

Static and Genetic Phenomenology

The aim of this chapter is to present arguments to support the central claim that phenomenology covers two broad interconnected areas, namely *static phenomenology* and *genetic phenomenology*. Both constructs will be used in the sense originally intended by Edmund Husserl. There are three interconnected points that need to be made about the subject in general:

1. Static phenomenology is a base for an eidetic psychology with its own object of study (i.e., intentional consciousness) and a clearly defined research method. Its object of study is the intentional experience. The static method has several methodological steps and its final goal is the definition of the invariant structures of human experience. However, for existential psychotherapy, besides de focus on the intentional experiences, the main aspects of the static method are: the epoché, the psychological-phenomenological reduction and the description of the human experiences.
2. Genetic phenomenology, on the other hand, underpins a form of psychology that goes beyond the mere description of the intentional structures of consciousness. This deals with subjects such as pre-reflective and reflective consciousness; the phenomenological

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notion of self; the creation of identity (the *persona*), constituted in an intersubjective space; and the analysis of passive geneses and the layers of meaning in the stream of temporal awareness. The genetic method enables us to plunge into layers of human existence that are pre-reflective, passive and anonymous, though nonetheless active. Genetic-phenomenological analysis is research into facticity, as proposed by Husserl. It is the basis of *one* form of existential phenomenological psychotherapy.

Between the static and genetic methods, there is constant dialectic. Constitutive phenomenology based on eidetic dimensions (static phenomenology) enables theoretical bases to be established, which are then explored in more depth and applied using the genetic method. The results yielded by this process are then subjected to regressive movements, and offset the results of descriptive research into a particular object of study. Husserl maintained a constant interrelationship between the two methods: “these are fundamental questions concerning the distinction, but also the ordering of necessary phenomenological investigations. Where they are concerned, I will always speak of *static* and *genetic* phenomenology” (Husserl 2001a, p. 643) (Fig. 2.1).

“Static” phenomenology investigates the processes of noetic-noematic constitution and elaborates typologies and general notions about human beings in connection with the world (Husserl 2001a). It focuses on the intentional structures of experience that form part of the human being. Static research is more general and abstract in nature and is not concerned with the existential specificity of the self and its individual history: “...I can doubtlessly designate phenomenological

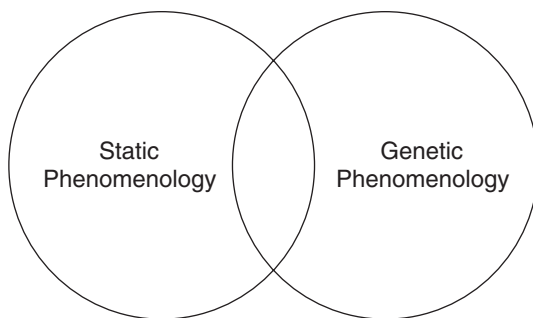


Fig. 2.1 Static and genetic phenomenology

investigations as static, investigations that attend to the correlations between constituting consciousness and the constituted objectlike formations, and exclude genetic problems altogether” (Husserl 2001a, pp. 639, 640). However, according to Husserl, we can have “a new task”, when this is applied to personal individuality (Husserl 2001a, p. 639). Thus, another function of the phenomenological project is to consider the specificity of the personal history, which is constantly in the process of becoming. Phenomenology is transported to a more concrete dimension, to the level of facticity, where the object of study becomes the self and its personal characteristics, motivations and intentions, always limited by horizons that have been previously constituted, actively and passively. “Of particular importance, but noticed very late, is the fact that reflective, so-called “internal, experience has very many levels and depth-dimensions and is exceedingly difficult to put into practice whenever one strives to go beyond the most superficial level” (Husserl 1977, p. 21). Genetic investigation aims to explore the rational and affective, conscious and pre-reflective dimensions of a historical temporal awareness, influenced by past sedimented meanings and by future expectations and desires. When Husserl comes up against the depth of personal existence, he inflects the ambit of phenomenology. “Finally, we have the phenomenology of monadic individuality, and included in it, the phenomenology of a genesis integral to it, a genesis in which the unity of the monad arises, in which the monad is by becoming. ...By the phenomenology of genesis attending to original becoming in the temporal stream, which itself is an originally constituting becoming, and by attending to the so-called ‘motivations’ that functions genetically, a phenomenology of consciousness shows how consciousness arises out of consciousness” (Husserl 2001a, p. 639).

The dual dimension of phenomenology is nevertheless unified by a common project. Husserl mentions the notion of the “leading clue” (Husserl 2001a, p. 633) to describe the constant dynamic and connection between the static and genetic methods. The two methods are mutually integrative and do not function exclusively in separation. That is to say, descriptive research throws up clues that lead to genetic phenomenology when this is located at the individual level of self. Certain eidetic knowledges, elaborated and typified, about the general structures of experience, may be applied to particular cases. Genetic research, for its part, can also produce clues leading to static phenomenology; by articulating eidetic knowledge at the individual level, it stimulates

further questions and new research possibilities. Our purpose is to adapt Husserl's static and genetic methods to the context of existential psychotherapy. However, the static and the genetic dimensions of phenomenology don't entail only a methodological scope, rather it presupposes theoretical underpinnings. Therefore, we will start to present some issues regarding the static method. Secondly, we will proceed by presenting several theoretical aspects linked to the genetic phenomenology.

STATIC PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology sprang from a double project: to present a method suitable for the study of mental processes and, in parallel, to deepen some philosophical principles that would establish a renewed scientific paradigm. Phenomenology, bases its project, in part, as *phenomenological psychology*. It is this particular aspect that most interests us. The fundamental principle required for any understanding of the object of study of phenomenological psychology is the concept of intentionality. Its *object of study* is *intentional experience*, or the *meaning of human experience*. In adopting the concept of intentionality, psychologists are not limited to understanding the psychic phenomenon, as something exclusively mental, although the objective is to study human consciousness. Husserl stressed that all consciousness is consciousness *of* something. Acts of consciousness such as perception, imagination, memory and hallucination, are intentional as they direct themselves, or *aim toward*, an object—the intentional object. If consciousness has *real* elements that are in an empirical domain, it also has *ideal* elements that with their dimension of meaning exceeding the spatial-temporal dimension, the empirical contingency. It is the intentional component of consciousness that places its object of study, the intentional experience, at the level of sense and meaning. “Whatever becomes accessible to us through reflection has a noteworthy general character: that of being consciousness *of* something, of having something as an object of consciousness, or to be aware of it correlatively—we are speaking here of intentionality. This is the essential character of mental life in the full sense of the word, and is thus inseparable of it” (Husserl 1997, p. 217). Husserl highlighted that one does not love, hate, hallucinate, perceive, imagine or simply recall, but one loves someone, one hates something, one hallucinates on something, one perceives an object, one imagines a wish or recalls a past achievement.

So, it is of crucial importance to understand that phenomenological analysis seeks to study in parallel the object and the subject implied within an act of consciousness. The concept of Husserlian intentionality implies that the intentional object cannot be analyzed correctly, without its subjective correlate, the act of intentional consciousness. One cannot be studied or analyzed, without the other. Phenomenological considers, for example, in a perception, the act of intentional subjectivity—that of perceiving—and the object to which the act of consciousness of perceiving is directed (in this case, this text that I am now reading, the object *while* perceived). Neither the intentional object, nor the intentional act, may be separately understood. This is valid even when the object does not, or no longer exists. Intentional consciousness may involve non-existent objects. Obviously, this does not suggest that one accepts the existence of non-real objects; however, the intentional acts have the capacity of targeting objects even when the referent no longer exists (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008). Husserl also added that intentional relations are always lived in a perspectival context. We are not only aware of a determined object, we are aware of an object in a particular manner. The intentional object is presented to consciousness from a determined way and involved in a specific context. Consider, for example, the computer on which this text is being written. The computer is never given in its totality, always in or from a perspective, and one may be changed substantially in each intentional act. The mode of the object's appearing to me and to consciousness may be distinct. Not only may I not perceive the computer as a whole but always from a perspective (in front, behind, from above, etc.), such that it may be given different meanings according to each new or different perspective. I may, for example, be annoyed, since the computer represents a space of work for me, when I would prefer to be engaging in a more leisurely activity, or on the contrary, be glad that a particular piece of work is about to be completed. I may be in a state of anticipation or expectation in waiting for an urgent reply by e-mail, or experiencing pleasure due to the fact that the computer has an aesthetically modern design. It may evoke a particular concern, given that the computer will bear subsequent financial running costs, as this been a common experience with other computers. There is an intrinsic relationship, namely that between the subjective act and the intentional act that allows a constituting of the meaning of an experience; in Husserl, the *intentional experience*.

The Static Method

The static method includes five steps: the *époché*, the phenomenological reduction, the description, the eidetic analysis, and inter-subjective results. To the therapeutic process, the first four dimensions are the ones important. The last one is out of the scope of this text, since is specifically important to the validation of qualitative research (Sousa 2014).

Epoché

Essentially *epoché* means to put in brackets, suspend the belief of natural attitude. In order to analyze human experience, we must abstain ourselves from considering the factual and empirical dimension of natural reality, so as to concentrate ourselves exclusively on what is given to consciousness, *such as it is presented* to consciousness. It does not deal with denying the world, natural reality, to doubt or enter in some mystical process of negation of objects and situations, but rather develops systematically, an attitude that makes explicitly the intentional mental processes. “The purpose of the epoché is not to doubt, neglect, abandon, or exclude reality from consideration; rather the aim is to suspend or neutralize a certain dogmatic *attitude* towards reality, thereby allowing us to focus more narrowly and directly on reality as it is given—how it makes its appearance to us in experience. In short, the epoché entails a change of attitude towards reality, and not an exclusion of reality” (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, p. 23). It is important to stress that the *epoché* is not a methodological step achieved in one moment. Many authors have speculated on the possibility of practicing the *epoché*, and of applying it. It is a methodological instrument that helps the therapist to centre himself on his object of study, seeking to avoid the bias of the naturalist vision. The crucial aspect of it is in excluding empirical dogmatism and the belief in a natural attitude. In the same way, any previously acquired knowledge about the kind of experience being described by the other is initially suspended. Obviously, it is not strictly true to say that the therapist is set free forever from his preconceived opinions. However, he may throughout the process of learning promote a critical exercise that permits him to recognize the bias of the descriptions that he is analyzing being influenced by previous theoretical constructs. Likewise, it does not imply a turn “inwards” of the subject, nor an exclusive concentration on the subjectivity of personal vision. Contrarily, the intentional experience cannot be understood in merely mental terms, the *epoché* is a tool that

makes possible a more lucid and clarifying approach, in the form of how experiences are perceived by the person.

