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BEYOND HUSSERL, HEIDEGGER, AND MERLEAU-PONTY: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MARC RICHIR

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In this article, I aim to introduce Marc Richir's refoundation of transcendantal phenomenology. Starting from the double—"symbolic" and properly "phenomenological"—constitution of the concept of phenomenon, I present the key concepts of Richir's "phenomenology nova methodo*": hyperbolical phenomenological* epoché*, schematism, affectivity, phantasy, and so on. Beneath the distinction between theory of knowledge and ontology, I seek to understand both the sense of what he calls the "endogenization" of the phenomenological field and, "beyond Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty," the role of temporality in the phenomenalization of the phenomenon.*

Marc Richir's oeuvre is now closed. Interrupted and not entirely completed, given that it has always been driven by an "'immemorial and immature'...(self-)generation of sense [*sens se faisant*],"[1] it represents at the same time a "regrounding" and a "recasting"[2] (metaphorically conceived in a quasi-metallurgic sense) of a certain German and French phenomenological tradition. Insofar as this oeuvre is still relatively unknown[3], we intend here to present some

[1] Marc Richir, *Fragments phénoménologiques sur le temps et l'espace* (Grenoble: Millon, 2006), 25.

[2] In his excellent work, *Phénoménologie de l'espace-temps chez Marc Richir* (Grenoble: Millon, 2013), Robert Alexander makes an appropriate distinction between "recasting [*refonte*]" (the first step that represents the "fusion" of philosophical concepts inherited from the past) and the "regrounding [*refondation*]" of phenomenology (which corresponds to the effective, and positive, realization of the Richirian reformation of transcendental phenomenology). However, these terms are used somewhat indifferently in Richir, so we will use the term regrounding in this article to refer to these two conceptions.

[3] Richirian studies have seen a tremendous growth in the past decade. This is most evident in the *Annales de Phénoménologie* published by the *Association pour la promotion de la phénoménologie.* The recent work, *L'écart et le rien. Conversations avec Sacha Carlson* (Grenoble: Millon, 2015), represents an excel-

fundamental aspects of this "regrounding" of phenomenology by focussing on the ways in which the notable influences of Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and Heidegger contextualize the development of Richir's original and novel project.

What presides over Richir's entire philosophical project[4] is the calling into question of the idea that every relationship to the world—be it "affective," "intellectual," and so on—has its origin and its source in a "subject" that refers itself back to an "outside" world. The starting point of a "regrounded" phenomenology—and it is here the first original point of Richir's work—is *not* an individual subjectivity, but the "impersonal" and "*asubjective*" "processes" and "operations" (*Leistungen*) of the *(self-)generation of sense* (*Sinnbildung*). The above gives rise to an irreducible ("internal") *dualism* (that is bridged by multiple imbrications and entanglements) between the procedures of *shaping, activation,* and *appropriation* of sense and the profoundly *affective* dimension, put into motion by the former, of this same sense. This dualism is—in the terms employed by Richir—one between schematism[5] and affectivity, or again, between that which falls under the "schematic" and the "proto-ontological." This dualism is redoubled by a second, equally "internal" rift—and here we find the fundamental paradox of what emerges as an "endogeni-

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lent introduction to his oeuvre. We could also point in this regard to the following works: H.-D. Gondek & L. Tengelyi, *Neue Phänomenologie in Frankreich* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011); A. Schnell, *Le sens se faisant* (Brussels: Ousia, 2011); F. Forestier, *La phénoménologie génétique de Marc Richir* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014) and the works of P. Posada Varela published in the *Annales de Phénoménologie* as well as in the Spanish journal *Eikasia* (www.revistadefilosofia.org). There are also quite a few very promising doctoral theses under way (we could mention here those of I. Fazakas and P. Flock).

[4] Which is equally true of other major representatives of contemporary phenomenology who are writing in French.

[5] The "schematism"—for which we must emphasize the constituting link with "*Sinnbildung*"—is one of the most fundamental (and the most innovative) concepts of Richirian phenomenology. On the one hand, it designates a dual "movement" of "*articulation*" and "*appropriation*" (be it *of* language or *outside* language). It is by virtue of this movement that a sense (be it only "in the making" or already distinctly graspable) becomes a sense *for us.* On the other hand, it designates at once the temporality-spationalization (that is itself neither temporal nor spatial) and what, *from the "inside"* so to speak, "logically" "sustains" the discourse (knowing that in certain cases, as in poetry for example, it is the *expression* that sustains it). The schematism replaces the classical (and phenomenologically inadequate) conception of the shaping of (sensible) "matter" resulting from the synthetic activity of the intellect.

