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Unconsciousness Between Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis

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Chapter 2

Reflections on the Phenomenological Unconscious in Generative Phenomenology

Alexander Schnell

Abstract In the present contribution, the phenomenological unconscious is approached not in the sense of the psychoanalytic unconscious but on an “infra-conscious” level, below the “given,” as it were. I outline a threefold account of the “pre-conscious.” The three fundamental types of the phenomenological unconscious (in the narrow sense of the word) are: the genetic phenomenological unconscious, the hypostatic phenomenological unconscious, and the reflexive phenomenological unconscious. I explore how the phenomenological unconscious intervenes in the articulation between consciousness and self-consciousness. It is the Husserlian model of an “omni-intentionality” with its “nuclei” that makes it possible to clarify the status of self-consciousness (at the level of the phenomenological unconscious). I end by highlighting the plurality of fields corresponding to different “spheres” of the phenomenological unconscious.

Keywords Alterity • Architectonic • (Transcendental) field • Genesis • Imagination • Reflexion • Self-consciousness • Sense

The expression “generative phenomenology” stems from the work of Anthony Steinbock. Even if there is an overlap in our terminology, there are nevertheless fundamental differences. For Steinbock, “generative” is approached in a literal sense, with a special accent on the difference between “normality” and “abnormality.” In my own usage, “generative” refers to a surplus of meaning both beyond and below phenomenology’s descriptive framework. In this respect, generativity clarifies our understanding of phenomenology as transcendental insofar as it attends to the genesis of meaning itself. In short, my usage of “generative phenomenology” is distinct from Steinbock in the same respect that the term “constructive phenomenology” is distinct from the thought of Fink.

Translated by Audrey Petit-Trigg

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2.1 Introduction

The “unconscious” is, as we know, one of the main concepts of psychoanalysis. In the present chapter, I won’t be offering a reflection based on the given concepts of the unconscious, but to analyse the different occurrences and meanings of the unconscious in phenomenology, aiming at clarifying its status (both from an ontological point of view and from the point of view of its relationship to consciousness). Thus, the establishment of the rapport with psychoanalysis is justified from an important methodological point: if the unconscious (in any existing distinction) is defined by its irreducible qualitative difference towards “consciousness” or the “conscious”, then the question is, of course, to know what justifies conceding a phenomenological “infra-conscious” level, and how this one behaves towards what is given and manifests itself to consciousness.

The question of the phenomenological unconscious matters in many regards. First of all, the exactitude of its status plays a decisive part in the justification of what cannot be left, precisely in phenomenology, to the sole level of what is given and what is let being described, in order to render the sense of the emerging. The difficulty that this perspective shares indeed with any other that meets the unconscious, is that the fact of declaring this unconscious as *unconscious* could hide a presupposition that we would introduce surreptitiously via exactly this *unconscious* character, and of which the patient emphasis and revelation would orientate massively the analyses. Would the unconscious then constitute a sort of phenomenological Trojan horse?

Such an objection could rely on the idea that the reference to sense singularly orientates the debate. What will be strongly defended here is the idea that this reference to sense, in its link with the unconscious, is precisely the fundamental horizon of transcendental phenomenology. Therefore, we can say that the notion of unconscious, in its phenomenological given, is not at first acquiring, nor even conquering, but rather supports any analysis. To find a direction in the complex meanderings of the phenomenological unconscious we will rely on known distinctions.

In his famous Supplement XXI to Husserl’s *Krisis* (see Husserl 1976), Eugen Fink observed that the insufficient theorisations regarding the unconscious are holding onto a profound naïveté may it be towards the unconscious or consciousness. His principal reproach is directed against the idea that consciousness (as much as the unconscious) would be something that is given.

To define more precisely the problems that are at stake here, it would be necessary, first, to remind the different distinctions of “consciousness” in phenomenology (to which, as we will see, correspond different distinctions of the “unconscious”). In the *Fifth Logical Investigation*, Husserl had made a distinction (still employing then a—Brentanien—language, stemming for a sort of descriptive psychology, whereas he actually already clearly aimed at an eidetic phenomenological analysis) between, firstly, consciousness as the whole of “*real*” phenomenological components of the empiric Self as the entanglement (*Verwebung*) of psychological lived experience in the unity of the flux of lived times; secondly, consciousness as the internal becoming

aware (*Gewahrwerden*) of the own psychological lived times and, thirdly, consciousness as “psychological act” or as “intentional lived experience”. The first distinction presumes the second; the third distinction constitutes a part of what the first includes.

