ASUBJECTIVITY AND IMPERSONHOOD IN PATOČKA AND DELEUZE

PATOČKA VE DELEUZE FELSEFESİNDE ASUBJEKTİF VE KİŞİSEL OLMAYAN

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Abstract
The asubjective, impersonal nature of Deleuze's philosophy is one reason it is often considered to be anti-phenomenological. Yet, as Patočka argues, phenomenology should, in fact, be asubjective in the first place. This opens the possibility of reevaluating Deleuze's philosophy of experience to see the extent to which it might be considered as an asubjective phenomenology. What we find is that Deleuze differs from Patočka in one important respect: although Patočka's philosophy of experience is asubjective, it is still personal while Deleuze's is both asubjective and impersonal. Thus, we wonder if an impersonal, asubjective phenomenology is possible, which might include Deleuze's views. To this end, we first study Patočka's reasons for going against Husserl and reorienting phenomenological studies away from an egoic subjectivity. In brief, Patočka holds that subjectivity is not a phenomenal given and thus is not to be of primary concern when doing phenomenology. What an examination of immediate experience uncovers rather than a transcendental subjectivity is instead a "thrust" into the world around us. Deleuze's philosophy of experience likewise seeks such a movement outside oneself, which we see in his use of Ferlinghetti's "fourth person singular"; yet, Deleuze's notion of a Peircian "Zerothness" makes it evident that, unlike Patočka, he does not locate personhood at the basis of experience but rather has in mind a particular sort of impersonal panexperientialism.

Öz
Deleuze'ün kişisel olmayan ve asubjektif (ilk anlamıyla, göreceli olmayan) felsefesi onun anti-fenomolojik olduğu iddiasına yol açan nedenlerden biridir. Ancak, Patočka tarafından tartışıldığı gibi; fenomoloji, zaten, asubjektiftir. Bu durum Deleuze tarafından geliştirilen deneyleme (yaşantılama) felsefesinin asubjektif bir fenomenoloji olabileceği ihtimalini yeniden değerlendirmenin yolunu açar. Burada karşımıza çıkan fark şudur: Patočka'nın felsefesi asubjektif olduğu halde hala kişisel deneyleme (yaşantılama) felsefesiyken, Deleuze'ünkü hem asubjektif hem de kişisel-olmayan deneyleme felsefesidir. Bu noktada; kişisel-olmayan, asubjektif bir fenomenolojinin Deleuze'ün çalışmalarında yer bulup bulmadığını merak etmekteyiz. Bu amaçla öncelikle Patočka'nın Husserl'e karşı geliştirdiği ve fenomenolojiyi "egosal-subjektiften uzaklaştırmanın" sebeplerini araştırmaktayız. Özet olarak; Patočka, öznelliğin verili bir fenomen olmadığını ve fenomolojinin asıl derdinin de bu olmadığını ileri sürer. Böyle bir dolaysız deneyleme (yaşantılama) araştırması aşkınsal öznellik yerine dünyamıza uyguladığımız bir "delme kuvvetini", (Patočka'nın deyimiyle bir "thrust"ı) açığa çıkarır. Benzer biçimde Deleuze'ün deneyleme (yaşantılama) felsefesi de böyle bir kendi-dışı hareketi, Ferlinghetti'nin "dördüncü tekil şahıs" kavramına olan atfı yoluyla gördüğümüz bu hareketi, araştırır. Hatta Deleuze'ün Peircie'çı "Sıfırıncılık" kavramı da buna delil teşkil eder. Patočka'dan farklı olarak; Deleuze'de, kişi-lik deneyimin temeline konumlandırılmaz, onun çalışmalarında kişisel-olmayan bir deneycilik, paneksperiantalizm vardır.

Introduction

Gilles Deleuze's philosophy is often considered to be anti-phenomenological, as he rejects many of the core principles and methodological assumptions in the Husserlian tradition. For, he is concerned with the forces and dynamics of the world that are more fundamental than – and disruptive to – the foundational structures of traditional phenomenology, as for instance, the lived body, the intentional relation, the transcendental ego, and the methodological centering upon

one's own *personal* experience. Yet, in Jan Patočka's asubjective phenomenology, we find strikingly similar critiques of some of these same Husserlian assumptions. This invites a comparison of the two thinkers, despite the fact that Deleuze makes no reference to Patočka. One excellent such study by Petr Kouba examines Patočka's and Deleuze & Guattari's different philosophies of life, in terms of the former's three movements and the latter's three forces.[1] In brief, Kouba (2019) finds that both Patočka and Deleuze & Guattari think that the cohesion of life cannot come from a pre-existing entity, such as a transcendental subjectivity (pp. 16–17); rather, it must find its source in a decentralizing movement where the individual remains always on the threshold of dissolution (pp. 22–23). Where Kouba sees them differing is that for Deleuze & Guattari, there is less harmony in life, and the dissolutive movement is more severe and dangerous (pp. 23–24).

Our specific purpose here is to expand upon Kouba's findings by focusing on Patočka's and Deleuze's philosophies of experience rather than of life, examining such phenomenological concepts as consciousness, perception, the givenness of the given, the transcendental ego, and perspectival personhood. Yet, before beginning this investigation, we should take note of the debate regarding Deleuze's relation to phenomenology in general.

In several places, Deleuze makes both explicit and implicit critical statements regarding certain foundational ideas in Edmund Husserl's and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological thinking. Jack Reynolds and Jon Roffe (2006) thoroughly evaluate these comments, and they identify three main ideas in phenomenology that Deleuze is critical of, with a common theme being phenomenology's failure to attain pure immanence: {1} Husserlian phenomenology posits a transcendental ego to which the flow of experience is given, rather than locating experience at its more basic origins solely within that flow itself (pp. 242–243).[2] {2} In post-Husserlian phenomenologies including Merleau-Ponty's, even when they avoid such a transcendental subjectivity, they nonetheless install a different mode of transcendence, as for instance, the flesh, the lived body, or the Other, which introduces forms, unities, identities, or hierarchies into what is more fundamentally

[1] See also: Alexandru Sava ("Back to the phenomena themselves," 2020, pp. 272–273). I would like to thank Majid D. Beni of the Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey) for his research advice and also the anonymous referees, whose suggestions greatly improved the quality of this paper.

[2] Deleuze, 2004b, pp. 112 [120], 118–122 [124–130], 129–130 [137], 132–133 [140–142]; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 46 [48], 142 [135], 149–150 [141–142], 178 [168]. Citations with page numbers in brackets give the translation page first and the original language edition second.

a thoroughly heterogeneous multiplicity (p. 243).[3] {3} Although phenomenology claims to be a presuppositionless investigation of experience, it still falls victim to some problematic beliefs or "*ur-doxas*," including the presumptions that there is harmony among a subject's faculties and also between the subject and the sensed world[4] and that the world is "*primordially impregnated with univocal meaning*" rather than involving chaos, unpredictability, disharmony, non-sense, and paradox (pp. 229–233, 243).[5]

For such reasons, numerous authors have highlighted these tensions between Deleuze and phenomenology, with some even regarding the two as totally alien or counter to one another.[6] Others stress the similarities and influences, often trying to build a constructive dialogue, with some going so far as portraying Deleuze's project as a more successful form of phenomenology or even a radicalization of it.[7] Still others note the differences between Deleuze's thinking and the phenomenological tradition in order to see if phenomenology itself might advance

[3] Deleuze, 1994, pp. 51–52 [73–74], 222 [286], 2003, pp. 30–33 [45–48], 2005b, pp. 58–63 [83–90]; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 46 [46], 85 [85], 142 [135], 149 [141], 178–183 [168–173], 228 ft. 6 [135 ft. 6], 131 ft. 17 [169 ft. 17].

[4] Deleuze, 1994, p. 137 [178–179], 2004b, pp. 111–112 [118–119], 133 [141], 2003, pp. 25–45 [39–57]; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 142 [135], 178 [168–169], 209–210 [197], 231 ft. 17 [169 ft. 17].

[5] Deleuze, 2004b, pp. 23–24 [32–33], 61 [76], 75–76 [81–82], 110–113, [116–121], 133 [141–142]. It should be noted, however, that not all of Deleuze's uses of the term "*phenomenology*" refer to a sort in the Husserlian tradition that he is critical of (Deleuze, 2005b, p. 30 [47]), because in his *Cinema* books, he discusses and even takes up C. S. Peirce's *phenomenological* and semiotic categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness (Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 100–101 [138–140], 146 [197], 201–207 [266–274]).

