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What is distinctive about the Second Person?

A Phenomenological Approach to its Normative Significance

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Abstract in English

Many have claimed that the second person is key to understanding the intricate dynamics of our interpersonal relations, with some emphasizing the theoretically and ethically transformative power of a Dialogical approach to philosophy. However, these bolder second-person approaches make it hard to discern what actually warrants an inquiry into the second person as a distinct phenomenon in the first place.

This dissertation argues that a phenomenological method can uncover important nuances of what it means to turn oneself towards another in second-personal address. These nuances are often overlooked or conflated in the wider philosophical debate. I contend that the second-person phenomenon manifests distinctively in experience and is crucial for how we make sense of our social lifeworld and the possibilities of speech and discourse. At the same time, I caution against overstating the transformative potential of second-person approaches as new paradigms, for instance in moral or political philosophy.

To advance my distinctivist approach to the second person, I discern different (proto)-normative moments of the second-person relation as they intersect with phenomenological descriptions of intersubjective experience. Drawing on the notion of social acts in Reinach and Husserl, I explore two different kinds of normativity that have either been ignored or overlooked in contemporary work on these older resources: Reinach's formal approach to the nexus of second-personal address parallels contemporary work on the normativity of speech acts. By contrast, Husserl's perspective on second-personal engagement as intersubjective involvement highlights how we experience a particular kind of co-dependency on others.

Despite my insistence that reconsidering Reinach and Husserl is highly productive for the contemporary debate, I diagnose that both approaches to social acts tend towards a too sovereign conception of the speaker. To fully appreciate the primacy of our practical, performative access to others, I propose shifting attention to the experience of being addressed by the claims and appeals of others. This uncovers second-personal responsiveness as yet another highly relevant structural moment involved in our experience of depending on others.

By highlighting these structural moments in experience, this dissertation not only offers a nuanced phenomenological analysis of the second-person phenomenon but also points towards a new way to grasp the normative significance of second-person relations. Rather than starting from traditional normative concepts such as justice, responsibility, or moral respect, I propose reflecting on how more subtle (proto)-normative dynamics of the second-person phenomenon underpin these concepts. This work contributes to both the philosophical discourse on the second person and the recently emerged methodological debate surrounding phenomenological approaches to normativity.

Abstract in Danish

Mange har hævdet, at anden-persons-perspektivet er en nøgle til forståelsen af vores mellemmenneskelige relationers komplekse dynamikker og nogle har derudover også understreget den teoretiske og etisk transformative kraft som den Dialogiske tilgang til filosofien besidder. Imidlertid gør disse ambitiøse tilgange det ofte vanskeligt at afgøre, hvad der egentlig berettiger en særskilt undersøgelse af anden-persons-perspektivet.

Denne afhandling argumenterer for, at en fænomenologisk metode kan afdække vigtige nuancer af, hvad det vil sige at vende sig mod en anden i en anden-personlig henvendelse. Disse nuancer bliver ofte overset eller sammenblandet i den bredere filosofiske debat. Jeg hævder, at anden-persons-fænomenet manifesterer sig på en distinkt måde i erfaringen og at det er afgørende for en korrekt forståelse af vores sociale livsverden og for mulighederne for både tale og diskurs. Samtidig advarer jeg mod at overvurdere anden-persons-tilgangenes transformative potentiale i forhold til at fungere som nye paradigmer, for eksempel inden for moralfilosofien eller den politiske filosofi.

For at udvikle min Distinktivistiske tilgang til anden-persons-perspektivet skelner jeg mellem forskellige (proto-)normative elementer i anden-persons-relationen, som de kommer til udtryk i fænomenologiske beskrivelser af den intersubjektive erfaring. Med udgangspunkt i begrebet sociale handlinger hos Reinach og Husserl udforsker jeg to forskellige typer normativitet, der enten er blevet ignoreret eller overset i moderne arbejde med disse klassiske ressourcer. Reinachs formelle tilgang til den forbindelse der etableres i anden-personlige henvendelser har paralleller til aktuel forskning vedrørende talehandlingers normativitet. Derimod fremhæver Husserls perspektiv på det anden-personlige engagement qua intersubjektiv involvering snarere hvordan vi oplever en særlig form for medafhængighed af andre.

På trods af min påstand om, at en genovervejelse af Reinach og Husserl er særdeles produktiv for den nutidige debat, vurderer jeg også, at begges tilgang til sociale handlinger har en tendens til at operere med en for suveræn positionering af taleren. For helt at kunne værdsætte primatet af vores praktiske, performative tilgang til andre foreslår jeg at ændre fokusset til vores erfaring af selv at blive adresseret af andres krav og appel. Dette afdækker endnu et særdeles relevant strukturelt moment i vores erfaring af at være afhængige af andre.

Ved at fremhæve disse strukturelle momenter i erfaringen tilbyder afhandlingen ikke blot en nuanceret fænomenologisk analyse af anden-persons-fænomenet, den peger også på en ny måde at forstå det normative potentiale i anden-persons-relationer. I stedet for at tage udgangspunkt i traditionelle normative begreber som retfærdighed, ansvar eller moralsk respekt, reflekterer jeg over, hvordan mere subtile (proto)-normative dynamikker i anden-persons-fænomenet ligger til grund for disse begreber. Denne afhandling bidrager således både til den filosofiske debat om anden-persons-perspektivet og til de aktuelle metodologiske diskussioner om fænomenologiske tilgange til normativitet.

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Introduction

> "If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. This human being is not *He* or *She*, bounded from every other He and She."
>
> (Buber, 1937, p. 8)

> "The union and interaction of individuals is based upon mutual glances. This is perhaps the most direct and purest reciprocity which exists anywhere. […] No objective trace of this relationship is left behind, as is universally found, directly or indirectly, in all other types of associations between men, as, for example, in interchange of words. The interaction of eye and eye dies in the moment in which the directness of the function is lost. But the totality of social relations of human beings, their self-assertion and self-abnegation, their intimacies and estrangements, would be changed in unpredictable ways if there occurred no glance of eye to eye. This mutual glance between persons, in distinction from the simple sight or observation of the other, signifies a wholly new and unique union between them."
>
> (Simmel, 1969, p. 358)

The reciprocal I-You relation has been a subject matter of fascination in linguistics, psychology, sociology and philosophy for quite some time. Second-person approaches have in common that they claim a distinguished status for the reciprocal I-You-relation in their respective fields and beyond. These inquiries touch on a host of overlapping themes and intuitions. Historically, appeals to the I-You relation in post enlightenment German and German-Jewish thought[1] have sought to investigate more fine-grained dynamics of our interpersonal affairs (*zwischenmenschliche Angelegenheiten*). By bringing *das Zwischenmenschliche* to the fore, second-person approaches often also appeal to some, broadly speaking, humanist conception of the subject as relation-oriented, responsible and striving for personal development. However, on

[1] A non-exhaustive list of seminal contributions to this cluster include: Fichte's (cf. 2000, p. 45) remarks on the person as 'reciprocal concept' in *Grundlagen des Naturrechts*, Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1828) *Über den Dualis*, Ludwig Feuerbach's emphasis of the I-Thou relationship (cf. 2006, p. 277) and, first and foremost, early 20th century philosophy of dialogue established by Hermann Cohen (1904, 1919), Martin Buber (1937) and Franz Rosenzweig (2013).

what grounds, within which scope and with respect to which associated values it is argued that the second-person relation deserves distinguished attention varies considerably from approach to approach – both historically and contemporaneously. What warrants an investigation of the second person as a distinctive phenomenon? This question will guide my inquiry in this dissertation.

I. Buber and Simmel: Linguistic Expression and Sensual Experience

To begin with, let me illustrate the gulf in the debate from a more historical perspective. For this, I turn to a brief comparison between philosopher of religion Martin Buber and sociologist Georg Simmel.[2] For Buber (1937), the I-Thou relation is a specific way of relating to other beings that stands in contrast to the I-It-attitude where we treat other beings as 'mere' objects. The I-Thou attitude does not only apply to interpersonal affairs in human sociality narrowly conceived but can also be assumed *vis à vis* non-human entities, such as works of art or nature's creations. Buber's philosophy of dialogue is an ambitious project with the scope of another 'Copernican revolution' where the 'primary word (*Grundwort*) I-Thou' provides a fundamentally new conceptual and spiritual starting point. The I-Thou relation is a primarily a *form* of encounter and not experienced in just every social interaction. Buber even writes: "Den Menschen, zu dem ich Du sage, erfahre ich nicht" (Buber, 1995, p. 9); „The human being to whom I say You I do not experience" (Buber, 1937, pp. 59–60). By contrast, Georg Simmel's relational sociology suggests a decisively experientially grounded explanation for the special status of 'reciprocity' and 'relational interaction' (*Wechselwirkung*) in human sociality. Simmel (1969) locates the sensual origins of

[2] My brief sketch here might make it appear as if Simmel (1858-1918) was exclusively the 'down-to-earth' social scientist and Buber (1878–1965) exclusively the religious thinker with an interest in (Jewish) mysticism. As a proponent of German Lebensphilosophie, Simmel might to some be as suspect of indulging in esoteric 'irrationalism' (see for instance Lukács, 1981, pp. 442–458). Conversely, Buber was a student of Simmel and deeply engaged with the scientific social-psychological study of social phenomena. From 1937, as part of his academic appointment at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Buber taught anthropology and social thought.

reciprocal social relations and the perhaps "most direct and purest reciprocity that exists anywhere" (Simmel, 1969, p. 358) in non-verbal mutual gaze encounters. These mutual glances, as a way of connecting with each other in eye contact, are something we experience in our most mundane interactions with others.

The comparison can highlight a point of tension that will be of particular interest for my inquiry. On the face of it, both Simmel's remarks on the '*purest reciprocity which exists anywhere*' and Buber's remarks on the *'word' I-Thou* are concerned with a specific way of encountering others. What goes on in these encounters is distinct from perceiving and observing others as 'mere' objects. Their interest in this 'unique union' between persons opposes any approach that simply takes our social interactions to proceed from isolated and initially unconnected agents. However, whether the special reciprocity in question is best approached by starting from linguistic expression, i.e. here, the *primary word 'Thou'*, or from a more basic sensual dimension of experience might not be so straightforward to reconcile. While exchanges of words leave more objective traces than the fleeting mutual gaze experiences, Simmel insists that the "self-assertion and self-abneigations", the "intimacies and estrangements" of social relations "would be changed in unpredictable ways if there occurred no glance of eye to eye" (Simmel, 1969, p. 358). Are these two approaches to the reciprocal second-person relation, i.e., (1) an argument that takes its departure from the language dependent form of encounter when we address someone as 'You' and (2) a starting point from sensual experience, competing or ultimately compatible alternatives?

II. The Problem According to the Contemporary Debate in Philosophy

In the contemporary philosophical debate, the notion of linguistic address is instrumental in a rather severe challenge against any claim that the second-person phenomenon tracks a distinctive correlate in thought, meaning, or experience. Consider Richard Heck's (2002) version of this challenge:

> "The phenomenon of the second person is a linguistic one, bound up with the fact that utterances, as we make them, are typically directed to people, not just made to the cosmos. (If there were speakers of a language who never directed their utterances to their fellows, they would have no use for the second person.) The word 'you' has no correlate at the level of thought." (Heck, 2002, p. 12)

On Heck's view, the second person does not allow for the same depth of inquiry as the notion of self-consciousness, i.e., the first person. On this view, addressing someone as 'you' tracks nothing distinctive on the level of thought or belief. Consider the following example to illustrate Heck's claim.[3] I notice that my friend has a smudge of mascara on their face. According to Heck, if I notice this and think 'that person has smudged mascara on their face' I already have the relevant sense that I need in order to refer to them in mind. If I then direct an utterance at them by unobtrusively leaning over to say 'Hey bro, you have a smudge of mascara on your face there' nothing essentially changes or gets added on the level of thought or belief. Or, at least that is the conclusion we would have to draw if we follow Heck's strict analysis of sense and reference.

In this argument, the second-person relation is characterized through the notion of addressing another.[4] Following Heck's presentation, addressing another is a purely verbal, linguistic phenomenon. On Heck's view, addressing an utterance to someone is merely a vehicle to transfer an underlying thought or belief as information to another speaker. From here, we can understand Heck's challenge: If much of what appears as the phenomenon of the second person takes place in our talking with one another why should we at all assume that such "'you-talk' tracks anything like a distinctive 'you-*thought*'" (Salje, 2016, p. 820)? The phenomenon of the second-person is

[3] The idea to illustrate Heck's claim with an example of a similar kind is credit to Naomi Eilan (2014, p. 269). She uses the case of 'Sally who trails sugar'. You notice her as 'that person that trails sugar'. What difference does it then make to turn to Sally to address her and say 'Hey Sally, you are trailing sugar!'? "What role could it have, given that you already have Sally in mind?" (Eilan, 2014, p. 269)

[4] Lea Salje (2016) highlights the non-trivial challenge posed by Heck's anti-distinctivist argument from addressing (Salje, 2016, pp. 819–820) and makes explicit that the challenge hinges on the notion of (linguistic) address (Salje, 2016, pp. 830–833).

contingent on our need to express our thoughts in utterances to others. This is simply due to the fact that we are not telepathic creatures but typically interact through exchanges of words. Addressing another in communication just has the basic purpose "to make the transfer of information from one speaker to another possible" (Heck, 2002, p. 16). Granted we follow Heck's argument, a starting point from the notion of linguistic address can thus cast some doubt on the naively compelling idea that the second person deserves the status of a distinctive philosophical concept at all. All this might easily convince us that the second person simply does not warrant the same degree of scrutiny and reflection as the philosophical issues around the notion of self-consciousness and the first person.

In response to this challenge, several contributors to the contemporary philosophical debate on the second person have tried to motivate the idea that there is in fact a distinctive kind of 'you-thought' (Conant & Rödl, 2014b; Eilan, 2014; Haase, 2014a, 2014b; Salje, 2016). The more ambitious projects in this line of argument challenge the overall picture of language, action, and the mind implied by Heck-like accounts (Conant & Rödl, 2014a; Haase, 2014a, 2014b). After all, on such a view, our fairly existential need to address our utterances to others and not just the cosmos is relegated to a merely contingent fact. This rules out that "the concept of communicative exchange with another" might be "as irreducible and as basic as the idea of an act of judgment by a single mind" (Haase, 2014b, p. 121) in our self-conscious lives. Others have opted for a more modest strategy to counter Heck's challenge and questioned whether the phenomenon of addressing another is really so inextricably tied to our use of verbal, linguistic utterances in this narrow sense (Eilan, 2020; Salje, 2016). After all, phenomena like the mutual gaze encounter suggest that verbally addressing another is "just *one way* of performing the act of addressing another" (Salje, 2016, p. 832). Here again, the alternative picture these proposals want to motivate is that there is such a thing as essentially communicative thinking (or experience).

Following Salje (2016), I call this more modest approach to motivate the idea of essentially communicative thought and experience as a response to Heck's challenge *the distinctivist approach to the phenomenon of the second-person.* In reminiscence of the historical project in the philosophy of dialogue, I will sometimes refer to the more ambitious and encompassing contemporary projects implied by some formulations of the distinctivist approach as *the Dialogical approach*.

III. A Distinctivist and Phenomenological Approach to the Second Person

My argument in this dissertation aligns itself with the heterogenous set of proposals of the distinctivist approach. I argue that the second person is indeed a distinctive phenomenon.[5] To do so, I choose a starting point in the phenomenological method by taking up cues from early and classical phenomenological texts and their more systematic contemporary rediscovery. This means that I emphasize that the second-person relation is, first and foremost, a specific form of intersubjective encounter where two different experiential perspectives are constitutively interrelated but nonetheless distinct. Such a phenomenological analysis sides more with the modest approach that uncovers how there is more than one way of performing the act of addressing another – a strategy that is either overlooked or dismissed by the more ambitious projects of the Dialogical

[5] For now, I use the term "phenomenon" somewhat undetermined. However, the stricter phenomenological sense of the term might provide a good avenue to clarify what 'distinctive' means. According to Heidegger, for instance, the expression 'phenomenon' means "*what shows itself in itself*, what is manifest" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 25) [das *Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*, das Offenbare]. He distinguishes three concepts of the phenomenon to clarify the phenomenological sense of the term (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 27–28): (1) In its formal sense, the phenomenon leaves undetermined which entities or characteristics we are dealing with. (2) In ordinary use, the formal concept of the 'phenomenon' is applied to anything that appears and is accessible to empirical intuition. (3) Finally, in the phenomenological sense, phenomena are not just what ordinarily appears as something. Rather, phenomena are structures of experience and existence that already unthematically show themselves in such ordinary appearances and "can be brought thematically to self-showing" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 28). The phenomena of phenomenology are thus, in this sense, what "shows itself in itself" [*das Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*].

approach. I suggest that considering traditional phenomenological themes such as ‚intentionality', 'essential form', 'experiential subjectivity', and 'intersubjectivity' can contribute towards the case for the distinctivist view and at the same time help to untangle several issues that have often been targeted all at once in the contemporary debate. Importantly, I think that this is possible without losing sight of the broader picture of language, thought, and action implied by the phenomenon of the second person. This is a feat which, at least for some proponents of the dialogical approach in their quest to root out any anti-distinctivist leanings[6], determines whether one has a grasp of the second person as a topic at all.

There have been several recent attempts to motivate a phenomenological investigation of the second-person relation with a focus on intersubjective experience (Meindl, 2021; Meindl et al., 2019; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Pawlett Jackson, 2020; Zahavi, 2019, 2023). I am indebted to this work and my methodology aligns itself closely with their understanding of the contemporary relevance of the phenomenological method. However, as of yet, there is no systematic assessment what such an approach to the phenomenological method could contribute to further motivate the distinctivist view of the second person. I think that the alternative methodological starting point to study the phenomenon of the second person *qua* 'experience' can circumvent some of the problems that authors who work against anti-distinctivist proposals in frameworks where the second person is conceived as a kind of 'thought', 'concept', 'logical form of relation' or 'capacity' run into. While the phenomenological method is often presented as radically opposed to everything that happened on the other side of the post-Fregean linguistic turn, the topic of the second person may

[6] For examples of such a tendency towards gatekeeping what counts as a proposal worthy of a Dialogical approach see for instance (Conant & Rödl, 2014a; Stawarska, 2009; Theunissen, 1977).

be able to show that cross-fertilization between approaches from philosophy of language and phenomenologically inspired approaches is possible and, indeed, fruitful.

This is not least the case because phenomenologists had to deal with a different set of opponents. Through classical phenomenology's uptake in the more continental spectrum of the philosophical debate, phenomenologists had to justify and defend their idiosyncratic terminology against charges of egocentrism, being restricted to present moment face-to-face encounters and generally not paying enough attention to the social construction of subject positions. They have to motivate the difference between an intersubjective moment of subjectivity and social construction and ward off concerns that the focus on experiential subjectivity implies a politically suspect notion of the 'sovereign subject'.

By contrast, the struggle against anti-distinctivist views of the second person in the wider contemporary debate in philosophy works against a culture where a more individualistic view of the mind and its mental states is the norm and having a too sovereign conception of the subject or the agent is traditionally not a concern. They have to motivate that the interpersonal dimension is philosophically relevant in first place against an empiricist paradigm that "knows only the particular subject" and "is required to conceive the referent of the second person pronoun as if it were simply one object among others empirically given to us in experience" (Conant & Rödl, 2014a, pp. 6–7). That being said, the impressive repertoire that contemporary proponents of the distinctivist view have appealed to in order to make their case spans Fregean analysis of the logical-conceptual structure of the relational form (Salje, 2016; Thompson, 2004), speech act analysis (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009; R. Moran, 2018), Anscombe's challenge to empiricist accounts of action (Conant & Rödl, 2014a; Haase, 2014b), and Cavell's work on acknowledgment (Khurana, 2021b). In my work, I will not be able to give any of these resources the detailed

treatment they would deserve and cannot do them justice as relevant and important access points to the topic of the second person in their own right.

Nonetheless, my investigation shares a conviction with these proposals in the wider philosophical debate and the more ambitious projects of the Dialogical approach. The conviction is that the distinctivist approach to the second person can be instrumental in addressing a desideratum in contemporary philosophical research. In their ambitious formulation, distinctivist proposals to the second person aim at reconceptualizing a set of issues that in contemporary philosophy has received much attention under the heading of the so called 'problem of other minds'. Rather than to consider the conceptual or epistemological versions and formulations of the problem[7], they want to motivate an alternative scope and argue that the philosophical problem amounts to more than these theoretical challenges. Instead, they want to motivate the idea that the issues at stake in the philosophical discourse about other minds have a bearing on our conception of practical knowledge and action and touch on questions of a more ethical nature.

To make this somewhat more concrete, consider again the case of letting someone know that they have something on their face. It would be very much in the spirit of Stanely Cavell's (2002) work on acknowledging[8] to stress that even saying something fairly trivial to someone – such as 'Hey, you, your makeup is smudged" – is typically about more that transferring a piece of

[7] For a useful taxonomy of versions and formulations of other minds problems see (Overgaard, 2017). I will not engage with the discourse of other minds in this thesis but to give the reader an idea of the kind of problems debated. The most frequently discussed problems are two versions of the epistemological problems that either engage with the question (1a) 'How can we know, or be justified in believing that there are minds other than our own?' or (1b) 'How can we know what is on another's mind, or what mental state(s) an other is in?' and different formulations of the conceptual problem, i.e. (2) 'How can we conceive of another mind, or of mental states that are not my own?'.

[8] Cavell (1979, 2022a) is generally referred to as one of the original figures to propose such an idiosyncratic reconceptualization of the discourse about other minds in the Anglo-American debate through his readings of Wittgenstein and Austin.

information. It makes a difference whether I simply want to let you know without attracting too much attention; or say it to you in a very concerned tone – maybe because I suspect that you might have been crying before. I might use a condescending tone because you go around looking so dishevelled all the time; or even tauntingly shout it across the room to embarrass you. All these nuances are possible while the raw information conveyed remains the same throughout. In short, such attempts to reconceive the subject matter of the philosophical discourse about other minds[9] push the case that it is a worthwhile philosophical task to engage with the question how we *actually* go about 'getting to know' other minds and what it actually means to interpersonally 'understand' one another.

The aim of the more ambitious 'dialogical' project is to break with the highly specialized boundaries between contemporary philosophy of mind, epistemology and ethics. As Conant and Rödl (2014a) highlight in the introduction to their special issue on the topic, often "a pair of reciprocally related questions - in this case, the supposedly merely epistemological one regarding the other as an object of knowledge (and thus assigned to the province of theoretical philosophy) and the supposedly merely ethical one regarding the other as a source of moral obligation (and thus assigned to the province of practical philosophy) - are apprehended and treated as utterly independent of one another" (Conant & Rödl, 2014a, pp. 3–4). The concept of the second person is, on their view, a promising avenue to bridge this divide. I am sympathetic towards the idea to break with too narrow boundaries in contemporary philosophical thinking. However, the wide-

[9] For the sake of philosophical precision, it is very important to not think about this program as a solution to the epistemological or conceptual versions of the problem. Rather, we are dealing with a reconceptualization that can provide a valuable counterbalance against a certain emphasis on particular ways to engage with other minds such as mindreading or a particular sub-personal mechanism such as simulation in received debates. See (Dullstein, 2012; Overgaard, 2017; Overgaard & Michael, 2015).

reaching philosophical scope of such a demanding project might have led to somewhat of a blind spot for the more fine-grained intersubjective dynamics of the second-person phenomenon. This is where I think traditional phenomenological themes such as intentionality, the eidetic method, and intersubjectivity can prove useful and provide a new structure to help us ground and discern different issues at stake in this project. Moreover, drawing on the phenomenological tradition comes with the advantage that it naturally does not confine itself to the narrower boundaries of one specific philosophical problem area in contemporary philosophy such as epistemology or ethics.

Conversely, the dialogue with these approaches from the wider philosophical debate on the second person can draw attention to challenges the topic of the second person might pose for a phenomenological approach. I will show that it is too easy to dismiss the phenomenology of intersubjectivity as altogether unsuitable to contribute to a distinctivist approach to the second person. However, the topic of the second person does present some inherent challenges to a method so rooted in an investigation of *first-person* intentional experience.

In highlighting this, my investigation alludes to issues in the ongoing debate within phenomenology to refine the scope of application of its own methods. In my reflection on the second-person phenomenon, I work against a certain tendency in contemporary adaptations of the phenomenological method to juxtapose their 'bottom-up' approach from pre-reflective and embodied experience against approaches that allegedly start 'top-down' from conceptual thought, linguistic structure, and grammatical form.

By working against this binary view of the relation between embodied experience and conceptual thought, my investigation touches upon central contemporary research challenges in phenomenology. These are, namely, to systematically reflect on a phenomenological approach to normativity (cf. Crowell, 2013; Heinämaa et al., 2022; Loidolt, 2018; Wehrle, 2015) and language

(cf. Apostolopoulos, 2019; Benoist, 2008; Engelland, 2021; Lohmar, 2017) as well as to find ways to address matters that concern social (in)justice with an originally phenomenological method (cf. Aldea et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2019). I think the topic of second person can help to spotlight the importance to continuously address such crucial methodological challenges within the contemporary phenomenological movement. I am, in a first instance, concerned with identifying them as genuine methodological challenges rather than to present a ready-to-hand solution or methodological toolbox to tackle them in practical application. A thorough spelling out of the methodological implications of my reflection on the second person case for any of the three topoi indicated here will have to be taken up more explicitly and detailed in future work.

IV. Chapter-by-Chapter Synopsis

With these preliminary remarks in place, I now present, in brief outline, the structure of my argument. The central idea is this: **Chapters 2 to 6** each elaborate on a different phenomenological entry point to approach the topic of the second person. On what grounds should the second person count as a distinctive phenomenon that becomes manifest in experience and thought? The perspectives presented in each chapter are not meant as mutually exclusive alternatives to address this question. Rather, the main concern of my inquiry is to show that distinguishing these levels of analysis is helpful to untangle several issues that somewhat intuitively fall together in an investigation of the second person. I am convinced that this can help to refine our understanding of the philosophical problems and issues at stake with the topic. Of course, this will also involve pointing out tensions between the different perspective along the trajectory I outline.

Before I delve into this task, I review recent attempts to develop phenomenological approaches to the second person in **Chapter 1** and confront them with concerns from the wider philosophical debate. According to some, the phenomenology of intersubjectivity is altogether unsuitable to contribute to a distinctivist approach of the second person. I suggest that going back to Reinach's

and Husserl's work on 'social acts' can help to combine two rather disjunct threads in the recent phenomenological work on the second person and push back against the outright dismissal of a phenomenological approach's relevance to investigate the second-person phenomenon.

In **Chapter 2**, I then turn to Reinach's and Husserl's work on the notion of 'social acts' and their common methodological starting point in **intentional experience** – a corner stone of any phenomenological method. I address the concern that any appeal to 'intentionality' runs the risk of missing the mark of the second person because such an analysis will inevitably break down the experience into a set of composite acts or individualized mental states. Against such concerns, I suggest that the phenomenological approach to intentionality points out that there is a specific form of intentional experience at play in social acts: They are about 'turning oneself towards another' (*sich an einen anderen wenden*). As I will show, getting clear on the unique character of the intentional correlates involved in this experience is helpful to understand the distinctive character and irreducible status of second-person relations. However, I concede that just pointing out the complex character of the intentional correlates for second-person experience is not enough. We would want to say more to adequately characterize (1) the form of normativity and (2) the kind of intersubjective engagement at stake. Here, I take Reinach and Husserl work to point in two diverging but equally interesting directions that both have their roots in the analysis of social acts as a distinctive kind of intentional experience.

The next two chapters follow the hints about the second person to be found in Reinach' and Husserl's respective work on the notions of 'social acts' (*soziale Akte*) and 'communication' (*Mitteilung*). My aim is to make the diverging trajectories in their approaches to the second person phenomenon explicit. On the one hand, with Reinach, we have an approach to second-personal address that primarily analyzes the formal nexus of claims and their fulfilment and its straightforward deontic-normative import. In Husserl's work, on the other hand, we find an

approach that describes how second-personal engagement and communicative connection leave their marks in (embodied) and experiential subjectivity.

In **Chapter 3**, I take a detailed look at Reinach's claim that the sufficient feature of social acts is their 'need of being heard' (*Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit*). Reinach's **eidetic method** studies the formal connection between claims and their fulfilment. What warrants an inquiry of the second person as distinctive phenomenon, on this view, is that it highlights a specific form of normativity that we experience in relation to a second person as counterparty. I argue that Reinach's approach combines elements from contemporary attempts to point out the significance of this distinctive form of bipolar normativity as a function of second-personal address. Independent of whether one approaches this form of normativity by analyzing the essential connection (*wesensgesetzliche Verbindung*) between claims and their fulfilment (Reinach), as a more static logical-deontic form (Thompson, 2004), or as a more dynamic transactional-deontic structure (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009), this account highlights that it often matters to us that we experience claim and commitment relative to a counterparty. I show that the bipolar form of normativity is particularly salient in the domain of civil law and in certain experiences of social normativity more and highlight the merits of such a formal approach to the practical nexus enabled by second-personal address. Due to their formal method, these contributors do not need to further account for the role of experiential subjectivity to argue for a distinctive second-person phenomenon. However, from a phenomenological perspective, an account of the experienced intersubjective and social dynamics that go beyond the formal practical and discursive nexus is exactly what would be desirable.

In **Chapter 4**, I then turn to Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity as a perspective that forefronts embodied and **experiential subjectivity** to understand the phenomenon of the second person. What justifies to investigate the second-person as a distinctive phenomenon, on this view, is that it is about a specific form of intersubjective engagement. What makes second-

person relations distinctive on this approach is that they enable communicative connection. I highlight how second-personal engagement gears into our interactional practices on two levels: Firstly, in present time, face-to-face interaction, we experience second-personal engagement as a social dynamic that highlights our co-dependency in communicative connection even before we enter into demanding deontic relations of joint commitment. Secondly, on considering the role of habitualization, this account reveals an operative normativity, that points to an interesting trajectory to reflect on the meaning of authenticity and inauthenticity in communicative engagement in a thoroughly intersubjective, relational manner.

In **Chapter 5**, I turn to possible limitations of this starting point from the phenomenology of intersubjectivity by considering **responsive interpretations of intentionality**. On the view outlined in this chapter, what warrants to investigate the second person as a distinctive phenomenon is that it gears into a specific dimension of action. I consider three different meanings of opposing others to argue that second-personal responsiveness proper concerns the meeting of practical stances about a concrete issue. I argue that this is essential to understand what it means to oppose someone's actions as a wrong. To make this argument, I draw on insights from approaches inspired by philosophy of language that help to clearly demarcate the dimension of action in question. I then discuss what a phenomenological perspective on second-personal responsiveness and the normative experience of being addressed by a claim can contribute. Crucially, the (proto)-normative structure revealed in this reflection on second-personal responsiveness is not simply about emphasizing the antagonistic nature of social relations over harmonious encounters. Second-personal responsiveness concerns a distinctive experience of practical reality where we are personally addressed by the demands and appeals of the other.

Finally, in **Chapter 6,** I engage with the perhaps most straightforward sense to think about the distinguished status of the second-person relation and the distinctive role of dialogical encounters

in human social experience. The intuition is that dialogical encounters also have something to do with **treating other beings 'well', or at least 'respectfully***'*. To investigate this intuition from a more contemporary angle, I propose to consider Iris Marion Young's contested notion of 'asymmetrical reciprocity' and her take on the challenge to understand each other in a morally respectful way in communicative exchange given the fact of social injustices. I defend her ambitious claim that all communicative exchange is structured by what she calls asymmetrical reciprocity against the suspicion that the notion is merely a 'postmodern oxymoron'. To do so, I put my proposal for a distinctivist, phenomenological approach to the second person to work.

1 | Phenomenological Approaches to the Second Person

What does it mean to engage with another as 'You' rather than to merely observe them from a third person perspective? Outside phenomenology, the concept of the second person has been used as an open heading to raise questions and connect problems in different areas of philosophical and interdisciplinary research (Conant & Rödl, 2014a; Eilan, 2014; Khurana, 2021a). In particular, this more recent philosophical literature aims to connect attempts to think about the second-person relation in theoretical terms by inquiring into the nature of 'you-thinking' and 'you-awareness' with attempts to give the second person normative substance by also revealing it as a source of our practical reasons for action.

In this chapter, I review recent attempts to engage with the topic of the second person with a phenomenological approach. I point out that recent efforts to introduce the notion of second-personal engagement into the phenomenology of sociality and its central debates mainly investigate the second-person relation in more theoretical terms as 'you-awareness' in the context of social cognition theory (León, 2021; Meindl et al., 2019; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2019). However, as of yet, few attempts have been made to link this work to recent phenomenological analyses of the normative and practical significance of the second-person relation in calls for a 'second-person phenomenology' (Crowell, 2016; Stawarska, 2009). I argue that this is a missed opportunity to understand the link between the theoretical and practical relevance of the topic. I follow up on the suggestion from the wider philosophical debate and outline my approach to make this connection.

