

# Broaching the Difference Between Intersubjectivity and Intersubjection Inspired by the Feminist Critique<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

In Critical Philosophy and, particularly, phenomenology ‘intersubjectivity’ is a core theme of analysis. As Zahavi put it, intersubjectivity, “be it in the form of a concrete self—other relation, a socially structured life-world, or a transcendental principle of justification, is ascribed an absolutely central role by phenomenologists.” Yet, when dealt with in this way, ‘intersubjectivity,’ as a conceptual attempt to refer to our ontology, to who we are, conceals other phenomena. In this paper an attempt is being made to articulate the phenomenon of authentic intersubjectivity by contrasting it with what we refer to as intersubjection, when only one subjectivity is expressing the Other by expressing the Other through the same, as in the case of empathy. Following the feminist critique we identify intersubjection as the tendency to reduce the Other to one’s own categories hence muting them or, at best, imposing on them a category which is intended from one subject only. Following Sartre, we articulate intersubjectivity as a reciprocal, bilateral relation where subjec-

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tivities are revealed to each other through the ontological structure of motivation/resistance.

**Key words:** *intersubjectivity, empathy, intersubjection, motivation, resistance, the Other, difference, feminist critique*

### ***Introducing Hot Intersubjectivity***

Intersubjectivity is a hot topic. Hot in all senses. When we say that someone is hot we usually mean that s/he is sexy. There is an erotic element. If we begin with Plato in the *Cratylus*, the erotic can be broken down in its three parts forming the question, the *ἔρώ/τη/σις*: what is it, or who is s/he? The erotic here *as a drive towards* implies an experience of intrigue, an experience which captures our interest, which excites and fascinates; a desire, eros. But this question of the Other, as in the platonic text, is always in the name of the father—*Poros*, literally passage, is the father of Eros.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, when something is hot is also linked to the concept of danger as it can burn us and induce us pain; physical pain. Finally, hot is also associated with the concept of importance or significance as in the case of referring to a hot issue. The hotness here is attractive under the condition of the significance it bears on some current state of affairs, something which casts some influence on our standing. In this case, our philosophical standing. As a topic, a theme, a subject, intersubjectivity is hot.

To pick up on some prominent work on the *subject* of intersubjectivity, let us start with the work of Dan Zahavi who has *subjected* the concept to an elaborate analysis. As Zahavi put it, intersubjectivity, “be it in the form of a concrete self-other relation, a socially structured life-world, or a transcendental principle of justification, is ascribed an absolutely central role by phenomenologists.”<sup>3</sup> There is much to be said about what these three categories or *subjects* of (philosophical) interest are about. However, before even dealing with any of these areas separately, there is an intrigue, a question arises: Are the above, topics, thematizations or

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<sup>2</sup> Πλάτων, *Κρατύλος ή Περι Ορθότητας Ονομάτων* (Αθήνα: Πόλις, 2001). [Plato, *Cratylus or Per Correctness of Names* (Athens: Polis, 2001)]

<sup>3</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Exploring the First Person Perspective* (London: MIT Press., 2005), 148; Dan Zahavi, “Intersubjectivity,” in *Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, eds. Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard, 180-189. (Milton Park: Routledge, 2012), 1.

*subjects* just various manifestations of the phenomenon of intersubjectivity or is intersubjectivity the condition of such phenomena? Let us not *subject* this question to an answer at this present point, but let us start from the beginning, that is, the *arche* as Jacques Derrida advises.

Intersubjectivity. Inter-subjectivity, like inter-national, like inter-personal, ‘has’ the notion of relation—in this case a relation *of* subjectivities; or a relation *between* subjectivities (maybe as in a relation between persons and between nations?). Initially, we can say that intersubjectivity refers (at least terminologically) to “a relation between subjectivities.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, subjectivities which relate. It seems fair then to phenomenalyze ‘subjectivities’ and ‘relation’ in order to understand what intersubjectivity is, or, better, in order to understand intersubjectivity. In terms of classical phenomenology, we could say that we first need to demarcate the regional eidetics which make up the eidos, or the eidetic structure. Yet, a perusal in the literature dealing with these *subjects* reveals a tendency to phenomenalyze intersubjectivity through subjects. Intersubjectivity is usually revealed, theorized, defined, described as a “relation between subjects...a subject-to-subject relation.”<sup>5</sup> The difference is described through the concepts of subject-object. “Phenomenologists have generally distinguished sharply between intersubjective relations—or subject–subject relations—and subject–object relations.”<sup>6</sup> Let us then trans-pose our first philosophical thorn into a question: is ‘subjectivity’ synonymous with ‘subject’?

From this question, let us advance our philosophical analysis, let us move with existing philosophical means of transport, with existing philosophical metaphors. If one likes to move in Cartesian ways, as a dualist, then, the empirical everyday subject is seen as a composite of a body (*res extensa*) and a soul (*res cogitans*). In this theorization, subjectivity, as the essential *whatness* of the subject is the *res cogitans*. *A fortiori*, intersubjectivity here must be used to theorize the relation of such immaterial entities. From this perspective we hardly ever *see* in the literature what such a relation between subjectivities as ‘immaterial’ is. Either

<sup>4</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 189.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Zahavi and Søren Overgaard “Intersubjectivity,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee274/full>), (2013), 4.

literally or metaphorically, intersubjectivity becomes invisible.

Let us now move and flow through the perspective of the (structuralist) phenomenologist, the so-called modern. The modern phenomenologist moves away from and even negates the existence of a concrete/determined (*res*) cogito. In our critical tradition, subjectivity is now theorized as the transcendental condition of consciousness. There is a co-motion towards what Zahavi calls a one-level account of consciousness<sup>7</sup>. That is, subjectivity is taken to be the pre-reflective self-awareness of our embodied being. In an alternative formulation, the latter has also been referred to as ‘mineness’ after Heidegger, and, with further elaborations and tweaks, just like folk tales and songs move from one generation to the next, subjectivity is now to be conceptualized as a first personal acquaintance with the world and the others who populate it. In his latest work, Zahavi refines this formulation and underscores how important subjectivity is for any theorization of our experiential life. “Experiential life is as such and from the beginning characterized by pre-reflective self-consciousness and by first-personal character and for-me-ness.”<sup>8</sup> This for-me-ness no longer expresses the weight of the ‘mineness’ of traditional existential phenomenological accounts as something ultimately subjective and mine that no one else or nothing else is or feels, but it is to be understood in a minimalist way as a first personal acquaintance with my experience in the world, an acquaintance which has a perspectival difference with that of the other subjects.

When referring to the first-personal character of phenomenal consciousness, to pre-reflective self-consciousness, experiential selfhood, and for-me-ness, I am referring to the self-presentational character of experience and to the entailed experiential perspectivalness. I am claiming that we have a distinctly different acquaintance with our own experiential life than

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<sup>7</sup> This co-motion is witnessed in the critical philosophical tradition, whose subject matter is predominantly phenomenology, or other subjects which (who?) are categorized as continental. In the analytical tradition consciousness goes hand in hand with the subjects of scientific thinking and is layered in states hierarchically but without rhythm, arithmetically and without tempo-rality, that is, a-rythmetically; there is always a Higher State of Consciousness as was musically put by Josh Wink in the 1990s. Consciousness, there, is hot with capitals (HOT).

