

2 Intersubjectivity – Syntheses and Product of Encounters with Alien Others

Introduction

Doubt, one's own lived body, other people – these are all unities that are clearly original experiences. We are at one with our doubt and with the difference that we experience between doubt and certainty. We experience immediately the power to live as and govern through our bodies. We encounter alien bodies from the beginning as other persons, other egos. Yet, although we know *that* we experience them, although we know something about the *manners* of givenness of these unities, still we lack a great deal of clarity as to how they arise within experience.

If the power of phenomenological reflection that Husserl inaugurates as maintaining a link to our involvement with the unities of experience is to help us in a significant way, it needs to assist us in clarifying the appearance of these unities as the kind of unities they are. In particular, as we mentioned in the preceding chapter, Husserlian phenomenology needs to clarify how the alien person's body presents itself without directly demonstrating which predicates of an animate organism have been transferred from oneself to make the encounter possible.

This second chapter has two sections. In the first, I explicate the particular syntheses that Husserl identifies as at work in the pairing with another's lived body in the *Cartesian Meditations* (*Husserliana I*, hereafter *CM*). And it is here that the relationship of overlaying (*Deckung*) achieves prominence in a way that will be relevant to the rest of this book. What the deployment of this term by Husserl signifies in the pairing with other bodies, I argue, is that distance and alterity are recognized without being totalized or reduced.

In the second section, I explore within the account given in *Expe-*

rience and Judgment (hereafter *EJ*) how the overlaying with the other person is fundamentally employed in order to recognize essences. This argument, in its explication of the *reason* for isomorphic descriptions of pairing and essential intuition, is new, but it derives, I claim, from the earlier consideration of doubt as a pre-reflective gift of the possibility of other persons.¹

What this chapter does not consider yet are two important conditions for intercorporeality and essential intuition – namely, time-consciousness and the logic of part-whole relations. These I save to discuss in chapter 4, in which they will be seen both as gifts of intercorporeality and as conditions for it.

Initial Definition

The remainder of Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation, much of his *Crisis of the European Sciences (Husserliana VI)*, and numerous volumes of his lecture and working notes are attempts to explicate the experience of our encounters with alien other persons. The experience of others has numerous conditions, numerous structures, that make possible our actual perceptions of them. But the general name for these conditions or structures is intersubjectivity, by which Husserl means the linking or intertwining of the powers of the transcendental ego that is in each case one's own.

For Husserl, intersubjectivity is not an abstract set of categories that are visible only when we consider other persons. It is not a thing or a concept. Rather, it is the origin, process, and goal – the prepared, unfolding organization of the syntheses that are already at play – of every experience that a subject has. Intersubjectivity is the 'higher level genesis,' the pattern that our intercorporeal, bodily experience is imitating and echoing. And it is the call of these bodies to mutual recognition.

In the act of listening to the jazz piece played by a group, one hears a whole that the parts could not have produced on their own, a whole that organizes the players and the notes. However, that same song is nothing else than the players and their breath and hand motions in their responses and calls to flesh out the theme. This sense of the whole piece of music as both independent of its parts and dependent on those same parts (which are themselves wholes) is the sense of reciprocity given musically.

The intertwining of the players' bodies, the way each player makes room for the others, only happens given a whole that is their explicit

organizational principle. Their bodies respond, encounter one another, within an overarching structure. Yet that structure is nothing – marks on a page, perhaps – without those bodies to take it up and carry it out. Particularly in jazz, it matters essentially who the players are, whether and how they anticipate one another, and how they take up the same theme and what they do with, through, and to it. In short, in jazz one sees, hears, and feels the bodies and the piece call to one another, just as the bodies and intersubjectivity do in Husserl's descriptions below.

I. The Syntheses at Work in Encounters with Alien Others

As we discussed at the end of chapter 1, the experience of the alien person's body occurs without our immediately knowing exactly and exhaustively *how* it *could* occur. The experience happens as if behind our backs, as if some higher function of our powers – powers we did not know we had – were already engaged in recognizing the alien. The experience of the alien thus appears as if the truth of the experience were a higher unity that we had already formed with the other.

It is precisely this character of appearing *without* a clear pedigree that Husserl examines. When Husserl looks more closely at the 'intentional situation' of the appresentation of (and of the bodily, apperceptive transfer of sense to) the alien, he finds several powers, several 'syntheses' at play – namely, similarity, overreaching, awakening, and overlaying. These syntheses are the conditions for the appearance of the alien in a perceptual encounter. They are the predicates that are at least initially excluded from a direct showing.

It must be the case, in other words, that the appresentation and apperceptive transfer that occurs in an alien encounter does so because one is 'awakened' by the other – that the noematic contents of oneself and the other have appeared as 'similar,' as finally 'overlaying' their sense with one's own. Husserl's discussion of intersubjectivity, at least in the fifth of the *Cartesian Meditations*, thus is the recovery of a necessary 'history' of the acts of recognition that are brought together in the single and immediate experience of *Fremderfahrung*. It is these acts of recognition lived as a unified whole that form intersubjectivity, which is more precisely a way of seeing and a way of *being* the intertwining that one has with others.

The experience of the alien other's body *calls for* the recognition and reflection that oneself and the alien other were already *joined together* in mutual, passive and active syntheses of meaning. The appresenta-

tion and transfer of that body requires that we acknowledge that we already are subjects that are intertwined with one another such that other things could be experienced together as paired, as calling forth a response that has implicated our own bodies.²

A. Similarity

Although we have already spoken at some length about the way in which Husserl describes the appresentation of the other person as a relationship of similarity, I would like to return briefly to it here. What I want to emphasize is the way in which a noematic similarity motivates or founds the more noetic act of overlaying.

In her experience, the phenomenologist searches for the layers of sense that go into the encounter with the alien body. She discovers in her search that she can recognize a passive source of her intentionality of the other person, a similarity or *Ähnlichkeit*, within ownness: 'It is clear from the very beginning that *only a similarity* [*Ähnlichkeit*] connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body over there with my body can serve as the *motivational basis* for the "analogizing" apprehension of that body as another animate organism' (CM, 111; my emphasis). One can recognize another person as another lived body like one's own only if the experience of another person is prepared passively, only if, 'from the beginning,' one already sustains a 'motivation' to recognize a relationship as such that can be further specified as an 'analogizing apprehension.' Similarity does not privilege either oneself or the other. It is an impartial, non-self-conscious insight that 'takes in' at one blow the entirety and the certainty of the encounter.

Such a passive preparation of a relationship is something we often experience even when not doing phenomenology. If we stop after some years to take account of how we became friends with someone, often the exhaustive account of the beginning of the relationship is hidden. We are left with an intuition of a compatibility that we must have recognized straight away, without being quite aware of our perception. Why else but for a passively recognized similarity or compatibility would we have pursued this person at all and not these others who were there at the same time? This kind of compatibility or similarity that we discover at the bottom of our explicit awareness of a friendship is rooted, Husserl is arguing, in an unexplicated experience of similarity at an even more passive level of bodily involvement with others. It is this sort of a structure of similarity, which nevertheless can itself be experienced by

means of phenomenological reflection, that makes possible any and all involvement in language and action.

