

Somewhere This Side of the View from Nowhere: On the Phenomenological Prepredicative Grounding of the Idea of Objectivity

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Abstract: Although objectivity is mainly accounted for in terms of linguistic thought and communication in this article I will aim to show that at least one condition of possibility for our understanding of objectivity is grounded on a prepredicative i. e. pre – linguistic and pre – communicative level. I will endorse a Husserlian viewpoint on the issue and I will try to develop some aspects of the Husserlian account of three – dimensional thing – perception by means of which I will show how prepredicative experience can actually offer us a fundamental element of our common understanding of objectivity. In doing this it will be necessary to acknowledge thing – perception as being primarily intertwined with indeterminacy. I will claim that only on the basis of such an intuitive and prepredicative access to the things as partially indeterminate first and as determinable second is it possible to have an understanding of the world as something (at least partially) independent from the intuition(s) all subjects can have of it. By means of the addition of a consciousness of the thing as accessible to other subjects one achieves a vision of the thing as fully determinate in itself. This “vision” however takes one to be aware of the determination of the thing as lying beyond any intuitive grasp of it. The result will thus be that the prepredicative constitution of our basic sense of objectivity leads us to intend the world as something which should be accounted for (also) by means of sources different from intuition.

Key words: objectivity; thing – perception; prepredicative experience; indeterminacy; Husserlian epistemology

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I . Introduction: objectivity and perception

“Objectivity” is a quite ambiguous term. Just browsing through articles in philosophical encyclopaedias and dictionaries it is easy to see that there is no clear and unanimous definition of what the precise meaning of this expression is. However it seems quite reasonable to state that more or less all possible meanings one can ascribe to the word “objectivity” are in some way related to what Thomas Nagel (1986) has called “the view from nowhere” i. e. an understanding of the things as independent from any point of view ,or ,if you prefer ,from any situated ,and therefore

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concrete or physical as it were point of view. In general we can say that objectivity is the idea that something is thus and so beyond one's point of view. In this sense a statement but also an idea or phenomenologically an intentional act of consciousness is objective in as much as it represents something as it really is beyond its simple appearing to someone. In other words the act is not just reporting how something appears to or it is judged by a specific subject. The judgement itself, indeed is objective if and only if it derives from reasons or evidences which are not peculiar to just one subject but rather in principle to all (possible) subjects. Thus the idea of objectivity is strictly related and sometimes even identified with the idea of universal validity as well as accessibility. Something objective is not the private property of any single subject or of any selected group of subjects. To have an objective view on something is to be given the thing as it is beyond any perspectival point of view and the reference of such a view is necessarily available to all subjects – or to nobody at one time. In this sense objectivity can and indeed often is reduced to the idea of something which is shared by all (real and possible) subjects, i. e. a view on the object of which all subjects can partake. Following this line of thought one could tend to say that being that perceptual experience⁽¹⁾ is always perspectival experience can have no meaning for objectivity, i. e. it is objectively irrelevant.⁽²⁾

Stephen Gaukroger (2012) has recently essayed and explained different understandings of objectivity. The “view from nowhere” is actually not the only way to understand objectivity and according to Gaukroger's analyses even not the most fundamental one – or at least it is not an understanding of objectivity which is applicable in all fields of cognition. Within the present article, however I will generally assume an idea of objectivity quite close to the “view of nowhere” discussed by Nagel. In general as it should emerge from the following pages I consider here a basic sense of objectivity according to which there is an experienced reality which transcends one's experience. In this regard although I think that Nagel's definition of objectivity is indeed able to grasp a central aspect of our common understanding of what is at stake when we think or speak in terms of objectivity I do not share his reconstruction in three steps (Nagel 1986, 14ff.). I consider it to be too intellectualist in as much as it relies on one's reflection on one's experiences while I will here try to put forward a view according to which a primitive sense of objectivity is – at least up to a certain degree – possibly generated without the contribution of reflection. I will indeed, argue for a kind of immediate sense of transcendence which makes that very reflection possible – or maybe better, an immediate awareness of transcendence which motivates one's reflection about the distinction and the relationship between one's experience and the objects “themselves”. Such a sense of transcendence can be developed without the participation of reflection to understand the prepredicative ground of our general sense of objectivity.

In the present article I am interested in showing how the very idea of objectivity as referring to something that cannot be reduced to any single experience nor to any plurality of experiences, and as indeed being somehow beyond experience is in turn grounded on experience. To do this I will analyse our most basic kind of experience of objects, namely perceptual experience. I will consider it on the basis of a Husserlian framework, which conceives of perception as not requiring any conceptual, linguistic, or, in general, communicative capacities. By endorsing this kind of

frameworks I aim to show that before or beside communication and language we are able to experience something as transcending our very experience of it and hence as something to be possibly determined beyond intuitive processes i. e. as laying beyond the reach of “intuitive acts” (anschauliche Akte) as well as of systems of intuitive acts. I will concentrate on the perception of three – dimensional objects and I will show how such perceptual acts can be considered as the cornerstone of our capacity to understand the world and maybe also ourselves in terms of objectivity i. e. as something beyond and/or independent from our experience of it.

