The Telos of Consciousness and the Telos of World History

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the way in which Husserl's transcendental idealism reverses the thesis stemming from the naturalistic worldview, according to which the existence of humanity in the universe is a contingent fact. It will appear that the resulting teleological account of the world history does not interfere with the traditional explanations provided by the empirical sciences and that it is a consequence of the teleology inbuilt in the correlation between transcendental subjectivity and the world. The conclusion is reached by analyzing some of Husserl's text concerning the transcendental role of embodiment and normality.

1. Introduction

The gradual development of natural sciences over the past four centuries has bequeathed to us a worldview that hinges on a grand narrative beginning with the origin of the universe, and comprising a number a successive stages culminating with the birth of life on our planet and, ultimately, with the rise of human intelligence. Such narrative, which is based on the joint results of physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, and paleontology, has shaped our civilization probably more decisively than any other cultural transformation occurred in the modern era. It has provided the general framework in which our existence finds its place, and it has pervaded, often in implicit ways, our attitude towards human history and its meaning and value. Crucial to such world narrative is the rejection of final causes that marked the development of modern science, which initially associated with the rise of mathematical physics, finally led to the Darwinian, anti-teleological account of the origin of life and of its evolution up to us. Mathematical physics and evolutionary biology are indeed its lasting

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cornerstones, fostering a persistent naturalistic understanding also of the aspects of human life that appear, at first sight, more remote from the concerns of natural scientists. The recent achievements of neuroscience have strengthened its convincingness to an even higher degree.

It has often been claimed that the common motive unifying most of the scientific accomplishments of the modern era consists in a progressive de-centering of human existence and in its reinterpretation as a contingent emergence at the periphery of the universe. The opposition to such worldview has been fierce, and constantly renews itself in various forms; but it has only marginally affected its predominance. In particular, the role that our anti-teleological worldview seems to assign to blind chance deserves our attention. The realistic-naturalistic worldview underlying the scientific conception of reality and of the place of humankind in it rests not only on factual claims, such as that the universe existed long before the appearance of humans and of any other living being, not only on conditional claims, such as that the universe would continue to exist even if any human and animals disappeared, but also on a number of counterfactual scenarios. Indeed, all scientifically educated people would take as an obvious consequence of the scientific worldview that *had* the physical conditions of the universe been different, life would have never appeared, that, further, *had* the physical and biological conditions on the Earth or, perhaps, elsewhere too been different, no intelligent life would have developed, and that, finally, *had* the physical, biological and historical conditions been different, no scientific and philosophical civilization would have ever seen the light of the day. These counterfactual statements are woven into the naturalistic worldview precisely because they are taken to highlight that consciousness in general, and human consciousness in particular, is not only a limited phenomenon within the world, but also a wholly accidental one.[1]

One of the most vehement advocates of this worldview, the biologist Jacques Monod, has stressed the disquieting character of the role that chance plays in it:

> When one ponders on the tremendous journey of evolution over the past three billion years or so, the prodigious wealth of structures it has engendered, and

[1] This complicity between naturalism and the thesis of the contingency of natural history is absent in the sophisticated version of naturalism proposed by Quine, who tends to eschew counterfactual statements from the language of science. The resulting worldview ascribes nonetheless *to us* a wholly marginal role in the order of things. As is well known, according to Quine: «Physics investigates the essential nature of the world, and biology describes a local bump. Psychology, human psychology, describes a bump on the bump.» (Quine, 1981, p. 93).

> the extraordinarily effective teleonomic performances of living beings, from bacteria to man, one may well find oneself beginning to doubt again whether all this could conceivably be the product of an enormous lottery presided over by natural selection, blindly picking the rare winners from among numbers drawn at utter random.
> While one's conviction may be restored by a detailed view of the accumulated modern evidence that this conception alone is compatible with the facts (notably with the molecular mechanisms of replication, mutation, and translation), it affords no synthetic, intuitive, and immediate grasp of the vast sweep of evolution. The miracle stands "explained"; it does not strike us as any less miraculous. (Monod, 1971, p. 138)[2]

It is not surprising that within the field of philosophy of mind, which, over the past decades, has struggled with the problem of finding a place for mind, consciousness and human culture within the naturalistic worldview,[3] some have felt the need to reconsider the rejection of teleology that characterizes modern science. For instance, Thomas Nagel, who can be considered as an unhappy naturalist, waging against naturalism a lifelong "war from within", has recently argued that a correct account of the mind, one involving consciousness, reason, and the ability to grasp values, makes it almost impossible for the materialist neo-Darwinian view of evolution to explain how the mind originated from a material world governed by the laws of physics. According to him, the miracle does not stand explained. Nagel ventures to suggest that, in order to overcome this difficulty, scientific explanation might have to change in such a way as to accommodate a form of teleological account. Such account would imply a significant revision of the scientific conception of nature. In virtue of such revision, the laws of nature would only set probabilistic constraints on the evolution of physical systems, while properly teleological laws would increase the probability of the specific outcomes of natural processes that are endowed with a higher value. In other words, teleological laws would fill the gaps left open by the laws of physics by orientating evolution towards a more meaningful future state of the world.[4]

[2] See also his programmatic dismissal of teleology: «The cornerstone of the scientific method is the postulate that nature is objective. In other words, the *systematic* denial that 'true' knowledge can be got at by interpreting phenomena in terms of final causes - that is to say, of 'purpose'» (Monod, 1971, p. 21).
[3] For such overall characterization of the predominant motivation of contemporary philosophers of mind, see, for instance, Kim (1998, p. 2), and Searle (2000, p. 89).
[4] Nagel, 2012, p. 91-93.

This is not the place to discuss either the plausibility or the internal coherence of such a proposal, which Nagel himself seems to consider little more than a possibility worthy of consideration, given what he sees as the current hopelessly unsatisfactory state of science. It is useful, however, to mention it before exploring some of the aspects of Husserl's views about teleology, precisely because, as we shall shortly see, Husserl aims at reintroducing teleological considerations in our worldview, without interfering in the least with the explanations of natural science. In what follows, I will outline how Husserl's transcendental idealism implies a reversal of the naturalistic worldview also concerning the role that the latter assigns to blind chance. The resulting picture will highlight the radical opposition existing between transcendental phenomenology and philosophy of mind (both in its mainstream form and in the deviant version suggested by Nagel). Furthermore, it will provide a clear example of how one of Husserl's chief aims consisted in elaborating a reinterpretation of the scientific results that, while not interfering with them, would pave the way to a new rationalistic worldview, in which the primacy of humanity is reestablished.