<sup>8</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 62.

with the experiential life of others (and vice versa), and that this difference obtains, not only when we introspect or reflect, but already in the very having of the experience.<sup>9</sup>

This account, however, moves us to form another question. If this is a way to talk about subjectivity, would it not mean that intersubjectivity is a relation between pre-reflective self-consciousnesses, between acquaintances? What would be the manifestation(s) of such a relation? Zahavi who follows Edmund Husserl<sup>10</sup> and Edith Stein proposes empathy. But to empathize someone seems to imply, at least *prima facie*, a unidirectional movement from the empathizer to the empathized. Once again, at least *prima facie*, empathy does not seem to depict a subjectivity-subjectivity relation but a subject-subject relation or a subject-object precisely because it depicts a unidirectional phenomenon (the empathizer to the empathized and not vice versa in a single episodic relation). The empathizer empathizes the empathized but the empathized does not empathize back. One person becomes the subject of another's person's empathy. One is subjected by another. One's person's movement towards an Other, one's person's motion (emotion?) toward an Other. Yet, the Other is passive in this episode, a moot point with respect to the per-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>10</sup> The critique we are raising here is not new either. Husserl, unlike Zahavi, had understood that Empathy is not “an originary experience” of the Other qua Other qua me. In the *Ideas I*, Husserl has appreciated this philosophical thorn whereby the “empathic viewing” is not a consciousness of the Other whereby “the latter [is] given in consciousness as originary.” Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book* (Hingham, MA: Kluwer, 1983), 6. This appreciation is prevalent in all the *Ideas I*. “Empathic seizing upon someone else’s consciousness” is later defined by Husserl as an immanent intensive mental process which is different with the transcendent intensive act of consciousness which characterizes the seizing of the physical object (Ibid., 90). Natalie Depraz underscores that in Husserl’s empathy there is this phenomenon of unidirectedness initiated by the subject who empathizes – there maybe an intentional consciousness from both subjects but “*cette double intentionalité contient une dissymétrie*” [this intentional consciousness contains a dissymetry]. Natalie Depraz, 2004. “Autrui: Autrui et L’Atruisme,” in *Dictionnaire D’Éthique et De Philosophie Morale*, ed. Monique Canto-Sperber, (Paris: PUF, 2004), 123-127, at 124.

spectival-ness of the subject who empathizes. No motion from the empathized towards the empathizer. This unidirectionality then cannot do justice to the meaning of *between-subjectivities*, of intersubjectivity. But we shall come back to empathy later.

In the modern route then, there seems a bit of an impasse when it comes to reveal the relation, the movement of one subjectivity to another, the intersubjective relation. Let us move to the post-structuralist means of uncovering inter-subjectivity. In the radical post-structuralist critique of the subject, the subject is theorized not as subjectivity but as intersubjective itself, an embodied unity of oneself as another. The subject is a derivative of an original intersubjective being. This is a far more complex and difficult move to make and when made the intrigue is intensified. If the *I* that I am is ‘intersubjective’ then how is this ‘intersubjectivity’ (my intersubjective being) (to be) manifested with respect to another person who is also an *I* that/who is intersubjective? If the subject that I am is already intersubjective hence I can reflect myself as another—as a platonic voice as presence springs forth immediately as Other/otherness in any phenomenological reduction<sup>11</sup>—then there must be an-other difference of the Other intersubjective structure which/who can do the ‘same.’ Multiplying this to the estimated billion of embodied unities for the year 2016 then there must be an equal amount of differences. But apart from these immanent differences of the embodied unities, we must factor in the exterior differences of the intersubjective relations between the intersubjective beings. Ontologically, must there not be another difference between the immanent and the exterior manifestation of such a theorization of ‘intersubjectivity’?; *phenomenologically* there should be (many? One too many?) eidetic difference(s), (*εἰδοποιός διαφορά*). But what is/are it/they?<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> We are referring primarily to Derrida’s critique in *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology*, and in *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl’s Philosophy*: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl’s Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> This critique is not new. We see it in the literature with Jean-Luc Nancy whom we follow closely here when he asks “What is the space opened ber-

These four philosophical horns arise precisely because we have moved with the contemporary attempts to understand intersubjectivity or how subjectivities relate. In the following lines there is an attempt to move away from this kind of philosophizing. These paths move us to an impasse. Without rejecting, we move as by migrating. Time to *resist* this impasse by re-turning to previous philosophers' attempts to express the intersubjective experience. First, we shall make the *arche* with Edmund Husserl and then move *not to what can be defined* as intersubjectivity but what we (could) *feel* as intersubjectivity.

### ***The Theme or Subject of the Other***

In moving through the various philosophies concerning the Other, the philosophies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jean Paul Sartre identifies a conceptual theme that subtends them all: Knowledge—"my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through *knowledge*."<sup>13</sup> Particularly in Husserl, where we trace the *arche* of the modern phenomenol-

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ween eight billion bodies, and, within each one and, between phallus and cephalé, among the thousand folds, postures, falls, leaps and bounds of each?" Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 82. Ricoeur has also anticipated the same issue with what he refers to it as the problem of the criteria of ascription. "The thesis of the sameness of self-ascription and of ascription to someone else demands that we account for the equivalence between ascription criteria (whether experienced or observed); and, beyond this equivalence, that we account for the reciprocity that remains to be interpreted between someone who is me and another who is you." Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 39. In his discussion with Nancy, Derrida admits that the issue always comes back to *who claims* responsibility in one way or another. Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well' or The Calculation of the Subject," in *Who Comes After the Subject*, eds. Peter Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (London: Routledge, 1991), 96-119.

<sup>13</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (Colorado: Pocket Books, 1971), 233; emphasis in original. In the same entry as the one mentioned earlier, Depraz provides a concise yet profound analysis of the main philosophies of the Other whereby the issue of knowing the (objective) world has always conditioned the question of the Other. Similar analyses are offered by Theunissen: Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber* (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1986).

ogical tradition, to prove that the Other is an-Other like me, who can constitute the world as an objective phenomenon like me, becomes of paramount importance in order to arrive at the objectivity of the world; a foundation for objective knowledge. This presupposition, however, when subjected to further analysis reveals two rather different philosophical directions. These two directions can be seen, or, better, we can phenomenalyze these two philosophical paths through the philosophizing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The Merleau-Ponty of *Phenomenology of Perception*, moving hand in hand with Husserl's principles (*archai*), wrote:

the phenomenological reduction is idealistic, in the sense that there is here a transcendental idealism which treats the world as an indivisible unity of value shared by Peter and Paul, in which their perspectives blend.<sup>14</sup>

Intersubjectivity is the phenomenon of “blending” or “communication,”<sup>15</sup> this being “immediately in touch with the world,”<sup>16</sup> the constitution of meaning, world, noema. In Sartre's words, such Husserlian conceptualization of the Other reveals the Other being there along with the subject and object of my perception; with the *of* of my perception:

Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity.<sup>17</sup>

This perspective elevates the Other to the importance of the foundation of knowledge. My world is such because of the Other who guarantees it. This guarantee, however, unfolds with a bifurcation. Either the world to which I have access is my world and the Other guarantees it but never accesses it, just like *un garant Parisien*, who guarantees my home without it being their's to live; or, we both live in a world which we constitute together, a shared value, a blending of perspectives, an “idealistic” world—or a socially structured world with Zahavi.

In the former case, the Other can never have access to the world

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<sup>14</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1945), xxi.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii.