Following the dominant though not undisputed trend in philosophy of perception as well as Husserl I will limit my analyses to visual experience. Moreover I will limit the scope of my analysis to a one – sided and almost static kind of visual perception. It goes without saying that a full – fledged account of our understanding of the way objectivity is linked to our perceptual experiences requires also analyses of more complex and dynamic experiences which include also other senses beside vision as well as their reciprocal connections. As a matter of fact a phenomenological analysis of thing – perception which is limited to a one – sided visual field is certainly a kind of abstraction from a full – blooded account of the very same visual experience. Nevertheless the kind of “reduction” to one – sided purely visual perception I am endorsing here is beneficial as I hope to show to our understanding of our most basic sense of objectivity and then to offer a prepredicative grounding of a basic idea of objectivity a grounding which can at the same time show us both its the limits and its consequences.

II. Some essential aspects of a Husserlian phenomenology of visual thing – perception

As said in the introduction by adopting a Husserlian standpoint I will here regard perception as a kind of intuitive experience i. e. a kind of consciousness which puts the subject in direct relation to a certain content. ⁽³⁾ The latter is given in the flesh (leibhaftig) and is not merely intended. In intuition what is meant is there and the intentional consciousness is directed towards it although the presentation of the object can happen with different degrees of accuracy and vividness. ⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore in perception we find a combination of sensuously “full” intuitions (which correspond to the sensuously given sides of the object) ,empty intentions (which correspond to the non given sides and aspects of the object) ,and sensuously fulfilling intuitions (which deliver the material required by the empty intentions) . This is obviously the feature of perception which is of crucial importance for the issue of objectivity as this will be discussed here.

Given this framework it is easy to see that one of the main issues in a phenomenological analysis of perception is constituted by the fact that we visually perceive certain objects as three – dimensional and this implies that we intend the thing as being made of more parts or aspects than the ones which are actually sensibly given to us. In this regard especially in the trend of Husserlian phenomenology it is important to stress that the intention directed towards the thing does not simply think or conceive of the thing as containing more parts than the ones we effectively see but that the direction towards the parts which are not sensuously given to us is contained in perception itself without any interference on behalf of other types of act.

This is a puzzle that any philosophical treatment of perception cannot avoid considering. In Husserlian phenomenology this puzzle can be formulated as follows: When we perceive a thing as

being three – dimensional ,we are also aware that only a part of the thing is actually given to us. Only some aspects of the thing are sensibly present. Other aspects ,for example the backside ,are not presented to us ,but rather only co – presented.

Now ,if we maintain ,following Husserl (1983 92 – 94; 2001 54 – 55) ,that spatial thing – perception (from now TP) is necessarily perspectival ,it could seem that in our perception we also intend something which is not properly given to us. Does this mean that perception presents us something as being ungiven? Should we assume that perception giving us the outer reality shows us that the reality contains something that is not given to us? However ,if this is the case then ,at least from a phenomenological point of view ,we have to ask: how can we know ,or more basically be aware of something which is not given to us? The main philosophical issue is found ,indeed ,in the clarification of the meaning of the aforementioned co – presentation of the non – given profiles of a thing.

Despite the partial non – givenness ,we do not really have an incomplete consciousness of the thing. In TP we perceptually intend the whole thing. Per se ,perceptual experience intends more than what the senses offer. These senses are relative to only some aspects of the thing; however ,in our perceptual apprehension of the thing ,the sides for which we apparently have no corresponding sensations are also included. The puzzle ,then ,with perceptual three – dimensional objects lies in the belief that the non – given parts are essentially intertwined with the very givenness of the object. We would not see a three – dimensional thing if we were not able to see it as also being made of non – given sides.

This being the phenomenological situation ,we have to clarify what justifies or motivates our perceptual awareness ,and the following belief ,that there are other aspects of the thing beyond the ones which we have sense evidence of. To state the question briefly: Where does my awareness of (a part of) something derive from ,considering that this said (part of) something is not given to me?

Since this is the core ,fundamental situation I will consider in order to ground our basic sense of objectivity ,I will restate it once more. When we straightforwardly⁽⁵⁾ visually perceive a three – dimensional thing ,we “see” that it has more aspects than those which are actually visible. We are somehow certain of the latter. To deny this would be equivalent to denying that we are perceiving a three – dimensional thing. Thus ,when we are aware of something as three – dimensional ,we are (unthematically) assuming that we are not properly seeing the totality of the thing. Our certainty concerning this excess of the thing with respect to our sensible access to it ,is no fruit of reasoning ,though. The further sides of the thing are not given to us symbolically either. We can say that we intend them blindly ,or ,more precisely ,emptily. However ,one has to remark that the kind of emptiness involved here is different from the kind of emptiness we have when we read ,hear ,and understand any kind of signs and symbols.⁽⁶⁾ In this latter case ,we do not perceive anything at all of the intended object ,while in perception we see a part of the object itself ,and we understand such part as part. Now ,the problem is: how do I know ,or how do I come to be aware of the fact , that what I see is just a part of a larger whole?

Putting aside the idea of a signitive account of perception ,the question is whether or not there

are other options to account for the perceptual certainty we have that there are other aspects of the thing even if the perception itself by means of which they are meant does not sensuously offer them to us.