Yet if consciousness is defined by intentionality, the unconscious can only refer, in phenomenology, to a non-intentional dimension of consciousness: this does not concern the components of consciousness that one would inhabit or would apprehend (as, for example, the sensible data), but this underlines non-intentional “participation” (of which we will have to define the status) of consciousness in its relationship to the world. Three directions are indicated here (in response to the distinction made by Husserl): (I). The phenomenological unconscious indicates a character-in-depth (it has a *Feldhaftigkeit*), non-subjective field which, in a certain way, dissociates the consciousness from any subjectivity meaning a Self or an ego. (II). The phenomenological unconscious has a reflexive character, directing consciousness in an internal manner on itself, or, at least, on something that, inside this “depth”, is not qualitatively distinct from itself. (III). Finally, the phenomenological unconscious contributes to a relationship of exteriority, it participates to the ecstatic openness to an alterity that presents itself under different types. In short, it appears that the phenomenological unconscious is thus corresponding to a threefold “pre-conscious” dimension preceding and instituting consciousness in a way.

In what follows, I will question the status of the unconscious in phenomenology through this threefold perspective: with respects to the distinction in between the different levels of depth, with respects to the articulation of the internal consciousness and what this one is conscious of; and with respects to the different types that the unconscious reveals, to what I would call a “phenomenology without phenomenality”. What will be at stake, then, is the question of the pre-intentional dimension, or furthermore non-intentional, of the intentionality itself. For reasons justified from an architectonic point of view, I won’t follow the arrangement proposed by Husserl, but I will follow the reversed order.

2.2 The Different Types of the Unconscious in Phenomenology

In a general way, the first issue is to know how to access the phenomenological unconscious. In the present set of reflections, I cannot answer directly to this question—and this is due to the very nature of the inquiry. There is a hiatus between what is given in the immanence, on one side, and the unconscious, on the other side; if we could recount this passage, the unconscious would be then reduced to a modality of consciousness. At the same time, not only must there be a certain link between these two registers, or else what is at play in the phenomenological unconscious would not have any impact on consciousness. At the same time, there must also be a certain type of consciousness recognized at the level of this unconscious (and

within itself), or else, it could not be accessed. And all the difficulty here is to keep the assurance—which is no other than the loyalty to the phenomena—of not introducing what is related to projections or unfounded constructions.

In which order can this link be? The two classic answers (in the transcendental tradition) are the following. First, it is either an order of “conditioning”, or, second, an effect of “residue”. In the first case, what is made of this unconscious is only a combination of transcendental conditions that have to be assumed (to recount the phenomena), but that cannot be experienced because they have no sort of reality themselves. In the second case, we consider consciousness like a sort of symptom from which we are going back to its primal and original activity. We will think these two solutions one through the other. The idea of the residue of a constitutive activity only makes sense if we succeed in establishing the type of necessity created there; and the transcendental conditioning can only constitute a convincing approach if we present both the ontological status of transcendental elements and the attachment of the constituted to its transcendental origins.

If consciousness is always consciousness of something, would this mean that the unconscious would be devoid of any noematic correlate? The particularity of the phenomenological unconscious resides in the fact that this correlate is not “given”—but not in the meaning in which something non-thematic could be brought to light thanks to an intentional analytic which would reveal the implicit syntheses at stake in such and such phenomena. This non-given-ness refers more to another type of correlation, that is to say a non-intentional correlation. As seen in this way, it is then a matter of clarifying the possibility and the status of such correlate, questioning the irreducible character of the intentionality.

With respects to the definition (or rather the definitions) of consciousness given by Husserl in the *Logical Investigations*, many examples of a “phenomenology of the unconscious” could be quoted. I will only mention three of these here. First, the phenomenology of time of Husserl himself, particularly in the *Bernau's Manuscripts* where the father of phenomenology operates, through his analysis of the *Zeitobjekt*, a disconnection between temporality and objectivity (and therefore between the “time-object” and the objective correlates of the intentionality of action), which necessitates to place oneself beyond the immanent sphere of consciousness (and which I call, to be faithful to the Husserlian terminology, the “pre-immanent” sphere) (Schnell 2004). Second, the Levinasian analyses in *Totality and Infinity* (Levinas 1969) of an “epiphany of the face” which are centred around a manifestation of the alterity which is not a “content” (Levinas means: a sensible content bond to be apprehended by an intentional consciousness), nor an “un-intentionality” of any sort, but involving a destitution which precisely makes any phenomenology of intentionality implode (cf. Schnell 2010). Finally, the Richirian phenomenology of the “phenomenon as nothing but phenomenon” that the author of *Phénomènes, temps et êtres* (Richir 1987), developing his own understanding of transcendental phenomenology, phrases in these terms:

