

historiografía [*Historie*]. Ello exige el cuestionamiento del proyecto “científico” inicial y la perspectiva de una destrucción de la historia de la ontología sostenida, sobre todo, en *Ser y Tiempo*. Así, Xolocotzi Yáñez se concentrará en mostrar que en la ontología fundamental la historiografía se deriva de la historia; mientras que, en el pensar ontohistórico, se trata de orígenes radicalmente diferentes.

Heidegger y su obra. Ensayos en torno a la unidad de su pensar puede brindar diversas herramientas para comenzar a leer a Heidegger, manteniendo, a su vez, el rigor propio de los brillantes especialistas que allí disertan. La continuidad del pensamiento heideggeriano y sus posibles rupturas podrán ser abordadas a través

de temas tales como: diversas estrategias de lectura del corpus heideggeriano; el estatuto de la técnica y de los artefactos; la relación que Heidegger mantuvo con la obra de Kant; el problema de la correlación fenomenológica heredada de Husserl; las novedades introducidas por los *Cuadernos Negros* o bien atendiendo a la relación entre historia e historiografía. Todas estas “llaves de acceso” al pensamiento de Heidegger no hacen sino mostrar la actualidad de su obra y la magnitud de sus análisis.

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ZAHAVI, Dan (2020). *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 296 pp.

Thought the recent edition of *Self-Awareness and Alterity* has been re-published without major changes, it does offer new reflections from Zahavi about his first publication on the issue of self-awareness. The thesis he presented in this book and which was then developed in his subsequent works, *Subjectivity and Selfhood* (2005), and *Self & Other* (2014), had a big impact in the world of both phenomenological and cognitive science research, partly contributing to the birth of contemporary enactivism, an interesting branch of the 4Es¹ focused on the dynamic interaction between an acting organism and its environment.

The re-publication of this important book demonstrates how it remains an important milestone for research in the enactivist field and in its social and practical developments.

In this review I will recap Zahavi’s position on pre-reflective self-awareness and highlight criticisms of Hopkins and López Silva throughout.

The purpose of Zahavi’s ambitious work *Self-Awareness and Alterity* could be summarized as follows: on the one hand he wants to demonstrate that Husserl had a framework of pre-reflective self-awareness and on the other hand he wants to underline how this framework could become a benchmark in the contemporary analytical debate on self-awareness (p. xi). When the book was first published in 1999, its purpose was to create an opening towards phenomenology within cognitive sciences, which at the time were concentrated on higher order theories of consciousness (Armstrong² and Rosenthal³ are examples). Twenty years later, although the said opening has

¹ 4E means embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended, it refers to “Embodied Cognition”.

² Armstrong, D. (1968). *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. London: Routledge.

³ Rosenthal, D. (1986). Two concepts of consciousness, *Philosophical Studies*, 49, 329–359.

been completed, this rigorous text still has much to offer about the issues of contemporary cognitive science.

Self-Awareness and Alterity investigates self-awareness from the Husserlian point of view in relation to Alterity, an often neglected concept in phenomenological-Husserlian analysis. At times, Husserl himself has been interpreted as a defender of self-awareness as self-sufficient self-presence «cleansed of any type of absence, exteriority and alterity» (p. xi). But in fact, Alterity has been a key concept in phenomenology and one central to Zahavi's thesis. Overgaard and Henriksen, give Alterity two dimensions: a *broad* one, i.e. «anything that eludes or transcends a subject's grasps»⁴ and a *narrow* one, i.e. when Alterity refers to «another agent subjectivity or mind [...] only other subjects present an in principle limitation of our knowledge or grasps»⁵.

Zahavi's text understands Alterity in the *broad* sense: «[there are] three fundamentally different types of alterity: alterity in the form of (1) nonself (world), (2) oneself as Other, (3) Other self» (p. 200). Alterity is an essential element as we experience the world and ourselves directly through an element of non-identity and this non-identity must be embedded within any theory of self-awareness.

To better understand Zahavi's proposal, it is necessary to have a clear-cut definition of *pre-reflective self-awareness*: «Pre-reflective self-consciousness is pre-reflective in the sense that (1) it is an awareness we have before we do any reflecting on our experience (2) it is an implicit and first order awareness rather than an explicit or higher-order form of self-consciousness»⁶.