In this regard, there are at least three main options. I can know about the improperly given sides of the thing by means of:

- Memory;
- Imagination;
- Reasoning or Inference.

As Matt Bower (2014: 4) efficaciously shows, these can all be considered as ways to supplement the limited information provided to us by our senses. There are good reasons for rejecting all of these alternatives. Following the rebuttals offered by Mulligan (1995) and Zahavi (1996b), I will just briefly recapitulate them here in order to better specify the description of a three-dimensional thing which results from such a refusal.

When I perceive a three-dimensional thing, I somehow assume that the thing is made up of more parts than the ones I have sensible access to, and that these further parts are actually there now. Their actuality and their simultaneity with respect to the sensuously given sides are in contrast with their being in another time as well as with a merely imaginative or potential givenness. Although they are given improperly, they are co-presented and not presentified in any way. Inferential thought would likewise be untenable, because it implies that we have the concept of a three-dimensional thing,⁽⁷⁾ while in TP the other sides are given in the flesh.⁽⁸⁾

The insistence on the present actuality of the other aspects of the thing also refutes another possible way of accounting for our positing of them, namely by means of their relation to our potential kinaestheses. It is true that, by perceiving something as three-dimensional, we are also aware that we can fulfil certain bodily movements, by means of which we can discover the other sides of it. With his insistence on the affections which somehow guide our most basic relationship to the sensible world, Husserl himself does indeed seem to suggest that we are guided by the allures or stimuli (Reize) we somehow receive from the outer objects to explore them, or at least to have a certain bodily attitude towards them which is elicited by the things themselves as having further sides (see e.g., Husserl 2001a, § 1). However, although the allures could perhaps be considered as affording us to move towards the other sides, in the situation we are trying to clarify we already perceptually intend the other sides as being there now.⁽⁹⁾ It is on the basis of this intuitive awareness of their existence that we can be eventually provoked to their disclosure.⁽¹⁰⁾

In other words, the so-called a-priori correlation between subject and object of constitution (Husserl 1960, § 44) could suggest that the further aspects of a thing are constituted in relation to what Husserl (1989, 270 – 271) calls *Vermöglichkeiten*, i. e. the capacity a subject has to make something appear.⁽¹¹⁾ In this way, though, we would consider the other aspects as potential and not as actual. The other aspects are correlated with potential views, and the latter to potential movements (both mine or of the thing). However, we cannot properly say that it is our capacity to achieve certain movements that let us intend the other parts of the thing as being there now, or that our potential kinaestheses are the condition of possibility for the perception of the thing as three-

dimensional. Of course and this goes without saying in a Husserlian framework any givenness relates to some specific subjective achievement (achievement here should not be understood as being necessarily “active”). However, I would suggest that we should rather reverse the dependence and say that at least in this case it is the actual presentation of the thing as being more than what I see that motivates (or grounds) my awareness of the possibility to achieve certain movements in order to discover its further aspects. If they were not intended as being there now, I would not be motivated to discover them. In other words it would be a quite awkward account of our phenomenology of perception to say that the further aspects of the thing are constituted by means or also more humbly together with our movements towards them. Such an account would amount to quite a strong ontological form of idealism or subjectivism — a position Husserl’s “correlationism” was not, I hold, meant to endorse.

This being the phenomenological situation we have in the case of TP, let us now see how it can contribute to the foundation of our idea of objectivity. The first step in that direction consists in clarifying how TP goes hand in hand with an awareness of transcendence.

III. Transcendence and Indeterminacy

The idea of objectivity and following the perception of something as objective or in relation to its objective determination certainly seems to imply that the thing is not a private and exclusive achievement of a single subject and that objectivity requires a kind of “publicity” of both the object and its determination.⁽¹²⁾ In this sense it is undisputed that objectivity implies transcendence.⁽¹³⁾ Intuitively, only what transcends one’s mind, what goes beyond one’s feelings, opinions, and thoughts can be considered as an object of objective scrutiny and assessment, i. e. of objective determination.

However, I would argue that this implication is unilateral: objectivity requires transcendence, but the reverse does not hold. It is indeed possible to perceive something as transcendent without any thematic or unthematic reference to objectivity in the sense of a specific way to determine, i. e. to establish, to know how a thing is. More specifically, objectivity seems to be unavoidably connected to an idea of the thing as fully determined in itself although such full determinacy goes beyond one’s proper evidence of it. On the contrary, awareness of transcendence does not imply awareness of complete determinacy. TP entails an awareness of the perceived thing as going beyond what one properly sees, i. e. what one has sensuous impressions of, but the other sides of the thing are posited within TP in an indeterminate way, which, in turn, means that they, in themselves, are posited neither as determinate nor as indeterminate.⁽¹⁴⁾ The awareness one initially has of them lies beyond a distinction between determinacy and indeterminacy, so to say, before the sensitivity to them.