Psychological-Phenomenological Reduction

The second step of the method is the *psychological-phenomenological reduction*. The *epoché* and phenomenological reduction may be understood as two methodological instruments, used in parallel. “Whereas the purpose of the *epoché* is to suspend or bracket a certain natural attitude towards the world thereby allowing us to focus on the modes or ways in which things appear to us, the aim of the phenomenological reduction is to analyze the correlation interdependence between specific structures of subjectivity and specific modes of appearance or givenness” (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, p. 25). How can we understand this for the practice of psychotherapy? The main aspect is that the use of both the *epoché* and the phenomenological reduction allows the therapist to truly focus on the lived experience of the other. It is very hard to listen to other person and try to really capture the experience of the person that is describing his experiences. The static method is of great value for the therapist develops a kind of awareness focused on the other. Husserl considered the phenomenological reduction a central tool for the psychologist (Husserl 1998). The reduction used by the therapist, shall be in accordance with the reduction that Husserl designated as *psychological-phenomenological reduction*, not making use of a subsequent methodological step, the transcendental reduction: “Thus in order to attain the pure and actual subject matter of the required ‘descriptive psychology’, a fully consciously practiced method is required which I call the *phenomenological-psychological reduction*—taken in this context as a method for psychology” (Husserl 1970, p. 236). The *epoché* and phenomenological reduction do not imply an emptying of the *self* or of our past knowledge. The phenomenological reduction is a task for a critical consciousness, a methodological instrument, that seeks to reveal human experiences such as it are presented in a given situation.

Descriptions

The *phenomenological description* intends to avoid the explanation of a determined phenomenon by means of external factors to this, limiting itself to the phenomenon such as it is *given*. The description already

contains in itself, intrinsically, an understanding of the phenomenon. However, a good description is that one that describes the events with the greatest detail as is possible; including the cognitive emotion lived by the subject. The objective is to return with the greatest fidelity possible on the experience as lived, and such as it is lived at the moment in which it occurs. This descriptive methodological indication sometimes is neglected by therapists. The capacity of analyzing evidence in a descriptive way is something that calls for specific training, a considerable degree of aptitude, of self-critical capacity, such that it deepens the competencies of descriptive analysis (Spiegelberg 1994). The phenomenological description does not presuppose the simple acceptance of evidence uncritically rather they need to be carefully vetted by the trained eyes of the therapist. It is essential to highlight that, one of the fundamental reasons for Husserl stressing the need to describe intentional acts is linked to the fact that not all have the same cognitive value.

Eidetic Analysis

The fourth element of the phenomenological method is the *eidetic analysis—imaginative free variation*. Husserl stressed that is also possible to accede, through a conceptual analysis, to essential dimensions of the experiences. The eidetic reduction allows acceding dimensions, characteristics and properties that make a determined experience, which it is, leaving aside merely contingent factual variations. It is the aim to determine the essence of the experience, such as it appears to consciousness, be it a physical object, a perception, a sensation, or a lived situation. The objective is to identify the fundamental characteristics of the phenomenon, establishing, by way of a variative reflection, the particularities from which the phenomenon does not depend, to be such as it is. If, by removing the characteristics, the experience is no longer recognized, then that characteristic is considered essential. Should it not be prevalent, the characteristic is regarded as accidental, particular, and not fundamental for the *eidos*, for the essence of the phenomenon. The eidetic analysis in the scope of phenomenological psychology and psychotherapy is aimed at achieving synthesis of psychological meanings.

To sum up, the use of the static method applied to existential psychotherapy takes into account the following steps (Husserl 1970, 1997, 2001c):

1. *Epoché*, suspension of the natural attitude and previous knowledge;
2. *Phenomenological Reduction*, to centre upon the object such as it appears to consciousness and, on its subjectivity such that it experiences the intentional object such as it is lived;
3. *Descriptive*, phenomenological analysis implies a description of phenomena such as targeted by intentional consciousness;
4. *Eidetic Analysis*, permits through imaginative free variation, the elucidation of invariant structures, the essences, of the experiences.

GENETIC PHENOMENOLOGY

Between 1917 and 1921 Edmund Husserl developed what he called the *genetic-phenomenological method*, which would complement the *static-phenomenological method* and added an explanatory dimension to the descriptive static method: “In a certain way, we can therefore distinguish ‘explanatory’ phenomenology as a phenomenology of regulated genesis, and ‘descriptive’ phenomenology as a phenomenology of possible essential shapes (no matter how they have come to pass) in pure consciousness and their teleological ordering in the realm of possible reason under the headings, ‘object’ and ‘sense’. In my lectures, I did not say ‘descriptive’, but rather ‘static’ phenomenology ” (Husserl 2001a, p. 629).

The static method is characterized by its attempt to describe the way in which objects are manifested to consciousness, elaborating essential structures of experience which are expressed in eidetic dimensions, general and typified. The self is understood as defined and developed, without consideration of the cultural and historical context, or the meanings that have been temporally elaborated during the course of a unique personal development. Hence, the static method remains formal and abstract, seeking to investigate the type of procedures and acts of consciousness that are involved in the formation of meaning, but it is limitative as regards the origin of meaning and the genesis of the sense attributed to experience. As for the genetic method, this is directly connected to time consciousness theory, which Husserl began working on in 1893 and first demonstrated in his 1905 lectures. The crucial question is as follows: when the temporal dimension of consciousness is considered, the phenomenological method becomes “static”, as it excludes the factitious dimension of self, its personal and individual history, sedimented in layers of meaning, which are in part pre-reflective, non-thematic and anonymous to the self, but which nevertheless continue to influence its

experience of itself with the other and with the world. For Husserl, the self is never static, absolute and defined, but is rather situated in a *living present*. This means that the self extends uninterruptedly beyond the present moment, influenced by its past history and conditioned by its expectations (explicit or implicit) of the future. Intentional consciousness never *exists* only in the present moment; it inhabits the paradox of the here-and-now, which experiences its existence through a temporal flux which is simultaneously a being-here, a being-no-longer-here and a being-not-yet-there (Montavont 1999). Husserl uses the term “person” in relation to this facticity, a process of becoming, which constitutes time and is constituted in time, the centre of a surrounding world (Husserl 1989). Person and world are inseparably interrelated. As we shall see, the genetic method plumbs the depths of facticity of existence, assuming that the self has a cluster of abilities and characteristics, habits sedimented throughout its experiential process, which are not immediately accessible but which passively influence the person’s action. Each experience has a deep temporally constituted dimension which only the genetic method can explore (Donohoe 2004). The process of genetic-phenomenological analysis will in part be a distillation of the sedimented layers of meaning that intersubjectively constitutes the subject’s personality and his experiential horizons. From that interrelational context from which human existence derives, there may emerge conflicts, existential tensions and traumatic processes, for their part sedimented in dissociative processes that operate at the pre-reflective level (Spinelli 1997; Stolorow 2007). Existential psychotherapy’s work of clarification focuses upon the anguish and dissociative processes that form part of the being-in-the-world (Spinelli 1997). There are three main aspects to the rationale underlying the genetic-phenomenological applied to existential psychotherapy: inner time-consciousness theory, the experiential self and the theory of passive geneses. This theoretical structure will be framed by the method of genetic-phenomenological analysis, which will in turn be complemented by other concepts. In short, the aim is to present a theory based upon existential phenomenological psychology which has repercussions for existential psychotherapy (i.e., upon the phenomenological conception of self; the constitution of passive geneses which form the existential ground of the person; the way in which the person’s interaction with the surrounding world not only contributes to development of personal identity but may also open up the possibility of psychological disturbances resulting from traumatic processes between the sedimentations of self and the experiences gleaned in the surrounding world).

Inner Time-Consciousness Theory

Husserl considered inner time-consciousness theory to be the cornerstone of the theoretical edifice of phenomenology (Husserl 1977). It reflects and expresses the fundamental aim of the phenomenological project: to understand how subjectivity can manifest itself, how it is a *constituent* of beings in the world and how it *is constituted* to itself. Husserl wondered how consciousness perceives an object with temporal extension, such as a melody, but also asked how consciousness has manifested itself (Husserl 1994, p. 56). According to him, it would be impossible to perceive objects with temporal extension if consciousness could only apprehend the “now” moment of the object and if the stream of consciousness were no more than the sum of a series of unconnected “nows” (Zahavi 1999). To explain the apprehension of temporal objects, and situations involving changes and successions, three technical terms are used: *primordial impression*, *retention* and *protention*. Let us consider a sequence of three sounds making up a melody. When the first sound is heard (the now moment of the object), the *primordial impression* is activated. This never occurs in isolation, as that would not enable the object’s temporality to be perceived; thus, it is always accompanied by a *retention* (i.e., of the moment-just-passed), which allows access to the moment it dives into the past. Simultaneously, *protention* is a more-or-less undefined form that intuits the moment that is about to happen. Consciousness perceives temporal objects “in blocs”, in a three-part dynamic temporal structure in which the temporal phases (past, present and future) of the object are presentified “together” in a concentrated form. Thus, in inner time consciousness, retention and protention are not past or future in relation to the primordial impression but presented together with it. Retention and protention should, however, be distinguished from thematic recollection and expectation. The former are passive activities that occur without any intentional action on the part of the subject; that is to say, there is no active contribution from the consciousness. Thematic recollection and expectation, on the other hand, are independent intentional acts that depend at least in part upon the subject’s actions, i.e., they are voluntary (Merleau-Ponty 2002).

