

**Personal data:**



a spatio-temporal place in a world with material objects, and if there were no possibility for others to track or understand me.

Husserl formulates it thus:

...if we *eliminate* nature, 'true,' *Objective-intersubjective* existence, there always still remains something: the spirit as *individual spirit*. ... we still have, notwithstanding the enormous impoverishment of 'personal' life, precisely an I with its conscious life, and it even has therein its individuality, its way of judging of valuing, of letting itself be motivated in its position-takings. (*Ideas II*, §64 311 [297])

He also claims:

...*no real being*, no being which is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances, *is necessary to the being of consciousness* itself (in the broadest sense, the stream of mental processes). (*Ideas I*, 110 [92])

I will first clarify what makes Husserl say this, and secondly evaluate his answer to my question<sup>2</sup>.

## **II. Husserl's idea of a self-individuating and -unifying consciousness**

If we want to understand why the mere reference to consciousness is enough to understand the spirit as individuated and its consciousness as unified, and why this understanding does not imply a reference to an intersubjectively constituted objective world or to a really existing material world, we should first see what Husserl means by 'spirit'.

Husserl describes the spiritual I<sup>3</sup> as the subject of intentionality (*Ideas II*, 22 Tf 44.6663 06436(d)-0.295585



unitary Body, i.e., a body which is animated and which bears sense, and 2) unitary spirit. (§56 255)

Let's turn to some of the phenomena that make Husserl claim that the spirit individuates and unifies itself in its course of consciousness.

(1) Husserl mentions how every *cogitatio* and its intending subject are absolutely individuated: in the process of having a thought, no material boundaries need to appear for this thought process to appear as individuated (say, for the thought '2+2=4' to distinguish itself from the thought 'people are not so intelligent as they often think they are'), nor, says Husserl, is the appearance of these physical boundaries required for the occurrence of the experience that *I* am thinking this thought.

(2) Further, this I is the bearer of its habitualities, which implies that it has a particular history.

### III. Evaluation

Now we come to my evaluation of Husserl's proposal. I will now give support to a hypothesis which, if it were confirmed, would jeopardize three claims of Husserl's: one concerning an intersubjectively shared space of meaning, a second concerning an intersubjectively shared physical realm and a last concerning an intersubjectively shared time.

The hypothesis I wish to launch is that a referral to a body which can be followed by others in an intersubjectively shared space and time is essential to the awareness of being a diachronic

I. I say 'referral to a body' and not 'awareness of an

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of a traumatic event or in psychosis, we will not typically try to restore her identity by asking her who she thinks she essentially is, but rather by grabbing her by the shoulders or letting her have a seat. She herself will oftentimes try to gather herself by dabbing her face with water; a cure found useful by psychiatrists who have wrapped patients like these in bandages or put them in bath. Knowing where I am and what my boundaries are seems in all these cases to help restore my idea that I am an I.

If all of this is true and my consciousness of being an I always requires that I have an experience of my bodily boundaries, then Husserl's claim that we can describe the transcendental experience of our spiritual unity without reference to





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