Therefore, it could be defined as the *immediate, non-thematic and first-personal givenness* of experience.

Zahavi investigates the concept of self-awareness by providing a so called conceptual compass, i.e. eight issues that he believes to be fundamental to a complete theory. I will go through these eight points of reference, and then look at the direction that Zahavi took with his text and the framework he built.

1. *Methodology: what is the specific question that we are answering*

What interests Zahavi is the givenness of our first-personal experiences from a phenomenological point of view, i.e. the way in which this peculiar "phenomena" present themselves to us (p. xviii). Pre-reflective self-consciousness is not simply a quality added to the experience, but it constitutes experience itself (p. 54). In pre-reflective self-awareness one's self is experienced as the subject of awareness without any process of reflection on itself (p. 54). All conscious experiences include a minimal form of pre-reflective self-awareness, i.e. all my conscious experiences are always and necessarily given to me, immediately and directly⁷.

2. *Structure: the differences between various types of self-awareness and clarification of their internal differentiation and complexity.*

The issue could also be reformulated as follows: are we monads that enter the world only starting from themselves or are we constituted through a process of integration of otherness? Husserl explained that the concrete ego cannot be grasped

⁴ Overgaard, S., Henriksen M.G. (2018). "Alterity", *Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological Psychopathology*.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Gallagher, S. & Zahavi, D. (2019). "Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/self-consciousness-phenomenological/>

⁷ Colombetti, G. (2011). Varieties of pre-reflective self-awareness: foreground and background bodily feelings in emotion experience. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 54(3), 293-313.

independently of its relation to what is other than itself. Husserl's realization is that every constitution presupposes an illetic, material moment, which is to say something *else* (p. 119). Subjectivity is permeated by otherness; the constitution is therefore a process that takes place and develops itself in the structure of the world/consciousness (p. 121). This is the starting point from which to proceed to investigate the other facets of pre-reflective self-awareness.

3. *Temporality: how can I be self-aware of temporal experience? And how can I be self-aware across a temporal distance?*

Zahavi proposes a structurally temporal self-awareness model referring to Husserl's structure of "primal-impression-retention-protention" (p. 65). Husserl's theory not only explains how it is possible to perceive a temporal object in an enduring act of consciousness, but also how it is possible for consciousness to unify itself in time⁸. In fact, the three-fold structure of temporal experience is what could be called a *noematic temporalization* (p. 69). But what about the *noetic temporalization*, or the temporal manifestation of consciousness to itself? Husserl theorizes three different layers of temporality: the objective time (the objects that appear), the immanent subjective time (the pre-empirical time of acts) and the absolute pre-phenomenal flow of consciousness. The thirs is not just one of the most difficult problems of phenomenology but also one of the most ambiguous ones. Zahavi interprets noetic temporalization as follows (criticized by Brough, 2011⁹): the pre-reflective self-awareness of the act and the non-objectifying self-manifestation of the absolute flow are one and the same,

a pervasive self-manifestation that structurally founds pre-reflective self-awareness (p. 77).

4. *Egocentricity or non-egocentricity?*

Husserl himself changed his mind on this question during the years, and it's his last development on the issue that Zahavi takes up, i.e. an egological theory of self-awareness. Every conscious experience belongs to a subject, but whether a certain experience is mine or not depends on the givenness of the experience itself (p. 148). The ego is not something opposed to experience, it is not something that is outside of the stream of consciousness: it is a structural part of its givenness (p. 148).

5. *The body that shapes awareness*

Bodily self-awareness is the pre-requisite for experiencing the givenness of the object (p. 95). The perception of my surroundings always presupposes a non-reflective awareness of my body. Perception is not a passive reception of stimuli, but an active exploration of the surrounding environment (p. 96). Perception is always correlated and accompanied by the self-feeling of the body moving (not proprioception): it means that there is no disembodied perception.¹⁰ In fact, the body is constitutive of our pre-reflective awareness of ourselves.