<sup>17</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 233.



that I experience but s/he guarantees it since we share it and we can talk about it, it is our common surrounding world, the object-world. Yet, this ultimate inability of the Other to see the world through my eyes, so to speak, betrays the possibility of there being something always out of reach for One and Other. That something could be either some sort of phenomenal experience due to each person's particular physical, psychological, and historical constitution, or, and this is of the greatest importance, the inability to ever verify that when we all talk about, say, experiencing 'quenching thirst' we are all indeed do experience (have experienced) the 'same' thing. This approach to knowing the Other whereby there is this inevitable inability to equate each other's experience because of the inability to verify that the object of experience is the same for all, borders with solipsism.

In the latter case, however, solipsism is not an issue because there is no world to be an object of experience. Experience is the creation or, better, the constitution of the world. Experience is the world-object, the lifeworld. There are no such objective relations about which we can talk about but never be absolutely certain that we are all experiencing the same way. We are the relations as we constitute them together by living them, we co-constitute them. The world is a co-constituted sociality, noema—one could even say that everything is socially constructed. Yet, we can "eidetically trace the essential possible variants"<sup>18</sup> of such co-constitution whereby the result would be the correlate of our factual experience called "the actual world"<sup>19</sup> as one special case among a "multitude of possible worlds and surrounding worlds."<sup>20</sup> In either case, however, both options are within the paradigmatic modality of thought of transcendentalism. For either case to happen there must be something, a condition, some sort of thing(in)itself; an unknown whole that makes our experience possible. It may not be the case that it "exists in itself" in a Kantian way but it can exist in itself by the permanence guaranteed by its materiality/physicality which allows us to constitute it.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>21</sup> In marginal note in *Ideas I* Husserl writes: "Natural attitude is related here to

In *The Visible and The Invisible* Merleau-Ponty tried to move away from such transcendentalism by moving closer to a material theorization of the world and the Other. “[I]t is in the world that we communicate, through what, in our life, is articulate.”<sup>22</sup> But this world is already objective “from this lawn before me that I think I catch sight of the impact of the green on the vision of another... It is *the thing itself*, that opens unto me the access to the private world of another.”<sup>23</sup> The thing itself here is guaranteed by its material distinctness about which we can talk. Intentionality becomes intensionality. It is not by chance that Merleau-Ponty will then attempt to trace those material categories of perception that condition the distinctness of an undifferentiated, intertwined material whole as breadth and depth.<sup>24</sup>

We cannot but notice a reversal in thinking: The later Merleau-Ponty is more materialistic and explicitly more Kantian. It is the objective world which conditions the affirmation of the existence of the Other contra Husserl where it is the self-other relationship that conditions the constitution or discovery/unveiling of an objective world—where “we come to an understanding with our fellow human being and in

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the real world at hand; the world is a universe of “what exists in itself.” But being broadened it must become related to everything “ideal” “existing in itself” over against “us” which, to be sure, is there for us as coming from spontaneities, as a product, but then it too is nevertheless there “mentally.” (Ibid., 55).

<sup>22</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; my emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> The discussion has been prepared in the *Phenomenology of Perception* by making breadth and depth those categories which interchange depending on the prominence of material organs. Breadth is the other side of depth. “What we are dealing with is a mode of presentation and a type of synthesis which are new and which transfigure the object” (260). “In both cases depth is tacitly equated with breadth seen from the side, and this is what makes it invisible” (297). Intersubjectivity is then approached through a thing in itself. “All men accept without any speculation the equivalence of depth and breadth; this equivalence is part and parcel of the self-evidence of an intersubjective world, which is what makes philosophers as forgetful as anyone else of the originality of depth. But prior to this we know nothing of the world and of space as objective, we are trying to describe the phenomenon of the world” (298).

common with posit an Objective spatiotemporal actuality.”<sup>25</sup> The Other is just like me only because we are already connected through various material “intertwinings” (*entrelacs*). There are invisible chiasmatic (material) relations where everything is (inter)connected and becomes visible. Just like a glove that has two sides so the world has two sides, the visible and the invisible. But this invisible is not something immaterial or metaphysical. It is the Other side of the visible. There are chiasmatic relations everywhere. I do not see or immediately sense my inner organs; in one sense they are invisible, yet in various circumstances these very organs can be sensed, they can come to the experiential foreground, the visible, I can sense them. There is then a co-corporation, an intercorporeity of various things which through different conditions can constitute unities, ie my body. Merleau-Ponty frequently uses the metaphor “flesh and blood.” The fetus of a pregnant mother is within the body of the pregnant woman, invisible. It is this ‘one’ flesh and blood that constitutes them. As Leder explains following Merleau-Ponty, my fetal and embryonic development “proceeded through a series of visceral *écarts*.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it is not that with and through the Other that I/we know our world by what is in us visible in the broadest sense possible. Rather, it is through the world that we come to be and know each other because we have come out of the same stuff. We are already connected through various invisible processes of material being. Hence, the question of knowing if there is an Other (qua subjectivity qua me) just because it is not immediately visible becomes redundant and non-sensical just like the question of knowing if there is a heart in me which is not visible.

Using Merleau-Ponty as a metaphor, we see that either moving with some strand of transcendentalism or with materialism the subject of the Other has been approached through the subject of knowledge. But Sartre, anticipating today’s materialism which like a virus has moved in propagation and has affected all subjects of philosophy, even phenomenology, resisted this path. Following the Nietzschean admonition, he appreciated that knowledge is always perspectival. The way that I know my flesh and blood from within is not the same way I know the flesh

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>26</sup> Drew Leder, “Flesh and Blood: A Proposed Supplement to Merleau-Ponty.” In *The Body*, ed. Donn Welton (Malden, MA: Blackwell.Leder, 1999), 200-210 at 206.

and blood of the Other. And since there is a phenomenal-experiential difference between the two, such difference constitutes a being that has to be accounted for. The material turn is inadequate for that. My heart, the way I am acquainted with it is not the same way that another person in general or a cardiologist is acquainted with it. For the former, if the way I know my heart that beats or the hand that I move was the same as I get to know the Other's, then unavoidably we would end up asking with Husserl "What makes this organism another's, rather than a second organism of my own?"<sup>27</sup> There is something that it is mine (my body) and something that is not mine (the body there) but in the plane of consciousness (I am conscious of my body and that body there) they are both mine.<sup>28</sup> For the latter, the case of the cardiologist who 'successfully' transplants a body's heart into another body, they can claim that the body before *functions* as the body now with a new part. Just as when my Citroen C2 VTs remained functionally the same with my Citroen C2 VTs when I changed its engine because I had burst it, so the doctors and nurses were telling Claire Sylvia that she was the same Claire Sylvia after a change of heart—wholistically the same based on functional sameness; Claire Sylvia subjected to material principles was the same before and af-

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<sup>27</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 113.