To structure my review of the literature, I consider three rather disjunct groups of proposals that have all engaged with some aspect of the topic of the second person while employing a phenomenological method. Just like in the wider philosophical and interdisciplinary debates, the understandings why a second-person approach matters are vastly different:

(1) Phenomenologically inspired approaches in the cognitive sciences take a "second-person approach" to mean a general turn towards embodied intersubjective and interactive forms of contact to understand social cognition (De Jaegher et al., 2017; Fuchs, 2013; Gallagher, 2012). Here, the notion of the second person plays a central role in a rhetorical strategy as part of a broader research agenda. These calls for a second-person method push against a mainstream focus in the cognitive sciences on so-called 'objective' third-person processes which are somewhat naturally the focus of the observing scientist.

(2) Within the debate on the phenomenology of sociality, the notion of 'second-personal engagement' has been investigated as a much more specific form of intersubjective encounter that involves reciprocal awareness and mutual affective identification (Barber, 2022; León, 2021; Meindl, 2021; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2019, 2023). Such an approach that forefronts embodied and experienced intersubjectivity may offer important and nuanced insights as to how second-personal engagement and communicative connection manifest themselves in experience in a distinctive manner.

Finally, **(3) calls for a 'second-person phenomenology' that draw on more existential approaches** to the phenomenological method highlight the interdependence of normative and descriptive aspects in the second-person phenomenon (Crowell, 2015, 2016; Stawarska, 2009). They insist on the importance of considering a normative approach to the second-person relation that views it not only as a natural socio-cognitive capacity but also as important to understand how we experience our practical ability to participate in, actively respond to, and shape our shared social reality of human affairs.

In the following, I will confront these existing approaches with concerns voiced in the wider philosophical debate that the phenomenological method might be altogether ill-suited to contribute anything towards a distinctivist approach of the second-person phenomenon. The general concern

is that the phenomenology of intersubjectivity might have illuminating things to say about more primitive perceptual encounters and face-to-face interactions but does not have much insight to offer when it comes to the specific form of relation at stake in second-personal address.

In section 1, I suggest that this concern might be valid with respect to how the notion of the 'second person' has been used as a somewhat more rhetorical strategy to emphasize the importance of 'interaction' in the interdisciplinary theory of minds debate. However, as I show in section 2, it would be too premature to dismiss the phenomenology of intersubjectivity prematurely on these grounds since recent work in the phenomenology of sociality investigates 'second-personal engagement' a more specific form of intersubjective encounter that involves second-personal address, reciprocity and mutual affective identification. I note that some of the contemporary commentators have mainly emphasized that second-personal engagement is of relevance for our socio-cognitive capacities. In section 3, I turn to two different proposals that call for the more encompassing project of a so-called 'second-person phenomenology'. Steven Crowell's (2015, 2016) and Beata Stawarska's (2009) respective proposals have in common that they draw our attention to normative aspects at stake with the phenomenon of the second person, despite their differences in scope and understanding of the phenomenological method. I highlight that there are important reasons for the recent work in the phenomenology of sociality to take these concerns on board. In section 4, I suggest that going back to Reinach's and Husserl's original work on the notion of social acts is a good starting point to think these latter two, rather disjunct trajectories together. Not least, because I believe that the intertwinement of descriptive and normative aspects at stake with the topic of the second person are rather salient in these older resources. However, they seem to have either been sidelined or overlooked in the contemporary debate on social phenomenology and the second person that draws on these resources.

1.1 The Second Person as 'Rhetorical Strategy' in the Interdisciplinary Theory of Mind Debate

A continuous challenge in contemporary research on the topic of the second person is to navigate the need to address a specific enough set of problems to be philosophically or otherwise relevant while maintaining a sufficiently broad scope to connect issues across philosophical fields or even disciplinary boundaries. In the introduction to a special issue on the topic, Naomi Eilan (2014) has succinctly labelled the seemingly ubiquitous appearances of the term 'second person' across research areas a contemporary "You Turn". This "You Turn" can be observed in different research areas within philosophy, in particular moral philosophy (Darwall, 2006), the epistemology of testimony (R. Moran, 2018), political theory (Khurana, 2021a) and philosophy of language (Conant & Rödl, 2014; Haase, 2014), as well as outside of philosophy in developmental psychology (Reddy, 2018) and neuroscience (Schilbach, 2016). All proponents of second-person approaches claim that the second person reveals a particular quality of human encounters that is important for either problems of social cognition, or normative theory, or both. However, neither across disciplines nor within a particular research area is there a consensus about what exactly a second-person relation amounts to and why it is important to turn to it. Naomi Eilan (2014) assesses that this is not necessarily a bad thing but is concerned that we might reach a point "where wheels begin to spin in a vacuum" (Eilan, 2014, p. 266) if we try to answer these questions within the confines of any particular internal debate.

In the introduction to another special issue on the topic, Conant and Rödl (2014a) come to a similar conclusion and argue that it is necessary to view the second-person topic through different philosophical lenses. In order to reflect on the second person "profitably, we need to broaden our conception along two dimensions: historically, across philosophically traditions, and systematically, across philosophical disciplines" (Conant & Rödl, 2014a, p. 8). They add that a

further condition to do this well is to understand that there is a crucial difference between the mere coincidence of the word 'second-person' and the concept of the second person. It is one thing to pick up on the 'second person' as a rhetorical strategy and another thing to pick up on it as a set of conceptual problems with philosophical relevance. Conant and Rödl even go so far as to claim that the latter conceptual investigation of the second person points to *"the* problem of the second person" (Conant & Rödl, 2014a, p. 4). I take their boisterous claim to mean that the ubiquitous appearances of the second person as a topic do indeed point towards an intricate set of philosophical questions that bridge philosophy of mind, epistemology and ethics. Like Naomi Eilan, they are not trying to solve 'the' problem by presenting a monolithic 'theory' of the second person.

Despite these calls to break with traditional boundaries within philosophical research, some contributors to the wider debate doubt that a phenomenological method following the tradition started by Edmund Husserl and his students and early followers has anything to add to the topic. The general concern is that phenomenologists are too occupied with basic intersubjective engagements to approach the second person as a more specific form of human encounter in its communicative and social nature. A phenomenological approach, so the concern, can thus not address the relevant set of philosophical problems at stake.

Naomi Eilan (2020) writes that "[m]uch of the debate in this tradition turns on appeals to empathy and to debates about how empathy makes other I's immediately present" by postulating "empathy as a kind of primitive perceptual/experiential capacity" (Eilan, 2020, p. 16). The problem with this is "that the postulation of a brute capacity to empathically perceive other I's begs the question" (ibid.). Vincent Descombes (2001) even argues that this 'intersubjectivism', i.e., phenomenology's reliance on the primacy of primitive perceptual encounters and face-to-face interactions between subjects to account for social reality, cannot get social relations proper into

view.[10] What is at stake in second-person relations, according to Descombes, is not "the presence of another, or even the perception of another" (Descombes, 2001, cited after transl. Grasser, p. 21).[11]

Indeed, some contemporary advocates of phenomenologically inspired approaches seem primarily concerned with basic perceptual intersubjective engagements and do not carefully distinguish whether these encounters involve reciprocity or addressing another. This goes in particular for phenomenologically inspired approaches in the cognitive sciences and psychology that are primarily concerned with other perception. Moreover, with these approaches, the suspicion might be warranted that the 'word' second person serves more as a rhetorical strategy. For instance, Thomas Fuchs (2013) uses the terms intersubjective perspective and second person perspective (2PP) synonymously as notions that aim at overcoming "the antagonism of first and third person or subjective and objective perspective" (p. 2). Similarly, Shaun Gallagher (2012) uses the notion to refer to this wider research agenda within the cognitive sciences. The chapter 'Intersubjectivity and the Second Person' uses the term "second person" only once in the body of the text (cf. Gallagher, 2012, p. 196) and it seems that any form of other perception – whether unilateral or reciprocal – would qualify as a 2PP. In this context, calls for a 'second-person method' champion an alternative approach in the interdisciplinary theory of minds debate that prioritizes embodied

[10] Descombe's (2014) work beyond the paper I refer to here is not primarily about the second-person or dialogical philosophy but concerned with the "institutions of meaning". Together with Jocelyn Benoist and the sociologist Bruno Karsenti (2001) Descombes is part of a group of authors that critique mainstream 'intersubjectivism' within phenomenology and its inability to account for the habitual and institutional structuring of the social world. Caminada (2023) convincingly shows that Husserl's concept of 'Gemeingeist' actually allows for a way to move beyond what these authors call 'intersubjectivism', i.e., an account of the social world that is only derived from interactions between subjects. Against Descombes' and Benoist's claims, Husserlian social ontology seems able to describe subjectivity within the context of collective habits and common institutions.

[11] I take this translated quote from Marc Grasser's (Descombes, n.d.) polished, but unpublished translation of Descombes text, available online under the title 'Be Your Own Heir'.

cognition and interactive engagement and even literally calls to "embody social interaction research" (De Jaegher et al., 2017).

These calls to focus on the 'second-person perspective' go hand in hand with advocating for the thesis of direct social perception (DSP) against two groups of mainstream proposals, namely theory theory (TT) and simulation theory (ST).[12] Against the idea that we either need a cognitive mechanism that simulates the mental states of others (ST) or engage in some form of mindreading (TT) to understand them, DSP suggests that we can directly perceive other's mental states in their embodied expressions. When I see a person in distress, I perceive their sadness in their hunched posture and frowning facial expressions. Experientially, their bodily expressions are not just symptoms or behavioral signs from which I infer that they are most likely sad. I see their sadness and their "mind in action" (Krueger, 2018, p. 301). To make this point, the DSP thesis takes partial inspiration from the classical debate on other perception (*Fremdwahrnehmung)* and empathy (*Einfühlung)* in early 20th century phenomenology (Zahavi, 2011). The general idea here is that making sense of others in perception involves a basic form of other-directed intentionality (Zahavi, 2014). This roughly corresponds to what Eilan calls a "primitive perceptual/experiential capacity" that makes other I's immediately present in experience.

There are two problems with the more rhetorical use of the term 'second person' in this context. Firstly, exclusively presenting the second-person method as an alternative to ST and TT in the interdisciplinary theory of mind debate (ToM) might in fact miss out on the philosophically

[12] TT goes back to Premack and Woodruff's (1978) work in animal psychology who originally claimed that chimpanzees 'have' a 'theory of mind' that explains their alleged ability to ascribe intentions. The focus of TT is on the general question of how we understand others in their mental states by positing that this involves a folk psychological theory. The rival theoretical paradigm ST, first formulated by Heal (1986) and Gordon (1986), is much more interested in the specific cognitive mechanisms that are required to attribute mental states to others where the claim is that this involves some form of simulation process.

interesting and meaningful set of problems at stake with the more ambitious projects of the *Dialogical approach*. Secondly, at least with its current focus and sporadic, inconsistent use of the word 'second person', this body of literature does not really help to discuss the second person as a *distinctive phenomenon* and cannot contribute to an argument how the second-person relation manifests itself in meaning and experience in any distinctive way. Here, I do not want to engage too much with the former, more ambitious concern because I do not want to offhandedly dismiss the real interdisciplinary impact of the 'interactive turn' in the cognitive sciences in the last decades. Moreover, I suspect the calls for the fundamental ways in which *the Dialogical approach* seeks to reconceptualize and address philosophical problems might itself suffer from some obscuring and mythicizing effects that go hand in hand with also using the notion of the 'second person' in a rhetorical function.

However, one point I do want to take note of here concerns the lack of philosophical precision in this interdisciplinary debate. Some commentators have lucidly argued that the 'second-person' intervention in the interdisciplinary theory of mind debate frames the debate somewhat misleadingly (Dullstein, 2012; Overgaard & Michael, 2015). Monika Dullstein as well as Søren Overgaard & John Michael argue that proponents of the interactive turn in the ToM debate "ultimately have different explanada in mind than defenders of ST and TT" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 232). In the traditional ToM debate, the concern is "a very specific aspect of social cognition, understanding others in terms of their mental states" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 242) to explain how we come to hold justified and true beliefs about other's mental states. This debate is not originally interested in "giving and account of how social relations are established or how social interactions work" (ibid.). Simply saying that the more holistic perspective of a 'second-person method/perspective' is also important does not "change the legitimacy of the primary explanandum of both ST and TT" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 242). This is true even if the second-person,

interactivist intervention might provide a valuable counterbalance against a certain overexcitement with mindreading and inference as a particular form of social cognition and simulation processes as a particular sub-personal mechanism championed in these debates.

Therefore, the proponents of the second-person intervention might be better advised to make "it explicit that the focus on the second person leads to a reconceptualization of the problem" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 238) and work on substantializing the alternative phenomena they reflect on by focusing on the second person case. Interestingly, Monika Dullstein (2012) suggests that a tentative point of comparison to make this reconceptualization explicit would be the kind of "position Stanley Cavell holds in regard of the classic problem of other minds" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 237). I think that following up on Dullstein's tentative suggestion here would make the link between the phenomenologically inspired second-person intervention into the cognitive sciences and the more ambitious contemporary projects in the wider philosophical debate on the second person, i.e., such as the one sketched in Conant and Rödl's (2014b) special issue, much more apparent. What is more, Cavell's work on 'acknowledgment' might already point to one of the phenomena that proponents of the second-person method in the interdisciplinary theory of mind debates would have to engage with to make their case clearer.

Substantializing the phenomena that are relevant in a reflection on the second person case is especially important, since the notion of the 'second person' is used sporadically and inconsistently in the context of the second-person intervention into the theory of minds debate. Another lucid observation in Monika Dullstein's (2012) survey of the debate is that Shaun Gallagher (2001, 2008, 2012) seems primarily concerned with the second-person perspective to "emphasize the autonomy of social interactions, i.e. the fact that interactions are more than the summation of individual attitudes and actions" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 239). The developmental psychologists

Vasudevi Reddy (2010b, 2010a, 2018)[13], on the other hand, takes second-personal engagement to "stand for a certain attitude which interacting partners might adopt with respect to each other" (Dullstein, 2012, p. 239). Making this distinction more salient will be one of the main tasks in my own inquiry. To do so, I now want to focus on the latter, more specific concern about maintaining the second person as a distinctive phenomenon. There is a crucial difference between a broad interest in embodied interaction patterns that contribute to alignment and coordination between participants in a practice and the study of second-personal engagements as a more distinctive form of embodied intersubjective encounters that involve 'mutuality' or 'reciprocity'.

To get a more concrete idea of the distinct form of encounter at stake with the second person, let's consider again Eilan and Descombes positive remarks on the phenomena they are interested in. For both, how we connect to others in communicative language should be central to an account that wants to get at the specific social nature of second-person relations. We would only call a teaching relation socially successful if the following holds: "it's a teaching relation, because the professor has only taught if someone has been taught, and a student has only been taught something if someone else has taught it to them" (Descombes 2001, cited after Grasser p. 23). This somehow requires something that goes beyond an attempt to reach out to others in acts of empathy. My act of empathy towards another can in principle remain unilateral. I might really want my child to study for an upcoming school assignment and at the same time empathically grasp and possibly even empathetically relate to their boredom and distractedness with the task. This, however, does not yet ensure that we sit down together and have a successful study session.

[13] Although Reddy has collaborated with the initially phenomenologically inspired contributors (cf. Brinck et al., 2017), her own inspiration stems from dialogical philosophy, in particular Martin Buber. It is thus natural that she emphasizes the *form* of encounter and specific affective mark-up of the attitude at stake in second-personal engagement.

To develop this intuition further, both Eilan and Descombes draw on Reid's and Austin's hints about the inherently relational nature of a certain type of agent-relative speech acts.[14] When I invite you for tea, I do not just notify you about an action I just performed. There is a difference between merely letting you know that I have just put on the kettle as a piece of information about our shared work place and saying the same sentence as an invitation to have tea together. The inviting itself is an action and a social operation. These agent-relative speech acts, like inviting, promising, ordering, greeting, and apologizing, need to be addressed towards another, a second person. They are essentially acts for two parties and require some kind of "communicative connectedness" (Eilan, 2020).

This gives us something to work with. An account that wants to contribute to the distinctivist approach to the second-person phenomenon should demonstrate an interest in these peculiar social operations. On this point, the phenomenologically inspired 'second-person' intervention into the interdisciplinary theory of minds debate either simply misses the mark of the second person as a topic or would at least need to be refined to account for the more specific form of encounter at stake in the I-You-relation.

However, it would be premature to dismiss the entire phenomenological method based on the assessment that it allegedly only has interesting things to say about empathy as a basic capacity to perceive and experience others. If we turn back to the classical phenomenological literature on intersubjectivity and sociality and its contemporary rediscovery, it becomes apparent that

[14] Accounts of the second person in the contemporary philosophical debate often refer back to Thomas Reid's (2010) work on social acts of mind. This is then linked to ideas from speech act theory established by J.L. Austin's (1975) in 'How to do things with words'. In particular, the idea that language not only has "locutionary" and "perlocutionary" but also a distinct "illocutionary force". For a comprehensive synthesis of these frameworks see Richard Moran's (2018) '*The Exchange of Words*'. See also Barry Smith's (1990) work on the history of speech-act theory which discusses both Reid's work on 'social acts of mind' and Adolf Reinach's phenomenological analysis of 'social acts'.

phenomenologists did not stop their inquires at other-perception and empathy as a basic form of other-directed intentionality. Next, I will consider what more specific phenomenological inquiries of second-personal engagement as a lived intersubjective encounter might contribute to the topic.

1.2 Phenomenology of Sociality: Second-Personal Engagement as a Specific Form of Embodied and Experienced Intersubjective Encounter

In a wake of renewed interest in early 20th-century phenomenological writings on sociality and social ontology (Salice & Schmid, 2016; Szanto & Moran, 2016), some contemporary commentators have highlighted that the reciprocal I-You relation was of particular importance to early phenomenologists, in particular to Edmund Husserl, Adolf Reinach and Alfred Schütz (Barber, 2022; León, 2021; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2015, 2019, 2023). For these early phenomenologists, second-person relations are key to account for the possibilities of social and communal experiences. Their engagements with the performative function of second-personal address, the I-Thou-relation and communication show that it would be premature to dismiss the phenomenology of intersubjectivity as altogether unsuitable to investigate second-person relations as a more distinctive form of human encounter. The recent contemporary synthesis of these historical resources indicates a way forward to investigate second-personal engagements *as embodied and experienced intersubjective encounters* with dedicated attention to the form of interpersonal encounter at stake with the I-You-relation.

To do so, Adolf Reinach's (1953) work on the notion of so-called 'social acts' in '*Die Apriori Grundlagen des Bürgerlichen Rechts*' is an important point of reference. With his discovery of 'social acts', Reinach singles out a subclass of intentional experiences with the relevant performative function in question. Long before Austin, Searle and others establish speech act

analysis in philosophy of language[15], Reinach clearly distinguishes essentially 'social' acts, such as promising, ordering, inviting, greeting, thanking and apologizing, from mere intersubjective contact in other-directed experiences, for instance feeling love, hate or envy towards someone. What is essentially 'social' about these acts is that they are not just directed outwards at another person but that they are turned towards another to address them. Note that these are exactly the kind of social operations that Eilan and Descombes singled out as crucial to understand the peculiar communicative connection and distinctive form of relation at stake in second-person encounters.

An explicit reference to the *Thou-orientation* can be found in the work of Alfred Schütz's (1967) phenomenological sociology. Interestingly, Schütz combines both the basic unilateral experience of apprehending others and the more specific experience that involves reciprocity under this heading.

> "The Thou-orientation can, therefore, be either one-sided or reciprocal. It is one-sided if only one of us notices the presence of the other. It is reciprocal if we are mutually aware of each other, that is, if each of us is Thou-oriented toward the other." (Schutz, 1967, p. 164)

So, in one respect, Schütz uses the term interchangeably with other-orientation to mean the basic experience of apprehending other subjects. Specifically, he has scenarios in mind where we share time and space with another. He gives the example of you and I watching a bird in flight. Even if we would never say that our lived experiences were identical, we, nonetheless, feel that "during the flight of the bird you and I have 'grown older' together; our experiences have been simultaneous" (Schutz, 1967, p. 165). As Michael Barber (2022) points out, "the emergence of this intentional 'Other-Orientation' brings into existence a (one-sided, unless it is reciprocated) second-person experience and relationship." (Barber, 2022, p. 96). If this were all Schütz had to

[15] For a detailed investigation of the historical connections see Barry Smith's (1990) essay 'Towards a History of Speech Act Theory'.

say about ‘second-person experience’ it would certainly make him another candidate that – like some contemporary advocates of the interactive turn – might have gotten too carried away with prioritizing the importance of immediate other-perception in embodied face-to-face interaction broadly conceived and, in the process, missed out on the distinctive mark of second-person encounters.

However, Schütz also describes the specific kinds of other-oriented encounters that crucially involve reciprocity under the heading of the Thou-orientation. In a recent essay, Michael Barber (2022) has discerned these nuances in Schütz’s work and pointed out that a phenomenological account that starts from the basic intentionality of consciousness makes nuances “particularly discoverable” that are “regularly overlooked and unmentioned by accounts that neglect intentionality” (Barber, 2022, p. 96). For one, Schütz highlights that there is a specific experience in the mutual gaze, where one’s intentional directedness towards another is reciprocated in eye contact. Like his fellow sociologist Simmel, he recognizes that “[t]his interlocking of glances, this thousand-faceted mirroring of each other, is one of the unique features of the face-to-face situation” (Schutz, 1967, p. 170). A second nuance that is extensively explored in Schütz’s work are experiences of interlocking motives. This gets at the kind of social operation at stake in speech acts/social acts as prioritized by Descombes and Eilan. Take for instance the case of requesting where, in the ideal case, “my in-order-to motive (e.g., to get an ink bottle from you, which is the purpose of my request to you) becomes your because-motive, the motive acting on you from behind, as you, at my request, pursue the project of getting the ink bottle for me” (Barber, 2022, pp. 96–97). What I is important here is that the discovery of all these nuances is based on a study of the intentional activity involved which I consider a corner stone of any phenomenological method.

We can trace this methodological commitment to the study of intentional experience and activity back to Edmund Husserl's work. Of particular relevance here are the intersubjectivity manuscripts (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 165–185, 1973a, pp. 461–479). Compared to Schütz, Husserl shows a more pronounced understanding of the I-You-relation as a phenomenon that is crucially distinctive from more basic forms of other-directedness. By partially appropriating Reinach's notion of 'social acts', Husserl draws on a similar set of paradigmatic social operations, such as commanding, requesting and telling, and develops an analysis of the specific intentional experiences of being turned towards others in address. What is more, not only does he distinguish unilateral acts of empathy from the case of reciprocal awareness, but, interestingly, also insists on a difference between mere reciprocal awareness and communicative connection in the I-You relation.

In this discovery, Husserl does not abandon his interest in basic forms of intersubjectivity and considers these basic experiences as foundational for complex communicative forms of intentional activity. In '*Phänomenologie der Mitteilungsgemeinschaft',* he first goes through cases of unilateral, parallel and reciprocal empathy in turn (Husserl, 1973a, p. 472).[16] However, as he works his way up to the complex form of communicative intentionality, he comes to the conclusion that reciprocal empathy is not enough to establish the communicative connection and unity that is distinctive for the I-You nexus:

> "What now that reciprocal, active empathy is established? Thereby no social unity, no communicative [unity], no actual I-You nexus […] is established. What is still missing is the intention (Vorhabe) and will to make manifest (Kundgebung) – the specific act of

[16] See (Zahavi, 2019) for a more systematic rendition of the different forms of empathy considered by Husserl. Zahavi proposes that Husserl distinguishes unilateral, parallel and reciprocal empathy in the concerning passage before coming to the pointe conclusion that neither of these forms of empathy it is enough to account for the communicative connection in the reciprocal I-You-relation.

> communication, which, in establishing a community is called communicatio in Latin." (Husserl, 1973a, p. 472, transl. Meindl & Zahavi 2023)

Based on such passages, contemporary commentators have interpreted Husserl's work as a contribution to the 'You turn'. Notably, Dan Zahavi, Patricia Meindl and Felipe León (León, 2021; León & Zahavi, 2018; Meindl et al., 2019; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2019, 2023) have insisted on the difference between reciprocal awareness and the communicative experience in the I-You-relation in their interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity. They propose that a detailed investigation of the role of reciprocity and mutuality is important to understand second-personal engagement proper.

In short, their proposal is that, beyond mere reciprocal 'awareness', second-personal engagement will involve a more sophisticated degree of affective and motivational responsiveness towards each other. Reciprocal awareness is about more than being 'in contact' which merely requires that each party empathically grasps the other's presence. Beyond this, second-personal engagement involves a "special kind of reciprocity" (Zahavi, 2019, p. 254) where our intentional lives interlock in a more substantial way. This special kind of reciprocity is a "bi-directional responsiveness" (Zahavi, 2019, p. 254) and allows us to co-motivate and co-influence each other. Importantly, joining this intersubjective I-You-nexus is what makes it possible for our "self-experience to be enriched and matured through the incorporation of an external perspective" (Zahavi, 2019, p. 256) while at the same time "preserving the required difference and diversity" (Zahavi, 2023, p. 97) of the two experiential perspectives involved in the encounter. This point is particularly important to Zahavi and colleagues in order to maintain a viable account of experiential subjectivity.

To intervene in contemporary debates, such as the discussions of joint attention in social cognition research (León, 2021; León & Zahavi, 2018) and investigations of collective intentionality in social ontology (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2019, 2023), Zahavi, Meindl

and León have strategically presented second-personal engagement as primarily a natural socio-cognitive capacity in their analyses.[17] Dan Zahavi, in particular, frequently stresses the "normatively quite undemanding" (Zahavi, 2023, p. 93) character of the Husserlian proposal. By that he means that the distinctly communicative experience in second-personal engagement does not automatically imply a pro-social attitude towards the other. In fact, Zahavi's interpretation allows for the idea that "up to a certain point, relations of conflict or even abuse" (Zahavi, 2023, p. 94) would qualify as second-personal engagement. Thus, compared to more normative frameworks of communicative experience the proposal does not reserve the notion of 'communication' exclusively for pro-social, non-strategic purposes.[18] What makes second-personal engagement a distinctive intersubjective encounter is, on this view, is that it is about more than being 'next to one another' (*Nebeneinander*) in perceptual contact. This leaves it open that we can either face each other in the pro-social, harmonious mode of being 'for one another' (*Füreinander*) or face off in more antagonistic, hostile or manipulative manners where we are 'against one another' (*Gegeneinander*).[19]

I observe a tendency in this contemporary work to ward the phenomenological approach to the second person off from discussions of possible normative aspects at stake with the topic. To situate the direction of my own proposal, I want to take note that this runs against a general intuition in the wider philosophical debate. Zahavi and colleagues rely heavily on Naomi Eilan's proposal that

[17] To intervene in the debate on joint attention, León (2021) explicitly distinguishes his argument against recursive mindreading in this debate from John Campbell's (2005) normative approach to argue for the irreducible status of communicative exchange.

[18] An influential example of such a thicker normative notion of communication would be Habermas' (1984) theory of communicative action where communicative action and reason are by definition pro-social and developed in contrast to a notion of 'merely' strategic action and reasoning.

[19] The distinction between *Nebeneinander, Füreinander* und *Gegeneinander* is again inspired by passages in Husserl's intersubjectivity manuscripts. See Husserl (1973a, p. 477).

second-personal engagement is about a distinctive 'communicative connection' and 'mutual interdependence' in the intersubjective nexus. What they seem to ignore or neglect is that the general thrust of Eilan's work on the 'You turn' is to use an investigation of the normativity of (human) practices as an avenue to introduce ethical consideration about respecting the alterity and particularity of the other into contemporary debates in philosophy of mind. Moreover, many of the philosophical notions considered in the wider debate on the second person, such as 'acknowledging', 'mutual recognition' and 'interpersonal understanding', allow for a more intricate discussion of normativity in practices but do not rely on any claim that all second-personal engagements are automatically pro-social and harmonious encounters. In light of this, I believe that a more sophisticated discussion of possible normative imports of the phenomenon of the second person is necessary in order to develop a comprehensive phenomenological approach to the topic.

This observation about a possible lacuna in the current debate in the phenomenology of intersubjectivity and sociality allows me to refine the concern from the wider philosophical debate. Even just a brief survey of contemporary engagements with the work of Reinach, Schütz and Husserl shows that it is simply not the case that the phenomenology of intersubjectivity was and is only concerned with basic, unilateral and, in this sense, 'solipsistic' experiences of other Is. As I will show later, a careful consideration of these historical resources and a nuanced description of the specific intentional activity at play can go a long way to defend the claim that the phenomenon of the second person becomes manifest in experience in a distinctive manner. Let me therefore propose a way to reframe the concern with phenomenological approaches to intersubjectivity from the wider philosophical debate. I think that the more relevant question to ask is whether these phenomenological approaches – with their focus on affective and motivational intertwinements of experiential perspectives – can also contribute to the investigation of the normative significance

of second-personal responsiveness. Afterall, it seems to me that the notion of 'responsiveness' does a lot of the work to argue that the 'mutual interdependence' and 'reciprocity' in second-person encounters is specific and distinctive with the above proposal. On my view, this aspect of the phenomenon of the second person deserves dedicated attention. As of yet, most contemporary phenomenological reflections in this direction have taken up a broadly existential perspective on experience. This is what I will consider next.

1.3 'Second-Person Phenomenology' and Normative-Existential Approaches

Proposals more interested in normative aspects of the second-person phenomenon insist that there is a "necessary intertwining of the descriptive and normative layers" (Stawarska, 2014, p. 186). In this section, I want to consider Steven Crowell's (2015, 2016) and Beata Stawarska's (2009) work towards a dedicated 'second-person phenomenology'. The quality and potential of their assessments to contribute towards a contemporary and originally phenomenological method are quite different. Crowell's work on the second person is based on his in-depth methodological consideration towards a phenomenological approach to normativity in '*Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*' (Crowell, 2013) where he traces these considerations back to the work of Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas. In her monograph '*Between You and I. Dialogical Phenomenology*', Stawarska (2009) mainly uses these classical phenomenological authors as a negative counterfoil to highlight insights she finds in the tradition of dialogical philosophy following Buber and others. However, despite these different degrees of engagement with methodological questions and historical resources in the phenomenological tradition, both take themselves to ground their work in an existential approach[20] to experience.

[20] Note that for Crowell this is about highlighting the methodological potential of Heidegger's 'existential turn', specifically in his approach to intentionality compared to Husserl's take on intentionality. With Stawarska's claim that her 'dialogical phenomenology' combines dialogical philosophy following the

First, consider Steven Crowell's (2016) more careful proposal towards a second-person phenomenology. He suggests to restrict the term 'second-person phenomenology' to a "reflection on the experience of being addressed by a claim, experiencing oneself 'in the accusative,' as it is sometimes described" (Crowell, 2016, p. 70). Crowell's first important methodological point is that such a reflection remains, "like all phenomenology, a reflection on first-person experience, but the kind of experience it reflects upon involves some very interesting and important features" (Crowell, 2016, p. 70). What comes to the fore with this approach is that "being addressed by a claim is a normative condition for the constitution of an objective (shared) world and the constitution of myself as a human being" (Crowell, 2016, p. 70). Second-person phenomenology, understood in this way, investigates the original "constitutive achievements of second-person address" (Crowell, 2016, p. 82). It can thus highlight "a very specific sort of responsiveness to the force of normative claims" (Crowell, 2015, p. 572) that is a presupposition to understand what it means for others and myself to (performatively) take responsibility for our lives.

Where the proposal by Zahavi and colleagues, discussed in the previous section, uses the notion of 'responsiveness' more as a placeholder, Crowell suggests that in order to understand (second-personal) responsiveness in its distinctive form we need to move beyond a discussion of affective and motivational intertwinements of our intentional lives. Instead, what is required is a dedicated reflection on the normative grounds of first-person intentional experience. Responsibility consists

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tradition of Buber with an existential approach to experience 'existential' is used in a much looser sense to refer to "the existential phenomenology of Heidegger, Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Levinas" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 15). This style is typical in North American phenomenology and continental philosophy. Coincidentally, this methodologically laxer approach to phenomenology is often also the basis of work of research under the heading of 'Critical Phenomenology' as recently emerged in the North American context. For a discussion of possible disadvantages of the lack in methodological considerations in this debate see the volume 'Phenomenology and Critique. Why Method Matters' (Aldea et al., 2022). On my view, Beata Stawarska can count as an early advocate of 'Critical Phenomenology' before the term was established as a rhetorical strategy. She has in recent years supported the movement.

in a primary experience of normativity that constitutes me as answerable and accountable to others. What I find particularly insightful about Crowell's approach is that he makes this link back to an analysis of intentional experience and intentionality explicit. This allows him to emphasize a continuity in the phenomenological movement while discussing possible limitations of the Husserlian framework. I read Crowell's proposal in line with other authors, in particular from the debate in more contemporary German phenomenology, that have worked towards a so called 'responsive interpretation' of intentionality (Bedorf, 2010; Waldenfels, 1994).