[6] See, for instance: Éric Alliez (*De l'impossibilité de la phénoménologie*, 1995); Alain Beaulieu (*Gilles Deleuze et la phénoménologie*¸ 2004); Jeffrey Bell (*The problem of difference*, 1998); Constantin Boundas ("Translator's introduction" to Deleuze's *Empiricism and subjectivity*, 1991; "Introduction" to *Gilles Deleuze: The intensive reduction*, 2009); Levi Bryant (*Difference and givenness*, 2008); Michel Foucault ("Theatrum philosophicum," 1977); Leonard Lawlor ("The end of phenomenology," 1998; *Thinking through French philosophy*, 2003); Pierre Montebello ("Deleuze, une anti-phénoménologie?" 2011); Dorothea Olkowski (*Gilles Deleuze and the ruin of representation*, 1999; "Philosophy of structure, philosophy of event," 2011; *Deleuze, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty*, 2021); Nicolas de Warren ("The anarchy of sense," 2014). Note that many of these cited studies provide a nuanced approach discussing compatibilities in addition to the tensions, with some being quite balanced overall (e.g., Bell, Bryant, Lawlor, Olkowski, de Warren).

[7] See, for instance: Paul Crowther (*The phenomenology of modern art*, 2012); Joe Hughes (*Deleuze and the genesis of representation*, 2008); Reynolds & Roffe, 2006; Alexandru Sava ("Back to the phenomena themselves," 2020); Somers-Hall ("Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty," 2009; "Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenology of difference," 2019); Judith Wambacq ("Depth and time in Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze," 2011; "Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze as interpreters of Henri Bergson," 2011; "Maurice Merleau-Ponty's criticism on Bergson's theory of time seen through the work of Gilles Deleuze," 2011; *Thinking between Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty*, 2017). Again, many of these studies take a nuanced or balanced approach, noting tensions in addition to compatibilities (e.g., Reynolds & Roffe, Somers-Hall, Wambacq).

and mutate using Deleuze's ideas,[8] which is also the underlying concern of this essay.

With this aim in mind, the bulk of this investigation is oriented around the following two questions: what are the characteristics of Patočka's asubjective, personal phenomenology, and what might an impersonal sort look like instead, drawing upon Deleuze's philosophy of experience? Kouba in fact briefly sketches out a phenomenological comparison of Patočka and Deleuze,[9] so the task we undertake is to more fully execute such an analysis and expand it by including two of Deleuze's notions deserving greater phenomenological attention, namely, a Peircian "Zerothness" and the "fourth person singular" perspective. By the end, we will be able to distinguish these two asubjective philosophies of experience by means of the specific role that personhood plays in them, and we conclude by asking the question: might phenomenology be reshaped using Deleuze's ideas?

Patočka's Asubjective Phenomenology

Patočka's (2015b) "asubjective" phenomenology is for him phenomenology proper, which he defines as "*the quest for a core of absolute givenness*" (p. 18 [12]) and thus for "*the ultimate ground of the appearance of that which appears*" (2019, p. 85 [647]). This means that it is primarily concerned with "*things just as they show themselves and as they appear*" (p. 85 [648]). In other words, when doing phenomenology, we take the starting point of our study to be our own immediate experience, and we analyze and theorize on the raw givenness of its phenomena.[10] When we do so, we must follow Husserl's "principle of all principles," namely, that our studies remain within the limits of what is given to our experience and never import extraneous presuppositions or theories.[11]

Patočka seeks an *asubjective* phenomenology because he thinks that Husserl strays from this principle when accounting for the transcendental ego. He especially objects to how Husserl regards transcendental subjectivity as a sort of foundational place around which phenomenology can be centered and from which it can be

[8] See, for instance: Beistegui, 2000; Rudolf Bernet ("Phenomenological and aesthetic *epochē*," 2012); Leonard Lawlor ("The end of phenomenology," 1998); Corry Shores ("Body and world in Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze," 2012; "Self-shock," 2013; "In the still of the moment," 2014; "Cinematic signs and the phenomenology of time," 2016); Mark Vagle & Brooke Hofsess ("Entangling a post-reflexivity through post-intentional phenomenology," 2016).

[9] See: Kouba, 2019, pp. 16–17.

[10] See: Patočka, 1989, p. 294, 2019, pp. 86 [648–649], 107 [676], 1998, p. 3.

[11] See: Husserl, 1982, p. 44 [51]; Patočka, 2015b, p. 30 [20].

conducted (Patočka, 2015a, p. 46), One instance where Husserl (1982) exceeds the limits of phenomenological study is his claim that we can find evidence of our transcendental ego by means of the phenomenological reduction and *epochē*, whereby we train our attention to the phenomenality and givenness of the phenomena we experience by "*parenthesizing*" and putting "*out of action*" our concerns for their actual existence in the world around us (pp. 51–66 [56–69]).[12] By means of the *epochē*, Husserl claims, we may become certain of the existence of our transcendental ego, which lies at the foundational origin of all our conscious acts (pp. 63–66 [66–69]). This is in part because the ego is bound up in all our mental acts; and, since they are indubitable, so too is the transcendental ego that is fundamental to them (pp. 63–104 [66–101]). Yet, as Patočka (2015a; 2015b) reminds us, being unable to doubt the existence of a transcendental ego is not the same as studying it as an apparent given, which it never is (p. 49; p. 30 [20]). In fact, Patočka (2015a) is not even criticizing the use of the *epochē;* rather, he thinks that Husserl did not apply it to the fullest extent to also parenthesize our positings of the transcendental ego's existence (pp. 48–51; see Chvatík, 2015, pp. 61–62).

Patočka notes another case where Husserl posits an ego as the center of experience even though it is not directly given. Husserl describes a dual layered structure to perceptual consciousness. On one level, we remain aware of a stream of sensory data, while on another, we are conscious of one same perceptual object that these data belong to.[13] Yet, Husserl claims that despite this split structure, there is a "*single double ray*" diverging from a *unitary ego* that remains aware of both layers.[14] Patočka (2015b) objects that this sort of a structure that Husserl posits goes beyond the scope of immediate givenness to our consciousness (p. 30 [20]). We have no experience of this subjective pole of consciousness from which double rays of attention supposedly split off. We simply experience these two layers

[12] More specifically, we parenthesize our existence positings for things, which we make in the natural attitude. See: Patočka, 2015a, pp. 59–61.

[13] One possible illustration is Husserl's example of looking at a brown beer bottle over the course of an evening. While we examine it, there is a flow of sensory data, including color sensations of its brownness. As the sun descends and the sky darkens, we have sensations of darker and darker browns. Yet, despite the variations in this flux, we take the features of the bottle, which vary from area to area and from moment to moment, to be of one self-same, identical bottle (Husserl, 1991, pp. 245–49 [237–41]).

[14] "*The ego* […] *is directed* […] *on both of them together* […]. *The two are together actively taken up by the ego; the indivisible ego is in both*" (Husserl, 1973, p. 115 [128]). See: Husserl, 2001b, p. 104 [396–97].

of our consciousness, without a subjective unity appearing along with them (pp. 30–34 [20–23]).[15]

But what about our *embodied* I? Patočka (1998) says that we experience our embodiment primarily as an awareness of our body's dynamic "*existence as a moving, active being*" (p. 40). These movements are directed toward the things around us that we perceive and interact with, and our bodies focus their energy on some action with regard to them (p. 40). Yet, although our bodies are "*originally present to us*" as this "*definite dynamism*," this dynamism itself of embodiment does not appear originally; what is given instead are the things we interact with, like "the chalk, the table" (p. 40). Thus, "*The agent I, the I that acts, never appears before us*" (p. 41).

One final motivation for Patočka's (1998) asubjective phenomenology is his view that existence is a thrust into the world and not a retreat into one's own consciousness (pp. 36, 57): "*Life's drive into the world, to things and to other beings, makes us what we are*" (p. 65). Phenomenology, accordingly, should not involve a reduction to a transcendental subjectivity as a point of orientation, nor should it begin with an assumed objectivity of some sort (Geniusas, 2011, p. 606). It rather must begin with the givenness of the given itself:

> This field can never be explained on the basis of anything existent, be it objective in the manner of a natural thing or subjective in the manner of the I. […] its whole essence consists in manifesting, disclosing and presenting other beings (Patočka, 2015b, p. 33 [22]).