2. The teleology of consciousness and the teleology of world history

The first systematic presentation of Husserl's transcendental idealism in *Ideas I* contains only a few sparse references to the notion of teleology and, as is often the case, in close connection to the problem of God. It is appropriate, however, to begin this analysis from this work, because in it, in a very succinct way, Husserl introduces the general notions that help us frame the relation between transcendental idealism and teleology. In *Chapter Four* of *Ideas I*, Husserl pursues the attempt of circumscribing the nature and scope of the phenomenological reduction, previously introduced as the suspension of the transcendence of the world of the natural attitude. In § 58, the transcendence of God is suspended, which Husserl had characterized in § 51 as radically different from the transcendence of the world and "absolute" in a sense other than that in which transcendental consciousness is said to be "absolute". [5] Before announcing that the phenomenologist should refrain from using any judgment implying the existence of God, Husserl hints at the reasons that might motivate the positing of such peculiar transcendence. At this point, he mentions two groups of teleological reasons. Let us consider them in turn:

[5] Husserl, 1983, p. 116-117.

> Reduction of the natural world to the absolute of consciousness yields *factual* concatenations of mental processes of consciousness of certain kinds with distinctive regular orders in which a *morphologically ordered* world in the sphere of empirical intuition becomes constituted as their intentional correlate, i.e., a world concerning which there can be classifying and describing sciences. At the same time precisely this world, with respect to the material lower level, admits of becoming determined in the theoretical thinking of the mathematical natural sciences as the "appearance" of a *Nature as determined by physics*, subject to laws of Nature which are exact. In all this, since the *rationality* made actual by the fact is not a rationality demanded by the essence, there is a marvelous *teleology*. (Husserl, 1983, p. 134)

In order to unpack this dense passage, it is necessary to recall some key-ideas of the *Fundamental Phenomenological Consideration*, the central section of *Ideas I*. The eidetic analysis of consciousness contained in it aims to open up the objective domain of transcendental phenomenology as the eidetic science of transcendental consciousness. The dualism of fact and essence is crucial to this effort: on the one hand, there is the essence of consciousness in general, and, on the other, its factual instantiations in the *Erlebnisse* of a given stream of consciousness. All the entities that happen to exist in the factually existing world are the correlates of such factual instantiations and, in the transcendental attitude, they are reduced to so many pure phenomena for the phenomenologically reduced subject. Husserl had already highlighted in § 47 that the constitution of the world is a contingent fact (as against the eidetic necessity governing the *how* of its constitution), by introducing the famous mental experiment of the dismantling of the world, the so-called "*Weltvernichtung*", whose aim was to show that the being of consciousness would remain unaffected even in the extreme scenario under which a generalized discordance between *Erlebnisse* prevented the stable constitution of any objective correlate of consciousness. This is not only valid for the individual objects of our experience, such as a table or a tree, but also for the entire constitutive layers that a scientifically determinable, objective world must necessarily comprise in order to exist. Two such layers (comprising in turn several superimposed sublayers) are fundamental to the being of an objective nature: the level of nature as it is given in perceptual experience, and the level of nature as it is determined by mathematical physics. The constitutive analysis shows that, when mathematical physics describes natural entities and processes in terms of mathematical concepts and magnitudes, it elaborates higher order

transcendent units replacing the objects of direct experience and assuring the ultimate objectivity of material nature.[6] The first level of natural objectivity is the "*morphologically ordered*" domain that Husserl mentions in the passage above, and that the describing and classifying sciences of nature, such as botany and zoology, investigate. The higher order level of natural objectivity, instead, is the correlate of the idealizing, mathematical natural sciences.[7] Now, the dismantling of objectivity in thought envisaged in the mental experiment of the "destruction of the world" highlights that there is no eidetic necessity for a morphologically ordered nature to be also determinable in exact physico-mathematical terms. Indeed, Husserl envisages, as a first step in the destruction of objectivity in thought, that the world of experience, while existing and manifesting a morphological order, could be such that it does not admit of any objective, exact physical determinations.[8] The result of this analysis is that, once we have reduced the world to absolute consciousness, we realize that the factual concatenations of *Erlebnisse* are such that they constitute, in virtue of a contingent concordance, synthetic unities of different degrees, i.e., they constitute a world *as a rational totality*. The appearance of ordinary perceptual objects is contingent upon the harmonious syntheses that take place in perception, and constantly at threat of being cancelled out by future experience. This is, already by itself, a fact worthy of wonder; but no less startling is the fact that such morphological order manifests, "behind it", an exact nomological order.

This double, factual, contingent rationality of the world as it constantly constitutes itself in transcendental consciousness is what Husserl here characterizes as a "marvelous *teleology"* pointing to the possible existence of a supreme source of such teleology, namely God.[9] Setting aside the theological implications that Husserl is trying to work out, and which would in turn require the practical-axiological reconsideration of the world, it is at this stage important to understand the sense in which Husserl connects the rationality of the factually constituted world to the notion of teleology. Now, for Husserl, true being is always the correlate of reason intended not as: «*... an accidental de facto ability*, not a title for possible accidental matters of fact, but rather a title for an *all-embracing essentially necessary structural form belonging to all*

[6] See Husserl, 1983, §§ 40 and 52.
[7] For a more detailed analysis of morphological and exact-idealizing sciences (see Husserl, 1983, §§ 72-74).
[8] Husserl, 1983, p. 104.
[9] For an analysis of the theological implications of the teleology of consciousness, see (Held, 2010).

transcendental subjectivity.» (Husserl, 1960, p. 57). To the eidetic structure of rational consciousness, there correspond the possibility of the appearance of true factual being. The rationality of the fact is precisely its being an objective pole attested in the objectifying structures of consciousness. Why, then, does such contingent, rational, objective poles deserve to be ranked under the heading of teleology? To appreciate this point, it is necessary to recall the basic elements of the theory of constitution, at least in its simplest form, i.e., the one involving perceptual consciousness only. In each act of perception, an object is given only one-sidedly, and yet grasped not as a profile, but as a full-blown object. This means that to each act of perception, there corresponds a *horizon* of possible concordant perceptions of the same object that are emptily anticipated in the actual state of perception. The future course of experience can confirm that the object exists and is such as it has been anticipated, or else it can produce a collapse of concordance. In other terms, an act of perception can intend a transcendent object only insofar as it has an anticipative structure that can find fulfilment in the subsequent course of the experience of that object. The intentionality of consciousness, the intending of an object, is, thus, connected to a system of possible perceptions in which the existence of the object is given with evidence. In a sense, the being of a transcendent object sets a task for consciousness, the task of confirming its existence in virtue of the character of evidence that pertaining to all possible perceptions of that object. This is, in outline, what Husserl has in mind when he speaks of the object grasped by an intentional act as a *telos* for the life of consciousness. [10] The posits of experience are, thus, related to an internal teleology of the life of the subject, whereby the subject is, so to speak, constantly "thirsty" for further evidence confirming their existence and progressively revealing their being so and so. This remains true, even if, in fact, the subject will not endlessly pursue this progressive concatenation of perceptions.