zation"[6] of the phenomenological field in general and of the phenomenon in particular—this time between the "duality" of the schematic/proto-ontological (*Leiblichkeit/Leibhaftigkeit*) and an "absolute"[7] radical transcendence that we must necessarily presume so that the affectivity can be schematized and that this schematism does not schematize "emptily" or "in a vacuum." This double dualism—which is a "good dualism" as opposed to the "bad dualisms"—enables us to overcome the impasse that we have recognized in the philosophical tradition to date (relative to the dualisms of mind/body, understanding/sensibility, consciousness/world, subject/object, and so on). Its value in overcoming the bad dualisms is twofold: it seeks to avoid the trap of "realist" and "materialist" ideologies, and the false question regarding the possibility of the "reality of the outside world."[8]

The difficulty is that the "internal," "asubjective," or "presubjective" dimension characterizing the first dualism is neither "objective" nor "worldly," but must also be accounted for otherwise than by appealing to the vocabulary of "passivity" or of the "unconscious" (particularly in the psychoanalytic sense). Here too the Richirian regrounding of phenomenology offers a new ("architectonic") starting point for phenomenological research. Contrary to Husserl, this starting point must not be sought in the *intentional* experiences of consciousness—that is to say, in the *objectifying* acts for which *perception* represents the basis against which everything is measured in relation to the object—but in the *phantasíai*, in the types of "representations," specific to "*phantasía*" (*Phantasie*), that are *pre-intentional* and situate themselves *beneath* all objectifying perceptions. These non-figurable *phantasíai* only appear in the form of "silhouettes" (inchoate) or "shadows," at once impossible to seize concretely and insusceptible to being fixed. The reason is that they are most able to account for the originary *distance with oneself* characterizing all experience and, in particular, all human experience.[9] The new starting point of Richirian phenomenology—

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[6] If Richir does not use this term himself, it nonetheless appears to me perfectly appropriate to describe the fundamental orientation of his phenomenology (unlike many other contemporary phenomenological projects); it effectively contains both the ideas of a "kind" of "*inside*" and that of a "*genesis*" (due to the schematism).

[7] Note that for Richir, "absolute transcendence" is not a brand of the so-called "theological turn" in recent French phenomenology.

[8] Keeping in mind that this double objective is exactly what Fichte was getting at with his *Wissenschaftslehre* and, in a certain sense, also the Heidegger of the 1920s.

[9] For Richir, this will lead to the foundation of a *phenomenological anthropology.*

mobilized in Richir's work since 2000[10]—consists in exploring the "imaginative" basis of intentionality (in Richirian language: relating to "*phantasía*"), and this beneath all objectivization.[11] What we have then is a "theatre of shadows" that is for all this not purely chaotic, but where the phenomena may be apprehended due to a "*mathesis* of instability." It is in this sense that the Richirian regrounding of phenomenology is still a kind of *transcendental* philosophy, but in a different sense than that of Kant or Fichte (and even, in a broader sense, than that of Husserl).

I

Jumping into Richir's thought—as every reader who attempts it will attest—is a formidable challenge. He does not write traditional philosophical treatises: generally speaking, he does not define the terms he uses (or rarely does)[12]—and this in spite of the fact that he uses very idiosyncratic language—he does not state a plan, and he does not start with a hypothesis to then work out its consequences and implications. He offers the reader little direction, and incessantly

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[10] Works in which, to say it another way, Richir clarifies the transcendental sense of the "*'power' of the phenomenolization*" that *phantasía* consists in (and which he had earlier called "imagination" in its Fichtean sense). See for example *Du sublime en politique* (Paris: Payot, 1991), 55.

[11] We must take note that the use of the term "imagination" is only justified in the context of these summary considerations. To be absolutely accurate, we must conform to an important Husserlian analysis that distinguishes between *phantasía* and *imagination*—only the first falls within the purview of the new phenomenological basis under discussion here, one which is found beneath all objectivizing intentionality.

[12] To be more subtle and accurate with regard to his process: Richir frequently introduces a term (*e.g.* schematism, the institution, temporalization in language, *phantasía*, the sublime, etc.) *in the context of a specific analysis* and subsequently (sometimes many years later) takes up the term again in a larger context, often modifying it, *while fully integrating it in his studies*; that is to say, by carrying out a "*recasting*" in the aforementioned sense of the word. It is therefore essential that we always return to these initial analyses to reconfigure its elaborations and modifications, in order to be able to grasp the precise meaning of the concept in question (transformed, in this reappropriation by Richir, into a *new* concept). Richir's oeuvre thus represents a particularly impressive iteration of the Heideggerian idea (contained implicitly in §74 de *Sein und Zeit*) that the "authentic" philosopher, instead of referring herself to her "destinal sending" (insofar as it would be any one of the "heroic" pasts of her people), is rather the one who is able to produce an original and innovative unity between her own elaborations and the most powerful moments in the history of philosophy.