The primordial impression—retention—protention structure is constantly being updated and altered in the stream of consciousness. Each new retention is always retention of the previous primordial impression and of the primordial impression that preceded that. As time passes, objects and the experience of them lose qualities and definition.

Retentions gradually weaken until they eventually become imperceptible (Husserl 1994; Zahavi 1999, 2005; Bernet et al. 1993). The crucial question from the psychological point of view is that *the example of sound may be extended to any kind of experience lived in the first-person perspective*. What is given in the self in “living flesh” (Husserl 2001a, p. 217) undergoes a transformation during the continuous retentive process in the stream of consciousness. It is successively relegated to the past, so that the continuous emergence of new primordial impressions occurs inseparably from a retentive transformation.

Manifestation of Subjectivity and Temporality

For Husserl, inner time-consciousness theory had a much more important aim than merely explaining the perception of temporal objects. It had to do with the very manifestation of subjectivity (Zahavi 1999). Therefore it is important to mention the concept of *double intentionality: transversal intentionality (Querintentionalität) and longitudinal intentionality (Längsintentionalität)* (Husserl 1994). Let us go back to the example of the melody. When we hear a sound, an intentional act occurs, enabling an intentional object, different from consciousness, to manifest itself. The act is intentional because it allows the manifestation of something different from itself, but at the same time the act is also manifested to itself. This is therefore a double intentionality, in which the object is given by means of the act which, as well as manifesting the intentional object, also manifests itself: “from the last explanations, we can give the following response: there is a single unique flow of consciousness which constitutes the temporal unity immanent in the sound, and at the same time, the very unity of the flow of consciousness” (Husserl 1994, p. 107). There are two intentionalities that are inseparably united and intertwined, effectively two sides of the same coin. The intentional act and the stream of consciousness are integral inseparable parts (Mohanty 2008). Each retention implies a double intentionality. The intentional act is called the transversal intentionality of retention. The intentionality of retentions (that is, the flow of consciousness itself) is called longitudinal intentionality. This is not a supplementary retention that is added to the retention of sounds. If it were, this would imply infinite regression. As well as being intentional and making possible the manifestation of something different from itself (the intentional object),

the act is characterized by an “inner consciousness”, in the sense that it is manifested to itself (Husserl 1994). For Zahavi, one of the crucial questions arising from a correct interpretation of double intentionality is that *inner time-consciousness is the pre-reflective consciousness of acts of consciousness and lived experiences* (Zahavi 1999, p. 71). As Sartre also mentioned, inner time-consciousness theory is the most appropriate place for understanding Husserl’s explanation of the pre-reflective structure of consciousness (Sartre 1994b). The stream of temporal awareness is the name given to a pre-reflective consciousness, which is not an intentional act, an internal object or temporal unity, but rather a basic permanent dimension of human consciousness (Husserl 1989). Experiences become the object for consciousness only when reflexivity is introduced; for Husserl, the object is at this point transcendental in relation to consciousness, i.e., there exists a *difference* between the object and intentional consciousness. The flux of consciousness and intentional acts are not two distinct flows but two different ways of manifesting a single stream.

Pre-reflective Consciousness and Temporal Identity

It is important to remember that retentive pre-reflective consciousness is a modification, in the sense that, when the primordial impression becomes retention, we are not only before the object as it was given (for example, the melody), but as it was *experienced* (Zahavi 2003). Effectively, the *stream of consciousness of retentions and protentions form a chain of experiences* that transcend natural givens; they are not experienced neutrally in their crude form (Rodemeyer 2003). Therefore, Husserl’s theory demonstrates how all experience is constituted in temporal awareness, a consciousness that is not thematic and which is the province of a non-objectified self. Every experience is retained in the stream of consciousness, even when it is not constituted as a reflective object or instituted in objective time, forming a backdrop that constitutes the experiential horizon. Longitudinal intentionality anchors subjectivity, as Merleau-Ponty pointed out; retentions and protentions are intentionalities that fasten subjectivity to its surroundings (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Through time awareness, the pre-objectified self is continuously and uninterruptedly lived in a multiplicity of experiences that are constantly being updated in the retentive chain, while

it nevertheless recognizes itself pre-reflectively as the same over time, despite the changes. Consciousness is a stream of lived experiences, in other words, a flowing manifold. But these many different types of lived experiences are all known to me as “my experiences”. Through their all belonging to “me”, these experiences all belong together, and thus they form a unity. This synthetic unity of the diversity of the *stream of lived experiences* is, according to Husserl, temporality (Held 2003). In this sense, *inner-time consciousness is the primordial space for the constitution of identity*. There is unity, a flow of consciousness, a self, a personality (Husserl 1989).

Husserl’s concept of inner time-consciousness is a theory about the notion of a basic identity established in time, where the lived present is an opening, a present in depth, *ek-static*, which enables the experiences of subjectivity and the constitution of selfhood to be scrutinized. Time consciousness is the basis of selfhood, meaning and reason (Merleau-Ponty 2002). *The temporality of consciousness enables the experiential world of subjectivity to be analyzed*. If time is the thread with which the personal narrative is woven, it is understandable that the dynamic structure of temporal awareness is affected by the presence of existential tensions and psychological disturbances. Stolorow and his colleagues imported phenomenology to psychoanalysis and, over the course of several decades, developed the notion of “dynamic intersubjective fields”, which presupposes a focus on affectivity in human experience and considers it to be both regulated and compromised by relational systems (Stolorow 2007). This idea was always central in existential psychotherapy, which “assumes that all reflections upon our lived experience reveal that existence is relationally-derived” (Spinelli 1997, p. 96). What Stolorow means is that the presence of emotional trauma in the human experience seriously compromises the *ek-static* unity of temporal existence (Stolorow 2007). Traumatic experience causes the temporal awareness of the past to congeal in the present, so that one remains captive there or returns constantly to it, while the future loses significance. The line of flux of temporal awareness collapses, which means that clinical dissociation may be understood in terms of a disorganization of personal meaning sustained by temporality (Stolorow 2007). The dynamic structure of temporal awareness will necessarily have to be considered from the therapeutic perspective when there are dissociative processes arising out of existential tensions and conflicts.

Experiential Selfhood

While recognizing that it is reductive to work with only one notion of self (the term is multi-faceted), Zahavi, basing himself on classical names from phenomenology such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, suggests that there is an “*experiential dimension of selfhood*” (Zahavi 2007, 2005). This is a basic form of selfhood, a core self (the ‘experiential self’) which precedes and underpins the narrative self (or, if we prefer, the constitution of personal identity). *The fundamental question of the phenomenological theory of pre-reflective consciousness is that, in an experiential dimension, all and any experience in a first-person perspective immediately implies a basic awareness of self* (Husserl 1994; Heidegger 1988; Sartre 1994b; Merleau-Ponty 2002). In order to gain access to a *core self*, it is necessary to investigate experiences lived in the first person. For example, when I perceive an object, experience an emotion, recall a past event or bring forth a thought, I simultaneously have a basic pre-reflective awareness of myself. To be self-aware is to have first-person experiences that are characterized by the quality of being *mine*. The basic dimension of human existence and the constitution of self does not take place in opposition to the stream of consciousness or separately from it; on the contrary, the core self is submerged in the experiential world, i.e., in the experiential flow of temporal awareness. Thus, self-understanding implies an investigation into the experiential interaction between the self and the world, which is clearly the main aim of existential psychotherapy. The experiential self is the conceptual articulation of the being-in-the-world: “It is possible to identify this pre-reflective sense of mineness with a minimal, or core, sense of self In other words, the idea is to link an experiential sense of self to the particular first-person givenness that characterizes our experiential life; it is the first-personal givenness that constitutes the *mineness* or *ipseity* of experience. (...) To be self-aware is not to interrupt the experiential interactions with the world in order to turn the gaze inward; on the contrary, self awareness is always the self-awareness of a world—immersed self” (Zahavi 2005, pp. 125, 126).

As Sartre points out, if I feel pleasure, I am aware of feeling pleasure; the experience of pleasure does not exist first, to which the awareness of feeling pleasure is later added. Pleasure is awareness of feeling pleasure. The way of being of subjectivity is to be aware (Sartre 1994b). “For the law of being in the knowing subject is *to-be-conscious*” (Sartre 1943,

p. 17). Perceiving a table is not a matter of affirming that the table exists in itself, but that it exists for *me* (Sartre 1943). The awareness of an object is simultaneously a pre-reflective consciousness, a non-positional consciousness (Sartre 1943). For Sartre, this basic selfhood does not yet mean self-awareness. It is necessary to distinguish between pre-reflective consciousness, and reflective consciousness, which is now self-knowledge (Sartre 1943). We will see below that, for Husserl, intersubjectivity is constitutional; but here what matters is the fact that any experience lived in the first person is totally exclusive and unique. “But this unique distinctive character is clear, consisting in this, that an all-inclusive synthesis pervades the streaming of lived experiences and all existence synthetically constituted in them as persisting, an all inclusive synthesis by means of which even unreflectedly I am constantly a pole of identity in relation to which everything else is ‘objective’” (Husserl 1977, p. 208). Merleau-Ponty also indicated that through temporality there arises *selfhood*; that is to say, consciousness always maintains a relationship of itself for itself (Merleau-Ponty 2002). If there are qualitative differences in the way experiences are lived, there is a quality that remains unaltered—the fact that the experiences are *mine* (Heidegger 1962). Along similar lines, Heidegger understands that the essence of *Dasein* lies in the existence that is characterized by a *being of mine*. The *Dasein* is unveiled in and through facticity, a being thrown into the world, with a pre-comprehension and an intrinsic connection to himself, prior to any interpretative movement: “We are ourselves the entities to be analyzed. The Being of any such entity *is in each case mine*. Because *Dasein* has *in each case mineness* (Jemeinigkeit), one must always use a personal pronoun when one address it: ‘I am’, ‘you are’. Furthermore, in each case *Dasein* is mine to be in one way or another” (Heidegger 1962, p. 67).