For Deleuze, too, a transcendental ego is not immediately given; yet, to distinguish their views, we will consider the issue of personhood.

Patočka's Personalistic Phenomenology

Although Patočka does not think that philosophy should be oriented around the subject, his phenomenology nonetheless regards personhood as more fundamental than impersonhood. In Patočka's philosophy, personhood can be understood as a sort of status or condition of *non-indifference* with regard to the way that things or experiences are oriented in the world. For example, he says that Newtonian space is impersonal, because in its thorough homogeneity, no point is thought to be a pregiven, established point of reference; for, its many points are

[15] "*it does not follow at all that here there is a common subjective basis for the two different 'act qualities'* […]. *The 'common subjective ground' is not a phenomenological given* […]" (Patočka, 2015b, p. 34 [23]).

"*wholly indifferent to each other*," forming "*a continuous coherent continuity*" (Patočka, 1998, pp. 29–30). As such, there are no inherent conditions of the space allowing for an *up* to be differentiated from a *down*, a *left* from a *right*, or a *near* from a *far*. Classical atomists like Democritus may at first seem to have an impersonal sort of "*Unlimited space in which there is no natural location, no privileged point, no possibility of orientation";* however, his notion of a "falling" of atoms would still indicate a minimal non-indifference, as we have a directionality and "*the beginning of orientation; above/below are relations which make no sense as purely objective*" (p. 29).

When there is personhood, it can be distinguished phenomenologically as being either first, second, or third, according to Patočka. In first personhood, all things are oriented around a subject as an internal point of origin, perspective, and reference and as the source of activity and mental action. It is something like Husserl's (1989) notion of the body as the "*zero point of orientation*" for all our embodied experiences (p. 61 [56]).

The phenomenological and existential character of first personhood lies primarily in our "thrust" into our world's horizons (Patočka, 1998, pp. 36, 46). Patočka's conception here is much like Husserl's account of how our perception is driven to explore and penetrate the visual world around us. This happens because in every act of seeing, there is not just what is explicitly given to our view; there is also a vague "horizon" at the periphery of our awareness. For Husserl, these non-visible aspects or things are not given with the same sort of fullness that they would have were we to turn our attention directly to them.[16] Yet, because they are referred to or hinted at, they tantalize us to penetrate them with our senses and explore them with our bodily movements. Husserl (2001a) even characterizes this in terms of a seduction of sorts:

> it calls out to us, as it were, in these referential implications. "There is still more to see here, turn me so you can see all my sides, let your gaze run through me, draw closer to me, open me up, divide me up; keep on looking me over again and again, turning me to see all sides.

[16] For instance, when we look at a table, Husserl (2001a) says that while one side is given explicitly in our perception, simultaneously we are implicitly aware of its "*non-visible back side*" and of its "*non-visible interior*" (p. 40 [4]). These remain on the margins or horizon of our awareness, as do the objects surrounding it, like the floor that it stands upon, even though they too may not be directly apparent at that moment (p. 42 [6]; Patočka, 1998, pp. 34–35).

> You will get to know me like this, all that I am, all my surface qualities, all my inner sensible qualities," etc. (p. 41 [5])

Patočka (1998) notes how all the things in the world hold out "*a range of possibilities*" for our bodily interaction with them, remaining "*always already present precisely in the horizon*" (p. 46). Our thrust toward our body's experiential horizons is a penetrative exploration of the world, and this is what characterizes the first "*personal structure*" of our embodied experience (p. 48).

Unlike first personhood's unipolar orientation into the world we penetrate, second personhood is a bipolar one with a mutualized other. Here, we project a unipolar perspective like our own out into the world, yet it is directed back upon us from the point of view of some other person or thing. What Patočka seems to have in mind is something like Merleau-Ponty's notion of how, on account of horizons, our point of view is distributed all throughout the many things around us, such that to look at something else is thereby to look at ourselves from their perspectives. To explain, Merleau-Ponty has us imagine that we are viewing a lamp sitting upon a table, with a chimney visible behind it. On account of the horizonal structure of our consciousness, we have the lamp's backside in the margins of our awareness, even though it is not directly visible to us. Yet, note that the backside view of the lamp is what the chimney behind it would be "seeing," so to speak, from its own perspective. So, in a sense, by viewing the front side of the lamp, we are indirectly attending to it also from the perspective of this other object standing behind it, directly opposite to us.[17]

Since we also stand in relation to all the things in our phenomenal world, this means that on the horizons of our awareness we also have these other objects' perspectives upon *us*, ourselves. So, we feel "*looked at*" by all the other things in our phenomenal world, Merleau-Ponty (1968) says (p. 139 [1764]). Similarly, Patočka (1998) claims that our thrust away from ourselves "*encounters a mirror*" (p. 36); it is "*a reality whose objects we ourselves are";* and, "*if we seek to penetrate it,*

[17] Merleau-Ponty (1962) writes: "*I already perceive from various angles the central object of my present vision. Thus every object is the mirror of all others. When I look at the lamp on my table, I attribute to it not only the qualities visible from where I am, but also those which the chimney, the walls, the table can 'see'; but back of my lamp is nothing but the face which it 'shows' to the chimney. I can therefore see an object in so far as objects form a system or a world, and in so far as each one treats the others round it as spectators of its hidden aspects and as guarantee of the permanence of those aspects. Any seeing of an object by me is instantaneously reiterated among all those objects in the world which are apprehended as co-existent, because each of them is all that the others 'see' of it*" (p. 79 [746–47]).

we become involved in its impulse and thereby turn back to ourselves" (p. 48).[18] This reflection of our outer directedness back upon ourselves serves as the *basis* for the second person, "*I-thou*" orientation that we can have also with other living beings who are doing the same with respect to us (pp. 36, 51–52). For, as we will later see, we can attribute to living beings the same sort of directed awareness that we ourselves have with regard to them, thereby making this mirror encounter be an interpenetration of conscious horizons.

Third personhood, although associated with objectivity, is not necessarily impersonal; for, it still involves an orientation to first and second personhoods. We find a similar sort of relation in how Karl Bühler and Roman Jakobson say that, linguistically, the first person can be considered as the "*addresser*," the second person as the "*addressee*," and, in "*correlation*" with both of them (Bühler, 1982, pp. 153–54 [80–81]), the third person as "*someone or something spoken of*" (Jakobson, 1987, p. 68). As Patočka (1998) puts it, "*I am speaking with Thee about it (her, him)*" (p. 55). Since "*the third person exists in a relation to two other persons,*" that means it is *not indifferent* and thus is not inherently impersonal (p. 29). Phenomenologically speaking, third personhood is obtained when a Thou breaks from its "*mutual mirroring*" and "*process of exchange*" with our I and "*departs into the realm of the* it" (pp. 53, 60).

Still, Patočka leaves room for a sort of *impersonal* dimension of our embodied experience. He is working here with Husserl's account for how we attribute consciousness to others. When we perceive something, we can also additionally perceive – or "apperceive" – something else about it that is presented over and beyond – or "appresented" with – that given presentation. Husserl illustrates by having us suppose we are looking at a decoration of a certain kind (figure 1, left).

[18] This encounter with our mirrored horizonality for Patočka (1998) does not seem to be a running up against an external limit to our penetration, but rather it involves more of an awareness of its fuller extent, as it points not just outward but additionally back upon us and also engages us in an ongoing, dynamic, explorative relation with the world: "*This return to the self is only a special mode of continuation, a stage on the way from the self outward. It does not break the original impulse that seeks to penetrate other regions of what is; it only, so to speak, bends it. [...] That is a further moment of our corporeal activity […]. Our original dynamism […] encounters other dynamisms […] – our life in flesh is thoroughly interpenetrated by this personal structure. […] a situation is something different from an objective relation that assumes termini external to it and to the relation; a relation is something other than its termini*" (p. 48).

Fig. 1 Calligraphy on an arabesque background[19]

We experience a raw flow of sense data of it, and we also conduct an interpretative act that endows it with the sense "arabesque." Yet, at some point, we begin to realize that within the pattern lies something with linguistic or symbolic value (figure 1, right), and then our interpretative acts give it this other, additional sense (Husserl, 2001b, p. 105 [398]). That extra aspect of the design then stands out in our awareness, as we apperceive it in addition to our perception of the whole design, thereby providing this appresentative "*surplus*" to it (p. 105 [398]).