throws him *supra* ("as we have seen") or *infra* ("as we will get to later"), which only increases the sinuous and seemingly complex character of his reflections. However, there are some properly *philosophical* reasons for this. If he proceeds this way, it is not simply to avoid being "academic" or because his position is itself un*clear*, even if, it is understood, the difficulty of the "*thing*" (*Sache*) itself complicates the task for whoever engages in it. If it is difficult to "enter into" his thought and to understand it, it is because in a sense one must *already* be in it, given that it is a philosophy always already "on a journey." His work illustrates the idea—which Foucault, for example, had already formulated a long time ago—that for the philosopher today, it is no longer possible to adopt a point of view "from above," that it is no longer a matter of using a "philosophical consciousness," transparent and clairvoyant, that would open one's eyes to the "natural consciousness" on which one's positions could safely stand. And so, philosophical activity is an activity that understands in a completely originary and primordial way that all experience, as we have already seen—and so *a fortiori* all "experience of thinking"—is always already *at a distance* with itself and invariably contains an irreducible opacity. As a result, the philosopher cannot take a step back to put before herself an object, a thought, in dialogue with itself, that she could grasp in its entirety and then expose in a systematic and linear way. Of course, philosophical activity is a *reflective* activity, but not in the sense in which the philosopher, looking from "elsewhere," would gaze *upon* the thought itself. Philosophizing means being submerged *in* thought—taking it "*en route*." To the extent that everything that relates to the senses does not have an attributable origin, it stands to reason that this also follows for the discourse that deals with it.

II

The Richirian "regrounding" of phenomenology reconsiders the nature and status of the "phenomenon."[13] In phenomenology, as we know, the "phenomenon" does not designate the "appearing" [l'*apparaissant*], or in any case *not essentially,* but that which is most often not apparent (*unscheinbar* in Heidegger) and which renders the appearing (and the appearance) *possible* in the first place. This is true for Heidegger, who defines in §7 of *Sein und Zeit* the phenome-

[13] See Richir's important article "Qu'est-ce qu'un phénomène ?," *Les Études Philosophiques*, vol. 4 (1998): 435–49.

non in the "phenomenological" sense as that which shows itself implicitly right in the midst of the appearing and which is to be thematized in the phenomenological description. But this already applies to Husserl in whose work we find two meanings of the phenomenon: the "ingredients" of the immanent sphere of consciousness (apprehensions, contents of apprehension, and so on) and, "more deeply," the "constituting phenomena" of the former (as I shown for example in his analyses of the constitution of internal time consciousness).[14] For Richir, all that *is*, in so far as it "appears," emerges from a double "constitution" (a term that he does not use in this context and which I use here only to outline the general idea): one constituting the phenomenological field proper and the other corresponding to a "symbolic institution" (*Stiftung*) *that is not properly phenomenological*! What exactly does that mean?

The aforementioned idea that the *(self-)generation of sense* takes place *beneath* a "constituting subjectivity" contaminates the Richirian meaning of phenomenon. Fundamentally, it does not give rise to a ("noetic-noematic") *correlation*, a structure within which the sense constitutes itself like a "noematic unity"—what Husserl would call the "institution of sense" (*Sinnstiftung*)—but reflects a "sense-formation" (*Sinnbildung*) that is something of a *fashioning*—impersonal, "asubjective"—of sense (an idea that Richir finds already present in the final Merleau-Ponty). Yet, this *Sinnbildung* is neither accessible directly nor immediately! What is accessible is what is symbolically instituted. We can pull from this two fundamental characteristics: it is *fixed* through words and by words (and their corresponding or underlying *concepts*), and this "fixing" arises from a *habitus* and its "cultural," "social," and "historical" sedimentations, that is to say, from a domain that transcends the properly phenomenological sphere. In other words[15], the diverse symbolic institutions (characterized moreover by an absolute non-datability) *deform* the phenomenon in the appearing [l'*apparaissant*]. The role of phenomenology, then, is to dive under the surface of the appearing [l'*apparaissant*], of the given, in order to clear up the phenomena prior to their deformation by symbolic institutions. If, in the insightful terms of László Tengelyi, "the given, according to Richir, should

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[14] On the different versions of the phenomenon in Husserl and Heidegger, see A. Schnell, *La déhiscence du sens* (Paris: Hermann, 2015).

[15] See the very instructive presentation of contemporary French phenomenology in general, and of the Richirian regrounding of phenomenology in particular, in Gondek and Tengelyi, *Neue Phänomenologie in Frankreich*, especially the two first paragraphs in Part One, Chapter One.

not be identified with phenomenology" and if it is rather "the place where the phenomenological dimension meets the symbolic dimension of experience,"[16] then the phenomenologist's task consists in plunging into the depth of the "non-given"[17] and the "non-appearing" to distinguish what arises out of the "phenomenological" from what is symbolically instituted—that is to say, to make the phenomena, *and nothing but the phenomena*[18], the defining feature of his research.

III

The realization of this "regrounding" requires, as we would assume, a specific *method.* Since Richir did not write a "discourse on method"—he preferred to issue methodological remarks (often very precise ones) rather *sparsely*—I will limit myself here to *one* aspect, namely the question of *access* to the phenomenological field and the *legitimation* of what the phenomenologist can establish on this issue.