<sup>28</sup> This philosophical problem surfaces again when neuroscience tries to account for the recognition of the Other through the so-called mirror-neurons. Crudely, a set of neurons have been 'discovered' that display the 'same' pattern of activity of goal directed body movements whether the movements are of the object of study (monkey) or an object of the object of study (the experimenter as the visual object of the monkey). Evan Thomson offers a compelling case that the discovery of these so-called mirror neurons provide neuroscientific evidence of Husserl's pairing phenomenon; briefly, that we come to know the Other through our bodies, by appresenting one another. Yet, if they are the same, and the stipulation of phenomenology as non-inferential recognition of the Other is kept, Husserl's question "What makes this organism another's, rather than a second organism of my own?" remains unanswered and begs. Either there is a mineness that will characterize this activity as mine and the other as of an-other's, or, a difference between the activities must exist for the non-inferential pairing to occur as (felt) immediate pairing. Evan Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8.5-7 (2001), 1-31.

ter. But Sylvia, or better to say Claire, was clearly “not feeling it”; “she ain’t feeling it” as the slang version has it. Rather, she was going ‘mad’:

I didn’t know who I was or what I was doing here. My body, the nurses assured me, was doing fine...But it wasn’t my body that concerned me. It was everything else...I was going through the early stages of an identity crisis.<sup>29</sup>

Like the ‘mad’ Nancy after the transplant

If my own heart was failing me, to what degree was it ‘mine,’ my ‘own’ organ? Was it even an organ? For some years I had already felt a fluttering, some breaks in the rhythm, really not much of anything (mechanical figures, like the ‘ejection fraction,’ whose name I found to be pleasing): not an organ, not the dark red muscular mass loaded with tubes that I now had to suddenly imagine. Not ‘my heart’ beating endlessly, hitherto as absent as the soles of my feet while walking.<sup>30</sup>

Reducing everything to material relations or functions cannot, therefore, reveal what we feel when we refer to the experiential selfhood or, concomitantly, the experience of intersubjectivity. Material reduction is ontological destruction. As Sartre has shown in other subjects of philosophy, both materialism and idealism are fraught with destructive presuppositions. Both ways of thinking have to be resisted in order to free the concept of Intersubjectivity.

### ***Sartre’s Intersubjective Phenomenology***

Sartre starts with the cogito. The cogito as the first truth, as “an apodictic basis.”<sup>31</sup> But this cogito is not exactly the Cartesian one. It is not “a substantial being analogous to that of a thing”<sup>32</sup> but “the manifes-

<sup>29</sup> Claire Sylvia, and William Novak. *A Change of Heart* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008), 167.

<sup>31</sup> J.P. Sartre, “Consciousness of Self and Knowledge of Self”, in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), 113.

<sup>32</sup> In *Being and Nothingness* the Cartesian cogito is falling into the “error of substance” and the Husserlian cogito “functional description” (73).

tation of consciousness. In knowing I am conscious of knowing.”<sup>33</sup> There is something where/to which/at I can ascribe my experiences through ascribing them. My cogito is my subjectivity, my consciousness, something completely and ultimately felt as mine.<sup>34</sup> In this sense there is always an ontological separation between me and the Other (an ontological separation of Self and Other).<sup>35</sup> Therefore, intersubjectivity, is indeed a question of the relation of subjectivities, mine, which I feel through my being conscious of myself and the Other. But how do I know or how can I know that there is an Other the way I know that I am in the apodictic basis that the cogito can provide? If the Other exists like I do, then my cogito in its being, will be able to disclose the Other not as a structure of itself like a emaciated logical Kantian category—to use Polanyi’s expression—or in terms of being constituted by me as I come to know anything else which is not a subjectivity. Rather, the only option for the condi-

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<sup>33</sup> J.P. Sartre, “Consciousness of Self and Knowledge of Self”, in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), 114.

<sup>34</sup> The Cogito as an apodictic basis is indeed as has been traditionally construed the first firm basis of theoretical knowledge. Yet, as Henry points out in *Barbarism*, this basis is itself a knowing, exactly as Sartre mentions above, yet this knowing is itself of a different kind (*un savoir autre*), not theoretical. Only such a different knowing can dispense the moment of absolute doubt. This knowledge is a feeling, a way of being affected (*sentir*). Only a feeling, a pathos in the old sense of being affected can dispense with the convincing power of the theoretical, logical apodicticity of any proposition or system of propositions or even theoretical paradigms. And this feeling is itself a power, an I can which I can destroy all knowledge and habit—just like Dostoevsky who brilliantly says that you can propose to me the ultimate truth of the world, God himself but still I can say that I don’t believe it, I may resist it. Why? Because I can. And this ‘I can’ need not be considered as a present or a presence in all its senses but as a possibility of presenting, as a something which may condition all attempts to objectivation yet not itself being objectivated. In speaking of consciousness it is a consciousness which cannot be fully conscious of itself, that is, in Sartre’s parenthesis conscience (*de*) soi. In Derridian terms, the ‘*de*’ which marks presence and definitions needs to be under erasure, *sous rature*. Michel Henry, *Barbarism* (Paperback. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2012). Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes From the Underground* (London: Alma Classics Ltd, 2010)

<sup>35</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 213.

tional 'if the Other qua Other qua being like me is possible', is for them to be revealed in my cogito as cogito; "by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular 'concrete Other just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence."<sup>36</sup> But what does this actually mean?

Sartre's approach is something like a transcendental *reductio ad absurdum*. The transcendental premise works within the process of the *reductio* like *partes extra partes*. That dynamic way of philosophizing provides him with the compelling thesis: Only if there is another like me, can I make sense of my experience of presenting to myself my self as another (I am what I am not and I am not what I am) which is phenomenalized in the modalities of shame/pride. But let us move with Sartre from the start.

If the Other and the self are necessarily separate and no relation of whole-parts defines them such that a totality is constituted of of them like in Husserl; and if the only possibility of one existing for the Other is an immediate certainty as guaranteed by a reflective-transcendent cogito in its modality of givenness to itself; and if this modality also reveals that the self can never (fully) objectify itself even in self-consciousness (hence *conscience (de) soi*) but only be given as pure presence to self (the apodictic feeling of the cogito); then, the only possibility for the existential certainty of the Other, is the Other to be given to me (my cogito) as a subjectivity (as another cogito). But since this subjectivity cannot be construed as Cartesian epistemic access (precisely because the what it is like is a past modality of being in order to be), it must be given in a mode of an immediate situation, an ontic-existential way in connection with me if we were to use Heidegger's terms, simply in the everyday praxes. That is, as a consciousness with the certainty of the experience. But such certainty only my cogito can reveal and guarantee as it has done in revealing my self in my own self-ascription: in thinking I am thinking. With Theunissen, "the task has much rather to be, or Sartre thinks, that of leaving the encounter with the Other its factual character and still exhibiting its indubitability."<sup>37</sup>

Moving forward, Sartre thinks that *if*<sup>38</sup> there is an-Other for me

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Theunissen, *The Other*, 205.

<sup>38</sup> A very important point needs to be made here. In modern logic the conditional 'if' is construed within a binary logical presupposition. Something cannot be A

there, in the world, then I must also be An-Other-for-the-Other, I must be an Other for them. So any proof about the Other for me must also be a proof of me as another for them. But that is not enough. We both need to become conscious of these proofs of one another, at the same time, in the same place. This is the missing part from Husserl. It is not enough that I gain a certainty of the Other as Other based on my pure immanence (as in Husserl's empathy). That certainty is incomplete so to speak. Certainty would be that the Other is revealed in me (as a cogito) as Other, as a subjectivity and I do the same for them; a "bilateral relation"<sup>39</sup> which at the same time and place all *Is*, eyes meet, that is, (we) become conscious of each Other. If the analytic stops with what I think (that) I know based on my categories, then the Other is not revealed as cogito as subjectivity but as a subject. The Other is subjected by me. Even if I treat them as a subjectivity I still subject their being to what I constitute them to be. My subjectivity as constituting intentionality does not reveal the Other constituting intentionality in its freedom to constitute but reduces it to my way of constitution, my I can. This fine phenomenological point that Sartre makes had been well appreciated from Gabriel Marcel, the early Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Henry.

