

Language versus reality The case for phenomenology and the Deleuzian ‘heresy’

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Abstract: This article is an inquiry into the relationship of language, as a phenomenon within the world, with the reality of the world as such and the ontological dimensions that underlie a conception of language in these terms. In doing this and in highlighting a kind of interiority of language with regard to reality naively thought, the author undertakes a discussion of the linguistic phenomenon in a broad phenomenological perspective, implying *ipso facto* a temporality factor, which except for an argumentation along this way deals also with the Deleuzian position on the matter in *The Logic of Sense*, as contrasted with the ‘orthodox’ or mainstream phenomenological view. A major place in the article has the argumentation about the deficiency of language in epistemological terms, more specifically in the face of certain phenomena associated with quantum mechanical situations.

Keywords: *Dasein*, individual, inner time, interiority, language, pre-predicative, quantum measurement, reality, sense, singularity-event, transcendental consciousness.

1. Introduction

If not for the second sentence to the title, the subject-matter of the article would be so wide-angled as would equivalently be, for instance, an article about the bounds of ontology in being within the world. Therefore limiting the discussion in terms of language as a phenomenon within the world, both in the ‘orthodox’ Husserlian view and the subsequent Heideggerian transcendental ‘anthropocentric’ position, served first of all to suspend the traditional rationalist approach of linguistics, which is to ignore the reality of language as a phenomenon in itself and consider it simply in what appears as an interjection between speaking and thinking by means of phonetic or written signs, i.e., a kind of codification mediating thinking with expression. In this sense the discussion draws to the source of linguistic phenomenon itself in a phenomenological perspective that would be the level of subjectivity put in absolute, non-reductionistic terms, well beyond the Chomskian attitude that smacks of a kind of subjectivist disposition and yet is being criticized for not fundamentally putting into question the deep structure of ‘mental reality’, in the sense that “linguistics

should give us a picture of the ‘mental reality’ underlying language, which will then give us insight into the ‘human essence’ – into what distinguishes us from other life forms” (Grisham 1991: 38). On the other hand, choosing to talk about language vs. reality from a phenomenological viewpoint presented the chance to ‘deconstruct’ Deleuze’s conception of a transcendental field, imbued with concepts of formal mathematics in a kind of putting the cart before the horses, as an attempt to found an ontology of beings in the world generative of the linguistic phenomenon by downplaying any kind of subjectivist concerns.

At the same time my critique of certain threads of Deleuze’s thought, mainly in *The Logic of Sense*, may help clarify the idea of an ‘interiority’ of language that could be reducible to the ‘interiority’ of the subject, implying in turn a concept of inner, subjectively generated time. I refer, for instance, to Deleuze-Guattari’s statement in *A thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

Not only are there as many statements as there are effectuations, but all of the statements are present in the effectuation of one among them, so that the line of variation is virtual, in other words, real without being actual, and consequently continuous regardless of the leaps the statement makes (Deleuze *et al.* 1969: 94).

In fact this is a kind of continuous variation that, Deleuze’s eccentric, epistemically based metaphysics notwithstanding, leaves room for a possible interpretation in proper phenomenological sense:

To place the statement in continuous variation is to send it through all the prosodic, semantic, syntactical, and phonological variables that can affect it in the shortest moment of time (the smallest interval). [...] to content oneself with extracting a pseudoconstant of content, [which] is no better than extracting a pseudoconstant of expression. Placing-in-variation allows us to avoid these dangers, because it builds a continuum or medium without beginning or end. [...] A variable can be continuous over a portion of its trajectory, then leap or skip, without that affecting its continuous variation; what this does is impose an absent development as an ‘alternative continuity’ that is virtual yet real (Deleuze *et al.* 1969: 94-95).

Of course Deleuze had other inclinations than seeking a recourse to the human subjectivity in absolute terms for this kind of continuous variation. In *The Logic of Sense* events, even though are not confused with their spatiotemporal effectuation as states of things, are yet not thought but as essentially identical with meanings, the latter as what is inseparably the expressed or the expressible of a proposition and the attribution of a state of things (Deleuze 1990: 21-22). This is a position that would ineluctably end up in circularities or even conceptual overlappings by entering a notion of time that leads to a notion of temporal instants without ‘thickness’ conceivable

as mathematical points, to make room for a notion of events identifiable with meanings as 'incorporeal causes' extrinsic to linguistic propositions.

Leaving aside Deleuze's deviation from the broadly meant environment of phenomenological philosophy in which an essential part of the French philosophy of 20th century was nourished, my main focus in Sections 3 and 4 is to build up an argumentation for a phenomenologically founded view of language versus the world, one that would also reconcile certain aspects of the Husserlian and Heideggerian narratives on the matter. Primarily this would have to do, except for the inquiry into a pre-predicative level of discourse reducible to a priori forms of subjectivity, with the notion of inner time as 'coalescing' with the transcendence of subjectivity itself either in the sense of the Husserlian transcendental ego or in the sense of the Heideggerian *Dasein*. In these terms one may be able to found the 'interiority' of the linguistic phenomenon within the world on an 'interiority' prescribed by inner temporality as the essential mode of being of absolute subjectivity in taking also into account the intentional a priori modes of the latter. Accordingly one may provide a consistent account of meanings as ideal unities or species considered not as species of objects as such, i.e., in a material 'thingness' sense, but as species of intentional acts of thinking intimated in language use. Consequently, an 'interiority' of language in this sense as non-detachable from the world and yet not organic part of the world, could be reducible to the interiority of the subjective origin and attributable as a phenomenon, e.g., in virtue of Merleau Ponty's lived sense, to the embodied agency.

A major question dealt with in Section 5, namely the deficiency of language in capturing the being-in-the-world as unmediated by any constitutive-explicative faculties posed in principle a posteriori, seems to involve the epistemology of a situation in a purely worldly sense. What came out naturally as the field of preference to inquire into the relation of language, in the phenomenological perspective adopted throughout the text, with an epistemic situation is the field of quantum mechanics in which, for instance, the Heideggerian notion of 'being there' in actuality or the Husserlian notion of living present may possibly acquire a newly found relevance. This has especially to do with the quantum theory of measurement in which, more than probably anywhere else, the expressional capacity and the foundation of both formal and common language's 'interiority' *vis-à-vis* the world, are tested against the grindstone of physical reality.