From the start, every transcendental philosophy encounters the problem of the *legitimation* of knowledge (and, in particular, of the knowledge *that is proper to it*). In fact, the recourse to conditions that are not given in immediate experience, but are supposed to account for it, requires a specific justification.

The *Kantian* legitimation of knowledge shows that Kant appeals yet again (at least in part) to a *deduction*, in the *classical* sense of the

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[16] *Ibid.*

[17] We now understand the meaning of Richir's implicit but only thinly veiled answer: "the more reduction, the less givenness," to Jean-Luc Marion's "last and ultimate" principle: "as much reduction, as much givenness," which, according to the latter, raises phenomenology as "final philosophy" the status of first philosophy. See for example his contribution "Intentionnalité et intersubjectivité" in the anthology *L'intentionnalité en question entre phénoménologie et recherches cognitives*, (ed.) D. Janicaud (Paris: Vrin, 1995), 154. What emerges from the properly phenomenological field is located, according to Richir, *beneath* the given (and beneath what is symbolically instituted). Consequently, the more we apply the fundamental phenomenological tool of the reduction, the less we are in contact with the given.

[18] The phenomenon as "nothing but phenomenon" designates the phenomenon as *disconnected from all (intentional) objects*; as such it draws from what Husserl calls the "pre-immanent" sphere of transcendental consciousness (see for example in the phenomenology of *time*, text no 54 of *Husserliana X*). But whereas for Husserl the status of this pre-immanent sphere is fully determined (is it intentional or non-intentional?), Richir seeks to forcibly establish the *pre-immanent* character of phenomenon as "nothing but phenomenon." For this notion of "phenomenon as 'nothing but phenomenon,'" see *infra.*

term, in the process of establishing *transitively* the transcendental synthesis necessary for justifying the possibility of experience (and through this also the possibility of knowledge).[19] From the *phenomenological* point of view, this procedure is questionable since the fact of simply *supposing* transcendental syntheses lacks the kind of concrete proof we can and must rightly demand of a legitimation of knowledge. To say it more precisely, if Husserl denounces the lack of "grounding" for knowledge on a number of occasions, it is in the name of a "transcendental experience" that can be legitimated it in two ways: either as a descriptive account of "actions" and "operations" (*Leistungen*) of the transcendental consciousness—as they are given intuitively—or else, more generally, as an experience having as its object the "transcendental subjectivity" or the "monad" (in the Husserlian sense) as specific field of exploration (knowing that the inseparable separation between the subject and the world is supposed to be overcome by a "self-enworlding of the transcendental subject"[20]). The idea common to both these directions is that they ultimately rely on a certain justification in valid *evidence*. That is to say, they rely neither on an act of intellect or reason, nor on a deduction or a syllogism, but on a "seeing" or on an intuitional being-given. It is here the profound meaning of the "principle of all principles" of §24 in *Ideas I*.

Yet, Richir calls this principle *into question*. The principle of this challenge—and there is here another very novel contribution of his phenomenology *"nova methodo"*— consists in the fact that he opens up phenomenological research to a new dimension that is neither the purely *gnoseological* one of the theoretician of knowledge who implements specific procedures in order to render possible this kind of knowledge, nor the *experimentable* dimension (experimentable of course thanks to a non-sensible dimension of experience) of a form of "non-reality" ("irreality," "ideality") that already contains what is necessary to account for reality.[21] The key concept that grants us possible access to this entirely new dimension is that of "architecton-

[19] For more details on this point, see the first chapter of part one in my *En deçà du sujet. Du temps dans la philosophie transcendantale allemande* (Paris: PUF, 2010).

[20] See on this point Husserl's fifth *Cartesian Meditation*.

[21] In the wake of a reinterpretation of Husserl, we can discern in Richir's oeuvre a veritable "third way" for transcendental philosophy; beyond a first orientation (Kantian or Fichtean) of the theoretician of knowledge giving himself the condition of possibility for *knowledge*, and beyond the second orientation (claimed by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) that privileges an *ontological* perspective.

ic transposition."[22] Let us explore in a few words what this term means, since it completely transforms the relationship between the "founding" (the "constituting") and the "founded" (the "constituted") in phenomenology.