Experiential Self—“Streaming” and “Standing”

Experiences lived in the first-person perspective *are* in inner time consciousness in a non-thematic position, submerged in a horizon of potential and possibilities (Held 2003). The self of inner time consciousness is primordial and originary, as it slips through the retentive chain of consciousness, although remaining constantly self-aware. At a deep dimension of self, *streaming* and *standing* are one and the same inner

time-consciousness (Held 2003). This gives rise to the paradox of the person that knows himself and recognizes himself as the same subjectivity over time, but who simultaneously identifies with a multiplicity of different experiences, and who is in constant change (Husserl 1989). This is what Husserl called the “living present” (Husserl 1970). Although the self lives constantly in a chain of experiences that go on throughout life, and cannot be identified outside that flow, the self given in the first-person perspective is at the same time an *invariant* dimension that is maintained throughout the multiplicity of experiences (Zahavi 2005). As stated: “through this pre-objective self-identification, my primordial ego, on the one hand is something unchanging, that is, it is standing and remaining; on the other hand, through this pre-objective self-distancing, it is some-thing living and streaming, that is, something that can become something different in comparison to what it was before. Thus my ego, in its deepest dimension, is a living being, wherein ‘standing’ and ‘streaming’ are one” (Held 2003, p. 47). At this level, it is not a matter of the subject’s transparency to himself, or of a reflective process of construction of self-knowledge (Zahavi 2003). The crucial aspect is the direct connection between the phenomena experienced and the first-person perspective, in which there already exists a primordial non-thematic pre-objective dimension of self. Nothing can be present to the self if it is not self-aware. The experiential self may constitute itself as a person, construct its personal identity through language and narrative processes—above all, as we shall see, through the intersubjective space and relational networks—but the experiential self is a base structure of consciousness that precedes any narrative dimension (Zahavi 2007). From the psychological point of view, what is important is that the experiential self cannot be understood or considered independently of its connection with the world. The self is, in first place, present in the experiential life, intrinsically connected to the other and to the world. The experiential self, as it is defined by phenomenologists, is similarly conceptualized in existential—phenomenological psychotherapy, which considers an irreducible *grounding of relatedness* (Spinelli 2007, p. 12) as the first principle of self: “phenomenologically influenced perspectives on the self begin by asserting its indissoluble and indivisible *interrelational grounding*. Nothing meaningful can be stated or experienced about ‘self’ without an implicit reliance upon the self’s interrelational placement *in the world*” (Spinelli 2001, p. 41).

Phenomenology of Passivity: The Depths of Facticity

Following Husserl, it is possible to go one step deeper to understand the meaning that is present in the background of lived experiences, which always contain a dimension that is veiled and obscure. Later, it will be important to distinguish the notion of self from the concept of person, a distinction that leads to an explanation of the intersubjective constitution of personal identity, thus enabling closer connections to be made with psychology and with psychotherapy. However, for Husserl, there are also intrinsic motivations belonging to each subject, which are veiled, hidden, and are not immediately accessible. These are what Husserl considered to be a backdrop of experiences that the self does not immediately understand, but which nevertheless continue to “knock on the door of consciousness” (Husserl 1989, p. 105). These are geneses of meaning that have been established passively, without the participation of the active self, and which have gradually formed *sedimentations and habits* that become part of the subject’s history and influence his experience. Research using the genetic method acquires pertinence when the aim is to understand not only the active self but to deal with the depth of passive experience that involves the development of the person, and his present and future expectations. The genetic method thus makes vertical connections between the basic self and a personal identity, and between progressive and regressive movements of *intentional motivations*. It also deals with multiple associations that occur in passive geneses in the dynamic structure of temporal consciousness, where the active self is not the main actor but nevertheless has an influence. Our starting point was inner time-consciousness theory; however, this on its own may be formal and abstract, as Husserl himself pointed out, if it is not directly related to the contents of facticity and the existential dimension of subjectivity that is always imbued with personal characteristics, memory and affectivity. It is in that connection, it is argued, that inner time-consciousness theory and passive geneses allow phenomenology to go beyond the descriptive mode to elaborate a theory of change and personal development, a theory which is concerned above all with the constitution of a personality or personal identity that can be applied to psychology and psychotherapy. See, for example, the lectures on phenomenological psychology that he gave in Freiburg in 1925, in which he refers to passive geneses as an integral part of the constitutions of personality, to the necessary connection between time consciousness and facticity, and how the collapse of certain

personal assumptions may bring about radical changes in the subject: “As regards the psychic life of the lower passive levels, it is everywhere the presupposition for personality” (Husserl 1977, p. 100). “However, the psyche is not just streaming life, but a life in which, inevitably, distinctive new unities, habitualities are constituted, that is, the passive and active abilities, abilities of perception, abilities of feeling, abilities of memory, intellectual abilities etc. (...) personal characteristics which are variable and in fact never resting, and which eventually, in a collapse, can change totally; among them are the strictly so-called character traits; the unity of mental individuality which persists even through character changes, permeates all that” (Husserl 1977, p. 107).

Active and Passive Self

Already in *Ideas II*, Husserl refers to the free self that decides and acts, but mentions that this active self is only one dimension of existence; a great deal of personal experience involves a passive self. Even when the self is active, part of it is only passively active. Husserl clearly states at various points in his oeuvre that, even in a hidden dimension, the self *is not* a nothing (Husserl 1977, 1989). Investigating the geneses of meaning throughout the process of personal development implies considering the way the self is in constant contact with what Husserl calls *hyle* (Depraz 2001) (i.e., all the sensorial givens of experience, such as “instincts”, sensations like pleasure or pain, various types of feelings, well-being and illness, all of which form part of the passive dimension of the experience of self and influences it, even before being thematized) (Husserl 1989). When dealing with the relationship between the experiential self and the constitution of a personal identity, it will be seen that the self is the starting point for personal growth; despite always involving a passive dimension, it nevertheless exerts “self-preservation” (Husserl 1989, p. 265) and therefore does not cease to be an active agent. The self exerts functions, develops particular competences and has intrinsic motivations; in short, it is the centre of the faculties. For Husserl, this is only one dimension of self—that of *practical reason* (Husserl 2001b). However, even rational dispositions are influenced by passive moods (Husserl 1989). Thus, it is important to highlight a crucial point: the self is constantly and simultaneously active and passive; the sediments of ways of being and habits acquired are intertwined with the free will of subjectivity. Following the notions of the active and passive self, three central aspects may be

identified with regard to Husserl's notion of passive geneses: there are active geneses that occur with the participation of the self and in rational cognitive acts; there is a dimension of passive geneses that promote a mutual influence between the active and passive selves, forming a bridge between passive and active geneses; finally, there is a dimension that is totally passive, in which associative networks of meaning creation occur without the active participation of the self (Husserl 2001a; Steinbock 1995). The space of pure passivity is that of "primordial constitution", because this occurs *prior* to a rational and thematic constitution on the part of the subject.

Passive "Unconscious" Geneses

If we accompany Husserl in his elaboration of the genetic method and its application in the analysis of the depth of temporal facticity, the active self and passive self, we enter into the domain of passive geneses which transport phenomenology to the unconscious dimension. "Thus, our considerations concern a phenomenology of the so-called unconscious" (Husserl 2001a, p. 201). Let us look at this in parts. The world of passivity leads to an obscure, latent, hidden dimension that is veiled from temporal awareness. The point to be stressed is not to sustain Husserl's "nil of vivacity" means the same of Freud's unconscious. Although Husserl referred several times to a recondite and anonymous dimension of self, a deep part of existence that is not immediately accessible, he always did so cautiously, placing the word in brackets, or using hedging devices such as "what was then called the unconscious" so that the reader could distinguish his own specific approach. But the aim here is not to set up a dialogue between Husserl and Freud, nor to clarify the differences between their theories. The aim is to make explicit the theory of Husserl's passive geneses, how this directly connects with inner time-consciousness theory and with the pre-reflective dimension of self, and how these together may offer an important contribution to existential phenomenological psychology.

The theory of passive geneses may extend the horizons of phenomenology and consequently to existential psychotherapy, as other authors have done it. For example, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty have all considered the covert dimension of human existence. Heidegger mentioned that *Dasein* is not only ontologically distant from itself, for even at the ontic level it is hidden (Heidegger 1962). Sartre claims

that consciousness affects itself pre-reflectively even in bad faith (Sartre 1943). As for Merleau-Ponty, connected the aims of psychoanalysis with the phenomenological method, linking them with the notion that “all human acts have a meaning” (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p. 184). Later, he would claim that, although psychoanalysis and phenomenology had not followed parallel paths, they both pointed to the notion of *latency* (Merleau-Ponty 1982, p. 71). However, an attentive reading of Husserl’s theory of passivity and concepts associated with it suggest that it is closer to a psychological language of phenomenological psychology, and therefore may be linked to existential psychotherapy.