As Smith (2002) has thoroughly shown, perception is a kind of experience that, although it is connected with sensations, is of a totally different quality. That’s why I above said that TP gives the thing as going beyond one’s impressions of it. It is thus, TP itself that marks a distinction between the object and me, as well as between the thing as such and its givenness to me. In this regard, we should first point out that the difference between immanence and transcendence, as far as TP is concerned, is not only related to the problem of the other sides of a thing, but rather also to

the lived experience that the given object is something persistent although its givenness changes. Plurality of appearances — or in a more Husserlian vocabulary adumbrations (Abschattungen) — is not to be exclusively related to the different sides of one thing, but rather to one same side as well. I can see the same side in many ways according to different lightnings, for example, and anyway as changing through a plurality of different appearances, though keeping being intended as the same object — or, more precisely, as the same side of the same object. Following, the consciousness of the transcendence of the thing in relation to my sphere of immanence could already be located at this level of experience (Husserl 2001, 53–62; Smith 2002, 135).⁽¹⁵⁾

With that said, we have to acknowledge that the issue of the back sides of a three-dimensional thing adds a relevant element to this framework. While the discourse concerning a plurality of adumbrations in regard to one single two-dimensional object could allow for an understanding of the object as being fully given from each perspective, although with different degrees of accuracy, the reference to the other aspects puts onto the table the idea of something which is intuitively or properly not given at all, which is given emptily or, as I suggested, which is given in an indeterminate way. On the other side of the thing there can be aspects of which I have as good as no idea.

In order to show that we can conceive of TP in terms of indeterminacy is far from being a merely abstract understanding of TP, we should consider an example that, although it was inspired by a piece of literature, can hardly be dismissed as a mere conceptual game.

I walk into a room and I perceive a thing lying at the centre of it. I see that it is three-dimensional, even if I do not know what the thing is. I cannot figure out what its total shape is — not to mention the colour. I see that what is given to me presents a mixture of irregular geometrical patterns, but I cannot recognize anything which allows me to figure out its total shape, and thus how the other sides are. The only, extremely vague, idea I can get is that also the other sides are very irregular. Let's, in short, suppose I am perceiving an odradek.⁽¹⁶⁾ I have no doubts that it is something and that it has an extension which goes beyond the sensuously given sides, although the object is of a kind totally unknown to me, i. e. I have no idea about its total look.⁽¹⁷⁾

It is then clear that TP implies that I see the thing as being composed of other sides, but the latter can be intended with a very high level of generality, i. e. indeterminacy. In a certain sense, I would be aware of them even if I had no clue which allows me to anticipate how they are or how many they are.⁽¹⁸⁾

According to the aforesaid, we can establish that TP is possible even if one does not intend the thing as fully determinate, and in a sense, even without wondering whether the thing is fully determined and, in case, how. We could say that to perceptually believe in the existence of the other sides of the thing, we do not need to believe almost anything about them, about their qualification, and even about their quantification.⁽¹⁹⁾

IV. TP and three – dimensionality

In the previous section we have seen that a basic feature of TP, namely that it includes more parts than the one(s) one properly has intuition of, is clearly connected with the essential embedding of TP in a three-dimensional space. A thorough account of three-dimensionality evidently — 196 —

goes beyond the limits as well as the scope of this contribution. We have to limit ourselves to point out and carefully consider just some fundamental phenomenological facts which characterize the givenness of space in TP beside μ as it were μ the givenness of the thing.

First of all μ we should remark that in TP a thing is given in a three – dimensional space which is perceived as surrounding the thing μ and which lies between the perceiver and the thing. Second μ space has depth μ and the thing possesses depth among its features. Third μ in TP we literally see the thing as covering a part of the space and μ at the same time μ the space as extending itself beyond the thing.⁽²⁰⁾

These three phenomenological data μ as it were μ are evidently in need of further investigations. What is of relevance to the present task is that the hidden parts of the thing are intended together with a respective part of the surrounding empty space and that the emptiness of the surrounding space is deeply different from the one concerning the ungiven sides of the thing. In general μ the emptiness of space is properly given μ i. e. given as properly empty. Also in general μ the filling of the empty space is different from the filling of the empty intentions concerning the hidden sides of the thing. As for the latter kind of emptiness μ it concerns the intentions μ and not the thing itself. By filling my intentions towards the other sides of the thing μ I do not fill in the sides themselves μ but rather just my consciousness of them. As for the empty space μ emptiness is the determination of space itself μ i. e. empty is how the space is. In this case μ then μ to the intentions directed towards an empty space are μ in themselves μ “full” intentions μ and not empty. As for the replenishment of the empty space itself μ this can be achieved by means of occupying it with something μ including one’s view. It is μ then μ easy to realize how μ in TP μ slightly shifting one’s attention from the thing itself to the space surrounding it μ one can become aware of the other sides of the thing as determinable. Let’s schematically see how this precisely happens.

We can say that μ all we can be certain of in the perception of a thing which appears as three – dimensional is that:

- there is a part of what we see that we do not properly see;
- we have a kind of apodictic certainty that the other sides of the perceived thing exist;
- we can have only clues concerning how the other sides μ and thus the thing in its whole determinacy μ are;
- what we do not see is posited because we see the extension of the thing in a third dimension – regardless whether we have or not a sort of gestaltic scheme to continue it beyond the intuited surface.⁽²¹⁾ This scheme μ indeed μ cannot offer any guarantee about the real aspects of the thing and it is based on the primary understanding of the thing as three – dimensional;
- this means that we are also aware of the space surrounding the thing;
- the surrounding space is perceived μ in contrast with the space occupied by the thing μ as empty;⁽²²⁾
- a space perceived as empty does not get filled in the same way empty intentions directed towards the ungiven sides of the thing get filled μ i. e. by means of fulfilling intuitions;
- the replenishment of empty space corresponds to the possibility of occupying it either with other things μ or with one’s own body μ including one’s eyes and μ thus μ one’s gaze.