What distinguishes, first of all, this *new* dimension of all *foundation* (as much gnoseological as ontological) is the fact that—contrary to such a foundation—it is *non-positional.* To identify it, Richir introduces the term "phenomenological basis," a term that enables him to distinguish its *non-positional* character from the positional character proper to *foundation* [*Fundament*] in the strictest sense. The basis is to the non-positional sphere what the foundation is to the positional sphere. Yet, the "architectonic transposition" is precisely a trans-

[22] In a very general sense, this concept must be placed in relation with the central idea in Richir's work—an idea we find first in his teacher Max Loreau (concerning Dubuffet's paintings) and which was also exposed (though independently) by Patrice Loraux in his studies of Plato—according to which *everything that appears, all phenomenon, also always appears at the same time through its "pseudo-phenomenon" or its "simulacrum."* This signifies that all formation of sense, when it happens, also always shows itself through its deformation caused by the attempt to grasp or fix the sense in language, a deformation that he calls the "distortion" of the phenomenon. When this "distortion" brings into play two *different* architectonic registers (where there is nonetheless a "cohabitation" and an "interaction" between the two registers), it is called an "architectonic transposition." Richir writes more precisely on the latter: "...the architectonic reduction allows us to analyze this transposition with the help of its suspense in the instant [*exaiphnès*], that is to say the coherent deformation, from the 'before' to the 'after,' of the founding register, and the mode of structuration-temporalization of its possibilities with regard to the founded register and to all that emerge, correlatively and in turn, as the mode of structuration-temporalization of the possibilities of the founded register. This means that, by a genuine metamorphosis where the originary founding register becomes unrecognizable, that the latter is only *transpassible* (Maldiney) in the circular registers of the founding and founded because it no longer falls within the scope of their possibilities (and their mode of structuration-temporalization). As result, the possibilities of the founding originary register are transmuted into transpossibilites (Maldiney), beyond the metamorphosis that they have undergone by way of an architectonic transposition that reinscribed them among the new possibilities instituted by the *Stiftung*—at the same time for what is founding and what is founded. Nevertheless, between the founding register and the register that is founded in and by the *Stiftung,* there is...an unbridgeable gap, precisely the one that the *Stiftung* keeps open, which, in all phenomenological rigour, renders impossible the 'derivation' from one to the other; this derivation can only happen as result of the '*metaphysical* leap' [my emphasis, A.S.] that gives itself in advance what is needed to bridge it." *L'institution de l'idéalité. Des schématismes phénoménologiques* (Beauvais: Mémoires des Annales de Phénoménologie, 2002), 26.

position, which is to say "that which transmutes the phenomenological basis by transforming it, by way of its position, into a foundation."[23] This implies, on the one hand, the crucial distinction between the "founding" (*Fundierung*) that posits a *foundation* (*Fundament*) and the "institution" (*Stiftung*)—which should not be understood in the same way as the *institution of sense* (*Sinnstiftung*) mentioned above, but in a way that is more akin to what Richir calls in his earlier works a *sense-formation* (*Sinnbildung*)—that "only" has a *basis*: this basis can only be *posited* at the price of an inevitable *deformation*. The *Fundierung* thus has a principle (*archè*), whereas the institution does not; it is *without* principle. This means, on the other hand, that the basis remains forever *distinct* from the foundation, in Richirian terms (borrowed from Henri Maldiney): the basis remains *transpossible* for the foundation that is itself *transpassible* for it; that is to say, there is a principled impossibility of passing from foundation to basis, for this would otherwise result in, as we have seen, a deformation or metamorphosis caused by the transposition. "To say it another way, in phenomenology, we do not deal with hypostases or 'levels of *being*'[24], but with *architectonic registers*, each of which has its own field of possibility, but each of which would be 'dead' (inert and finally indiscernible) if there were no transpossibility of one in relation to the other and transpassibility from one to the other."[25]

But how then are we to *access* this "phenomenological basis"? Methodologically, thanks to a *radicalized* phenomenological *epoché* that Richir calls the "*hyperbolic* phenomenological *epoché*" and, additionally, by virtue of a phenomenological "sense" that is receptive precisely to this beyond that characterizes the radical *gap* between the basis and the foundation. However, the fact of admitting such a sense clearly indicates to us that this philosophical project will walk the line between phenomenology and metaphysics.[26] The very nature of the phenomenological forces us—and precisely *because of that*—to a perpetual back and forth ("phenomenological zigzag") between the "founded" and the "instituted." Its justification is afforded by the coherence of the whole (giving "life" to thought) as

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[23] *Fragments phénoménologiques*, 377.

[24] Richir opposes himself here, as we can see, to the neo-platonic perspective as much as to the Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit*.

[25] *Fragments phénoménologiques*, 377

[26] Does metaphysics not also require a particular sensibility (as the metaphysical tradition affirmed it from Plato to Nietzsche)?

well as by the contact with the "real," at once the necessary basis and terminus of all phenomenological analysis.

IV

Since his early works, and in particular since his *Recherches Phénoménologiques* (1981 and 1983), Richir has had as his goal a radical "regrounding" of phenomenology. All the while focussing on different "fields" or "objects"—the "phenomenalization" of the phenomenon, language, myth, *phantasía* and imagination, affectivity, time and space, psychopathology, aesthetics, etc.—, and so on—this regrounding has nonetheless for almost four decades had only one objective: to grasp phenomenology as a *transcendental* phenomenology in an original and novel way. What constitutes its originality? A brief exploration of the central philosophical alternatives afforded to us by Husserl and Heidegger will give us a preliminary answer.