Affective Zero-Consciousness

The primordial laws of the constitution of geneses, of their associative motivational laws, originate in inner time-consciousness (Husserl 2001a). As we have seen, all retention is always retention of a lived experience. A primordial impression occurs simultaneously with a transformation in the retentional chain and each retention is relegated further back into the past, implying that each experience included in a retention will gradually lose more of its “force”. “Continuous retentional modification proceeds up to an essentially necessary *limit*. That is to say: with this intentional modification there goes hand in hand a *gradual diminution of prominence*; and precisely this has its limit, at which the formerly prominent subsides into *universal substratum*—the so-called “unconscious”, which, far from being a phenomenological nothing, is itself a limit-mode of consciousness (Husserl 2001a, p. 217). Husserl describes the uninterrupted process of transformation of the retentional chain as a “clouding over” process (Husserl 2001a, p. 217) in which all experiences that are initially a primordial impression gradually lose their clarity, traces and salient features, causing their affective force to diminish. From the psychological point of view, it is fundamental to grasp not only the connection between lived experiences and time consciousness, but also that the retentions that gradually lose their salience are relegated to the “nil of the vivacity of consciousness”, or to a space of “affective zero-consciousness”. This passive dimension of consciousness is not a nothing of psychological life; the retentions of inner time-consciousness do not disappear. On the contrary, they form the subsoil, the background of lived experiences, which are permanently present as an experiential atmosphere of subjectivity. “This gradation is also what determines a

certain concept of consciousness and degrees of consciousness and the opposition to the unconscious in the appropriate sense. The later designates the nil of this vivacity of consciousness and, as will be shown, is in no way a nothing” (Husserl 2001a, p. 216). Inner time-consciousness is the place of constant genesis; the meanings created by the self have a history. For Husserl, temporal awareness is a constant becoming (Husserl 2001a). Passivity is a subsoil that is being constituted throughout a person’s development, a space for the creation of a cluster of personality features, of more or less sedimented habits, which are sometimes present in a totally passive and obscure form, but which nevertheless play a role in the being of subjectivity. One of the main aims of genetic analysis is to explain the constitution of meanings that were sedimented throughout the different phases of development, which Husserl calls *habitus*, meanings that are in part not immediately accessible to the self.

In short, genetic-phenomenological analysis proceeds from the assumption that the self does not have access to all the perspectives of lived experiences. Some are superimposed on others and some are sometimes more prominent than others, for reasons not immediately apprehended, while others are vague or peripheral, transformed or distorted in the retentive process, or, as we shall see below, by associative processes. The analysis of passive geneses places phenomenology before the deep life of the subjectivity (Steinbock 1995). Having arrived at this point, it now becomes possible to delineate a preliminary contribution to the question raised above concerning the way the self can collapse, a collapse that may be manifested in multiple ways. In the sphere of existential psychotherapy, Spinelli broaches the concept of *worlding* as an experiential process in which all subjectivity deals simultaneously with the ontological dimensions of existence and with the ontic strategies of being before the givens of existence (Spinelli 2007). Worlding also expresses how existence is a continuous process and in constant becoming, existence as it is projected outside itself. However, worlding-as-process necessarily has a structure that fuses into a worldview; i.e., the more or less rigid *sedimentations* that are gradually established along the personal development of the self, others and the world. This worldview includes the personal beliefs, self-vision, meanings, behavior, emotions and affectivity that the person has created in the interrelational space and upon which he bases himself when dealing with his existence. This worldview structure is complex but “attempts to maintain a structure that places greater value

upon the continuation of being rather than upon the cessation of being” (Spinelli 2007, p. 32).

This assumption is directly in line with the self-preservation that Husserl speaks of and which was mentioned above. But the connection is closer; the worldview and worlding enunciate a basic characteristic of the experiential self which has already been evoked here and which is present in the flow of temporal consciousness—a streaming and a standing. As we have seen, inner time-consciousness and passive geneses form a theory about the way sedimentations are formed and transform into habits, some more rigid than others, and which are constituted in the experiential self. The first principle of existential psychotherapy is that the self is grounded relatedness. For this reason, uncertainty and existential anguish are two dimensions of human existence which arise from this presupposition, as everything that is developed is lived in the uncertainty of the intersubjective space. Inevitably, there will be tensions and conflicts that arise from one’s own existential project, between worlding as process and the sedimentations of the worldview. These conflicts may result in different types of psychological manifestations and disturbances, and, in extreme cases, with the collapse of the self; according to the existential approach, tensions arise that are inherent to the experience of the givens of existence (Yalom 1980).

Phenomenology of Association, Intentional Motivations and Affective Allure

Husserl introduced the concept of *intentional motivation* as the essential law of personal self (Husserl 1989). In the world of subjectivities, of people, this implies intentional motivations, both intrinsic to each subject and intersubjectively between subjects. From the idiosyncratic perspective, there are motivations that are veiled from self knowledge, and which inclusively interconnect in “associative motivation networks”. These include sedimentations of cognitive acts, memories, and also apperceptions, non-thematized pre-reflective acts, sensorial acts, therefore a whole non-rational dimension of self. “By all means, there are hidden motivations. Even without our performing acts of belief, they enter into motivations. Examples of it are provided by the realm of *experience*, the infinitive field of motivations included in every perception, in memory, and (modified, however) in every phantasizing of a thing.”

Apprehensions of things and of thingly nexuses are “webs of motivation” (Husserl 1989, p. 236). Husserl considered phenomenology of association (Husserl 2001a) to be a continuation of inner time-consciousness theory (Husserl 2001a). Not only are associative processes transmitted between and through previously established sedimentations, the associative laws of intentional motivations occur *without* any conscientialization of self (Husserl 2001a). These networks of associative motivations occur in progressive and regressive movements, influencing each other mutually in such a way that past experiences may flow into future expectations or present action, just as pre-reflective expectations (protention actions) may influence sedimentations or acquired habits (Husserl 1989). Much phenomenology of association highlights the fact that associative trajectories take place in the sphere of passive geneses; they are not previously defined or reflectively elaborated upon by the self, yet nevertheless retain their influence on it, either by remaining in the passive sphere or by articulating influences between the passive and active self (Husserl 1977). Thus, a motivational association may arise in the consciousness through an “affective allure”: “By affection we understand the allure given to consciousness, the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego; it is a pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego; it is a pull that is relaxed when the ego turns toward it attentively, and progress from here” (Husserl 2001a, p. 196). Between thought and feelings, cognition and emotion, the self has various experiences that simultaneously exert an allure upon it. Affection presupposes a *prominence*, a *contrast*, for either cognitive or affective reasons. A lived experience produces an affection in the self, which for its part will imply a “relief” of that same allure when the self reacts to it. However (and this is a particularly important point from the psychological perspective), even when the self does *not* direct all its attention, even when the self is not totally active in relation to that experience, the affection may even diminish in force. As Husserl said, there is relief in the sense that the attraction provoked a genuine effect in the self, even when “it remains in the antechamber of the self” (Husserl 2001a, p. 215).

Associative Reactivation and Passive Geneses

Finally, three aspects need to be mentioned that are crucial for existential psychotherapy. Firstly, passive geneses may be *reactivated* even when they have lost affective force and are in zero consciousness. Secondly, the

importance of passive geneses does not have to do only with retentions (that is to say, with experiences of the past); equally important is research into protentions (i.e., passive expectations). Thirdly, all experiences lived in a particular stream of consciousness, in a particular self, influence each other mutually. This is one of the reasons why phenomenology of association gives particular importance to the phenomenological investigation of memory (Husserl 2001a). Phenomenology of association also connects the first point mentioned (i.e., that associative processes can provoke reactivations of experiences, even those that are occult). Husserl uses the term “awakening”, defined as follows: “by awakening we understand and distinguish two things: awakening something that is already given to consciousness as for itself, and the awakening of something that is concealed” (Husserl 2001a, p. 120). As we have seen, in first place, the primordial impressions that become retentions gradually lose prominence and are sedimented in zero consciousness. However, *what is sedimented is the original meaning of the lived experience*. Thus, an experience may be inactive in the consciousness but its meaning is implicit and is kept present, though in an occult form. Experiences of the lived present may reactivate retentions and passive geneses through an “associative awakening”. There are many reasons why a particular retention may be reactivated, and these may be both cognitive and rational, and emotive and pre-reflective (Husserl 2001a). What is more, the associative process does not follow previously defined routes; the reactivations may “touch upon” different sedimentations that were not initially interconnected (Husserl 2001a). Associative recollections, which include the retentions upon which they are based, should be distinguished from traditional memory (Drummond 2003). This question emphasizes the existence of an extensive horizon in the experience of self, which, passively, continues to permit the elaboration of associations between past experiences, or future expectations, at an implicit pre-reflective level. This hidden experiential sea, for its part, may be reactivated, though it is not possible to anticipate how that will happen or the form that it will take in particular situations that occur. We should also remember that everything that has been said about retention (and in fact Husserl gives particular importance to the exploration of memory networks), the laws of passive genesis and associative reactivation processes also apply to protentions. Indeed, protention is presented as having priority for the updating of present experience, and is the temporal foundation of intentionality (Rodemeyer 2003). It is obviously important for the psychotherapeutic process, for as we know,

the existential approach always emphasized the future dimension of lived experience and how this connects with and influences present experiences.