For Husserl (1960), appresentation is also the means by which we attribute subjective life to other beings (p. 109 [139]).[20] Their subjectivity is not given directly and originally to our awareness (p. 109 [139]). Rather, when we encounter other living creatures, we experience them as objects; yet also, we additionally attribute to them the sense of "*animate organism*" by means of an "*apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*" to them (p. 110 [140]). Patočka (1998) says that the other subject is appresented to us in a manner similar to how, when reading, we overlook the letters' graphic shapes, attending instead to their meanings that we apperceive along with them (pp. 63–64).

[19] "Part of a 15th-century ceramic panel from Samarkand (Uzbekistan) with white calligraphy on a blue arabesque background." Photograph by Marie-Lan Nguyen, with my modifications, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabesque#/media/File:Turquoise_epigraphic_ornament_MBA_Lyon_A1969-333.jpg. Used under the provisions of the Creative Commons 2.5 license, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5.

[20] See: Patočka, 1998, p. 63.

Patočka then uncovers an *impersonal* I-hood that can arise through the appresentation of subjectivity. As we interact with our world, its objects can obtain meanings that correlate with our practical comportment towards them. For example, in lowering ourselves upon a chair, we give it the sense of something to sit upon. Others are doing this as well to the *same* objects around us (Patočka, 1998, p. 67). As Husserl (1960) explains, "*every natural Object experienced or experienceable by me in the lower stratum receives an appresentational stratum* […] *united* […] *with the* […] *primordial originality: the same natural Object in its possible modes of givenness to the other Ego*" (p. 125 [153]). In other words, we do not just apperceive the senses that objects have for us; we also may apperceive the senses they can have for others, too. And, it is by means of us all appresenting meanings to the same objects that we can together constitute a shared "*world of men and culture*" (p. 125 [153]).

Patočka (1998) notes that, by endowing the object with this meaning that is based on our own practical comportment toward it, we have in a way placed our *subjectivity* into it, which Patočka calls the "*subject in the object*" (p. 67). For instance, a chair in your vicinity can be something *for you* to sit upon. Yet, you also see me comporting myself to the chair as something to for me to stand upon, thereby putting my own "subject in the object." When we notice how the object is publically available in this way, we see that there is a certain indifference as to whose subjectivity might enter it: it can be something for you, me, or anyone else. It becomes a sort of public being with an *impersonal* "subject in the object" in our shared world of humans and culture, and as such, it appears to us as having an impersonal sort of it-hood.

Yet, we also notice how others comport themselves toward us in various ways, attributing one or another sense to us. Thus, our interactions with others make us aware that we too are a publically available, shared thing in our social world that may be endowed indifferently with one or another person's subjectivity. In this way we might experience an "*impersonal I-hood.*" As Patočka (1998) writes:

> There is here a realm of something common that is open to our comportment as it deals with things. It is an objectified subjectivity which we can project back into our own experience. Thus another level of I-hood arises – *an impersonal I-hood.* […] the impersonal I is continuous with appresentation, an essential structure of our mutual contact (p. 67).

Still, the impersonality of the I in Patočka's asubjective phenomenology is not something original but is rather a "surplus" sense that can be added to the primordial, personal I.

In sum: Patočka's phenomenology is asubjective because our primordial subjectivity is never given directly and because our existence is a thrusting movement away from ourselves into the world. Yet, he still holds there to be a primordial and *personal* selfhood at the center of our experience. He disagrees with other attempts in the philosophical tradition that have instead tried to exclude personal being, writing: "We need to delve beneath this layer of the impersonal and bring out the originary personal experience" (Patočka, 1998, p. 172); and, he also asks, "*Impersonal nature, impersonal subjective processes, impersonal coordination – what has become of that original element from which we started, where is the original grasp and analysis of the foundation* […] *?*" (p. 172). Furthermore, even though Patočka thinks phenomenological studies should not be grounded in a transcendental subjectivity, he nonetheless, as Ivan Chvatík (2015) observes, still might hold that we are fundamentally a self-same subject that is the basis for our grasping identical objects throughout their varying appearings over time.[21] Deleuze, in contrast, rejects both the subjective *and* the personal orientations in his philosophy of experience.

Deleuze's Philosophy of Experience

There is an aspect of Deleuze's philosophy that brings it more under the umbrella of Patočka's definition of phenomenology, namely, his analysis of the "encounter." For Deleuze, we do not have encounters with things that we are already able to recognize. Rather, we experience encounters when our normal processes of recognition break down (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 139–40 [182]). Recall that one of Patočka's (2015b) characterizations of phenomenology is that it is a "*quest for a core of absolute givenness*" (p. 18 [12]). Deleuze (1994), in fact, considers an object of an encounter as being "*not the given but that by which the given is given*" (p. 140

[21] Chvatík (2015) notes that Patočka "*understands that appearance is 'seeing through perspectives the one thing presenting itself in them… This seeing through the perspectives, this transcending of the sensibly given is, after all, an accomplishment that must be performed by someone, an accomplishment brought about by a recurrence and, in this recurrence, by the maintaining of an identical which then becomes the object*'" (p. 64). See: Patočka, 2015b, pp. 31–32 [21] for the original source that Chvatík quotes here and also translates with different wording. Geniusas (2011) also notes that for Patočka, our subjectivity still manifests in our responsibility to truth and thus to "*how things show themselves*" (pp. 109–110).

[182]).[22] However, for Deleuze, the givenness of the given is not itself phenomenally given,[23] which would seem to exclude it from his studies of experience. Yet, he also accounts for how it can be *indirectly* experienced in the encounter. In certain instances, he elaborates this through a specific sort of experience whose features we might examine, namely, the sublime, in which the harmonious operation of our faculties is disrupted through that shocking encounter. Deleuze (1978, 2003) conducts analyses of similar experiences in his *Francis Bacon* book, a bit like how phenomenologists study the fundamental traits of their own experiences of givenness.[24] Thus, while we may be reluctant to consider Deleuze's philosophy of experience a "phenomenology," it still, more or less, could fall under Patočka's definitions.

Yet, what we find in Deleuze's analyses of experience is that he is interested in something *impersonal* that underlies the personal, and perhaps this is one way for us to better approach the raw givenness of the given that he has in mind. For instance, in his studies of sensation in his *Francis Bacon* (2003) book, he finds that "*the lived body is still a paltry thing in comparison with a more profound and almost unlivable Power*" that disrupts the workings of our bodies and renders us into a "*body without organs*" (p. 32 [47]). While this notion is richly elaborated in many other contexts, in this particular one it refers in part to how one's body is shockingly sent into disarray, undergoing involuntary spasms and contortions along with a sensory chaos of sorts. Our bodies are no longer a holistic flesh that is internally and externally organized harmoniously but rather more like inert meat hanging from the bones and electrically shocked into contractions (pp. 9–45 [21–63]).[25] We will look now at this fundamental, impersonal level of experience to see how it contrasts with Patočka's personalist phenomenology, but we will consider it in two other particular cases that are not normally given phenomenological attention, namely, Deleuze's notions of Zerothness and the fourth person singular.

[22] On this topic, see especially: Levi Bryant (*Difference and givenness*, 2008).

[23] Deleuze (1994) writes that "*difference is that by which the given is given";* yet, "*Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon*" (p. 222 [286]).

[24] See especially: Daniel Smith (*Essays on Deleuze*, 2012, pp. 228–232).

[25] See especially: Tomas Geyskens ("Painting as hysteria," 2010).

A Peircian Zerothness

Deleuze develops his notion of Zerothness in his writings on cinema, where he also adopts a metaphysical conception about the composition of the world drawn from Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. We are to think of the bodies around us as somehow being ultimately composed of light in movement, understood also as images. These movements traverse through one another, modifying each other in the process: "*Every image is 'merely a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe'*. Every image acts on others and reacts to others" (Deleuze, 2005a, p. 60 [86], qtg. Bergson, 2004, p. 28 [33]). Larger bodies, under this framework, are conglomerates of interacting motions that persist with their mutual exchanges of influence (Deleuze, 2005b, p. 135 [182–83]). Deleuze (1982) formulates these ideas under an equivalence: "*image = movement = matter = light.*" Being an image does not require a spectator but rather that these movements impact and imprint themselves upon one another, thereby leaving their characteristic "mark," so to speak.[26]

Deleuze (2005a) notes that under this Bergsonian conception of all things as moving light imagery, matter is understood as being in flux: "movement-image *and* flowing matter *are strictly the same,*" he writes (p. 61 [87]). It is perhaps something akin to a sea where the particular ripples or waves that are propagating throughout the whole body of water might be analogous to how the things of our world can be understood as flows in interacting matter.[27] Yet, it is so fluent that it is better to think of it more as "gaseous" than as fluid (p. 86 [121]).