Marcel elaborates on this point in the *Philosophy of Existentialism*. Even if I thematize the world with the phenomeno(logically) similar Other as a subjectivity, as a constituting intentionality, that does not mean that the Other magically becomes an-Other qua subjectivity qua

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and not-A at the same time, the ultimate thesis of non-contradiction. For the ancients, however, this was not the case in their logos and in their art of logos, their logic. What Derrida shows us in his analysis of the ancient greek *ἄμα* through the *φάρμακον* is precisely this non binary logical option. The pharmakon is both cure and poison at the same time, in the same space: living is at the same time dying. The ultimate presupposition of modern logic does not correspond and cannot be applied to the being of being human. This *ἄμα* is what makes Sartre's thesis so compelling. When the 'if' is construed as *ἄμα* then there cannot be an experience of shame or pride without the Other. These are happening both at the same time, at the same place, to-get-there. The there is the revelation of the Other to the self, self-and-Other together, subjectivity-and-subjectivity together, intersubjectivity [see Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (New York, NY: The Harvester Press, 1982) and Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981)].

<sup>39</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 361.



me. Even as a supposed subjectivity, the other is reduced to a subject. Trying to treat one as subjectivity I already have subjected them to how I want them to be treated. And in the place of perception, such constitution falls short as an awareness of others as they are. It is “*concerned with a series of metrical relations...it has nothing to do with the relationship between human beings.*”<sup>40</sup> The Other is next to the door, or two meters away, or is moving towards, or her name is...But it is always me that makes a subject of what they are. The other is categorized through my zero point. Their being a subject is for me based on my own horizon of perception.

The early Merleau-Ponty elaborated on this very point by taking the important factor of temporality into consideration.

My consciousness, being co-extensive with what can exist for me, and corresponding to the whole system of experience, cannot encounter in that system, another consciousness capable of bringing immediately to light in the world the background, unknown to me, of its own phenomena...even if I succeeded in thinking of it [the other body there] as constituting the world, it would be I *who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent.*<sup>41</sup>

The crucial point that Merleau-Ponty makes here is that the Other cannot be revealed as cogito, as subjectivity in a past modality of the Cartesian and analytic phenomenal consciousness of what it is like to (be) x. It is not what has been, the *en-soi*, which is at stake when it comes to revealing another subjectivity. The Other as subjectivity, as a consciousness, can only be revealed through their consciousness, through their *pour-soi*. When Sartre uses the metaphor of the «perfected robot» in order to emphasize that the factuality of the Other through their body cannot reveal their subjectivity just because it seems to be analogous to mine (they might as well be perfected robots), he does it to underscore that the perfected robot is an *en-soi* by the very fact that it is already finite in its programming. There is no *pour-soi* in something programmed and perfected be it even the most open system possible in quantum mechanics. Consciousness, subjectivity, is free through and through to constitute. Con-

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<sup>40</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1970), 70; my emphasis.

<sup>41</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 407; my emphasis.

sciousness is not a system. The Other, if they exist as I exist, then, they must be a true openness, a total freedom to be whatever they can be motivated to be, that is, they can choose out of the infinite rather than to adapt to the possibilities of a (pre)determined finitude. It is through the Other's look which is like mine if they are a subjectivity that "I effect the concrete proof that there is a 'beyond the world.'"<sup>42</sup>

These two points, largely neglected in discussions of intersubjectivity, are of paramount importance because if the analysis or the attempt to find the Other (if they exist) is punctuated to what I constitute them to be without their being expressed as they are, then what we experience is not intersubjectivity but *intersubjection*. We relate to the Other (inter-) by thematizing them according to our own categories (making them our subject of experience, subjection). As the feminists rightly say, we reduce them to our own categories. We (the same) reduce them (the Other) to the Other of the same—as Luce Irigaray has theorized the condition of women being subjected by men: "reducing the Other to the Other of the Same which could also be interpreted as submitting the real to the imaginary of the speaking subject."<sup>43</sup> Zahavi's Husserlian inspired empathy has this unfortunate shortcoming. The empathizer may say "I feel ya" but that is their subjecting the Other to what they think they know about the Other, how one subject(ivity) intends an object/subject which it constitutes as a subject(ivity). Empathy here is not feeling with the Other, but feeling the Other as a possible Other of the same. Feeling empathy for the Other *as such* "one reappropriates it for oneself, one disposes of it, one misses it, or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it, which as concerns the other, always amounts to the same. Between the proper of the other and the other of the proper."<sup>44</sup>

This relation defers (to) the relation of master and slave. It only slightly differs from the phenomenon of generosity that Friedrich Nietzsche discussed: the master auto-calls himself generous by giving alms to the slave. Generosity here, Nietzsche advises us to wake up, is not defined by the one who receives the alms but by the one who is giving them. The empathizer to the empathized based on the *arche* of em-

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<sup>42</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 270.

<sup>43</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 99.

<sup>44</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, xii.

pathy. And this is exactly what has happened with phallogocentric science who has perpetuated all the relevant myths about women as Simone de Beauvoir rightly says:

But most often woman knows herself only as different, relative; her pour-autrui, relation to others, is confused with her very being; for her, love is not an intermediary 'between herself and herself' because she does not attain her subjective existence; she remains engulfed in this loving woman whom man has not only revealed, but created.<sup>45</sup>

Women have been subjected to what men want them to be. And through our analysis it seems to be stemming directly from this phenomenon that we are trying to articulate, of intersubjection. It is the appropriation of the Other, their definition based on our own categories. The Other does not constitute, they are constituted.<sup>46</sup> It all, then, comes down to who makes the start of expression, the arche, the archon, the lord:

The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say 'this is this and this', they seal everything and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.<sup>47</sup>

The question of whether there is another like me has been answered in the way I, the questioner, want it to be answered based on the evidence that I observe.<sup>48</sup> Once again with Nietzsche, in the process of

<sup>45</sup> Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 631.

<sup>46</sup> And this process is still in play in today's moral philosophy as well. Recent rhetoric about effective altruism is just a recurrence of the same phenomenon. The effectiveness of altruism is not corroborated by the one who is receiving the help. That one is muted. The effective altruist receives the stamp of the effective either but himself or by, as Irigaray says, a hom(m)osexual exchange.

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*. eds. Judith Norman and Aaron Ridley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 27.

<sup>48</sup> Another such case of intersubjection is the case of the modern ethnographer who, even in the case of Malinowski who advocates for the complete immersion in the context of situation for the understanding of the Other, understands through his own categories. He "has to rely on the living reality of spoken language *in fluxu*" so that he "can study directly the conditions and

trying to find the Other I destroy them. My initial intrigue, my erotic experience, the desire, to find whether there is another like me ends up with violating their being, raping them.

We do not experience intersubjectivity but a relation of master-slave. Intersubjection then is the semblance of the “good old skool” physical master-slave relationship. In firmly denying that this is intersubjectivity, a bilateral authentic we relation, a relation of subjectivities, Sartre writes:

It is sufficient to observe that the Slave is the Truth of the Master. But this unilateral recognition is unequal and insufficient...I am...a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another. Therefore the Other penetrates me to the heart.<sup>49</sup>

These phenomena are left hidden when we philosophize egologically with *Cartesian Eyes* and *Kantian Is*; they are left concealed in the phallogocratic binary logic of soft/hard, up/down, homo erectus/penis erectus. Moving with Sartre, *ἄμα* there is another then such tendencies must be resisted if the Other is to be revealed. The Other is revealed only if the tendency to subject them as an object of our subject is resisted.