6. *Intersubjectivity*

To Husserl, human beings are made up of an element of worldly transcendence, which means that my interactions with others influence my self-awareness (p. 148). There are mainly two different ways of understanding the subjective complex opened to the Other: the *psyche*

⁸ Gallagher S. (2005), *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 190-191.

⁹ Brough J. B. (2011). The Most Difficult of all Phenomenological Problems, *Husserl Studies*, 27, 27-40.

¹⁰ Gallagher S. (2005), p. 59.

and the *person*. By *psyche* Zahavi means a psychophysical complex, while *person* means how I appear to myself as a socialized subject and member of the social world (p. 161). The point that Zahavi touches is how the subject acquires a worldly self-awareness and how he comes to understand himself as a worldly entity. The origin of personal self-awareness is in social acts, in the relationships with other human beings: I am not only a pure ego, but a person who has dispositions, habits and passions (pp. 174-175).

7. *Intentionality*

Intentionality is the ability of mental states *to be about*, *to stand for things, properties, and states of affairs*¹¹. Consciousness is in fact, simultaneously and co-originally aware of itself and related to the world. Self-manifestation might not itself be a type of intentionality, but it is always accompanied by hetero-manifestation (p. 43). Husserlian analysis entails a distinction between activity and passivity of intentionality: whenever the subject is active, it is also passive since, to be active, is to react to something else (p. 119). This leads to Husserl's distinction between *receptivity* and *affectivity*. The first is the most primitive type of intentional activity whereas *affectivity* involves being invited to turn one's attention to something (p. 119). This point is important because it explains that reflection is not a foreign, disembodied act, but is motivated by being affected by something and responding to that something. The concrete ego cannot be thought of independently of its relation to what is foreign to it (p. 120).

8. *The Unconscious*

According to Husserl, the mistake

made in connecting self-awareness and pre-reflective self-awareness to the unconscious is conceptualizing consciousness only as a phenomenon of attention. In fact, consciousness is far more complex than an act of intentional attention (p. 211). Zahavi insists on the persistent influence of the past, which – as was said for intentionality – contributes to the genesis and formation of our apperceptions in a sort of sedimentation process of cognitive schemas (p. 211). It is therefore possible to link the unconscious with our self-awareness, since it is not localized at the level of our intentionality, but is rather a dimension of opaque passivity.

Zahavi's text opened the debate not only in Husserl's phenomenology itself, giving rise to discussions about what Husserl's real precepts were, but also within the discussion around self-awareness.

It would be ambitious to report all objections alongside Zahavi's *de facto* or possible answers¹², so I will focus on the two objections that – in this peculiar context – best highlight interesting issues of the pre-reflective self-awareness: that of Hopkins and López Silva. The two objections respectively touch two different issues:

- The impossibility of defining pre-reflective self-awareness through a phenomenological investigation (Hopkins).
- How delusions of thought undermine the claim that consciousness necessarily entails phenomenal self-awareness (Lopez).

For the sake of completeness, I will here mention other objections and famous debates: Brough / Sokolowski's objections¹³ concerning the status of the “absolute flow” in temporal self-awareness,

¹¹ Jacob, P. (2019)., “Intentionality”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2019 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/intentionality/>

¹² Zahavi D. (2018), Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Selfhood: A reply to some critics, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 9, 703–718.

¹³ Brough J. B. (2011) and Brough J. B. (2010) Notes on the absolute time-constituting flow of consciousness. In D. Lohmar and I. Yamaguchi (Eds), *On time. New contributions to the Husserlian*

which have been answered by both Zahavi and an article by Neal DeRoo¹⁴. Guillot's objections about the distinction between *for-me-ness*, *me-ness* and *mineness*¹⁵. Farrell and McClelland's objection¹⁶ that focus on the same issue as López-Silva¹⁷, and finally there is Howell and Thompson's interesting objection to *phenomenal me-ness*¹⁸.

Hopkins lays out his critique of pre-reflective self-awareness in his text *The Philosophy of Husserl*. Mainly, he takes issue with the fact that Zahavi is inclined to use the phenomenological method to describe a phenomenon, defined as "pre-reflective"¹⁹. Indeed, he argues that the phenomenological method operates exclusively on acts of reflection and that only through reflection can we know something about the stream of lived experience. «The methodical presupposition of acts of reflection in order for phenomenological cognition to take place therefore means that unreflected lived-experiences are essentially incapable of being directly apprehended in their "unreflected" mode»²⁰.