[10] Husserl explains this point in several passages. I provide here some examples. «Und so wird die Methode der Konstitution schließlich zur allgemeinen Methode der gesamten Phänomenologie; aus keinem anderen Grunde, weil die teleologische Konstitution des Bewusstseins (das ist der möglichen Zusammenhänge einzelnen Bewusstseins, mit denen sich Gegenständliches konstituieren kann) es so fordert.» (Hua 3/2, p. 549). «...das Wesen der transzendentalen Subjektivität und ihre Wesensgesetzmassigkeit durch und durch teleologisch ist. » (Hua 9, p. 254). «Das Ding ist seinem Wesen nach nichts anderes als etwas, das unter den Umständen so und unter anderen anders und dann gerade so ‚aussieht' und im Wechsel des Aussehens unter der Idee eines X von Eigenschaften steht, das im Prozess der möglichen Erkenntnis das Telos ist, das immer vollkommener in immer besserer Annäherung erreicht werden kann, in immer vollkommeneren Ansätzen. » (Hua 14, p. 248).

What is true at the level of ordinary perception is true also for the higher-level intentional correlates of empirical science. To each scientific truth, there corresponds a multi-layered system of intentional activities, in which it constitutes itself, beginning with the level of ordinary perception and ending in the experimental and theoretical activities of science. Each such object is the *telos* of an infinite system of possible evident verifications that, in the case of science, becomes also the *conscious* aim of an endless determination. In sum, the fact that factual course of intentional acts belonging to the stream of consciousness is not a chaos of "adumbrations", but a synthetic unity in which a scientifically terminable world is constantly constituted reveals the teleology of consciousness in the above-specified sense.

We can now turn to the second group of teleological considerations that Husserl mentions immediately after the above quoted passage:

> Furthermore: The systematic exploration of all teleologies to be found in the empirical world itself, for example the *factual* evolution of the sequence of organisms as far as human being and, in the development of mankind, the growth of culture with its spiritual treasures, is not yet completed with the natural-scientific explanation of all such produced formations as coming from the given factual circumstances and according to the laws of Nature. Rather, the transition to pure consciousness by the method of transcendental reduction leads necessarily to the question about the ground for the now-emerging factualness of the corresponding constitutive consciousness. Not the fact as such, but the fact as source of endlessly increasing value-possibilities and values-actualities forces the question into one about the "ground" – which naturally does not have the sense of a physical-causal reason.(Husserl, 1983, p. 134)

The first part of this passage refers to the universal history that, starting from the first living organisms leads to the rise of humanity and to the development of civilization and to is "spiritual treasures", among which, let us recall it, science constitutes, for Husserl, the highest of all. It is, at bottom, the world narrative characterizing modernity that we have already encountered at the beginning of this study, supplemented by a final part about the birth and development of human civilization. Let us call it *world history*. The fact that Husserl speaks here about "teleologies" might make the reader wonder whether he is endorsing some kind of teleological scientific explanation of such a history, one that would be at odds with the modern methods of physics, evolutionary biology, and of the social sciences. However, this is not at all the case. As Husserl clearly states, the

scientific explanation of such "evolution" is based, at least for the part concerning nature, on the "given factual circumstances" and on the "laws of nature". In other words, empirical sciences have the task to explain what has in fact happened according to their own methods, which will be causal-nomological in the case of the sciences of nature, and "motivational" in the case of the "sciences of spirit". Husserl never believed that the teleological reconsideration of empirical facts must interfere with the explanation of the sciences, although he believed that human sciences cannot be reduced to the natural sciences and that they must make use of notions such as aim and motivation.[11] Rather, Husserl is convinced that, once the empirical sciences have explained the fact of this evolution towards the present state of affairs with their own methods, there remains room for its teleological reconsideration, based on the transcendental fact of the absolute consciousness constituting them. Once the world history is reduced to the corresponding transcendental facticity of certain concatenations of *Erlebnisse*, one has reached the ground on which one can ask the question about its teleological source. The question is now "for the sake of which that happened" and not "why?". This reconsideration involves, therefore, questions of values and not only of fact. This open tendency towards higher and higher "value-possibilities" is, once more, a motivation for the constitution of the transcendence of God as the source as such teleology, which, as already said, is not the line of inquiry pursued in this study.

In conclusion, if we extract from § 58 the teleological notions there presented, without focusing of how they point to an ultimate teleological source, we confront the following situation. The *de facto* concatenation of intentional *Erlebnisse* in the absolute consciousness is such that it, so to speak, "carries within it" two "marvelous" teleologies. On the one hand, we find the very fact that the world is scientifically determinable *ad infinitum*, i.e., it is the ideal pole, the *telos*, of an infinite process of knowledge. It is, first, morphologically structured in ordinary inanimate objects and living organisms, including human beings. In addition, the material layer of the morphological nature given in perception appears only as the manifestation of the fully objectified world described by physics, governed by exact physical laws. On the other hand, we find in absolute consciousness the concatenations of lived experiences corresponding to the fact that such world has an internal history, an internal developmental process that from inanimate matter has led to the emergence of

[11] Husserl, 1989, § 56.

life, humanity, and civilization. At both levels, what is in question here is "transcendental facticity" i.e., a component of absolute consciousness. Still, while in the first case we observe the very fact that the world constitutes itself as an objectively determinable nature, i.e., we observe the occurrence of the syntheses that make this objective determination possible, in the second case, we witness the existence of a certain number of facts within the phenomenologically reduced world, namely that there is an evolutionary process that from inanimate matter leads to human civilization. It is this second fact that rises immediately a question connecting Husserl's thought with the scientific common sense view of the world history: to what extent and on what basis can we claim that such ascending process was necessary? If we do not yet take into account questions of value, and we omit any considerations concerning the possible teleological source of this developmental process, can we say anything about its being, in some sense, goal-directed? As we shall see in the next section, the first teleology, the teleology inbuilt in the very existence of a scientifically knowable true-world-in-itself, *the teleology of consciousness*, provides the key to answer this question and to cast a different light on the entire scientific world narrative.