In other words, the experience of similarity is a passively intended, concrete presentation of others within one's 'primordial sphere.' Now it is in its concreteness that the similarity itself matters and calls on us to act on it.³ She calls to me with a voice like mine, and our similarity hits me in the midst of what I am doing. Hers is not any cry or sound; it is one I share, a voice that always already has a grip on me. I walk like my father, and you can see that when we walk together, his gait is just the way I also walk. And even if I try to undo the similarity, I cannot. However, in these two examples, despite the initial concreteness of moments or organs of the experience of similarity, the totality and range of the similarity – of the 'predicates' proper to *Leib* and productive of the similarity – are, for essential reasons pertaining to the very meaning of 'alien,' not able to be adequately (thus explicitly) intuited by me. How does her voice immediately claim mine? What is it about a human voice, or, for that matter, the call of a loon on the water, that inaugurates the similarity? How do I walk like my father? How is walking built as a stylistic and not just a functional similarity? These questions move towards the recognition that the similarity announced in these examples, this inherently experienceable relation or structure, is something that is, as a whole, passively and pre-predicatively established.

Though it be established pre-predicatively, however, the similarity between oneself and the other person does point back, from within its concrete development, as precluding at least one description of it. That is, the similarity between one's own lived body and that of the other person is *not* capable of being described as a relation of original and copy. This is because, as we live our similarity with others in concrete ways, we find ourselves unable to control the relation.

In the friendship example, neither friend can say that she is the unique and sole original lived body to which all others appear as subordinate, as merely similar copies. Our similarity and compatibility with each other as friends announces a sharing that cannot divide into master and mastered. This is also the case with a less sophisticated example.

While I am walking down a street, I have an experience of a woman who waves at me. In seeing her hand waving urgently, I find myself almost immediately waving back in a similar way, without thinking, even though I realize, from the beginning, that I do not know her. That is, I find myself beginning to raise my hand and to wave it back to her,

as if completing a circuit, without explicit awareness of what I am doing. My similarity with her, that of my body with hers, that of her wave with mine, seems to announce itself to me as that of an original (the woman waving) and a copy (my, subsequent and rather non-reflective act).

But this is not so. The woman waved because she had already passively grasped that we were similar as total bodies. She waved as a recognition of the fact that we were given together as similar bodily wholes, and that I could be compelled by our separate hands *as if* they were organs of our pre-established overarching, communicative relationship. She may have originated our explicit communication, but she depended on a prior similarity that (passively) appeared to her – that is, of me as someone who, like her, experienced waving as a means of further contact.

Furthermore, she waves because she realizes at some level that she cannot dominate our relation of similarity. She waves as a plea, as someone who sees that neither of us is the origin of our pairing together, of our involvement. She waves to mean ‘please, please take up what we already have between us.’ Indeed, within any appearance of our similarity with others, then, each of us also realizes that the similarity that precedes and claims us does not take away the fact that it is only *one* of these bodies that each of us rules and governs, as Husserl notes. Our similarity does not *enforce* upon us as its members the manner of our explication of itself.

Because one still experiences distinction within the similarity, the phenomenologist thus recognizes that *similarity* is not the synthesis or the experience that adequately accounts for the possibility of the experience of an alien body. The woman on the street does not wave at me simply to announce how similar we are. She waves because she wants to say more, to someone who can say ‘no’ or walk away from her, even as my hand is already responding.

Similarity therefore cannot *as such* explain the discontinuity between the other’s body and my own, the resistance to the original-copy designation. And thus Husserl is compelled further to explore the genesis and appearance of the interrelationship that occurs across the irreducibility of both oneself and the other. What the phenomenologist discovers is that the difference that still occurs within the experience of similarity leads to the discovery that our *mutual and symmetrical* functioning as individuals occurs as a mutual *overreaching* and eventually as a mutual *awakening* and *overlaying*.

B. Overreaching

How do we perceive ourselves as similar when we are so separate, when the other is precisely other? The similarity occurs, Husserl finds, only as similar discontinuities. It is the discontinuities that are paired, that occur as similar.⁴

The other person as a body that is immediately a similar lived body appears as a *noema* that *exceeds* its own limits. The other's body appears as demanding that it be recognized as a similar *system* of perceiving, one that gives its own evidence of itself. The other appears as a 'there too,' Husserl says. Yet this overreaching of the alien body, this penetration of one's own sphere with its similarity and demand for equal recognition, which no other object or body on its own can do in the same way, occurs because, in one's recognition of it, one has *also enacted* this same kind of overreaching. To recognize the other's demands, claims, overreaching – this means that one's own act of perceiving must also have already reached beyond itself, reached into the other's otherness and made sense of it.

Husserl discusses the overreaching that persons enact relative to one another as the motion of pairing. In any pairing, including one's own with the other person, there is 'an intentional overreaching [*Übergreifen*], coming about genetically (and by essential necessity) as soon as the data that undergo pairing have become prominent [*abgehoben*] and simultaneously intended' (CM, 112). The relationship, the pair, comes about 'genetically.' That is, the relationship immediately issues into the members, who each enact its structure. The jazz group starts to play together and already from the very first practice session, certain dynamics, certain patterns of which player solos when (and in what ways), mark themselves out as the usual course. The group can work at making these patterns explicit, work at changing or varying them, but the overreaching, the way they impinge on one another and sidle or smash their ways into the centre, has already started before they can reflect on it.

On the one hand, then, the members of a pair of persons, of lived bodies, become intended by each's own consciousness simultaneously and are taken up *as simultaneous*. Each has already overreached itself and entwined itself with the other. One's entire lived body and one's ability to experience *as such* are paired with another person's – that is, both of us see the table as seen by the other; both our gazes are locked in a loving, desirous, indifferent, or angry situation of seeing each other.

On the other hand, this simultaneous overreaching can only happen in this way, in this recognition of the otherness of the other as claiming recognition, because the overreaching preserves the very limits that are being transcended. For each member, the individual-bodily limits 'overreach' each other while preserving the ability for each to experience the pairing as his or her own.⁵ They are simultaneous and yet sequential, in the same way that a soloist does not require the others to stop playing, and in fact often *needs* them to continue laying down the beat or the bass line.

Overreaching names this strange mixture of unified simultaneity and individual, sequential limits (a pair is both together; a pair goes from this one to that one). Overreaching, then, is one of the descriptive terms that Husserl uses that I believe, like simultaneity and the others listed in this section, names something intuitable. That is, it names something that is both a condition for the possibility of the experience of other persons *and* a concrete experience.

In short, the experience of overreaching names this fact: people come to understand themselves and one another according to their relationships. From a long time beforehand, perhaps from the beginning of one's memory, one perceives oneself as a (paired) member of a family, or of a marriage, or of a friendship. Yet within that relationship, within that pairing, one maintains and even develops the capacity for freedom and self-reflection by virtue of the fact that the relation only occurs as something that preserves a distinction and distance between it and oneself. What one discovers in the course of relationships is that one is held accountable for the course the relation takes *as if* one were always already explicitly and completely bound within and by it – without ever fully being so. A relation, such as the family, that appears initially as *complete* coincidence and simultaneity, as the complete submersion of one's own role as a particular individual, later manifests the fact that it has always already called on one's own power (as a *separable* layer) to assent to and preserve it.⁶ The relation is also what situates and preserves the members.