I am a consciousness means that I find myself somewhere in the world. To say that I am found in the world or that I have been given to myself as a self-consciousness is for Sartre the inability of treating myself as an object. I can never ultimately objectify myself unless I kill myself—and even that is debatable from an existential perspective. Therefore, thinking dynamically if there is an Other, then, for this Other to have the same existential status as me, they must be experiencing the same ‘thing’. Therefore, the

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situations characteristic of a culture and interpret the statements through them” but this interpretation is utterly unidirectional - empathetic. It may empathetic but it is not sympathetic. The Other, as in the tribe, the savage, the primitive or however they are called, is not voiced with respect to whether this interpretation is anywhere near to their experience and the wor(l)d. One’s demonstration, one’s predication, one’s word violating another’s world as Lionnet described in *The Mirror and the Tomb*. B. Malinowski, “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages,” in *The Meaning of Meaning*, eds. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923), 296-336 at 307; Françoise Lionnet, “The Mirror and the Tomb: Africa, Museums, and Memory,” *African Arts* 50-59 (2001).

<sup>49</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 237.

absolute certainty of the existence of the Other is (if it so happens) that *I* experience the process of *my* being objectified by the Other. But since in my own consciousness I can never objectify myself, ***the proof of the Other as subjectivity would be mutatis mutandis et ceteris paribus that I experience a resistance of being objectified by another subject.*** By resisting the Other in their process of my being objectified by them as I do for myself in the mode of being of self-consciousness. This is the process by which the Other as a subject is revealed to me as subjectivity in the certainty of the cogito. It is me who will resist the objectification of the Other by being presented as a subject to them. But because I will so resist, I will be presenting myself as an-Other to them-as-subjects. Thus, intersubjectivity is the relation of subjectivities which are presenting themselves to each other without being subjectified to objectifications or subjectifications. This process of resisting objectification by subjection Sartre attempts to explicate through his well-known analysis of the re-gard/the look.

### ***Sartre's Structure Look-Shame/Pride as Entropy***

The Other's look can make me feel shame or pride *if* I claim it as a look toward me. Zahavi claims that Sartre's shame "presupposes the intervention of the other, not merely because the other is the one before whom I feel ashamed, but also and more significantly because that of which I am ashamed is only constituted in and through my encounter with the other."<sup>50</sup> But it is not *because* of the intervention of the Other that I feel ashamed. There is no speck of causation in Sartre's metaphysics of authentic human relations, of intersubjectivity, or in his metaphysics of presence of self and of self to an Other self. And neither can any (material) modality of causation fully account (for) the workings of shame. As Sartre says many times following consistently his approach to consciousness, shame is a modality of consciousness. I am ashamed. What this means is that being ashamed is literally a being that I am as being ashamed and at the same time a being that I am not since I am the one who is being ashamed of (my self). The Other has no place in my self-consciousness of shame as Sartre underscores—let alone any kind of intervention. The Other is neither a mechanical or quantum cause nor a condition which implies some sort of causality. What the Other does is

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<sup>50</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 213.

to look at me. To look *at me* is to motivate me if I grant the ontological importance of their look. Looking at me the Other motivates me to come back to myself, to be motivated to resist my current situation and realize the being of myself which is not available to me while being immersed in my projects, in my situation. This coming back to myself while being motivated by the Other is what the ancients called entropy—literally, shame, *ἔντροπή* (*entropy*)<sup>51</sup> or the coming back towards one's being (see also Lidell and Scott's relevant entry).<sup>52</sup>

*La honte*, or shame, or *ἔντροπή*, is the being given to oneself that being that one does not have access to. Zahavi insists that this is close to what Husserl called iterative empathy:

According to Husserl, this case of iterative empathy, where my indirect experience of another coincides with my self-experience, can be described as a situation where I see myself through the eyes of the other (Husserl 1959: 136–7). When I realize that I can be given for the other in the same

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<sup>51</sup> Sometimes the text reveals to us its secrets if we ask different questions as Hans-Georg Gadamer advised us to do in *Truth and Method*. In the Sartrean text it was always a question why is shame mentioned twice, once before the section of the *Look* and then one after. Even Marjorie Grene who does appreciate that Sartre's philosophy being dynamic is trying to combine both phenomenology and rational exegesis, she fails to take into consideration that shame in Sartre is not to be construed moralistically as most commentators do. It is the being that I am that shame reveals not a negative emotion: "Shame reveals to me that I am this being, not in the mode of 'was' or of 'having to be' but in-itself. When I am alone, I can not realize my "being-seated;" at most it can be said that I simultaneously both am it and am not it. But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004); Marjorie Grene, *Dreadful Freedom: A Critique of Existentialism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948). J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 262.

<sup>52</sup> Richard James Blackburn appreciated Sartre's theory of entropy although solely in materialistic terms. This entropy is the Aristotelian and modern scientific one, not exactly the one we are talking about here which relates directly to being affected by oneself through the presence of another self which is a metaphysical phenomenon, a "metamorphosis" as Sartre calls it a handful times. Richard James Blackburn, *The Vampire of Reason: An Essay in the Philosophy of History* (London: Verso, 1990).

way as the other is given for me, that is, when I realize that I myself am another to the other, my self-apprehension is transformed accordingly. It is only when I apprehend the other as apprehending me, and take myself as other to the other, that I apprehend myself in the same way that I apprehend them and become aware of the same entity that they are aware of, namely, myself as a person (Husserl 1954: 256; 1973b: 78). Thus, to exist as a person is, for Husserl, to exist socialized in a communal horizon, where one's bearing to oneself is appropriated from the others (Husserl 1973b: 175; 1954: 315; 1952: 204–5; 1973c: 177, 603).<sup>53</sup>

Sartre's look does not involve "seeing myself through the eyes of the other" and it is certainly not an indirect experience of the Other. If it were, how would it be that we are in a situation where "I apprehend the other as apprehending him and take myself as the other to the other that I apprehend myself in the same way that I apprehend them..."? To begin with, the very concept of apprehension is an arrest, a bar to the self-motivating consciousness that I am. As mentioned before, the Other does not cause nor intervene for revealing to me the being that I cannot reveal to myself while being it. The Other motivates me by looking at me. "Motivation is not causation."<sup>54</sup> To be motivated by the Other means essentially that the Other is not an inert other—just like a material object. A stone cannot motivate me—but only a subjectivity like me. Causation runs to the physical plane while motivation, ontologically, – if motivation has any meaning at all—runs in the metaphysical. I do not cause myself to be (the scholastic and analytic philosophies of *causa sui*) but I motivate myself to be.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Self & Other*, 236.

<sup>54</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 27.

<sup>55</sup> This point about the ontological difference between motivation and causation that Sartre elaborates here by applying it to the consciousness of the Other, comes directly from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and the *Ideas*. For something to be able to be experienced, that is, the experienceableness of something is not related only to a possibility of logic but rather "a possibility motivated in the concatenations of experience." Consciousness itself is "through and through one of motivation" which always points beyond itself. In a footnote Husserl explains that "this fundamental phenomenological concepts of motivation...(and in contrast to the concept of causality as relating to the transcendent sphere of reality)...is a universalization of the concept of motivation in accordance with which we can say e.g. that the willing of the

As Robert Olson<sup>56</sup> explained, motivation is a key theme in Sartre's phenomenology (he identifies at least three theories). Consciousness is theorized through the metaphysical concept of motivation which is not causation.