In the context of our present reflexions it is the second kind of “fulfilment” which is of interest. Following:

- the surrounding empty space can be perceived as allowing kineastheses into it;
- the awareness of these possible kineastheses can allow the awareness of the other sides of the thing as determinable.

If this schematic account is correct we have somehow understood how from a minimal view of a thing as three – dimensional though with an indeterminate awareness of its other sides we can arrive to a consciousness of the very same thing as determinable in its entirety. However we have thus not really reached the level of consciousness which considers the thing as already determined now. The other sides are first given in an indeterminate way. Husserl (2001a, § 1) speaks of “determinable indeterminacy”. We have seen that the switch of our attention from the thing to the surrounding space can support maybe even elicit our awareness of the other sides as determinable. It should now be questioned what else is necessary in order to become aware of the other sides as determinable determinacy, so to say. In other words we need to understand what motivates our awareness of the other sides as determinate before, or this side of, our exploration of them.

To be sure such awareness can derive from many factors. We do not need to specifically consider them here. We can limit ourselves to point out that so far both memory and imagination have been excluded from the factors which participate in TP. That was valid though, as regards the most basic elementary as it were form of TP. At that stage we simply had a grasp of the thing as external and as composed of more sides than the ones we have sensations of. The other sides were thus kept indeterminate – if you will their determination was not in question at all. As soon as we acquire a consciousness of them as determinable though any faculty we have to presentify i. e. to figure out how those sides are can come into play. Moreover beside imagination and memory one should consider at least two further factors: gestaltic laws and the awareness of other subjects. The latter is the most important for us here because it clearly overcomes the possibilities of a single subject but at the same time it allows in principle an understanding of the thing as properly and fully given – although this is tantamount to a proper givenness which no singular real and really perceiving subject can have. Assuming that the total surface of a thing can be covered by the view of a more or less large plurality of subjects the surface can be totally and properly given in one single instant although no subject is the one who benefits of such a proper givenness. This means that by means of consciousness of other – wherever this comes from – ⁽²³⁾ one achieves a consciousness of a total givenness of the thing which is effective i. e. it is in a certain sense real and actual but goes beyond one’s sphere of intuition as well as the sphere of intuition of all partaking subjects. As it is easy to see this is a step even beyond an awareness of the thing as totally determined in itself; we are here in front of an awareness of the thing as totally and determinately given. This is I maintain the “ideal” a basic understanding of objectivity amounts to. ⁽²⁴⁾

It is quite clear that in this regard our sense of full – blown objectivity is certainly not something we can properly account for if we remain confined within the limits of pure, or mere, TP. Full – blown objectivity should quite reasonably be located on a discursive, communicative level of

experience. With that said, what makes this latter idea so reasonable should not be situated on the same predicative level but rather in a more direct level of access to the things themselves as indeterminately given, as determinable beyond the reach of any single intuition, and, finally, thanks to memory, imagination, gestaltic laws, and consciousness of others, as determined in itself. Once we have acquired such a consciousness, it is not difficult to see how, assuming that we also acquire a linguistic mind, we can come to a consciousness of the thing as given to a kind of panoptic view — a view from everywhere.

In the conclusions we have to assess whether and, in case, how such a view from everywhere is equivalent or linked to the view from nowhere.

V. Conclusion

The pre-linguistic and pre-communicative experience of TP has taken us up to the consciousness of the thing as fully determined in itself beyond one's effective or proper view of the same thing. Subsequently, the awareness of other subjects as co-determining the thing, produces the idea of a total view, i. e. of an all-sided view of the thing. However, this view is not possible for any single subject. Properly, it belongs to no subject, and any subject can only participate in it, but no subject has any intuition which properly corresponds to such an encompassing view. As a consequence, the view from everywhere is a view of no subject. It is the view of no-one. The only way to make it, so to say, real is possibly by means of communication between the involved subjects. Indeed, it is only thanks to communication that a subject can partake such an all-sided view.

We could therefore say that such a view exists only in communication. Communication, though, puts the determination of the thing beyond intuition into the sphere of discourse and discussion, that is of empty acts. Communication and language, as well as reasoning in general, are made of, and produce, empty intentions, no fulfilling intentions.⁽²⁵⁾ No subject partaking such sphere, and thus no subject seeing the things as to be determined by the total, intersubjective view, can perform, or somehow acquire, the corresponding intuitive fulfilling acts. No one can grasp the totality of the thing and the total view of the thing can be achieved only by means of rational, discursive beliefs. One can only understand whether the contents of one intuition correspond to the part of the object the discourse ascribes to her.

It follows that any subject that strives for the view from everywhere, i. e. for the total determination aka knowledge of the thing, one has an intuition of — and then, as a consequence, any subject that strives for knowing the external world — has to accept to enter into a communicative thought about the thing, to accept informations from other sources than one's intuitions and, thus, to allow also the sublation, as it were, of one's intuitions of the thing at stake. Intuition, indeed, is allowed only to provide the common reference of all discursive acts, but the determination of how the reference is, cannot be a matter of intuition. Does this mean that one has to give up what one sees?