Compared to Crowell's work, Beata Stawarska's (2009) engagement with the phenomenological tradition may seem somewhat superficial. Stawarska's proposal for a 'dialogical phenomenology' explicitly defines itself against the allegedly 'egocentric' Husserlian framework As an alternative, she develops a 'polycentric' view that "makes a strong case for a polycentric perspectival configuration of experience situated within the shared world" (Stawarska, 2009, p. x). According to her proposal, work in what she calls sociolinguistics[21] and developmental psychology "lends evidence to the coprimacy of first and second person in situated perceptual experience of the world, as well as in speech" (Stawarska, 2009, pp. 174–175). On top of this, an important thrust of Stawarska's dialogical approach is to offer a contemporary reinterpretation of values of inclusion and participatory communal engagement that she finds in Buber's work on the interhuman (*das Zwischenmenschliche*).

[21] Interestingly, Stawarska does not really consider resources that would be considered to belong to the discipline of socioliguistics. One of her main references is the *theoretical* linguist Lyons. Otherwise, she mainly refers to Wittgensteinian inspired philosophical work on the social constitution of language practices. This neglects important work in linguistic anthropology and sociology such as the work of Harvey Sacks (1989) or more recent literature that explicitly considers the intertwinement of language and gender (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) which would align well with Stawarska's research interest in the feminist implications of her dialogical approach.

In using the egocentrism charge against Husserlian phenomenolgoy to define her own approach in such a way, Stawarska stands in line with earlier attempts to develop an explicitly second-person oriented, dialogical philosophical method as an alternative paradigm to transcendental phenomenology, notably Michael Theunissen's (1977) work '*Der Andere. Studien zur Sozialontologie der Gegenwart*'. In a recent paper on Husserl's phenomenology of communication, Meindl and Zahavi (2023) have rightfully expressed "strong reservations regarding" such "criticism of classical Husserlian phenomenology" (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023, p. 362). As already shown in the previous section, simply arguing that Husserlian phenomenology only considers more primitive intersubjective encounters neglects that we do, in fact, find dedicated reflection on the nature of communicative address and "what it means to relate second-personally to one another" (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023, p. 362) in Husserl's work.[22] For the most part, I share Meindl and Zahavi's reservations about Stawarska's approach to the phenomenological method. In the subsequent chapters, I will come back to Stawarska's proposal for a 'dialogical *phenomenology*' several times to point out further problems with her approach. These concerns are particularly important if Stawarska's aim is indeed to develop a distinctly and originally phenomenological approach to the second person.

Despite possible shortcomings in her approach to phenomenology, I want to highlight an important and contemporaneously relevant motivation that goes hand in hand with Stawarska's particular proposal for a 'dialogical approach'. Throughout her monograph, Stawarska expresses her interest to use her framework to reflect on so called "power relations' (Stawarska, 2009, p. 70), positions of oppression and privilege (Stawarska, 2009, p. 71), as well "disempowered speech"

[22] The wide-spread egocentrism charge against Husserl's phenomenology often hinges on some ambiguous remarks in Husserl's Vth Cartesian meditation. Stawarska only considers the widely available writings of Husserl that have been translated to English.

(Stawarska, 2009, p. 184) and the idea that "certain social groups are at greater risk than others of being excluded from I-You-reciprocity" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 185). Coincidentally, these issues do not seem to occupy the other contemporary contributors considered thus far very much in their reflection on the second person case.[23] I leave open here whether this is partly due to "the masculine privilege exercised within the Western tradition" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 185) of philosophy, as Stawarska herself diagnoses, or not.

In very different ways, both Stawarska's and Crowell's proposals consider the inherent precariousness of our shared social practices. Such a normative perspective highlights that the mutuality and responsiveness at stake in second-person relations is never guaranteed. Our ability to relate to others in a second-person orientation is not just a natural embodied socio-cognitive capacity but also an embodied practical experience of an 'I can' or, importantly, an 'I cannot'. This allows us to consider that the meaning of 'successful' second-person relations and our chances of maintaining a "participatory character of meaning-making" (Stawarska, 2009, p. x) in our second-personal engagements with one another may be heavily dependent on our normative positionings within a habitualized second-personal nexus of communications and normative claims. From this more normative perspective, an investigation of the phenomenon of the second person is warranted because it allows for a reflection on our practical ability to shape and contribute to our shared reality of interpersonal human affairs.

With Stawarska more than with Crowell, I observe a tendency to simply skip over an engagement with phenomenological resources and related methodological questions. Unlike Crowell, Stawarska refrains from properly discussing "post-Husserlian phenomenology" because

[23] An exception here is Thomas Khurana (2021b) in his introduction to his special issue that contains an exchange between Steven Darwall (and his work on the second person standpoint) and Axel Honneth (and his influential recognition theory). His suggestion seems again to point in the direction of Stanely Cavell.

she suspects that it suffers from "a similar oversight of I-You interdependency" (Stawarska, 2009, p. x) as the Husserlian framework. What is more, despite her interest in speech act theory , which she discusses rather uncritically with respect to received speech act theory's own possible shortcomings to reflect I-You-interdependency (Stawarska, 2009, pp. 181–184, 2017)[24], her inquiry does not acknowledge historical predecessor of SAT in the early phenomenological movement such as Reinach's work on social acts. In fact, I think Stawarska's lack of precision here may have even led her own proposal for a dialogical approach to fall behind reflections on the precarious nature of experiencing social participation with a distinctly phenomenological method, i.e., with the very same resources she accuses of neglecting "I-You-reciprocity" and "interdependency".

As already indicated in the review of this section, I find Steven Crowell's engagement with these post-Husserlian resources, such as Heidegger, Levinas and Lyotard, much more nuanced and insightful to understand how a second-person phenomenology follows a distinctly phenomenological method. In particular, his suggestion to restrict the phenomenological investigation of the normative grounds of second-person experience to a reflection on the experience of being addressed by a claim is lucid and will subsequently guide my inquiry. However, starting with the rather complex, original reflections found in Heidegger, Levinas and others who are firmly rooted in the continental tradition can make it even harder to connect a phenomenological approach with discussions of the second person in the wider philosophical

[24] For instance, it is not clear why a framework like that of Rae Langton and Jeniffer Hornsby (Hornsby & Langton, 1998; Langton, 1993) endorsed by Stawarka (2017) should be better suited to contribute towards her dialogical approach than a more phenomenologically grounded approach. In fact, Langton and Hornsby's by now classic feminist remarks on speech act theory and pornography draw on a rather conservative approach to received speech act theory which does exactly not get at the relevant account of interdependence in action at stake with the dialogical approach in the wider philosophical debate. See (Bauer, 2015) and (Finlayson, 2014) for critiques of this debate in received theory and its limitations to contribute to the feminist issue at stake.

debate 'on the other side' of the 20th century linguistic turn. My proposal is therefore to go back to the resources found in Reinach's and Husserl's work to carefully look for nuances and normative significances of the second-person phenomenon that such an existential starting point might miss out on. This can help to make avenues for dialogue across divides in the received philosophical debates explicit.

1.4 Back to Reinach's and Husserl's work on 'Social Acts'

In this chapter, I have considered three groups of proposals in the contemporary literature that work towards a phenomenological or phenomenologically-inspired approach to the second person. I have introduced the concern that the phenomenological method with its starting point in *first-person* intentional experience might be altogether ill-suited to contribute towards a distinctivist approach to the *second* person. According to some, the phenomenology of intersubjectivity might simply miss the mark of the second person. In order to dispel such concerns, a careful consideration of (proto)-normative aspects implicit in a description of second-person experience is necessary. More precisely, a phenomenological approach to the second person will have to spell out how second-personal responsiveness as a distinctive form of intersubjective engagement and encounter with another relates to more basic affective and motivational intertwinements of our respective experiential perspectives.

To approach this task, I suggest to go back to Reinach's and Husserl's work on the notion of social acts. Recent contributions to the phenomenology of sociality have drawn on a combination of these two older resources to make a case for the importance of second-personal engagement in phenomenological approaches to sociality (Maaß, 2002; Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Salice & Uemura, 2018; Zahavi, 2023). However, in presenting a synthesis of these resources, some of the contemporary commentators seem to have either sidelined or overlooked the intertwinement of descriptive and normative aspects at stake with the topic. I show that an understanding of the

(proto)-normative significances of social acts, second-personal address and communicative engagement is much more salient in these older resources than the current literature on second-personal engagement in the phenomenology of sociality would suggest.

Let me finish this chapter with some further remarks on my methodology. First, I highlight how the analysis of intentional experience allows for a systematic reflection on different (proto)-normative aspects. Then, I point out why using the methodological pluralism available in the phenomenological movements matters to address important challenges in contemporary research.

1.4.1 Intentionality as a Methodological Guiding Thread to Different Kinds of Normativity

A guiding thread for my analysis is to highlight how any phenomenological approach to the second person will have its roots in an analysis of intentional experience. Intentionality, in the phenomenological sense, is about the basic 'aboutness' or 'directedness' of experience.[25] This is a constant across different approaches to the phenomenological method. In my review of the literature in this chapter, I have identified that grounding the phenomenological method in an analysis of intentionality is a helpful strategy to maintain a continuity across the plural ways to interpret the phenomenological method. What is more, this is also the most viable pathway to make the phenomenological approach to normativity explicit.

Making the connection between normativity and intentionality explicit, is a particular strength of Steven Crowell's (2013) work. He points out a method to make the topic of normativity explicit in phenomenological research. Crowell observes that classical phenomenologists such as Husserl and Heidegger recognized that a "phenomenological investigation of intentionality demanded a

[25] This still holds even if, like Heidegger, one does not want to limit intentionality to the activities of consciousness but instead consider the enactment of existence (*Existenzvollzug*) as such.

thorough reorientation of philosophy" (Crowell, 2013, p. 3) due to its novel approach to meaning. However, "neither thought it particularly striking that it was meaning's normative structure that accounted for this demand" (ibid). An important task for contemporary phenomenologists is exactly to make this connection explicit.

Following his example, the topic of normativity has now seen more systematic treatment in contemporary phenomenological research.[26] In this line, Sara Heinämaa (2022, p. 19) argues that phenomenology is a distinct alternative to neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian, Foucauldian, and naturalistic approaches to theorize normativity. According to Heinämaa, one important advantage of a phenomenological approach to normativity is that "phenomenology is able to articulate differences between various forms of normativity without reducing them to one another" (Heinämaa, 2022, p. 19). The central idea, as formulated by Sophie Loidolt (2018), is that "[a]ll phenomenological claims about normativity can be traced back to the intentionality of experience" (Loidolt, 2018, p. 152). The interesting insight of phenomenological approaches to normativity is that "different kinds of normativity can be gained from an analysis of intentional experience" (Loidolt, 2018, p. 152).

I occasionally use the term '*proto*-normative' for these different kinds of normativity as they are not about justifying concrete principles for action or providing answers to applied moral or political questions. They typically do not take a starting point or even make reference to traditional normative concepts that inquire into what is 'right', 'good', or 'just'. The term 'proto-normative'

[26] In general, the philosophical engagement with metatheories of normativity is a fairly modern project. The accounts of normativity that have emerged in the second half of the 20th century have uncovered a "conceptual jungle" (Heinämaa, 2020) that has not only been of interest to phenomenologists but also in other spheres of philosophical inquiry, for instance with pragmatist and Wittgensteinian approaches. Developing a comprehensive metatheory of normativity or a full taxonomy of normativities is a task that I cannot achieve in this dissertation nor am I sure if that is the best aim to pursue to productively work with such modern approaches to various kinds of normativity.

is often used in the literature on Levinas. As Loidolt suggests, the term can highlight that although Levinas investigates the experience of being confronted by an imperative 'ought' this does not "aim at sketching out a normative theory. Rather, he seeks to describe the *fundamental structure of subjectivity in ethical terms*" (Loidolt, 2018, p. 161). While I will engage with this more specific idea of proto-normativity in chapters 5 and 6, I also use the term proto-normative in a somewhat broader sense for other phenomenological kinds of normativity. These are not necessarily concerned with such a proto-*ethical* project that investigates the specific grounds on which properly moral principles and imperatives are established. For instance, as I show in chapter 3, the normativity of Reinach's notion of social acts parallels the normativity of speech acts. This project might, in a broader sense of the term, better be called proto-normative rather than normative as it investigates a structure that merely describes the *grounds* of our reasons for action and deontic judgments. However, these grounds are not (necessarily or exclusively) the foundation or background for moral/ethical 'oughts' but are concerned with (experiences of) commitment in a broader sense. Similarly, in chapter 4, I suggest that the idea of an "[o]perative normativity that guides our everyday practices" (Loidolt, 2018, p. 154) is proto-normative in such a looser, but again somewhat different sense. While Reinach's analysis still operates on a deontic level that concerns commitments and claims, the notion of an operative normativity does not confront us with any concrete 'oughts' at all but instead cashes out pre-obligatory, passive, and oftentimes unthematic ways in which we orient ourselves in the world and in our interactional and communicative practices. Instead of using 'proto-normativity' throughout, I will most of the time simply use 'normativity'. The reader should now have some idea of the cluster of ideas and problems I am interested in when I use either term.

In my analysis of Reinach and Husserl, I look for such different kinds of normativity implicit in their account. In order to show how Reinach's and Husserl's very different approaches to the

phenomenological method as a whole and to the experiences in social acts in particular are still connected, I first demonstrate that their respective analyses have their common ground in a starting point from intentional experience. In chapter 2, I will argue that Reinach's and Husserl's respective analysis of social acts converge towards a similar basic feature in intentional experience that seems to characterize the experience of second-personal engagement well. However, this initial synthesis of their work on social acts should not distract from the diverging trajectories in their work. Reinach characterizes the distinctive bipolar form of normativity enabled by second-personal address. Husserl gives a more detailed account of the specific kind of intersubjective engagement at play in second-person relations. My aim in chapters 3 and 4 will be to follow these diverging trajectories in Reinach's and Husserl's work and make the different reflections on normativity that go along with the respective approach explicit. As a result of the final two chapters 5 and 6, I then identify the task to relate such a phenomenological analysis of normativity back to traditional normative concepts such as justice, responsibility or (moral) respect in a more detailed reflection as a desideratum for future research.

1.4.2 Mobilizing a Methodological Pluralism in the Phenomenological Movement

To motivate further why I think it instructive to go into this much detail about these diverging trajectories in Reinach's and Husserl's analyses of social acts, let me briefly situate the different focal points in their respective approaches to the phenomenological method.

Reinach's approach is, as Herbert Spiegelberg (1960, pp. 195–205) suggests, best characterized as a phenomenology of essences. His method reveals immediately intuitable essential connections (*Wesenszusammenhänge*) independent of the assumption of a correlative cognizing subjectivity. Against the general thrust of the neo-Kantian debate in early 20th century German philosophy, the *phenomenological a priori*, according to Reinach, "is not a property of propositions or acts of judging or knowing, but of states of affairs (*Sachverhalte*) judged or

recognized" (Spiegelberg, 1960, p. 199). These states of affairs belong to a particular regional ontology for which phenomenology uncovers the respective essential laws.

By contrast, Husserl's project ultimately focuses on the constitution of sense *relative* to an experiencing subjectivity. Husserl's account of the *a priori* comprises a more formal and epistemological approach to the a priori, as familiar from the Kantian proposal (Kern, 1964), and reflections on a *material a priori.* In his project, Husserl gradually recognizes the importance of thinking sense constitution relative to an experiencing subjectivity. Subjectivity is actualization of acts of consciousness (*Bewusstseinsvollzug*).

This fundamental methodological difference also shows in their approach to social acts. Reinach studies the essence of claim and fulfilment and the essential connections (*Wessenszusammenhänge*) between them. He designates the appropriate regional ontologies where these essential connections are valid, for instance the legal sphere. In a certain sense, it is quite straightforward how a philosophical claim about these essential laws (*Wesensgesetze*) for any particular regional ontology is a normative proposal as the concept of essential law has a normative content.

By contrast, Husserl's account of social acts is embedded in his analysis of different layers of sense constitution that unfold for the experiencing subject as horizons of meaning. In such a study of constitution, questions of normative validity (*Geltung*) can feature in two ways, as either an analysis of static or dynamic constitution (Bernet et al., 1996, pp. 181–189). While static constitution considers already established systems of meaning in their structure of validity (*Geltungsaufbau*), genetic constitution describes the genesis of the constitution of this validity. In order to do so, the latter method often provides a nuanced description of various foundational 'layers' of experience that underly a complex experience, such as the kind of experience at play in social acts.

In the following, I will mainly ascribe the use of a so-called eidetic method to Reinach. This is true for the context of social acts.[27] I want to mention here that this is where Reinach's approach to phenomenology is inspired by Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and his reflections of eidetic intuition. In a nutshell, an eidetic method is about imagining and contrasting different possibilities for the same structural features of experience. However, on closer scrutiny we find that Husserl's later clarification of eidetic intuition as eidetic variation (Lohmar, 2019) again point to a somewhat different conception of judgment and the activity of reason than the one implicit in Reinach's approach to phenomenology.

This might be enough to hint that Reinach's and Husserl's diverging projects unfolded on a phenomenological method are in themselves complex. I will not be able to offer a proper systematic reconstruction and a detailed account of the methodological tensions between them. My work should thus not be misunderstood as an attempt to accurately reconstruct and interpret the original lines of questioning and philosophical projects more salient in the material I consider as resources to understand the phenomenon of the second person. I will not be able offer a detailed discussion of the projects entailed by Reinach's and Husserl's conflicting metaphysical convictions and their endorsement of phenomenological realism and transcendental idealism, respectively. I will also not be able to assess Reinach's original suggestion to found the phenomenology of law in his analysis of (second-personal) social acts or comment on how Husserl's remarks of communication work towards his reflection on a phenomenological ethics.

However, I think that there are some merits in highlighting the more general point that there is in fact such a methodological pluralism available in the phenomenological movement. Going back

[27] In a more detailed analysis, an eidetic method could also be made explicit in Husserl's reflections on community and sociality in the manuscripts pieces I consider in the following chapters.

to Reinach and Husserl and the plurality of approaches available in the early phenomenological movement is not just of historical interest. It is an often-overlooked resource to reflect on contemporary challenges in phenomenological research.

For instance, Reinach's account has mostly been brought into dialogue with problems in speech act theory following Searle's influential paradigm in the received literature. Reinach's work has mostly been discussed in a relatively small circle of researchers that more or less affirmatively endorse Searle's approach to SAT.[28] However, J. L. Austin's discovery of the performative qualities of speech acts has received much wider uptake beyond these particular debates. Notably, it has also influenced prominent approaches in critical theory. We find reference to Austin's work on speech acts and their performative function in the work of Habermas (1984), Derrida (1988b) and Butler (2021). Reconsidering Reinach's work in this direction may help to gain a better understanding of the potential for mutual enlightenment between phenomenology and these established methods in critical theory. Recent literature in critical phenomenology (Weiss et al., 2019) – as exemplified in this chapter by Stawarska's approach as an early advocate of such a line of inquiry – mainly considers Husserl and Heidegger as figures in early, classical phenomenology while the unique research interests of figures like Reinach are not acknowledged.

In this dissertation, I will restrict my analysis to highlight the missed opportunity to mobilize the methodological pluralism available in the early phenomenological movement. I consider this

[28] Contributors to have pointed out the parallel between speech act theory and Reinach's work have almost exclusively focused on Searle (Crosby, 1990; Mulligan, 1987; B. Smith, 1990). However, I think that Reinach's method is more similar to J. L. Austin's original, much more explorative approach to speech acts. Austin occasionally described his method as a kind of phenomenology or "linguistic phenomenology" (Austin, 1956, p. 8). By contrast, Searle's (1969) work on speech act gives a much more rigid taxonomy by aligning speech acts with mental states and their so called "direction of fit" as well as by prioritizing constitutive, i.e., institutional rules, for the successful and non-defective performance of speech acts.

a first step to ground such more ambitious projects. To eventually get there, let's consider first how Reinach and Husserl approach the second-person phenomenon.

2 | The Second Person and Intentional Experience

According to some proponents of second person approaches, phenomenology misses the mark of the second person (Descombes, 2001; Stawarska, 2009; Theunissen, 1977). In this chapter, I challenge the blanket dismissal and propose a first step towards a more nuanced analysis by taking a point of departure from a phenomenological analysis of intentional experience. To what extent can an analysis from intentional experience make the case that the second-person relation becomes manifest in experience in a distinctive way? To assess this, I consider the concern that any analysis in terms of 'intentionality' will ultimately break down the distinctive mark of the reciprocal I-You relation into a set of composite intentional states to account for the complexity of what goes on.

This chapter is structured as follows: In section 1, I tentatively establish what proponents of the so-called Dialogical approach might mean when they suspect that an approach 'misses the mark of the second person'. The concern I will focus on in this chapter is that any analysis in terms of 'intentionality' will analytically resolve what goes on in second-person encounters into a set of mental states or interpersonal attitudes that can be attributed to the involved parties individually. What proposals of such an Analytic approach miss out on is that the second-person person phenomenon becomes manifest in experience and thought in a distinctive manner.

Against the backdrop of this concern, I introduce Reinach's and Husserl's work on the notion of social acts in section 2. I argue that they designate the relevant subclass of experiences for a phenomenological analysis of second-person relations. In section 3, I show that, despite their different methodological approaches to study social acts, both mostly agree on the typical features of social acts. Next, in section 4, I show that their analyses of the intentional correlates in social acts take '*turning oneself towards another*' in address (*sich an jemanden wenden*) or, '*to-you-ness*' as primitive and distinctive feature of the experience. I reject alternative interpretations that present

Reinach's account of the complex intentional correlates in terms of some set of composite mental states.

Finally, in section 5, I outline how Reinach and Husserl characterize second-person relations beyond this basic but distinctive 'to-you' directedness. Where Reinach's work on the *need of being heard* (*Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit*) sheds light on a distinctive form of normativity, Husserl's account of *communicative connection* allows us to understand a kind of intersubjective engagement that is distinctive for the I-You-relation. These will be the respective starting points for my analyses in chapters 3 and 4.

2.1 The Dialogical Approach to the Second Person and the Distinctivism Claim

As I indicated in the previous chapter, some contributors to the wider philosophical debate about the second person suspect that phenomenology somehow misses the mark of the second person. In this section, I want to take a closer look on what grounds classical phenomenology has been dismissed. What does it even mean to 'miss the mark' of the second person? Here, I suggest that a central concern by proponents of so-called dialogical approach is that any attempt to describe the second-person in terms of its 'intentionality' will by default breakdown the phenomenon into composite elements. It goes without saying that this might make the phenomenological starting point in a description intentional experience inherently suspicious.

The most outspoken sceptics of classical phenomenology's usefulness to study the I-You-relation want to establish dialogical philosophy (Theunissen, 1977) or dialogical phenomenology (Stawarska, 2009) as a paradigm in its own right, on the same level as transcendental phenomenology, realist phenomenology or existentialist phenomenology. Here, I will not assess whether the more ambitious projects to either establish a phenomenology of dialogue as a new paradigm or to view it as a new 'first philosophy' have their merits. Instead, I will examine the

more specific claim that classical phenomenology has neglected the "primacy of *I-You connectedness* in meaning and experience" (Stawarska, 2009, p. iv).

On Stawarska's view, an approach that heeds the primacy of I-You connectedness describes "the first-to-second person relatedness binding the dialogic partners in a nonfusional as well as nonexternal-additive manner" (Stawarska, 2009, p. xi). She then claims that "mainstream phenomenological approaches, however diverse they may be" (Stawarska, 2009, p. ix) have neglected this aspect of experience. She focuses on Husserl in particular and claims that Husserl's 'egocentric framework' makes him conceive of "sociality as an aggregate or a collectivity of insular individuals" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 30). Despite this, Stawarska does not "deny that the phenomenological tradition offers invaluable resources for thematizing the multiple aspects of interpersonal relatedness" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 6). But although mainstream phenomenology has made important contributions to study the relation between self and other at its experiential roots in empathy these approaches still tend to miss the mark of the second person.

For a more neutral way to understand Stawarska's concern[29], I turn to a taxonomy of approaches to the second-person relation proposed by Matthias Haase (2014b). Haase (2014b) contrasts what he calls the Dialogical Approach with the Analytic Approach to the I-You-relation.[30] Accounts that follow the Analytic Approach to second-person relations come in many

[29] By "neutral" I mean a way to understand the concern that does not choose "mainstream" phenomenology as its principal antagonist and does not rule out that it might have something to contribute to the topic from the start.

[30] Haase further distinguishes a third group of proposals, the Reflexive Approach. This is a third option mostly defended in Kantian-inspired engagement with the topic such as Steven Darwall's (2006) influential work on second person ethics. According to the Reflexive Approach, the act of addressing is a fundamental dimension of reason but does not necessarily require exchange with an actual other. Instead, it is already available in the critical practice of asking for reasons and addressing oneself in an internalized manner (Haase, 2014b, p. 121). I will briefly come back to this proposal in chapter 5 and discuss why Husserl's approach to intersubjectivity does not presuppose such a process of internalized self-address.

different shapes. Contributors to the Analytic Approach may very well recognize I-You-relations as an important type of interpersonal engagement (Peacocke, 2014) or have made significant contributions to the study of communication and conversation analysis (Grice, 1969). Nonetheless, proponents of the Dialogical Approach to the second person still think that these analyses miss something important about second-person relations. Haase suggest that proposals of the Analytic Approach share the following central assumption:

> "Whatever the details, all proposals of the Analytic Approach have in common the following assumption: the relation of reciprocal recognition in address is to be resolved into a constellation of elements that could in principle also occur outside the union" (Haase, 2014b, p. 117).

To illustrate how the relation of reciprocal recognition is resolved into composite elements in proposals of the Analytic Approach, Haase uses Peacocke's (2014) account of interpersonal self-consciousness as an example. In his work on interpersonal self-consciousness, Peacocke gives an account of communicative second-personal engagement. However, Peacocke offers a picture where "expression and uptake figure in the contents and success conditions of sets of interdependent but discrete mental acts ascribed to X and Y individually" (Haase, 2014b, p. 117).

As another classical example for a proposal of the Analytic Approach consider Paul Grice's influential account of communicative intention. Grice (1969) describes a speaker's communicative intention in terms of a set of first order, second order and third order intentions that aim (1) at producing a particular response r in the audience A by the speaker's utterance u, (2) at A's recognition of S's intention in utterance u and (3) that this recognition functions at least as part of the reason for A's response r. According to Grice, this set of mental states makes up the 'communicative intention' in an utterance and is attributed to the speaker S individually. We could come up with a similar analysis of the matching set of intentions to describe the process of recognition of the communicative intention from the addressee's perspective. But the general

assumption is that it is sufficient to provide an analysis of a set of embedded mental states that can be attributed to the involved parties individually in order to give a full account of second-person relations.

Alternatively, the proposals of the Dialogical Approach reject the assumption that the I-You-relation can be accounted for by ascribing two independent sets of acts to the two involved parties individually. According to the Dialogical Approach second-person relations are irreducible to solitary acts of mind. In Haase's words: "The concept of communicative exchange with another is as irreducible and as basic as the idea of an act of judgment by a single mind" (Haase, 2014b, p. 121). What the Analytic Approach misses is an account of the specific union and connectedness in second-person relations.

However, like the Analytic Approach, the Dialogical Approach to second-person relations comes in many shapes. Haase, for instance, draws inspiration from German Idealism and philosophy of language. For him, a Dialogical Approach is exemplified by Fichte and Hegel in what they pitch "as 'das anerkennende Sebstbewusstsein': the reciprocal relation in which 'a self-consciousness is for a self-consciousness'" (Haase, 2014b, p. 123). From the perspective of philosophy of language, second-person relations require the assumption of a "special union of language, mind, and world" (ibid.). A second-person relation is a relation "where (1) the fact of the relation, (2) their thought of this relation, and (3) its linguistic expression are inseparable" (ibid.). The linguistic expression involved in this "manifests its function only when it is taken up by its addressee" (ibid.). Similarly, Stawarska (2009) highlights the importance of language and speech to understand second-person relations and argues for an interdisciplinary method that combines ideas from philosophers of dialogue like Martin Buber and sociolinguistics.

Whatever the details of these proposals, they share what I call the *distinctivism claim*. According to the distinctivism claim, the mark of the second person is, in some sense, a 'non-derivative', 'autonomous', 'irreducible' or 'primitive' correlate in thought and experience (cf. Salje, 2016). The process of recognition cannot be resolved into composite elements. Instead, it is necessary to account for the specific kind of 'union' or 'connectedness' established in second-person relations. In this chapter, I restrict myself to an assessment of how compatible a phenomenological approach from intentional experience is to contribute towards the distinctivist approach to the second person, i.e. whether it is able to attend to the distinctivism claim. For now, I sideline other concerns that advocates of the Dialogical approach might have with a phenomenological approach.

In order to assess whether a phenomenological approach from intentional experience might be compatible with the distinctivism claim, I will turn to Reinach's and Husserl's work on social acts. By singling out social acts as a subclass of experiences in its own right, both did indeed study second-person relations as a specific form of intersubjective engagement. This shows quite straightforwardly that dismissing early phenomenology on the grounds that its mainly contributes to the debate on empathy but has no illuminating thoughts about the I-You-relation and communication is too superficial.[31] However, what needs to be assessed to make the connection to the distinctivist proposal is *how* early phenomenologists approach second-person relations. I will argue that Reinach's and Husserl's respective accounts can be interpreted as proposals of the distinctivist approach. More precisely, I will show that they both argue that the specific intentional

[31] In their recent criticism of Stawarska's dismissive attitude towards Husserlian phenomenology contribution to the topic of the I-You-relation and communication, Meindl & Zahavi (2023) fluctuate somewhat between these two strategies for assessment. They frame their argument around the fact *that* Husserl also worked on communication and not only on empathy. However, as I will show in section 4 their argument can also be read as a case in favor of the distinctive communicative-connectedness in the I-You-relation in line with what proponents of the Dialogical approach suggest.

correlates involved in the experience of standing in a relation of address with another person is primitive and cannot be described in terms of a set of composite mental states or as an additive account of more basic intersubjective experiences in empathy.

2.2 Social Acts: An Interesting Subclass of Experience

Some human activities such as promises, requests, commands and invitations crucially involve a second person. They each come with "a curious effect" as each type of activity "produces a unique bond between two persons" (Reinach, 2012, p. 8). These experiences of relating to a second person are different from solitary, 'non-social' acts of mind such as interests, beliefs, convictions, preferences and judgments. The credit for establishing 'social acts' as a relevant subclass of experiences for phenomenological analysis goes to Adolf Reinach in his work *Zur Phänomomenologie des Rechts. Die Apriorischen Grundlagen des Bürgerlichen Rechts* (2012/1913).[32] Reinach sets out to investigate the typical and essential features of this peculiar subclass of experience by comparing and contrasting both experiences of non-social and social acts as well as different types of social acts.

Reinach is interested in the normative connections established by social acts and how they ground our experience of the essence of claim and obligation. Starting from our everyday social interactions, with a particular focus on promising as a social act, he sets out to describe the a priori foundations of (civil) law. However, his discovery of social acts is contemporaneously not only relevant due to its pioneer work in the phenomenology of law (Loidolt, 2010). Reinach's work has also received contemporary uptake because he introduces an interesting approach to understand

[32] In the following, I will cite from the English translation with the title *The Apriori Foundations of Civil Law.* Particularly relevant for my analysis here is the section that introduces the notion of social act in the *Foundations* (Reinach, 2012, pp. 18–28, §3) and an earlier unpublished and unfinished manuscript piece entitled "Non-social and Social acts" (Reinach, 1989a).

social normativity broadly conceived (Salice, 2014). Many have pointed out the parallels between Reinach's discovery of social acts and the pragmatist analyses of "speech acts" established significantly later by J.L. Austin (Crosby, 1990; Mulligan, 1987). How we motivate and influence each other by performing social acts is different form merely influencing their behavior by using physical force or unilateral actions. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, Reinach's discussion of social acts gives an implicit account of the varieties of speech act norms and their socially normative effects.

We can find different phenomenological approaches to the same class of experience. This insight is important because Reinach's notion of social acts has been appropriated for rather different purposes within the early phenomenological movement. Although he does not explicitly credit Reinach, Husserl draws on the notion of social acts in his writings on intersubjectivity, sociality and community. This reception has in turn influenced Edith Stein's work on empathy (Szanto & Moran, 2015) and Gerda Walther's work on community (Salice & Uemura, 2018). While Husserl is, like Reinach, interested in the motivational and practical nexus established by the performances of social acts, he is not concerned with a meticulous phenomenological analysis of different types of social acts and their essential features. Instead, Husserl is interested in social acts for their constitutive function to ground our experiences of sociality and in particular their relevance for the constitution of communal experiences. His most detailed explorations of social acts can be found in 'Gemeingeist I' (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 165–185) and 'Phenomenology of the Communicative Community' (Husserl, 1973a, pp. 461–479), two pieces from the intersubjectivity manuscripts.[33] Rather than to compare, contrast and analyze different types of social acts, Husserl

[33] Reinach's influence through the notion of social act is also apparent in the Ideas II, which Stein intensively worked on and (tried to) discuss with Husserl. According to Salice & Uemura (2018), Walther picked up on the notion of social acts in Husserl's lectures 'Natur und Geist'.

is interested in a distinctive interpersonal, communicative quality that runs across many types of social acts. According to Husserl, social acts enable communicative connection between two or more subjects. This gives rise to basic communicative communities of address and uptake of the address. It is "the mere community of address and uptake of the address, or more direct, of appeal and listening" (Husserl, 1973a, p. 475). Thus, rather than to offer a parallel perspective on something akin to speech act norms and the practical form of nexus, the Husserlian analysis provides insights into the complex intersubjectivity of expressive social acts and their relation to more basic embodied and affective experiences of intersubjectivity in empathy as well as their important role in enabling communal experiences.