Perhaps there is no better way to close the Introduction after the last epistemological prompt than quoting from B. D'Espagnat exactly as he wrote:

En conséquence la science ne se meut avec aisance que dans les domaines où le découpage – par la pensée – de la réalité en petits objets séparés est une opération féconde. Elle est

*donc incapable de capter la vie dans ce que cette dernière a d' essentiel à savoir le fluide, le continu, et le mouvant.*¹

2. *The faultiness of the Deleuzian conception of transcendence as ontological – linguistic foundation*

Deleuze claimed in *The Logic of Sense* that dealing with sense not as a predicate or a property but as an event, more concretely (in the Deleuzian idiom) in terms of a nomadic or impersonal singularity, the discourse is no longer bearing the characteristics of a linguistic form as codifying the meaning-form, yet it is not about the formless but rather of the pure unformed (Deleuze 1969: 106-107).

However as I argue in the next, Deleuze's attempt to propose a foundation for the 'emergence' of meaning-forms irrespectively of subjectively founded a priori norms, is ineluctably bound to fail on the following grounds.

If we consider the genetic elements of a problem in general so that the category of sense replaces the category of truth, with 'truth' and 'falsity' based on the subjective and empirical level of knowledge, the relation that inheres between the problem and its conditions "defines sense as the truth of the problem as such" (Deleuze 1969: 121). Further if sense is intimately associated with the notion of event in Deleuzian metaphysics, and events are conceived as ideational singularities which communicate in one and the same Event that endlessly redistributes them in a way that their eternal truth extends indefinitely so long as they may emerge out of jets of singularities, (and thus justify their linguistic presence as infinitives), the whole point in Deleuze's argumentation against the inherence of subjectivity in the transcendental sphere ends up in a big circularity.

In the first place, if a problem is determined only by the singular points that express its conditions wherein singular points in the Deleuzian sense are meant as pre-individual, non-personal, a-conceptual and further as generators of a series of events in a determined direction up to the vicinity of another singularity, one may end up with a naive application of the mathematical notion of singularities. For instance, in the theory of differential equations the existence and distribution of singularities are relevant with the problematic field of solutions defined by a specific equation. It is common knowledge that singularities in the theory of differential equations and more generally in mathematical analysis are point-like 'deformations' of the

¹ "Consequently science does not move with ease but in the domains where the cutting – by the thought – of reality in small separate objects is a fertile operation. It is therefore incapable to capture life in what this latter has by necessity, that is, the fluid, the continuous, and the moving". See (D' Espagnat 2015: 121, auth. tr.).

mathematical continuum (think of the mathematical form of intuitive continuum), therefore they are subsequent to the continuous structure and by necessity cannot engender it. Furthermore, the kind of convergence or divergence in the vicinity of a singularity is implied by mathematical pathologies due to the structure of the real numbers as representing the continuum and not by the continuum itself in the sense of mathematized intuitive continuum.²

Time and again Deleuze applied the concept of Event (with a capital e) to describe its 'paradoxical instance' in terms of which all events are distributed and communicated in his own particular sense of nomadic distribution³ that underlies the unique, aleatory and pre-objective being of the Event. Yet as with all other attempts throughout the history of ontological-metaphysical thought to dispose of the sense of being in absolute terms by means of an approach that would keep it totally unfettered from objectivist constraints, the concept of Event in the Deleuzian sense falls ultimately into the trap of having to account, in rejecting a reduction of a subjective type, for a being other to the Event in positioning the Event in a 'state' *ante* to that of denotation, manifestation, or signification something that naturally entails the pre-individuating, a-conceptual and non-personal character of the Event.

Evidently, phenomenologically thinking, this kind of actualization from the impersonal, pre-individual and a-thematic singularities to the individuated beings as persons would be accessible in no one's domain except for the domain of the latter beings as embodied carriers of a temporal consciousness and an I (*Ich*) for which the world has validity as a past that was, a present that is and a future that will be, all retrievable and presentable at once in the actual present as a streaming living experience. And there is clearly no possible way to have some kind of emission of singularities occurring on an unconscious surface by an immanent principle of auto-unification through a nomadic distribution without the presence of a subjectivity for which this state-of-affairs would be its own mode of being in the world as being-in-constituting thus and so. The negation of the latter supposition leads inevitably to the naiveté of a sort of objective or even physical realism evident from the way Deleuze relapses into mathematical conceptualizations to describe the (nomadic) distribution of sin-

² An idea of the intuitive continuum that comes easily to the mind is L.E.J. Brouwer's concept in relation with the primordial intuition of mathematics: i.e., the "substratum, divested of all quality, of any perception of change, a unity of continuity and discreteness, a possibility of thinking together several entities, connected by a 'between', which is never exhausted by the insertion of new entities" (van Dalen *et al.* 2002: 205).

³ Nomadic distribution in the sense of 'emergence' of singularities is described by Deleuze as radically distinct from "fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of consciousness"; see Deleuze 1969: 100-108.

gularities as ‘crop ups’ in a properly meant field of transcendence in which they arise as “topological events to which no direction is attached” and yet whose nature depends on objectively distinct instances (Deleuze 1969: 104-105).⁴

Consequently Deleuze entered, in a presumably epistemologically motivated context, into the same kind of circularities he accused the Kantian and the phenomenological tradition of having fallen into, namely by determining the transcendental field in the image of what it is supposed to ground. Of course by the latter allusion is meant the subjective sphere either in the Kantian concept of the synthetic unity of apperception or the Husserlian concept of the transcendental ‘locus’ of a priori intentionalities. In the same vein Deleuze criticized the Husserlian genesis for rendering the noematic nucleus of an object or event in the sense of a collection of attributes as a predicate and not as a verb, thereby insisting on the sedentary character of a concept and not on the ‘kinematical’ character of an event. Yet Deleuze has no other option to render the emergence of the impersonal and pre-individual singularities as intelligible out of the undifferentiated abyss except as ‘realized’ individual beings in allegoric mathematical forms. Even as the expressed world, i.e., the actualized world, is founded on the compossibility of different worlds conditioned on a mathematically inspired notion of convergence of the series of ordinary points around the vicinities of respective singularities, Deleuze once again slipped into the circular mode of relying on the founded to account for the founding. In this sense one would think of his statement that “the continuum of singularities is entirely distinct from the individuals which envelop it in variable and complementary degrees of clarity”, (Deleuze 1969: 111), as nothing else than the ontological predominance of the actualized individuals over the pre-individual singularities in ‘enveloping’ them according to certain rules of convergence so as to be incarnated in a body or consist in single state out of a multiplicity of states, etc.