In a certain sense, yes. By aiming for a total determination of the thing, the only way one can partake in such determination is to abandon one's intuitive data — in a sense, also the very fulfillment of the intentions corresponding to the determination of the sides one indeed properly sees.

That is why one can come to consider a perfectly objective view a view which fully transcends one's as well as any other "concrete" viewpoint — hence the so-called "view from nowhere".

Generally, when we speak of objectivity, we speak about the capacity of some act of consciousness, language or thought to faithfully represent its reference, i. e. to offer a determination of the intended object as it is in itself and not as it simply appears to any of us. According to what I have been showing in this article, such a way of understanding the determination of things and following of objects in general is grounded on the fact that something is perceived as transcendent and as exceeding one's own intuitive access to the perceptual thing, plus the motivation to consider that something is completely determined in itself. While transcendence does merely mean that something lies beyond one's view and one's grasp as it were, objectivity is related to the full determination of something even at the expenses of one's intuitive access to the things. If our account of TP and the passage to the idea of a total view of the thing are correct, we can say that, once one starts to see the thing one intuitively as being determined beyond one's perceptual intuition, and any perceptual intuition in general, one can also develop a kind of "Kantian consciousness" towards the thing — as well as the external world in general — as something different from appearance.

Certainly this is not the only meaning of objectivity we can endorse. However, the story of TP we have been telling here can help to understand why our sense of objectivity — and indeed, our sensitivity towards a consideration of the very contents of our experiences in terms of objectivity — often swings between a view everyone can share, and a view beyond any situated grasp, i. e. beyond any "subjective" grasp — a view, in a sense, no one can achieve. In the attempt to fully determine a perceptual three-dimensional object, we reach an understanding of such an object as given in a total sight each has a part of; however, no one can see the whole, and in order to participate in the idea of a total vision, one has to give up at least parts of one's perceptual beliefs. At any rate, one should enter a dominion of reason and trust in other sources than intuition — including the reports of others and our capacity to correctly interpret them.

Husserlian philosophy, which has often been accused of solipsism, and has been both criticized and praised as intuitionist, in the end teaches us that our objective determination of the world, although, so to speak, solipsistically grounded in intuition in the form of TP, cannot, at least not solely, be a matter of intuition, but rather of communication, i. e. of mediation, and possibly of rational and logical discussion.⁽²⁶⁾ Accordingly, any appeal to intuitions in matters of objectivity could even be considered as a betrayal of the very primordial and intuitive evidence which we suppose to give us access to the world.

As for the main purpose of this article, i. e. to show that idea of objectivity as concerning the determination of any object or issue, which is independent of one's subjective view on it, we can finally say — assuming that the show has been successful — that the view from nowhere is always grounded on a view from somewhere, i. e. that only a subject able to perspectively perceive the world in the flesh, i. e. who is able to perceive the world, to sensuously see it as exceeding one's view, and to perform all the "sensuous" steps we described above, is also able to believe that the true world has to be discovered — assuming that it can be discovered — beyond what one can sen-

suously intuit. In other words a “purely” perceptual and process is able to constitute the ground for the belief that the “real” world is not a matter of intuition and thus it is not what we perceive. Whether this is a paradox and in case whether and how it can be solved is an issue for other investigations.

Notes:

(1) In the present article if not specified as meaning otherwise when I speak of “experience” I always mean “perceptual experience”.

(2) A certain perhaps extreme form of Cartesianism could come close to this idea. As known indeed for Descartes only “intellectual ideas” can tell us something we can be justified in considering as true because only intellectual ideas can be clear and distinct.

(3) For the general concept of intuition in Husserl and how it is closer to the pre-Kantian rather than to the Kantian and post-Kantian meaning of intuition see (Hintikka 2003).

(4) One should notice that for Husserl perception is not the only kind of intuitive (anschaulich) act we have. Memory and imagination are intuitive as well although instead of presenting something they presentify (vergegenwärtigen) it. Moreover one should mention the quite controversial idea of a categorial intuition (kategoriale Anschauung) (Husserl 2001b 269–304). However in what follows I will speak of intuition only in terms of sensuous and presenting intuition i. e. as perceptual experience. My grounding of the idea of objectivity on a prepredicative purely perceptual level can therefore also be considered as a foundation of the idea of objectivity on a kind of intuitive relationship to objects which does not require any thematic form of reflection nor a linguistic ability on behalf of the perceiver. Moreover I will principally consider perception as pure i. e. in abstraction from any synergy with remembering and imagining. Following Husserl (1983 5–6) I will thus consider perception as our primary access to something real (outside of ourselves).

(5) I say “straightforwardly” in order to underline that here we are not considering cases in which we could make use of some instruments in order to perceive things more completely such as if we were to use mirrors. However in this case as well the possibility to associate the parts of the thing I indirectly perceive with the ones I directly perceive and so with the whole to which the latter belongs rests on the previous understanding that the directly perceived aspects are aspects of a whole which is bigger than what I directly see.