The Person

We have already plumbed the depths of the passive geneses of self. Now it is time to move upwards in the direction of Husserl's notion of the *person*. Inner time-consciousness, the experiential self and passive geneses form a theoretical triad that is fundamental for psychological and psychotherapeutic praxis. However, it would be incomplete if we did not consider the notion of the person, the relationship between the person and the other, and how the former is constituted intersubjectively. According to Husserl, intersubjectivity conditions must be fulfilled for a person to develop beyond basic selfhood (Husserl 1989). Basic ipseity implies growth and development in order to achieve the plenitude of a personal identity. The concept of person is phenomenologically and ontologically dependent on the experiential self (Zahavi 2005), but basic selfhood, while being a necessary condition, is not in itself enough to constitute a personal identity; it has to be developed within a social and cultural context, with the Other (Zahavi 1999). Genetic-phenomenological analysis involves describing and interpreting meanings that have become sedimented during the course of personal development, at its different phases, during its interaction with the family and with social and cultural environments. It also involves describing and making explicit expectations that are present in the associative networks of protention (Husserl 1989). In a surrounding world, the experiential self is situated as a basic ipseity that includes sensations, associations, passive geneses, and stimuli, which remain largely hidden, though they passively influence the activity of the active self, of the person. They influence its being-in-the-world, its thought, affectivity, behavior. The experiential self is the container of the obscure moods of the person (Husserl 1989). At the level of personal development, we not only consider a stream of abstract consciousness, or experiences flowing in the retentive chain (Husserl 1989, p. 290) but also the sedimented dispositions, traces of personality, affectivity, the meaning inherent in passive and active geneses and their idiosyncratic components as expressed through thought, the body, affectivity and the person's behavior. Genetic-phenomenological analysis has as its object of study the person, who has a history and a unique life. From the

psychological and psychotherapeutic point of view, it considers the connection between the experiential self and the person, knowing that it is in the presence of a unique subjectivity. The person is the object of exploration, containing within himself an experiential self, the core of the lived experience. There exists a continuous two-way flow between the experiential self and the surrounding world, i.e., a bidirectional influence that is dynamic and constant between the dimension of the self, the person and the intersubjective space of the surrounding world. The interconnection, hiatus, contrasts, oppositions, cracks between these two worlds that are both an integral part of the existential project result, or may result, in conflict or in the loss of adequate self-preservation. A dramatic change in one of these dimensions, in the self or in the world, will necessarily influence the other (Stolorow 2009).

However, psychological disturbance, and in extreme cases, the loss of meaning, occur in the intersubjective space and are the result of disruptive interrelational processes. The sedimentations which are at zero consciousness may spontaneously unleash a reactivation in the self as a consequence of a confrontation between aspects sedimented in the experiential self and the experiences of the surrounding world. As mentioned above, in the process of personal development, there will certainly be a place for the confrontation between the structural dimension of self based on sedimentations and the process of becoming, which is the characteristic dimension of being in the world. There is a continuous two-way flux between the “inner” world of the self and the “outer” world of the surrounding environment. A dramatic change in one of the systems influences the other. This existential tension is what I call *paradoxical reversibility*. Change is an intrinsic part of the human condition. The matter has to do with cognitive and emotional abilities and resilience that each person has, from one moment to the next, to deal with the affective forces of the self, together with the challenges that are raised in the interrelational space. Sartre mentions the restlessness that characterizes the fatality of consciousness becoming spontaneously anguished (Sartre 1994a). Suddenly, sometimes for no apparent reason, the consciousness will become anguished; it is as if that anguish were a possibility that is always there. At these moments, the introduction of phenomenological reduction is not a learned or intellectual operation, but rather a way of achieving a true and authentic connection as the mode of being. The existential conflict may arise from an impact that is produced in the self as a result of its interactions with the surrounding world, and which may unleash dissociative processes (Spinelli

2007). The dissociation may involve the different strategies that the self develops in response to the challenge raised to one of the sedimented dimensions: for example, the suppression, negation or redirecting of existential tension, which can be translated into false beliefs or behaviors that are not in tune with an authentic way of being. In extreme situations, the conflict may lead to the fragmentation of self, the loss or annihilation of the sense of being a person (Orange et al. 1997). The concept of reactivation mentioned by Husserl may be understood in two ways from the psychological and psychotherapeutic point of view. On the one hand, the reactivations of associative networks intertwine sedimented meanings which, when confronted with the thematic horizon of mundane experiences, may unleash existential anguish. On the other, that which is defined here as *reflexive reactivation* is a psychotherapeutic objective, in the sense that it seeks to phenomenologically investigate the constitution of meaning in passive geneses, which in turn may only happen in the sphere of a privileged interrelationship space.

The Other

For Husserl, the constitution of the person always occurs with another, never on one's own. Personhood is intersubjectively constituted (Zahavi 2005). The self is constituted and may achieve development and personal subjectivity in its relationship with others and in the surrounding world that is common to different people. People are given as co-subjectivities in interrelationship and not as objects opposed in themselves. They exist and develop in personal associative networks, based on the surrounding world, and address each other in relationships of mutual influence and understanding. Relationships of mutual understanding are here understood in a broad sense, as they may involve disagreements; however, what is fundamental is that the surrounding world is an intersubjective space of interpersonal motivations (intersubjective motivations) (Husserl 1989) and of communication between subjectivities (Husserl 1989). The space of the surrounding world gives an ontological dimension to the development of subjectivity, and the relationship between the self and the other is a necessary condition for personal construction.

The subject develops in the relationship with the other. Although the face-to-face encounter is an important dimension of intersubjectivity, and makes it possible for a subject to access the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of another subject, it is also clear that experiences are intrinsically

idiosyncratic. Through empathy I can access the experiences of another person, but that does not mean that I have access to exactly how that other person experiences them. As mentioned above, what distinguishes experience in the first-person perspective is that it has the quality of being intrinsically *mine*. In this sense, the other's perspective is totally inaccessible to me; I can have access to the other person's perspective only from the second- or third-person perspective. This difference, far from being a limitation or problem, is *constitutional* from the phenomenological point of view (Zahavi 2005). From the moment we gain access to the experience of the other, just as the other has access to his experiences in the first-person perspective, we are before the negation of alterity. Otherness will be dissipated. The intersubjective experience is never the same for two subjects, though it may be similar, and the appearance of a phenomenon to two subjects can never have the same fusional possibility as it has when two eyes belonging to the same subject observe a particular phenomenon (Zahavi 2005, 2007). This question does not mean that it is impossible to have access to the other, nor that we should confuse different types of access (first-person, second-person) with different types of certainty (Zahavi 2005). Different perspectives always have advantages and disadvantages and it is well-known that also in psychotherapy, this asymmetry is crucial to introduce alterity into a space which, at least in part, is also of development and knowledge. It is important to recognize two central aspects: firstly, there is a constitutional asymmetry between the first- and second-person perspectives (Zahavi 2005); secondly, the self may have access to the experiences of the other through a particular intentional experience that Husserl has written extensively about—empathy. As Husserl refers: “I can have a ‘direct’ experience of myself, and it is *only my intersubjective form of reality* that I cannot, in principle, experience. For that I need the mediation of empathy. I can experience others, but only through empathy. Their own content can be experienced only by themselves in ordinary *perceptio*. Likewise, my lived experiences are given to me directly, i.e., the lived experiences in their own content. But others’ lived experiences can be experienced by me only mediately, in empathy” (Husserl 1989, p. 210).

To access my intersubjective space, I need the other; it is through the mediation of empathy that, through the other, I experience myself intersubjectively as a person. The self may in fact develop selfhood and constitute its personal identity, but that *project* is realized through interaction with the other in the space of the surrounding world, i.e.,

intersubjectively. My personality is constitutively inseparable from the interrelational space; existence cannot be apprehended exclusively through individuality. Although I have my own experience, in the first-person perspective, as totality—and the body plays a crucial role here—it is the other that I apprehend in first place as another, as a human being, and only at a second moment do I apprehend myself as a total person (Merleau-Ponty 2002). When I experience the other experiencing me as an other for him, when I live an experience in which the other can experience me as I can experience myself, there occurs a fundamental change and I apprehend myself as a person. Once more we should point out that personality is, according to Husserl, constituted intersubjectively. In fact, for the author, it is particularly relevant when my own experience is mediated by another and when I experience another having the experience of me (Zahavi 2005). A quotation from Zahavi is crucial to understand the pertinence of this point in the psychotherapeutic context: “Husserl elaborates this idea in his description of a special kind of experience of the Other, namely, the situation in which I experience the Other as experiencing myself. This ‘original reciprocal coexistence,’ where my indirect experience of an Other coincides with my self-experience, can be described as a situation where I see myself through the eyes of the Other” (Zahavi 1999, p. 160).

What is suggested is that this understanding of a type of particular experience with another has a direct resonance with the way the existential phenomenological psychotherapist conceptualizes the space of the therapeutic relationship as a *human encounter* (Spinelli 1997). For Spinelli, in that space, it is not the intervention techniques that are crucial but rather “*being with* the person” (considering the person’s way of being as valid and with its own meaning), and “*being for* the person” (the attempt to understand the person’s way of being in the sense of clarifying his beliefs, values, sedimentations, dissociations, etc.) (Spinelli 2007). The therapist provides the person with a particular experience of an “other,” who, representing all others and the world, simultaneously offers the person the possibility of rethinking and reliving his being-in-the-world emotionally in a safe environment.

Alterity in the Self: Temporality, Corporality and Reflexivity

Temporality

The question to be highlighted here is that there exist three conditions of human experience that promote the constitution of an inner alterity

in the self: the temporal, the corporal and the reflective (Zahavi 2004, 2005). The possibility of gaining access to the intersubjective context, to the self of another, is something that makes part of the intrinsic structure of consciousness (Rodemeyer 2003). We shall not here repeat the arguments relating to *temporality*. Husserl's inner time-consciousness, expressed as the dynamic structure of primordial impression, retention and protention, places temporal consciousness in a constant dialectic between presences and absences. Temporal awareness is always beyond itself, projected in becoming. Consciousness never totally coincides with itself, for the temporal structure always leads to a time lapse in relation to itself. As Merleau-Ponty points out, the temporal structure of consciousness breaks the total coincidence in itself, draws the possibility of perspective and introduces the non-being of subjectivity (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Temporality is certainly the possibility of relating itself to itself, which makes possible interiority and selfhood, but just like temporality, subjectivity too requires an opening to the other as a way of getting out of itself, even so that it can constitute itself (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Sartre also emphasized that the subject's whole relationship with himself is always a relationship of duality. Presence to itself implies a permanently unstable temporal equilibrium between identities, cohesion of itself and the diversity of a synthesis of multiplicities (Sartre 1943). In subjectivity, the ontological grounds of consciousness imply a time lapse, which consists in being itself in the form of presence to itself, which never totally coincides, presupposing an internal fissure (Sartre 1943). Temporality is thus one of the conditions that enable subjectivity to intrinsically possess the possibility of encountering the Other, therefore, with access to intersubjectivity (Rodemeyer 2003).