I argue that it is this situation of becoming prominent together and overreaching one another that is most important for Husserl's description to continue towards layers and layering. One can come to one's own self-experience (and for phenomenologists, persons can only perform the reduction to the sphere of ownness and eidetics generally) *only* if one begins *as if* in a fully original upsurge of mutual prominence and mutual (albeit implicit, perhaps regulated and graduated)

abridgement of distance and perspective. This is precisely what Husserl means, I take it, when he emphasizes that the overreaching comes about 'genetically' (CM, 112). The overreaching occurs as the very genesis or origin of persons' becoming prominent together. Overreaching is coeval with persons' prominence as singulars. That is, ownness occurs only within and given the decentring and mutual relationship of oneself and others.

The description of one's experience as an overreaching, however, is still not sufficient to account for one's experience as it appears. This overreaching does not itself reveal *how* both persons do not immediately annul one another's limits completely. One has merely recognized that these limits are not destroyed because one has experienced them as having had to reach 'over' to one another. Within this overreaching, then, something remains to be discovered – and that something is the most sophisticated descriptive syntheses, *awakening* and *overlaying*.

These syntheses can be experienced in their own right in myriad encounters involving the lived body, and with them the phenomenologist can finally clarify for herself the manner in which the initial similarity and overreaching occur as both ruptures and ongoing initiations into and a preservation of ownness. The passive (awakening) and active (overlaying) syntheses display themselves in their intertwining as the basis for our mutual perception of one another as humans – that is, for co-perception as similarly embodied and mutually implicating subjects. These two syntheses allow the phenomenologist to account for the ways in which her experience of the other person is an identifiable unity of *her* experience, which by definition retains her ability to be awakened by the other person to new demands, to new meanings.

C. *Awakening, Overlapping, and Overlaying*⁷

The moments of any pairing, Husserl says, are more closely described as 'a living mutual awakening [*Sich-Wecken*] and an overlaying of each [*überschiebendes Sich-Überdecken*] with the objective sense of the other' (CM, 113).⁸ The phenomenon of awakening [*Sich-Wecken*] is the phenomenon of the *distance* or limit between oneself and another as nevertheless founding the appresentation of overreaching similarity. The phenomenon of overlaying (*Sich-Überdecken*) is the phenomenon of the *bridge* that those involved make over their distance, a distance that the bridge (unlike the initial overreaching) nevertheless continues to bring before them in their passage over it. Overlapping (*Überschiebung*) is

paired here with overlaying (*Sich-Überdecken*) as a noematic, affective pressure that motivates a noetic grasp.⁹ By means of the overlapping, noematic contents that push consciousness towards a grasp of its intercorporeality, awakening and overlaying stand in a correlative relationship and reveal themselves as such, just as the bridge reveals the distance required for it to be a bridge.¹⁰

Awakening and overlaying are correlative by means of overlapping contents eliciting a synthetic response; that means neither awakening nor overlaying itself is sufficient to account for the experience of overreaching and similarity, for how a similarity and an overreaching with others actually come to *matter* to us. In one's empirical description of emergence from sleep to the recognition of wakeful experiences of objects and other persons, one has some evidence of the experience of sleeping as both similar to and distinct from that of wakeful experience; but the transition from one to the other happens always as if behind one's back, out of reach of one's immediate identification, insofar as one's senses operate anonymously, receptive to the affective and overlapping contents of the waking world.¹¹ One's emergence from ownness (or indifference) to the particular experience of particular other persons evinces a similar structure to the empirical experience of waking up from a sleep or coming to recognize overlapping family structures in the sense of one's own utterances.

The phenomenologist recognizes that the experience of another person and that person's *Leib* must have been prepared by a passive synthesis that precedes explicit identification. Like the process of waking up from sleep, which involves a kind of implicit but constant and increasing (passive) resistance on the part of consciousness to remaining in its sleeping state, the awakening to another person's lived body is an experience that the phenomenologist discovers to be possible only insofar as the other person offers constant (albeit previously implicit) *resistance* to one's own intention. One awakens to the sense 'other person' because one's consciousness cannot understand the other as a moment of itself. One awakens because one's consciousness experiences the other's resistance and is thereby called out of itself, out of its own restrictions into a wider, shared field of play.¹²

The phenomenon of awakening is thus experienced as the *limit* to one's identification of the other person. One cannot make 'one's own' what allows other people's bodies to be theirs, and this limits the extent to which one can make immediate, explicit sense of the other person and vice versa. Mutual overreaching, in other words, is experienced

to some extent as the preservation of one's limits relative to the other person *by means of* their ability to challenge that limit, to wake us up.

To the extent that persons have awakened one another as noematic wholes – as bodies within a nexus of overlapping intercorporeality – persons also perform a noetic act, a mutual understanding or synthesis of identification that is active and that occurs within each person's primordial sphere. This very ability to identify with one another is what Husserl calls our 'mutual overlaying' – it is the further development of the synthesis announced in our overreaching one another.

I will argue below in more detail about the synthesis of overlaying and its distinction from awakening, but suffice it to say here that the phenomenon of overlaying is encountered as the ability to have experiences of one another within a unitary experience, to identify one another as on the same earth and in an overarching relationship. One experiences other persons never in complete isolation from oneself but always in some relation – even if that relation is largely potential, merely bodily, definitively conflicted, and so on. And the fact that the other always appears in relation to oneself, then, is the fact of overlaying.¹³

D. Conclusion

Husserl's discovery and explication of the structural, correlative, and experiential notions of awakening and overlaying comprise the most sophisticated layer in his description of the experience of the other person. When one experiences one's mutual encounter as an overlaying, for example, one sees the origin and preservation of the earlier description of the apperceptive transfer:

As the *result* of this overlaying, there takes place in the paired data a mutual transfer of sense [*Sinnesübertragung*] – that is to say: an apperception of each according to the sense of the other, so far as moments of sense actualized in what is experienced do not annul [*aufheben*] this transfer, with the consciousness of 'different' [*Anders*]. (*CM*, 113; my emphasis)

And, although Husserl does not maintain it here, I argue in the sections that follow that the transfer of sense as egos also depends on their noematic awakening to one another. Indeed, all the descriptions of apperception – transfer, similarity, and overreaching – come about because of the gap between the lived bodies, a gap that is ineradicable and mutually identifiable and that awakens persons to one another and to themselves.¹⁴

In general, pairing and mutual transfer can break off or decay whenever one's perceptual attention turns towards other things or when the characteristics of egohood disappear – as in the case of death or in the experience of what seemed human being in fact a mannequin. The pairing, which begins as a recognition of a bridge across a gap, a shared gap that allows for mutual understanding, a gap that *is* consciousness – the pairing that begins as a bridge of one lived body to another – can in fact conceal aspects of itself or fracture into a relation of oneself with another mere body (*Körper*). But this shows, then, that the authentic case of pairing is not a case of merely reaching out and intending another person as simply a mere body (*Körper*) and from there gaining access to her alienness. Essential to pairing is the unconcealing of the ongoing and co-primordial element of awakening to the other's alienness, the uncovering of a relationship that the phenomenologist cannot fully bring to explicit awareness as simply her own constitutive activity.¹⁵

II. Intersubjectivity as the Basis for Intuiting Essences

Intersubjectivity does more than just name the general conditions for the encounter with an alien body. It is not just the fact *that* alien bodies call for a kind of unity that must pre-exist them. It is also *how* they do so. In other words, the meaning of the term 'intersubjectivity' includes the specific *kinds* of unities that are formed by means of bodily overlaying with one another. It includes the way the conditions of experience likewise become concrete, particular stances of taking up the world and one another.¹⁶