The transcendental phenomenology takes roots [...] in the question of the phenomenon insofar as it is not always already “interpreted” as any other phenomenon but itself (a pre-existing structure, a thing or an object to which correspond determined concepts or ideas),

as a consequence, of the phenomenon considered as *nothing but* phenomenon, where comes out and appears only the phenomenon. [...] Our consideration of the phenomenon as *nothing but* phenomenon, comes down to radicalize the Husserlian phenomenological reduction and to give it a new meaning: what is at stake here is to consider the phenomenon outside (by bracketing or disconnection) of any positivity and any determinity which is not susceptible, for us, to come to it from anywhere and by anywhere, of which it although constitutes [...] the transcendental matrix. (Richir 1987, p. 18)

Even if the terminology will evolve during the three last decades, this project aiming at installing himself in the phenomenological sphere beyond what is given and ‘symbolically instituted’ characterises definitely Richir’s approach in his re-foundation of (transcendental) phenomenology (see Schnell 2011).

The genetic phenomenological unconscious I see in these different elaborations (which are in no way exhausting the typology of the phenomenological unconscious) trace a common motive, which I will offer to generalize or, at least, to extend to what I call the “genesis of factuality” operating in a strictly phenomenological frame. One of the first distinctions of the phenomenological unconscious is notified where we transgress or leave the sphere of an “immanent” given. But what is motivating precisely this descent beyond the immanent sphere? Two aspects are decisive here: “objectively” the encounter of originating “facts” that the phenomenologist has to “geneticise” if he or she doesn’t want to remain “blocked” in the descriptive analysis; “subjectively”, the search for a mode of comprehension and appropriation preventing from the mistake of the “idealistic” and the “realistic,” these are phenomena that are not the result of a constitutive consciousness but that we do not yet have to consider as a simple pre-supposed state (and therefore an irreducible fact).

We know that the intentional analysis in Husserl aims at revealing the whole of operations or effectuations of the “transcendental subjectivity” (mainly this is here a matter of syntheses (may they be active and/or passive) that are at play in any consciously rapport. Insofar as these “*fungierende Leistungen*” are not explicitly conscious, but demanding to take on of the phenomenological attitude (consisting of a reflexive attitude, buried, in a way, when we are directing ourselves directly towards an object), does it mean then that it would be here a first modality of the phenomenological unconscious? The answer is negative, because the phenomenological attitude implies a method which reveals these effectuations in an intuitive evidence. These effectuations (including the “intentionality of horizon”) are therefore not unconscious, but require a specific stance, allowing descriptions that are re-effectible by everyone.

But this “intuitive evidence” is not expandable to infinity: when we are apprehending “limit situations” of phenomenological description, it can happen to be leading to some impasses. For example, on the level of the constitution of the intimate consciousness of time, evidence doesn’t give the legitimating resources to clarify the status of “original constitutive phenomena” and of the immanent temporality. The requirement which is then imposed, to descend beyond the immanent sphere of consciousness opens on a “pre-immanent” field which constitutes a first type of phenomenological unconscious (which is not down to refuse conceding to

consciousness the possibility of “appropriating” itself its object, but rather opens on a new type of “appropriation” and “comprehension”).

The particularity, which is at the same time a difficulty, cannot rely on anything that is given, but exclusively drawn from a certain negative dimension of the phenomenal content (for example: the originary temporality is *not* subjective, because this would lead to a regression to infinity, *nor* objective, because this would come down to a petition of principle). This “negativity” doesn’t give room to a “nothing”, but establishes exactly a link between (immanent) “consciousness” and what is possible to draw “beyond” it—and constitutes there precisely the fundamental characteristic of this first type of phenomenological unconscious (which I call the “genetic phenomenological unconscious”¹).