Even as Deleuze appealed to some kind of passive genesis to talk about a sense-generating world in which singularities-events are organized in circles of convergence, there is no reasonable ground to think of the pre-individual level of the transcendental field in any other way than in terms of actualization and individuation and consequently of expressibility involving by necessity a subjectively

⁴ Deleuze, citing A. Lautman’s *Le Problème du temps*, has argued, in an attempt to present the morphology of the solution of differential equations involving singular points as a substitutive ontology, that the nature of singularities as topological ‘accidents’ in the field of directions (relative to the form of a differential equation) is in a concrete sense defined by the form of the integral curves in their vicinity; (Deleuze, 1969: 344-345). However, as already alluded to, this is a kind of ersatz mathematized ontology that obviously downplays the implicit assumption of an *ad hoc* continuous substratum, in the sense of Brouwer’s intuitive continuum, possibly reducible to the subjective modes by which one may have acquired this ingrained concept of continuum.

founded source. In these and these terms only, one can render a rational interpretation to Deleuze's claim that truth or falsity are transferred from the propositions to the conditions of a problem these propositions supposedly resolve, in a way that truth presupposes the sense attributed to the events. It would be paradoxical to construe out of these assumptions a transcendental field as opposed to the subjectivity of the person posited in absolute, non-mundane terms. In other words in the nebulous Deleuzian realm of singularities-events, the question of expression including a notion of expression in purely linguistic terms becomes equivalent to the question of actualization in the world involving individuals as presumably constituting (and not constituted) parts of the world.

Further and insofar as the actualization may be only conceivable in inner-worldly terms in the presence of a constituting consciousness and in the modes it is constituting, if there is a transcendental residuum in the linguistic constructs it would be rather found in the subjective sphere within-the-world. By this measure Deleuze's invocation of the univocity of Being, in referring both to what occurs and what is expressed, should be rather viewed as an attempt to do justice to a presumed transcendental element in the structure of language in denying at the same time any constitutional role to the subject. As it turns out a Univocal Being in the Deleuzian sense of "happening to things and inhering in language", would account for the interiority of language in the face of the exteriority of the world only by appealing to essential invocations of being of the kind found in traditional metaphysical arguments: the Being is neither active nor passive, it is extra-Being, "the minimum of Being common to the real, the possible, and the impossible" (Deleuze 1969: 180). And yet in the face of these allegations, indicative of an irresistible relapse to a kind of wide-angled subjectivism, Deleuze stated in the *Difference and Repetition* that the concepts of nature as concepts on an indefinite comprehension are found in the spirit that contemplates or observes and makes represent nature rather than in nature itself. On this account, nature itself is a self-opposing, alienated concept in the sense that the objects of nature do not possess and cannot recollect their proper moments. To cite an instance, remembrance, recognition and elaboration of memory in the natural repetition that necessarily refer to a *pour soi* of consciousness, as consciousness of knowing, is what is effectively lacking in a conceptualization of nature devoid of the constitutive capacity of an I. (Deleuze 1968: 14).

In the bottom line the Deleuzian interpretation of language, for instance, of the semantical content of the indeterminate infinitive in linguistic-grammatical form, as expressing the sense (or equivalently the event) in virtue of enveloping the 'internal' to the language time, seems ontologically lame insofar as the subjective constitutive factor is considered as little more than an exteriority to the event that is bound to express. In the face of it one may not bring up

an arbitrary transcendental scheme supposedly dissociated from subjectivist concerns to account for the ‘interiority’ of language in view of the exteriority of the world. For then, as will be further shown in the next sections, one would inevitably be dragged into unsubstantiated ontological assumptions or fall into the trap of reproducing circularities or yet succumb to both temptations.

3. *What should be the pre-predicative level in ontological and linguistic terms?*

If the methodological question concerning language as a tool of analysis has not been sufficiently addressed in the phenomenological literature, for the main reason that for a phenomenologist guided by the principle of eidetic intuition “once we have come into direct contact with the objects, the role of the concepts taken from ordinary language comes to an end”,⁵ it is still true that Husserl touched, although not extensively, on the issue in some places in *Ideas I* and in the *Logical Investigations*. In the latter and in a somehow indirect way Husserl focused on the concept of meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*), as a signitive or symbolic intention to promote a view of knowledge as the fulfillment of such meaning-intentions without, as a matter of fact, taking into account in an explicit way the extent to which meaning-intentions are limited by the linguistic structure (Kung 1969: 331).

In yet another place, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he sought, by means of the concept of predicative judgment (which in Husserl’s view lies at the center of formal logic in its historical evolution), to reach by the syntactical deconstruction of a sentence of analytical discourse, the ultimate level judgment, foundational for all logical evidence, i.e., that of the ultimate pre-predicative experience reduced to the givenness of individual objects-in-person. The latter sentences in the general form of *S is p* would form the absolutely pre-logical level as it would be prior to any syntactical activity since, letting any kind of modalities out of question, more than any other linguistic form they are the outcome of a purely phenomenological evidence in dispensing with the necessity even of the objective existence of the syntactical subject *S*.

For Husserl this primordial predicative form must be the original noematic nucleus of all judgments, the structural foundation asserting something of something in the Aristotelian tradition of the declaratory proposition (ἀπόφανσις), from which all other derivative logical forms spring out as

⁵ The quote is from an article of Husserl’s disciple R. Ingarden published in 1919-1920 in a Polish journal. Exact citation may be found in Kung 1969, fn 3. In Kung 1969, Kung considered Ingarden’s article as the only known exposition in some detail of the phenomenological method concerning the role of language.