By virtue of the *epoché,* Husserl puts in parentheses all "positing of being" (*Seinssetzung*), which enables him to bring out, in a transcendental experience, the "operations" (*Leistungen*) of transcendental subjectivity that provides a legitimation of *knowledge.* Heidegger, by contrast, announced a new ontology (that is to say, a science of Being *qua Being*). If it seems that he has not managed to achieve the latter, at the very least his project had the merit of giving to transcendental subjectivity a "soil (or ground) of *being*" (*Seinsboden*) that was, according to him, lacking in Husserl—since, as he correctly notes, for something to be given in itself and from itself, it must first "*be.*" So, in radicalizing the Husserlian "transcendental experience" in a certain way, Heidegger opened the door to a phenomenological *ontology.*

As important (and influential[27]) as this new path was, the reading of Husserl provided by Heidegger is no less one sided. Too numerous are the analyses that find that Husserl was in reality much more "subtle," situating him beneath the gnoseological/ontological divide.[28] It is *this* Husserl that Richir is interested in (and to that extent, he subscribes to a Finkian perspective). Thus, his works explore, according to what I have already acknowledged above, the properly phenomenological field beneath a Husserl, who is reduced to the

[27] As is attested, in an exemplary way, by the works of the later Merleau-Ponty as well as those of Levinas.

[28] Which explains and illustrates how these analyses mobilize, as I would argue, "*phenomenological constructions.*"

(purported) reactualization of a *gnoseology*, and a Heidegger, who is seen as the founder of a phenomenological *ontology*.

We can illustrate this point in another way. In the context of the duality between subject/object (constituting subjectivity/intended objectivity)—as much with Deleuzian thought as with post-Husserlian phenomenology (and post-Heideggerian ontology)—we have to do with a certain "monism" that creeps in a sphere beneath that of the subject/object split. In Deleuze, such a position leads to a "philosophy of immanence," while, in the phenomenological tradition, it consists in searching for a "third way" (see notably Merleau-Ponty), a "monism," then, beneath the split between idealism and realism. The first phenomenologist that paved the way for such a perspective was Eugen Fink, who opposed the way in which, according to him, Husserl "compartmentalized" transcendental consciousness between different levels or spheres (objective, immanent, and pre-immanent[29]). However, this is not the direction taken by Richir.[30] His transcendentalism consists in the fact that he vigorously defends dualism—in his later work, he speaks of an "archaic separation" (*chôrismos*)—one that in an original way does not simply oppose a "transcendental" sphere to the sphere of what appears (immanently) [*l'étant apparaissant*], but in a more refined and subtle way, distinguishes, within the sphere "beneath" the immanent being [*l'étant*], between *two* registers the respective statuses of which will need to be clarified. But in what way then is Richirian phenomenology a form of transcendentalism?

V

This "regrounding" of phenomenology, advanced by Richir, effectively constitutes a new step in the history of *transcendental* philosophy, or more precisely, in the history of *transcendental phenomenology*. If he considers his phenomenology to be such a transcendental phenomenology, it is because, in his terms, it is a "phenomenology *as* phenomenology, and *nothing but* phenomenology"[31]—and this, because the phenomena that it targets are "phenomena as nothing

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[29] For more detail on this, see the last chapter of my work *En deçà du sujet*.

[30] Richir shares with Fink the idea that phenomenology situates itself beneath the gnoseological/ontological divide, but he rejects the "monism" of his phenomenology of the world.

[31] *Phénomènes, temps et êtres. Ontologie et phénoménologie* (Grenoble: Millon, 1987), 18; my emphasis.

but phenomena." What can we understand from this? Richir is clear on this point:

> Transcendental phenomenology takes root...in the question of the phenomenon insofar as it is not always already "interpreted" as phenomenon of something other than itself (a prior structure, a correspondence between determinate concepts or ideas and a thing or an object), consequently, of the phenomenon considered as *nothing but* phenomenon, where nothing else appears but the phenomenon.... Our consideration of the phenomenon as *nothing but* phenomenon thus amounts to radicalizing the Husserlian phenomenological reduction, and to giving it a new meaning: it is a matter of considering (by bracketing or putting out of play) the phenomenon outside of all positivity and all determinacy that, for us, can only come from elsewhere and otherwise, of which it nonetheless constitutes...the transcendental matrix.[32]

This formulation of his philosophical project (dating from 1987) will remain valid in all his future elaborations. We could ask: what are its historical sources? Richir's phenomenology *fundamentally* takes root first of all[33], as we have seen, in Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenologies—even if, subsequently, he develops his project beyond them. He makes this absolutely explicit in the following: the "phenomenon that is 'nothing but phenomenon,' Husserl looked for it in the inner time-consciousness and in the swelling of the 'living present,' whereas Heidegger looked for it in the 'phenomenon of the world,' *i.e.* in the three ecstases of originary time, in the transcendental schematism of temporalization."[34]