For the same reasons it is impossible to assign to a consciousness a motivation other than itself. Otherwise it would be necessary to conceive that consciousness to the degree to which it is an effect, is not conscious (of) itself. It would be necessary in some manner that it should be without being conscious (of) being. We should fall into that too common illusion which makes consciousness semi-conscious or a passivity. But consciousness is consciousness through and through. It can be limited only by itself.<sup>57</sup>

So if another subjectivity, another consciousness, is like me the revelation of the consciousness that they are must logically reveal itself through the ontological structure of motivation-resistance. The Other's look insofar as I claim it presents me with my being seen. But this is only an attempt of being objectified. The presentation of my being as a being seen is an attempt to become an object. The Other is not yet revealed to me as they are. In my attempt to *resist* this objectification, to transcend it, and then being resisted by Other in their attempt to resist my resistance, my transcendence transcended, is the verification that I know the Other is another like me, another freedom, another constituting intentionality, another subjectivity. There is no clearer passage than the following where Sartre pulls to-get-there all the elements of his phenomenological analysis:

Shame is the **revelation** of the Other not in the way in which a consciousness reveals an **object** but in the way in which one moment of consciousness **implies on the side another moment as its motivation**. If we should have attained pure consciousness by means of the cogito, and if this pure consciousness were only a consciousness (of being) shame, the Other's consciousness would still haunt it as an inapprehensible presence and would thereby escape all reduction. This demonstrates sufficiently that it is not in the world that the Other is first to be sought but **at the side of**

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end motivates the willing of the means." Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 106-107.

<sup>56</sup> Robert G. Olson, "The Three Theories of Motivation in Jean-Paul Sartre," *Ethics* 176-187, (1956).

<sup>57</sup> J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, lv.



**consciousness as a consciousness in which and by which consciousness makes itself be what it is.** Just as my consciousness apprehended by the cogito bears indubitable witness of itself and of its own existence, so certain particular consciousnesses—for example, “shame-consciousness”—bear indubitable witness to the cogito both of themselves and of the existence of the Other.<sup>58</sup>

The Other subjectivity is revealed to mine as they motivate me to resist the being that I am before they try to subject the world in their own way of which initially I am an object for them. Shame as entropy is this recoil to make a decision to either be motivated by the Other to their own way or to resist it anew. It is in this factual embodied situation that the Other existence is revealed to me the way that I have been revealed to myself. At the end, it is me who can resist or be motivated, it is my choice. But as Henry underscores the Other is revealed as subjectivity in this “practical limit of my ‘I can.’”<sup>59</sup> The phenomenon of a transcended transcendence, my resistance to be motivated to the direction of the Other is a sort of countermovement against my movement, an active pressure that I nevertheless cannot experience otherwise than in the impeded dynamism of my ‘I can.’<sup>60</sup> Intersubjectivity then, as an authentic relation of subjectivities, of consciousnesses, of constituting intentionalities, cannot be theorized without the ontological structure of motivation-resistance.

### *Sartre’s Intersubjectivity and the Perpetual Conflict Para-myth*

It is true that Sartre does mention that the relations with Others are (can be?) a perpetual conflict. From the earliest commentators, from the polemics such as Jean Isère and Marjorie Grene, to the sympathetic ones such as Iris Murdoch<sup>61</sup> and Robert Olson, all the way to the recent hermeneutics of Zahavi, Sartre has been *subjected* as leading us to a state of perennial conflict. What all these commentators have missed is to

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 272-3; all types of emphases are mine.

<sup>59</sup> Michel Henry, *Incarnation: A Philosophy of Flesh* (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 209.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Iris Murdoch, *Sartre, Romantic Rationalist* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1953).

*subject the text* to the following question; in Sartrean words, to resist it ontologically: How can Sartre talk about a radical freedom, a dreadful freedom to use Grene's phrase, and still make a claim about an ontological structure which suggests something so platonically eternal, the universal and the necessary, the *a priori*? What kind of antinomy is this to be free and at the same time be in conflict forever? One does not have to resort to *Nausea* or *The Words* for the answer. Even in *Being and Nothingness* and in *Materialism and Revolution* Sartre tried to empower us by analyzing the fact that we are *Nothing In Particular*, we are free, we can be anything we can be motivated to be. We are an ignition, an arche, a principle of being something by not being anything else and at the same time of being able to resist this being by being motivated to be something else. After all, to be motivated to do something one has to resist doing whatever it is that they are doing which is not what the motivation is for. But a freedom can only be revealed by another freedom. An 'I' needs the Other to be revealed as 'I.'

The conflict that has been characterizing most human relations, this intersubjection, is an *en-soi*, till the moment we say what the case is and the words cease to vibrate. That does not mean that there have not been any authentic intersubjective relations or that they could not be in the future. The ontological structure of conflict is about the past on which we reflect. There is no ontological force for determining the future or making the present words messianic, to use Derrida's expression; that it will always be like that. As long as we are we are choosing. Finally, to make a claim that something is not something else there must be some sort of experience of an ontological difference between the two. Therefore, an authentic intersubjectivity must have been felt so as to theorize about all other relations not being such. This ontological difference we can see in the writings of Emmanuel Lévinas, Alfred Schutz and Simone De Beauvoir.

In Lévinas,<sup>62</sup> the Other's face reveals the subjectivity that they are. It is a radical transcendence from the ultimate immanence of what I am to the revelation of the Other as what they are, the Other like me. Lévinas's account is a genetic account, an attempt to show that even when taking

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<sup>62</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1961).

Nietzschean naturalism or animalistic evolutionary Darwinism to the extreme, morality is not just custom or social constructed utilitarian rules. Morality is an optics, the first view of the Other qua Other qua me. Morality is a metaphysical connection to/with the Other, the breaking off my own egoistic contentment to the appreciation, understanding of the Other. In Lévinas's account the ontological structure of resistance-motivation is subtending the whole analysis.

If one is contented in their projects where the Other is but an object on the way, their being can be overcome and transformed just like in the case of transforming a trunk into wood for the fireplace. Why not kill if one can? Ultimately, in a pre-social atheistic animalistic condition there can be no ('civilized') reason at all for not killing the Other as one kills animals to be fed. According to Lévinas, it is the Other who reveals themselves as a subjectivity that I am and this situation arrests/resists the freedom of my being a potential killer. And this revelation need to come only in a conflict of equals, the same Nietzschean ethos, status. Lévinas is well aware of the part where Nietzsche explains the phenomenon of requital. But this requital construed ontologically can equally apply to cases of seemingly non-equals. Lévinas chooses to pose the question why one would not kill a helpless mother and an orphan. It is in their face that a requital is performed; a requital in the opposite direction. The resistance that the face of the helpless reveals is a pure communication of their inability *to physically* resist the killer. The potential killer is faced with something strange, a luminous sur-face. The face betrays the ontological I can of the expression I cannot physically resist you by hitting back or fleeing. This is still a resistance ontologically. It is still a requital. For Lévinas, the killer as a transcendence becomes a transcendence-transcended in the face of the Other's inability to physically resist the killer: I reveal you as a potential killer: You can kill me, I cannot physically resist you. I do not negate your physical freedom, I amplify it. I requite positively. *And thus you are free to choose*, or better yet, you are faced with choices as your path is interrupted. It is not disrupted, it is interrupted, there is communication in this event. You can kill me or help me, or leave me or... You have possibilities. But I revealed these possibilities for you, I phenomenalized them, I presented them to you, I presented your being free; I recognize your freedom as *we* were found in a situation; Your free choice becomes your responsibility: You can help me or you can kill or... But this I is not an eye/I. As Lévinas explains

elsewhere, this I cannot be converted into the grammar of consciousness. “It resists it to the point that even its resistance is converted into a content of consciousness...a face disconcerts the intentionality that aims at it.”<sup>63</sup> Lévinas keeps the metaphor of the sight not as vision which has a beginning/end in the visible object but an *optique* which is infinite. The Other is encountered as an infinity.