syntactical superstructures (i.e., negation, conjunction, disjunction, modalization, quantification), by way of transformation or combination.⁶ Consequently more than an assertoric proposition, Consequently more than an assertoric proposition, *S is p* becomes in the Husserlian sense a thetic proposition which by this virtue cedes the source of its originality, both in form and meaning, to the constitutive modes of a subject, and even more radically to their very origin. In this sense the question of establishing, by a genealogy of logic the pre-predicative level in both linguistic and ontological sense acquires a new content at odds with attempts to attribute it, like Deleuze and various metaphysical philosophers did before him, to some transcendental field 'extrinsic' to subjectivity. In these terms the reduction of the self-evidence of judgments in the objectual self-evidence may entail the question of whether the pre-predicative level, reached by syntactical regression in the first place, would indeed lead to the pre-logical level and, still more important, will raise the question of the nature of the procedures required for leading methodologically *a tergo* to the pre-predicative universe. The apparent methodological steps leading back from derivative to original judgments till the ultimate level of irreducible substrates, evident in the intentional experience of 'thingness' or completely abstract individuals, are syntactical operations and nominalizations of such operations by which we reach an ultimate level unfettered by any syntactical concerns and thus foundational for all logical evidence. This would presumably be the level of ultimate pre-predicative experience, understood as the givenness of individual objects in the Aristotelian sense of a categorially irreducible 'general-something' (τόδε τι). These primordial, non-analytically reducible objects-individuals would form the absolutely pre-syntactical and in a sense pre-logical level, i.e., the one prior to any syntactical activity. In this sense one may pass from the domain of logos understood as a correlate of meaningful acts of expression and ideal significations to the domain of logos as intentional correlate of acts oriented to the 'lowest' level of intentional apprehension, i.e., prior and foreign to all logical and consequently syntactical activity.

Yet if by eliminating all acts of syntactical construction we may be brought back from an upper substrate to the immediately lower one and this way to the ultimate substrates given in the sheer experience of individuals as such, how could it be possible, one may ask for example, to interpret the supposedly syntactical reduction from the mathematical cardinality of

⁶ Contrary to the traditional positing of *S is p* as the original form of categorical judgment admitting of two juxtaposed co-original forms, namely, the positive and the negative judgment, Husserl favored the original predication *S is p* as a single-layered (*einsichtig*) one, to the extent that it implies a "nominal position understood as a fundamental position", i.e., the positing of a substrate or object as a subject attributed with a predicate *p*, which by this positing alone implies a sense of subjective constitution.

sets in general to the set of real numbers, ‘from the latter to that of rational numbers, and, in like fashion, to natural integers, then to singular integers understood as a multiplicity of units, and finally, to the individual objects from which they were drawn by formalization’? (Pradelle 2021: 61-62).

If the methodological steps in passing from the level of more complex judgments to the lowest level, namely that of the evidence of irreducible substrates, are thought solely in terms of syntactical deconstruction one may hardly account in this context alone for the reduction from the ‘mathematical cardinality of sets’ in general to that of the set of real numbers, from the latter to that of the set of rational numbers and so on. For anyone knowledgeable with the current and last century’s developments in the foundations of mathematics a key issue brought up in the epistemology of mathematics, in fact in the ontology of mathematics, is the question of the deficiency of syntactical means to ‘capture’ not strictly finitistic mathematical concepts, a case highlighted by Gödel’s incompleteness results and the still pending decidability question of the well-known *Continuum Hypothesis* involving the cardinality of the mathematical continuum. (See, for instance, Fefeman 1999; Livadas 2019, 2020).

In *the Experience and Judgment* Husserl characterized the colligation of objects A, B, C,..., syntactically nominalized as the conjunction of A, B, C, ..., in the form of the set {A, B, C, ...}, as essentially founded not on material elements nor on the essence of things themselves insofar as their essence is taken into consideration only as it makes differentiation possible (Husserl 1964: 188-189). Instead, to make a collection of objects (e.g., a set of objects or a class of sets of objects) a thematic object in actual presence, an act of a higher order level is required, one of productive spontaneity rather than one of passive receptivity. In a showcase of the insufficiency of syntactical means to capture the conception of a whole, irrespectively of the cardinality and the essence of its constituting elements, as a completed unity in actual presentation Husserl appealed to what he termed a retrospective apprehension (*rückgreifendes Erfassen*). Perhaps not unexpectedly, given Husserl’s constant preoccupation in his post-*Logical Investigations* years with the origin of transcendence within immanence, this was meant as an act of thematization of a collectivity of objects by the constituting (transcendental) ego, into an identifiable and re-identifiable object-meaning possibly posited as a substrate of judgments in general and, in particular, of formal-mathematical propositions (Husserl 1964: 246-247). This kind of constituting activity was meant in fact as a unity-constituting and consequently a meaning-founding act of the transcendental ego as ego-in-act. Consequently it might possibly lay the ground to justify the transcendental element found in the notion of the ‘interiority’ of language as pertaining to the being-in-constituting of the ego itself,

implying as a matter of fact its mode of being as temporal. Obviously it is in this sense that must be read Husserl's conditioning of the logical requirement of individuality on the unique (inner) time, that is, of the "requirement of an object as an identical substrate of predicates and of objective truths (subject to the principle of noncontradiction)" and further of the idea of a whole of interconnected possibilities (Husserl 1964: 355-356). Put succinctly:

Now every intuition we have, every phenomenological perception, memory, etc., every judgment, every statement, sense, conscious intention is absolute consciousness, and all this in the unity, that belongs to these experiences. Naturally we have there to turn back to the ultimate flux of time and we have to think of all unities drawn back to their last and fundamental multiplicities (Husserl 2013: 139).

This is of course a view tied to a conception of objectivities as ontologically dependent on the absoluteness of consciousness in the sense that certain a priori features of absolute consciousness as the unity and the interconnection of conscious experiences (as immanent appearances) cannot be attributed to physical laws. This leads as a consequence to an idea of 'indestructible' objectivity apt for application by means of a meaningful linguistic environment to the extent that the 'lowest' grounds of scientific objectivity are due to invariances inherently associated with ultimate, non-eliminable forms of objectivity, beyond any notion of beginning and cessation (Husserl 2013: 151).

As a matter of fact for both Husserl and Heidegger, even as Heidegger was gradually distancing himself from Husserlian phenomenology and its promulgated transcendence within the immanence of consciousness, the 'interiority' of language implied by the founding unity of any meaningful discourse would be ultimately associated with an absoluteness established in subjective terms and by implication hinged on inner temporality.

