: Sec 9). I prefer the translation in "each case owned" see footnote 33 below.

[20] Here, I disagree with Longuenesse who argues that Sartre's example of counting illustrates that pre-reflective consciousness assumes a kind of "self-consciousness Kant called 'consciousness of oneself as subject', expressed in the proposition 'I think'." (Longuenesse, 2017, p. 45).

[21] We find such a position defended in various ways by Leech (2012), Leech (2017), and Kitcher (2017). Indeed, as Leech has shown Longuenesse goes so far as to argue that the "very nature of judgment requires that it has a structure appropriate to being part of a course of reasoning" (Leech, 2017, p. 176) which reflects the laws of syllogism (see Longuenesse, 1998, p. 90n).

[22] Here I take my lead from Kern (2019).

[23] Staiti (2015) clearly shows why we need to differentiate between a first-order and a second-order judgment.

[24] Barnes translates *hexis* as disposition, however the latin term for *hexis* is *habitus*. In this context, reference to habit is more fitting. I should like to thank Klaus Held for drawing my attention to this.

[25] Here I take my lead from Rödl (2018) who draws this comparison to Aristotle.

[26] I have taken this citation out of context. Here, Husserl is concerned to show (against logical psychologism) that logical laws are not normative. They are theoretical laws that can serve normative propositions, but they are not normative in themselves.

[27] I should like to thank Jim Grant, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, and the anonymous reviewer for assisting me in clarifying my position.

[28] For example, Heidegger argues in *Being and Time* that, when a tool breaks down, I realize its usefulness. "When an assignment has been disturbed—when something is unusable for some purpose—then the assignment becomes explicitly" (Heidegger, 1962, Sec 16: pp. 74-5), namely I recognize the assignment *as* an assignment and with it the entire assignment structure. Indeed, it is only because we reflect that we become aware that there was an assignment structure.

[29] As Husserl claims the motive, the reason that I am obeying or regard myself as bound by them is a free decision. See Hua IV Section 59: p. 255 (G)/267.

[30] [Ms. A VI 30, 54b (probably 1926)] cited by Bernet (1993), p. 214, cf. Held (1966), Römer (2020).

[31] As Jardine notes: "for two acts of judging to manifest an enduring conviction, it is insufficient that they share a logical identity with respect to the state of affairs which they posit. To use an example of Husserl's, on two different occasions I may give a logically identical description of a certain landscape when perceptually confronted with it, picking out exactly the same features in exactly the same way on both occasions, my judgmental acts being correlated with the same categorical object in both cases. But I may do all that without the logically identical "judgment" being a conviction in the proper sense, without it counting as an enduring feature of my thinking as such" (Hua IV/V pp. 341–342/Hua IV Sec 29: p. 114; Jardine, 2022, p. 185).

[32] Important for Husserl is that the actual judgments do not endure but my convictions do. They constitute "a lasting property of the ego, existing also in those intervals of phenomenological duration in which they are not being constituted as lived experiences"(Hua IV, Sec 34, pp. 113–114 translation slightly altered), that is, they subsist even when we do not actually make those judgments but are concerned with other matters.

[33] Heidegger refers to experience being either *eigentlich* or *uneigentlich. Uneigentlichkeit*, is generally translated as inauthentic (Heidegger, 1962, Section 9) but I think owned and disowned is a better translation in this context, given the privative (un) and eigen (own).

[34] As Sartre observes: "…the act of reflection alters the fact of consciousness on which it is directed" (Sartre, 2003, p. 98).

[35] What I have left unaddressed is that Kant believes that there are certain a priori concepts that are always in place whenever we make judgments. These are the categories of the understanding.

[36] Crowell pursues a similar line of thought (but drawing on Heidegger rather than Husserl) when he argues that such a "normative achievement is constitutive of a self who can only be what it is by regarding itself as answerable to experience." Cf. Crowell (2020).

[37] This does not guarantee an immunity to error of misrepresentation, false memory and misidentification, but it does explain why when we reflect upon ourselves, we see ourselves differently to the way we see objects. For we necessarily feel that there is an intimate link between the object we perceive and ourselves.

[38] I should like to thank Pablo Fernandez Velasco for drawing my attention to this passage.

[39] As Husserl says: "Though convictions are, in general, only relatively abiding and have their modes of alteration (through modalization of the active positings - for example, "cancellation" or negation, undoing of their acceptance), the Ego shows, in such alterations, an abiding style with a unity of identity throughout all of them: a "personal character" (CM: IV: Sec 32: p. 101). What is maintained is the epistemic force, the commitment to remain truthful to ourselves to act and think in accordance with what we believe to be right and justifiable.

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