We see already, then, that we are *beginning* with an impersonal picture of the world in which there are no privileged points of orientation. For, we are to consider not just the things that appear to us as movement-images; we ourselves, even at our most fundamental level, are also composed of movement-images:

> External images act on me, transmit movement to me, and I return movement: how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself image, that is, movement? And can I even, at this level, speak of "ego," of eye, of brain and of body? Only for simple convenience;

[26] This overview leaves out many details to Deleuze's conception, but it could suffice for our phenomenological purposes here. For the full account, see: Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 60–63 [86–90].

[27] It is a picture of the world that resembles how Deleuze portrays Spinoza's inter-affectual movements of the modes of extension. See for instance chapter 6 of: Deleuze, 1988. Thus he writes that "*This infinite set of all images constitutes a kind of plane of immanence. The image exists in itself, on this plane*" (Deleuze, 2005a, p. 61 [86]).

> for nothing can yet be identified in this way. It is rather a gaseous state. Me, my body, are rather a set of molecules and atoms which are constantly renewed. Can I even speak of atoms? […] It is a state of matter too hot for one to be able to distinguish solid bodies in it. It is a world of universal variation, of universal undulation, universal rippling: *there are neither axes, nor centre, nor left, nor right, nor high, nor low*… (Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 60–61 [86], my emphasis).

Yet, despite the world being fundamentally impersonal in this way, experience nonetheless permeates it. Because images alter one another when they propagate through each other, Deleuze says that this event of mutual modification can be seen as a *perception* (that is to say, the one movement, by being impressed upon by the other, can be thought of as "perceiving" that influence upon it, in the loose sense of receiving its modifications [Deleuze, 2005b, p. 30 (47)]; or, in the least, it can be said that the other "appears" in it through its modifications [Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 61–63 (88–90)].) In fact, within this Bergsonian conception, the light composing all the movement-images is even consciousness itself: "*all consciousness* is *something, it is indistinguishable from the thing, that is, from the image of light. But here it is a consciousness* […] *which is diffused everywhere*" (p. 63 [89–90]);[28] and, "*it is the set of images, or the light, which is consciousness, immanent to matter*" (p. 63 [90]). This can be contrasted to the Husserlian and Merleau-Pontian personalized notion of intentional consciousness as consciousness *of* something; by having this directnedness, it brings about an "*anchoring of the subject*" in a particular part of the world with its own personal "zero-point" of orientation (p. 59 [84]).[29] Deleuze, however, begins with an impersonal view of the world, and yet, he does not entirely side-step phenomenological concerns; for, experience, perception, and consciousness remain fundamental to his account, even though he is not working with an intentional consciousness having its own personal orientation and directedness.

Deleuze's conception of a broadly diffuse consciousness can be seen as a sort of *panexperientialism*, which is "*the view that experience exists throughout nature";* and more precisely, a *physicalist* panexperientialism is "*the view that each* genuine

[28] Ibid., p. 63 [89–90].

[29] Whether or not intentional consciousness for Husserl necessarily involves egoic subjectivity is a topic for a further discussion that we cannot conduct here. For a detailed analysis of this issue, see: Rudolf Bernet ("An intentionality without subject or object?" 1994).

active individual (1) has some extension in space-time and (2) grasps or takes account of or prehends data in its past environment" (Rosenberg, 2004, p. 91).[30] Deleuze's Bergsonian framework, then, is panexperientialist, as all the parts of the world are understood as undergoing some sort of a perceptual experience and are somehow constituted by a kind of a minimal "awareness" of these modifications. This is not to say that all things in the world have a *human* sort of perceptual awareness with the same features as our own. We rather need to think of a very minimal sort of affective "perception" where things, as movements, register themselves upon one another by means of their physical interactions.

Our own particular first person perspective arises as a surplus to this fundamental, impersonal layer of the world, and it does so by means of a slowing down in the propagations of movements in certain regions of the world (Deleuze, 2005b, p. 62 [89]). Were we just a thing like any other, the movements impinging upon us would just continue into, through, and back on their way out of our bodies. However, certain bodies, namely, living organisms, are able to discriminate particular types of influences on account of them being of special interest. Their deliberation upon that information delays their response, creating an interval of time between perception and reaction (Deleuze, 2005a, p. 64 [91]).

Bergson provides the example of an amoeba to illustrate. Its body exudes prolongations, and when one encounters a foreign body, it reacts instantaneously by retracting that prolongation. Here we have a personal perception because, of all the influences acting on the amoeba, it discriminates one as being of particular relevance which it is non-indifferent to, all while it lets the other impinging movements go unnoticed and pass through it. Although there is only the tiniest interval of time in this single-cellular case, more complicated organisms with nervous systems are able to process data with greater complexity and variety, which lengthens the duration (Bergson, 2004, pp. 55–56 [55–56]).

[30] A stronger form of this idea would be "panpsychism*, which is roughly the view that everything has an experiencing mind associated with it*" (Rosenberg, 2004, p. 91. See: Majid Beni ("A free energy reconstruction of arguments for panpsychism," 2021, pp. 2–3). Galen Strawson notes that experience can be seen as entailing mind (Strawson, 2006, pp. 25–26, 2017, p. 81). Here we will simply characterize this framework as panexperientialist, so to avoid complications regarding whether "mind" should be attributed to all the movement-images for Deleuze, putting Bergson aside.

Personhood in this framework is always secondary to the field of universally varying, impersonal perception-movements because the personal ones are no more than slowed impersonal ones.[31] We are not normally aware of the perceptions our body has on this lowest impersonal level, but part of Deleuze's project is to seek out the conditions when our states of awareness can be reduced or attuned to it. This can be found for instance in his studies of the body as meat hanging off the bones and of the body without organs in his *Francis Bacon* book and also in his study of cerebral shocks in the film experience (Deleuze, 2003, 2005a, pp. 151–159 [203–213]).[32] Another way he comes upon it is by tracing a reduction from a Peircian Thirdness down to what he considers a Zerothness, where all is pure, impersonal perception.

To follow Deleuze's cinematic illustration for a reduction to Zerothness, we first need to see how Peirce's categories can be associated with the three personhoods.[33] To formulate this correlation to personhood, recall Bühler's and Jacobson's accounts of linguistic personhood, namely, of a first personal addresser ("I"), communicating with a second personal addressee ("you"), who together make reference to a third personal matter correlated with them and standing within their shared context ("he/she/it"). As Edna Andrews (1990) notes, these divisions are "*reminiscent of Peirce's distinction among three modes of being: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness*" (p. 75). The first personal perspective can be regarded in terms of Firstness, which "*is the mode in which anything would be for itself,* irrespective of anything else" (Peirce, 1976, p. 332, my emphasis).[34] Secondness, however, as with second personhood, pairs two distinct subjects, without "*any*

[31] Note that there is an ambiguity in the terminology used between Deleuze's first and second *Cinema* books on this topic. In the second volume, all modifications are considered perceptions, and the ones that involve intervals of delay are "*perception-images*." Yet, in the first volume, only those which are selected and are non-indifferent are called perceptions. (See also: Ronald Bogue (*Deleuze on cinema*, 2003, p. 67.) So, using Patočka's terminology, we might distinguish the two sorts of perception by saying that the simple modification perceptions are impersonal ones, while the selected ones are personal.

[32] See, for instance: Rudolf Bernet ("Phenomenological and aesthetic *epochē*," 2012); Ronald Bogue (*Deleuze on cinema*, 2003, Chapter 6; *Deleuze on music, painting, and the arts*, 2013, Chapter 5); Daniel Smith (*Essays on Deleuze*, 2012, Chapter 13); Corry Shores ("Body and world in Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze," 2012).

[33] Note that according to William Rosensohn (1974), it is in fact Peirce's *phenomenological* elaboration of the three categories that is the most fundamental in his system of philosophy (pp. 1–2. See: Peirce, 1965, p. 135 [CP 1.280].) Yet, we here instead attend to more linguistic aspects of Peirce's categories, as they are more pertinent to our study of personhood.

[34] Indications of my emphasis in non-block quotations refers to the unitalicized parts of the quoted text.

mediating subject or circumstance" and without relations to anything else beyond the two of them (p. 332). And finally, as Andrews (1990) observes, the "*referential function*" in Bühler's and Jakobson's descriptions of the third person "*precisely fulfills Peirce's definition of Thirdness as 'the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other'*" (Andrews, 1990, p. 75, qtg. Peirce, 1966, p. 221 [CP 8.328]).