The objection touches a problematic point of Zahavi's theory, i.e., is it possible to describe phenomenologically without referring to reflection? Is it possible that these acts of reflection modify the lived experiences?

According to Hopkins, Husserl characterizes the limit of the givenness of

lived experience firstly by not identifying a pre-reflective self-awareness before its reflective thematization. Instead, he describes the mode of givenness as the *initial manifestation* of a lived experience. Secondly, «this mode of presentation of a lived experience as a phenomenon, that is as "having just-now been", is therefore inseparable from the phenomenon of its temporality»²¹. There is not a pre-reflective consciousness: it is impossible to thematize modes of consciousness that are not reflectively modified²².

In summary, according to Hopkins, the methodological access of phenomenology to pre-reflective experiences is based on acts of reflection: the supposed "pre-reflexivity" is unthinkable unless it is given a reflection that modifies its "pre-reflexivity"²³.

Zahavi does not deny that the issue highlighted by Hopkins is a possible obstacle to his proposal, but there is also a possible resolution. According to Zahavi, reflection only alters the way in which the primary act is experienced, it does not change the contents of the act (p. 191). Indeed, a thematization of the *structure of pre-reflective givenness* is not possible, but this does not mean that we cannot investigate the *contents* of the act through pure or transcendental reflection (p. 192).

Zahavi explains this specific concept through Sartre's distinction between *pure* and *impure reflection*, where the latter

phenomenology of time (pp. 21-49). Phaenomenologica, 197. Springer: Dordrecht.

¹⁴ DeRoo, N. (2011), Revisiting the Zahavi-Brough/Sokolowski Debate, *Husserl Studies*, 27, 1-12.

¹⁵ Guillot, M. (2017), I Me Mine: on a Confusion Concerning the Subjective Character of Experience, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8, 23-53.

¹⁶ Farrell, J. & McClelland, T. (2017), Editorial: Consciousness and Inner Awareness, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8, 1-22.

¹⁷ López-Silva, P. (2017), Me and I Are Not Friends, Just Acquaintances (sic): on Thought Insertion and Self-Awareness, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 10, 319-335.

¹⁸ Howell, R. J. & Thompson, B. (2017), Phenomenally Mine: In Search of the Subjective Character of Consciousness, *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8, 103-127.

¹⁹ Hopkins, B.C. (2011), Limits of the transcendental-phenomenological investigation of pure consciousness. In B. C. Hopkins, *The Philosophy of Husserl*. Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited.

²⁰ Ivi, p. 140.

²¹ Ivi, p. 141.

²² Ibidem.

²³ Ivi, p. 142.

is an objectifying act that modifies and falsifies the object of reflection while the former holds out the possibility of a non-falsifying reflection that discovers nothing; precisely for this reason Sartre used the term “recognition” instead of “knowledge” (p. 186). While stressing that Sartre does not give an adequate explanation of what this “pure reflection” could be in relation to his theory, Zahavi argues that this notion is indispensable because it is the condition of possibility of a phenomenological investigation into pre-reflective subjectivity (p. 187). If a reflection is not able to “recognize” without adding or mystifying the contents of the deed, the whole concept of pre-reflective self-awareness would fall into impossibility (p. 187).

Zahavi then moves to Husserl, underlining transcendental reflection as a point of proximity to Sartre. In fact, he does not deny that reflection is the method for investigating consciousness from a phenomenological point of view, but he even argues that our lived experiences possess an organic or morphological structure that makes them accessible to reflection (p. 189). «Perhaps one can say that the attentional modification is a horizontal variation, whereas the reflection implies a vertical alteration. Whereas the attentional modification thematized something that for accidental reasons has remained unthematic, reflection thematizes something that for essential reasons has been unthematic» (pp. 191-192).

López Silva's objection, on the other hand, is entirely based on his interpretation of Zahavi's theory, which he calls the “Self-Presentational View” and which should argue that the subjective character

is a sort of minimal phenomenal awareness of the subject of experience; in short, Zahavi «comes to equate the notions of subjective character and self-awareness without further argument»²⁴.