2.3 The Hypostatic Phenomenological Unconscious

The “genetic phenomenological unconscious” is not submitted to a universal regulation; it discovers its legality in the genesis itself (which is different each time, depending on the considered objects) and therefore has a fundamental tendency towards mobility, diversity, and change. It reveals the share of fluctuation and of fleetness beyond the stability of objective reality. Yet there is a second type of phenomenological unconscious which goes towards fixity and immobility. The world is permanently genesis as much as hypostasis. Our relationship to it is mediated both by the genetic phenomenological unconscious and by the hypostatic phenomenological unconscious. To speak the Richirian language, we would say that the architectonic transposition (which occurs everywhere and every time) of the phantasia in imagination (and perception) precisely supposes a hypostatic fixation of what has been first moved by the genesis.

It is important to underline that the hypostasis is not first, nor exclusively, the fact of language—even if the latter is a sort of first “mark”. The hypostasis (that we understand here in a different meaning than the Levinasian use) “occurs” already within the thinking and inside of it. Any reflexive consciousness carries it out; without it, we would not be conscious of space, nor of a certain aspect of time, even if, of course, time in its “flux” is precisely opposed to space insofar as it is fundamentally characterized by hypostasis. The hypostatic phenomenological unconscious is the first stabiliser of any activity of the intellect.

In a certain manner, we could relate the “genesis” and the “hypostasis” with what Freud had identified in terms of “life drive” and “death drive”. With the fundamental difference, though, that the hypostasis, as Blumenberg had seen it in his way, is condition of life, an organisational principle allowing it to orientate and impose itself. Without mentioning the fact that genesis and hypostasis do not belong to an

individual nor to a particular psyche, but are constitutive of a transcendental dimension of the meaning waiting to happen.

What justifies here to speak about two different “types” of the phenomenological unconscious? The genetic phenomenological unconscious and the hypostatic phenomenological unconscious are already distinct by the fact that the first is by right variable to infinity (according to the “*facta*” to geneticise) whereas the second always generates one same aspect of the phenomenon (that is to say its “stability” and its “fixity”).

But their difference lies in another aspect: the hypostatic phenomenological unconscious has a fundamental rapport to the *real* (to the “factuality of the ‘real’ world”) whereas the genetic phenomenological unconscious rather concerns the clarification of a certain modality of the knowledge of phenomenon. This difference refers then to the one between an *ontological* level and an *epistemological* level, even if, of course, one is not drawing here the idea of an opposition between the ontology and the theory of knowledge. As we will see for the third type of phenomenological unconscious, we are dealing here with a perspective situated beyond this distinction. The “stabilisation” as I just indicated it, is the fact of *imagination* (in the strict meaning of the term²). The “act of imaging” characteristic of imagination constitutes precisely this fixation in question here.

2.4 The Reflexible Phenomenological Unconscious

A third type of phenomenological unconscious is not concerned by phenomena (to “geneticise” or to “stabilize”) but by the legitimisation of the conditioning (and constitutive) quality of the phenomenological discourse itself. As I have argued elsewhere (Schnell 2015), we could make a distinction between three “sorts” of phenomenological constructions. Whereas the phenomenological construction of the first sort is strictly commended by the “*facta*” to geneticise, the phenomenological constructions of the second and third sorts “are feeding” themselves (in a way) from an unconscious “process” or a “operation”, that the speculative transcendentalism aims at unveiling. These “operations” are no other than the ones of an *imaging* process.³

We must first note that the fact of raising the question of such a “feeding” entails obviously important risks. If this one corresponded to the idea of a sort of “matrix”, surreptitiously introduced, that could be used here as “funds” from which would be drawn any and every elaboration of a generative phenomenology, then this would evidently have no phenomenological value and would, at the very most, be of use in

²In distinction to “phantasy” and “reflexibility” (cf. the next note).

³Let us note, however, that this “imaging process” must be understood as having three meanings. First, phantasy operates at the level of a genetic phenomenological unconscious; second, the imagination operates at the level of a hypostatic phenomenological unconscious; finally, reflexivity operates as that of a reflexive phenomenological unconscious.

¹In the sense of a “transcendental genesis” (which is to say, I insist on a “constructive phenomenology”).

the case of a certain “metaphysic”, faced with which we would have, furthermore, every reason to be suspicious.

What is then the phenomenological meaning of the recourse to this imaging process? Here, we aim at analysing what is “founding” the “imaginary constitution” of the real. To demand the justification—all the more in the domain of the unconscious—of such a process is probably a vain request and shall never find any satisfying answer. Here, and on this aspect Hegel will always be right, only the *realisation* of such a project can act as a legitimising “guarantor”. Nonetheless, all we can say is that the specificity of this third type of phenomenological unconscious is to “reflect” every other in an implicit way (that is to say, the two others and itself)—meaning that not only does it reflect *on* them but also it unveils their legality (that is to say what makes the reflexion *possible*).