In turn Husserl's radical reduction to the transcendence of the ego, to the extent that the regression from the logical structures of signification involves the noetic⁷ and noematic structures present in the 'lower' layers of intentional apprehension, brings into the foreground questions that touch on the transcendence as founded on the absoluteness of subjectivity itself. This said, if the noetic-noematic level of intentional apprehension is meant as preceding meaningful forms of linguistic expression one may be rightfully reserved as to the possibility of properly founding the presumably pre-objective

⁷ A noematic object is an object said to be constituted by certain a priori modes as a well-defined object (an object as meant), immanent to the temporal flux of a subject's consciousness. In contrast to noematic objects, noetic objects described as moments of hyletic-noetic perception can be only thought of in terms of evident 'givennesses' of the a priori orientation of intentionality. More in Husserl's *Ideas I*: Husserl 1976: 229-232.

character of noetic enactment within the sensuous field of experience. This seems an open question related more generally with the Husserlian conception of the pre-objective character of intentionality in view of the necessity to appeal to the reflection itself, a necessarily objectifying act, to be conscious of any intentional act. Husserl has in fact left, as it happens also with the ‘ontology’ of transcendental ego, the question of the objectivity of intentional acts as such in suspense. In *Phenomenological Investigations* (Suppl. volume, part II), for instance, he has clearly stated that each act of the objectifying cogito oriented to an object, whose being is posed as thematic, is an actual intention that is objective. This also applies to the special case of meaning-intentions for which, in Husserl’s words, we do not know yet whether one can have non-objectifying acts as meaning-giving ones (Husserl 2005: 200).⁸

In view of the above we may have to regress to a ‘world only for me’ in order to reach the pre-predicative and therefore pre-logical level of experience, by abstracting from the limited intersubjective validity of the language we speak⁹ and further by going back from the founded experiences, e.g., cultural or epistemic objects, to the simplest sensually accessible ones. Could there be, in such terms, a residuum of the world reducible to sensuous perception alone, a world of exclusively sensuous substrates, of primary substances, and of bodies as given in external experience allowing to establish lowest-level, pre-predicative judgments ultimately appealing to individuals as irreducible, sensuous substrates given in the simplest form of predication *S is p*? One has serious reasons to doubt, insofar as the kernel of lowest level judgments, the non-analytically reducible τὸδε τι, supposedly deprived, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, even of a temporal form and considered as just an intentional correlate, has relegated its ontological legitimacy from the world of external experience to the experiencing subject as temporally constituting in absolute terms.

4. *In what terms Heidegger and Husserl shape the discussion on the relation of language to the world?*

If there is a common thread to judge Husserl’s and Heidegger’s treatment of the ontological foundation of language it is primarily the need to account for the role of language *vis-à-vis* the world with all that this position implies in terms of subjectivity, temporalness and straightforward representation,

⁸ This kind of ambivalence regarding a presumably non-objective character of intentional acts and the ensuing circularities may be found in various places in Husserlian texts, e.g., in Husserl 2006: 113), (Husserl 1973: 543, 550, Husserl 1968: 353, 423.

⁹ See Pradelle’s arguments in Pradelle 2021: 68.

according to which linguistic structures correspond to phenomenal features. On this account the possibility of application of linguistic forms on the basis of an 'empty' content in contradistinction with phenomenal 'fulfillment' awareness underscores the non-existence of an isomorphic mapping, to use mathematical parlance, between linguistic forms and features of the world, something that was a common preoccupation for both, especially concerning the routine language use in Heidegger and the 'puzzle' of symbolic thinking in Husserl. In the post-*Logical Investigations* years Husserl faced the challenge of the aforementioned 'puzzle' by employing, in the *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, the concept of 'anything-whatsoever' (*Etwas überhaupt*) in a formal-ontological sense applicable, primarily, in propositions involving formal-mathematical individuals, corresponding to 'empty' intentional substrates devoid of any material content whatsoever (Husserl 1974: 77-78).¹⁰ Given the capital importance they both attached to the role of temporality as co-constituting a non-reductive subjective foundation of being in the world this was to be reflected in what would determine language as human activity within-the-world.

More concretely for Husserl:

Time consciousness is the original seat of the constitution of the unity of identity in general.[...] The result of temporal constitution is only a universal form of order of succession and a form of co-existence of all immanent data. But form is nothing without content. Thus the syntheses which produce the unity of a field of sense are already, so to speak, a higher level of constitutive activity (Husserl 1964: 73).

In these terms the temporal form is not only a form of individuals, to the extent that we may talk about enduring individuals, but may further have the function of uniting individuals in a unity of connection (Husserl 1964: 158). It is noteworthy that Husserl's conception of logical-linguistic activity in subjective-temporal terms underwent a gradual evolution virtually from the time of *Logical Investigations* onwards, wherein the turn to a transcendental-subjective foundation was becoming more and more evident. In *Logical Investigations II*, for instance, meaning is characterized as the ideal species of intentional acts pertaining to non-separable 'qualitative' and 'material' parts as unity, and further meanings as ideal unities or species are considered not as species of objects as such but as species of intentional acts of thinking intimated in language use (Husserl 1984: 122-123, 308-309). Consequently for Husserl the unity of perception of a plurality of individuals, a unity on the basis of

¹⁰ The distinction between 'empty' substrates and associated syntactical objectivities and 'thingness' substrates and associated 'materially filled' syntactical objectivities corresponding to material objects is also found in *Ideas I*; Husserl 1976: 27-28.

a connecting temporal form, to the extent that temporality has been ‘interiorized’ in transcendental reduction, has served as the foundation of formal-ontological unity in the sense of a special kind of constituted unity that provides the basis for special relations, namely, the formal relations appealing to empty-of-content ‘general-somethings’, and further to the concept of language itself.

Heidegger, on the other hand, had associated a notion of temporality with language in terms of the demonstrative function of articulacy in the sense of the latter as participatory communication (*Mitteilung*) in being-in-the-world. In *Being and Time* he pointed to the temporality of discourse meant as ‘interiority’ that should be neither confused with a vulgar sense of temporality insofar as language speaks about temporal processes in the various tenses employed a propos, nor with the fact that talking occurs in ‘psychical time’. Heidegger’s concept of the temporality of language is plainly stated as following:

Discourse is in itself temporal, since all speaking about ..., of ..., or to ... is grounded in the ecstatic unity of temporality. The kinds of action are rooted in the primordial temporality of taking care of things, whether it is related to things within time or not. With the help of the vulgar and traditional concept of time which linguistics is forced to make use of, the problem of the existential and temporal structure of the kinds of action cannot even be formulated (Heidegger 1967: 320).