For Husserl, intersubjectivity is also at the heart of consciousness's ability to intuit or 'see' essences. By means of the perspectives of other persons, integrated within each one's own perspective, each person, each subject has the ability to intuit or perceive essences on his or her own. By means of these mutually implicated perspectives, each person can anticipate, codify, and organize his or her concrete experiences in terms of the actual types and rules that function within and across them. In short, it is because each subject can apply her or his pairings with alien bodies to objects as such that essences appear immediately as what they are.¹⁷

A. *The Functional Community of One Perception*

The experience of one's subjectivity, of one's growing power of reflection, is the experience of arising as a body for oneself. However, the

experience of one's subjectivity is also the experience of living with another person in a shared field of perception, a shared world of objects. Indeed, as Husserl describes the conditions of this encounter, he finds that another way to point out the mutual overlaying and awakening that occur within the encounter is to point to an operative, perceptual co-functioning: 'In other words, the two [the sense of other's body for me and the sense of the other's body for himself] are so fused [*verschmolzen*] that they stand within the *functional community* [*Funktionsgemeinschaft*] of one perception' (CM, 122; Husserl's emphasis). Persons co-perceive one another, and together (in mutual co-perception) they co-perceive the world as one world and their correlated perceptions as one act of perceiving.

A functional community of one perception means the following three things: both oneself and the other perceive in *similar ways*; both self and other perceive the same *things*; and each one of the pair can experience his or her own separate acts of perceiving as implicated in (or as directed by) the other's. I will consider each of these in turn. Oneself and the other perceive in similar *ways*: each has the same kind of perceiving body; each needs to move to get a better view on things, and so on. Both self and other perceive the same *things*: each experiences her or his perceptions as limited perspectives on things that require other perspectives to fulfil them. And finally, the perceptual acts of both self and other *implicate* each other: I experience the other person as a similar yet separate ego who co-perceives herself when I perceive her, who co-perceives herself when she perceives me, who co-perceives me when she perceives herself.

Each of these three components of the functional community of one perception requires the others. Ultimately, however, the third component is the foundational one. The other two, perceiving the same objects in a similar way, are possible only given our mutual implication. In other words, we see that we are similar because the very act of *seeing similarity* is shared. By virtue of mutual implication, by virtue of oneself and the other people mutually appearing together and to one another within a situation, one's experience appears always as an excess, as a yet-to-be-fulfilled system of empty intentions and fulfilments. The guarantee that it is possible to live with this excess, to recover, to interpret or to make something out of it, stands there in the already implicated person of the other.

An example might come in the experience of a national or familial tragedy. We may not know the others who also mourn or who are

shaken by these deaths. But immediately on being thrown together in mourning, we seem to 'find' one another, to feel connected as ones who have lived through the same situation. We see without thinking or speaking that we have recognized the same things, even if only passively. And even if we never speak, even if we can never recover the situation in its entirety, since we did not live through it together in exactly the same place or manner – that is, even if loss is an irreducible moment of the temporal character of persons' functional community as such – still we take the other person as a route into the excessive character of that experience. Access to the other, lost faces of the shared world is what the other *means* and *exists*.

Following this example, perhaps Husserl's most concise formulation of the functional community of one perception is as follows: one experiences the other person 'as if I were standing over there, where the Other's body [*fremden Leibkörperß*] is' (CM, 123).¹⁸ From this it becomes clear that the alien body has imposed the necessity of one's being involved, of being in relationship. The relationship is not something external, not an introjection. Rather, it appears as a recognizable unity-through-distance. The 'as if I were,' as a kind of subjunctive distance between oneself and the alien lived body, is not collapsed. Rather, it is always maintained. The unity with others is a unity in which one always has work to do to understand what the situation is, what it has been, what it means for the future. In any finding oneself together, the experience of the relationship is an ecstatic experience of standing outside of oneself. It happens according to simultaneous but different modes of intuition that can always be taken up reflectively. And in this being outside oneself – at least in terms of the sense the other person has for oneself – one is given to oneself as this ego who, despite ecstasy, finds the value and meaning of its own perceptions only within the relationship itself.

B. Functioning Together, We Intuit Essences

Having discovered our functional community of perception, what we find in Husserl, I argue, is that it is *because* we are intersubjective that we are able to see essences. It is *because* we are always already overreaching, awakening, and overlaying all other subjects with our whole bodies that we can perform the activities whereby particular objects and the world in general can yield to us the essences that make possible an experience of something *as* what it is. In other words, it is *because* we

already form a functional community of perception that we can function perceptually together on behalf of one another, on behalf of that community.

Returning to the example of listening to jazz music, we can anticipate the insights discussed in this section. The following examples, it is true, are ones in which I describe how I come to intuit essences about explicitly intersubjective phenomena – the identity of an artist across her music or of a song across its variations. However, although I do not start here with the intuition of an essence of 'an object as such,' I will go on to show how the intuition of *all* essences operates according to the logic of intersubjectivity, which is simply writ large in these examples.

The first example is of listening to the singer and pianist Nina Simone and trying to determine the essence of her music. Now I very much enjoy her songs, but if I were asked what it is that motivates that enjoyment, I would have to do a bit of work to figure that out. That work would largely include listening to her play and sing across a sufficient number of her songs, albums, moods, and so on.

In fact, as I do move from one song or album to another, I hear Nina's voice shifting. Sometimes her voice sounds to me like a muted trumpet; at other times, like a harsh wind; at still others, like a slightly out-of-tune violin. Across these differences, though, in which she seems to be a series of modifications of the same singer and artist, something grabs me. As I work to describe her impact on me now, it seems that what motivates me to like her work is that, in each piece I hear, she sounds like the particular 'enworlding' of an idea, like justice or oppression itself.¹⁹ That is, the variations of her voice resound in me as if she and I shared an important idea, an idea that resounds directly through and as her. For me, then, the idea of Nina Simone as a whole, the idea of her jazz music as immediately bearing witness to her particular inflection or deployment of oppression and social justice through the particularity of her tenor and tremors, arises through these songs, across them, as if it were an important part of her essence as a musician. I hear her as if a particular face of justice were what she brought to and through these pieces, as if that was what I picked up on and affirmed in my enjoyment.

Another example might be to think about the essence of a particular jazz standard – say, 'Someday My Prince Will Come.' What is it that characterizes this song? What does it mean to hear it? Many great and undiscovered jazz artists and groups have played this song – Bill Evans for one, Miles Davis for another. But if we are to articulate the essence

of this song, we need to listen to *all* of these variations – and they can be *quite different* from one another.

In jazz particularly, the essence of a piece does not lie shut up in the markings of the original sheet music. Rather, the standard can still sound within the variations, and sound more urgently, even though each variation is an opportunity for the artist or group to be in dialogue with that piece and with one another. How do we establish the essence of ‘Someday My Prince Will Come’? By listening to the variations, by hearing through them what the song intends, what the groups do, what it and they leave open, make possible, forfend, and so on. Through the variations something happens – some grasp of what ties these variations together – that is both a particular chord progression or rhythm or key and more than these – that allows one to grasp the essence.

In both of these examples – the unity of Nina Simone through her works, and the unity of the song ‘Someday My Prince Will Come’ through its variations – it is clear that a functional community of perception is required and enacted in the process of describing the intersubjective phenomena being considered. I can perceive the essence of Nina Simone’s music only (1) by bringing her different musical acts together so that an organizing principle of justice lost and longed for shows through them; and (2) by myself communing with her perceptions, or by acting as if I can, with what I hear of her, in the process. I perceive the essence of the song ‘Someday My Prince Will Come’ only (1) by allowing the variations themselves to show a communal appreciation across their differences (and perhaps because of them); and (2) by allowing my own perception and understanding of music to contribute to the bridges between them, to hear through them and with them what they are all calling for.