We can see, from a historical point of view, that the question of a phenomenology as nothing but phenomenology (that is to say, more concretely, of the phenomenon as nothing but phenomenon) arises from developments in the phenomenology of *time.* The continuity with Husserl is quite evident here: In text no. 54 of *Husserliana X*, as we have already mentioned, Husserl establishes the necessity of diving into the depths of a *pre*-immanent sphere of transcendental consciousness, which is to say a sphere *beneath* the object and the subject. His phenomenology of time—and this becomes even clearer in the *Bernauer Manuscripts* (1917/1918)—no longer has anything to do with "temporal *objects*" (*zeitliche* Objekte), but with "time-

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] The "other source" of this philosophy being French (or francophone) phenomenology: M. Loreau, M. Merleau-Ponty, J. Derrida, and so on.

[34] *Ibid.*

objects" (*Zeitobjekte*) that are not properly objects, but designate the temporal dimension—*disconnected from all objectivity*—as the universal form of all appearing.[35] But this pre-immanent dimension, beneath both the subject and the object, does not only appear in the phenomenology of time. Husserl also refers to it in his research manuscripts relating to the "originary *hyle*" (*Urhylè*) and intersubjectivity—in what I call a "constructive phenomenology,"[36] of which Richir's phenomenology represents, in a sense, a continuation and further development. The link with Heidegger is equally evident: As long as we identify, as Richir does again in 1987, the phenomenon as nothing but phenomenon to Being *qua* Being in the sense of *Sein und Zeit*[37], the horizontal ecstaticity that characterizes originary temporality, *beneath all being,* is at the heart of Being—the "phenomenon par excellence."[38] So, here again, it is *time* that opens the door to a phenomenological dimension beneath the subject/object split, beneath all being, beneath any prior structure. To put it otherwise, and provided that we *generalize to the level of transcendental phenomenology what Husserl and Heidegger had first established for time,* the object of phenomenology as phenomenology is not this or that phenomenon, but what makes it so that the phenomenon occurs—what Richir calls "phenomenolization."

If an understanding of this phenomenalization must clarify the role and status of time, it is however neither reduced to, nor is it exhausted in, this clarification. We still need to explain how, within phenomenality, there can be an opening to the radical exteriority of the world. This means that if phenomenalization implies a proto-temporalization, it also implies a proto-spatialization without being able to presuppose with certainty either time or space in advance.

I will end this article with a few remarks on the status of this "phenomenalization"—which will allow me to return once again to the fundamental concept of the "schematism."[39] The basic precept of

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[35] For more details on this disconnect between temporality and objectivity, see my book *Temps et phénomène. La phénoménologie husserlienne du temps,* (Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 2004).

[36] See my book *Husserl et les fondements de la phénoménologie constructive.*

[37] *Phénomènes, temps et êtres,* 44.

[38] See *Sein und Zeit,* §7.

[39] Conventionally, the philosophical tradition (from Aristotle to Baumgarten) opposed the *inferior* faculty of understanding, characterized by the passivity of the knowing subject *vis-à-vis* external reality, to a *superior* faculty of understanding involving an *activity* of this same knowing subject. Kant was the first to question this opposition, for which he substituted the distinction between "receptivity" and "spontaneity" and in doing so emphasized a certain "active"

phenomenology of the "absence of all metaphysical assumption" means first of all that the thought of the phenomenon in its phenomenalization cannot in any way start from or rely on a *pre-given concept*. Therefore, it is not—to use Kant's terms in the *Critique of Judgement*—"*determinate*," but "*reflective*":

> This aesthetic reflection without a pre-given concept, as Kant has rigourously demonstrated, requires a free and productive schematism where the imagination in its freedom, as the *power* of constituting and gathering intuitions, finds itself subsumed by the understanding in its legality (as the *power* of unifying what is understood in the phenomenon): thus, there is in this "schematism without a (determinate) concept" an intimate union between a diversity already tending towards unity and a unity already open to receiving this diversity. So we recognize in it what we call *the transcendental schematism of phenomenalogization*, where thought (understanding) and sensibility (imagination) are indiscernible, where imagination thinks and thinking imagines, and

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dimension of the same sensibility (ensured by its *a priori* structures) as well as a certain "passivity" at the level of the intellect (the "functions" of the latter not being a function of the free will of the subject). But this was done at the cost of establishing a new opposition—that of *immediacy*" (belonging to intuition) and "*mediacy*" (characterizing the concept)—solidifying the well-known *duality* of the "branches" of knowledge.

Through his studies of the existentialia of "understanding" (*Verstehen*), of "affective disposition" (*Befindlichkeit*) and "discourse" (*Rede*), and notably through the "temporal retrieval" of this existential analysis, Heidegger thought he had overcome this opposition by trying to make evident the type of temporalization that it implied. The idea that "*Rede*" (the German transposition of the Greek "*logos*") is supposed to "articulate" the understanding and the affective disposition signals that this temporal mediation also has to do with a certain "logical" dimension (but not simply a discursive one!).