Thus the reflexible unconscious is characterized by a sort of “doubling”—giving it a “possible” quality—which leads it to act on the totality of the sphere of the phenomenological unconscious. What can we understand by this? We have seen that on the level of the “hypostatic phenomenological unconscious”, imagination acted as a “stabilising” factor of the real. At the level of the “reflexible phenomenological unconscious”, by contrast, the imagination is developing all its constitutive and reflexive quality (notably concerning the “self-reflecting law” of reflexion). The unconscious is structured as an imaging ability—including, I insist, the genetic dimension as well as the hypostatic dimension of the two first types of phenomenological unconscious.

2.5 The Question of the “Self-Consciousness”

Up until now, the concept of a “phenomenological unconscious” was analysed with regard to the articulation of the possible articulation between an epistemological perspective and an ontological perspective. This problematic concerns the rapport to the “object” and questions the manner in which the phenomenological method contaminates, if we can say it this way, the *Being*. Yet the phenomenological unconscious also intervenes on another level: that of the articulation between the consciousness and the consciousness of “self” (naturally in the “non-subjective” sense, characterizing this “pre-conscious” field).

Fink righteously insisted on the fact (that we have already referred to), that all the problematization of the unconscious generally suffers from a lack with respects to the comprehension and clarification of the consciousness. The consciousness is not a “bone”: it is not of any kind of given objectivity and, in particular, it is not an instrument or a tool that one could “apply” to something (to its “object”). The paradox of consciousness, and most particularly of the self-consciousness, is that it is precisely played and at play at the level of the unconscious (or at least in the phenomenological sense of the term).

The fundamental argument is that self-consciousness, and same for any consciousness of the object, cannot be explained through the means of reflexion, but by

implementing an immediate rapport precisely stemmed from the unconscious. In the history of philosophy, and particularly in the history of phenomenology, different explanatory models of self-consciousness were offered. The most known is first the *reflexive* model (which can be traced back to Classical English Philosophy): according to this model, not only is self-consciousness a specific type of consciousness of the object (where the object is nothing else but the conscious subject itself) but (and this is a perspective that belongs to classical German philosophers) this self-consciousness is even considered as a *condition* for the object-consciousness.

For Brentano, the difficulties linked to this conception (making then impossible, in particular, the instantaneous prehension of the “*present*” consciousness) pushed him to acknowledge a “internal consciousness” which Sartre will then take on through the idea of “non-thetical self-consciousness” within any thetical consciousness of the object. But these two models are not without difficulties because they leave in the dark the status of this “internal” consciousness or of this “non-thetical” consciousness (of self).

The critiques have often repeated that the constitution of the consciousness of time in Husserl, if it prolonged the path first opened by Brentano, still nonetheless fell into difficulties marking the reflexive model (I am relying in this context on the famous Supplement IX of the *Zeitvorlesungen* published in 1928). In reality, Husserl had elaborated, since 1917/1918, in the *Bernau Manuscripts*, a strong alternative to this reflexive model, which was not really noticed (or at least did not capture the attention of the critiques). This alternative was that of an “omni-intentional” model.

I have explored this model elsewhere (Schnell 2004), showing, in particular, that Husserl was looking to give an account of the constitution of the immanent temporality using a phenomenological construction of the “original process” which was substituted to the phenomenological description of the “absolute flux of consciousness” delivered in his previous manuscripts (and reproduced in the *Zeitvorlesungen*).

This original process is constituted of phases, more precisely: of “cores” through and through intentional—hence, therefore, the idea of an “omni-intentionality”. But one difficulty persists (of which we can ask ourselves if it is more due to a moment of hesitation in Husserlian analyses or to the lack of interpretative tools brought by the commentator). Is there, strictly speaking, a phenomenological testimonial of this “omni-intentionality” or is it only a matter of a somewhat epistemological system related to the phenomenological construction?