We can further clarify the potential parallels between Peirce's three categories and the three personhoods by examining their "valencies." Peirce considers the three structures to be indecomposable, and as such, they have no components to differentiate one from the other. However, they can be distinguished by the number of things they bind together, something like chemical bonds, which may be illustrated with propositions bearing "blanks" for those things it might connect with. Firstness is a monad with one valency, in that it can be connected only to one content, as with "*'– is a man,' or 'man that is –,' or '–'s manhood'*" (Peirce, 1961, p. 294 [CP 3.465]). Personhood here, if there would be any, could only be something unto itself, and thus some sort of first personhood. Secondness is a dyad allowing two connections, for example, "*– is a lover of –*" or "*the loving by – of –*" (p. 294 [CP 3.465]). The second personhood here lies in how an other stands in a direct relation to a first. And finally, Thirdness introduces a third party set in relation to the first two, as with Peirce's example "*– gives – to –*" (p. 303 [CP 3.476]).

We should note that, among the three valency structures (monad, dyad, and triad), Peirce addresses another possibility, namely, a "*medad*," one having no valency. Linguistically, "*A medad, or* impersonal verb, *is a complete assertion, like* 'It rains'" (Peirce, 1976, p. 338, my emphasis). Phenomenologically speaking, a medad would be just "*a flash of mental 'heat-lightning' absolutely instantaneous, thunderless, unremembered, and altogether without effect*" (Peirce, 1965, p. 145 [CP 1.292]); thus, it may be akin to Deleuze's panexperientialist, impersonal perception. In other words, Zerothness for Peirce would seem to exclude personhood from the picture and only involve a bare, impersonal event, state of affairs, or perception.

Deleuze's cinematic illustration for the reduction to Zerothness is a short piece entitled *Film* (Schneider, 1965), written by Samuel Beckett and starring Buster Keaton.[35] The screenplay text begins with "*esse est percipi";* and a stated theme of the film is the "*Search of non-being in flight from extraneous perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception*" (Beckett, 2006, p. 323 [113]). The main character on this quest for non-being through his becoming unperceived is divided into two figures that ultimately prove to be one, namely, his self as an object being seen, which is the character played by Keaton, named "O," and the eye seeing that objectified self, called "E," which is performed by the camera filming Keaton. In the first part of the film, character O has certain interactions with people around him where they see one another despite his strong efforts to avoid eye contact (figure 2, panel 1).

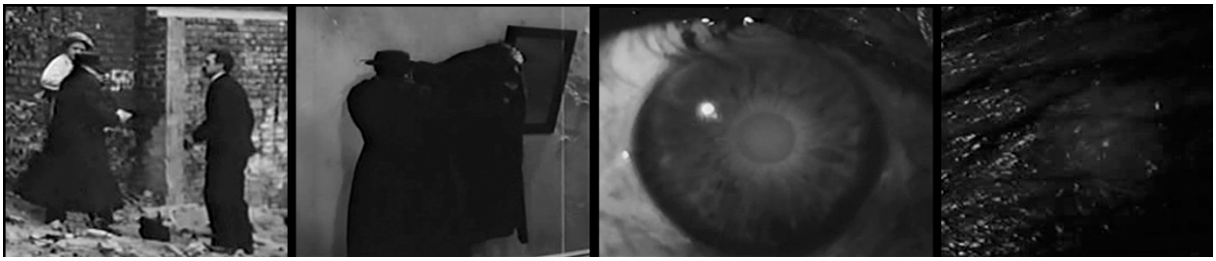

Fig. 2 Reduction to Zerothness in Schneider and Beckett's *Film*

In standing apart from character O and the other people he is interacting with, the camera bears third personhood; and, insofar as its gaze holds the characters together in the frame, it also functions as a Thirdness as well. When character O finally arrives at his apartment, he tries to eliminate all perceptions directed upon him, for instance, by shuttering windows, ejecting pets from his room, and covering his mirror (figure 2, panel 2). This leaves just a relation of Secondness and second personhood between character O and camera E, which is closing in on O. Camera E gradually nears to the point of staring directly into O's eye (figure 2, panel 3). While rocking in his chair, he covers his eyes in his effort to attain a pure, first person isolation, and the dying out of the rocking and the fading into black, Deleuze (2005a) observes, is like a descent into his nonbeing (figure 2, panel 4) (p. 70 [99–100]).

[35] On account of an ambiguity in the terminology between Deleuze's two cinema books, his cinematic analysis does not correspond explicitly and straightforwardly with the three personhoods. As such, we assign the personhoods on the basis of Deleuze's descriptions. In addition, Deleuze's account also involves other types of images that are associated with the categories, namely affection, action, and relation images; yet, for simplicity, we exclude these notions here. What is most important for our analysis is that the lowest level is perception and thus it is a pan-experientialist framework.

However, Deleuze (2005a) thinks that we should not see this as a search for non-being by means of eliminating all being-perceived but rather as a quest for Zerothness, that is to say, for a pure, impersonal perception of the panexperiential world:

> for Beckett, immobility, death, the loss of *personal* movement [...] are only a *subjective finality* [...] only a means in relation to a more profound end. It is a question of attaining once more the world before man, before our own dawn, the position where movement was, on the contrary, under the regime of universal variation, and where light, always propagating itself, had no need to be revealed. Proceeding in this way [...], Beckett ascends once more towards the luminous plane of immanence, the plane of matter and its cosmic eddying of movement-images (p. 70 [100], my emphasis).

Could this mean, perhaps, that Deleuze would wish to take the phenomenological reduction and *epochē* one step further than Patočka does, by putting out of action even the personal basis of experience?

The Fourth Person Singular

Another way that Deleuze elaborates his philosophy of experience is by exploring a fourth sort of personhood, which in fact is largely impersonal in nature. He draws this notion from Laurence Ferlinghetti's writings, especially his novel *Her*. In it, the main character and narrator, Andy Raffine, is on a quest to attain a greater, impersonal perspective that he calls the "fourth person singular." He seeks it in a sort of ecstatic spiritual love that would take him out of our earthy limitations of personal selfhood. He never fully attains it and instead only accomplishes a partial or false sort of fourth person singular rather than the true one he seeks.

In both kinds, one goes beyond one's own personal, perspectival limits, somehow occupying – and being occupied by – a variety of others. Raffine, for instance, reports: "*A woman held her womb open. I came out*" (Ferlinghetti, 1960, p. 21), and, "*I had lost her anonymous body in the flow of myself I had absorbed her into my blood*" (p. 106). So, in the fourth person singular, rather than speaking in one voice, there is instead, as Joff Bradley (2015) puts it, "a mad cacophony of speech" (p. 188). Raffine says at one point:

> it was all the trains I had ever ridden on, hitched together with universal couplings, [...] now slithering together into one long track over myriad crazy roadbeds of desire, and all the travelers that had ever travelled merged in myself, speaking sixty-six languages, with all the languages dubbed together into one great supranational soundtrack with multilingual simultaneous translation (Ferlinghetti, 1960, p. 84).

Deleuze notes something similar in his discussion of Pierre Klossowski's *The Baphomet*.[36] The souls of the deceased are awaiting final judgment when they will be reunited with the bodies they once inhabited. As they are not anchored down to extensive bodies that can keep them apart from one another, the souls (or "breaths") instead float around erratically, moving as little gusts of wind, passing into and through one another, merging with and splitting from each other. In this other context, we see a similar dynamic of transiting from perspective to perspective, never holding to an isolated one but always being a movement between and through many of them (Klossowski, 1988, pp. 62–68 [86–95]). In fact, these "*arbitrary intertwinings*" of the souls involve their mutual "*indifference*" regarding whom they combine with, meaning that they exist perpetually in an impersonal state of some sort (p. 66 [92], 68 [95]).

In the *non-true* fourth person singular that Raffine mostly occupies, one completely loses sight of oneself in one's delusional self-dissipation. Here one's perspective is the "*mad eye of the fourth person*" (Ferlinghetti, 1967, p. 56). As Clifford Duffy (2008) writes, Raffine is a "wandering schizoid narrator" (p. 125). While under this perspective, Raffine says that he "*saw and understood everything but myself*" (Ferlinghetti, 1960, p. 134). For example, at the beginning of the story, Raffine in his madness is not sure if he is seeing a film or instead real things in front of him; and, supposing it be a movie, he is uncertain "*whether or not I was the grade B hero or merely an extra*" or "*whether or not the action had already been filmed. I seemed to be walking in on the finished sequence only to find myself in the middle of it as it evolved for the first time*" (p. 14).[37] As L. A. Ianni (1967) notes, in this non-true fourth person perspective with its "*undifferentiated observer*," one fails "*to clarify the relation between oneself and external reality*" (p. 396).