As I now go on to lay out Husserl’s description of the intuition or experience of essences, I will emphasize the way in which other people are necessary for the intuition and experience of *any* essence, and not simply the essence of these societal, cultural, musical producers and products. What will be interesting to note is how the logic, the structure of these intuitions, is exactly the same. All essential intuition, for Husserl at least, operates as if trying to determine the essence of a person or a cultural production.

The main textual example I use here comes from section 87 of *EJ*, titled ‘The Method of Essential Seeing.’ Across that work as a whole, as we learned in the first chapter of this book, Husserl is concerned with the role of the pre-predicative sphere in the recognition of essences and

their identification as unitary phenomenological objects. In this particular selection from within *EJ*, Husserl states that, with the multiplicity of variations that her imagination provides in the process of eidetic variation, the phenomenologist sees the development of the *eidōs* as a rather organic and qualitative leap:

In this transition [*Übergang*] from image to image ... all the arbitrary particulars attain overlapping coincidence [*überschiebender Deckung*] in the order of their appearance and enter, in a purely passive way, into a synthetic unity in which they all appear as modifications of one another and then as arbitrary sequences of particulars in which the same universal is isolated as an *eidōs*. Only in this continuous coincidence [*Deckung*] does something which is the same come to congruence, something which henceforth can be seen purely for itself. (343; my emphasis)

I will now explicate this text in reference to Husserl's discussion of intersubjectivity in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation, focusing particularly on the terms 'transition' and 'modification.'²⁰

1. TRANSITION

Essences, for Husserl, appear directly. The experience of them, for him, cannot be disputed. We do not simply see particulars and then *argue* to essences. We see or 'intuit' essences, and this kind of direct seeing or intuition of essences is a problem only insofar as we attempt to clarify how it occurs, especially relative to other kinds of intuition.

As implied in the text cited immediately above, one of the differentiating marks by which an essence appears is the kind of act that makes its appearance possible. For Husserl, the acts of consciousness, out of which an essence appears directly and in person, are called 'eidetic variations.' In performing these variations, consciousness then enacts a 'transition' from image to image, from one variation to another. Through that transition, consciousness comes to leave behind the variations in favour of a full intuition of the essence itself.

For example, in order to clarify the manner of appearance of the essence 'table,' the phenomenologist holds in mind the appearance of this particular table with regard to one aspect – its four, brown, short legs; she then varies that aspect by moving imaginatively to another, possible appearance of five, yellow, longer legs, and so on. The *fact that she can make the move back and forth* between these two appearances or variations, as well as to a multiplicity of additional variations not given

explicitly in her intuition of this table here, allows her, after amassing a sufficient number of particular variations, to see each and all variations as 'arbitrary sequences.'

This change, wrought upon each particular instance, each of which is now given the sense of 'arbitrary,' occurs by means of this sufficient and uninterrupted set of consciousness's own acts. The subsumption of particular instances towards an overarching *eidos*, then, would not happen without one's ability to make transitions and to allow a multiplicity to fade into the background in favour of a new appearance, the appearance of an overarching principle of unity, for its own sake.

In light of our discussion so far, it is important to note that the appearance of the essence or *eidos* occurs because of the noematic-noetic correlation of content and act. The subject makes a noetic move in that she 'transitions' between acts of variation. She inaugurates, in other words, a flow of action, a continuity, and her consciousness maintains its unbroken focus through its movement, through the variations. This continuous motion allows her to be open towards the *eidos*, which is prepared by the manner of the variations fitting together.

Correlative to the continuous, noetic transition is the noematic sedimentation or 'belonging together.' The contents of the images respond to the continuous, purposive, and imaginative movement. They respond by giving themselves as 'modifications' of one another, as variations that join together. Out of the successful, continuous transition – indeed as the meaning of that very success – the content of each variation supports and calls for the following one. The noematic affirmation of the noetic process thereby eventually allows the subject to experience any further instances or variations as *already belonging together*, thereby allowing the rubric to appear on its own precisely because the contents and the acts correlate so fluidly.²¹

The noetic act of 'transition' and the noematic content of 'modification' are moments or concepts that Husserl also locates within the phenomenological description of the encounter with other persons. I will briefly explore the role of each within intersubjectivity in order to move towards the conclusion of my argument for this section – namely, that other people are necessary for the intuition of essences. What I will show here concerning transition are two key points: first, that the transition I perform in order to see particulars as various instances of the same *eidos* is something I am always already involved with all the time within intersubjectivity; and second, that it is because I *am* both a variation and a motion of transition within transcendental intersubjectivity

that I can establish a correlation between variations and transitions in my own experience of essences.

Now, by way of anticipating objections, it is true that Husserl does not use the term 'transition' or *Übergang* in his description of *Fremderfahrung*. I believe he does not do so because he recognizes that the experiencer cannot actually 'go over' to where the alien other person is and live her experiences as she lives them. One's particularity as this lived orientation, as the zero-point of one's own Here, is, as Husserl says, irreducible. And thus one can never *oneself* truly achieve the transition towards the other person in the way that one can move from one's own lived experience of this table to an imaginative variation.

Nevertheless, as we have discussed in the previous section, the experience of another person compels the phenomenologist towards the motion of transition – and indeed, implicates us within it – insofar as we are compelled to say that the other person appears from there 'as if I were there': '[the body of another person] brings to mind the way my body would look "if I were there"' (CM, 118). The sense of the subjunctive 'if I were there' thereby evokes in the experiencer the recognition of the structure of transition, even if, unlike the eidetic variation, the transition cannot actually be fully and intuitively completed in the experiencer's own consciousness. Thus the manner of appearance of the other person is evidence of a transition that cannot be fully completed yet appears *as if* it were always already completed imaginatively.

In fact, the other person not only appears as if *some* appearances of one's body had already been involved in a transition between them as one lives them here and hers as she lives them there, but also as if there were always already performed a movement or transition by one's *entire* body: 'The first-awakened manner of appearance of my body is not the only thing that enters into a pairing; my body itself does so likewise ... Thus the assimilative apperception becomes possible and established, by which the external body over there receives analogically from mine the sense, animate organism' (CM, 118). In other words, the relationship between persons that Husserl describes as 'pairing' or *Paarung* can only appear as a unity if it is the case that one's body as such already has, within its appearance to oneself, the sense of having 'gone over' to where that other person is and confirmed their sense as an 'animate organism.' One's transition or movement from over here to 'as if I were there' is therefore a necessary movement that one recognizes as *demande*d by the encounter, as a transition that *must* already be made, even if it occurs by means of gaps that can never fully be filled in.

Neither in eidetic intuition as such nor in *Fremderfahrung*, however, can transition be a structure sufficient to account for how the appearance of the *eidōs* or the other person as other comes to presence for consciousness. As mentioned already, the *eidōs* appears as the *correlation* between transition and variations, as the principle for this correlation, or as the noematic recognition that appears as the simultaneous index (and transcendence) of the phenomenologist's own noetic movement. In the case of *Fremderfahrung* more particularly, it is precisely *because* the transition between the phenomenologist's self-perception and the other's perception of her *cannot* be fully completed within her consciousness that the transition shows itself to be insufficient to account for the entire sense of her encounter as a pairing and a unity. It is not the case, then, either in eidetic intuition in general or in the experience of the alien other, that the transition alone (as the motion consciousness performs) could be the content of any *eidōs*.