The Body

Husserl developed an extensive theory of *corporality*, which, among other matters, stresses that the psychological world is connected to existence through the body (Husserl 1989). Psychological development and experience are given in an embodied subjectivity (Husserl 1977). Even the meaning of psychological experiences are, in part, dependent upon bodily processes, although joy and sadness are not lodged in the heart as blood is, nor are the sensations produced by touch only a matter of organic tissue (Husserl 2006). The body is the point zero from which all perceptive experience is realized; there exists only perceptual experience from embodied subjectivity, but that experience is not only affirmation

of bodily existence, it is also the presupposition that the body is given to itself in an immediate form. Husserl distinguishes different types of bodily consciousness. In first place, I experience my body pre-reflectively, not thematically; the body is experienced as a unity, it is the subjective experience of the body (*Leib*). Later, an objective thematized experience of the body is acquired (*Leibkörper*) (Zahavi 1999). At the first moment, however, all perceptual and spatial experience is dependent on the kinaesthetic experience (Zahavi 1999). Unfortunately, an in-depth exploration of Husserl's theory of the body falls outside the sphere of this text. However, a brief note is necessary in order to highlight that corporality is one of the conditions for the presence of an inner alterity of self. One of Husserl's basic arguments is that the body has the unique particularity of being experienced with a *double sensation* (Husserl 1989, 1977; Zahavi 2005). When my left hand touches my right, there is simultaneously an experience of touching and of being touched; the body is both an object for itself and a living feeling body. The experience is reversible, because the possibility of the body touching itself and being touched places subjectivity concomitantly before its interiority and its exteriority. This experience is not only corporal; it is also a *double psychological experience*: "thus the body is seen at this level, as well as every specifically bodily process, every specific bodily member, and seen in its two-sidedness, at the same time in its physical externality and its animating internality... The experience of the body as body is therefore already a psychic or rather two-sidedly psychological experience" (Husserl 1977, p. 100).

Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied subjectivity, which seeks to overcome the classic dichotomy between subject and object, is also well-known (Merleau-Ponty 2002). The body is not only an object for itself, it is also experienced; it is not merely exteriority of the psychological life, but on the contrary, existence is realized in the body (Merleau-Ponty 2002). But the embodied existence presupposes an experience of another, the experience of an alter-ego (Merleau-Ponty 2002). It is precisely because subjectivity is not transparent to itself and because it is embodied that the other becomes evident. There is an *internal* relationship between body-consciousness and another body-consciousness experienced *externally* (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Merleau-Ponty highlights a direct connection between bodily kinaesthesia and the psychological world, between bodily emotion and "psychic facts". For example, in a

situation where an adult plays interactively with a 15-month-old child, placing one of the baby's fingers in his mouth as if he to bite it, he will find that the baby will also open its mouth, and despite never having recognized itself in the mirror and not having the same kind of teeth as the adult, it will feel that its own mouth is an instrument that can "bite". The baby feels this because it sees the adult on the outside and sees that his jaw is capable of the same intentions. This game also has for the baby an intersubjective meaning. The baby perceives the intentions through his body, while he perceives the body of the other and their intentions (Merleau-Ponty 2002).

One of the reasons why the self manages empathically to gain access to the other is because his own bodily experience of self intrinsically presupposes a game of ipseity and alterity; that is to say, the double bodily experience is an anticipation of the experience of otherness (Zahavi 2005). In Husserl, the body is a centerpiece for the constitution of psychic reality, the source and origin of our experience of alterity, and consequently, our experience of the other. The body is the centrepiece for ensuring one of the essential conditions for the constitution of a person—the intersubjective space (Husserl 2006). The body is also constituted intersubjectively through the other. For Husserl, the mundane object is that which is intersubjectively accessible. As mentioned, my body is not accessible to me in that mode. The body that I apprehend is the living body, not the object body. The body is not experienced as a mundane object, tactilely or visually, and it is given in parts, not as a whole. The first body that I access as a whole, as mundane object, is the body of the other, and through this I can constitute my own corporality (Zahavi 1999). There is a constitutional hiatus between the self and the other; for Husserl, the body as empathy exerts an essential condition for intersubjectivity: "for psychic being to be, to have *Objective existence*, the *conditions of possibility of intersubjective givenness* must be fulfilled. Such an intersubjective experienceability, however, is thinkable only through "empathy", which for its part presupposes an intersubjectively experienceable Body that can be understood by the one who just enacted the empathy as the Body of the corresponding psychic being" (Husserl 1989, p. 101). Consequently, phenomenological theory presupposes that an understanding of the self and the other, of intersubjectivity, will have to take account of the body. In both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, corporality of subjectivity is one of the seeds of present alterity *in* the self.

Reflexivity

Finally, *reflexivity* is also a source of alterity in the self. Sartre, as we have seen, mentioned the importance of the pre-reflective consciousness. He connects reflection to time awareness, in such a way that it can transform the givens of pre-reflective non-thematic non-positional consciousness into self-consciousness (Sartre 1943). In order to clarify the connection between reflection and temporality, Sartre distinguishes two types of reflection: the pure and the impure (Sartre 1943). Pure reflection does not alter the pre-reflective givens of consciousness. It is a situation in which reflection is simple presence to itself, turning non-thetic consciousness into thematic consciousness, in keeping with lived experience. It does not add anything to pre-reflective experiences. Indeed, it is above all explicative, because it connects with what is already known. This, according to Sartre, is achieved in an ideal form through a *catharsis* (Sartre 1943). Impure reflection gives unity to psychological acts that are present in daily life. Through impure reflection, the temporality of consciousness is constituted and, in the process, objectifies the self's experiences. Reflection is considered impure because it transcends that which is presentified to the consciousness; it interprets it, transforming and objectifying what was present to the consciousness. There is a reflexive transformation of the original experience. Reflection is a tool intrinsically linked to Husserl's phenomenological method. It is also related with his inner time-consciousness theory. As an analysis of pre-reflective consciousness, inner time-consciousness theory is a starting point, beginning from the retention that reflection makes possible. Reflection, for its part, is what constitutes experiences as temporal objects. Retention makes it possible for the just-passed to be realized *through* retrospective observation (Husserl 1994). Reflection is always given in a temporal dissonance, as the reflective act is about something that has already happened. But what arises in the reflexive act is the *same* act that occurred in that something that has already happened, and it is the same act because it has been held in retention (Zahavi 1999). The retentive phase is pre-reflective consciousness of experiences without these being objectified. It is retention that makes it possible for reflexive consciousness to introduce a doubling between the act of reflecting and the act that is reflected upon. Pre-reflective consciousness does not apprehend its own experiences as object. There is no difference between the intentional experience and pre-reflective consciousness, and so the former cannot be understood as an object. Inner time consciousness

enables this difference to be created; it makes it possible for the experience to arise reflexively, in a multiplicity of appearances through a temporal horizon.

But what happens when the experience is apprehended reflexively? According to Husserl, there is a *modification*, a *transmutation* and an *alteration* (Husserl 2001b). Reflection does not therefore have a merely reproductive action; it actually alters the primitive state of experiences of the pre-reflective consciousness. Reflection is not only a change of attention; it also gives rise to *new* cognitive acts and *transforms* experience (Zahavi 1999). It is the reflexive movement that enables consciousness (of) itself—self-knowledge. It is one and the same subject that reflects about the reflected act. Reflection allows us to distinguish perception itself from what is perceived (Husserl 1994). It is a consciousness of itself based in *alterity* and *difference*. This does not imply that we are speaking of a division in the self or that reflection places me before another self. Sartre mentions a sketch of duality in a reflexive self-presence. This dual dynamic becomes a *unity* in which the reflex is the reflector (Sartre 1994b). Husserl mentions that, when I reflect about myself, I am a subject that reflects and simultaneously I am an object that is being reflected about, that object that I designate as *I* (Husserl 1977). Reflective consciousness is distinguished from pre-reflective experiences because it introduces a type of fragmentation of self that is not experienced in lived experience. In this sense, reflection is characterized by having a component of *otherness* (Zahavi 2004). In reflecting about himself, the subject becomes a theme for himself. According to Zahavi, this movement is characterized by a certain *alienation*, a *fragmentation of self*, which brings implications (Zahavi 2005):

- Reflection is a precondition for self-critical deliberation; the first-person perspective, though necessary, is not enough to enable the subjectivity to deliberate, confront its experiences, eventually introducing alterations in its action;
- Reflection involves a kind of splitting of the self;
- Reflection, which is in part a fragmentation of the self, implies that there is always an anonymous non-thematic and unknown part to subjectivity.