3. An overview of the transcendental role of embodiment and normality

In order to answer this question with the resources of phenomenology, it is necessary to overcome the somewhat simplified exposition of transcendental idealism that is contained in *Ideas I*. In particular, one needs to take into account the role that the living body ("*Leib*") and intersubjectivity play in the constitution of the world. In *Ideas I*, especially in the *Fundamental Phenomenological Consideration*, Husserl only hinted at these themes, simply because his aim was a preliminary one, namely to clarify the difference between the immanent being of transcendental consciousness and the transcendent being of the world, which is relative to the former. Indeed, Husserl has been rightly credited with reforming the very notion of transcendental philosophy in such a way that the themes of embodiment and intersubjectivity become central to it. Yet, these themes did not hold center stage in the first volume of *Ideas*, due to the introductory character of that work. In his *Nachwort* to *Ideas*, Husserl, reasserting the validity of the conclusions of his earlier, so vociferously criticized book, characterizes it as: «The first preliminary beginning of a new conception of the transcendental problem» (Husserl, 1989, p. 419). The transcendental problem in question consists in the task of elucidating the sense of this world,

more specifically, the *sense of its being*. The being, the real existence of the world, lies beyond doubt, but the foundation of its legitimacy can become thematic only in the specific artificial attitude called *transcendental*. The eidetic constitutive analyses carried out in this attitude reveal that the being of each entity belonging to any ontological region is a sense constituted in transcendental subjectivity in virtue of the syntheses operated in its intentional performances.

> The result of the phenomenological sense-clarification of the mode of being of the real world, and of any conceivable real world at all, is that only the being of transcendental subjectivity has the sense of absolute being, that only it is "irrelative" (i.e., relative only to itself) whereas the real world indeed has an essential relativity to transcendental subjectivity, due, namely, to the fact that it can have its sense as being only as an intentional sense-formation of transcendental subjectivity.(Husserl, 1989, p. 420)

The central thesis of Husserl's transcendental or phenomenological idealism is contained in this sentence, i.e., the claim that the world is a unit of sense in transcendental subjectivity. Indeed: «...transcendental phenomenology, as a concrete science, is itself *universal idealism* carried out as science...» (Husserl, 1989, p. 419-420). However, these formulations acquire their real meaning only once the self-explication of the absolute Ego, the pure Ego of the transcendentally purified lived experiences, reveals that such Ego constitutes the world only *qua* member of an open community of transcendental subjects that co-function with it, and are implicated in its being, in a word, only when the real word-constituting subjectivity appears to be transcendental intersubjectivity, and phenomenology becomes a transcendental phenomenological monadology. Thus, characterized, phenomenological idealism relativizes the being of the world to transcendental subjectivity, because such being is contingent upon the concordance of the constituting experiences of an open community of transcendental subjects. *Transcendental*, thus, means, in the first place: «concerning the consciousness-relative sense of being of the transcendent»(Hua 9, p. 289), although, in virtue of the self-reflectivity and irrelativity of constituting subjectivity, the term naturally extends to what concerns the self-constitution of transcendental subjectivity itself and of its ultimate sense of being.

Husserl never tires of demarcating his transcendental idealism from what he terms the *classical idealism* represented by Berkeley, Leibnitz and Hume, and, *a*

fortiori, from the most naive versions of psychological idealism (which, according to him, classical idealists indeed had already, at least to an extent, overcome). We find a succinct characterization of the latter form of idealism in the following passage:

> As long as one knows only of psychological subjectivity, posits it as absolute, and yet would explain the world as the mere correlate of this subjectivity, then idealism will be countersensical, will be psychological idealism – the one opposed by an equally countersensical realism.(Husserl 1989, p. 421)

Psychological subjectivity is subjectivity *qua* human or animal, i.e., consciousness apperceived as annexed to human or animal living-bodies, thus, consciousness posited in the natural attitude as a situated component of the spatiotemporal world. Any doctrine that turns the world itself into a being relative to psychological subjectivity is a form of psychological idealism. In light of Husserl's characterization of the transcendental problem, such doctrines are countersensical, because psychological subjectivity is already a constituted unit of sense belonging to the world, in other words, it is already a *relative being* that presupposes the sense "world". The being of the world, the way in which it legitimizes itself as the true world, cannot rest on one of its components.[12]

As is well known, the fact that transcendental subjectivity is not embodied human or animal subjectivity does not mean that the living body does not play a role, and a fundamental one, in the transcendental constitution of the world. On the contrary, the constitutional analyses can be carried out without mentioning the living body only in an abstract form, or, as Husserl said, in the "self-forgetfulness" of what actually constituting subjectivity is. [13] Recall that each perception involves two types of sensations. Changes in kinaesthetic sensations motivate changes in the sensations that undergo objective apprehension. They also motivate the apprehension itself. Kinaesthetic sensations are connected in an essential way to the horizon of potential perceptions surrounding any given perception of a transcendent object, because the progressive explication of the horizon takes place as a continuous series of perceptions motivated in turn by continuous series of such sensations. As these kinaesthetic sensations, by themselves, cannot undergo any objective apprehension, they themselves

[12] The criticism of this countersense is ubiquitous in Husserl's work, for it often serves the purpose of illustrating how the authentic formulation of the problem of knowledge cannot be given in the natural attitude, but demands the suspension of the world-positing apperceptions. In the natural attitude, the problem of knowledge can be formulated only in an "anthropological way".
[13] (Husserl 1989, p. 60).

acquire only indirectly the sense of something transcendent, namely through a process of *localization* in the living body that is essentially parallel to the localization of the fields of sensation themselves. The *Leib* as the bearer of my subjective life emerges in virtue of a peculiar synthesis: the localization of kinaesthetic sensations in what will become actual *parts* of the *Leib* (limbs, eyes, etc.) is motivated by the mutual perception of the different sense organs. Thus, the fields of sensations can themselves be localized in ways that are specific to them, and the *Leib* appears as a unitary system of sense organs, or as *the* organ of perception. Now, there is little doubt that, already at the abstract level of solipsistic experience, the *Leib* is *de facto* involved in all perceptual life, as the freely moving system of the organs of perception and as the zero-point of spatial (and temporal) orientation.[14]

The *Leib* does not only play an essential role in the perceptual life of a "solipsistic subject", but is also necessary for the constitution of the other subjects, i.e., for the constitution of intersubjectivity, and, correlatively, of the one objective world common to all. In transcendental terms, this means: if an objective world is to exist at all, there must be an open community of subjects in a relation of mutual understanding that co-constitute it, hence, these subjects