In short, Reinach and Husserl have very different motivations to study social acts as a subclass of experience. Interestingly, this also means that they emphasize different methods to study social acts from a phenomenological perspective. For Reinach, an eidetic method of contrast is crucial for his analysis, whereas Husserl's constitutive analysis identifies the foundation for social acts in more basic experiences of empathy to then, in turn, point out the foundational role of social acts for experiences of practical communities of will and personalities of higher order.

Here, I will neither provide a comprehensive interpretation of Reinach's and Husserl's work *in toto* nor will I offer a comprehensive treatment of their respective contributions to social phenomenology and social ontology. My argument is simply that despite these different interests and motivations to study social acts and their different approaches to the phenomenological method and its metaphysical status as a whole[34], Reinach and Husserl mostly agree on the typical experiential features that demarcate social acts as a subclass of experience. These are, namely, (1)

[34] Reinach defends a version of realist phenomenology whereas Husserl in his later work famously turned to a version of transcendental idealism.

intentionality, (2) spontaneity, (3) other-directedness and (4) a need for uptake. In a first instance, I will introduce each feature in turn and point out the parallels in Reinach's and Husserl's discussion of social acts. Only in the section 5, will I then turn to some important differences in their approaches to feature (4) and their respective understandings of the observation that social acts are in need of uptake.

2.3 Typical Features of Social Acts

2.3.1 Intentionality and Spontaneity

All social acts come with a *(1) specific form of intentionality*. According to a phenomenological account of experiencing, all experiences are intentional in the sense that they come with *aboutness* or *directedness*. In social acts, when we address another subject, the intentionality of the experience takes a specific form: Experiences in social acts are about being turned towards another in a specific way. *I turn myself to you in address*. Both Husserl (1973b, pp. 166, 167, 183, 211, 1973a, pp. 471, 473, 474, 475) and Reinach (Reinach, 1953, pp. 39, 42, 1989a, p. 356, 2012, p. 19) use the German reflexive verb "*sich an jemanden wenden*" to describe this.[35]

Reinach brings the intentional structure of social acts to the following formula: They are about turning oneself towards someone about something; "they have a direction *to* someone *about* something" (Reinach, 1989a, p. 356, my transl.).[36] Initially, it is rather hard to capture the

[35] In the official Reinach translation, there is no indication of the original German formulation '*sich an jemanden wenden*' to highlight that the notion is used in a terminological sense. For instance, in the following German passage „Ich kann die Behauptung für mich aussprechen, ohne jedes Gegenüber, an das sie sich wendet. Der Mitteilung aber ist diese Wendung immanent." (Reinach, 1953, p. 42) the idea of 'wenden' is simply translated with 'address(ing)': "I can verbally express the assertion for myself, without having any partner to whom it is addressed. But this addressing is intrinsic to informing. It belongs to its essence to address another and to announce to him its content." (Reinach, 2012, p. 21). There is no official translation of the passages that use 'sich an jemanden wenden' in Husserl's intersubjectivity manuscripts. Here, I choose to translate 'sich an jemanden wenden' with ‚turning myself to you'/‚turn oneself towards someone' sometimes with the addition of 'in address'.

[36] „[Sie haben eine] Richtung *an* jemanden *über* etwas." (Reinach, 1989a, p. 356)

distinctiveness of "turning myself to you" in address by only giving this formal structure and direction of the intentional act in question. How is this any different from noticing another person in our environment? Initially, we might think that tuning 'to x about y' simply reflects the basic as-structure of any intentional experience.[37]

Consider the case of attending physical objects. For me as experiencing subject, everything in the world appears in a specific way *as something*. Usually, the coffee mug on my desk is given to me as the thing from which I sip my drink. So, when I direct my attention to it to reach out for it, this is usually what that is about. With my sketch book in hand, the same mug will be given to me is a different way – as this object I am trying to draw.

In a similar way, I can also turn my attention towards other people in a variety of different ways. Many of them will not constitute social acts, where I turn myself to them in address. At a crowded social gathering, I might survey the room with other people for this or that purpose. I might simply stand there to watch all the drama unfold and 'take in the atmosphere of the party'. I might notice this person laughing hysterically or that person crying, visibly upset. In another case, I might stand there with a quite different attitude, ready to more actively survey and 'check out the room' – maybe to single out someone who might be a good person to ask for the next dance or buy me my next drink.

The important point here is that both these cases of observing others will be quite different from actually turning myself to someone in address to ask them for the next dance or to convince them to buy me my next drink. The task at hand, is to capture how these latter acts of address where "I turn myself to you" are distinct from merely turning my attention to this or that person at

[37] See (Doyon, 2016).

the gathering under a specific thematic focus. As a first step to do so, I will outline two interesting features of social acts by following Reinach's and Husserl's attempts to capture what is distinctive about them.

One interesting feature of addressing someone is that the other person does not necessarily have to be present face-to-face for the experience to exhibit the specific form of intentionality in question. Husserl gives the example of his wife putting out an apple on top of his hat and coat to address him and remind him that he should remember to eat (Husserl, 1973b, p. 166). This is still an experience of an expressive communication and thus "will have to be addressed in the study of communications (*Mitteilungen*)" (ibid.) and social acts.

Secondly, social acts are (2) *spontaneous, practical activities*. Social acts have distinguished practical relevance as they involve active intentional, purposive expression (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 165–166, §1; Reinach, 2012, p. 18). To describe purposive experience and its specific temporal structure Reinach uses the term spontaneity.[38] An experience is spontaneous in this strict sense of the term only if it figures as in my action. Husserl does not use the term "spontaneity" to describe this quality of the experience. However, the same demarcation is reflected in Husserl's use of the term *Absicht*, i.e., practical intention, rather than to simply use intentionality

[38] Reinach's use of the term "spontaneity" in somewhat confusing if one is familiar with its use in Kantian terminology. Kantian "spontaneity" describes the contrast between the activity of understanding/reason and passive receptivity that merely affects the conscious "I". Very likely adopting terminology from the dominant Neo-Kantian discussions in German philosophy in his time, Reinach seems to partially buy into the general thrust of the Kantian divide between the spontaneous faculty reason/understanding and merely receptive affectivity. Reinach characterizes experiences that involve emotions as somewhat passive and not in our control, i.e., hate wells up in me and, while indignation is certainly an experience of activity, it is still somewhat passive as I may or may not be able to control it. Many contemporary phenomenologists of emotions and affectivity would question this at least partial endorsement of the Kantian divide between reason and affects. However, for what matters here, it is important to note that Reinach restricts the use of the term spontaneous further than in Kantian terminology to mental activity with a purposive, practical intention, i.e. the experience that figures in my actions.

(*Intentionalität/Intention*) in the broad sense of directedness/aboutness (Husserl, 1973b, p. 166, 1973a, p. 473).

To illustrate this important demarcation, first, consider some examples for spontaneous but non-social acts. These are, for instance, making a decision or making a resolution. They have a distinguished temporal structure in that that they are punctual experiences. At the same time, they have the potential to signal and initiate a longer lasting transformative change in our practical attitudes and habituality. To illustrate this temporal structure, consider resolutions. As Reinach points out (Reinach, 2012, p. 18), only the *making* of a resolution (*Vorsatz fassen*, literally seizing or grasping a resolution) is a spontaneous act. When, consequently, we then *hold* a resolution this might still be an intentional activity, an active or at least dispositional state of mind, but it is not a spontaneous *act* in Reinach's terminology.

Let's consider the temporal structure at play in social acts. As a spontaneous act, issuing a command is characteristically a punctual experience. We sometimes express this punctuality of the experience linguistically when we use the explicit formula to perform the social act by saying "I *hereby* command you to φ".[39] By contrast, the possible chain of events that may be initiated until the command is taken up and executed by the addressee will be temporally extended. Reinach describes this with the metaphor of a circuit that is opened by the performance of a social act (Reinach, 2012, p. 21). Depending on the type of social act the circuit is closed in different ways. For instance, in the case of promising my promise can be fulfilled when I do for the other whatever I promised; but it may also be terminated by another social act, for instance, when the other waives their claim to the promise or I revoke it by referring to a condition that was part of the promise.

[39] I take this point from Austin's (Austin, 1975, p. 57) exposition of speech acts because I think it helps to clarify Reinach's and Husserl's accounts of this feature.

Husserl considers an even bigger picture and observes that repeated, iterative performances of the same type of social acts can create stable habitual practical units between two persons so that they may impact and encompass the two subject's entire lives. For instance, Husserl describes the master-servant relationship as a practical community of wills that revolves around the social act commanding (Husserl, 1973b, p. 169). The experience of performing a social act itself, however, can be demarcated and specified as the experience of a punctual practical intervention.

The interesting point about Reinach's and Husserl's description here is that they carefully distinguish a particular experience of practical activity. Importantly, this specific experience of practical activity at stake in social acts is crucially different from 'skillfully coping' with our environment, i.e., the kind of practical stance that has been a particular focus in the cognitive science adjacent phenomenological approaches (Dreyfus, 2014). This contemporary view on action and agency combines phenomenological insights with more pragmatist approaches. Typically, the focus of such work are mechanisms of 'attuning to each other' as experienced in partnered physical activities such as dancing tango together or playing double in tennis. Quite often these contemporary approaches use the concept of 'skillful coping' in a rather ubiquitous way and present it as '*the'* key to understand how we handle our interactions with others. By contrast, Reinach's and Husserl's accounts of the peculiar experiences in social acts highlight that there are multiple and subtle nuances to the ways in which 'others' are involved in intersubjective experiences and mutual actions. In the specific case of social acts, these experiences are not primarily about 'mere' other-directedness in the sense of other-awareness and attunement. Next, I turn to their account of how others are involved in social acts in more detail.

2.3.2 Other-Directedness and Need for Uptake

Both non-social and social acts can be spontaneous, practical mental activity in the strict sense described above. Following Reinach's method of contrast, the next thing to inquire is this: What

makes the difference between internal doings like making resolutions and deciding and examples of openly expressive acts like commanding, requesting and asking questions? Reinach considers two features, (3) other-directedness and (4) the need for uptake, in turn.

Social acts like commands, requests and questions are typically directed at someone and this directedness at the other person as intentional object thematically figures in the experience. However, mere intentional other-directedness is not the most distinctive feature of social acts. There are some essentially other-directed experiences that do not necessarily involve the experience of turning myself to you in address that is so characteristic for social acts. According to Reinach, I can for example not envy myself or forgive myself.[40] However, I typically do not express my envy and address it to the person I envy. And, while I can tell someone that I forgive them, the process of forgiving does not necessarily take place while I address the person who has wronged me. Both are therefore not social acts in the relevant sense.

Hence, the most distinctive feature to distinguish the experiences in social acts from experiences in merely other-directed activity is their (4) need for uptake. How this experience different from mere other-directedness? To describe what makes the difference both Reinach and Husserl draw on similar metaphorical language. Reinach uses the command as an example and turns to a penetration metaphor to describe the experience:

> "The command penetrates the other (*dringt in den anderen ein*) and has by its very tendency the need to be heard (*vernommen*) by the other. We never give a command if we know for sure that the subject to whom we turn with the command is incapable of becoming aware of it." (Reinach, 2012, p. 19).

[40] One might object: But what about self-forgiveness? The concept of self-forgiveness has become popular is psychotherapy and self-help resources. However, I think with Reinach it might be worth to consider whether that concept should not be treated with some caution. While the affective profiles of intersubjective forgiveness and self-forgiveness might be similar, I doubt that self-forgiveness can have the same normative force.

Similarly, Husserl characterizes the experience as one where we are "*within one another*" (*Ineinander*) rather than merely 'next to one another' *(Nebeneinander)* (Husserl, 1973a, p. 477, 1973b, p. 174). It is for those experiences where the turning-myself-to-you figures in the experience that Husserl reserves the term *I-you-relation (Ich-Du-Beziehung)* (Husserl, 1973b, p. 167, 1973a, pp. 472, 476–479).

On closer examination, there are crucial differences between Reinach's and Husserl's understanding of the idea that the addressee's uptake is somehow necessarily involved in the experience. (I will elaborate on these differences in detail in the next two chapters.) However, in a first instance, both agree on a particular quality and function of the intentional correlate of social acts. Whatever happens in particular types of social acts, all of them seem to track experiences where we "penetrate into" the sphere of the other subject. Reinach and Husserl hold that we "interlock" or "integrate" our experiencing in a "stronger", "deeper" manner than when we unilaterally or reciprocally direct our awareness, attention, or actions at another subject. One way of understanding this is to say that the intentional correlate of social acts points to a distinctive way of experiencing. Social acts manifest themselves in experience in a manner that is autonomous and non-derivative to a set of individual acts of attention directed at other intentional contents. Next, I will consider whether this is already sufficient to show that the second person phenomenon manifests itself in experience in a distinctive manner.

2.4 Social Acts and their Intentional Correlates

I suggest that Reinach and Husserl agree on the essential qualities of the intentional correlates of social acts. Much of my comparison in the previous section simply relied on a cornerstone of any phenomenological method: We can describe experiences in terms of their intentionality in the broad sense, i.e., in terms of their aboutness/directedness. Using this approach, both Reinach and Husserl characterize the aboutness in social acts simply as the experience of "turning myself to

you". The aim in this section is to substantiate my point with reference to competing interpretation of Reinach in the literature. First, in subsection 4.1, I consider interpretations that attempt to understand the experience by breaking it down into composite intentions and thus count as proposals of the Analytic Approach. These interpretations have primarily been proposed in the literature on Reinach (in attempts to connect his work to contemporary debates on collective intentionality following Searle and others).[41] In 4.2 I outline my concerns about these interpretations. Then, in section 4.3, I draw on Genki Uemura's (2023) alternative proposal in response to these interpretations. I argue that the specific intentionality in social acts is best understood as a primitive experiential mark of second-person relations. This is in line with the distinctivism claim. In section 4.4, I briefly indicate why proponent of the Dialogical approach might nonetheless have concerns about the phenomenological starting point from intentional experience.

2.4.1 Interpretations of the Analytic Approach

In order to understand the complex intentionality in social acts, some Reinach interpreters have argued for proposals that are in line with the Analytic approach. The intentionality involved in social act is "complex" because it is not the same as simply taking "the other" as the intentional object of the experience. Just as proposals of the Dialogical approach, these proposals seek to describe and highlight this difference and appreciate the "complexity" of the experience. To do this, both the *(1) second-order intentionality* account (Mulligan, 1987) and the *(2) double-directed*

[41] Uemura (2023) discusses both these proposals to arrive at his interpretation. 4.1 I give my own rendition of their arguments and present my own rendition of possible objections in 4.2. The idea to consider the proposals by Mulligan and DeVecchi to develop an alternative interpretation is credit to Uemura's work.

intentionality account (De Vecchi, 2014) propose to break down the experience of address in social acts into a set of composite intentions as mental states.

According to the second-order intentionality proposal, the performance of social acts always involves a second-order intention that aims at the recognition of my address. Social acts involve a content that depends on the type of social act performed, i.e., the content of my promise refers to my future action, the content of a command refers to the action of another person, the content of my question is about my uncertainty about proposition p, and so on. On top of this reference to the content of the social act, we then say that all social acts also involve a second order intention "that the act in question be grasped", "that an act be recognized as being addressed" (Mulligan, 1987, p. 13). According to Mulligan, this explains "just what it means for a social act to be addressed" (Mulligan, 1987, p. 13). Interestingly, Mulligan diagnoses that "Reinach does not go into the problems raised by complex or ramified intentions" (Mulligan, 1987, p. 44). To mitigate this alleged shortcoming he suggests to supplement Reinach's account with a more detailed account of the set of higher-order intentions involved. For the reader of this chapter, it is sufficient to think about this proposal[42] as in close proximity to the well-known Gricean account of communicative intention outlined in section 1 of this chapter.[43]

The second-order intentionality proposal is not the only possible way to analytically divide the experience of social acts up into composite intentions. As an alternative, consider the double-directed intentionality proposal. According to this proposal, social acts are directed *through*

[42] This connection seems based on Mulligan's previous work on Reinach's contemporary Anton Marty and his account of second order intention.

[43] Mulligan himself remarks in a footnote that Reinach's neglect to spell out the need of second order intentions compared his contemporary Anton Marty's work on such second order intentions resembles the relation in which J.L. Austin stands to Grice and Strawson in received speech act theory (Mulligan, 1987, p. 44).

another subject *at* a common targeted object. On this view, the command involves an intention that is directed at the other subject as "the *medium* through whom x is done" and another, simultaneous intention that "aims at the commanded, (requested, promised etc.) thing" (De Vecchi, 2014, p. 127).

Let me briefly highlight what these accounts get right. Both proposals acknowledge that the 'social' intentionality involved in social acts is special in that it is different from both intersubjective intentionality and collective intentionality (De Vecchi, 2014, pp. 126–127). On the one hand, it is more than an intention that is merely directed at another subject's experience. On the other hand, the reference to a shared object is also less straightforward than in collective intentionality where we are jointly directed at a common feature of our environment, a goal for action or a property or value that defines our group identity. Moreover, both Mulligan and De Vecchi try to account for the fact that the other's involvement in the address somehow matters to fully describe the intentionality of social acts. But can these attempts to analytically break down the intentionality of the experience into composite mental states fully capture what it means to address someone?

My concern with their approach, in brief outline, is as follows. While both cover some aspect of the second-person phenomenon in more or less detail, they miss out on the gist of the phenomenon that I find conveyed in Reinach's and Husserl's description of the typical features of social acts. This is what I will elaborate on in the next subsection. Following an alternative proposal by Genki Uemura (2023) in response to Mulligan and De Vecchi, I argue that the intentional correlate of second-person relation/social acts is best understood as "primitive" and irreducible to a set of mental states – no matter how complex the proposal to analytically distinguish these composite mental states.

2.4.2 Objections against Interpretations of the Analytic Approach

Let us consider the possible objections against the second-order intentionality proposal and the double-directed-intentionality account in turn. In short, my concerns with these interpretations are this: Mulligan's second-order intentionality proposal does not capture the peculiar temporality of social acts – as outlined in the previous section – appropriately. De Vecchi's double-directed struggles less with this aspect. However, her proposal does not capture precisely enough how the other's uptake features in social acts.

First, consider Mulligan's *(1) second-order intentionality proposal*. The central concern here is that it does not capture the idea that the performance of social acts is a punctual experience accurately. How is the second-order intention 'that the act in question be recognized' part of the social act? Uemura suggests two options in order "to disambiguate what it means for a social act to *involve* a second-order intention" (Uemura, 2023, p. 84). One option is to think about the second-order intention as *a constituent mental state* of the social act. The other is to merely think about the second-order intention as something the social act *entails* downstream of its performance.

With the former option, the criterium that the experience of *performing* a social act is a punctual experience is no longer satisfied. Consider 'making a promise'. If we think about aiming at the recognition of the promise by the addressee as a separate but constituent mental state it is hard to see how this would not be temporally extended – even if we concede that the thought that aims for 'you to grasp and recognize the promise' could fade in the background to only occasionally pop up as an articulated thought. Moreover, in Reinach's description of promising it is quite important that the experience of making a promise is not about waiting for the other's acceptance (Reinach, 2012, pp. 28–29). This, however, is the kind of process we would have to picture with the stronger formulation of the second-order intentionality proposal.

With the latter, weaker claim about the status of the second-order intention, the idea the act is *essentially addressed* to another is lost because the second-order intention it is no longer a constituent feature. In the case of making a promise, the only remaining constituent feature would be the first-order intention 'that I φ'. The feature that I make the promise *to you* would be oddly sidelined on this account. In sum, the second-order intentionality proposal effectively outsources that social acts somehow essentially aim at recognition and uptake by the addressee to a mental occurrence that can be neatly separated. This is at odds with Reinach's careful description of both the experience of performing social acts in general and his specific remarks about the case of making a promise.

The *(2) double-directed intentionality proposal*, captures the simultaneity of these aspects in the experience of performing a social act better. However, merely making the other figure as "medium through which x is done" somewhat sidelines the important role of the other's active recognition of the address. What is more, this formula seems geared towards action-focused cases like commanding where the social act is fulfilled by an action done through the other.

The proposal does not fare so well to describe the experiences of social acts which do not call for an action by the other. Take, for instance, asking a question. A question might call for a response from the other. But if it is to be a genuine question rather than a rhetorical question, I will not address the other as a mere medium that will respond to my prompt to give me a pre-determined answer.

Even for the simple case of communicating something to another the formula seems off. To illustrate this point, consider Uemura's (2023, p. 87) example: "Communicating to my colleagues that I will leave for vacation next week". On the double-intentionality account, the experience would structurally have the same intentional correlate as "My act of thinking about my colleagues as media (through which I make something happen in the world.)" (ibid.), which seems somewhat

off the mark here for the simple act of informing. Moreover, my colleagues only seem to feature as disengaged, abstract media. They are, like a variable, easily exchanged for other addressees. According to a description that follows the double-intentionality view, exchanging the concrete addressee would not change anything significant about the experience. However, turning the address towards someone else seems to have a rather significant impact on what the experience of performing the social act is like for me. I am not indifferent to whether I communicate that I leave for vacation to my colleagues or whether I convey the same information to my neighbors.

2.4.3 'Primitivism' as an Alternative Interpretation of the Distinctivist Approach

What is the alternative? In line with the general thrust of the Dialogical approach, an alternative interpretation will reject any attempt to break down the relation of reciprocal recognition into something that could in principle occur outside the connection between You and Me. Such an interpretation of Reinach has been proposed by Genki Uemura (2023). He suggests that we can simply take 'turning myself to you' as the "non-definable, primitive experiential feature" (Uemura, 2023, p. 70) of social acts. Uemura calls this view "primitivism" about the intentionality of social acts. He proposes to take what he aptly calls '*to-you-ness'* to be the distinctive intentional and experiential feature involved in performing social acts. I think that this is an elegant solution that does more justice to how we, on the whole, experience relations of address than the previously considered analytic interpretations.

Let me briefly illustrated this by pointing to a distinctive nuance of social acts that this proposal captures. Uemura stresses that *'to-you-ness'* is not the same as a social act's *'need of being heard' (Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit)*. As I will elaborate in the following chapter, the 'need of being heard' is a feature that goes beyond the mere directedness of the act. It captures a normative function around which we understand success and failure in the context of social acts. For '*to-you-ness',* on the other hand, Reinach only offers a negative characterization by claiming that the experience of

'turning myself to you" in address is not the same as more basic forms of intentional other-directedness. That is despite more basic other-directed acts and being turned towards another in address often figuring co-extensively in most types of social acts.

When I order someone to do something, more basic ways of relating to the other as experiencing subject will typically feature in the experience. For instance, I might also be targeting them in their state of awe, insecurity or fear to really get to them and make them obey me. By contrast, Reinach gives "waiving a claim" as an example of an experience where such more basic experiences of the other do not figure in the experience (Reinach, 2012, p. 32). When I waive my claim that was granted to me by someone's promise, I am turned towards them in the sense that I am turned towards the claim I hold towards them. The social act exhibits '*to-you-ness'* but it is completely sufficient that this takes place on the level of our transactional connection with each other in promising. Nonetheless, waiving a claim is an act for two, it needs to be turned towards you. It cannot just be thrown out into the world like a spear without an addressee as its proper target.

The distinctions between 'to-you-ness' and basic other-directedness as well as between to-you-ness and the need of being heard, highlighted by Uemura, are important. To appreciate the difference between various basic forms of other-directed intentional experiences and the more specific experience of turning-myself-to-you in address better, it is helpful to consider the Husserlian account of social acts alongside Reinach's account. Reinach merely contrasts other-personality (*Fremdpersonalität*) and 'to-you-ness' and does not offer an extensive analysis of different types of basic other-person-directed intentionality. Husserl, on the other hand, is well-known for his detailed account of the sphere of more basic other-person directed acts under the heading of empathy (*Einfühlung*).

Despite their different starting points, there is an important parallel in Reinach's and Husserl's respective arguments. I suggest that in his analysis of communication (*Mitteilung*), Husserl arrives at a similar point and recognizing 'turning myself to you' as the primitive description of the intentional correlate. Their respective arguments both rely on the idea that the intentional correlate of second-person relations of address is primitive and not further definable.

In his recent work on a Husserlian account of second-personal engagement, Dan Zahavi (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023, p. 365; Zahavi, 2019, p. 254, 2023, p. 88) has highlighted the difference between the communicative experience in the I-You-relation and more basic other-directed acts in empathy. In his analysis of the so-called communicative community (*Mitteilungsgemeinschaft*), Husserl works his way bottom-up through different types of empathy to arrive at social acts and communicative experience (Husserl, 1973a, p. 472). We can relate to others in unilateral empathy and parallel empathy. The former is the basic way in which we understand others as experiencing subjects without this requiring any form of intermediate projection or simulation. We observe someone and see that they are sad, happy or angry. This does not require that the observe other also becomes aware of me. In what Zahavi (Zahavi, 2019, p. 254) calls parallel empathy, both A and B direct their awareness at the respective other, however they each remain unaware of the others attention.

From here, Husserl moves on to discuss the special case of reciprocal empathy where both A and B are mutually aware that they are attended by the other. The crucial point is that Husserl now insists that not even reciprocal empathy is enough to establish an I-You-relation. What else is necessary? Husserl concludes his analysis with the following claim:

> "What now that reciprocal, active empathy is established? Thereby no social unity, no communicative [unity], no actual I-You nexus […] is established. What is still missing is the intention (*Vorhabe*) and will to make manifest (*Kundgebung*) – the specific act of communication, which, in establishing a community is called *communicatio* in Latin." (Husserl, 1973a, p. 472, transl. Meindl & Zahavi 2023)

Here, I take Husserl to offer an argument that has a parallel function to Reinach's account of the primitiveness of to-you-ness, granted we follow Uemura's interpretation. Husserl likewise emphasizes that we lose something crucial in the description of the experiential nature of the I-You-relation if we simply explain it in terms of a set of composite intersubjective experiences in empathy. The equivalent to the analytic approaches discussed for Reinach's account of social acts would be to propose some way to break down the experience of communication into a set of underlying experiences of empathy. However, according to Husserl the I-You-relation is essentially an experience for two and involves awareness of a social and communicative unity. It cannot be explained in terms of just pointing to a set of experiences and acts of empathy. Again, we find the idea that the I-You-relation is essentially about turning myself towards the addressee. This does not preclude that most communicative experiences co-extensively involve more basic experiences of intersubjectivity in unilateral, parallel and reciprocal empathy.

With this parallel treatment of Reinach's and Husserl's respective argument, I want to motivate that their account of the second-person phenomenon in terms of *intentional experience* resonates well with the general thrust of the distinctivist approach. By drawing on available interpretations from Uemura and Zahavi, I read them to argue for an intentional correlate that is primitive and irreducible – both to a set of individual mental states *and* a set of more basic intersubjective encounters in empathy. Instead, *turning myself to you* is the primitive experiential mark of the second-person relation and the appropriate starting point to understand the complex intentionality involved in mutual attitudes of address. The approach highlights the crucial role of the specific openness and connectedness between two parties in second-person relations. Attempts to breakdown what goes on in the I-you-relation into a set of mental states cannot account for the specific experience of openness and mutual manifestation in second-person relations.

Through the lens of intentional experience, in the phenomenological sense, the answer to the question 'What warrants to consider the reciprocal I-Thou-relation as a distinctively manifest phenomenon in experience and thought?' is simply this: In second-personal address I turn myself towards you. It is this to-you-ness as basic experiential feature that makes up the not further discernible intentional correlates of (all) social acts.

2.4.4 Remaining Concerns from Proponents of the Dialogical Approach

Reinach and Husserl both approach the mark of the second person through the lens of *intentional experience*. I suspect that proponents of the Dialogical approach might still have some concerns with the phenomenological focus on intentional experience in their approach to the second person. In Stawarska's and Haase's work, for instance, linguistic expression and the language dependence of second-personal address are the prevalent points of departure. According to them, the language dependence of second-personal address is crucial to understand the distinctive nature and irreducible status of communicative exchange and the relation mutual recognition involved in addressing another. For Stawarska, turning to "linguistics" helps her to demonstrate "the philosophical thesis of primary I-You connectedeness" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 53). Haase argues that "the idea of mutual recognition requires a […] view according to which address is an act of mind *sui generis"*(Haase, 2014a, p. 358). They would certainly have reservations with a focus in intentional experience that seems to sideline the central role of conceptually articulated and linguistic expression.

However, the reference to 'linguistic expression' by these proponents of the Dialogical approach might itself be in need of clarification. Afterall, proponents of the Analytic approach likewise recognize that second-person relations are primarily about (linguistically) addressing another. However, opponents of an anti-distinctivist approach to the second person such as Christopher Peacocke (2014, see section 1 in this chapter) or Richard Heck (2002) will argue that

addressing another is ‘merely’ a linguistic phenomenon. Against the Dialogical approach, they hold that we not need a view that argues for any deeper meaning-making function of the second-person relation in thought or experience.

On the Analytic view, the claim that the second person has a distinctive relevance in thought and experience is superfluous. Instead, Peacocke suggest that the interpersonal self-consciousness involved in addressing can be understood as a complex set of first- and third-person attitudes. In fact, I suspect that Kevin Mulligan would join Peacocke’s and Heck’s assessment here to defend his second-order intentionality account. For him, the second-order intention proposal captures “just what is means for a social act to addressed” (Mulligan, 1987, p. 44). Before proponents of the Dialogical approach can jump to more encompassing aims to substantiate why the second-person relation matters, it is important to provide a solid argument for their distinctivism claim. I have argued that an analysis of intentional experience can make a good start to motivate that there is something more substantial about ‘turning oneself towards another’ in address. This goes beyond ‘mere’ verbal linguistic expression of first-order thought content where the second-personal address is only needed to transfer the pre-established meaningful content to others through verbal address.

This notwithstanding, whether the focus on the language dependence of second-personal address and the approach from intentional experience are competing or ultimately compatible lenses to approach second-person relations will have to be discussed further in the following chapters. I suspect that neither singling out intentional experience nor linguistic expression alone will be fully sufficient to further characterize the distinctive nature of the second-person relation. We need something more to further motivate the distinctivism claim. Conveniently, neither Reinach nor Husserl stop at a mere description of the intentional correlates involved in social acts. Instead, they develop suggestions that allow us to understand the normative and experiential

significance of second-person relations. To conclude this chapter, I will provide a short outline of these two trajectories in their respective accounts.

2.5 A Relational Form of Normativity and an Experience of Intersubjective Engagement

Both Reinach and Husserl approach second-person relations through the lens of intentional experience. Following their respective analyses of the aboutness/directedness of the experience, I have drawn attention to a basic experiential mark of second-person relations. Second-person relations have a direction to someone about something. In terms of the intentionality involved they are primitively and indissolubly about turning oneself towards another. Having established this, I now want to turn to the question how we might further characterize how second-person relations become manifest in experience and thought in a distinctive manner.

If we continue to follow Reinach and Husserl here, it is important to understand that *to-you-ness* is a rather thin experiential feature of social acts. *To-you-ness* is not identical with other features that figure more prominently in Reinach's and Husserl's respective descriptions: Reinach is famously known for the discovery that social acts are "in need of being heard" (*vernehmungsbedürftig*), whereas Husserl provides an account of the actual communicative connection and intersubjective uptake we experience in social acts. *To-you-ness* is somewhat hard to discern as a feature in its own right in conjunction with these other features because we mostly experience all three feature co-extensively when we make use of social acts.

I suggest that the 'need of being heard' and 'communicative connectedness' are Reinach's and Husserl's respective proposals to characterize the second-person relation further. According to Reinach, social acts are in need of being heard. He forefronts the normative function of the potential uptake towards which social acts are teleologically oriented. By contrast, Husserl prioritizes the role of actual intersubjective uptake and thus emphasizes that second-person encounters enable communicative connection in processes of co-determination and co-influencing

between subjects. Reinach's spotlight on *Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit* points towards a way to understand a specific relational form of normativity enabled by second-personal address. Husserl's account of communicative connection allows for a richer description of how the specific intersubjective engagement at play in second-person relations becomes manifest in our embodied experience. These are the two trajectories I will outline in more detail in chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

In this chapter, I have argued against the concern that a phenomenological approach to second-person relations can only give a reductive account of I-You connectedness and the process of mutual recognition involved in it. The worry was that phenomenological approaches will, due to their starting point in first-person intentional experience, by default break down the process of reciprocal recognition into elements that could in principle take place outside the connectedness established by the relation of address. Following Reinach's and Husserl's accounts of social acts, I have shown that analyzed through the phenomenological lens of intentional experience second-person relations are simply *about* the specific way in which we turn ourselves towards another in address. This basic description of the complex but primitive intentionality in relations of address is constitutive for the experiences in second-person relations where the peculiar connectedness between the two parties is essentially involved. In a final step, I have argued that Reinach's and Husserl's additional qualifications of social acts and I-you-connectedness go beyond such a description of the mere directedness of social acts. In the next chapter, I will first turn to Reinach's account and also start to address the concern that a phenomenological account sidelines the language dependence of second-personal address.