Husserl emphasizes that reflexivity unveils the pre-reflective existence of the self. Reflection enables personal development, the exploration of

personal characteristics, traces of personality (Husserl 1989). But reflexivity not only transforms the experience of subjectivity, it is the very condition for the intersubjective dimension of human existence. That is to say, reflexivity is one of the conditions for knowledge of intersubjective motivations present in the co-existence between subjectivities (Husserl 1989). However, and because this is not only a mirror to the experiential world, reflection represents both a loss and a gain. On the one hand, it is limited by the lived experiences, which are at its source; on the other, when experiences are represented thematically, they are not merely reproduced but modified. Reflection, in thematizing experiences, alters them and transforms them to different degrees. But it is precisely because reflection is not only a mirror of experiences that it can constitute something more in terms of self-understanding (Zahavi 2005). The relation of the subjectivity with itself is a relation based upon the temporal doubling existing in the self (Merleau-Ponty 2002). As we have seen, Sartre specifies that all *presence to itself* involves a duality, a separation at the core of consciousness (of) self, that is, of pre-reflective consciousness. That separation, an intangible fissure, is a *distance in space*, a *time lapse*, a *psychological difference—nothingness* (Sartre 1943, p. 113). The phenomenological tradition postulates pre-reflective consciousness not as a static identity but as *dynamic ipseity*, in possession of intrinsic temporal differentiation (Zahavi 2005). That is, an *ek-static* existence. It is from this differentiated unity present in the experiential life that reflection can constitute self-knowledge. Reflection, for its part, introduces an alterity, an otherness, in the self. To sum up, there is an internal *alterity* in the self, or (to use Husserl's paradigmatic expression) there is *transcendence in immanence* based on the *temporal structure*, the *corporal dimension* and a *reflexive differentiation*. Although these forms of internal alterity of the self are essential to the development of subjectivity, this does not have absolute control over them. As we have seen, temporality, corporality and reflexivity place the subject before a difference, a duality, a splitting of himself; that is to say, he is placed before an otherness in himself that he cannot control nor apprehend in its totality (Zahavi 2004). The being of consciousness consists in existing at a distance from himself (Sartre 1943).

Arguing that there exist different types of alterity, Zahavi claims that, from the phenomenological point of view, three are fundamental: "(1) nonself (world), (2) oneself as Other, and (3) Other self". (Zahavi 1999, p. 195). This triad of alterity is directly in keeping with the way Spinelli

conceptualizes the notion of *worldview*, dividing it into three substructures: the self-construct; the other-construct, and the world-construct (Spinelli 2007). Although Spinelli does not broach the three sub-structures in terms of alterity, as Zahavi does, the theoretical connection is pertinent. This is one of the reasons why it is argued that the existential approach should not be considered only as an interpsychic vision of self. The basic forms of alterity of self are the three essential dimensions that form the object of phenomenological analysis in the psychotherapeutic context. What this exposition shows is that, even on the level of the face-to-face relationship in the therapeutic space, the self, the other and the world need to be investigated together in an integrated way: “according to our presentation, the concepts I and we are relative: the I requires the thou, the we, and the ‘other’. And furthermore, the Ego (the Ego as person) requires a relation to a world which engages it. Therefore, I, we and world belong together; the world as communal environing world, thereby bears the stamp of subjectivity” (Husserl 1989, p. 301).

Double Reduction and Intersubjectivity

This chapter ends with a short note that identifies one more contribution from Husserl’s phenomenology of intersubjectivity to existential psychotherapy and the face-to-face context. This note has been placed in epilogue position due to the fact that it brings together a number of the concepts that have already been discussed above. Two main ideas are emphasized. Subjectivity, for Husserl, is, from the outset, intersubjectivity (Depraz 2001). On the other hand, the notion of empathy (important for the face-to-face encounter) is, for Husserl, first and foremost a primordial, original and passive dimension of experience, and therefore prior to the notion of empathy as a way of understanding another. Empathy as *paarung* or coupling is an associative process between a living-body and another living-body, which experience a similar functioning of actions behaviors and kinaesthetic movements. It is a holistic experience of similar experiences through which a body-consciousness may be recognized in another through empathy (Depraz 2001). However, empathy is also a particular intentional experience which enables me to gain an understanding of another. But can phenomenological reduction exert a crucial role in empathy or is it restricted to a questioning self? (Husserl 2006). Can phenomenological reduction be applied in the intersubjective context of psychotherapy?

In first place, it is important to point out that, for Husserl, all human experience admits the possibility of *double phenomenological reduction*. For one, reduction makes experience in itself accessible to the immanent gaze; secondly, reduction may be performed upon the intentional content of experience (Husserl 2006). As far as it is possible to access memory, reduction may be performed a posteriori on the contents of the original experience, both on the experience that was effectively the object of attention and on the intentional experiential foci that were maintained in the experiential background. Double reduction emphasizes the importance of memory. Reduction may be performed *on* memories and may even be able to make explicit aspects, experiences, emotions, thoughts and desires that were present at the original moment of the experience in the background of the person's experience. Even "unconscious" dispositions may be object of phenomenological reduction, scrutinized through the person's memories (Husserl 2006). Memories are a particular interest, and the description and analysis of them forms a fundamental part of phenomenology. What Husserl says is that of the multiple experiences (cognitive, affective) that temporal consciousness has at any moment, the self focuses its attention upon the immediate and reflects only upon some. "Even 'unconscious' lived experiences are integrated in the context, which itself is given by way of perception and directly grasping consciousness, or else the context is supplemented through such 'unconscious' lived experiences. I recognize that I am experiencing various sensations and feelings, which right away I will not get hold of in reflection" (Husserl 2006, p. 97). But phenomenological retention may be practiced on any lived experience. At any moment we can, through reduction, focus our attention upon a second-plane experience that was only partially noted or which has lost its affective force in the retentive chain. Phenomenological investigation of memory probes contexts of simultaneity and of succession to try to understand how those phenomena are interrelated in the single stream of consciousness. While retentions and memories are often unclear or undetermined, they may nevertheless be clarified. The reactivation of a memory may in addition shed light upon another memory; it may relate and connect memories that were not initially connected and shed light upon their experiential value. The whole "stream of consciousness of retentions and memories is a field of experiential investigation in itself" (Husserl 2006, p. 72).

This process is valid for subjectivity, but could phenomenological reduction be transported to the intersubjective space and help to gain

access to the other, to understand the other? As asked by the author: “Do we ever arrive at an *other* phenomenological I? Can the phenomenological reduction ever arrive at the idea of several phenomenological I’s?” (Husserl 2006, p. 82). Husserl would say that it could. Through empathy, double phenomenological reduction is imported to the intersubjective space and applied in the face-to-face encounter with the other (Husserl 2006). Empathy is a particular empirical experience, and may also be the object of phenomenological reduction, the space of intersection, where a subjectivity may have access to the comprehension of another subjectivity. It is important here to mention some aspects that are particularly important for the therapeutic relationship and which constitute a reading of Husserl. What is affirmed is that, through empathy, it is possible to access the comprehension of another. However, Husserl constantly affirms that there is a law that reminds us that, even in the sphere of empathy, I do not have access to the same thoughts, emotions and experiences of the other. The crucial question is that the empathic experience may become fundamental precisely because there does not exist any total connection or fusion between two people. When phenomenological reduction is applied to empathy and to the face-to-face encounter, a person may get beyond his stream of consciousness and gain access to the experience of the other. Here there is shared access and an experiential connection is effectively given; two people “accommodate themselves to each other” (Husserl 2006, p. 162), influencing each other motivationally, in reciprocal comprehension of thoughts and emotions, which may in turn bring relief, and cognitive and emotional transformations. But the reason why empathic experience may be particularly powerful is because the independence between the people is never broken. The space of alterity is assured in the intersubjective encounter. It is precisely because there is independence between two autonomous selves, phenomenological reduction can produce significant experiential effects. The empathic connection exists because a primordial independence is maintained simultaneously with the interrelational unity between the subjectivities. In addition to constitutional alterity between subjectivities, two dimensions are crucial to promote that empathic space of bonding and differentiation: the objective time and space of the natural attitude. The question that Husserl seems to highlight is that experiences of the natural attitude function as *indices* from which those same experiences may be analyzed phenomenologically. It is because the face-to-face encounter takes place in the sphere of the natural attitude that

reduction, when applied, is no longer only about the individual experience, but also about the natural attitude of the self and of the other person that is present in the face-to-face encounter. *Empathic reduction is co-reduction* (Husserl 2006). The natural attitude is a space from which experiences, through empathy, become indices of intersection between two autonomous experiential systems. In that space of intersection, the objective time of the natural attitude is a bridge for the two consciousnesses that live a mutual experience in the same Now. Sartre demonstrated in his phenomenological analyses of shame and fear that the gaze of the other is not received only as a spatializer but also as a temporalizer. Simultaneity presumes a temporal connection of two co-existences that are not linked in any other way, so that the gaze of the other attributes another dimension to the time of a subjectivity. At that moment, according to Husserl, there is an experience of *mirroring*, which, in the sphere of the therapeutic encounter, may be termed *experiential validation*: “any possible empathy is the ‘mirroring’ of each monad in the other, and the possibility of such mirroring depends on the possibility of a concordant constitution of a spatial-temporal nature, of an index for the respective constitutive lived experiences, which index extends into all I’s” (Husserl 2006, p. 164).

Experiential validation presupposes an *affective reflexivity*. It is not only a cognitive or merely emotional process, but a harmonization of total co-existences in which both dimensions are inherent. But this experience of experiential validation is viable for two concomitant reasons: there is a profound empathic experience between two people and neither is the “victim of reduction” (Husserl 2006, p. 160) of the other; neither is dependent upon the meaning that is achieved by each of the individualities in the dyad; on the contrary, what is achieved is “in itself and for itself and conceived through its own being” (Husserl 2006, p. 164). This aspect has resonance with the notion of an *original experience of co-existence* when I experience the Other having an experience of me. For that reason, the existential approach has always insisted on the concept of *presence* as a central dimension that influences the therapeutic process, including the therapist. Through a complete human presence, the therapist is co-present in the relational field of the other and only thus is it possible to truly “see” the other. In this sense, the therapeutic space reflects the principle of constitution of self-development and of a personal identity. It is a continuous process of validation through a person that is in tune with the affectivity of another, which enables the

emotional experience to be strengthened and consolidated, and for the latter to consequently develop. It is a space in which my indirect experience of the other coincides with my experience and through which I see myself through the eyes of the other. That gaze of the other may transform me. As Sartre mentions, through the gaze of the other, not only am I transformed, but there also occurs the total metamorphosis of the world. This chapter has focused above all on a theoretical component concerning a series of concepts, which require subsequent adaptation and integration into the praxis of existential psychotherapy.

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