[14] The theory of constitution has to work out the *eidos* of the constitution of the world in transcendental subjectivity. Therefore, the following question cannot be avoided: "Can we imagine a world-constituting disembodied subjectivity, or is there an eidetic law according to which no such constitution can ever take place?" The answer to this question is required by the eidetic character of the science of transcendental subjectivity. This question can of course be first addressed at the primordial level of solipsistic constitution. To be sure, the already mentioned mental experiment of the *Weltvernichtung* implies *a fortiori* what we could call a *Leib-Vernichtung*: if each transcendent objectivity cancels out as a result of a chaos of conflicting adumbrations, then the same fate befalls the living body. However, under this scenario, the resulting disembodied consciousness is also a worldless one, and, setting aside the controversy over whether such a mental experiment can be conducted to its radical endpoint, this conclusion does not help us answering the question concerning the possibility of a disembodied subject that is world constituting. Now, it appears that Husserl himself was torn by this question. In *Ideas II*, he sets it aside, while, in a short text written in 1927, he takes up the issue, and eventually seems to settle for a categorical statement that: 1) a *Leibloses Subjeck* is conceivable, and 2) it would be able to constitute the world, i.e., to possess hyletic data that undergo objective apprehension in correlation with motivating series of kinaesthetic data (Hua 14, p. 547). It is of course likely that the world constituted by such disembodied subjectivity, even within the abstraction imposed by the solipsistic approach, would be very impoverished, and would amount to a quasi-world, of the kind of those corresponding to the gradual destruction of objectivity envisaged in *Ideas I*. However, it is not necessary to pursue this question here, since the living body, playing a necessary role in any act of empathy, is a necessary presupposition of the intersubjective constitution of the world, as Husserl recalls at the end of this short text.

must be embodied. This is what Husserl tellingly calls the *transcendental deduction of the Leib*.[15] In virtue of this first result, the being of the world necessarily implies the existence of a community of embodied subjects, or, seen from the transcendental point of view, in order for transcendental subjectivity to constitute the world, it must self-objectifies as a community of embodied subjects.

These are the first and most fundamental roles that the living body plays in constitution, but by far not the only ones. As we shall soon see, embodiment is essential also for the highest level of constitution in virtue of which the world of experience is replaced by the fully objective world of mathematical physics. Yet, this second important step can be correctly framed only by taking into account Husserl's analysis of the notions of normality and abnormality.

The key to understand the phenomenological account of normality consists in acknowledging that it is a *transcendental* notion required by the constitution of the world.[16] Let us first focus on the role of normality in the perceptual life of an individual subject. As we have seen, the objects of perception and their properties are constituted in virtue of the concordant progress of experience. Concordance between different *Erlebnisse*, let us stress it once more, is the fundamental condition for reality to be there at all. It is by reflecting on it that we realize that transcendent reality cannot be dissociated from the syntheses that take place in consciousness. Now, the role of the living body as the organ of perception introduces a further degree of complexity in the relation between what appears as real and the character of concordance. Let us, for instance, consider the way in which a blister on a finger modifies our tactile experience. In this case, there occurs a conflict between the tactile experience of the impaired finger and the tactile experience that we are used to and that, for instance, the other fingers still make possible. Similar situations arise when we cross the eyes, and, much more dramatically, when we ingest chemical substances that alter our perception in a radical way. In all such cases, we do not apprehend the changes in sensations as objective changes. Rather, we consider the "new" qualities as mere appearances of the *normal* ones. This fact suffices by itself to highlight that normality must play a necessary role in the constitution of the world, i.e., a transcendental role. Indeed, a subject unable to tell apart whether a breakdown of

[15] Hua 13, p. 375.

[16] As Joona Taipale puts it: «... phenomenology deals with normality as a transcendental, qualitative, and dynamic issue» (Taipale, 2014, p. 123-124).

concordance is due to the alteration of the state of its living body or, rather, to a real change in the world, would not be able to constitute a stable reality.[17] The transcendental necessity of a coordination between the living body and the external world[18] does not rule out that there can be several such coordinations different from another. We can easily imagine a permanent alteration of our sense organs that would gradually establish a new normal and persistent style of perception, admitting, in turn, new types of anomalies. However, a certain normal (or "orthoesthetic" perceptual life) is necessary, precisely because it provides a *reference frame* for anomalies that are due to changes in the bodily (or environmental) conditions of perception.

These last considerations naturally extend to the intersubjective constitution of the world, in which normality becomes necessary for the mutual correlation of the perceptual (and intellectual) life of different subjects, i.e., for them *to co-constitute the same world*. The title of a text written between 1930 and 1931 indicates the entire sense of this problematic: *Apodictical structure of transcendental subjectivity. The problem of transcendental constitution of the world from normality*. A section of this manuscript entitled *Characteristic of human normality* deals with the problem of the phenomenological interpretation of sentences such as "I, while apperceiving the world, apperceive it as normal" and "I am normal". Husserl asks: "What do they mean "*phänomenologisch von innen gesehen*"? Here is the answer:

> ...I am in a surrounding world with human beings, who "all, apart from individual exceptions" experience this world as the same and determined in the same way, and, accordingly, have it in certainty as experienceable and experienceable in identity for one another. The world – before science - means for me and for them all (in their open multiplicity, also generatively 'openly infinite') exactly this common world [Gemeinwelt], and, to be specific, nature... (Hua 15, p. 157)

In this text, we find a clear formulation of what is means to "have a world" as a member of an open community that shares a normal perceptual life. The reference to "generativity" that is contains indicates that such community stretches through different generations of subjects sharing the same world. This community will admit, as subjects co-constituting the world, "deviant" members, such as children, pathological subjects, and, in a different way, animals too. These subjects do not share the same structure of normality. However, the community of "normal", adult,

[17] Hua 13, p. 367.
[18] Hua 13, p. 263-264.

healthy human beings will set the norms also for their constitutive performances.

The aforementioned text contains also the important reference to the prescientific character of the original form of this intersubjective experience of the world in the unitary flux of the life of a community. What is, instead, the role of normality with respect to the constitution of a world that is scientifically determined, i.e., ideally true in itself? It is at this stage that one must take into account the difference between two transcendentally fundamental senses of normality: the first (the one we have discussed so far) concerns the *perceptual* normality of an open community of human beings, the second the *intellectual* normality of the ideal community of all possible rational beings. The first corresponds to actual human beings that have a normal perceptual life, the second to the ideal community of all rational beings, no matter their physical make-up.