2. MODIFICATION

In his description of both eidetic intuition and *Fremderfahrung*, Husserl asserts that the noetic transition that consciousness enacts correlates with a noematic sense of each image, variation, or person as a 'modification' of the other. Ultimately, this correlation of transition and modification leads the phenomenologist to describe an 'overlapping coincidence' in which the *eidōs* appears. Insofar as the transition in each case – that is, in eidetic intuition and the experience of the alien other – occurs within one consciousness, then the two images, variations, or persons do not simply remain separate from each other. They sustain internal references from the one to the other; they appear as modifications of each other *by means of the very possibility* of moving between them.

Let us take each in turn. First, in the description of *Fremderfahrung*, Husserl describes the appearance of persons as a system of modifications:

It [the sense of the lived body of the other person as immediately expressing their subjectivity] is therefore conceivable only as an analogue of something included in my peculiar ownness. Because of its sense-constitution it occurs necessarily as an 'intentional modification' of that Ego of mine which is the first to be objectivated, or as an intentional modification of my primordial 'world': the other as phenomenologically a 'modification' of myself. (*CM*, 115)

There he highlights that the other person appears, and could 'conceivably' appear, only as an appearance of a person who is linked through and through to one's own self-appearance. A person appears as a modifying claim on one's own self-experience, as if one had already made the move to be there where she is standing.

In terms of the second case, namely that of eidetic intuition, we have already cited the parallel description of the modifications involved in eidetic seeing in the passage from *Experience and Judgment* mentioned at the beginning of this section B. As a brief reminder, Husserl describes there a kind of *progress* from the appearance of particular images to their appearance as 'modifications' of one another 'and then' to their role as 'arbitrary particulars' that yield a new appearance of the separable *eidōs* in their overlaying.

After thinking through the significance of the terminological similarities in the descriptions of both essential intuition and *Fremderfahrung*, I claim here that Husserl meant for us to attend to the process of (1) appearing as modifications of one another, and then (2) forming the *eidōs* through those modifications, as a process that founds and previews what we do when we see any other *eide*. In fact, the process of modifications forming an *eidōs* is directly visible as a temporal development in numerous examples from intersubjective life.

Let us take as an example the act of listening to a jazz trio play a familiar standard. The acts of transition between the soloists and the group are made by means of different registers, different interpretations of the same theme or piece. Each solo is, in its own way, a modification of the others, a taking up of them, an anticipation and remembrance of them. For the attentive listener, it is by following the transitions and by hearing the modifications as calling for one another that he can hear the whole, the essence of the group's effort and communication. In some sense the *eidōs*, the true sense, of the song appears to the attentive listener only as the recognition of the solos as modifications of one another and of the original piece.

To be sure, this insight is able to be (and usually is) hidden by the skill and intimacy of the jazz group. For we often hear the group or the piece and not the motion of foreground and background of the solos, not the means by which the group or the piece appears as such. Yet an attentive listener, one who interrogates the ground of her enjoyment as she listens to the music, can attend to the layers of the music, can hear and follow its motivational structure and musical development as she encounters it.

Like the attentive listener, the reflecting phenomenologist is trained to attend to the way the *eidōs* arises by means of its variations. And in attending to that development, the phenomenologist can notice that the process of intuition in which the *eidōs* arises also evinces the same kind of structure as the experience of *Fremderfahrung*. That is, the phenomenologist can see, in any particular encounter with an alien other, how the appearance of the lived body of another person first stands out as an irreducible particular; and then, through a kind of transition, appears as someone similarly embodied to her, as making a similar set of demands (i.e., appearing as modifications); and then, how she and the other serve as mutual modifications, as cases within the general structure or *eidōs* 'other person.'

Yet there is an important difference, one that I highlight in order to show what I take to be the proper ordering of essential intuition as such to intersubjectivity. The experience of *Fremderfahrung* is one of mutuality, of one's becoming an eidetic variation – becoming a modification – of the alien other person and vice versa. But in this mutuality it is also an experience of becoming and *owning* the shared *eidōs* of transcendental intersubjectivity without having fully submerged oneself as an *arbitrary* modification.

If I recognize myself to be a variation of you, and you of me, in *Fremderfahrung*, it is not true to say that we thereby recognize ourselves as members of an arbitrary sequence for an intercorporeal, intersubjective *eidōs*, which arises through us but outside of us. Intersubjectivity does not appear by our losing touch with – or distancing ourselves from – our ownness as such. Rather, the *eidōs* that we are together, which we intuit directly as our community of function within intercorporeality and intersubjectivity, is, like all other *eide*, still also an *eidōs* 'for' each of us in our own particular perceptual lives.

The *eidōs* 'transcendental intersubjectivity,' then, has always already been formed in the same basic manner in which all other *eide* are formed – through variations overlaying one another at a distance and thereby making possible the intuition of an *eidōs*. But because in the *eidōs* of intersubjectivity *all* of our being and meaning is involved (and not just a particular noematic content), and because the *eidōs* that we enact is one that we recognize ourselves to *be*, the variations or modifications are never fully or simply arbitrary. In other words, we are able to grasp ourselves as modifications of each other only insofar as our perspectival (and irreducible) particularities refuse simply to serve as arbitrary functions within our 'functional community of one perception.'

Given this difference, why should one note the isomorphic structure of essential intuition and *Fremderfahrung*? The answer, I take it, is that the variation in the isomorphism is itself significant. Indeed, as I will go on to argue below, the variation indicates the fact that the *eidōs'* transcendental intersubjectivity is formed prior to all other *eide* and is, by virtue of its ability to provide a limit to arbitrariness, the target or goal within all other *eide*.

Let us turn now to the difference in the overlaying that operates within the encounter with the alien other person. There, in forming an essence by means of all that we are, by means of our entire embodied consciousnesses, which we see as given wholly together with the other person in *Fremderfahrung*, we function not as arbitrary modifications of one another but as relatively (more or less) *anonymous* ones. The two terms *anonymity* and *arbitrariness* mean very different things.

An anonymous person is not an arbitrary one. An anonymous donor to a university, for example, keeps an important, particular sense in their withdrawal or withholding of their name. Not just any arbitrary person could have donated this sum, and so on. Likewise, because of the sense that anonymity preserves, it is the anonymity of one another as modifications that press towards intersubjectivity that now deserves further consideration. For ultimately, it will be the anonymity of the variations within intersubjectivity that call for but also hold accountable and revise the arbitrary modifications of other *eide*. It is because we can never fully know one another within our nevertheless mutual formation of intersubjectivity, it is because anonymity is never fully dispelled, that (a) we can have *eide* at all, and (b) we must hold *eide*, on behalf of those who have not perceived or spoken yet, as immediately grasped but as indefinitely susceptible to critique.

Let us return to the example of eidetic variation in the experience of the essence 'table.' To vary the appearance of this table imaginatively and arbitrarily is to engage in eidetic intuition on behalf of the others with whom one always already forms transcendental intersubjectivity. It is to acknowledge their simultaneity, their ability actually to take up other views right now that are contemporaneous with but distinct from our own. To vary our perception of 'this here now' towards an *eidōs* is to attest to the gift of the other persons' very particular, very own, powers to view what we do ... but from where they are, from the very actual and specific but largely anonymous standpoints that they enact.