While leaving, for instance, the notion of the present in ambiguity¹¹ in that the now-saying *Dasein* ‘understands itself in terms of what it is available in the world’, Heidegger outlined in *The Concept of Time* his commitment to the non-reductive character of *Dasein*’s temporal being in the world reflected in a temporal conception of language as a basic mode of being-in-the-world. In these terms, prior to the way language expresses time thematically, comes the more fundamental question of how the temporalness (*Zeitlichkeitsein*) of being-in shows up in language, in which case a theory of tenses founded on the temporal being of being-in of *Dasein* (in the particular Heideggerian sense of self-alienation) would be the plausible way to look back to the basic foundations of traditional grammar. One may think, a propos, of futuralness as expectant temporalness becoming everydayness ‘to the extent that being-in succumbs to the world’ (Heidegger 2004: 63-64).¹²

¹¹ I have in mind the ambiguity concerning, on the one hand, that which is the present in the surrounding world (*die Präsenz*) and, on the other, the present now as lived experience of *Dasein* itself (*das Präsens*). See Heidegger 2004: 63.

¹² The Heideggerian notion of language as being itself temporal does not contravene the deposition and ‘exact’ reactivation of the formal signs model, itself ‘approximative or schematic in character’, allegedly implying an essentially atemporal relationship between expressions and their sense-genetic origins (Inkpin 2016: 80). Heidegger’s implication of time in terms of linguistic activity is of a

On a shared phenomenological background Husserl's view of the words is that they are not just signs, bearers of a semantic content, but 'vectors of meaning in the sense of acts of intending' in a way that "the verbal and semantic consciousness are not juxtaposed to one another, disjointed, but rather, make up a unity of consciousness in which the double unity of word and sense [*Wort und Sinn*] is constituted".¹³ Husserl moreover claimed that the intentionality unifying the words themselves and the sense, the living experience of the word and the thinking, has the character of patent intentionality which in contradistinction to the latent intentionality presupposes the active presence of pure ego (Husserl 1974: 366).

As known, the origin of the Husserlian pure ego was never clarified whether it might be derivable by an *in rem* concern over the subjective origin of the synthetic unity of the world in the Kantian tradition or by the purely logical necessity of breaking off the interminable chain of constitutive causes. Consequently even as the concept of the pure ego is regarded the 'black hole' of the Husserlian transcendental reduction, yet this kind of radical reduction unifying word and sense would by all accounts mean that if there is a transcendental factor in the 'interiority' of language in relation to the phenomena of the world then this should be associated with the kind of transcendence found in the 'interiority' of the subject itself with all that implies with respect to a subject's a priori constitutive modes.

I draw attention here that in a broadly conceived converging perspective with the phenomenological attitude a conception of language 'without recourse to an ideal of full, nontemporal determinacy' makes Wittgenstein's and Merleau Ponty's views compatible on the matter insofar as Merleau Ponty rejected any ideal of full determinacy in considering linguistic meaning as characterized by constitutively indefinite horizons in the process of formation, while Wittgenstein was essentially of the same view to the extent that 'the commitment to full determinacy implicit in his earlier calculus model of language leads to incoherence' (Inkpin 2016: 220). Wittgenstein's calculus model of language in his *Philosophical Investigations* failed on the grounds that the regress-of-rules argument would imply that a calculus-underpinned language lacks of a proper foundation as it renders inconceivable the ideal of full determinacy insofar as it generates a non-terminable regress of meaning-

deeper genetic origin inhering in the essence of being of *Dasein* as temporal and in the ecstatic unity of temporality. Further, it is not true that Heidegger had generally (beyond SZ) 'nothing specific to say about the temporality of language (either *Rede* or *Sprache*) as such', as claimed by Inkpin in (Inkpin 2016; note 29: 325). In fact Heidegger does so explicitly, though not extensively, in Heidegger 2004: 74; 63.

¹³ See Vandeveldt 2021: 199-200, 203-204, 209.

attributing rules and hence incoherence. Concerning, however, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, while both conceive language in a purposive perspective inasmuch as Wittgenstein's intrinsic link between the use of signs and forms of practice may be thought to enlarge the context of Heidegger's instrumental relations involving the use of linguistic signs, it is still phenomenologically unfounded to draw analogies, as Inkipin does,¹⁴ between Wittgenstein's association of linguistic signs and forms of practice with Heidegger's derivation of the significance of words from *Dasein*'s circumspective setting-out. Indicative of the vagueness of the demarcation line between the transcendental and the mundane spheres, this means that *Dasein*'s circumspective setting-out may have a transcendental origin founded in the mode of being of *Dasein* itself well beyond Wittgenstein's mundane interpretative undertaking on the issue.

After all language for Heidegger, as a primary ontological mode of the public realm, in all its phenomenal reality must be referred back to *Dasein* as a way of *Dasein*'s being and its modes of being. On these grounds *Dasein*'s predicative awareness, characterizing Heidegger's conception of language as the modification from purposive to an objective properties-based individuation of entities, may be neither conceived through an ontologically separated, ego-independent 'inside-outside' of language nor through language as an autonomous or abstract entity that comes into contact with the world only accidentally (Inkipin 2016: 224). Furthermore Heidegger's conception of language, more specifically, the non-inferential grasp of the features of the world in the disclosing function of linguistic signs in the sense that "all disclosure of the world is embedded or founded in pre-predicative equipmental or purposive awareness, a view that [...] extends to the use of language" (Inkipin 2016: 227), points to the founding role of the pre-predicative level in terms of language formation in a way reminiscent of Husserl's invocation of a pre-predicative level to accede to the most fundamental level of logical-linguistic activity as discussed in Section 3.