3 | Eidetics and the Bipolar Form of Normativity

3.1 Second-Personal Address, Linguistic Expression, and Phenomenology

In the previous chapter, I have indicated that a starting point from linguistic expression and the forms of conceptual and discursive judgment often features in proposals of the Dialogical approach. Proponents of the Dialogical approach hold that a proper appreciation of the second person as a philosophical topic requires to forefront a special intertwinement of language, mind and world to fully do the phenomenon justice. A concern is that the phenomenological method with its starting point in intentional experience sidelines the importance of language, speech and conceptually articulated expression. In this chapter, I engage with this concern in more detail. I argue that the phenomenological method should not be conceived as so fundamentally orthogonal to inquiries of linguistic address and discursive judgment as some make it out to be.

Let's consider again how Beata Stawarska (2009) articulates these concerns about classical phenomenology. According to her, "natural language is bracketed and regarded as a phenomenon by the phenomenological onlooker, whose own method is conceived as linguistically neutral" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 23) in classical phenomenology. On Stawarska's view, the phenomenological starting point in first-person experience inherently runs the risk to neglect meaning within the socially transformed context of language use. She therefore suggests that a proper understanding of the second person needs a multidisciplinary recourse to language pragmatics and linguistic psychology. This is "indispensable to do justice to the richness and complexity of the phenomena under investigation" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 16). In this assessment, Stawarska perpetuates a widespread view according to which the phenomenological method is primarily or even exclusively interested in the study of prelinguistic, pre-conceptual experience.

Despite this, Stawarska frequently insists that her account is a modulated *phenomenological* method, a dialogical phenomenology that foregrounds the interrelation of meaning and experience.

However, this phenomenological account of experience has to be supplemented by what she calls 'sociolinguistic perspectives' to fully capture the significance of second-person relations. To me, the simple proposal for a division of labor seems to neglect important methodological issue. I struggle to read Stawarska's proposal as anything but an appeal to simply turn to an account of meaning based on a version of language pragmatics rather than intentional experience.

With this concern, I do not want to dismiss Stawarska's positive claim that there is a lot of potential for mutual enlightenment between phenomenology and language pragmatics. However, I think there are several disadvantages that come with an all too hasty dismissal of classical phenomenological methods and their own capabilities to reflect the peculiar intertwinement of subjectivity, language and world. This is particularly the case if the aim is to insist on some merits of phenomenological approaches. Firstly, and very broadly speaking, it seems to run against what we find in the research programs of important figures in phenomenology. For second generation phenomenologists after Husserl and Heidegger - from Schütz over Merleau-Ponty to Levinas and Arendt -, language plays a central role in structuring our sense of being-in-the-world and is indispensable to understand the human lifeform as social. They do this without seeing a need to just abandon the phenomenological starting point in first-person experience in favor of another approach to meaning such as linguistic pragmatics. Secondly, and more important for my point in this chapter, such a hasty dismissal propagates a narrow and methodologically diminished view of phenomenology. I fear that this might undermine the very productive dialogue with those who approach the second person through the lens of pragmatics of language and ordinary language philosophy that Stawarska is calling for.

To illustrate why this diminished view of the phenomenological method might actually prevent a productive dialogue with those who study the pragmatics of language and second-personal address, I turn to Kukla and Lance's (2009) comprehensive attempt at a pragmatic topography of

speech act normativity. In their co-authored monograph ‘‘*Yo’! and ‘Lo’!’*, Kukla and Lance take some inspiration from a camp in contemporary North American pragmatism that foregrounds the role of embodied practices by combining classic pragmatists such as Dewey, James and Pierce with phenomenological authors like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. An influential founding figure in this camp is Hubert Dreyfus (2014) with his phenomenology of skillful coping. However, Kukla and Lance point out that this camp there is a tendency to “privilege embodied practice over conceptual discourse and thought, seeing the former as more fundamental and more interesting than the latter” (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 5). They rightfully point out that this comes at a price:

> “To do so, is to assume that discourse and thought are not themselves embodied practices, and it is also, we think, to undervalue the philosophical centrality of language and discursive judgment in making possible our status as epistemic and moral subjects and character of the empirical world.” (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 5)

The camp that Kukla and Lance describe here is influential in some contemporary phenomenological research areas at the intersection with the cognitive sciences and affect studies where the argumentative strategy is often to demarcate one’s own position from other positions that are marked as too ‘cartesianist’, ‘intellectualist’ or ‘cognitivist’. In this context, there is a tendency to insist on the radical primacy of a pre-conceptual, embodied, affective layer of practical intentionality and knowledge. In doing so, this view implicitly introduces a sharp divide between a layer of pre-conceptual, embodied practical knowledge and a layer of propositional, conceptual (practical) knowledge.[44] On my view, the downside of such a radical foregrounding of the pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual is exactly what Kukla and Lance point out. It is a missed opportunity to

[44] In her assessment of the potential synergies between phenomenological feminist approaches to affectivity and Wittgensteinian approaches for political theory, Linda Zerilli has critiqued this tendency in some contemporary phenomenological approaches as an insistence on “what Barnett (citing Robert Brandom) calls a ‘layer-cake interpretation of the relationship between practice and expression.’” (Zerilli, 2016, p. 246)

describe discourse and thought themselves as embodied practices and the relationship between practice and expression as a domain where discourse, thought, and propositional judgment naturally intertwine with prelinguistic foundations of experience and intersubjectivity.

This radical insistence on the primacy of pre-conceptual, embodied practical knowledge, however, is by no means representative of what classical phenomenologist meant by insisting on a pre-linguistic, pre-predicative foundation of experience. The claim that subjects are already pre-linguistically acquainted with intersubjectivity and that linguistic expression has pre-linguistic roots in experience must not be confused with the claim that these pre-linguistic, unarticulated experiences of meaning and normative validity are disjunct from thought, reason and judgment. In fact, for early classical phenomenologists like Reinach and Husserl, it was completely natural to find predicative and categorical judgments highly interesting candidates for phenomenological inquiry exactly because of the challenge to describe the intertwinement of unarticulated pre-predicative and articulated predicative experience. As I have shown in the previous chapter, in order to investigate social acts Reinach and Husserl naturally turn to examples that involve linguistic expression, for instance commanding or requesting, and do not shy away from using terms such as volitional intention. They do this because they find this terminology relevant to describe and investigate social acts as a subclass of intentional experience and the specific experience in second-personal address in order to do the related phenomena justice.

Conversely, it is important to note that simply turning to language pragmatics and ordinary language philosophy alone does not guarantee an appreciation of second-personal address as a topic and important dimension of language and intersubjective experience either. This is another point against the clear-cut division of labor between phenomenological and sociolinguistic and language pragmatic approaches proposed by Stawarska. Foregrounding language, conceptual

expression, and communication does not automatically imply an interest in or awareness of the topic of second-personal address.

One of the central aims in Kukla and Lance's topography of speech act normativity is to show that language has an essential second-personal pragmatic dimension (cf. R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 153 ff.). They propose this against the dominant tendency in their field of research to privilege "the structure of *declarative assertions*" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 11), i.e., speech acts that convey statements or propositions. As a rule, the structure of declarative assertions is treated as "the *privileged or sole* dimension of language" (ibid.). Therefore, even philosophers of language who privilege pragmatics over semantics and syntax often treat "the *addressing* function of speech" as "external to its structure" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 172).

An interesting example of this is Donald Davidson's (1992) paper on 'The Second Person'.[45] Kukla and Lance note that, despite the title, Davidson "restricts himself entirely to an observer's perspective *on* the speech of another person, rather than discussing addresses *to* another" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 172). This is because his analysis privileges "interpretive" encounters between individuals (ibid.). On Davidson's account, speaking and interpreting are non-relational, individuated acts. In order to be in communication with one another, two subjects "must each be an interpreter of the other" (Davidson, 1992, p. 264). Using the taxonomy introduced in the previous chapter, Davidson's approach to the second person would fall under the proposals of the Analytic Approach. This shows that merely pointing to a social transformative effect of language,

[45] Other figures that Lance and Kukla charge with neglecting second personal address or treating it as external to the structure of language and speech include Brandom, Sellars and McDowell. They do this while also drawing and appreciating these authors contributions to problems in epistemology and metaphysics. In particular, they engage with Brandom's account of speech act normativity and are, despite their critique that he neglects the inherent function of second-personal address in discourse, inspired by his account of normative judgments and deontic scorekeeping.

as Davidson (cf. 2005) certainly does, does not necessarily go hand in hand with an interest in the second person in line with what advocates of the Dialogical Approach find interesting about it as a philosophical topic.[46]

In this chapter, I show that the phenomenological starting point in intentional and typically first-personal experience does not mean that the method is altogether blind to the linguistic, normative, and logical forms and structures in play with the phenomenon of the second-person. To do so, I turn to Reinach's account of social acts because I find his account of second-personal address in social acts particularly interesting to make this point. I argue that Reinach's ideas can be productively read alongside contemporary claims about the nature and functioning of second-personal address and its role in making up the form and structure of discourse and speech. My attempt to consider his work alongside these contemporary analyses of the practical and discursive nexus enabled by second-personal address can help to make aspects of Reinach's work salient that may have previously been overlooked.[47]

In section 2, I take a closer look at Reinach's claim that the need of being heard is the sufficient condition to establish a social act. In section 3 and 4, I show that Reinach's eidetic approach to study the essential connection between claims and their fulfilment combines elements from two

[46] I do not want to imply that Davidson's philosophy of action and agency is overall not important or ill-conceived. The main aim of my analysis is to connect phenomenological perspectives to the Dialogical Approach to the second person in the wider philosophical debate. Note that because of this I will not develop an argument for why one should even prefer the Dialogical Approach to the Analytic approach to second-person relations. For a possible way to approach such an argument against the interpretative/analytic approach to the second person see (Satne, 2017).

[47] Contributors to have pointed out the parallel between speech act theory and Reinach's work have almost exclusively focused on Searle (Crosby, 1990; Mulligan, 1987; B. Smith, 1990). However, I think that Reinach's method is more similar to J.L. Austin's original, much more explorative approach to speech acts. Austin occasionally described his method as a kind of phenomenology or "linguistic phenomenology" (Austin, 1956, p. 8). By contrast, Searle's (1969) work on speech act gives a much more rigid taxonomy by aligning speech acts with mental states and their so called "direction of fit" as well as by prioritizing constitutive, i.e., institutional rules, for the successful and non-defective performance of speech acts.

contemporary proposals. In section 3, I introduce Kukla and Lance's dynamic approach to the transactional structure enabled by second-personal address and show how Reinach's description aligns with it. In section 4, I present Michael Thompson's more static work on the bipolar form of normativity that constitutes this transactional-practical nexus. I give examples of domains where bipolar normativity becomes particularly salient in our experiential and social lives. In section 5, I highlight some advantages of the more structural and formal approach to the second-person phenomenon considered in this chapter. However, I also ask whether a more robust account of experiential subjectivity might be helpful to support their argument that second-personal address produces more than mere linguistic 'surface' phenomena and has a deeper relevance for how we experience ourselves as persons and agents in relation to others.

3.2 Reinach on the Need of Being Heard and the Essential Connections between Claims and their Fulfilment

According to Reinach, social acts are 'in need of being heard' or 'in need for uptake' (*vernehmungsbedürftig*).[48] In the previous chapter, I have suggested that *Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit* should be distinguished from the more basic experiential feature, *to-you-ness*, where the latter simply describes how we turn ourselves towards others in address. Following Uemura (2023), I have argued that the *need of being heard* and *to-you-ness* are co-extensive but non-identical features of social acts. A social act that exhibits 'to-you-ness' is in 'need of being heard' and *vice versa*, but they are not one and the same feature (Uemura, 2023, p. 81). As a distinctive feature of social acts, the need of being heard essentially characterizes a

[48] The official English translation (Reinach, 2012) translates *Vernehmungsbefürftikeit* with 'need of being heard'. *Nehmen* literally means 'to take', therefore uptake is the closer translation. With the prefix 'ver', 'vernehmen' is generally associated with picking up noise or sound but also with taking up announcements and messages, i.e., *Mitteilungen* – no matter through which channel they are physically conveyed.

normative function of social acts. In this section, I will discuss Reinach's approach to this normative function of social acts and highlight to what extend his somewhat formal, structural considerations are still grounded in a phenomenological approach to experience. To do so, I show that Reinach is committed to a philosophical attitude that aims at being open and faithful to what is given in experience (cf. DuBois, 2002, p. 330).

Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit as a feature of social acts revolves around a normative function because it allows us to understand our talk about 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' cases. Success and failure are dependent on whether the performed social act achieves what it strives to realize in the world by eliciting the appropriate responses or actions in the other party. For instance, if the other person takes up a command addressed to them as a mere request or misunderstands the content of the command, we will consider these, in different ways, unsuccessful performances of the social act commanding.

On Reinach's account, the 'need of being heard' is the sufficient feature around which to understand the normative effects of social acts. With this feature, Reinach describes that social acts come with a teleological orientation and strive to produce or change normative bonds of commitment between persons. Reinach conceives of what happens when the social acts receive uptake as "fulfilment" (*Erfüllung*). His analysis of social acts is primarily concerned with the essential connections between claims and their fulfilment. Importantly, Reinach does not consider the essential connections between claims and their fulfilment as originating from a correlation with the embodied experiential perspective of the cognizing subject. I want to motivate that this more formal approach to essential connections in the context of social acts is still linked to a reflection on (first-person) intentional experience in that it is rooted in a philosophical attitude that is open to what is given in experience.

Let's first consider the notion of fulfilment in its technical sense. Fulfilment is not only a colloquial word that, in English and German grammar, is used in conjunction with the verb 'promising'. We say 'Thank you, you have fulfilled your promise by φing'. In the context of a phenomenological analysis through the lens of intentional experience, it is also a technical term. Reinach applies the notion of fulfilment not just to promising but to social acts in general.

Broadly speaking, the phenomenological notion of the fulfilment of an empty intention indicates a connection between meaning and normativity and is thus a corner stone for a phenomenological method to approach any kind of normativity. An analysis of such fulfilment relations typically draws on the teleological nature of intentionality (Crowell, 2013; Heinämaa, 2022). Consider Steven Crowell's example to illustrate the basic idea of fulfilment relations (Crowell, 2013, p. 38): It is one thing to know and assert that the coffee in my mug in front of me has gone cold by now and 'emptily' intend this. It is another thing to assert the same thing by actually bringing the mug to my lips and feel the taste of the cold coffee. Only in the latter case is the intention fulfilled. To contemporary phenomenologists, the notion of fulfilment is probably best known in discussions about perceptual experience, in order to give an account of how we might conceive of perception as normative (Doyon, 2022; Doyon & Breyer, 2015). Historically, Husserl develops the notion '*Erfüllung*' in the *Logical Investigations* where he not only considers the fulfilment of intentionality in perceptions but also in acts of judgment.[49]

[49] In the *Apriori Foundations of Civil Law*, Reinach makes several references to the *Logical Investigations* as one of the theoretical sources of inspiration. Salice (2012) warns that this does not mean that Husserl and other early phenomenologists agreed on a joint program on how to understand notions such as fulfillment and how they constitute a comprehensive account of meaning. In particular, where for Husserl all acts, even judgment and thought, are structured by the relation of intention and fulfillment, Reinach holds that in thinking/judgment there can be no fulfillment (Reinach, 1989b, p. 339). Instead, we recognize (*erkennen*) states of affairs. Social acts are special for Reinach because they qualify for a relation between empty striving and its fulfillment, whereas for Husserl any act of consciousness would be governed by this relation. I am only interested in social acts here so the specifics of Reinach's overall account of thought and judgment does not matter too much to me here.

Fulfilment for social acts is less straightforward than for perceptual experiences or acts of judgments.[50] This is, for one, because their fulfilment crucially depends on the uptake of the addressee. In most cases, the social act is not fully fulfilled if it is merely heard by the addressee but often requires further uptake through response or action. While the experience of the performance of social acts is punctual, their fulfilment goes beyond the present moment of their performance and often times the concrete communicative encounter. Metaphorically, Reinach describes that every performance of a social act opens a circuit that strives to be closed (cf. Reinach, 2012, p. 21). This circuit is closed by receiving an appropriate uptake that corresponds to the essence of the respective type of social act.[51] Sometimes it is enough that a social act is simply heard; sometimes it calls for a response or an action on behalf of the addressed party. The exact mechanism to close the circuit opened by any particular social act will be determined by the type of social act. For Reinach, an eidetic method of contrast to compare such concrete types of social acts is central to his analysis. I will come back to some examples for this in the next section.

It is an open question in Reinach interpretation how to conceive of the teleological striving of social acts and their fulfilment *as part of our experiencing* within his ontological and metaphysical framework. Uermura (2023, p. 81) points to this issue in his attempt to characterize the 'need of being heard' as a feature of social acts. He argues that it is uncontroversial to claim that 'turning myself to you' (to-you-ness) is an experiential feature. However, when we 'wait' for a social act to fulfil its striving it is somewhat implausible that this is always accompanied by an actual experientially felt need for the social act to be fulfilled in every moment. Uemura comes to the

[50] More precisely, fulfillment for judgments in what Husserl calls "categorial intuition" is also not straightforward but in a different way. For Reinach, thought and judgement are not governed by the relation between intention and fulfilment.

[51] According to Reinach, the circuit opened by a social act can be only "tentatively closed" or "definitively closed" (Reinach, 2012, p. 21).

conclusion that there is no conclusive textual evidence on how exactly Reinach conceived of the relation between the 'need of being heard' and experience. He indicates that this might be somewhat of an underdeveloped problem in Reinach's work. Uemura himself seems to suggest that it would be more rigorous within Reinach's own framework to think about the teleological orientation of social act as non-experiential components of the act. As my aim here is not to defend Reinach's overall theoretical programme, I defer a further discussion of this problem to Reinach interpreters.[52] For what matters to me here it is enough to illustrate that Reinach does indeed explore what language pragmatists call the practical form of nexus enabled by second-personal address. In doing so, he captures a distinctive form of normativity where we experience commitment and obligation relative to a second person.

Elaborating on this will be my aim in sections 3 and 4. I show how Reinach's discovery of social acts aligns with the two different contemporary approaches to the structure and form of nexus that arises on the basis of second-personal address. Reinach's eidetic method and his study of essential connection combines elements of Kukla & Lance's (2009) more dynamic account of speech act normativity as a transactional and discursive structure (section 3) and Thompson's (2004) more static account of bipolar normativity as a distinctly relational deontic-logical form of judgment (section 4). While I will highlight some crucial differences between Reinach's ontological and metaphysical commitments and these approaches in philosophy of language, I will mostly appropriate Reinach's discovery of social acts without discussing his phenomenology of

[52] However, the problem in Reinach interpretation might hint at a related problem in contemporary debates in critical phenomenology and social ontology and the question whether it is possible to give a phenomenological account of pragmatic, social, linguistic, power, institutional or any other kind of "structure" while maintaining a starting point in first-person experience. Especially, if one thinks about first-person experience as intentional experience and not just a narrow idea of the first-person perspective as 'whatever is in this moment given to me', I see no problem with thinking about the fulfilment of social acts as part of our experiencing in this broader sense.

essences in detail. In my appropriation, I follow Loidolt (2010, 2016) and Mertens (2023) who both suggest that it is possible to draw on Reinach's important insight from his phenomenological discovery of social acts and their performative force without committing to his overall metaphysical projects.

3.3 Second-Personal Address and Transactional Structure

3.3.1 Kukla & Lance: Speech Act Normativity and Second-Personal Address

All social acts have a direction to someone about something. This was the conclusion of my analysis of the intentionality of social acts in the previous chapter. All types of social acts – from commands over questions to mere communications about facts and states of affairs -, come with this directedness. In their analysis of speech act normativity, Kukla and Lance (2009) express in pragmatic terms what Reinach's and Husserl's analyses understand in terms of the primitive intentionality of social acts: All speech acts/social acts come with a specific second-personal directedness.

To make their argument, Kukla and Lance (2009, p. 134) point out that the many interesting pragmatic functions of speech acts, such as functioning as an interrogative, imperative or declarative, can somewhat distract philosophers of language from realizing the ubiquity of second-personal address. They show that speech acts which merely call on another – for instance, 'Hi, Patricia!', 'What's up, Laura!', 'Good morning, sunshine!', or simply 'Hey, you!' -, may be particularly insightful to grasp how essential second-personal directedness is to understand speech act normativity. In terms of a pragmatic analysis, such obviously second-personally directed speech acts form a distinct category of utterances by virtue of their pragmatic function to address another. We often use speech acts with the primary function to address another in greeting

practices. These so-called vocative speech acts[53] do not necessarily have additional pragmatic functions beyond addressing another. They do not necessarily also function as an imperative, interrogative, declarative, and so forth.[54]

Based on this observation about second-personal directedness as a particularly salient feature in vocative speech acts, Kukla and Lance make a more ambitious claim. They claim that this primitive second-personal directedness is a necessary condition for *all* speech acts/social acts. "[A]ll speech acts have a second-personal address built into their function" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 136). In the context of received act theory this is particularly hard to show for assertions and other agent-neutral speech acts:

> "Our discipline's insistent and nearly exclusive focus on declarative speech has not only masked the significance of voice and perspective to discursive pragmatics, but even made these considerations almost unseemly, as they threaten to sully the objectivity of such speech." (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 213)

Here, I will not assess their argument for their more ambitious claim as it would side-track my phenomenological analysis too much. I think that this might be exactly one of those issue where the debate context of received speech act theory makes it overly hard to highlight the importance of second-personal address. For Reinach, it seemed quite natural to understand more objective communications such as the act of informing (*mitteilen*) (Reinach, 2012, p. 21) and eventually

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[53] The Vocative is a grammatical case with the function to identify a person being addressed. It has been retained in some Indo-European languages, notably in Baltic and Celtic languages. While English has lost the vocative case as a grammatical feature, we nonetheless frequently use vocative expressions, for instance when we say "I don't know, Dan". This has a different meaning from using the name as the object of the sentence by saying 'I don't know Dan.'. Instead of names we also make use of vocative nouns 'boss', 'folks', 'mate' etc. as vocative expressions.

[54] It is important to emphasize that while vocative speech acts do not have additional pragmatic functions beyond addressing another person, greeting *practices* on the whole often *do* have additional functions. Depending on the specific social and cultural contexts, we often do more than to 'merely' address others in greeting practices. I will come back to this in section 3.3, with reference to linguistic anthropologist Alessandro Duranti's (1997) challenge of the status of greetings in received speech act theory.

even the agent-neutral[55] legal enactment (*rechtliche Bestimmung)* (Reinach, 2012, p. 105) as types of social acts that are necessarily second-personally addressed and in need of being heard.

What matters more to me here is that Kukla and Lance share Reinach's conviction about the teleological structure and normative function of social acts. The primitive second-personal directedness of speech acts/social acts at a specific audience, addressee, recipient or counterparty is the basis to make sense of a transactional structure where speech acts 'strive' for fulfilment of normative claims. According to Kukla and Lance, the speech act's function to be second-personally directed is a condition for the possibility of there being genuine speech at all. Second-personal address enables a normative-pragmatic structure that is essential for discourse. This pragmatic structure functions around the teleological orientation or 'strivings' of speech acts to change the normative statuses of others. "[F]or example, assertions strive to impart beliefs and grand inference license, orders strive to impute responsibilities for action, and so forth" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 12). I call this important structure that describes the normative function of speech acts a transactional structure because its main aim as a philosophical-analytical instrument is to account for the dynamic transfer of normative statuses between agents.

What is interesting about this way of thinking about the normativity of speech acts/social acts is that the speech acts themselves seem to become protagonists – at least by way of speaking. It is 'the order' that 'strives to impute responsibility for action', and so on.[56] One reason for Kukla and

[55] An important point in Reinach's analysis is that legal enactments are anything but commands given by the law-giver and addressed to the citizens or to the executive organs of the legal order (Reinach, 2012, p. 105). Where commands are necessarily other-directed, the legal enactments of norms is not an only requires address and official announcement.

[56] Reinach occasionally uses similar language where the social act becomes the grammatical subject of the sentence, for instance '*der soziale Akt zielt auf etwas hin*' (Reinach, 1953, p. 43) or '*der soziale Akt wendet sich an*' (Reinach, 1953, pp. 53, 170). However, he more frequently resorts to formulations such as '*der soziale Akt wird vollzogen'* or *'der soziale Akt wird ausgeübt*' that indicate and maintain the fact that the social act is performed by 'someone', i.e., a person/subject.

Lance to formulate their reflection in this way is that they think it important not to confuse "the structural second-personal dimension of speech in general" with "the (occasional) intimacy of the speaker/audience relationship it enables" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 170). According to them, this is a conflation that some continental philosophers invite by starting from the full experience of second-personal, dialogical encounters without appreciating the normativity that arises just on the basis of their normative effects in discursive-pragmatic structure. In order to account for the kind of normativity that Kukla and Lance have in mind, it is entirely sufficient to focus on the structural second-personal nexus of claims and their fulfilment.

Next, I show that Kukla & Lance's topography of the teleological striving of speech acts aligns well with an aspect of Reinach's methodological approach. I will consider the method of contrasting different types of speech act/social acts which in phenomenological terms amounts to performing an eidetic variation over different relevant types of social acts. This method is helpful to understand the transactional structures enabled by second-personal address. A particular important question to address in this context is how to employ this method to analyze social act/speech acts in a way that allows us to reflect on both their social-context-independent, essential properties as well as their social-context-specific properties.

3.3.2 Reinach: Different Social Acts, Different Essential Mechanisms

In order to appreciate how social acts constitute a transactional nexus, it is helpful to consider and contrast different types of social acts. The purpose of this is not simply to present an elaborate typology and taxonomy of social acts - although such an exercise is possible and could be useful to apply the insights from such an analysis in the social sciences. Instead, a simple way to describe Reinach's more general point here is this: Different types of social acts follow different types of essential mechanisms. Somone wary of Reinach's *a priori* essentialism can follow Kukla and

Lance and think about these different mechanisms as (mostly) corresponding to different pragmatic functions of social acts.

Take the differences between the social act *informing* compared to the social acts *requesting* and *commanding* (Reinach, 2012, pp. 21–22). Informing for which, in German, Reinach (1953, p. 42) uses the term *Mitteilung,* is a straightforward type of social act because it merely has the aim to make the addressee aware of its content:

> "It belongs to its essence to address another and to announce to him its content. If it is directed to a human being, it has to be externally expressed in order to enable the addressee to become aware of its content. With its becoming aware the goal of informing is reached. The circuit which is opened with the sending out of the open act is here closed." (Reinach, 2012, p. 21)

For commanding and requesting "things are somewhat more complicated" (ibid.). Here, merely making the addressee aware of the command or request only 'tentatively closes the circuit'. Commanding and requesting "aim by their nature at corresponding, or better, at responding activities, whether these activities come to pass or not" (ibid.). The difference between commanding and requesting is quite hard to pinpoint although, experientially, it makes a huge difference whether someone requests or demands something of us. Reinach makes clear that although most examples of social acts involve linguistic expression, they are not limited to it. A whole motivational and intentional stance is involved when we 'do things with words':

> "The same words can be the expression of a command or of a request: the difference manifests itself only in the way of speaking, in emphasis, sharpness and in other factors" (Reinach, 2012, p. 21)

Yet again different are the social acts *questioning* and *responding*. The social act *asking a question* does not call for an action to be executed but for another social act, "the response in the strict sense" (ibid.). If we compare '*informing'* and '*asking a question'* we note a crucial difference in the required underlying intentional experience. Whereas informing presupposes conviction with

respect to what I inform someone about; asking a (genuine) question requires uncertainty about what I am going to ask.

Firstly, as a result of this brief phenomenological variation over different types of social act we can now distinguish (i) simple social act, which only require that the other becomes aware of them, (ii) social acts which aim at other activities and action, and (iii) social acts which presuppose or call for other social acts. Secondly, we now have some examples of how a social act's genuine performance and sincerity has its foundation in the underlying intentional experiencing. In a next step, we can consider how more complex social acts that require response or action continue to strive to be fulfilled after they have received initial uptake from being heard, i.e., where the addressee merely becomes aware of the command, request, etc.

Consider again the case of promising. It is already by virtue of our turning towards another that we can *genuinely* perform a social act even if it is not heard by the addressee, i.e., the expected uptake from others remains partially or fully unfulfilled. Reinach writes:

> "If we put ourselves in the position of the promisor, we see that a genuine promise can be performed and expressed, yet without reaching the subject to whom it is directed." (Reinach, 2012, p. 28)

What matters for the genuine performance from the perspective of the promisor is their 'inner' experience of commitment to do what they promise and that they are experientially 'turned towards' an actual other as you. What Reinach means by inner experience is that the expressive intentional experience of turning oneself towards another about something is founded in underlying experiences. Consider again that, according to Reinach, the necessary foundational experience to ask a genuine question is some degree of genuinely felt uncertainty, whereas to inform someone I need to be somewhat convinced about what I am going to tell.

Conversely, it is possible to inauthentically perform *successful* social acts. For instance, when I give a fake promise (*Scheinversprechen*) where one either actively pretends without any commitment or is only somewhat half-heartedly committed to what one promises. When someone inauthentically performs such a fake promise, it is very well possible that it is heard by the addressee and that it receives uptake like a genuine promise. We then have a successful case of an inauthentically performed promise. When I use the terms 'genuine' and 'authentic' here this should not be read as a premature qualification about whether the promise is moral or immoral in the ethical sense. In our everyday lives, uncommitted, insincere promising is in many contexts a socially accepted practice. For instance, a promise to call each other after a first date is quite often unanimously understood to mean the opposite, i.e., it is often an agreement to not see each other again.

Even after a social act has received initial uptake from the other party most more complex social acts will continue to strive for fulfilment. In the case of promising the claim established by the utterance 'I hereby promise to φ' tends towards the realization of its content, i.e., the action 'to φ' executed by the promisor. The realization of the content of the promise in a certain manner of speaking "belongs" (Reinach, 2012, p. 32) to the respective experiences of claim and commitment in each of the involved parties.[57] The claim "dissolves" (ibid.) when a social act receives uptake by fully realizing its content.

[57] "Like the act of promising itself, it tends towards the realization of its content by the promisor. It is destined to be dissolved."

It is also this basic idea of fulfillment that allows us to understand different ways in which social acts can fail.[58] Here, I will highlight three different ways in which we experience failure and violation in the context of social acts: (1) when the action that the social act aims at is not realized by the other party, (2) when the uptake or response violates "the logic" of the social act, (3) when the uptake or response is not in line with what we expect. We understand what it means to "violate a claim" around the idea that social acts and their corresponding claims strive for fulfilment. One way in which we experience violations in the context of social acts that require action is *(1) when the desired action is not realized by the other party*. Consider again the case of promising:

> "To every claim and to every obligation there 'belongs' the realization of their content, not in the sense that the realizing action necessarily exists as soon as they exist, as claim and obligation exist as soon as the heard act of promising exists, but rather in something like the sense in which admiration 'belongs' to a beautiful work of art, or indignation to a bad action. If the realizing action does not occur at the time at which it should, the obligatory relationship undergoes a change: the claim is 'violated.'" (Reinach, 2012, p. 32)

We consider the claim of the promise violated even if the desired result/state-of-affairs that the action aims at is realized in another manner. Even if the promisee steps in and does themselves what the promisor promised to do for them, we would nonetheless say that the promisor violated their promise. As another example of a specific experience of failure consider the case where the fulfilment of what was promised becomes impossible. According to Reinach, the bond of commitment between the two parties is not simply dissolved in this case. Instead, we experience a kind of failure where the "obligatory relationship takes on a distinct kind of meaninglessness" (Reinach, 2012, p. 32).

[58] In *How to do Things With Words* Austin (Austin, 1975, pp. 34–43) famously offers a more elaborate taxonomy of what I, here, call experiences of failure and violation by distinguishing different types of so-called "infelicities".

With social acts that mainly aim at uptake through response from the other rather than action, we experience violation and failure in yet a different way. Quill Kukla (2023, p. 5) highlights that one of the most ubiquitous and basic experiences is that the performance of a speech act/social act constrains the possible uptake and responses by the other party. A social act constrains the possible responses that make sense to us. Consider the performance of the social act *inviting*. When I invite you by saying 'Let's go for a coffee together', you can either gladly accept, refuse politely, suggest that we have tea instead, or let me know that this is an outrageous proposal. But if you respond to this with 'Okay, you have convinced me, I also believe in fairies now' that just makes no sense and randomly violates the logic of the essential mechanism opened by my initial invitation.