According to López-Silva, the move from *phenomenal consciousness* to *self-consciousness* is neither obvious nor warranted²⁵.

«One thing is to say that phenomenal consciousness might lead to different degrees of self-awareness, but quite another is to propose that mere phenomenal access to experiences entails phenomenal awareness of the subject of experience»²⁶.

The fundamental passage that López-Silva uses to support his thesis is taken from the empirical studies on the delusions of intrusive thoughts i.e., examples taken from psychopathology²⁷. What he denies is the fact that this phenomenal sense of “mineness” is fundamental to the dimension of phenomenal consciousness. He then gives the example of some patients who claim that there are thoughts or ideas that have been put into their head by external agents or that are not actually theirs²⁸. According to López-Silva, TI (thought-insertion) is a fundamental example for arguing that the sense of ownership is not necessary to have a phenomenal conscience²⁹.

«TI makes it possible to propose a distinction between two kind of conscious experiences. On the one hand fully-owned experiences would be those that enjoy for-me-ness, a sense of subjectivity and a sense of mineness (as in most normal cases). On the other hand, plain phenomenal experiences would be those that enjoy for-me-ness, but show some degree of absence of the sense of subjectivity»³⁰.

²⁴ López-Silva, P. (2017), p. 322.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ivi, p.325.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Ivi, p. 327.

³⁰ Ivi, p. 333.

According to Zahavi, López-Silva's objection is unable to undermine his theory because it ignores the fact that the term "self-awareness" can be used to reflect the self-directed character of consciousness³¹.

Zahavi engages the discourse on the question of the egocentricity or non-egocentricity of self-awareness. Furthermore, López-Silva often talks about how phenomenal consciousness is characterized by *for-me-ness*, which he defines as something that has to do with direct and phenomenal access to what is happening, but this entails exactly what Zahavi claims³².

López-Silva argues that the existence of thought intrusion undermines Zahavi's arguments on the sense of ownership. According to Zahavi the issue is linked to the notions of mineness and ownership that we are operating with: «...the underlying premise in both of these criticisms is that the notion sense of ownership is univocal, and it isn't. In previous writings, I have distinguished several notions of ownership and argued that one of these is retained in thought insertion (...) the reason I can be said to own my thoughts or perceptions perspectively is consequently because they appear to me in a manner that is different from how they can appear to anybody else»³³.

Zahavi's remarkable, yet not unproblematic, work can be credited with jump starting empirical investigations and critical evaluations. In particular, the collaboration between phenomenology and cognitive sciences has been tightened even more firmly thanks to *Enactivism*, specifically the Zahavi/Gallagher version in books such as *The Phenomenological Mind* (2007). Concepts such as *emergent cognitive structures*, *self-organizing*

organisms, *interactions between organisms and their environment* are interesting partial-developments of phenomenological insights because of their attention to how alterity is able to shape the self.

«The enactive approach [...] entails that both the organism and the meaningful structures in its environment emerge from a set of self-organizing dynamic processes»³⁴.

The idea that reflection is not necessary to be self-aware and to have some sort of pre-presence in the world around us is essential to sustain enactivism. Even if there is no real definition of enactivism capable of encompassing all the different typologies (the Varela / Thompson / Rosch original, the "autopoietic enactivism", or the "sensorimotor" i.e. "radical" one) the main interest lies in interpreting cognition as active and embodied, as something that emerges from the dynamic and interconnected activity between the organism and its environment³⁵.

In conclusion, Zahavi's research provides an interesting and fertile understanding of how the self, the first person-giveness of experience, emerges from the interconnected activity with the Other and with the World. A theoretical framework that not only has great importance nowadays but that has proven to be rich soil for resolving the great contradictions between philosophical problems and cognitive sciences.

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³¹ Zahavi D. (2018), p. 11.

³² Ivi, p. 12.

³³ Ivi, p.17.

³⁴ Ward D., Silverman D., Villalobos M., (2017). Introduction: The Varieties of Enactivism, *Topoi*, 36, 365-375, p. 368.

³⁵ Ibidem.