However, the anonymity of the others whose powers one uses to vary the appearance of the table, even without their being present in

the room with us, even within what appears as our own imagination – this anonymity does not take away their co-givenness with us as transcendental intersubjectivity. By virtue of this co-givenness, it is always possible that their anonymity could, at any moment, diminish. In fact, the anonymity of those other modifications of oneself is *in principle* convertible to personal particularity in each and every case of an encounter with alien others.

All that someone need do is to appear within our experience and introduce to us a table whose structure we had not thoroughly accounted for in our own variations. Or all she need do is point to a piece of the music or of a text in philosophy again, and highlight a word or phrase, and suddenly we realize that we had enacted a series of variations or interpretations on her behalf, on behalf of all readers or hearers of that text, which were inadequate.

Phenomenology, in other words, helps us see that in order to intuit an essence, we must be willing not only to ‘take (over) a stance’ but also to communicate it, to ‘stand up’ for it, to allow it to be confirmed and disconfirmed. To intuit essences is thus not simply to participate in the movement of absolute truth but also to participate in the tying together of truth and intersubjectivity, of experiencing absolute truth as the explicit coming-to-recognition of what always already occurs implicitly and anonymously.

To have a perceptual world, to have essences, by means of a functional community of one perception, means that within our essential intuition and our communication of that experience, anyone can, anyone must, come to check our work and to fill in concretely his or her formerly anonymous co-functioning. In this occurrence, in the efforts of the person who appears to ‘check our work,’ in the interruption or the resistance or the creativity of the now *less* anonymous other person, we see the always provisional status of the arbitrary variations that we pass through to grasp the *eidōs*. We see how *eide* are given on behalf of the anonymous others with whom we share our structure as transcendental intersubjectivity. And we also see how they are so given only for ongoing description and communal efforts within our shared perceptual system.

The only certain *eide* are those given as the very structure of transcendental intersubjectivity itself – for example, the structure of mutual overlaying and awakening, the structure of intentionality, of the way in which the object as such reflects noetic rays, or the pattern of modifications overlaying one another and allowing the *eidōs* to shine through.

And that means that most – perhaps all – other *eide* must be what Husserl would have called 'inexact' essences.

Before I leave this section on modification, let me point to a further place in the *Cartesian Meditations* where I see Husserl discussing the encounter with the alien other person as a mutual modification. There, in the description of *Fremderfahrung*, as the motor of the 'apperceptive transfer' (CM, 110) we discussed above, Husserl points out the 'mutual overlaying [*sich-überdecken*]' (CM, 113) of the sense of one's own lived body and that of the other person. This overlaying, this transfer, is the noetic and experiential indication of the noematic and synthetic unity of persons as modifications of one another in the *eidos*' transcendental intersubjectivity.

To point to further textual support for my argument here, I would highlight that Husserl also discusses transcendental intersubjectivity directly as anonymous, as concrete, and as open-ended – that is, as the very horizon of all actual and possible other persons: 'It is also clear that men become apperceptible only as finding Others and still more Others, not just in the realm of actuality but likewise in the realm of possibility ... To this community there naturally corresponds, in transcendental concreteness, a similarly open community of monads, which we designate as transcendental intersubjectivity' (CM, 130). For Husserl, transcendental intersubjectivity stands ready as a transcendental, eidetic 'possession' on behalf of concrete encounters, conflicts, and abnormalities. That means that, while forming itself within the pairing of particular non-arbitrary persons, intersubjectivity happens largely passively and anonymously. Intersubjectivity is therefore a sketch of our co-perceiving community that is filled in concretely by means of communicating the eidetic intuition we experience. Intersubjectivity is the way we articulate, in particular utterances, how essences appear; and because of their linguistic structure, these utterances always function on behalf of the others who inhabit one's structure too and who therefore can interpret and critique them.

Intersubjectivity is recognizable because one is always limited in one's recognition of another person's life and the relations that person has with still further other persons. These other persons, the facts of one's limitations in the face of another, always appear as demanding concrete and specific action. For it is always as an actually existing person, who arises out of anonymity as immediately attached to the world and to a particular variation on one's perspective, that one encounters another. It is for the sake of these others and their actual-possible differ-

ences from one's own that one experiences all other *eide* as the achievement of an anonymously arising, open-ended multiplicity.

Arbitrariness is thus something that each person uncovers as a useful tool within the actuality of consciousness as a lived structure of anonymity. For the anonymous person on whose behalf one intuits an essence, this shift from this perception of a brown, four-legged table to an imaginative variation of one with an arbitrary number of legs, an arbitrary colour, and so on can be performed. The other is anonymous and thus does not immediately contest this act. But arbitrariness, and its pairing with anonymity in the enactment of eidetic variation, always yields in principle to the explicit encounter with the other person, to the explicit taking into account of particular views, which check our work.

It is only because we form an intersubjective nexus as irreducible and intercorporeal persons that our anonymous standing in for one another works in tandem with our 'transcendental concreteness.' It is only because persons do *not* form transcendental intersubjectivity solely or essentially as a merely pure and abstract concept, devoid of reference to their concrete existence as these particular lived bodies, that persons can have eidetic intuition at all. And, finally, it is only because our deployment of arbitrary sequences serves to promote future communication between particular and actual experiencers that arbitrariness, and the modification structure it makes possible, appears at all relevant and helpful.

C. Conclusion

I have tried to show in this section and in this chapter that Husserl presents a description of intersubjectivity, of the experience of other persons, that implies that it is the ability of actual others to be implicated in one's own perspectives and profiles that makes eidetic variation and eidetic intuition possible.²² In other words, I have argued that Husserl's texts provide evidence for the claim that the intersubjective community of co-perception to which one belongs serves as the source of one's project of knowing all other objects and their *eide*.

Furthermore, I have claimed that the power of this source of eidetic intuition as such lies simultaneously in the other's alien and existent *distance* from one's own perspective and in their *overlaying* with one's own sense. Were this not the case, were there not other perspectives to negotiate as simultaneously co-given and as distant, then imaginative variation, the projection of one's own standpoint into anonymous other

ones, would not be possible. Were there not a play of anonymity and personal actuality in the experience of intersubjectivity, there would be no secure limit to arbitrariness and to the process of imaginative modification within one's own faculty of imagination. Finally, I have demonstrated that without both (1) implying the other anonymously, as the one on whose behalf I vary the appearance of the table, and (2) leaving open the possibility for that anonymous other to interrupt and contribute to my project of variation in a particular, alien way, nothing would appear as a 'what' with any significant content.

I will now go on briefly to discuss some passages in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* that further my treatment of essential intuition in its relationship to intersubjectivity. What I will show here is the fruition of this argument – namely, the idea that essences are perceived as intersubjective stances on shared objectivity. And I will show within Husserl's isomorphic descriptions that essences are experienced as taking a stand together on the meaningfulness of the givenness of the world. I turn to the *Analyses* for this for two reasons: first, to show that Husserl took his description of essential intuition as an overlaying of modifications to be central to his phenomenology, as it recurs across several texts (including *Phenomenological Psychology*); and second, to highlight how it is precisely overlaying at a *distance* that Husserl recognizes as promoting the possibility of meaningful experiences.