(6) One should mention that at an early stage i. e. in the Logical Investigations, Husserl (1977b, VI, § § 14, 15, 23, 25, 26) himself speaks of a signitive relationship between the properly given sides of an object and the ungiven ones. However Husserl will soon revise such a theory and will even point out all of its flaws: cf. Husserl (1997, § § 16–18). For a very concise but clear and precise presentation of the evolution of Husserl’s thought concerning thing-experience see Bernet, Kern, Marbach (1993, 115–140).

(7) I intend here to rule out a strong conceptualist view concerning the contents of perception as characterized by Van Mazijk (2015). I will not touch upon the issue as to whether or not what I propose here can be in accordance with what Van Mazijk calls a weak conceptualist view.

(8) If we assumed imagination as responsible for the givenness of the hidden sides we would have either a reduction of the solid to a plane, made of all sides disposed on a more or less flat surface or a constant reference to hidden sides because the imaginary view of the other sides as those sides which are hidden to me in perception should give them as in turn having hidden sides which were the ones I am now perceiving. Unless I allow that in perception we encounter a kind of modal mongrel made of imaginary and of real parts imagination were then somehow alternative to my perception of the same thing and not really complementary to it.

(9) I say that the other sides are perceptually intended because as previously stated in the Husserlian frameworks perception is considered as a whole an intuitive act but it is not solely made of intuitions but also of empty intentions. Therefore it is perception itself as a complex act, which intends the ungiven sides.

(10) In this regard we could notice that even in the case that we follow Gibson’s (1979) ecological theory of perception we should say that the affordances related to our ecological embedding are affordances in the actually given sides of the objects while the hidden sides do not per se offer any possible intramodal (Bower forthcoming) clue. As known the contribution of kinaesthetic awareness to thing-constitution has been underlined by Husserl himself for instance in Ding und Raum (Husserl 1997) and it has also more recently been discussed in interdisciplinary researches on perception for instance under the label of “sensorimotor knowledge” in Noë (2004). Within the Husserlian scholarship Michela Summa (2011; 2014) has offered careful and detailed analyses of the role of kinaesthetic awareness in TP. Although I do not contest their validity I believe that kinaesthetic awareness does not properly account for our awareness of the unrevealed sides of perceived things. Evidently kinaesthetics are a kind of act while the other sides are contents. In my view we could perhaps claim that kinaesthetic awareness and the awareness of other sides go hand in hand but not that kinaesthetic awareness founds the awareness of other unrevealed or ungiven sides. Moreover I claim that

the relationship between act and content is here from the point of view of our one-sided perceptual experience primarily not a relationship of reciprocal foundation but of unilateral foundation: my current one-sided perception improperly gives me the hidden sides and these sides can work as foundation for the awareness of kinaesthesis apt to reveal them. Therefore my primary question here is how we come to have an awareness of such ungiven sides. In this regard, “a genetic (or developmental) claim that we perceive objects as 3D because we have learned the way in which their appearances change as we have moved around them in the past” such as a referee of a previous version of this paper suggested me, is beside the point I am analyzing. Said claim indeed seems to assume that we perceive something as 3D only after we have moved around it or, at least that we are aware of it in relationship to our possible movements. Contrariwise I am here assuming that such sides are intended before we have an experience of turning around the object. I would indeed claim that the third dimension is not constituted “gradually”. There must be a sense of depth which precedes my movement as well as my awareness of possible movements around the things. Otherwise when we move around something how do we know that we are moving around the thing? Likewise how can we understand that something is turning in front of us and not that it is changing its look? It is as I will show later rather because the thing is given as surrounded by space an empty space which allows my movements — and not vice versa. I thank the mentioned referee for allowing me to restate the general framework I assume in this article clearly and to spell out more elements which in my view are in support of it.

(11) This “enablement capacity” should not be interpreted as a kind of magical power on the part of the subject. It more trivially refers to the bodily movements by means of which a subject can if the situation allows it discover the backside of an object and observe it from different viewpoints. See Claesges (1964).

(12) Twenty years ago Zahavi (1996a; 1996b; 1997; 2001) has proposed a theory which has been very influential in the Husserlian as well as in the larger phenomenological scholarship. Until recently, though not universally accepted, and although some scholars have indeed shown some perplexities towards it, there have to my knowledge been only very few thorough critical examinations of such thesis: Bower (2014) and (Declerck 2018). Both have pointed out some flaws of Zahavi’s thesis, which has been labelled by Bower as Strong Open Intersubjectivity – thesis (in short SOI). SOI and the main argument in favour of it can be summarized as follows: a. in TP some sides of the thing are stated although they are not properly given within the very same perceptual act; b. the proper givenness of those sides is actually incompatible with the perception which gives them improperly; c. the other sides correspond to perceptions which cannot belong to the same subject which improperly perceives them; d. the other sides are thus correspondent to an open plurality of other subjects, i. e. to an open intersubjectivity; ergo e. TP already situates the subject in an open intersubjective dimension, i. e. the experience of a transcendent object as transcendent goes hand in hand with the embedding of a subject in an intersubjective community as it were.