[36] See, for instance: Deleuze, 2004b, Appendix 3.

[37] See: Ianni, 1967, p. 395.

By contrast, in the *true* fourth person singular, something is "able to see that in which it was itself imbedded" (Ferlinghetti, 1960, p. 134). So, it is not simply merging with and disappearing into the whole and remaining undifferentiated throughout it. Rather, it still has perspectivity and yet somehow is not limited to a certain one in particular. We can see how it is not a totalizing reduction of our perspective to a holistic one because Raffine says that in the fourth person, the things of the world maintain a "*rapport of strangeness*" with us and with each other, as they do not bear a "*soul bridge*" linking us and all of them together into a "*single soul*" (p. 93). It is thus not an anthropomorphized world where objects are understood in human terms, like "*the moon with a man in it made of cheese*" (p. 92). So, we see it cannot be a unified and shared "group" perspective but rather a multiplicity of divergent ones. In other words, it is impersonal in that there is an indifference as to which of the many perspectives one might take in particular, because there is a sort of free movement across all of them, like we saw with Klossowski's intermingling souls.

Also, for Deleuze, fourth person singularity involves an impersonal event of *becoming*; and, it is during this process of self-transformation that we take on the broadened range of different selfhoods and perspectives that are all at variance with one another while also somehow coalescing in that event. Deleuze explicates this notion by modifying Leibniz's theory of possible worlds. Under Leibniz's assumptions, we might think of a possible world as containing a set of individuals, with each being assigned a complete set of predicates that entirely determine them. These predicates also determine the series of events in that world. For instance, in our world, Adam has the predicate "sins," among all his many others. Thus, when the event comes where he is tempted by the serpent, he is predetermined to eat the forbidden fruit. God calculates all combinations of predicates for individual substances, and chooses the most perfect such collection of individuals, which is the possible world with the greatest variety and perfection.[38]

These predicates are often reciprocally relational with respect to the other individuals in that particular world. For instance, Adam is father of Cain, while Cain is son of Adam. As all things in the world are related one way or another, any one individual implies all the rest of the world, even though only God has a mind great enough to explicitly know all the predicates of each individual. Yet, since each

[38] Leibniz, 1908, pp. 78–9, 120–131, 233 [19–20, 48–56, 126], 1989, p. 193 [400], 1998a, pp. 59–64 [1540–1547], 1998b, p. 275 [615–616], 2001, pp. 267–268 [252] and Deleuze, 1993, p. 59 [79].

individual substance expresses everything else, it can be seen from its point of orientation as a perspective on the whole world, and thus "*the universe is multiplied as many times as there are substances*" (Leibniz, 1998a, p. 61 [1541]). Nonetheless, all these different views converge such that they are all in agreement about that whole. So, it is something like the way that "*the same town is differently represented according to the different situations of the person who looks at it*" (p. 61 [1541]).

Deleuze takes up this metaphor, but unlike Leibniz, he makes no assumptions about there being a common world that the perceptions of many things converge upon. This means that indeed the universe is as many as the number of perspectives:

> another town corresponds to each point of view, each point of view is another town, the towns are linked only by their distance and resonate only through the divergence of their series, their houses and their streets. There is always another town within the town (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 198 [203]).

The reason for this is that, unlike for Leibniz, in Deleuze's philosophy of time and becoming, there is not a God Who from the beginning chooses one world with its particular series of events, instead of another. Rather, events are determined partly by chance and also by the contingent circumstances of the complex competitions of forces involved in them. So, existing, for Deleuze, involves real durational becoming, which is unpredictable. When we are becoming, we do not know at first what we are going to become (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 2 [8]). This means that when Adam was tempted, it was not yet determined that he sins and thus that he lives in only those worlds where he commits the forbidden act. Rather, for Deleuze (1993), until the decision is made, he exists both in worlds where he does sin and in ones where he does not (pp. 81–82 [111–112]). Thus, as an individual substance, Adam expresses not just a single view on one world but various perspectives on many. In our own experiences, we may have felt something like this when making a life-changing decision, feeling in that moment being pulled in different directions, standing within and looking out into different worlds and thus becoming different selves all at once, until our path is finally selected.

For Deleuze (2004b), individuals that are in such a process of becoming are thus "*vagabond*" and "*nomadic*" in that they traverse many worlds without yet taking any as their home (pp. 131–133 [139–142]). And, as they are not predetermined, the events themselves are "*neutral*" with respect to their outcomes

and thus to the ways individuals change and develop (p. 116 [122]). So, if we want to fully embrace the indeterminacy of the event and of our own becoming, we must grasp it with "*the will of* anonymity, […] *which we must call will 'of* indifference'" (p. 116 [122], my emphasis). In other words, if we want to fully embrace the event in all its potential for creational variance to our world, we must remain indifferent to the outcome and affirm whatever it may prove to be (Deleuze, 2006, pp. 25–27 [29–31]). In this Leibnizian context, this means that we must take on the multiple perspectives of the various selves we are becoming in that event of transformation.

Deleuze articulates his notion of Ferlinghetti's fourth person singular in this same modified Leibnizian framework.[39] The fourth person singular is the perspective of the event and of nomadic individuals spanning between and across divergent worlds of possibility. As Bradley (2015) aptly puts it, the fourth person singular "*is able to criss-cross split perspectives*" (p. 188).[40] And, this goes beyond just similar variations of oneself: "*The subject is this free, anonymous, and nomadic singularity which traverses men as well as plants and animals independently of the matter of their individuation and the forms of their personality*" (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 123 [131]). This means that they are "*mobile, they break in, thieving and stealing away, alternating back and forth, like anarchy crowned, inhabiting a nomad space*" (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 143 [198]). Thus, we "*shall be a monster, a shapeless mass*" (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 123 [131]).

It is in this way that "*the fourth person is a becoming,*" as Duffy (2008) writes (p. 124). It involves a "*porous I*" that bears within it many tendencies to move to other variations of itself (Ferlinghetti, 1960, p. 61). Ferlinghetti's Raffine says at one point that he seeks "*the innermost swinger beyond the self*" (p. 60). While on the one hand, we are swinging away from ourselves when becoming, still, on the other, this movement is "innermost," that is to say, it is something you or I participate in and undergo. When we become involved in such an event, we also experience ourselves as a certain multiplicity of perspectives.

We might still wonder: if the first three persons can be assigned the pronouns I, thou, and it, then which pronoun might we assign to the fourth person singular to better conceptualize it? Deleuze (2004b) says it would be an impersonal "they" (as in, perhaps, "that's what they say") and functioning impersonally and singularly

[39] See: Deleuze, 2004b, pp. 117–18 [124–25], 160 [166], 172–73 [178], 2004a, p. 143 [198–99] and Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 65 [79].

[40] Bradley here cites: Jean-Clet Martin ("The eye of the outside," 1997, pp. 21–22).

like the "it" in "*it rains*" (p. 172 [178]). As such, it is like Peirce's medad. In French, it is "*on*," and, as Camille Chevalier-Karfis (2021) notes, "*'On' mostly means 'we'* […] *and it always takes a 'il'* [third person singular] *verb form. However, 'on' could mean so much more: 'one', 'people' … but also 'someone', 'you', 'they' and even 'he, she' and 'I'*." Deleuze (2004b) elaborates this fourth person "they" with reference to Maurice Blanchot's discussion of an impersonal sort of death (p. 172 [178]). Blanchot (1982) writes:

> Men die always other than themselves, at the level of the neutrality and the impersonality of the eternal They. […] *They die*: he who dies is anonymous […]. Whoever experiences this suffers an anonymous, impersonal force, the force of an event […]. […] no longer as the demise of a particular person […] but in this neutral form: someone or other's death. […] The only appropriate tears are impersonal ones, the general sadness of official mourners delegated by the indifference of the They. Death is public (p. 241 [323–324]).

Just as it is still *we* who must die an impersonal death, the fourth person singular likewise involves our experiences yet without our personhood attached.