In the *Analyses* (hereafter *APAS*), when Husserl discusses the *eidōs* or the universal implicit in similars, he discusses it as a necessary following up of a process of overlaying as a whole. The universal is recognized through one's involvement in the relation of the variations, through one's following up of the transition of one aspect, example, or perspective into the other. It is this transition one's consciousness performs that brings to light their overlaying as producing a single, transcending unity:

[The universal] can only first be ready for possible thematic grasping, by carrying out the activity of grasping uniform objects separately in the synthetic transition [*in synthetischem Übergang*] from the one to the next ... The direction of interest toward the universal, toward the unity as opposed to the manifold, is not that of determining the one uniform object in relation to the other being uniform to it; rather what awakens [*weckt*] interest is the One being actively constituted in the coinciding [*der Deckung*] of individually grasped uniform objects; the One is the same, and is the same over and over, no matter what direction we may pursue in passing from one to the next.²³

The *eidōs* is reached as a recognizable unity, in other words, only when the 'distance' between the variations is compatible, only when the passage from one to the other loses all trace of specific density. The 'interest' is no longer one or the other, but the fact of the 'transition' itself. In other words, the *eidōs* appears when consciousness awakens to its own power of movement both as *having already* generated meaning (that of the specific or particular objects now recognized as similar variations on a theme or type) and as *continuing* to generate meaning in its very motion.

One might see in this discussion the very bodily structure of habit formation. If I, an amateur and rather out-of-practice pianist, focus on playing the piano like Vince Guaraldi does, all at once, I will surely fail. My ability to be similar to him is not going to occur by my simply desiring and demanding that my hands play what he could. In fact, I have tried to play like he does through attempting to play his transcriptions, and I have failed.

But when I both hold on to the desire to play like Guaraldi and also do the work on my own relationship to the piano and to music, allowing that desire to be like him to submerge itself in favour of the real steps of learning how to listen and to practise *on my own*, I begin to get better both at playing in general and at playing like him. Eventually, after alternating sessions of practice and listening, while not focusing explicitly or reflectively on Guaraldi's own accomplishments, I hear myself playing a phrase or a note in the same kind of style. I hear his influence on me as I catch myself playing a riff of his in another song. And then, in that moment, I notice the achievement of our unity. Something about the essence of Guaraldi is also mine.

I take this example to flesh out the role of being awakened to an essence in the overlaying of the variations. One cannot force an insight onto the way in which an essence embraces its particulars, its variations. One can only be awakened to variations that appear, as if on their own, to call forth a new appreciation of their commonality. The essence is an experience that is passively prepared by the variations one moves between. Nevertheless, the essence is new. It does not arise *as* the variations but rather gives itself *within* the continuity of the movement by which I transition from one to the other.

Indeed, Husserl explicitly describes the newness of the *eidōs* when he goes on to say that the *eidōs* or the One occurs only once: 'The One does not repeat itself in something uniform; it only occurs one time, but is given in the many.'²⁴ To experience an essence, then, is to experience its arbitrary variations, its particular instances, desiring one another, com-

municating with one another. But in that communication something else, something excessive, arises, which nevertheless retroactively confers upon the variations a new layer of sense.

The *eidōs* 'table' occurs once. It is the same occurrence throughout all its variations, all its instances. But in that single occurrence it announces itself as 'given in the many.' This means that the essence, because it arises out of the multiplicity of instances and variations, also gives something back to them. It allows them to be inhabited by its unity; it allows their space and time of multiplicity to be held together by its singularity.

It is in this light that Husserl declares that the *eidōs* depends on the particular, that the *eidōs* is both a product of and the pre-existing principle of the unity of the particulars or variations:

We encounter the universal as a novel objectlike formation ... although, of course, *on the basis of sensibility*, insofar as the activity of 'going through' of grasping the individual, of *bringing into a coinciding is necessary* so that the universal as such can be *pre-constituted*, and *then later* can become a thematic object.²⁵

I sense this thing here and that one. I see flat surfaces, numbers of legs, colours. On the basis of my sensibility, I bring my experiences close to one another, allow them to overlay one another by holding them in memory or in imagination, the one after the other. In doing that, I allow 'the universal' to arise as a pre-constitution – that is, to be given as a unity that, while arising for me *after* my effort to move from one particular experience to another, nevertheless announces itself as already having been implicit in the particulars that sustain overlaying and communication.

The first time I recognize what a rock, a tree, or a classroom is, I immediately experience a retroactive refiguring of my experience. I remember former experiences, which were hazy, as instances of this *eidōs*, as if it were 'pre-constituted,' always there, lying in wait for me to see that, then too, I held a rock, entered a classroom, and so on. The 'novel' formation of the essence, then, loses nothing of its novelty by being given 'on the basis of sensibility.' Rather, the novelty is precisely possible in taking sensibility seriously, in allowing sensibility to do its work synthetically.

For Husserl, there really is the possibility that what one discovers, on behalf of the distances between instances, variations, perspectives,

and persons, is truly new. That is to say, in the case of essential intuition (and as it finds its parallel *Fremderfahrung*), there is

a coinciding and yet not a complete coinciding. The elements of the similarity that overlap [*überschobenen Ähnlichkeitsglieder*] (which by the way need not be separate) have a distance: different similarities have different distances, in fact, they themselves can be compared ... Nevertheless, something in common also comes to light here in the coinciding at a distance [*Deckung unter Abstand*], or as we could put it perhaps in a better way, it shines through originally as a universal.²⁶

The distances between sense-experiences that communicate with one another, that sustain a relation of similarity or shared sense ... the distances between subjects who are implicated in the very ability one has to make a transition from one variation to another ... these distances are precisely the spaces in which the universal, transcendental intersubjectivity, shines through. And it shines through 'originally.' This means, I take it, that the appearance of an essence can take me, can take the *community*, by surprise.

In one of my first experiences listening to a good jazz group perform live, one led by David Braid, I heard a song with a religious title. I think the title of the song was 'Reverence' or 'Reconciliation.' And I remember being moved by the way in which the piano and the other instruments played together but not so tightly as to be like my own experience of playing in a high school jazz band. In high school, we were all playing the same song at the same time. Our togetherness was anxious and frustrating (who played that wrong note?), and our musical production was much less interesting. We were more or less worried about faithfully rendering the notes on the page. But this professional group was far more sophisticated. In their playing together there were real gaps, but the gaps did not cause them to worry. Rather, the fact that they were not all playing in the same way or at the same time or, perhaps, even playing the same thing was the point of the piece.

I remember being moved by the fact that, in their rather distant togetherness, in their motion from and towards togetherness in the song, a religious meaning was captured for me in that shared act. Somehow their distances or rhythms of solo and group play allowed the idea of reverence or of reconciliation to come through. And I remember thinking at the time that they had successfully communicated that idea in musical logic.

For Husserl, all essences occur like my experience of this religiously titled jazz piece. Something new occurs within the gaps between the variations. And, more important, this structure of novelty is preserved within the most important essence, that of transcendental intersubjectivity itself.

What it means to be modifications of one another, what it means to make transitions on behalf of one another, is never fully given beforehand. The appearance of our community is always surprising, always sustaining revision and pre-constitution. Our friendships, our enmities, our indifferences, our marriages – they are never done with us, and they always arise both as showing us their novelty, as if covering over our distances, and as returning us to those very distances. To fully appreciate the structure of human experience, to do a reverential description, is to be resigned to reconciliation as its motor. We do all come together in the process of constituting the meaning of our shared lives, but we do so by way of irreducible differences and distances that are the very push to these shared, essential, and only relatively exact and stable positions.