The face of the Other for Lévinas can reveal the subjectivity that they are by resisting positively, by looking at someone and presenting them their being without intention, in the pure givenness of the surrender, the ultimate positivity, a sacrifice. This dis-concerting, dis-orienting is an entropy. Shame as entropy is still at work before any further act is chosen. Simone Plourde uses the term “revirer” to express this movement: a turning anew, an entropy. Shame must be construed ontologically and not moralistically as it happens. Entropy is not *αἰδώς* (moral shame) but conditions it. Shame or entropy is the stopping of one’s way of being, one’s trope, one’s course of action. It is a turn on one’s being based on another, a cata-strophe ontologically speaking.<sup>64</sup> The presence of the Other freedom is that which will resist another by motivating it to understand, to reflect the being in which one is before being looked, that is faced with, ontologically. Therefore, the first experience is not an *apologia* as Lévinas states in the sense of giving an account of the act that was about to be done. Before the *apologia* there is always an *taцит omologia* (confession), an understanding that the Other is another like me.

This understanding of the Other as subjectivity that they are can be called, with Max Scheler, “participation” “as a re-action to the state and value of the other’s feelings.”<sup>65</sup> It is a fellow-feeling, feeling with, sympathy. This participation is not to be confused with the dominance of the subjective eyes on the Other as in the case of empathy as feeling the

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<sup>63</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, “The Trace of the Other,” translated by A. Lingis, in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345-359 at 353.

<sup>64</sup> In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida traces Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s theory of the genesis of language in a catastrophic trope cause by the finger of God. In Sartre, the catastrophe which is required for genesis is the Other, the Other’s look. I am born through the Other’s look which looks at me. [see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

<sup>65</sup> Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (London: Routledge & K. Paul. 1954), 14.

Other vicariously. “Thus in this case the two functions of vicariously visualized feeling and participation in feeling are separately given and must be sharply distinguished.”<sup>66</sup> The vicarious feeling is close to what we have been referring to as intersubjection. A subjection of the Other’s being to the Other of the subject who subjects.

Participation, sympathy, omologia, are all concepts that enable us to articulate and describe the metaphysical phenomenon of intersubjectivity. But again, these concepts have to be rid off their moralistic and rationalistic stains that various philosophies have burdened them over the years and transvaluated their meaning. Speaking ontologically, sympathy is not to be related to a particular emotional state; omologia (literally the same logos, confession) should not be related to any religious appropriation or the plato-aristotelian transvaluations of these concepts. Another attempt to clarify these concepts can be traced in the work of Alfred Schutz, for instance, who has attempted to describe exactly where such phenomena take place in the various ways that Self and Other relate in our social being.

In the *Homecomer* Schutz described the intersubjective experience as: “Our sharing a common vivid present this unique individual personality in this particular situation,” the “pure we-relation”<sup>67</sup> as “experiencing one another as unique personalities by following their unfolding thought as an ongoing occurrence and by sharing therefore their anticipations of the future as plans as hopes or as anxieties.”<sup>68</sup> In *Concept and Theory Formation of the Social Sciences*, the intersubjective experience is theorized through Max Weber’s *Verstehen*, understanding, «the protocol propositions of the psychophysical world,”<sup>69</sup> meaning. A phenomenon elusive of any sensory observation of sensory behaviour. This philosophical movement allowed Schutz to ask How is such *Verstehen* or understanding possible?<sup>70</sup>

The answer comes in *In Making Music Together*, since the above

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Alfred Schutz, “The Homecomer,” *American Journal of Sociology* 50.5 (1945), 371.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 372.

<sup>69</sup> Alfred Schutz, “Concept and Theory Formation of the Social Sciences,” in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, eds. Nathaniel Morris and Daniel O’Connor (Englewood Clifis, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967), , 380-390, at 381.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 383.

the question reveals:

the basic issue, namely, whether the communicative process is really the foundation of all possible social relationships, or whether, on the contrary, all communication presupposes the existence of some kind of social interaction which, though it is an indispensable condition of all possible communication, does not enter the communicative process and is not capable of being grasped by it.<sup>71</sup>

It is here that Schutz will re-visit Sartre and state that Sartre's basic concept of "looking at the other and being looked at by the other" (*le regard*),...examples of the endeavor to investigate what might be called the "mutual tuning-in relationship" upon which alone all communication is founded. It is precisely this mutual tuning-in relationship by which the 'I' and the 'Thou' are experienced by both participants as a 'We' in vivid presence; the possibility of living together simultaneously in specific dimensions of time:

...two series of events in inner time, one belonging to the stream of consciousness of the composer, the other to the stream of consciousness of the beholder, are lived through in simultaneity, which simultaneity is created by the ongoing flux of the musical process...this sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, this living through a vivid present in common, constitutes what we called in our introductory paragraphs the mutual tuning-in relationship, the experience of the 'We,' which is at the foundation of all possible communication.<sup>72</sup>

The example of making music together is not just an example or a creative thought experiment floating in the space of the philosopher's imagination. It is an actual experience. If we take into consideration the influence of Husserl on Schutz we can see what this tuning-in actually is. According to Husserl, consciousness is a structure of retention-consciousness of now-protention. The example Husserl gives us is that of understanding something as a melody. The melody consists a consciousness of the notes that I now hear and not completely let go as I anticipate the ones to come. The 'now,' as the Scottish say, is always a presence of

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<sup>71</sup> Alfred Schutz, "Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationships," *Social Research* 18.1 (1951), 78.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

what has passed and is to come. Subjectivity as consciousness is such a temporality that temporalizes itself. Therefore in the schema

Subjectivity 1: retention-consciousness of now-protention

Subjectivity 2: retention-consciousness of now-protention

it is the tuning-in of these structures necessary for the creation of a melody to occur. And we can take it further, by saying that all meaning is just a tuning-in. The expressions ‘I see what you mean,’ ‘I see your point,’ or ‘I lost you’ are all attempts to describe the stream of consciousnesses “lived through in simultaneity, which simultaneity is created by the ongoing flux of the [whatever] process...this sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, this living through a vivid present in common.” But this tuning-in insofar as each stream of consciousness is expressed freely means resistance/motivation is always conditioning this free expression whereby conflict may or may not occur. To reach balance playing see-saw fluctuations are most likely inevitable. And even if it takes forever to reach that tuning-in, that fine balance, it makes it even more rare and special.

***Intersubjectivity and Responsibility:  
Epilogue instead of Conclusion***

From the analysis above, it seems fair to appreciate that in our daily lives authentic we relations, intersubjective relations, are very rare if they ever occur. The evaluation of any fact is a choice we make and we have to take the full responsibility for it—lest in bad faith we attribute it to some God or to some paradox like an uncreated evolved yet open system of causal closed connections. In a system of head-phallo/capital exchange which is driven under the auspices of antagonism—where we eat each other symbolically as Derrida has showed—by competition and by the concept of the correct, of the winner, of the normal, it would be serious bad faith to maintain such relations as intersubjective, authentic we relations of subjectivities, of freedoms. Depressing? Very. Pessimistic? Not for a dreadful free subjectivity which resists and is motivated by a future s/he moves with complete responsibility to allow for free expression, for Otherness. Intersubjectivity is concealed, one can choose to unconceal it, and face it, and deal with it or remain in bad faith where everything is sour grapes—where everything is in-defer-ance.