To this series of oppositions, Richir substitutes once again a dualism, the one between "schematism" on the one hand—a polysemic concept that articulates all unity and diversity in general (by guaranteeing its "intimate union"), as well as the faculties of thought and sensing in particular, as I have already insisted, which fundamentally opens the possibility of the appropriation ("for us") of all erratic and savage sense—and "affectivity" on the other hand (which is not, for the "subject," the fact and manner of being affected—this only comes into play by virtue of the architectonic transposition—but an "interior," *i.e.* the "endogenous" sensing). The specificity of this dualism consists in the fact that it completely sets aside the oppositions between passivity/activity and immediacy/mediacy, and this because for Richir it is a matter of positioning himself on an*other* register than that of "subjectivity" in relation with an "exteriority."

> where, consequently, thinking is appropriated into the phenomenality of the phenomenon so constituted.[40]

We can thus identify two historical sources of the Richirian "schematism." Firstly, in the Heideggerian analysis of the originary temporality—Richir writes: the "phenomenon that is nothing but phenomenon,...Heidegger looked for it...in the transcendental schematism of temporalization"[41]—and secondly, above all, in Kant's *Third Critique.*

But, if there is a *historical* lineage with regard to Heidegger, there is still no *systematic* fidelity to his work as a whole. The originality of Richir consists precisely in the introduction of *phenomenological schematisms,* and in the inversion of—with regard to Heidegger—the constitutive relationship between the opening to the "world" and its "understanding" or "reflexive" appropriation by the "subject": "It is the...*ek-stasis of the phenomenon of phenomenon,* coextensive to the the originary distortion of phenomenon[42], to the inscription always that is always already carried out in the transcendental schematisms of the phenomenalization, *that constitutes the conditions of possibility and the transcendental matrix of the worldly ek-stasis (in the Heideggerian sense) rather than the opposite.*" This amounts to showing "the originary phenomenological enrooting of *Da-sein* in the transcendental schematisms of phenomenalization (of determinabil-

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[40] *Phénomènes, temps et êtres,* 20-21.

[41] *Phénomènes, temps et êtres,* 18.

[42] Richir understands by "originary distortion" the double determination of the phenomenon as nothing but phenomenon as holding at its core an irreducible indeterminacy (translation of the Greek *apeiron*) and as being susceptible of concealing itself to us by misrepresenting itself in the concept or idea that it appears to give us (in a sort of "transcendental illusion"). He further clarifies it in the following terms: "the phenomenon phenomenalizes itself inseparably from the two poles of its illusion. Firstly, the illusion of being centred upon itself, that would make the phenomenon in a sort of coincidence from one centre to another—from the centre of vision, namely the eye, to the centre of the phenomenon—as an indivisible individual; secondly, that of a universal centring that would make it visible, but only as it is contingently decentred with respect to this universal centre, as a particular case or as a simple factual illustration of an idea" (*Phénomènes, temps et êtres,* 78-79). The principled indeterminacy of the phenomenon characterizes once again Richir's *transcendentalism* "insofar as it is a question of... the transcendence of the phenomenon with regard to our frameworks of thought, our language, and our categories" (*ibid.,* 22). In addition to referring us to the Heideggerian understanding of transcendence (see in particular his 1928 summer lectures, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (GA 26)), this meaning of the "transcendental" foreshadows the Richirian notions of "transpassibility" (borrowed from Maldiney) and of "virtual."

ity and quantifiability), and so in more 'archaic' 'layer' of selfhood, which should be thought of as a kind of 'identity' *à la* Schelling."[43]

VI

I will end here this summary presentation of the Richirian regrounding of phenomenology. If I have concentrated, in particular, on its "transcendental" orientation, this does not mean that Richir's elaborations are limited to this perspective. In this regard, we could refer to his reflections on "symbolic institution" (*Stiftung*)[44], on psychopathology[45], on politics[46], or even on literature.[47] Thanks to its originality, and the many untraveled paths cleared by it, Richir's work will play a prominent role in the future of phenomenological research.[48]

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[43] *Phénomènes, temps et êtres*, 31.

[44] See M. Richir, *Phénoménologie et institution symbolique* (Grenoble: Millon, 1988).

[45] M. Richir, *Phantasia, imagination, affectivité* (Grenoble: Millon, 2004).

[46] M. Richir, *La contingence du despote* (Paris: Payot, 2014).

[47] M. Richir, *Melville. Les assises du monde*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Sens & Tonka, 2013).

[48] This is a reworked version of a previously published article which appeared in French as "Au-delà de Husserl, Heidegger et Merleau-Ponty: la phénoménologie de Marc Richir," *Revue germanique international*, vol. 13 (2011), [http://rgi.revues.org/1124]. I graciously thank Jean-Claude Monod for having authorized its publication in English.