The perceptual normality characterizing a given community of subjects is necessarily dependent on their contingent form of embodiment. The case of animals highlights the fact that different species perceive the world differently, but, less dramatically, also pathological human subjects, or subject in abnormal conditions, perceive differently. As Husserl explained in detail in *Ideas II*, this fact, under the guidance of the scientific ideal of objectivity, motivates the mathematization of the world and the substitution of the qualities perceived by the senses with properties defined exclusively in the terms of mathematical physics.[19] The last stage of constitution referred to in the previous section, the properly *theoretical* one, takes place, thus, in virtue of the relativization of perceptual normality and, consequently, of the transformation of the world as experienced by a community of normal subjects into an appearance of the true world of theory. Such world, of course, can be shared by rational subjects only, and presupposes, thus, the notion of *intellectual normality*, which establishes norms for the constitution of objectivity that cannot be relativized to the contingent form of embodiment of the subjects in question.[20] This ultimate layer of objectivity presupposes the universal validity of all a priori disciplines that

[19] See Husserl, 1989, § 18.

[20] Intellectual normality is a fundamental transcendental notion at all levels of constitution including the prescientific one. This passage clearly illustrates it: «Soll eine Welt sein, sollen Subjekte selbst sein, für sich und miteinander sein, soll eine Zahlenwelt, sollen Wesenswahrheiten und Wesen selbst sein können usw., so muss es normale Subjektivität geben; ich gehe nicht nur überhaupt als unbestimmtes *ego* allem, was für mich ist, vorher, sondern als normales Vernunftsubjekt, und das ist nun das grosse Thema, es zu umschreiben.» (Hua 15, p. 36). See also (Zahavi, 2001, p. 98).

make possible the empirical science of nature, i.e., on the one hand, the ontology of nature, with all its sub-disciplines concerning the spatial, temporal and causal eidetic components of materiality, and, on the other, the formal disciplines belonging to the *mathesis universalis*, such as logic, mathematics, and the pure theory of probability. Any intellectually normal subject would be able, in principle, to grasp the truth of such disciplines.[21] Genetically speaking, the first sense of normality is more fundamental:

> The first and universal normality is the one whereby transcendental intersubjectivity in general constitutes a world as a normal world of experience of normal humanity. (Hua 15, p. 155)

Eventually, though, only the ideal of a shared intellectual normality can ground the universal community of all rational beings, i.e., those able to co-constitute the world as a theoretical accomplishment. Husserl explicitly refers to this possibility of extending the concept of humanity beyond its finite, contingent sense.

> And eventually, if it were to turn out that 'human beings' live, for instance on Mars, and if we were able to find a way to get into a community of comprehension with them, then they would at once be ranked under the human "we", which is the correlate of the world as the common world of us all.(Hua 15, p. 164)

Let us sum up the results of this overview of the transcendental significance of embodiment and normality. In *Ideas I*, the correlation between the world and transcendental consciousness was introduced, in an admittedly very sketchy way, as a static relation between an individual stream of *Erlebnisse* and the world of the natural attitude. The developments just outlined, instead, without contradicting those first results, present a much more complex picture of the transcendental subjectivity constituting the world, and, thus, of the transcendental correlation itself. If a result of *Ideas I* consisted in the claim that the existence of a world is unthinkable without a *transcendental consciousness* constituting it, now it appears that, out of transcendental necessity, the existence of a world is unthinkable without an open community of

[21] One should think of the universal validity of logic and mathematics to appreciate this point. Husserl's critique of biologistic or psychologist accounts of logic and mathematics, which make the truths of such sciences species-dependent, rejoins his theory of constitution.

transcendental subjects that self-objectifies as a community of embodied rational beings, i.e., *latu sensu*, as humanity. This does not mean that the distinction between transcendental and empirical subjectivity and the absolute character of the former are abandoned, but only that a world can be constituted in my transcendental consciousness only if I constitute myself as a member of a community of co-constituting subjects, that, as such, must self-objectify as "humans".

A further crucial aspect that the analyses of *Ideas I* did not foreground is that a community of monads bears within itself the world in virtue of a *genesis* that implies a dynamic and historical dimension. The considerations on normality just presented suffice to illustrate this dimension of subjectivity, without in the least exhausting it. Once more, let us adopt a transcendental, regressive approach. For the "true world" to become the *telos* of scientific research, the community of transcendental subjects *must have* reached the stage of the universal rational normality, which, in turn, implies a perceptual normality that, instead, rests on the contingent structure of sensibility. In other words, transcendental intersubjectivity bears in itself the *telos* of the exact, scientific determination of the world, only in virtue of an internal developmental process: to the different layers of the constitution of the world, from the prescientific to the scientific one, there corresponds an inner *history* of constituting subjectivity. This final consideration on the relation between constitutive subjectivity and the *telos* of ultimate, objective, scientific knowledge leads us back to the question raised at the end of the previous section.

4. The transcendental necessity of the world history

The elements recalled in the previous section can help us understand that the answer to our question results from the nature of the correlation between transcendental subjectivity and the world. Taking into account the role of embodiment and normality will show that such correlation implies much more than the simple interplay between actual and potential consciousness that is so often evoked while discussing Husserl's transcendental idealism. Better, it will allow us to spell out in detail what the implications of the notion of *potential* consciousness for the constitution of the world are. Let us first recall what Husserl says in *Ideas I* about the existence of things that are not actually perceived:

> That the unperceived physical thing "is there" means rather that, from my

> actually present perceptions, with the actually appearing background field, *possible* and, moreover, continuously-harmoniously *motivated* perception-sequences, with ever new fields of physical things (as unheeded backgrounds), lead to those concatenations of perceptions in which the physical thing in question would make its appearance and become seized upon.(Husserl, 1983, p. 99-100)

What is not actually perceived belongs to the horizon of what is actually perceived and can become object of a direct experiential grasp by the progressive exploration of such horizon. As is often repeated, the transcendence of the world is transcendentally elucidated in terms of the distinction between actual and potential consciousness. Now, it is legitimate to imagine that such a formulation needs only to be slightly modified to take into account the past existence of objects that were never in fact perceived, and that no longer exist. Their existence *meant* that they could be perceived in the above described terms by an actually existing consciousness, or, alternatively, their past existence means that they could have been so perceived. Still, what can be said about the existence of things, and more generally, about the existence of the world before the appearance of any living organism able to perceive? How can we think of a moment in the past in which the universe was *purely material*?