The explicative reflexive model of self-consciousness raises a fundamental issue. How can the “self (-subject)” acknowledge, in the *return* of the self to the self, that the “self (-object)” of the consciousness is *identical* to this “self (-subject)”? So that there would not be here a simple comparison between two particular “objects”—supposedly meant to be identical, each time, to the “subject”—the self(-subject) has to be, prior to this, somewhat “in acquaintance” vis-à-vis itself. This forces us to admit, if consciousness is still “consciousness of something”, that is to say a subject *in scission* with its object, an *unconscious* dimension of consciousness which precisely assures the consciousness of the *self*. But this “un-consciousness” is nothing like a “phenomenological construction”—hence why we are distancing it from the three types of phenomenological unconscious exposed above. What Husserl looked

to approach with his concept of “core”, of “phase” of the “original process”, is precisely a type of “consciousness”, a “*lived experience*”, allowing the self-consciousness to appear in a pre-intentional transparency.

It is indeed the only way to give a comprehensible meaning to the “omni-intentionality”, precisely because the intentionality always presupposes a level of non-intentionality (for example: the apprehension supposes an apprehension content which is not, in its turn, intentional)—which means, going backwards, that what is *omni-intentional* is not *stricto sensu* intentional, but actually *pre-intentional*. The concept of “core” is employed to clarify the dimension concerning the *self-consciousness* of any consciousness. I would characterize it (as I provisionally did above) as “pre-reflexive”, if this did not suppose the *telos* of reflection. Yet the “reflection” is located in a superior level (*höherstufig*) or inferior—superior, when it is erected on an already operating consciousness; inferior, when it concerns a phenomenological construction. How are the previously analysed “constructive” dimension and the dimension of the “lived experience” articulated one to another?

2.6 The Plurality of Fields

One of the enigmas met by generative phenomenology concerns the revealing of different “spheres” or different phenomenological “fields”. Two points must be made out here. On the one hand, the “transcendental subjectivity” opens on several fields or spheres. On another hand, it is fundamentally itself a field—and therefore not a subject, an ego, a consciousness of an individuality of any nature. Let us clarify the first point. One of the greatest difficulties in attempting to clarify the phenomenological unconscious concerns the determination of the different “spheres” of consciousness, notably when it comes to the difference between the “immanent” sphere and the “pre-immanent” sphere.

Fink had already warned us against the tendency (Husserlian in his opinion) to “compartmentalize” the different levels of consciousness (and notably the objective reality, the immanent consciousness and the absolute flux of consciousness). On one side, the distinction between the three types of the phenomenological unconscious already presupposes the difference between these two spheres (none of these three types is conceivable without acknowledging a *pre-immanent* sphere); on the other side, the irreducible “attachment to the real” forbids us to venture in metaphysical speculations for which we would not be able to provide a concrete testimonial.

Here operates, still anew, a “generative zigzag” not only between the (phenomenological) construction and what is to be constructed, but also between different forms of transcendental “projects”, “projections”, on one side, and a testimonial in the “lived experiences” on another side, of which the “cores” of the “original process” are only an illustration from the simple level of the problematic of the status of self-consciousness. Thus the rapport between the immanent sphere and the pre-immanent sphere must be conceived outside any spatial coordinate. Notably, here a

tension is developed, or rather *fields* of tension which characterize the phenomenological transcendental (and its unconscious dimension) in its fleetness.

This very last aspect fundamentally contaminates the very status of “subject” and “subjectivity”. The “subject” is not a “starting point” (which doesn’t mean we would or should make an economy of it). What is presented at the beginning, if there is one is the production as enigmatic as ceaseless of “sense”. If the expression of a “non-subjective” phenomenology can have any meaning, it is at this level that, without a doubt, it has to apply. The difficulty is not so much to know how an isolated subject comes to the world, to the exteriority, to the real, but, on the contrary, how the “*Sinnbildung*” is crystallised in a Self.

2.7 The Architectonic

Relying on a concept originated in Kant, Richir often refers to the notion that I will appropriate myself here: that of the “architectonic”. The author of the “transcendental doctrine of the method” (in the first *Critique*) saw in it the internal systematic of philosophy in general, and of reason in particular. By this, I mean (following Richir) the *quasi* organic (alive, even) network of the “functions”, of the “effectuations” and also (in places) of the “concepts” holding together “the thought” and making it *coherent* (presenting itself, in the Finkian language, as an “open system”). I am saying “*the thought*” even though, *stricto sensu*, it is *plural* (of an indefinite plurality); and I am saying “*the thought*” (and not the “reason”) because it is not at all an “ability” attributable to a “subject”. There is an “architectonic”, in that sense, in any place and anytime coherence expends (complex and sometimes difficult to explore and analyse) from the “*Sinnbildung*”.