Experiencing such a *(2) violation of the logic of the social act* is again different from another way in which we experience the normativity of speech acts as another kind of failure to fulfill its striving. One of the most basic experiences of the normativity of social acts is perhaps the experience of *(3) the inherent risk that comes with the performance of any kind of social act*. There is usually always a range of possibilities to respond and close the mechanism opened by a social act. These essential mechanisms of social acts are invoked by the subjects who enact them. But even in the case of a simple social act like informing, invoking them does not yet guarantee that my social acts are successful – either in the sense that they are taken up in the way I intended them to be taken up, or in the sense that they at least receive sensible uptake. There is no guarantee that the circuit opened by a social act will be closed in the way I would like them to be closed. If I invite you for coffee there is no guarantee that you will gladly accept. However, me issuing the invitation also puts you in a position to respond. While in principle you could shout at me to decline or just ignore the invitation outright this would typically not be considered appropriate. Consider how much effort it can take to think about an inoffensive way to decline certain invitations, for instance invitations to take up particular representative, honorary roles in an institution even if you

never expressed any interest or wish to be honored in such a way and are not particularly keen to take on the additional responsibilities and workload.

These different nuances of what it can be like to experience failure or violation of social acts show how the 'need for uptake' (*Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit*) introduces a normative dimension to the performance of social acts. Experiencing the performance of a social act as successful is not in my power alone and not just a matter of the speaker committing enough to the social act. Rather, it is as much dependent on the uptake by the counterparty and the situation we are in together.

3.3.3 Essential Properties and (Social)-Genesis-Specific Features of Speech/Social Acts

Many of the phenomenological insights from Reinach's discovery of social acts can be understood in line with the discovery of the pragmatic structure enabled by speech acts. However, it is important to emphasize that such an appropriation of Reinach's analysis deviates significantly from his original aims and theoretical commitments. There are crucial differences between Reinach's essentialist approach and language pragmatic approaches with respect to the metaphysical and ontological status they assign to the structural normative nexus enabled second-personal address. For Kukla and Lance, the way in which speech acts/social acts constrain uptake and constitute specific pragmatic categories can only be examined relative to the lived practices and the material context they originate from. For Reinach, on the other hand, these mechanisms have the status of essential laws much like the logical law of mathematical ideal objects (such as $a^2+b^2=c^2$ in a right triangle).[59] Reinach's ambitious claim is to show that these essential laws are

[59] For an insightful reading of Reinach's analysis in line with approaches in analytic (deontic) logic see Gardies (1987). According to Gardies, the main difference between Reinach's method and analytic-logical frameworks is Reinach's "intuitionist style". His 'inuitionist appraoch' from what we find given in experience has the advantage of producing rich and often insightful descriptions. However, it also prevents a more nuanced discursive analysis of these connections where claims about their essential status should only take their departure from how things are intuitively given to us in experience. For instance, Gardies argues that we might question whether Reinach's claim that a communication requires conviction and *vice*

valid *a priori* and independent of any concrete social engagements between subjects, their conventional practices, and social lifeworld.

A possible merit of Reinach's strict essentialism is that he avoids any tendency to simply subsume all experiences of normativity and necessity in the context of social acts under the heading of 'conventionality' or 'socially constructed' norms (Gardies, 1987, p. 107; Salice, 2014; Salice & Uemura, 2018). Understanding speech act normativity primarily in terms of conventionality is a general tendency in received speech act theory. Reinach's focus on the essential necessities and possibilities of a given type of speech act independent of their social[60] genesis might thus work as an important counter-balance against this general tendency in received speech act theory. An important insight from thinking about Reinach's phenomenology of essences and language pragmatic approaches to speech acts in parallel is that this may encourage us to reflect more carefully on the distinction between possibilities of speech/social acts that are entirely independent of their social genesis and culture/social-context-specific features. Which properties are essential necessities and possibilities of particular kinds of speech/social act? Which taken-for-granted features of practices such as greeting, inviting, or promising might actually be more specific to our own home world experience than we think?

The importance of reflecting on this distinction has been highlighted in the social sciences, in particular in linguistic anthropology. In his essay '*Universal and Culture Specific Properties of Greetings*', Alessandro Duranti (1997) takes issue with the analysis of greetings in the received, English-speaking literature in speech act theory. According to received speech act theory,

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versa that questions exclude conviction should actually count as an essential (*wesensgesetzliche*) necessity (Gardies, 1987, p. 115). However, just like modern analytical approaches to logic, Reinach's analysis of social acts gives a "superb demonstrations of the a priori character of the pure science of law" (Gardies, 1987, p. 116).

[60] (and psychological)

greetings are ‘mere’ verbal formulae devoid of meaningful propositional content (Searle, 1969, p. 64). On this view, when we perform a greeting, we merely perform a conventional ritual that is entirely predictable for the involved parties. In his proposal, Duranti challenges such a dismissal of the meaning-making potential of greetings. To do so, he highlights that greeting-specific formulae such as ‘Hi’, ‘Good morning’, ‘Ciao’ or ‘Grüß Gott’ that invite assumptions about the ritualistic and predictable nature of greetings are only ubiquitous in some speech communities. Drawing on his anthropological research, he shows that many speech communities draw entirely on expressions that may also be used in other contexts than greeting practices. For an example of the use of such non-greeting-specific expressions, think about the way we employ ‘How are you doing?’ as a greeting in English.

The Samoan ‘Where are you going?’-greeting is Duranti’s example to show that “[c]ontrary to what is assumed in most existing studies of greetings, greetings are not necessarily devoid of propositional content; they can gather information about a person’s identity or whereabouts” (Duranti, 1997, p. 89). When a person issues this Samoan greeting by asking ‘Where are you going?’ they are looking for an actual answer about the addressee’s intended goal which may either be a place or task. In stark contrast to how English speakers use ‘How are you doing?’, a polite lie, i.e., ‘I’m fine/good’ as a standard answer, is not what this particular Samoan greeting aims at. Rather, the person issuing the greeting ‘Where are you going?’ wants to “find out as much as possible about the other party’s whereabouts” (Duranti, 1997, p. 89). Far from being a meaningless ritual, the ‘Where are you going?’-greeting thus exercises “a form of social control” and is not ‘merely’ an expression of “pleasure at seeing someone” (ibid.).

With this critique of received speech act theory, Duranti does not suggest that speech acts are entirely relative to the conventions of a particular speech community. In fact, this would make his ethnographic work an impossible task. As he points out, the challenging task for the social scientist

studying greetings is exactly to identify greetings across languages and cultures. Rather, his critique is meant to caution philosophical accounts of speech acts such as greetings to reflect more carefully on how they identify their universal, or, in Reinach's terms, essential properties. In the case of greetings, such essentially necessary possibilities might be that greetings 'establish a shared perceptual field' and an 'implicit spatio-temporal unit of interaction' (Duranti, 1997, p. 67). Greetings are 'near-boundary occurrences' that typically have an 'adjacency pair format' and come with a '*relative* predictability of form and content' (ibid., italics my emphasis). In such an analysis, the observation that 'greetings' are mere ritualistic performances of politeness then appears as a highly culture-specific feature of greetings in the Anglo-American lifeworld. Such challenges to our taken-for-granted assumptions about any particular type of speech acts can encourage philosophers and social scientists to take a closer look at exactly those kind of speech acts that have typically been marginalized and dismissed as devoid of meaning in received speech act theory.

In light of these cues from linguistic anthropology, philosophers might want to aim for an analysis that combines Reinach's interest in the essences of social acts with the language-pragmatic starting point from our intersubjective practices and the shared lifeworld we inhabit. To do so, would mean to transfer insights from Reinach's discovery of social acts to a framework that goes against his ambitious metaphysical project to only study those essential connections as necessities that are entirely independent of our shared life world and concrete interactional practices. Some readings of Reinach along these lines have suggested that we can just as well consider the different types of social acts to emerge relative to our shared lifeworld and the intersubjective practices we engage in. As Sophie Loidolt (2010) writes, Reinach's discovery of social acts "can also unfold its force independent of his a priori rigorism and can just as

productively be understood as language- or meaning making analysis of the social sphere as interactional field" (Loidolt, 2010, p. 83).

However, there may be more merits to Reinach's interest in the 'logical' form of the specific kind of normativity at play in social acts. Next, I argue that Reinach's analysis highlights a distinctive form of normativity enabled by second-personal address. Following Michael Thompson, I call this form 'bipolar normativity'. We experience this essentially relational form of normativity as relative rights. This bipolar form of normativity is crucially different from the non-relational form of absolute rights. I show that, by being open and faithful to what is given in experience, we can again make out certain spheres in our experiential and social lives where the bipolar form of normativity becomes particularly salient.

3.4 The Bipolar Form of Normativity

3.4.1 Thompson: The Practical Bipolarity of Judgments

In the previous section, I have discussed the practical nexus enabled by second-personal address as a more dynamic transactional transfer of normative-deontic statuses. A second strategy to avoid jumping to hasty conclusion from the occasionally experienced intimacy in second-personal encounters about their possible ethical nature is to reflect on the *form of deontic judgment* that the "formally distinctive type of practical nexus" (Thompson, 2004, p. 335) enabled by second-personal address in a more static manner. This is the approach chosen by Michael Thompson (2004) in his essay '*What is it to Wrong Someone. A Puzzle about Justice'*.[61] Thompson is interested in the "practical bipolarity of judgment" (Thompson, 2004, p. 337). I order to make

[61] Thompson's work has received uptake in the wider philosophical debate on the second person (Conant & Rödl, 2014; Eilan, 2014; Haase, 2014; Rödl, 2014).

the distinct nature practical bipolar normativity explicit he contrasts a set of relational, bipolar judgments with a parallel set of non-relational, monopolar judgments or, as he calls them the "merely monadic" form:

> Relational judgments that express bipolar normativity take the form *J(X,Y)*. We say that '*X wronged Y by doing A*', '*X has a duty to Y to do A*', '*X has a right against Y*'.
>
> By contrast non-relational judgments take the monopolar form *J(X)*. We judge that *'X did wrong in doing A'*, *'X has a duty to do A'*, *'X has a right to do A'*.

Compared to Kukla & Lance's proposal, that considers the transactional transfer of normative statuses between agents, Thompson's approach is more static. However, Thompson calls the distinctly relational form of judgments "*forms of bipolar normativity*" because he thinks about a pair of distinct agents as "opposing poles in an electrical apparatus". This again hints at the more dynamic idea of a normative transfer, which, in this picture, is represented by "an arc of normative current […] between the agent-poles" (Thompson, 2004, p. 335). On Thompson's account, what is distinctive about the bipolar form is that it captures what it means for an agent to conceive of themselves as a person that stands in relation to other persons.

Importantly, like Kukla and Lance, Thompson is careful to distinguish the structural dimension of speech from other association we might have when we consider certain experiences of second-personal encounters. Although Thompson starts his reflection with the case of moral judgments, he highlights that the bipolar form of normativity is not restricted to or even particularly distinctive for the sphere of morality. Bipolar normativity can also be found in the legal sphere, social sphere, or be applied to a specific practice such as a game of chess. Thompson describes this again in a metaphorical way and suggests that we can 'shift' the basic form of bipolar normativity 'into different gears' or 'sing it in different keys' (Thompson, 2004, p. 342). This highlights that the

distinctive bipolar normativity in question must not be conflated with any other 'thicker' normative implications a speech acts might have (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 161).

For Thompon, one of these gears are judgments about our moral obligations. In their monopolar, non-relational we come across them in the shape of moral principles and standards that determine what is lawful as such. We might deliberate that 'Jim was wrong to kill Sylvia' or even more generally judge that 'It is wrong to kill'. These principles can be understood independent of being concretely addressed to someone and justified in different ways. By contrast, the distinctly practical bipolar form of judgment typically shows when we concretely address a claim or demand towards someone – they are "inherently second personal" (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 143). We can call Jim out for wronging Sylvia by saying 'You wronged Sylvia by killing her/breaking your promise/doing A'. Here, my call towards Jim specifically puts him into a position of responsibility where he has to respond to the accusation.[62]

In order to fully appreciate the relational form of bipolar normativity, it is beneficial to look at less morally charged cases in a first instance and put the question to what extent second-personal address also plays a role in our experiences of moral responsibility and duty to the side for the moment. Understanding the distinctive form of bipolar-transactional normativity hinges on a much thinner approach to normativity. Instead of justifying the validity of moral 'oughts' or individual legal norms, this approach to normativity seeks to describe the practical dynamics and structures of normative phenomena more broadly conceived.

[62] As Kukla & Lance note, the call 'Thou shalt not kill' does imply the absolute moral principle that 'It is wrong to kill'. However, in its biblical second-personally addressed formulation, it also functions as a call that is addressed to all of us to individuate each of us in our moral responsibility (R. Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 143)

3.4.2 The Typical 'Atmosphere' in a Civil Lawsuit

Whatever the fundamental differences between the idea that the second-personal nexus is a pragmatic structure and Reinach's analysis of it as an essential *a priori* structure, both perspectives arrive at the insight that the second-personal nexus gives rise to a special kind of normativity that is bipolar in its form. As such it has to be distinguished from how we talk about principles, standards and norms in their non-relational, monopolar form. Coincidentally, civil/private law – the subject matter of Reinach's analysis in the *Apriori Foundations* – is a paradigmatic sphere to experience bipolar normativity as a distinctive and salient phenomenon. Here, I want to show how the distinction between bipolar and monopolar/monadic normativity is relevant in our experiential lives. To do so, I will draw on some helpful insights about this contrast from Michael Thompson's work in philosophy of action and deontic logic as outlined above.

In his analysis of the deontic-logical form of the bipolar type of normativity, Thompson appeals to differences between civil/private law and criminal law to develop the contrast between "*properly bipolar* and *merely monadic* forms of deonticity" (Thompson, 2004, p. 343). According to Thompson, private law is the "zone in which juridical practices *paradigmatically* generate bipolar deonticity […] under the headings of contract, property, tort and so forth" (ibid.). He continues his analysis by describing the "atmosphere" of typical lawsuits in private law:

> "Indeed, in our system the names of particular private-legal proceedings already exhibit the peculiar nexus of representations that interests us: *Mr X v. Ms Y*, we call them or *[your name here] v. Sylvia*. The atmosphere of a lawsuit is saturated with judgments of our type: 'She's done me wrong', we say, 'She owes me', and so forth." (Thompson, p. 343)

A civil lawsuit typically delivers some interpretation of 'X wrongs Y' (ibid, p. 344). We appeal to the institutions of civil law, whenever there is a disagreement between two parties and violations of duties and rights are under question. In the case of a successful lawsuit, the plaintiff gains rights for compensation and restitution against the defendant. In practice, these legal quarrels cover

virtually all areas of our lives – the workplace, marriage, family and relations with our neighbors. Infamous cases in German civil law, are lawsuits about the proper distance of fences and other objects to the border of the neighboring property.[63] The bipolar form of normativity provides the grounds to address questions such as '*What is just?', 'What is fair?' and 'What is right?'*.

By contrast, Thompson argues that criminal law is the paradigmatic juridical institution to generate *monadic deonticity* where we answer the question '*What is lawful?'*. Whereas civil lawsuits are about restitution and compensation, criminal law is about punishment and sanction. The verdict of the jury determines whether the plaintiff is "guilty" or not in a non-relational way:

> "If another agent comes into the matter – if there is, as we say, a 'victim'- it is to speak, as raw material in respect of which one might be wrong. The position occupied by other agents in the associated legal facts might equally be held by rare birds of old buildings. Much criminal law pertains after all to acts involving no other agent at all." (Thompson, 2004, p. 346)

In a criminal lawsuit, the jury evaluates the accused and his deed. In a first instance, a criminal lawsuit will often have to answer the central question whether the accused is at all culpable (*schuldfähig*) for the particular deed under investigation.[64] If this is the case it is then determined how and in what sense the deed was unlawful to determine the appropriate punishment or sanction. As a legal institution, criminal law does not seek to avenge the wrong done to possible victims, i.e., those affected by the deed, in a relational manner.[65] In the case of homicide trials, this is

[63] See German Civil Law Code, BGB §§903-924, §1004 and the respective federal legislation. Another typical cause for argument between neighbors is determining who has the right to fruit that falls from neighbor A's tree onto neighbor B's property. BGB §911 determines: "Fruit that falls from a tree or shrub onto a neighboring property shall be deemed to be fruit of that property. This provision shall not apply if the neighboring property is for public use."

[64] The concept culpability determines to what extent a person can be held responsible for their action. This depends on different factors such as age, mental state/health and cognitive capacities. It is always determined relative to a particular deed. In German criminal law, it is defined as the ability to recognize the injustice of the act and act accordingly, "das Unrecht der Tat einzusehen und danach zu handeln".

[65] As Thompson highlights this goes back to the roots of Western legal practices in Ancient Greek and Roman culture: "Though the criminalization of murder in ancient Athens kept each Athenian off the rest of

sometimes hard to bear for relatives of the victims and often leads to perception of the law as 'unjust' and 'too mild'. Often someone trialed in a criminal lawsuit will also have to stand up in a civil lawsuit. For instance, someone found guilty for aggravated robbery and sentenced to prison according to criminal law for this deed may also have to face a civil lawsuit. This is then where the culprit will be sued for compensation of the damage they inflicted towards others.[66] Rather than to claim that second-personal address is *tout court* relevant to understand obligation and deontic normativity, Thompson's contrast between the relational and non-relational form of deonticity is helpful to understand that there is a specific way in which second-personal address is relevant for our experiences of commitment and obligation.

3.4.3 Bipolar Normativity in Other Domains

In Reinach's work, we find awareness and reflection of the contrast between the bipolar form of deonticity and the non-relational form of deonticity in his distinction of transactional, relative rights and absolute, non-relational rights. The central difference is that relative rights require second-personal address to a partner or counterparty (*Gegner*) while absolute rights make no reference to a second person.[67] According to Reinach, the normative relation between intention and fulfilment is only at play in relative rights. The structural nexus on the basis of our performance of social acts has to be distinguished from how we experience absolute principles, standards and

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them to a certain extent, it turned their specifically juridical Achtung toward 'the State and the Laws' themselves, as Socrates puts it in the Crito, and not, at least not in the first instance, toward one another." (Thompson, 2004, pp. 344–345). In monadic, nonrelational forms of deonticity, we think about our obligations and duties towards law as such and not primarily as obligations and duties towards others.

[66] German and European tort law strictly restricts its function to compensating damages (*Schadensersatz*). The Anglo-American legal tradition, in particular in US-American tort law, know the mixed category of punitive damages (*Strafschadensersatz*) in its private law system. Punitive damages also have a punishing/sanctioning function to prevent further wrongdoing of this kind. Typical examples are lawsuits against big companies that have engaged in outrageous/unethical conduct that is not in the public interest.

[67] For an elaborate account of the terminology and Reinach's typology of rights see (Massin, 2017).

rights which are definitive and do not require address to a second person as a counterparty. Absolute rights are "not even capable of fulfillment" but can only be exercised (or not exercised):

> "But an essential difference between them is that the claim is by its nature something preliminary, something aiming at fulfillment, whereas the absolute right is something definitive, something resting in itself. The claim is in need of fulfillment; the absolute right over one's own action is not even capable of fulfillment at all. It can indeed be *exercised* by the holder of the right himself, but it does not call for such exercise in the sense in which a claim calls for fulfillment. And on the other hand, a claim is not capable of being *exercised."* (Reinach, 2012, p. 58)

The central difference between the bipolar form normativity which arises from the structural nexus of social acts and experiences of 'monadic', non-relational forms of normativity is that bipolar normativity essentially exists in relation to a counterparty. We experience monadic rights and obligations as properties of individual agents independent of any relation to a second person as partner or counter party.

Although civil law is the paradigmatic sphere to experience bipolar normativity, we also find normative phenomena which are non-relational in this sphere. As an examples for absolute, non-relational rights that belong to a person without reference to a counterparty in the context of civil law, Reinach analyzes how we conceive of our rights over things (property rights) and our rights to alter legal relationships (*Gestaltungsrechte*) (Reinach, 2012, pp. 52–53).[68] After establishing

[68] Massin (2017, p. 588) discusses the right to free speech as a more concrete example for Reinach's discussion of absolute rights as "rights over one's own action" (*Rechte auf eigenes Tun*). The right to free speech is typically a more fundamental constitutional right, so not directly relevant to the sphere of civil law. Massin argues that the right to speak freely is not held against any other party. To the objection that one's right to speak freely might indeed evoke a correlative obligation in the other parties through "interdiction for all other persons to prevent one to speak" (ibid.), Massin responds that this is not a genuinely correlative obligation as A's right to speak freely has a distinct content from B's obligation to not prevent A from speaking freely. He also highlights that Reinach's notion of *'absolute right'* must not be confused with 'universal rights'. Absolute rights do by definition and in their essence not require any reference to a counterparty while universal rights do. According to Reinach, universal rights are civil rights where the counterparty are all persons. Universal rights thus fall in the category of relative rights. "[A]bsolute rights may have universal rights as a *consequence.* If Paul has an absolute right to speak freely, he may also have "a claim on all persons to respect his rights and not to violate them." (ibid., p. 589)

the significance of the contrast in the legal context, I now want to show that the distinction is not just a peculiar subject of interest for philosophy of law but that it is more widely applicable to our experiences of social reality.

We do not only experience the contrast between bipolar, relational normativity and monadic, non-relational normativity in the legal context but also in the context of social normativity more broadly conceived. In the previous section, I have touched upon the examples of invitations and greetings and how we might experience the connection of claim and commitment between two parties as norms of politeness. Depending on the addressee and context, there is typically a limited range of ways in which we can perform an appropriate invitation. Once the invitation is issued, there is in turn a restricted range of appropriate ways to respond. The same is true for all kind of greetings. Norms of politeness in social interactions are tied up with the performance of social acts towards a second-person and very much reliant on the recognition by a counter party and their expectations and consequent approval or sanction. Transgressions may be called out by exclamations like "*You owe me respect!*" or "*The least you owe me is a response to my invitation to peer review this article!*". This might be a way to understand Duranti's observation (see section 3.3.3) that seemingly trivial social acts such as greetings can actually be used to exercise a subtle but no less impactful form of social control.

Again, this should not be misunderstood as a claim according to which the bipolar form of normativity is salient in all our experiences of social normativity. Many social norms such as dress codes or dining etiquette would typically be experienced as norms that simply 'belonging' to agents in a non-relational manner in the sense that they have manners or a cultivated style. Agents are evaluated on the basis of their individual actions and behavior and are judged for breaking 'the code', (rather than 'law'). Social sanctions in these cases may of be explicitly addressed to the confronting other in a confrontational manner. For instance, we might draw on second-personal

address to educate children and appeal to their respect for the members of the dining party. For instance, by asking the child to '*You have to wait until everybody is served'* and '*Use knife and fork when grandma and grandpa come over*'. Or, teach them that '*You should not chew with an open mouth. That's disrespectful.*', and tell them that they need to '*Ask to be excused from the table*'. However, this is not essential to call out violation of social code. Among adults, more often than not, the members of polite society will simply observe and judge the affronting individual and sanction their behavior from an observational stance. The cultivated observers may simply shake their head and judge among themselves that "*This guy has no manners*" or that "*This person has no sense of how to dress in good society*" to then snub and avoid the person in question in future.

The upshot of my analysis following Reinach's account of the 'need of being heard' (*Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit*) is that it often matters to us that we experience claim, commitment and obligation relative to a second person in our social lives. This provides for a clear way to understand the deontic-normative significance of second-personal address. The analysis is not about prescribing and justifying concrete norms of actions and 'oughts'. Instead, we can isolate a specific form of deonticity that essentially involves our relation to a counterparty. Reinach's discovery of social act and the bipolar-transactional form of normativity allows for a nuanced investigation of these specific experiences of bipolar normativity across various contexts relevant in our experiential lives.

To develop this further, we might again want to use Reinach's discovery against the strict regional ontological boundaries that constrain his own project. A crucial difference between Reinach's account and Thompson's account is that Reinach does not ground his analysis relative to the first-personal cognizing perspective of a judging agent. Reinach can thus circumvent questions about how moral and other absolute rights have their source in the experiencing and

judging person. Within his framework, Reinach can argue that 'moral rights' are as absolute rights part of a different ontological region that is governed by different essential laws. According to Reinach, moral rights as absolute rights could never take the form of bipolar normativity because absolute rights are not governed by the essential relation of claims and their fulfilment.[69] As a consequence of this, Reinach is not at all interested in promising as a practice with moral relevance and the moral judgment that 'promises ought to be kept'. Rather, he adheres to the analysis of the legal/social promise where an immoral promise has the same power to produce claims that strive for fulfilment as a moral promise. This is, on Reinach's account of promising, all that is needed to explain how we are committed to our promises.

For what matters to me in this chapter, the more difficult question about the possible import of second-person normativity for our experiences of moral obligation and judgment can be sidelined for the moment. Here, I merely wanted to show that isolating the bipolar form of normativity is useful to understand a specific way in which we make sense of normativity in our experiential lives. The core takeaway from this analysis is this: It often matters to us that we experience commitment and obligation relative to a counterparty, a second person. This is one way to conceive of the normative significance of second-personal address.

[69] Although Reinach's writings on moral philosophy are scarce (see Reinach, 2017) he shares the basic approach with other realist phenomenologists of the Munich and Göttingen circle. Accordingly, ethics is first and foremost about the concept of moral value. Reinach adds considerations about other concepts such as rightness (*Rechtheit*) and goods (*Güter*) but remains committed to the idea that the concept of value is central for this regional ontology.

3.5 Beyond Bipolar Form and Discursive Structure: Pre-Obligatory Dimensions of Second-Personal Address?

In this chapter, I have pointed out important systematic parallels between Reinach's analysis of the 'essential connections' and 'essential properties' of social acts and contemporary approaches to the form and structure enabled by second-personal address – such as the dynamic analysis of the transactional transfer of normative-deontic statuses in interaction (Kukla & Lance) and the Fregean analysis of the deontic-logical bipolar form of normativity (Thompson). A crucial advantage of the structural and formal approach shared by all three proposals considered in this chapter is that it provides for an elegant way to isolate a distinctive form of normativity enabled by second-personal address. Due to the focus on the practical nexus enabled by second-personal address, neither of the considered approaches has to inquire further into how social acts are given to the experiencing subject. This avoids the danger of conflating the distinctive relational form of normativity highlighted in this chapter with co-extensive experiences of intersubjective intimacy we might experience in some second-personal encounters. Moreover, we discover a rather 'minimal' type of normativity that should not be conflated with thicker pro-social or ethical implications to which a reflection on dialogical encounters with others might allude.

The analyses of the transactional nexus and bipolar form considered in this chapter forefront the practical and discursive nexus enabled by second-personal address. A certain challenge with this is that these analyses at some point call for an assumption about the source of the ability to actualize and perform social acts as a regress stopping element. The approaches mentioned here do this by pointing to a concept of the 'agent' or 'person' and specifically highlight that this concept is an essentially relational concept. According to Thompson (2004, pp. 351–355), the discovery of the bipolar form of normativity puts pressure on accounts that simply view agents exclusively as Davidsonian interpreters, individual realizers of pre-determined concepts, or lonely

tool users that attune to their environment independently of the distinctive bipolar practical nexus enabled by second-personal address. Thompson suggests that there is a minimal first-person judgment '*X is a person in relation to Y'* that underlies the bipolar form of normativity. Kukla & Lance (2009, pp. 171–177) likewise assess that the idea that claims are both first-personally owned and second-personal addressed is integral to understand the enabling structure of speech and discourse in their pragmatic analysis.

Reinach would of course resist such a correlational account of cognition, where objective states-of-affairs are always considered relative to a cognizing and judging subject. Despite this, he likewise recognized the need for a minimalist conception of the person as carrier of the ability to perform social acts. Reinach argues that the legal powers to grant, transfer and waive rights must have their origin in a source beyond the performance of social acts to avoid an infinite regress. For him, such an ultimate source is the person as such:

> "Such an ultimate source is in fact present in the person as such. A person can promise, convey obligations, assume them, and do many other such things. Of course the essential point is not that persons are capable of performing these acts; for we are not concerned here with this ability as a natural power but with the fact that effects in the world of right, such as claims and obligations, immediately arise from the performance of these acts." (Reinach, 2012, p. 81)

To ground this analysis, he holds that social acts can only be performed by 'persons', where a person, on Reinach's account, is anyone with legal capacity or power (*Rechtskönnen*) (Reinach, 2012, pp. 34, 81) to perform social acts.

> "This gives evidence of a legal power which cannot be derived from any other legal ability but which has its ultimate origin in the person as such. We speak here of the fundamental capacity or power of the person (*das rechtliche Grundkönnen der Person*). This fundamental power cannot be transferred. Insofar as it is grounded in the nature of the person as such, it is inseparable from the person; it forms the ultimate foundation for the possibility of legal-social relationships." (Reinach, 2012, p. 81)

Despite all differences, Reinach is thus in agreement with Thompson and Kukla & Lance that we need an assumption of the formal condition of possibility for the performance of social acts to ground the analysis of the manifold ways in which transactional structure and bipolar normativity are enabled by second-personal address.

Such a minimalist approach to the involvement of a person or agent as formal condition of possibility to actualize the performative force of social acts/speech acts may be particularly useful in the legal sphere. Michael Thompson highlights that, depending on the order of right in question, "the conception of a *person* must also be explained as to admit various types of collective and corporate person" (Thompson, 2004, p. 354). Thompson (2004, p. 355) highlights that in law we speak of corporations and associations as jural or legal persons. In US American civil law, lawsuits can even go by the name "X inc. v. Y Ltd.". To describe the legal power of such collective of corporate persons, it is enough to point to the fact that their performance of social acts gives rise to normative effects in the world of right in a specific legal order. Here, the formal concept of the person as anyone with the legal capacity to perform social acts is fully sufficient to account for the ways in which they give rise to transactional structures and bipolar normativity. This forgoes the need to introduce more challenging problems, such as questions about how collective and corporate persons are experienced in the embodied, individuated minds of its members. Such questions often go beyond what is important to understand how such supra-personal entities are given to us in our legal reality where they are in practice relevant to us.

Given all this, proponents of the more formal and structural approaches considered in this chapter may be skeptical of any attempt to further substantiate how second-personal address is given to an experiencing subjectivity. Any attempt to further substantiate how we experience the interactive dynamics in second-person encounters may just distract us from the distinctive kind of transactional structure and form of bipolar normativity enabled by second-personal address.

However, from a phenomenological perspective the richer description of the underlying dynamics of I-You-connectedness seems appealing. In order to get a fuller grasp of how I-You-connectedness becomes manifest in a distinctive manner in experience, it is beneficial to look beyond the strict focus of how second-personal address and the teleological striving of social acts/speech acts give rise to performative discursive structures.

In the next chapter, I want to motivate that an account of how I-You-connectedness is experienced in intersubjective encounters as actual second-personal engagement, can supplement the formal and structural analysis. As Karl Mertens (2023) points out for Reinach's analysis of the promise, Reinach is exclusively focused on the relation between performative expression and uptake to account for the experience of obligation:

> Only the promisor's linguistic utterance, understandable for an addressee, is the source from which obligations and claims arise. In contrast, the social dynamic of a particular interaction between promisor and promisee is not constitutive for the obligatory relationship between the persons involved in the promise." (Mertens, 2023, p. 95)

According to Mertens, it would be very fruitful from a phenomenological perspective to "analyze different layers in the relationship between the persons who become involved in a promise" (Mertens, 2023, p. 95). For Reinach, the fact that obligations arise from promises is taken as a starting point that cannot be further broken down. He takes claim and commitment as basic logical concepts to guide his analysis and presents us with phenomenological variations of the experiences of claim and commitment. However, from a phenomenological perspective, it is interesting to consider an alternative that looks beyond the formal practical nexus and logical-deontic form of second-personal address. For Mertens, it is important to "draw a difference between pre-obligatory levels on which the validity of the promise is based but which are not already obligating and seeking out levels in the interaction that are decisive for the obligatory meaning of a promise" (Mertens, 2023, p. 95).

Mertens assesses whether Reinach can provide a comprehensive account of our experience of obligation in the practice of promising. Here, I will not contribute to the discussion on the nature of promising. I will not assess whether Mertens' distinction between a level deontic validity and pre-obligatory levels is necessary for a satisfactory account of the sources of obligation in promising.[70] Instead, I highlight that the distinction between deontic structure and pre-obligatory social dynamic can, in a first instance, illuminate another way to conceive of the normative significance of second-person relations. I argue that this is important for a distinctivist account of the second person to understand and flesh out that communicative encounters do not only take place between persons as poles of I-You-Connectedness but also have their origins in our personal experiencing of intersubjective connection.

[70] See (Salice & Massin, forthcoming) for a defense of Reinach against Mertens critique of his account of promising. Salice & Massin highlight the advantage of the regress stopping nature of Reinach's argument. Following Reinach, they reject the possibility to offer a more substantial explanation of the source of the claims and obligation created by promises as a pointless endeavor.