This question is discussed by Husserl in some detail in a dense text written between 1914-15, i.e., shortly after the publication of the first volume of *Ideas*. We can sum up the conclusions of his analysis with the aid of the results of the previous section. The starting point is the essential connection between real being and the possibility of the valid knowledge of it, which ultimately implies the possibility of experience. This means that the existence of real being implies the «... necessarily co-existence of a knowing subject or capable of knowledge» (Hua 36, p. 140). We have already seen that, once developed in detail, what follows from this is the transcendental necessity of an open community of embodied subjects. In this sense, a purely physical world seems to be impossible. However, Husserl adds that such knowing subject is not necessarily actually knowing, but only really capable of knowledge, and even more importantly: «Neither is such subject required for the whole infinite time of existence of the world» (Hua 36, p. 140). Rather:

> A purely material world as lower stage and as initial period of the duration of the world satisfies the conditions of knowability, if there exists a subjectivity, which in a rational way through experience and thought constitutes this world, which is its present environment, and then in a rational way can construct

> backward the earlier periods of the world, and also (among those) a period of purely material nature.(Hua 36, p. 141)[22]

In light of the results of the preceding section, we can appreciate that this reference to a "rational" constitution effected through experience and thought is a scientific, theoretical kind of constitution, the only one thinkable when we speak about stages of the universe so far back in the past, before the appearance of any form of life. Furthermore, the only meaningful truth of such a world is the one expressed in the terms of theoretical knowledge. This implies, thus, not only that a material universe in which subjectivity never arises is unthinkable, but also that a universe in which rational subjectivity never arises is, likewise, unthinkable. No universe in which the evolution of life stops before the emergence of rational beings is conceivable, and the progressive development of: «... more and more differentiated living-bodies, a higher and higher developed central nervous system, higher and higher developed sense organs etc...» (Hua 36, p. 144) is a *transcendental necessity*:

> This development would have to be a necessary, definite development, and its goal would have to be reached and really achieved up to the point that a world is phenomenally constituted. This is necessary for one to be able to speak of a world at all. (Hua 36, p. 144)

Likewise, no world could exist in which the only existing subjects are irrational in the way in which insane humans are.[23] Husserl concludes:

> We necessarily have as correlate of an existing world a world-development, namely in the language of the absolute attitude: development of an open and yet not arbitrary multiplicity of subjects in accord with one another towards a level of development in which "normal" rational subjects emerge, who constitute the

[22] See also further: «Sind Subjekte soweit entwickelt, dass sie empirische Anschauung einer Welt und einer psychophysischen Gemeinschaftswelt haben, dann kann man eine vormenschliche Vergangenheit der Natur sich vorstellen und monadologisch interpretieren.» (Hua 36, p. 43). In this study, I will not explore the sense of the "monadological" interpretation mentioned here. Let us notice, in passing, that along these lines one can formulate a phenomenological answer to what Quintin Meillassoux has called the "problem of ancestrality" (Meillassoux, 2006, p. 13-49). An outline of such an answer is in (Zahavi, 2017, p. 199-204).

[23] «Eine räumlich-zeitliche Welt mit bloß psychischen Wesen ist sehr wohl möglich, aber nur möglich als Unterstufe derselben Welt mit auftretenden Vernunftwesen. Ebenso: Eine Naturwelt mit unvernünftigen Wesen der Art, wie es Verrückte sind, ist nur möglich, wenn die Unvernünftigen in jener uns vertrauten unvollkommenen Gemeinschaft mit vernünftigen Wesen auftreten, die diese Unvernünftigen in die Welt einordnen können. Also die Welt bezogen auf notwendig normale Subjekte» (Hua 36, p. 144).

> world in a rational way. This stage must really be reached, for one to be able to speak rightfully of the existence of the world. (Hua 36, p. 145)

The transcendental necessity of this evolution does not only have a natural, phylogenetic component, but also a properly historical, cultural one, that is it concerns also the cultural part of the world history. In a text written in 1921, after reasserting the transcendental correlation between the world and a "normal humanity" and the necessity of an evolution that from lower organisms leads to humankind, Husserl concludes:

> Subjectivity is absolute, but it has in itself its absolute development, and the necessity of possible knowledge means, given that the present is not all, but it is the present of pasts, only this, that the flow of development must lead to mankind and to science (to culture). The world can only be if it develops constitutively, if absolute subjectivity develops the world, so that it develops to self-consciousness in human form, and further develops to scientific self-consciousness. Without tendency to truth there is no truth, without development to knowledge there is no true being. (Hua 14, p. 136)

These considerations, which point to the inclusion of cultural history in the necessarily historical development that is the correlate of a true existing world can be better understood by reflecting on the relation existing between normality, horizon, and constitution. To each stage of conscious life, whether animal of human, there corresponds a possibility of constitution that is relative to kind of normality characterizing that stage. Each normal community of experiencing subjects has its horizon of potential experience that determines what its objective correlate is. However, not all such horizons are so structured that they can "bear" within themselves the world, intended as the *telos* of an objective determination. A community of animals share an *Umwelt*, relative to its experiential performances, to which a certain species-relative truth corresponds, but not a *world* in the full sense of the word. This is why any such community can only be considered as a lower stage of a community of human-like subjects. In other words, not all forms of experiencing subjectivities share horizons harboring a world capable of being objectively determined. Furthermore, a radical transformation of the human horizon itself occurs with the emergence of a mature, "European" scientific culture. A text written in 1926 clearly highlights this point. In it, Husserl characterizes the development of a scientific humanity endowed with technical means of observation such as microscopes and telescopes, as the establishment of a new form of normality that acts as a norm for any preceding stage of the evolution of humanity. The

perceptual *Umwelt* of the prescientific humanity is thus relativized to the new level of "normal experience" proper to a community endowed with such instruments. This transformation marks a fundamental break in this developmental process, because a scientific culture lives in the awareness that each stage of the scientific progress is only a provisional one, and that the way in which the world appears at a certain stage of scientific and technological development will be superseded at a later stage, when new norms for truth will be available. The upshot of this process is that, for a scientific culture, there arises the idea of a true world that lies at the infinitely distant endpoint of scientific progress: «The one true world becomes the pole of endless series of approximations of relatively true worlds» (Hua 39, p. 659). To the development of scientific humanity, thus, there corresponds not just the emergence of new horizons of potential "experience", but also the inception of a new developmental process of transformation of such horizons, a process that redefines the very sense of the being of the world. The sense in which the existence of a world necessarily implies a *potential* consciousness appears now in a new light. This potentiality is such that the world can only exist if it contains in itself a development leading to the emergence of a scientific consciousness.