In sum: Zerothness is the most basic level of reality in Deleuze's Bergsonian and Peircian, panexperientialist schema. Here, everything is constituted by movements; and, when they modify each other, they produce perceptions. They are impersonal at their basis because they propagate indifferently. It is only when entities select certain ones which they are not indifferent to, that there can be personhood in this picture.[41] Separately, there is the fourth person singular, which is the status of something that is becoming and occupying many perspectives as possibilities of its development. Although Deleuze never connects these ideas, perhaps it can at least be said that they may accompany one another, as moving towards Zerothness involves going beyond our given perspectival limitations and

[41] We might here wonder how this selection could be understood in relation to intentional consciousness. For Bergson, this non-indifferent selection, Deleuze (2005a) writes, brings about "'*centres of indetermination*', *which are formed in the acentered universe of movement images*' (p. 64 [92]). In other words, living creatures with nervous systems that process sensory data do not react just mechanically but rather their reactions are often not predetermined. This also means that images act on them, just like they act on all bodies, inert and animated alike, but additionally, images act upon another "*facet*" or "*screen*" of the living being – its brain – around which the world comes to be "*incurved and organised to surround it*," thereby forming a "horizon" (p. 66 [94]). As such, while we are not specifically dealing here with intentional consciousness, we might still notice a quite similar structure: there is an additional layer to the world's consciousness that has oriented locations and directionalities.

broadening out to include those of the other things we are interacting with, as happens with the fourth person singular, too.

Conclusion

Both Deleuze and Patočka call for experience to be studied apart from a subjective orientation. For Patočka, transcendental subjectivities are never given directly in our experience and thus they fall outside the scope of phenomenological investigation. Instead, our existence is most primordially a constant thrust into our shared world. While Deleuze never comments upon Patočka, we could try to formulate how he might respond to these ideas. For him, the world we thrust into is neither harmoniously cohesive nor singular. Rather, we venture through many divergent, "incompossible" worlds of development, taking alternate perspectives as multiple selves while we remain in a process of indeterminate becoming. Although we did not pursue these avenues here, Deleuze examines these more chaotic and impersonal modes of experience in his studies of Kant's sublime and of the experience of catastrophe in painting and of shock in cinema. Thus, both Patočka and Deleuze share similar asubjective philosophies of experience along with similar criticisms of Husserl's subject-oriented phenomenology; yet, they differ on the matter of the primacy of impersonhood.

Now we ask: on the basis of these findings, can we determine whether Deleuze conducts phenomenology or anti-phenomenology? If we consider how phenomenology is understood and practiced, Deleuze would seem to be undermining it, by finding a deeper ground beneath the givenness of our own, personal experiences. However, as Miguel de Beistegui (2000) notes, phenomenology has the "*ability to become and evolve"; "it is itself a flow, with unpredictable bends and meanderings, which* […] *always reinvent phenomenology";* and hence it is "*only an endless series of heresies*" (p. 68). We might further wonder if the fourth person perspective, or the Zeroth level of panexperiential perception, might be open to some sort of phenomenological description, perhaps by employing something like the impersonalized syntax that Deleuze & Guattari (2004) describe in *A Thousand Plateaus:* "*indefinite article, proper name, infinitive verb: A HANS TO BECOME HORSE*" (p. 292 [324]). In other words, can we describe the experiences we participate in, without limiting these descriptions to their personal scope and instead open them up to their broader range of participation?

So, perhaps it is best to say for now that Deleuze is not *yet* a phenomenologist; however, if further studies can help morph phenomenology along the directions that Deleuze favors in order to include a panexperientialist, fourth person perspective – as ours here aims to do – then one day Deleuze might be considered a phenomenologist, so long as his works can have the effect of transforming phenomenology in such a way that it comes to include his vision of impersonal experience.

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Summary

Both Jan Patočka's and Gilles Deleuze's philosophies of experience hold that subjectivity should not stand at the center of our investigations. Yet, Patočka remained loyal in large part to the basic teachings of phenomenology's founder, Edmund Husserl, and he created his own "asubjective phenomenology," all while Deleuze distanced himself from phenomenology and is often considered an anti-phenomenologist. Nonetheless, the fact that they both think that experience should be examined, specifically, by not grounding it in a transcendental subjectivity – along with the fact that they are both primarily concerned with the givenness of the given – suggests that perhaps Deleuze's ideas might be more or less compatible with Patočka's. The purpose of this essay is to find a critical point of distinction to see what it may indicate about Deleuze's relationship to phenomenology.

For Patočka (2015b), phenomenology is a "*quest for a core of absolute givenness*" (p. 18 [12]), and it limits its studies to "*things just as they show themselves and as they appear*" (Patočka, 2019, p. 85 [648]). Like Husserl, Patočka says these investigations may begin with the phenomenological reduction and *epochē*, which puts out of play our concerns regarding the actual existence of the things that appear to us. Yet, one reason Patočka diverges from Husserl is that the transcendental ego does not in fact appear to us, and we should not, like Husserl does, posit its existence, even if it is indubitable. In fact, in none of those instances where Husserl posits such an ego does it appear to our direct awareness. As such, the ego mainly falls outside even Husserl's delineation of the scope of phenomenological investigation. Instead, what our phenomenological studies tell us is that we experience ourselves not as subjects but as a thrust into the world we perceive and interact with.

Yet, although Patočka's phenomenology is asubjective, it still is fundamentally personal. By "impersonal," he means that there would be an indifference to the orientation of the experiences that occur in the world. However, since we experience our own thrust into the world, we take on the first person perspective of our own orientation within it. Patočka does however say there is an "impersonal I-hood" that we may experience. It occurs when we

notice how any other person or living thing whatsoever, indifferently, can comport themselves in any of a variety of ways toward us, similarly to how objects in our shared world can obtain an impersonal it-hood for the same reason. Still, this layer of impersonal experience lies over and above our more fundamental first personal orientation in the world.

Deleuze, however, studies a layer of experience that for him is more fundamental than the personal. There are two notions that elaborate this claim. One is what he calls "Zerothness," as a fourth category in addition to C.S. Peirce's Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, which he places into the context of a Bergsonian, panexperientialist framework. Here, everything in the world is ultimately composed of motions that affect and imprint their influence upon one another and so are images as well. They are also perceptions in the sense that these movements have a minimal sort of experience of one another by means of their affective interactions. Overall, these perception-motions move into and through one another, with none being selected as having any greater importance, and as such, they are impersonal in this framework. Personal impressions only arise when certain parts of the world, living creatures in particular, retain certain movements that their bodies are non-indifferent to, and they process those impressions while deliberating on the proper reaction, thereby delaying their full propagation back out into the world. Here, although first personal perspectives arise, they are fundamentally nothing more than impersonal impressions whose speed has been modified, and thus in this case, Deleuze is formulating an impersonal, asubjective, and panexperientialist philosophy of experience.

There is a similar instance of this, namely, when he is elaborating the notion of the fourth person singular, which he obtains from Lawrence Ferlinghetti. What is explored here are states of becoming when we find ourselves taking on many perspectives at once, thereby being different people at the same time, each with their own prospects on the future and their own points of view on the different worlds they inhabit. Deleuze articulates this idea by modifying Leibniz's possible worlds conception. For Deleuze, in events whose outcomes are not predeterminable, there is not just one world having a singular event but rather many worlds are involved, one for each possible outcome, all bridged by the event itself. Individuals participating in events are likewise multiple. Thus, for example, under this view, in moments of your life when you had to make a critical decision, choosing between a number of paths your life might take, you felt torn between different futures and different "worlds" of experience, while you strongly contemplated being different selves, too. It is in this way that Deleuze's fourth person singular can be seen as a further development in his impersonal, asubjective philosophy of experience.

Thus, the most critical difference this analysis uncovers is that, although both their philosophies of experience are asubjective, Patočka's is personal while Deleuze's is impersonal. The question remains: knowing this, what can we say about Deleuze's relation to phenomenology? Clearly Deleuze does not fit within the Husserlian tradition, but even Patočka, a loyal follower, had to veer from his teacher on the very critical matter of subjectivity. Although one question we must ask here is, "what is phenomenology?" maybe, in light of how it branched off and developed by many thinkers following Husserl, a more pertinent question would be: what can phenomenology *become?* More specifically, can there be a phenomenology of the impersonal layer of experience? To become so, what is needed methodologically would be a "reduction" to impersonal experience, something we might locate in Deleuze's studies of painting, cinema, and Kant's sublime.