Yet, if the different architectonics characterizing the “systematic” elaborations of philosophers, even the most important ones, are different each time (may it be only sensibly), it is because here, it is not the “subjectivity” that is at play, but the “singularity” (this term is from Richir as well) of the philosopher. Hence the importance to consider this term in the context of a reflection on the phenomenological unconscious: the meaning happening in an anonymous genesis is not the result of a “subject”, but it is not either (and in no case) a kind of absolute and neutral structure, delivered, at the very most, to a purely conceptual, even grammatical, analysis.

Thus the phenomenology of the un-conscious must necessarily (and nevertheless) treat with the rapport to the singular consciousness, which is not amount to the simple individual and empirical consciousness, but of which Heidegger had maybe glimpsed on, by insisting on the “*Jemeinigkeit* (ownness)” of *Dasein* in *Sein und Zeit*. This “singularity” is assisting the effectuation of the “*Sinnbildung*” as much as it is assisting it. The “architectonic” is then the name given to the characterization of the thinking insofar as it puts at stake both a “generative” dimension and a “lived experience” dimension; and it refers both to the “non-subjective” dimension of the “*Sinnbildung*” and to the “subjective” dimension of the “singularity”

of the “thinker” (insofar as he is on “the first line”⁴ and can only “be fed”, faced with “the thing itself” to be thought, from what is announced by far as a coherence to come and as a confirmation of what has been left within and in virtue of the thought to be).

2.8 Conclusion

One major point we shall remember from what precedes is the dynamic character of the phenomenological unconscious (a lesson which will of course not teach anything to the psychoanalyst that he does not already know of). What appeared was that the question of knowing what is the phenomenological unconscious turned rather into this other question which is to know how it operates and how it is effectuated. Let us recapitulate the essential results which we came to. The dynamic character of the phenomenological unconscious is inseparable from its “pre-donation” dimension. Following the order stated at the beginning (orientated with regards to a pre-intentional, non-intentional even, dimension of the transcendental consciousness), we can note three dimensions of the phenomenological unconscious:

1. Three different types of phenomenological unconscious (from the point of view of the “objective” side): the genetic unconscious, the hypostatic unconscious and the reflexible unconscious.
2. The unconscious dimension of the self-consciousness.
3. The “field” dimension characterizing this phenomenological unconscious.

But another order was crystallised in the previous elaborations, which is insisting in particular on the importance of the “imaging process” of any sense (“*Sinnbildung*”) and the status of “self”: indeed, we have, on one side, three ways in which the imagination (in the broad sense) operates beyond the immanent consciousness (the genesis of immanent *facta*, the hypostasis constituting the imaginal part of the factuality of the real world and the reflexivity concerning the auto-legitimation of the phenomenological discourse); and we have, on the other side, three ways in which the unconscious participates to the clarification of the status of “self” (more precisely: of the self-consciousness, of the field character of the transcendental consciousness and of the architectonic). Thus, the phenomenological unconscious is strongly contaminated by the problematic of the image, and it raises again from a renewed perspective the question of the status of the self.

I will end with a note on the position defended here *vis-à-vis* the one defended by Levinas. One of the examples I took from the beginning to illustrate the perspective of a phenomenological unconscious was indeed that of the *face* in its Levinasian apprehension. Yet if we come back to the analyses previously developed, with respect to this unconscious in phenomenology, we could argue that the transcendental(ist) perspective adopted here is completely missing out on the project

exposed in *Totality and Infinity*—may it be only because this unconscious is thematized in a (transcendental, precisely) field located beyond the one of alterity, towards which Levinas had, as we know, directed the first philosophy understood as “ethical”. How can we get out of such an appearing contradiction?

Levinas had considered that one approach of the “alterity” (as he had understood it) was impossible in the frame of a philosophy—and in particular of a phenomenology—of knowledge. One of the aims of the present elaborations is to “save” an “epistemological” perspective without falling again in the perspective criticized by Levinas—that is to say falling again into the position which assimilates knowledge with a sort of “identification” and which points out the priority of the objectifying consciousness. The fact to put imagination at the foreground is thus another way of attempting at giving alterity a central role in any knowledge—“alterity” which is indeed not the face of the other, but which is not either the “neutral sameness” turning knowledge into a simple instrument at the service of any “will for knowledge” or “will for power”.

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⁴This expression is by P. Loraux.