4 | Second-Personal Engagement and Experiential Subjectivity

4.1 Experiential Subjectivity and the Intersubjective Nexus

In the previous chapter, I have considered a formal approach to describe the normative structure enabled by second-personal address as a practical form of nexus. An advantage of this approach is that it provides for an elegant strategy to discuss the distinctive deontic-normative relevance of second-person relations where we experience claims and obligation relative to a counterparty. Such a formal approach to the normativity of the second-personal nexus can be achieved by considering the transactional transfer of normative statuses in interaction (Kukla & Lance), by highlighting the distinctive logical-deontic form (Thompson), or by describing the essential connections between claims and their fulfilment (Reinach).

However, all of these attempts to engage with the formal normative function of second-personal address somewhat lack a more comprehensive account of how second-person relations become manifest in experience. We could argue that the curious phenomenon where social acts/speech acts seem to develop a teleological life of their own is very much evidence for the claim that addressing someone is "a purely linguistic phenomenon" (Salje, 2016, p. 819). As Lea Salje (2016) shows, the view then easily collapses into an anti-distinctivist proposal about second-person thought where the capacity for second-personal address is just another face of a "single cognitive capacity" (Salje, 2016, p. 818). This cognitive capacity is ultimately rooted in a first-person judgment and thus second-person thought would, again, be reducible to first-person thought. Interestingly, Salje points to oral remarks by Michael Thompson (2012), where Thompson himself claims that addressing someone happens "only 'in language, in the noise, on the outward show of things', and not 'in the secret depths of the soul'" (Salje, 2016, p. 819). Is the form of nexus enabled by second-personal address only a linguistic surface phenomenon after all? By contrast, Reinach insists that while much of the unfolding of social acts happens through their

external expression they do not only have a "body" but also a "soul" (Reinach, 2012, p. 20). How can we understand Reinach's metaphorical claim? Is there further support for the argument that we can distinguish a distinctive, relational form of thought and experience *sui generis* that corresponds to the bipolar form of nexus - as proponents of the distinctivist view to the second person have suggested?

In this chapter, I suggest that the Husserlian approach to the I-You-relation can help to make this case. Following his approach, there is a distinctly second-personal way to engage with others that becomes manifest in experience in a distinctive manner. Second-personal engagement is a lived form of intersubjective encounter that leaves distinctive tracks in our subjective experiencing. To make this case, it is important to consider that we can already experience second-personal engagement in a pre-obligatory dimension of intersubjective engagement. On this view, it is these pre-obligatory, intersubjective dynamics that already justify an investigation of the second-person as a distinctive phenomenon. The practical nexus enabled by second-personal address is not just a formal structure but also a lived intersubjective nexus that is grounded in our subjective experiencing in a more foundational manner.

Husserl is interested in the role of actual intersubjective uptake between two subjects in communication and the resulting real intersubjective nexus. According to him, experiencing I-You-connectedness in a fulfilled manner requires a sense of one's own intertwinement with others in discourse and communication. I experience myself and others "in relation to one another as speaking subjects (*als Redende*), as communicating oneself (*als sich Mitteilende*)" (Husserl, 1973a, p. 474).

> "The other, himself an occasionally speaking communicator (*redender Mitteilender*), understands speech (*Rede*) as speech and what I say as address to him, as communicating speech, in which I speak about my intentions that concern him and his act behavior. And thus, both he and I understand others as in relation to one another, as speaking (als *Redende*), as communicating oneself (*als sich Mitteilende*). 'Speech' means here its widest

> sense of intentional and initially unmediated, ur-modal communication in whichever form (through sounding words, through writing, through communicative gesture)." (Husserl, 1973a, pp. 474–475)

Far from simply bracketing 'language', Husserl considers how we understand one another as speaking and communicating subjects. On this point, the perspective articulated in this chapter can be read as another line of response to Stawarska's concerns about phenomenology's neglect of language and sociolinguistic insights, as I have outlined them in the previous chapter. I argue that, far from simply presenting an 'egocentric' account of experiencing, the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity allows for a nuanced approach to understand our dependency on others in communicative exchange. This dependency on others should not be misunderstood as evidence for any kind of naïve social constructivist claim about our subjective experiencing. On such a naïve social constructivist view, we might not particularly care about investigating the distinctive dependency on others in communicative exchange because the claim is that most or all of our experiencing is socially construed and negotiated.[71] By contrast, the Husserlian approach insists on maintaining the plurality of the experiential perspectives involved in communicative, interpersonal engagement. What makes second-personal engagement a distinctive kind of intersubjective encounter is that we are able to maintain our perspectival differences although we experience intertwinement and integration of our experiential lives.

This chapter is structured as follows: In the next section, I introduce the methodological shift towards intersubjectivity as Husserl appropriates Reinach's notion of social acts. Following the Husserlian account of second-personal engagement, it is communicative connection as mutual

[71] This kind of social constructivism has been a target of critique in Dan Zahavi's (2014) work on subjectivity and selfhood. He argues that the Husserlian account of subjectivity and selfhood can firmly reject such social constructivist proposals about the self while showing that this view of experiential subjectivity is not incompatible with a detailed investigation of intersubjectivity and second-personal engagement.

interdependence that gives rise to the distinctive role of the second person in meaning and experience. In section 3, I consider mutual gaze encounters and back channeling as socio-cognitive phenomena to illustrate how the mutual interdependence in question becomes salient in experience and make plausible how second-personal engagement gears into our interactional practices and, in this sense, leaves its mark in experiential subjectivity. In section 4, I highlight that the Husserlian approach is not limited to present-time, face-to-face interaction. By considering the role of habitualization in communicative communities, we can describe an operative normativity that orients us in our everyday communicative engagements. Interestingly, this allows for a reflection on a normative moment of the up until here normatively thin notion of second-personal engagement. We can either simply 'go along' with what others say or actively engage with their communications. In section 5, I conclude with a brief comparative assessment of Reinach's and Husserl's approach. Whereas Reinach's account of the 'soul' of social act relies on an individualistic conception of sincerity, Husserl's approach points towards an intersubjective conception to reflect on communicative authenticity. My comparison highlights that the phenomenology of intersubjectivity allows for a rather sophisticated discussion of how we experience intersubjective and social dependency in second-personal engagement.

4.2 Husserl on Communicative Connection

4.2.1 A Methodological Shift: Fulfilment through Actual Uptake from Others

To appreciate the methodological shift from Reinach to Husserl, some historical contextualization is helpful. Reinach's approach to intentional experience is inspired by Husserl's early work in the *Logical Investigations*. Like other early phenomenologists[72], Reinach took

[72] Other names in the early circle that strongly believed phenomenological realism was the strongest reading of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* include Daubert, von Hildebrand and Ingarden (DuBois, 2002, p. 329).

himself to develop ideas from the *Logical Investigation* as he advanced a program for a phenomenological realism. As indicated in the previous chapter, I am less interested in these fundamental differences between Reinach's and Husserl's approach to phenomenology. The issue I want to point to here, is the relative absence of a more elaborate reflection on intersubjectivity in the *Logical Investigation.* As a consequence of this, Reinach's account of intersubjectivity in his analysis of social acts is specialized on (and limited to) the specific type of interaction that takes place between two subjects in a relation of address. A more in-depth phenomenological analysis of a wider conception of intersubjectivity and an appreciation of more affective dynamics of our engagements with others is absent in Reinach's work.

Already a few years after the publication of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl adopted intersubjectivity as a central problem for his phenomenological research program. Initially, this research was carried out under the heading of empathy (*Einfühlung*). In critical engagement with Theodor Lipps' account of empathy by analogical inference[73], Husserl and his followers Stein, Gurwitsch and Scheler, argued that we can have direct and immediate access to others' experiential lives in our unilateral and reciprocal perceptual encounters with others.[74] The early phenomenologists hold that this is an acquaintance with the other's experiential lives that we cannot obtain by merely entertaining beliefs or interpretations about the other party in their absence. Based on this basic perceptual account of experiencing others, early phenomenologists

[73] As exemplified by his discussion of Lipps account of promising due to his framework of *Einfühlung* in the *Apriori Foundations* (cf. Reinach, 2012, p. 38.42), Reinach was certainly aware of Lipps as an influential figure in the debates in German philosophy and psychology in his time. He studied philosophy under Lipps and completed his dissertation with him in Munich in 1904 before moving to Göttingen to complete his habilitation with Husserl in 1908. However, Reinach died in World War I in 1917 before Husserl's and Stein's in-depth critical engagement with the debate on *Einfühlung* took off in the phenomenological circle.

[74] For an in-depth treatment of the historical and systematic perspective of early phenomenological writings on empathy see (Zahavi, 2014). For a brief outline of the transition from empathy to second-personal engagement in early phenomenological research see (Zahavi, 2019).

investigated richer notions of personhood and interpersonal connection (Jardine, 2022). In the Ideas II (Husserl, 1989), Husserl and Stein develop the idea that our personal self-understanding and how we experience our personal lives as normatively relevant will be influenced and co-determined by our intersubjective engagements with others on many levels (Jardine, 2022, pp. 205–266). Far from only being interested in basic intersubjective experience, this program allows for the study of more complex intersubjective and social engagements. It is in this context that Husserl appropriates Reinach's notion of social acts.

Importantly, the shift towards intersubjectivity as an explicit research interest in Husserl's work changes the scope of the notion of social act. Husserl's starting point from more basic other-directed experiences in empathy allows for another way to conceive of the experiential 'fulfillment' of social acts. We can experience fulfilled intersubjective relation if we are actually engaged with others. For more basic encounters, this idea can be illustrated in the following way: I can infer from hearsay that my best friend is very likely sad and devastated because someone told me that their parent has recently passed away. However, this will be very different from actually observing my friend's sadness at lunch or hearing it in their voice in a conversation or an interaction over the phone. Only the latter experiences come with some degree of experiential fulfillment. Whereas Reinach's analysis of social acts around *Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit* exclusively considers potential uptake from others, the phenomenology of intersubjectivity forefronts the idea of fulfillment through actual uptake from others.

4.2.2 Mitteilung, Second-Personal Engagement and Mutual Interdependence

Let me further illustrate this systematic shift in how the concept of social act is employed by Husserl. To do so, I want to draw attention to an interesting difference in how Reinach and Husserl use the term '*Mitteilung'*.

For Reinach, *Mitteilung* designates the specific social act type 'informing' (Reinach, 2012, p. 21). In order to be fulfilled, the act 'informing' merely requires uptake from being heard by the other party and does not call for an elaborate response or action from them. By contrast, Husserl uses the term *Mitteilung* as a more encompassing term. Husserl gives an account of social acts of communication (*soziale Akte der Mitteilung*), where *Mitteilung* is typically translated with 'communication'.[75] Communication is not limited to informing, "the mere communication of facts (*der blossen Mitteilung von Tatsachen)*" (Husserl, 1973b, p. 169), but includes all types of social act in their performative function. He considers commanding, requesting, entreating and other types of social acts/speech acts under the heading of *Mitteilung* without paying detailed attention to their function as performatives and the essential differences between these social act types.

Compared to Reinach, Husserl seems more or less unaware of the possibility to cluster and contrast the fine-grained differences between different types of social acts in line with the program of a speech act 'phenomenology'. This important discovery is somewhat lost in Husserl's account. However, the new focus allows for a different perspective on the distinctive nature of the second-person phenomenon. Instead, the Husserlian shift in focus towards intersubjectivity and interaction allows us to understand how we experience our personal lives as co-determined by others in communicative exchange.

Since Husserl's remarks on communication and the I-You-relation are somewhat scattered, I now turn to an already developed systematic interpretation of these remarks. Following Zahavi, Meindl and León, I suggest that the Husserlian approach resonates with an idea in the contemporary debate of the second person according to which 'communicative connection' is what

[75] Translating "Mitteilung" with communication is also consistent with how the term has been translated in Heidegger's adoption of the term in '*Being and Time*'. Like Husserl, Heidegger understands the concept in a similar broad sense to appeal to the performative function of speech.

warrants its distinctive in thought, meaning and experience (Eilan, 2020). While Zahavi, Meindl and León emphasize the normatively undemanding nature of this proposal and highlight its relevance for empirical research, I also consider more closely how their proposal gives rise to an important normative moment of second-personal engagement.

In a set of related individual and collaborative papers, Zahavi, Meindl and León have considered the relevance of Husserl's remarks on the I-You-relation and communication in 'Phenomenology of the Communicative Community' (Hua 15) and 'Gemeingeist I' (Hua 14) (Husserl, 1973a, pp. 461–479, 1973b, pp. 165–185) for contemporary debates on social cognition, collective intentionality (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2023), and joint attention (León, 2021). According to these contributors, an important distinction in Husserl's account is that second-personal engagement goes beyond mere reciprocal awareness (Zahavi, 2019). To emphasize this point, Zahavi and colleagues establish a link with Naomi Eilan's (2014, 2020) non-phenomenological contribution to the wider philosophical debate on the second-person and her investigation of a specific kind of mutual interdependence.

Eilan (2020) argues that the actual responsive uptake in intersubjective exchange is key to how we experience the specific type of I-You-connectedness in communication and mutual address. In line with proposals that contribute to the Dialogical Approach to the second person, she suggests that adopting attitudes of second-personal address is distinctively about establishing communicative connectedness and cannot be explained with reference to parallel unilateral attitudes in speaker and addressee. According to Eilan (2020, p. 13), the dependence on the uptake on a counterparty is unique and constitutive for second-personal awareness and makes it a specific kind of world-dependence due to it essentially involving another person, another you.

It is this claim about mutual interdependence in communicative exchange that, following Zahavi and Meindl's interpretation (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023; Zahavi, 2019, 2023), is central to

understand Husserl's analysis of communication. They suggest that Eilan's mutual interdependence claim provides for a – by contemporary philosophical standards – clearer way to reformulate and interpret Husserl's idea that social acts give rise to a "particular kind of social unification" (Meindl & Zahavi, 2023, p. 366). Husserl uses different terms such as 'I-You relation', 'I-You community' and 'communicative community' (*Mitteilungsgemeinschaft*) to describe this specific kind of social unification.[76] Consider the following quote, chosen and translated by Meindl and Zahavi, from the *Phenomenology of the Communicative Community*:

> "In addressing and taking up the address, I and another I reach a first unification. I am not only for myself, and the other is not only another in front of me as the other, but the other is my you, and in speaking, listening, and replying we form a We that is unified, communalized in a specific way." (Husserl, 1973a, p. 467, transl. Meindl & Zahavi 2023)

The explicit reference community and communalization might invoke associations about stronger experiences of felt communalization and interpersonal connection in second-personal engagement However, on closer examination of this passage it becomes clear that Husserl really just provides us with a detailed description of the specific social dynamics we experience in communicative encounters. It is a "first unification" that captures the process of You and Me connecting in mutual address. We, in some thin sense, unify or bond in a way that is characteristic for communicative encounters.

Focusing on this first, tentative form of unification that is so characteristic for our experiences in communicative encounters highlights how we experience communicative connection. In communication, we experience depending on the participation of the other party in a way that gives rise to a specific experience of social dynamics. These dynamics are crucially different from

[76] For this, also see the following passages suggested by Meindl and Zahavi (2023, p. 366): (Husserl, 1973b, p. 166, 1973a, pp. 475, 476).

any experience of intersubjective engagement that only requires unilateral, parallel, or reciprocal attendance to the other party. On Zahavi's reading, what drives the transition from mere reciprocal awareness in empathy to communication is that we enter a mutual relation of co-influencing, co-determining and co-depending.[77]:

> "When subjects adopt attitudes of mutual address towards each other they motivate each other, intentionally, and Husserl also speak of this interplay and interlocking of address and response in terms of a coincidence of I and you (*Ich-Du-Deckung*). My intentional subjectivity incorporates the other's intentional subjectivity and vice versa, and this even holds true – according to Husserl – in cases of disagreement and conflict." (Zahavi, 2023, p. 93)

All this is driven by the interplay of address and response. However, the interplay is experientially salient and amounts more than a purely linguistic phenomenon. The experience accompanying this mutual interdependence is often described as a constitutive 'openness' and 'responsiveness'.

To some, the allusion to 'openness' and 'responsiveness' might read like an assumption about some stronger ethical preconditions. We might think that second-personal engagement presupposes mutual, symmetrical attitudes of respect and esteem. However, it is important to note that Zahavi (2019, 2023) and León (2021) stress the normatively deflationary, normatively undemanding nature of their proposal. According to this, the Husserlian account of the experience of second-personal engagement does not require any assumption that the I-You-relation is "necessarily non-hierarchical, characterized by attitudes of mutual esteem and equal respect and a concern for the well-being and dignity of the other" (Zahavi, 2023, pp. 93–94). Instead, Husserl's

[77] Zahavi seems to suggests that there is a distinct threshold between mere reciprocal awareness and mutual address in the I-Thou-relation according to Husserl. Other interpreters think that the transition between reciprocal awareness in empathy and mutual communicative engagement is a lot more fluid and less clear cut in Husserl's work (Jardine, 2022; Knoblauch, 1985).

account of second-person encounters captures the experience of a specific intersubjective, social dynamic. In second-personal engagement I can experience intentionally turning myself towards another as more or less experientially 'fulfilled' by the actual responsive uptake from the other party.

Next, in section 3, I follow this proposal and discuss how we experience mutual interdependence in present time face-to-face communicative interaction by drawing attention to two mechanisms in interpersonal interaction discussed in the social psychology and sociolinguistics. I show how the distinctive intersubjective experience in second-personal engagement gears into our sense of participation in social interactions. After establishing second-personal engagement as a distinctive form of lived intersubjective engagement in section 3, I then move the discussion beyond present time, face-to-face interaction in section 4. I consider the role of habitualization to argue for a normative relevance of this normatively deflationary account of second-personal engagement.

4.3 'Intersubjective Mechanisms': Mutual Gaze Encounters and Back Channeling

In this section, I consider two 'intersubjective mechanisms' that highlight moments in our interpersonal interaction where the specific kind of mutual interdependency, described in the previous section, becomes experientially salient. I will use (1) mutual gaze encounters and (2) back channeling to make my point.[78] Both are well established concepts in social cognition research, social psychology, and sociolinguistic research. My main aim is to show how these contemporaneously relevant concepts in sociolinguistics and social cognition research align with

[78] There may be other relevant socio-cognitive process and features to make my case. The work in this section, should be considered as a start for a non-exhaustive list of relevant nuances of socio-cognitive mechanism in communicative and conversational interaction where experiences of second-personal engagement become salient.

the Husserlian analysis.[79] In doing so, I provide a more detailed description of how the experience of second-personal engagement gears into our interactional practices and, in this sense, leaves its mark in experiential subjectivity.

4.3.1 Mutual Gaze Encounters

In their philosophical work at the intersection to social cognition research, Eilan (2020), León (2021) and Stawarska (2006) primarily turn to (1) mutual gaze encounters to illustrate a threshold experience of I-You-connectedness. Husserl (1973b, p. 211) himself briefly mentions the phenomenon to highlight the difference between merely physically "seeing" others, and being aware of the other in this way, and the special intersubjective encounter in a communicative exchange of glances:

> „I can see the other physically, see his eyes, but yet not 'see' him 'in the eyes'. I can see the embodied other and trace a piece of their inner life in the expression of his embodiment (*im Ausdruck seiner Leiblichkeit*), I can be directed at his acts, and yet not be, in this special sense, with them, in the way it is indicated with looking the other in the eye and with turning oneself towards him." (Husserl, 1973b, p. 211, my transl.)

In social cognition research, such encounters, where we 'see' the other in "this special sense", have been singled out as so called "communicative looks" (Carpenter & Liebal, 2011; Siposova & Carpenter, 2019, p. 263). To illustrate the idea, consider the following example from Naomi Eilan's work (2020, p. 6). Imagine you are attending a boring staff meeting where the university management presents a new success strategy. What might happen when you look up from your notes and meet eyes with a colleague across the room? Consider the following three scenarios. Despite their very different characters, all three describe instances of communicative looks.

[79] I will not be able to provide a thorough critical discussion of the different research agendas in these disciplines.

(1) The brief eye contact is enough "to establish that you think and feel exactly the same about the proceedings." (Eilan 2020, p. 6)

(2) "You expect an exchange of shared embarrassment/boredom, for example. Instead, you encounter eyes shining with enthusiastic endorsement" (ibid.).

(3) When your eyes meet, the other just "looks at you questioningly" (ibid.) and lets you know that they do not "know what you are 'on about'" (ibid.).

Firstly, the scenarios illustrate that second-personal engagement is in a certain sense a normatively thin notion. Very much in line with the Husserlian analysis of second-personal engagement, these scenarios show that mutual gaze encounters do not presuppose agreement or harmony between the two communicating parties. Put in phenomenological terminology, all of the above cases of mutual gaze encounters are to some extent experienced as fulfilled by the actual uptake from others. In this sense, communicative looks in face-to-face interaction add meaning to our social interactions. Importantly, this layer of meaning gets added independent of the degree of intimacy established between the two parties in their engagement and whether the encounter leads to mutual agreement and affirmation.

Moreover, mutual gaze encounters do not presuppose anything about the symmetry of the communicative situation. As Carpenter and Liebal (2011) highlight, mutual gaze encounters may be initiated 'top-down' by one party spontaneously as in the above example. But they can also be initiated by environmental stimuli 'bottom-up', for instance when an explosion or alarm goes off. Only in some cases, are they genuinely born out of the symmetry of the communicative situation. This is usually the case, when we are already engaged with each other in an activity such as a fun game or a nice meal and, in the process, exchange looks that expresses something like "Isn't it nice?" (Carpenter & Liebal, 2011). In these mutual gaze encounters we experience actual uptake from others – whether this uptake aligns with our expectations or not.

Secondly, the scenarios highlight that second-personal engagement in mutual gaze encounters is a distinctive kind of intersubjective encounter and has to be distinguished from other socio-

cognitive processes in intersubjective interaction. As Husserl points out in the above quote, communicative looks have to be distinguished from instances where we might physically aware of each other but no mutual gaze is established. In contrast to the three scenarios above, we could imagine a case where the other simply looks at me, or rather, 'through me' with a dazed absent-minded expression (Eilan, 2020, p. 6). This would not constitute a communicative look. Here the other might physically 'see' me and have some awareness of me. However, no communicative connection is established.

Moreover, it is important to distinguish mutual gaze encounters through communicative looks from other social cognition mechanisms that involve gaze. The exchange of glances in mutual gaze encounters is different from so-called 'gaze following' where we trace the other's gaze to anticipate their actions and behavior (Astor et al., 2021; Carpenter & Liebal, 2011, pp. 160–161; Scaife & Bruner, 1975; Shepherd, 2010). Gaze following behavior is "the ability to align one's own gaze with others to focus on external objects" (Astor et al., 2021, p. 1) and has been of much interest in social cognition research. The important point here is that this gaze alignment merely requires "mutual orientation" (Scaife & Bruner, 1975, p. 266) towards another without a need to establish the characteristic mutual manifestation and reciprocal responsiveness experienced in mutual gaze encounters. Studies on gaze following behavior are interested in how we, and possibly other species (cf. Zeiträg et al., 2022), 'predict' social behavior. In contrast to research with an interest in mutual gaze encounters, studies with a focus on gaze following behavior prioritize a mechanism of social cognition for which unilateral, interpretative access to others is sufficient.

Among the possible forms and mechanisms of social interaction, second-personal engagement in mutual gaze encounters also has to be distinguished from shared collective intentionality. The interpersonal dynamic at play in mutual gaze encounters is not quite like engaging in mutual action where we coordinate around a shared goal or at least a set of shared values or affective states

(Crone, 2018; Gilbert, 2013; Tuomela, 2013). Communicative connection in mutual gaze encounters is not as clearly aimed at coordination to achieve a common goal. Instead, the essential 'communicative connectedness' experienced in mutual gaze encounters and communicative looks is best described as mutual manifestation and openness. This openness implies a certain experience of vulnerability that will not go away with better prediction and interpretation of the others behavior. If and how I receive uptake from the other is never fully up to me and this is constitutive for the experience of I-You-connectedness.

4.3.2 Back Channeling

I now want to further investigate the saliency of these experiences of openness and dependency on the uptake from others in communicative interaction by considering (2) back channeling, a mechanism discussed in sociolinguistics. The term "back channel" was first proposed by linguist Victor Yngve (1970) in conjunction with the idea that the listener might be more actively involved in co-constructing a speaker's talking point rather than to merely passively wait for their turn to take over the speaker role:

> "In fact, both the person who has the turn and his partner are simultaneously engaged in both speaking and listening. This is because of the existence of what I call the back channel, over which the person who has the turn receives short messages such as 'yes', and 'uh-huh' without relinquishing the turn." (Yngve, 1970, p. 568)

The spotlight on 'back channeling' as an intersubjective mechanism makes salient how we experience second-personal engagement in communicative situations and face-to-face dialogue. In particular, it is a useful term to describe and analyze the peculiar pre-obligatory mutual interdependence in second-personal, communicative engagement.

Back channeling can refer to both verbal and non-verbal responses through which listeners co-determine and co-influence the communicative exchange. Research typically distinguishes two types of listener responses, (1) generic listener responses and (2) specific listener responses

(Bavelas et al., 2000). Generic listener responses are simple verbal interjections such as 'mmh', 'aha', 'uh', 'yeah' and non-vocalized cues such as nodding or shrugging that signal attention and acknowledgment to the speaker. Specific listener responses match in a more targeted, meaningful way with what the speaker is saying (Bavelas et al., 2000, p. 943). Examples for such specific responses are appropriate reactions such as showing or vocalizing shock, indignation, sadness or another emotional response through fitting verbal or non-verbal expressions. Listeners may even supply entire phrases or words that the speaker might be searching for as specific responses.

In social psychology (Bavelas et al., 2000; Li et al., 2010; N. Moran et al., 2015; Tolins & Fox Tree, 2014), experiments with a focus on back channeling have been proposed against more 'monological' models for conversational analysis. Experiments based on monological models treat the listener as a "speaker-in-waiting" (Bavelas et al., 2000, p. 941) and hence primarily observe turn-taking patterns. Instead, research focused on back channeling is aimed and understanding the role of communicative connection between the conversational parties. Very much in line with what the Husserlian analysis of I-You-connectedness suggests, engaging in communicative interaction creates an intertwinement between subjects that, in a normatively thin sense, has us experience each other as co-dependent on one another.

Importantly, experiencing communicative connection in this thin sense does not commit us to each other in a thicker deontic sense. This indicated that I-You-connectedness is prior to joint commitment in joint action.[80] Nonetheless, even this normatively thin notion of I-You-connectedness puts pressure on the idea that communication is primarily determined by the

[80] For a more elaborate argument for the importance of this pre-obligatory dimension with a Husserlian framework see (León & Zahavi, 2018).

speaker while the addressee/listener just waits for their turn to contribute to the meaning-making process.

As an example, consider an experiment by Bavelas et al. (2000) to illustrate this point. They examine the effect of generic and specific listeners responses by generating experimental conditions where the listeners are distracted from providing both types of responses. The participants acting as speakers are asked to narrate a close-call story. At the same time, the experiment participants acting as listeners are assigned a cognitively demanding task such as counting to distract them from giving typical listeners responses. The results show that without the appropriate generic and specific listeners responses, the speakers tell their story significantly less well. This highlights how we co-create, co-influence and co-determine the communicative situation, even though we are not necessarily acting jointly together in any intentionally committed way. Remarkably, we even experience co-dependency in communicative exchange in this rather asymmetrical experimental scenario, where one person is exclusively assigned the active speaker role to perform a narration while the other party 'merely' acts as passive listener to the story.

To sum up, both mutual gaze encounters and back channeling highlight how second-personal engagement as a specific kind of intersubjective engagement gears into our interactional practices. I consider this an important part of a strategy to motivate why the second-person relation and our mutual interdependence on one another in communicative interaction are a phenomenon with distinctive meaning-making function and experiential relevance.

Some might think research on intersubjective mechanisms at the intersection of verbal and non-verbal expression is primarily of interest for empirical research in psychological, social cognition research, and sociolinguistics. However, in the wider philosophical debate on the second person, Eilan (2020) and Salje (2016) have proposed that going beyond the standard verbal case is of crucial importance to respond to the anti-distinctivist challenge. A distinctivist account of the

second person works against the prevalent idea in philosophy of language that second-personal address is 'merely' a linguistic phenomenon that happens 'in the talking' and has thus no traction on experience, meaning, or thought.

Here, the accounts of mutual gaze encounters and back channeling illustrate that the verbal form of addressing is "just *one way* of performing an act of addressing" (Salje, 2016, p. 832). We discover that what happens 'in the talking' is much more intricately involved in meaning making. Addressing someone is not just a linguistic process to bring meaning to the surface that has already been fully established in individual thought and belief states. This perspective can thus contribute towards making the case for the distinctivist proposal of the second-person phenomenon. Moreover, extending our understanding of how we experiencing addressing one another beyond linguistic address narrowly conceived also sheds light on important nuances of interpersonal and social interaction.

After establishing how second-personal engagement is a specific form of intersubjective engagement that is experientially salient in communicative and conversational interaction, I now want to move beyond our experiences in present time, face-to-face encounters. In the next section, I follow the Husserlian analysis further and consider the role of habitualization in our experiences of communicative connection. We typically already belong to several communicative communities. I argue that, if we factor this in, we can describe an operative normativity that orients us in our everyday communicative engagements. This gives rise to an interesting approach to discuss 'genuineness' or 'authenticity' in communicative exchange with the emphasis on its intersubjective co-constitution.

4.4 An Operative Normativity in Communicative Communities

4.4.1 The Role of Habitualization and Supra-Personal Spheres of Social Validity

Zahavi, Meindl and León's interpretation would be misunderstood if we take the description of intersubjective dynamics in face-to-face dialogue to be the primary aim of Husserl's analysis. Instead, a central goal of his analysis of social acts of communication in the Ideas II (Husserl, 1989) and the intersubjectivity manuscripts is to show how interpersonal communicative connectedness contributes towards supra-personal spheres of social validity (*überpersonale soziale Geltungsbereiche*). Systematically, such an interest in social structure that goes beyond intersubjective experience in concrete interactions is exemplified by Husserl's (1973b, pp. 165–184, 1973b, pp. 192–204) analysis of the so called 'common mind' (*Gemeingeist*).

In Husserl's analysis of 'common mind' (1973b, pp. 165–184, 1973b, pp. 192–204)[81], supra-personal structures have a subjective and an objective side. He describes this as a correlative relationship between so called 'social subjectivities' (*soziale Subjektivitäten*) as associations of persons (*Personenverbände*) and their corresponding 'social objectivities' (*soziale Objektitäten*) (Husserl, 1989, p. 205).[82] Typical examples of such objectual correlates on the basis of habitually unified associations of persons in Husserl's writing include the club (*Verein*), the family (*Familienverband*), the circle of friends (*Freundeskreis*) or matrimony (*Ehe*). Subjects may be

[81] Page numbers refer to Manuscripts Nr. 9 'Gemeingeist I' and Nr. 10 'Gemeingeist II' in Hua 14.

[82] As Caminada (2019, 2023) points out, such "social objectivities" (*soziale Objektitäten*) may also arise based on patterns of mutual communication but they also appear as correlates of patterns of action, tools and technology or through joint endorsement and commitment to values. Here, I only focus on mutual communicative engagement to highlight how the Husserlian analysis gives rise to another normative moment of second-person relations. I refer the reader to Caminada's (2019) extensive examination of the concept of the 'common mind' and the role of habit in the Ideas II and the intersubjectivity manuscripts for a more comprehensive treatment of different forms of social intentionality and the corresponding structural correlates in the Husserlian analysis.

habitually unified in association of persons in weaker manners without a clear membership in such more institutionalized structures. For instance, the student population in a town may form an association of persons by regularly attending lectures, going to the same kinds of concerts, and frequenting the same bars without this necessarily involving a formal enrolment at the same institution or a membership in a student club or association. All these lived associations of persons have the following in common: When we communicate within an association of persons to which we already belong, we communicate on the grounds of an already existing intellectual interdependency (*geistiger Wirkungszusammenhang*).

Mutual communicative understanding (*Wechselverständigung*) in social acts of communication is one of the possible grounds on which we experience supra-personal social structures in a habitualized manner. Over time the minimal experience of a 'first unification' or 'communicative community' when we connect in mutual address gives rise to associations of persons that are unified in a more stable manner. On the level of language, such an implicitly unified association of persons is the so-called language community (*Sprachgemeinschaft*). In this context, Husserl articulates how we experience an operative normativity in communicative interaction within our language community as a "norm of the ordinary":

> "The unity of the language community is a unity of persons (an undetermined, open manifold) to which I, the speaker, myself and my environing world belong; persons that stand in a unity of tradition and that are conscious of the norm about the for - this circle - , ordinary means for mutual understanding and mutual influence […]. The ordinary (*das Übliche*) has in itself in a certain way a norm, the norm of the habitual (*Norm des Gewohnten*), after which one again expects the usual under similar conditions." (Husserl, 1973b, p. 229)

It is important to emphasize, that the idea of such communicative communities with a norm of the ordinary operative within them is not restricted to the level of language communities. We can adapt our styles of communication in more fine-grained ways relative to the particular association of persons we interact in. For instance, we might orient our communications differently depending

on whether we interact in our family, this or that circle of friends, or during the annual general meeting of the rabbit breeders club. In this way, we usually belong to multiple associations of persons and can effortlessly switch between the different habitual norms operative in these communicative communities.