In the present article it is not my interest to criticize nor to defend SOI. I would limit myself to point out that on the one hand SOI has the merit of raising the question concerning how an extremely basic prepredicative experience can be connected to a sense of objectivity which potentially overcomes one’s individual sphere of consciousness; on the other hand by claiming that the awareness of other sides implies some kind of intersubjective dimension indeed that TP is in the end accomplished by a “transcendental intersubjectivity” Zahavi goes definitely too far, and risks to obfuscate the very prepredicative ground of our basic idea of objectivity as well as our capacity to make sense of it, so to say our sensitivity to it. Zahavi’s exaggeration depends in my view also from a deeply erroneous conflation of transcendence and objectivity, which in turn goes hand in hand with a lack of consideration of the indeterminacy which characterizes TP and the different stages of the awareness of such indeterminacy from determinability to determination, which as I will now show can be considered as paving the ground for our basic sense of objectivity.

(13) In this regard one could ask whether since they do not seem to be properly transcendent in the way external objects are feelings, emotions, etc. do not allow an “objective view” on them. I do not tackle this issue here. However I would tentatively suggest that the capacity to gain an objective standpoint about the “inner life” is genetically later than that concerning external objects and is possibly a consequence of it. I is because we learn to consider external things as open to “objective determination” that we become able to have such attitude also towards our inner life.

(14) We could say that the givenness presents us a merely open possibility, but it does not properly, perse, entices us to any determinate one. See Husserl (2001, 39–62).

(15) This does not however imply any “Kantian” consciousness of the thing itself as something totally different from its appearances. What appears is the thing itself and not something intermediate between the thing and me. My perceptual awareness can be stimulated to perceive more because the more I perceive the more I “catch” the thing and not a ghost of it as it were. Therefore albeit the thing shall not be reduced to its appearing as if it were nothing but appearing, the contents of the perceptual acts are appearances of the thing itself, they belong to the thing as part of it and not simply of its manifestation. The manifestation in turn is not a kind of dress of the thing, it is simply so to say, the fact of being given to consciousness.

(16) See (Kafka 1995 427 – 429). A remarkable feature of this example is that given that I have read Kafka I can recognize something as an *odradek* although I have no idea about its “real” figure. It becomes in a certain sense a sortal term for things I cannot recognize. This means, then, that there is a minimal amount of features which permits its cataloging. Such features do not include for sure any specific type of shape nor color but do likely include three – dimensionality.

(17) Furthermore psychological researches seem to confirm that the recognition of shapes precedes the recognition of types of objects and that the perception of something as three – dimensionally extended is independent from both total shape and type recognition: see e. g. Sedgwick (2001) and Peterson (2001).

(18) For sure one could say that the given sides put some constraints as regards how the ungiven ones can be — but such constraints concern in my view only the size because the other sides cannot be wider higher than the one I properly perceive. This is however quite far from making our awareness of said sides “determinate”. As for other features above all shape and color I can have clues but these are not definitely binding. I would not therefore speak of constraints which TP really imposes to the other sides but in case rather of constraints to one’s imagination of the other sides.

(19) Also Zahavi (1996a 37) has clearly pointed out the difference in consciousness between the that and the how of the absent profiles, a difference which can be expressed in German by saying that we are certain of the *Sein* (being in the sense of existence) of the other sides of the thing but not of their *Sosein* (being – such – and – such). However Zahavi does not seem to adequately consider it in his development of SOI.

(20) This phenomenon is what in psychological studies of perception has been called “occlusion”: see e. g. .

(21) For relationships similarities and differences between Husserl’s account of perception and the theories proposed by the Gestalt – psychology see (Melle 1983 82 – 96; Smith 1998). A perspective which somehow seems to me in at least partial accordance with what I am claiming here in as much as it tries to work out a correspondence between the geometries of space and things and our perception of them, which somehow founds our orientation in space and our acquaintance with spatial objects on a level which precedes the typization of the perceptual contents is put forward by Boi (2006; 2013).

(22) The contrast with the space occupied by the thing should explain why even if we perceive a thing as surrounded by other things the very emergence of the thing as different from the other goes hand in hand with the perception of the space occupied by the other things as so to say emptyable.

(23) I leave indeed here aside if this consciousness precedes or follows the consciousness of the alterity of the external world. I would just limit myself to the observation that according to what I have tried to show in this article Zahavi’s SOI is not really justifiable in as much as it concerns our consciousness of the world as fully transcendent and the grounding of our awareness of the world as shared with other subjects seems to me as rather to be pursued along the lines of Bower (2014).

(24) This ideal emerges here as clearly connected with the the issue of truth concerning the intentions towards the object. Within the limits of the present article the issue of truth cannot specifically be considered though.

(25) As said above (see footnote 4) I have to leave here aside the issue of what Husserl calls “categorical intuition” which are situated on the level of we could say acts of reasoning. However categorical intuitions give according to Husserl himself ideal entities and not reality. I have here tried on the contrary to understand how reality which is primarily and in general only given in intuitive acts can become the object of a non – intuitive determination.

(26) The result of the reflections presented here could in this regard possibly be considered in accordance to Wallner’s (2011) idea of a fundamental hermeneutic dimension of Phenomenology. I cannot take on this issue here. I will limit myself to pointing out that either way a fundamental hermeneutic dimension in order to be meaningful related to something objective must rely on a more fundamental purely intuitive ground.

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