If along these tracks one may vindicate a view of language that is more than an intellectually structured complete and rationally functioning system of signs, in which the pre-predicative level of linguistic experience can be 'interiorized' as founded on a special kind of 'interiority' of the subject, one may get a linguistic activity which even as a phenomenon referred to and conditioned by being-in-the-world it is still in excess of pure mundanity. This means that, far from any ad hoc *mélange* of metaphysical and

¹⁴ Inkipin is oriented to a conception of language, in the sense of a so-called minimalist phenomenology of language, that is more close to a version of cognitive theory than to a transcendental phenomenology properly meant. Consequently he is bound, contrary to the Husserlian or Heideggerian views, to treat the question of the phenomenology of language in essentially mundane, objectivist terms. See Inkipin 2016: Ch. 10.

epistemological notions, seemingly Deleuze's way in the *The Logic of Sense*, language may be 'interiorized' as inalienably associated with the mode of being in absolute terms of an embodied consciousness in whatever particular denomination this latter may be found in the continental philosophy literature.

5. *The deficiency of language in the epistemology of the situation*

If language as a phenomenon within-the-world has an 'interiority', possibly thought of as the residuum left over after the elimination of all acts and apprehensions taking place in the world as expressible in standard linguistic forms, and if this 'interiority' may be reduced to the 'interiority' of the self as the absolute subjectivity factor, then the epistemology of a concrete quantum mechanical situation may prove a terrain of predilection to provide a convincing evidence for such claim. Especially if this situation tests *in extremis* the capacity of language to express by its linguistic means the process of being in being-objectified, in case we do not take recourse, for example, to the Deleuzian eccentricities of seeking the origin of sense in the so-called nomadic or impersonal singularities that refer in turn to an allegedly pure unformed being in banishing any kind of hetero-determination. By the same rationale one might inquire about the capacity of language to represent such categorial objects of mathematics, as the infinite sets or the formal individuals, in the Husserlian sense of formal-ontological objects, as consummate objects in terms of a subjective constituting activity. Naturally this kind of discussion may involve at some point the clarification of the role of subjectivity as transcendence and the grounding of its 'being there' in the actuality of the world together with the consequent involvement of inner temporality. The upshot of this inquiry reaching to phenomenological concerns about deep language structure is that the involvement of temporality, in the sense alluded to already, brings out deeper questions that stand the core matter of the phenomenological inquiry itself.

According to the Husserlian narrative, the unity of temporality as an objectivity leaves *in rem* an 'ontological' vacuum between the non-reflective, pure ego itself and its enactment in the present 'now and here', whereas for Heidegger the ecstatic unity of temporality, that is, the unity of the 'alienation-of-itself' in the raptures of past, present, future is the condition of the possibility that an existent can be as its 'there' (Heidegger 1967: 321 in: Livadas 2022: 2-3).

A sense of being as 'being there', implying a sort of inner temporality on the part of the 'questioning entity', i.e. the questioning subjectivity, may 'naively' and in indirect fashion vindicate itself in the way the separation between conceptual and factual in general may be considered a fuzzy one. For instance, in Quine's *Two dogmas of empiricism* the ontological core of our field

of knowledge is underdetermined by the boundary conditions of our experience insofar as properties can never be sufficient enough toward a complete and each time unique description of objects themselves, an almost obvious truth in quantum theory. Moreover objects in general, in particular quantum ones, except for material objects may also be considered as objects (or relations) re-presentable in abstraction in the context of a formal-mathematical (meta)theory, consequently as constrained not only by their status as physical objects but also as formal-mathematical ones. As already discussed in Section 3 the latter ones in virtue of formal-ontological objects imply, at least in the Husserlian narrative, the constitutive capacities of a transcendental subjectivity. On this account, the 'questioning entity', which can confirm its 'being there' as an unambiguous evidence in the present now and in the modes it constitutes objectivity, can shape an ontology of the situation that may conflate with epistemological concerns both in the level of 'observation' and, to the extent that mathematics as a formal syntax bestowed with modes of meaning-in-the-world is a highly specialized linguistic activity, also that of language.

In broad terms the question of being as reformulated into a question of a subjectively founded 'being-there-in-actuality', that is, being originally in the living present, may ground each subject's temporal particularity and establish the foundation of each individuality in the world, independently of context, as identically and invariably the same for that matter. In that case a sense of individuality in purely subjective terms and in the specific 'being there' of absolute subjective origin would be the ultimate foundation of the definiteness of a situation/state-of-affairs in the actual present irrespectively of whether we are talking, for instance, about the disentanglement of a quantum state-of-affairs upon 'observation' or about the constitution of an infinite formal-mathematical object out of an ideally infinitely proceeding mental construction. In both cases one can make possible a formal discourse about phenomena-in-the-world turned to meaningful linguistic objects out of subjectively founded processes that are yet non-eliminable by purely linguistic means. In this respect a subjectivity grounded in absolute terms making itself an unambiguous presence in actuality may pertain to the 'being there' in epistemological sense. Put in Husserlian terms, the transcendental ego by its very enactment in the living present, which is naturally not to be meant as a common sense self-awakening, nullifies the ontological vacuity between consciousness as passive receptivity (reflected upon) and consciousness as consciousness-of (reflecting on). This transcendently founded act may be epistemologically read, in terms of quantum measurement, as the possibility of identification of the quantum state registered by a detector with the consciousness of the same state by a time-constituting transcendental ego. By this token one may view through another

angle, on the one hand, the conceptual ambivalences concerning the objectivity of the state vector in the case of wave packet reduction, and on the other, the possibility of idealist interpretations associated with Bohr's assumption of the non-objectivity of the state vector (D'Espagnat 1999: 90-91, 253, 259).

In such terms a notion of the living present meant as the way of 'being there' of the transcendental subject in the particular situation might prove worthy of further discussion in epistemological terms as it bears on the way a process of being-in-constituting 'transforms' into a solidified objectivity transformable on an intersubjective basis into a linguistic object of a meaningful discourse. As stated before, the quantum-theoretical context as most inherently related with the subjective modes of 'observation' in being-in and facing-up to the world proves to be a field of preference to discuss the foundation and the bounds of linguistic activity with regard to phenomena within the world.