5. Conclusions

We can now go back to the teleological considerations that Husserl develops in § 58 of *Ideas I*. In that section, Husserl had exposed two series of motives that point towards a teleological consideration of the world, the teleology inbuilt into the intentional structure of consciousness, that ultimately leads to the *telos* of the scientific determination of the world, and the teleology manifested by what we have called the world history. It is this second type of teleology that seems to conflict with the standard interpretation of the scientific account of such a history, according to which the emergence of conscious life and, ultimately, of mankind was not in the least necessary. As anticipated, the first teleology, the teleology of consciousness, provides the key to understand the second. By taking into account the transcendental role of embodiment, intersubjectivity, normality, and cultural evolution, it has been highlighted that Husserl's transcendental idealism prescribes a necessary correlation between objective truth conceived as the infinitely distant end point of scientific progress (teleologically orienting the life of consciousness), and a history of subjectivity that from inanimate matter must lead to a scientific developed humanity. For such truth to exist as an ideal pole, as a *telos*, the world must contain the self-

objectivation of an infinitely self-developing transcendental intersubjectivity in the form of a scientific culture. Let us try to understand the consequences of this result.

The history of the universe could have been different in many ways, but it could not have been such that human life (conceived in the previously indicated broad sense) would have never arisen anywhere. What is the sense of this "could not"? The scientist who characterizes the world in terms of theories and nomological statements elaborate a framework that allows the formulation of an infinity of counterfactual statements. By simply varying the "initial conditions" (without, thus, considering universes in which different natural laws would hold) it is possible to formulate an infinity of counterfactual natural histories to which as many possible worlds correspond. Such alternative histories constitute a "counterfactual supplement" of the scientific description of the actually existing world that is, to be sure, deductively correct. In other words, there is no logical or physical reason to proclaim the impossibility in principle of such alternative worlds. One could also reformulate this fact by saying that, for the scientist who works in the natural attitude, the factually existing nature is only a particular case of an infinite family of possible natures parametrized by the contingent initial conditions of the history of the universe. Only a subset of such histories contains life, a smaller subset sentient life, and an even smaller human-like (i.e., rational) life. Now, Husserl's claims about the a priori necessity governing the world history can be seen as a *transcendental critique* of these counterfactual scenarios. What does this mean? As is well known, Husserl often claims that the naturalistic attitude (i.e., the attitude characteristic of natural scientists) is one-sided, because it identifies nature with the totality of being, because it ignores the constitutive subject, because it ignores the possibility of taking up a personalistic attitude, etc. Here, however, we face another consequence that such attitude is extremely likely to imply: i.e., to apperceive humanity as a contingent fact in the world. This consequence is due to a one-sided, objectivistic, notion of possibility that neglects that the transcendental correlation sets specific limits to what can count as a possible world. In modal terms, in addition to the different types of logical necessity, physical necessity, and in addition to the necessity stemming from the a priori ontology of nature, we have to take into account the phenomenological or transcendental necessity deriving from the a priori of the correlation. Such a priori, to be sure, must also

takes priority over the others. [24] This does not mean in the least that transcendental phenomenology interferes with the theoretical development of natural sciences by setting a priori limitations to their findings or, worse, by forcing upon them some kind of alternative teleological explanatory principles. Husserl is persuaded that nature is a causally closed sphere entirely governed by physical laws. There is no empirical fact that cannot in principle be explained in terms of laws and initial conditions. The explanation of why, for instance, the first life forms emerged from the primordial ooze will avail itself exclusively of physical and chemical principles. In this respect, we appreciate the difference between Husserl's transcendental approach and attempted teleological reforms of natural science such as Nagel's, conducted from within the naturalistic framework of contemporary philosophy of mind. What the transcendental critique implies concerns the counterfactual supplement of scientific theories only, according to which, for instance, the universe could have remained forever purely material; but the resulting impossibility of such scenarios cannot play any role in the scientific explanation of natural phenomena. It would make no sense, for instance, to claim that a cosmic catastrophe (such as the explosion of a supernova) capable of making forever impossible the emergence of life did not happen *because* it could not happen "out of transcendental necessity". The explanation why it did not happen must necessarily remain a causal-nomological one. Similar considerations apply to cultural history. Such history, according to Husserl, must be understood in terms of motivational explanatory principles, which will of course imply a counterfactual supplement requiring a transcendental critique. It is, indeed, all too easy to imagine that the conditions that led the development of "European" scientific humanity could have never obtained, or, once more, that the natural surrounding conditions could have been such that human history would end before reaching such a stage. Yet, once more, these counterfactual scenarios must be ruled out in light of the transcendental necessity stemming from the a priori of correlation.

I believe that Husserl's conclusion can be illustrated with the following analogy. While reading an autobiography (whether it is written in the first of or in the third person it does not matter here), we know from the outset that the main character of the book will not die, no matter how dangerous the situations described in it are, for the simple fact that the such character is also the author of the book, the one who is reconstructing and narrating the story. Thus, we know that the child the author once

[24] As Ip Long Nin has rightly stressed after hearing the presentation of the first version of this paper at the 2018 edition of the Venice Summer School of Phenomenology.

was will for sure grow into an adult. We know that, for instance, while the author was serving under the army, no bullet could ever kill him, nor render him forever deprived of the intellectual faculties required to recount the events of his life. Likewise, no machination, no intention to take his life or to deprive him of his intelligence could eventually achieve its aim. The life as well as the mental capacities of the author are, so to speak, protected by a kind of a priori immunity. Yet, we do not take this necessity to provide the explanation of the trajectory of the bullets that missed their target, nor of the failure of the plots hatched by the author's enemies. The events recounted in the narrative must be explained from within the narrative itself, with the causal and motivational resources existing in the world it describes. Of course, many alternative developments could be imagined, as long as they do not preclude the possibility that the protagonist will be able to relate them. Now, considered from the transcendental point of view, the world history can be likened to the autobiography of humankind, an autobiography that could have led to countless different histories, but to none in which the self-objectivation of transcendental subjectivity in the form of a mature rational humanity is absent, and, finally, an autobiography obeying to a transcendental necessity that does not interfere with the causal and motivational fabric of the world.

These considerations pave the way to what Husserl calls the teleological worldview based on the reconsideration of the world in terms of values, and prepare the ground for it. To be sure, they help us see that the necessary correlation between truth and subjectivity that is at the basis of transcendental idealism implies a reversal of the modern worldview, according to which humanity is but a contingent emergence in a self-sufficient material universe. Resorting to Schopenhauer's words, one can say that for Husserl too, humankind is the "bearer of the world".[25]

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[25] Schopenhauer, 1966, p. 332.

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