In these terms if one forms an idea of the living present as the undoubted self-confirmation of each subject's mode of existence in the world, one by which he has the sole and unique mode of accessibility to the world of phenomena including his own self, we may well come to conclude that the observational language of quantum mechanics may be only interpreted classically for it involves the self-enactment of the interacting *I* (*Ich*) in each living present in terms of the triangle conscious subject – measuring apparatus – quantum-state-of-affairs, expressible only in the state of objectification. Yet there seems to be more at play here than just an observational-theoretical division between classical terms as representing 'observational' ones and quantum terms as representing 'theoretical' ones, for which the orthodox Copenhagen interpretation appealed to the 'extra-physical' notion of quantum state collapse. To the extent that the rationality of nature makes it generally possible to have a mathematical physical theory in the formal terms of which one may account for the past and contemplate for the future events, the residue emerging de facto between the unitary evolution of a quantum state-of-affairs and the classically interpreted language of post-measurement outcomes is bound to re-appear in another form in the structure of the linguistic metatheory as a concrete demonstration of the non-eliminable 'interiority' of language itself in the face of certain phenomena-within-the-world. Rather than having to rely on realist accounts or contextual theories of meaning, in fact unable to provide a satisfactory account of the approximations involved in the transition from the quantum mechanical to the classical level, and of course having much less in common with Deleuze's idiosyncratic metaphysics in *The Logic of Sense*, a properly meant phenomenological account of the 'residue' in the quantum 'observation', turned into a linguistic 'approximation', would prove a luring interpretational means especially in view of its appeal to the absoluteness of the living present as mode of being

of the subjective factor. However, as I will claim in the next, this is exactly what makes language forever missing nature, the latter as authentically being itself.

It is known that Bohr went so far as to assert that we have no other means of understanding quantum mechanics other than the classical ones, in the corresponding linguistic norms based on a self-standing objectivist interpretation of nature. In this view “the appropriate physical interpretation of the symbolic quantum-mechanical formalism amounts only to predictions, of determinate or statistical character, pertaining to individual phenomena appearing under conditions defined by classical physical concepts” (Bohr 1949: 210-211, 238). It happens that von Neumann’s reduction postulate, being a high profile case of the relevant argumentation, has rendered impossible at least in the ontological level of a quantum measurement to account for the definiteness of post-measurement values of quantum observables without the implicit acceptance of the consciousness of a participating subject.¹⁵ For such subject a notion of a self-constituting inner time in terms of which he must ‘act’, in the absence of any sort of reflection (including self-reflection), should have to be prior established. It follows that the acting subject’s participation in the measurement process cannot be subsumed to a kind of physical reductionism by “evoking some physical event that occurs in the brain of the observer at the end of a measuring interaction. For such event would remain ‘inside the (quantum) calculation’ and would therefore do nothing to break the chain of entanglements and superpositions” (Bitbol 2021: 571). Then if one does not concede to some kind of ‘ghostly’ property of consciousness which can make possible a collapse of quantum states and the attainment of the ‘linguistic level’ of post-measurement values, the reduction to a constituting subjectivity conceived in absolute terms seems to be the plausible way between the Scylla of physicalistic reductionism and the Charybdis of eccentric metaphysics. Bitbol, evoking von Neumann’s use of the quasi-Husserlian expression ‘abstract ego’, has aptly referred a propos to von Neumann’s view in that “the

¹⁵ Given that due to its philosophical orientation the present article cannot enter into the technical details of the issues in quantum theory involved, the author suggests for those interested for a further reading, among many other sources (Boge 2018; D’Espagnat 1999; von Neumann, 1955). Concerning von Neumann’s reduction (or projection) postulate, which essentially amounts to the supposition that consciousness is able to modify physical states by collapsing them from superpositions of states to sharp values, there have been various alternative interpretations, among them Feyerabend’s in a 1957 paper, dispensing with the idea of a quantum unitary evolution collapse on grounds contrary to positivist ones. Yet the efforts to provide a link on statistical grounds between the uninterpreted formalism of unitary evolution representing a quantum state-of-affairs, as being in itself an ‘unknown’ process, and the classically interpreted language of post-measurement outcomes, have shortcomings on their own as the relation between observers and macroscopic measurement devices includes more data than is typically appreciated, while leaving out of account decoherence effects.

divide between the observer and the observed system can be moved back further and further until nothing (not even a brain, not even a ghostly soul) is left on the observer's side. It can be moved until the observer is represented only by her 'abstract ego', namely by a pure knower unknowable to itself, whereas all the rest is treated as a global (quantum) system" (Bitbol 2021: 572).

In other words in order to avoid the trap of physical reductionism one may with good reason make room for a consciousness in absolute temporal terms whose act of self-constituting would be 'inaccessible' to its reflecting self for then it would be part of the global physicalistic quantum system and thus inappropriate to account for the residuum lying between the uninterpreted formalism of the unitary evolution of superposed quantum states and the classically interpreted language of post-measurement outcomes. In a certain sense one comes across a persisting conundrum of phenomenological reductionism, namely the way to found a temporality-constituting consciousness that would not be identically consciousness of itself and consequently asking for a purely subjective origin of its own self in an interminable recurrence. Which is to say, what lies ahead is the way to found a kind of ever-in-act 'substrate' of consciousness that would always 'elude' reflection and such that it would also account for the interiority of language in resolving the 'being-in-the-flow' of the world as being 'already there' and in consummate objectivity. This kind of experience of the present, attributed to von Neumann's subjectivist account of his reduction postulate, in Bitbol 2021, as essentially a sort of constant self-awakening of the subject and a means to 'fill in' the chasm between living as original presence and thinking about living as original presence is part and parcel of the phenomenological discourse in both Husserl's and Heidegger's respective narratives.

Appealing to the living present in the terms discussed above, i.e., as the possible means of 'appearance' of the ego within the world, may offer a clue as to the possibility of eliminating the residue between acting-in-actuality and reflecting upon acting-in-actuality.¹⁶ However the kind of ontological vacuity, re-presented as a 'residue' in quantum terms between the 'being-in-entanglement' of a quantum state and its registration as post-measurement valuation, turned into immanent vacuity by transcendental-subjective considerations, may eventually prove non-eliminable due to the exclusively objective means available to put it into evidence. And by this measure the linguistic means available, to the extent that language amounts to a kind of normativity with regard to what has already come ontologically to 'be there',

¹⁶ See, e.g., Husserl's references in *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution* to the way the pure ego, as abstractness, becomes concreteness through the 'content' of the streaming present (Husserl 2006: 29, 53). Also Heidegger's reference to the being-there of *Dasein* as what it is in the initial givennesses now and soon to come; among other places, in Heidegger 1988: 24, 28, 65-67.

are most probably bound to leave the ‘interiority’ of language, in the phenomenological sense bestowed in this article, untouched and the conjecture of whether reality will forever elude language *essentialiter* unanswerable.

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