Thus, we can experience different 'ordinary' ways of communicating relative to the concrete 'circle' we are currently interacting in. By attending philosophy seminars, someone might attune to a particular way of ordinary communication appropriate for the intellectual context. Back at a family gathering in their rural hometown, the same person might easily shift back to a quite different ordinary way of communicating. These different communal, social and cultural contexts do not only shape our linguistic tool box (vocabulary, grammatical precision). Relative to a communicative community, we embody the norm of the ordinary down to the smallest details, from our body language, mimics, use of gestures, intonation, interpersonal distance, and the way in which we use generic and specific listeners responses, i.e., back channeling.

What is crucial to understand is that we experience these ordinary ways to express ourselves from a perspective 'within', as situated within the communicative communities. If we communicate in our usual circles, we experience the norm of the ordinary as coherence, orientation, and familiarity. Our communications run smoothly. This might become salient in the nice feeling when our jokes 'just click' with our co-communicators.

The important systematic point about the kind of normativity in question here is that it is an operative normativity (Wehrle, 2021, 2022). When Husserl investigates the ordinary, he is interested in a qualitative experience of what "has in itself in a certain way a norm" (Husserl, 1973b, p. 229). This stands in contrast to the more formal approach to the normativity of social acts discussed in the previous chapter in the context of Reinach's work. The relation of operative

normativity and experienced normality in Husserl's (and Merleau-Ponty's) work has recently been investigated in more systematic terms by Maren Wehrle (2015, 2018, 2021, 2022). A phenomenological approach will typically study the ordinary "*from within* as *lived normality"* (Wehrle, 2022, p. 201). Investigating normativity in this qualitative way is different from the more formal approaches to normativity (Wehrle, 2022, p. 200).[83]

In his work, Husserl shows that lived normality can be investigated as a qualitative experience of normativity for the most basic perceptual experiences. With normality in perception, an investigation of "how individuals experience something as normal or abnormal (individual normality)" (Wehrle, 2022, p. 201) is often sufficient. However, for the more complex experiences of the ordinary in communicative situations we will mainly be concerned with "intersubjective normality" (ibid.) where we describe "how this individual experience relates to those of others". The normativity in question here is operative and immanent because it "is established *within* practices themselves, that is, the kind of normativity that internally guides the practice and is acquired through repeated practice" (Wehrle, 2022, p. 202). Moreover, the regulation of norms of the ordinary in communicative communities is usually "not rendered thematic for the experiencing subject but can remain implicit or completely 'hidden'" (Wehrle, 2022, p. 202). It is possible that the operative norm of the ordinary is in different degrees thematic from the various different experiential perspectives within a communicative community.

With this clarification about the kind of normativity we are dealing with in place, I now want to show how Husserl's reflection on the norm of the ordinary in communicative encounters can

[83] Wehrle (2022, p. 201) contrasts the phenomenological/Husserlian approach to normality from within, as we qualitatively experience it, with historical and discursive approaches that mostly study normality from without. Foucauldian genealogical critique, for instance, largely defines normality "as the result of discursive or power processes of 'normation'" (ibid.).

highlight a further normative quality of second-personal engagement. His reflections provide an interesting way to discuss what it means to actively and 'authentically' engage with one another in communication.

4.4.2 Active Communicative Engagement and the Norm of the Ordinary

In this section, I want to draw attention to how the description of an operative norm in our 'ordinary' experiences of communicative connection allows for another way to describe an often-overlooked, 'thin' normative moment of second-personal engagement. The norm of the ordinary allows us to further characterize the quality of fulfilment through uptake from others. When we experience actual uptake, it makes a difference whether the addressee actively engages with what and how we communicate to them or whether they exclusively rely on habitualized response patterns. Thus, there are two ways in which we can communicatively engage with one another if we take into account that we usually communicate within associations of persons to which we already belong:

(1) As outlined in the previous section, we often draw on an habitualized knowledge of the ordinary (*das Übliche*) when we communicate with each other in our usual circles.
(2) However, we can work to actively engage in understanding (*nachverstehen*) each other's communications (Husserl, 1973a, p. 224).[84]

These two ways of communicatively engaging with others give rise to an additional normative dimension of second-personal engagement. We can simply follow the 'norm of the ordinary' and

[84] "In communication, *Nachverstehen* means a *quasi-enactment* of the activities and original experiences that the subject who is engaging in understanding (*der Verstehende*) has generally never experienced." (Husserl, 1973a, p. 224, my transl.)

go along with what others say. Or, we can choose to more actively engage with the other's communication.[85]

According to Husserl, it is one of the "temptations of language (*Verführung der Sprache*)" (Husserl, 1976, p. 372) to merely take up meaning from others and make them our own opinions. We tend to rely on what *one* usually says or does. Such empty modes of communication are very common in our everyday lives and to a certain degree crucial to make our social lives functionable. Language allows us to hold ideas of present and future states of affairs without having to invest the cognitive work to experience their content in an intuitively fulfilled manner all the time. If my colleague tells me that the coffee machine has been closed down for the semester break, I might not bother coming in to the office to check and experience this for myself. If I learn a complex physical theory in a lecture, I will have to take certain assumptions for granted and cannot have the justification for every single formula and judgment that goes into the proof intuitively fulfilled present all the time.

However, there are some modes of communication that enable us to fight against falling into the "laziness of conventionality (*Faulbett der Konventionalität*)" (Husserl, 1973b, p. 231). This requires that both the speaker and the addressee engage with one another in such a way that an active and engaged mutual understanding is possible. What is more, Husserl emphasizes that this is not determined by the addressee and their uptake in an isolated manner (Husserl, 1976, p. 371).

[85] Another option to resist the norm of the ordinary is to take up a more distanced attitude of reflection and reasoning without engagement with others. See distinctions in *Phänomenologische Psychologie*: "But we must first also distinguish between going along "passively" and deciding on free deliberation in favor of the other's decision […] . Thus I have: 1) Convictions arrived at by suggestion and only that; 2) freely following the other, convictions arrived at by active assent; 3) convictions of assent arising from one's own reason (possibly following his way toward insight and his insight itself)." (Husserl, 1977, p. 163).

Rather, it is a co-determined process where it matters just as much that the speaker expresses their communication in an understandable manner that invites active engagement.

In his analysis of the sociological implications of Husserl's phenomenology of communication, the sociologist Hubert Knoblauch (1985, pp. 46–47) suggests that Husserl systematically operates with two notions of communication. Husserl's reflections allow for a distinction between inauthentic and authentic modes of communication (*eigentliche und uneigentliche Kommunikation*). The reference to inauthentic modes is more implicit in Husserl's work. His primary interest are modes of authentic communication that enable actually engaged mutual understanding in contrast with modes of communication where we mainly rely on habitual response patterns.

According to Husserl, the paradigmatic social sphere where we strive for such authentic communicative engagement is in the community of researchers. In the C*risis* (Husserl, 1976, pp. 371–375), Husserl makes use of the distinction between inauthentic and authentic modes of communication to describe the value of knowledge seeking practice. For him, communication in the community of researchers illustrates how we can engage in authentic communication in an intersubjectively engaged manner. The possibility to reactivate and actively reenact the content of scientific works is not just accidentally achieved in retrospect but built into the way researchers communicate with one another (Husserl, 1976, p. 372). Both the researcher who produces a new idea and those who subsequently draw on it will choose their words, sentences, and sentence contexts carefully to ensure that the scientific statement can be repeated and applied in other practical and theoretical contexts (ibid). In this way, researchers engage each other's ideas and methods of reasoning in their community for the sake of the object (*für die Sache*) of their inquiry.

In the following, I want to highlight a trajectory to develop Husserl's account of the operative normativity within communicative communities beyond the community of researchers. The focus

on the community of researchers and thing- and fact-oriented processes of meaning-making as the ideal might make Husserl's discussion of authentic communication seem somewhat dated. Some might even raise the suspicion that 'authentic' communication, on Husserl's account, is "merely reserved for some privileged individuals, such as scientists, scholars and artists" (Heinämaa, 2023, p. 462). In line with what Sara Heinämaa (2023) has pointed out for the equally dated seeming notion of vocation (*Berufung*) in Husserl's work, it is very well possible to interpret such reflections of communicative intentionality as "a general human possibility" and as not in this first instance "determined by any set of material values - epistemic or moral, private or public, low or high, traditional or modern" (Heinämaa, 2023, p. 462). To develop the distinction between authentic and inauthentic communication beyond the paradigm of the community of researchers, I suggest to resort to such a charitable reading.

Firstly, we do not have to understand the remark on the 'temptations of language' as a devaluation of language and linguistic expression. Following a suggestion by Dieter Lohmar (2016b), we can read Husserl's account of the role of language here as an expression of the fact that language can work both as a means and as an obstacle for communication. The norm of the ordinary is an everyday feature that is part of our experience of communicating in circles that we already belong to. In any communicative community, communication will eventually be governed by habitual norms and conventions. There is thus a tendency to produce highly specialized styles and usages of language that work to demarcate the ingroup from outsiders. In these instances, an outsider to a particular communicative community may experience the habitualized linguistic communication routines as an obstacle for communication.

Due to this, we might want to pay particular attention how and where we experience deviations from our ordinary ways of communicating. As Wehrle suggests, "normality as a dimension of experience best manifests in the form of possible deviations, irritations, or surprises" (Wehrle,

2022, p. 214) because the operative normativity becomes thematic and salient in such experiences of breakdown. Contra Husserl's interest in exemplary paradigms of 'authentic' communication, contemporary phenomenologists will want to look at the other end and engage in a more extensive investigation of inauthentic everyday forms of communication.[86] In this direction, there is potential for a productive exchange with sociological research.

A brief juxtaposition of Husserl's reflections and contemporary work in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropology on the notions of '*speech community'* (Morgan, 2014) and 'c*ommunity of practice'* (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) can further highlight the contemporary relevance of his perspective from 'within' the communicative community. In the last decades, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists articulated the need to move away from static definitions of speech communities by clear geographical markers or other externally defined social identity markers. For their research agendas, they are in need of methods to study situated language to account for our more dynamic social realities.

> "Speech communities cannot be defined solely through linguistic analysis and description or by static physical location, since membership can be experienced as part of a nation-state, neighborhood, village, club, compound, online chat room, religious institution and so on. Moreover, unless they are members of highly stratified societies, adults often experience multiple communities. One's initial socialization into a speech community may occur within a culture with communicative values that differ from other cultures and communities that one encounters later in life" (Morgan, 2014, p. 7)

In order to account for dynamic social realities in less stratified societies, some social scientists (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) have therefore suggested to shift

[86] Knoblauch (1985) refers the reader to Alfred Schütz's notebooks for examples of investigation of "inauthentic" forms of communication in contrast with authentic forms (Schütz/Luckmannn, Strukturen der Lebenswelt, Band II, S. 329, 339) and Luckmann's "Aspekte einer Theorie der Sozialkommunikation.". Further literature which I find important to consider would be social scientific study of talk-in-interaction such as Harvey Sacks (1989) phenomenologically-inspired work in conversation analysis.

from the more traditional approach that defines speech communities exclusively through external identity markers to an approach that considers the dynamics within speech communities and consider practice norms from a perspective within the 'community of practice'. In these research programs, an account on how the same lived normality is experienced from different first-person perspectives is particularly valuable.

Based on such a more refined understanding of our everyday modes of 'inauthentic' communication in communicative communities in various shapes and forms, we might then be able to develop a more nuanced idea about opportunities for 'authentic' communication to build the kind of communicative communities which we might call transformative communicative communities. How can communicative communities beyond the community of researchers function as authentically, transformative communicative communities?

However, what comes before such bigger visions, is to further scrutinize from a philosophical perspective what 'authenticity' in communicative engagement can and should mean to understand certain caveats with claiming any kind of communicative authenticity. As a first clarificatory step in this direction, I want to tie back my analysis of Husserl's account of second-personal engagement to Reinach's remarks about the 'soul' of social acts.

4.5 'Individual' Sincerity vs. 'Intersubjective' Authenticity

I end this chapter with a brief comparative assessment of the trajectories followed by Reinach and Husserl. To do so, I want to point out a crucial difference between Husserl's reflection on a qualitatively experienced intersubjective normality and the possibility of intersubjective authenticity in communicative communities with Reinach's remarks on a more individualistic conception of 'sincerity'.

On Reinach's account, whether a social act is genuine and sincere is a matter of the individual speaker's underlying intentional experience. This is what Reinach calls the "soul" of the social act (Reinach, 2012, p. 20). For the social act promising, what matters for the genuine performance of the promise is the promisor's 'inner' experience of commitment. In order to ask a sincere question an underlying experience with a degree of genuinely felt uncertainty is necessary. Informing someone in a genuine way, conversely, calls for an underlying belief and conviction in the content of the information. These movements in our inner mental life as foundation for the performance of social act are, on Reinach's account, to be distinguished from the formal normative function of social acts tied to the outward expression, as discussed in the previous chapter. The formal function of the need of being heard can be fully explained by only considering what goes on in the "body" of the social acts (Reinach, 2012, p. 20), i.e., by accounting for the interplay of performative expression and uptake.

With the Husserlian focus on intersubjective experience, we forefront the consideration that even the foundational experiences underlying the expressive performance of a social acts comes with an intersubjective dependency that is often implicit and unthematic. This allows us to reflect on a different sense of 'genuineness' in communicative experience that is intersubjectively determined. If I ask you a question it should ensure that you can actively engage with the problem that I want to share with you. And *vice versa*, in your act of responding to my question you also have to be open to respond in a way that actually engages with my problem and my uncertainty rather than merely taking it up in the conventional way by giving me a generic answer to the question.

Let me highlight why developing a reflection of intersubjective authenticity alongside the more traditional picture of sincerity may be interesting. Like in Reinach's analysis we also find a similar tendency to endorse a more individualistic notion of sincerity in received speech act theory. The

overemphasis of sincerity and all too rigid attempts to spell out sincerity conditions for different kind of speech acts have received quite some criticism because they provide a somewhat diminished picture of speech.[87] In a critique of too rigid frameworks of sincerity conditions in received speech act theory, Gabrielle Falkenberg suggests to distinguish the more straightforward notion of 'interpersonal deception' (Falkenberg, 1990, p. 143), where we intentionally perform something we are not internally committed to, from a usually unthematic kind of "self-deception" where we experience discrepancy "between our unarticulated experiencing and what we as owner of the experience reflectively considers it to be" (Falkenberg, 1990, p. 144). In order to communicate with integrity, we need to communicate free from straightforward interpersonal deception. Hence, most communications call for individual sincerity in Reinach's sense as one precondition and this is undeniably important to us in our social lives. It matters to us in interpersonal interaction whether someone intentionally deceives us or not.

However, authenticity and inauthenticity in the context of communicative action is also about a more complex intertwining of interpersonal and individual self-experience. Both speakers and addressee's may be caught up in less thematic experiences of discrepancies. Such experiences of discrepancies are often induced through our intersubjective engagements and the unthematic and immanent normalities that accompany most of our communications. A much-discussed phenomenon is that women in leadership positions often make the unsettling experience that their orders are merely taken up as requests by their subordinates, even though they perform the social act 'ordering' genuinely and no different than their white male counterparts (Caponetto, 2017; R. Kukla, 2014; McDonald, 2021; Rawls & Duck, 2020). This indicates that experiences of

[87] For instance, the (alleged) exclusion of non-serious discourse from speech act analysis is one of the points in Derrida's critique of received speech act theory in the (in)famous Searle-Derrida-'debate' (Derrida, 1988a).

authenticity in communicative situations do not only require the right individual attitudes but also seem to depend on something I will for now can call ‘good’ practices within the communicative communities we belong to.

In order to investigate these demanding experiences of discrepancies, an account that stretches the traditional picture of what counts as speech, as outlined in this chapter, may be particularly valuable. Importantly, we might want to consider playful types of communication, such as joking, which have been particularly uninteresting for accounts mainly interested in individual sincerity. In language pragmatics, Herbert and Kukla (2016) have recently proposed to study what they call “peripheral speech” within speech communities. Peripheral speech is any kind of “informal, typically playful, insider speech that includes inside jokes, riffs, gossip, insider references” (Herbert & Kukla, 2016, p. 1). This is, first and foremost, a lot of fun for those who get it and thus easily becomes part of one’s ordinary ways of communicating. Because peripheral speech feels good for those who get it, it is very easy to either not notice or not care about the denigrating effects that some forms of peripheral speech may have on others. As ‘insider speech’, this peripheral, playful, and seemingly ‘meaningless’ speech can have an important role in demarcating who belongs to a community and who is cast out.

Moreover, it can be quite hard to break with the dynamics of peripheral speech as a member of a communicative community. For this Herbert and Kukla give the example of responding to a sexist joke by taking it seriously to subvert it:

> “Responding seriously, *even when combined with manifesting a theoretical understanding of the joke*, is still often enough to mark one as an outsider. For instance, women who object to sexist discursive play are often first accused of ‘not having a sense of humor’ or being told that it is ‘all in good fun’, but this can quickly escalate to anger, effective ejection from the community, and frequently threats of violence (see (West, 2013), for instance)” (Herbert & Kukla, 2016, p. 20)

However, this does not mean that peripheral speech is inherently oppositionally defined and doomed to outcast and denigrate certain members of a communicative community. Herbert and Kukla suggest that it may just as well provide "opportunities to build positive shared identities that are not oppositionally defined and do not depend on the denigration of others" (Herbert & Kukla, 2016, p. 577). How that might be possible and where we might want to be even more careful about the idea of 'authentic' and 'transformative' communication to build shared identities will be a challenge that I want to address in the final two chapters of this dissertation.

In this chapter, I have considered a Husserlian framework of second-personal engagement. The Husserlian account of communicative connectedness and intertwinement of experiential perspectives can highlight how second-personal engagement gears into our interactional practices on two levels: (1) In present time face-to-face interaction we experience second-personal engagement as a social dynamic that highlights our co-dependency in communicative connection even before we enter into demanding deontic relations of joint commitment. (2) On considering the role of habitualization, the account reveals an operative normativity, that points to an interesting trajectory to reflect on the meaning of authenticity and inauthenticity in communicative engagement in a thoroughly intersubjective manner.

What I hope to have demonstrated is that the Husserlian approach is not so easy to dismiss as egocentric. Compared to received speech act theory, the Husserlian approach considers intersubjectivity as an element of experiences that underly the performance of expressive social acts. Moreover, both on the level of face-to-face interaction as well as on the level of communicative and speech communities the framework offers several avenues to engage with research in sociolinguistics. In order to consider possible limitations of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity we need a more nuanced approach. This is what I will consider next.

5 | Second-Personal Responsiveness and Acknowledging

Up until here, I have discussed phenomenological approaches to the second person by unpacking the notion of social acts. I have considered how (1) a description in terms of the intentionality of the experience can help us to understand the complex intentional correlate involved in the act of turning oneself towards another in address; (2) I have employed Reinach's eidetic method to understand how second-personal address enables a 'practical form of nexus' with logical and deontic relevance; and (3) I have shown how second-personal engagement involves a sophisticated intertwinement of two, nonetheless distinct experiential perspectives that gears into our experiences of social dynamics in interactional practices. For each of these entry points to the topic, I have discussed in turn what such an approach contributes to the development of the distinctivist view of the second person by providing an account of how the phenomenon of the second person becomes manifest in experience and thought. In this chapter, I consider a possible limitation of the Husserlian approach. I argue that a distinctivist account of the second person needs to attend to a specific dimension of action that correlates with our responsiveness to the force of normative claims.

Previously, I have frequently drawn on Beata Stawarska's rather generic dismissal of Husserl's work. Stawarska argues that Husserl has nothing interesting to say about the second-person relation due to his supposedly 'egocentric' and individualistic framework. Her claim is that Husserl allegedly neglects language and social configurations of experience and can thus not describe the "polycentric perspectival configuration of experience situated within the shared world" (Stawarska, 2009, p. x). I have followed Meindl and Zahavi (2023), in their argument that this blanket dismissal is somewhat superficial and oblivious to Husserl's writing on communication and the I-You-relation in 'Phenomenology of the Communicative Community', 'Gemeingeist I' and the *Ideas II*.

In the previous chapter in particular, I have highlighted that the dedicated attention to intersubjectivity and communication in Husserl's work actually points to a much less individualistic, egocentric starting point than what we would typically find in received speech act theory. As Anthony Steinbock has argued, simply challenging "the absence of communication and language in a constitutive analysis" (Steinbock, 1995, p. 75), as one might do for Husserl's remarks on intersubjectivity in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation, is not enough. I follow Steinbock in his assessment of the Dialogical approach. He argues that filling the possible lacuna in Husserl's account by merely adding considerations about 'language' and 'culture' cannot essentially change the basic presuppositions about what it means to relate to others:

> "'Dialogical' philosophy or philosophies of the 'I-Thou', like Theunissens's *Der Andere*, or speech act theories from Austin to Searle, do not fundamentally alter the basic schema, despite their enormous contributions." (Steinbock, 1995, p. 75)

But what exactly does it mean to "fundamentally alter the basic schema" and consider our relatedness to others as a constitutive element of subjective experiencing? My aim in this chapter is to propose a more nuanced way to consider possible limitations of the Husserlian approach. In doing so, I will highlight an important dimension of action that is crucial to contribute to the distinctivist approach to the second person. This dimension of action correlates with our responsiveness to the force of normative claims and our ability to performatively take responsibility. How can we emphasize that there is an original import to sense-making processes from second-personal address and communicative exchange?

This chapter is structured as follows: In section 1, I introduce the idea that the Husserlian account somehow fails to grasp the full meaning of what it means to performatively take responsibility. I argue that this becomes particularly apparent when we consider cases of opposing another, in particular what it means to oppose another's action as wrong. In section 2, I then turn to such cases and show how Haase's reflection on the Dialogical approach to the second person

can highlight the specific dimension of action at stake with second-personal responsiveness proper. Second-personal responsiveness proper concerns an aspect of our reality of action where our practical stances meet about a present practical issue. In such cases of opposition, our mutual actions are incompatible in such a way that it is practically impossible to affirm both stances. In section 3, I outline the theoretical background to demarcate this dimension of action by drawing on resources from the philosophy of language, namely Anscombe's observations about stopping modals and Cavell's reflection on the meaning of acknowledging. In section 4, I then consider how second-personal responsiveness proper can be approached with a phenomenological approach by highlighting the merits of a responsive interpretation of intentionality that emphasizes the asymmetrical nature of intersubjectivity. In section 5, I discuss why second-personal responsiveness matters to develop a distinctivist approach to the second person. I argue that what is in question with second-personal responsiveness proper is an important proto-normative moment in experience and human practices that allows us to attend to concrete practical issues as we interpersonally engage with one another.

5.1 Possible Limitations of the Husserlian Approach

Contemporary research in phenomenology has narrowed in on a certain shortcoming with the Husserlian approach to the phenomenology of intersubjectivity (Crowell, 2013, 2015, 2016; Mertens, 2000, 2010, 2013; Steinbock, 1995; Waldenfels, 1994). These commentators have made seminal contributions to Husserl scholarship and are thus in no danger of simply not having engaged enough with Husserl's later work on intersubjectivity. The main line of critical engagement considered here is the idea that (Husserlian) phenomenology is in need of a (more) responsive interpretation of intentionality. A responsive interpretation of intentionality pays particular attention to how communicative experience and the alterity of the other might serve as original meaning constituting capacities in their own right.

Articulating this possible shortcoming in Husserl's account of intersubjectivity is somewhat difficult if the aim is nonetheless to insist that his work on the constitutive role of intersubjectivity in first-person experience has made an enormous contribution to the phenomenological method. To give an initial idea of this possible line of critique (section 1.1), I consider how Karl Mertens (2000), Bernhard Waldenfels (1994) and Steven Crowell (2015, 2016) have motivated the lacuna. The general thrust of their critique is that Husserl misses out on the role of original communicative experience in a particular dimension of action. I then show (section 1.2) that it is crucial to distinguish this shortcoming in Husserl's approach from the idea that the second-person standpoint is grounded in an internalized, reflexive capacity for self-address. In contrast to this Reflexive and anti-distinctivist approach to the second-person phenomenon, Husserl's approach insists on the openness for the plurality of actual experiential perspectives that can demarcate the distinctive character of the second-person phenomenon from other forms of solipsistic, self-sufficient activities of judgment and reasoning.

5.1.1 Original Communicative Experience and the Performative Function of Social Acts

As Karl Mertens highlights in an article on Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation, the original Husserlian analysis does not give a full account of the possibility of an "*original* communicative experience of others and their meaning constituting capacities" (Mertens, 2000, p. 13, my transl.). For Husserl, the original constitution of actual uptake in communication always works bottom-up, from the pre-reflective and basic affective experience of others in unilateral and reciprocal empathy to the experience of communicative reciprocity. Thus, for him "[c]ommunicative communalization is always founded in constitutive capacities of consciousness (*fundiert in konstitutiven Leistungen des Bewußtseins*)" (Mertens, 2000, p. 13). This precludes the possibility that communicative exchanges may be enabled by "a possible reciprocal relation of consciousness and language" (Mertens, 2000, p. 13). What is specific about inviting someone, asking someone a

genuine question, or apologizing to someone is that they require a constitutive openness for the other's response and readiness to improvise in the face of it. Moreover, in the previous chapters, I have contrasted Husserl's approach to social acts with Reinach's interest in the performative function of second-personal address where social acts almost take on a life of their own.[88] I have shown that Husserl either has not fully recognized the performative and pragmatic function of social acts or was simply not interested in it.

This neglect of the performative function of social acts of communication in Husserl's work has in a similar way been pointed out by Bernhard Waldenfels (1994) in *Antwortregister*. His argument (Waldenfels, 1994, pp. 36–45) is not that Husserl cannot account for communicative experience at all. He emphasizes that the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity can without any doubt account for idea that "the history of experience eventually includes communicative experience and that others are always already participating in sense making" (Waldenfels, 1994, p. 44, my transl.). However, by looking at the concrete case of questioning (*Fragen*), Waldenfels shows that Husserl remains committed to a more classic picture to describe the original import from communicative exchange for the constitution of meaning. In Husserl's analysis for the specific case of questioning, there is at least a tendency to conceive of the primary grounds of questioning as '*sachorientiert*', fact-oriented, i.e., about a 'thing' in question. This does not preclude that Husserl's investigation of communicative and dialogical encounters also takes into account practical and axiological aspects. Husserl considers not just questions about theoretical things but also questions that concern feelings of value. However, the entire

[88] I indicated in the previous chapter that Reinach's account suffers from its own shortcoming where his description of intersubjectivity is concerned. Here, I cannot give a detailed account to what extent Reinach's account fails to attend to the relevant dimension of action that I am concerned with in this chapter.

communicative and dialogical dimension will ultimately be developed through the teleological unfolding of horizons of meaning (*Sinnhorizonte*). As Waldenfels puts this point:

> The thing in question does not only have "theoretical character but may also take up practical and axiological/valuing character (Hua IV, 192). However, this does not exclude that the entire communicative dimension of communication (*Kundgabe*) and uptake (*Kundnahme*) stems from a meaning determining function (*Bedeutungsfunktion*). In linguistic theoretical terms, the pragmatic dimension is derived through the unfolding of horizons of meaning (*Sinnhorizonte*), that are taken from semantics. In this manner, Husserl's phenomenology is in line with the classical thinking, where all questioning is developed on the basis of the dynamic of factual/thing-oriented (*sachlich*) questioning." (Waldenfels, 1994, p. 45, my transl.)

Steven Crowell's (2015, 2016) work on 'second-person phenomenology' directly connects with Waldenfels' point in the above quote: Husserl seems to derive the pragmatic dimension of communication and uptake entirely from teleologically unfolding horizons of meaning. Crowell has argued that Husserl's relative neglect of the pragmatic dimension of language and the performative function of social acts make it so that he cannot account for what it means to constitute the other as performatively responsible. According to Crowell, the Other's responsibility is "radically beyond my reach" and cannot simply be incorporated in my horizon of meaning:

> "[W]hat is radically beyond my reach – not at all part of the intentional content, 'animate organism' – is the Other's responsibility for his or her own life. Responsibility, whether my own or that of the Other, is a kind of 'singularity', and it cannot be understood in the Husserlian framework of acts of consciousness and their intentional meaning-correlates because it is a performative – taking responsibility – that presupposes a very specific sort of responsiveness to the force of normative claims." (Crowell, 2015, p. 572)

The gist of these critiques is that Husserl does not fully recognize the performative nature of addressive speech and original meaning constituting capacities of communication. This oversight leaves his reflection on what it means to performatively take responsibility for one's own life and constitute others as performatively responsible underdetermined. I propose to understand the general claim of these proposals in the following way: The performative function of addressive speech points towards a proto-normative moment in experience that cannot be captured in the

Husserlian description of the intentional intertwinement of two experiential perspectives. However, simply pointing to the performative function of speech and the original meaning constituting capacities of language, as Mertens, Waldenfels and Crowell do for the most part of their critique of Husserl, does only seems to circumscribe the issue. Some clarifications are in order to situate this line of critique and to adequately understand the proto-normative moment in experience that specifically targets our responsiveness to the force of claims and appeals addressed towards us.

5.1.2 Solipsistic Self-Responsibility vs. Plural Self-Responsibility

Before attending further to this line of critique, I want to establish that Husserl's account is, despite the possible shortcoming outlined above, an approach that attends to the actual plurality of others' perspectives. The Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity allows for an account of the second-person relation and the nature of communicative exchange that is dependent on a relation to *actual* others. This makes his account crucially different from accounts according to which the second-person standpoint can be entirely internalized in self-consciousness. Some contemporary proposals with origins in the broadly Kantian tradition (Darwall, 2006; Korsgaard, 2007)[89] suggest that the second-person standpoint is a cognitive capacity that derives from an internal, reflexive process of self-address. Following Haase (2014b, pp. 117–121), I call this approach the Reflexive approach. The Reflexive approach is to be distinguished from the Analytic approach considered in chapter 2 of this dissertation. Rather than to break down the experience in composite mental states, the Reflexive approach ties second-person thought to first-person thought

[89] As Haase and Thompson highlight, this is assessment is about a popular received position in Kant scholarship and does not necessarily also apply to Kant's reflections on practical reason and judgment.

in a single cognitive capacity (cf. Salje, 2016, pp. 817–818). Like the Analytic approach, the Reflexive approach is another way to formulate an anti-distinctivist approach to the second person.

Stephen Darwall's (2006) influential treatise in moral philosophy on '*The Second-Person Standpoint*' is representative for a proposal of the Reflexive approach. Darwall highlights that the second-person standpoint cannot be explained in terms of a combination of first- and third-person regressive attitudes, i.e., as advocates of the Analytic approach such as Peacocke (2014) would have it. However, although Darwall's second-person standpoint is irreducible to a combination of first- and third-person attitudes it can ultimately be traced back to a single mind's cognitive capacity and a form of judgment that is already available to us when we do not turn to actual others in address. On this view, the expressive performance of the address to others is only secondary to the internalized relation of self-address that I maintain with myself. This second-personal relation to myself is what makes me, in a first place, the kind of rational agent that is capable of addressing others with moral demands. As Haase (2014b) puts it in his description of the Reflexive approach:

> "Logically speaking, what I bring to you in the activities of address that require the participation of another is something that is already available to me in solitary activity of critical self-reflection" (Haase, 2014b, p. 121)

For these representatives of contemporary Kantian moral philosophy, the moral judgment from the second-person standpoint is ultimately rooted in an original capacity for self-address. For Darwall, this specific kind of self-address is what makes the meaning of holding someone responsible intelligible to me:

> "[G]enuine obligations can result only from an address that presupposes an addressee's second-personal competence. To intelligibly hold someone responsible, we must assume that she can hold herself responsible in her own reasoning and thought. And to do that she must be able to take up a second person standpoint on herself and make and acknowledge demands on herself from that point of view" (Darwall, 2006, p. 23)

Note that Darwall's argument here is not only about the idea that a rational agent needs to grasp the basic 'autonomy' that comes with the ownership of one's experiential perspective simply by

virtue of existing as an experiencing subject.[90] Rather, it presupposes a more demanding ability to take up "a second-person standpoint on oneself and make and acknowledge demands on herself from that point of view" (Darwall, 2006, p. 23). The critical reflective capacity to take up such a second-person standpoint on myself is what makes my own and other's responsibility intelligible to me.

Those who accuse Husserl of a through and through egocentric framework might think that Husserl, just like the above-mentioned Kantians, ultimately ties second-person thought to first-person thought and thus propagates the same picture of a particular kind of rational, autonomous agent as the Reflexive approach. This, however, is exactly where these interpreters miss out on the achievement of the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity. For one, in contrast to proposals of the Reflexive approach, the Husserlian account grounds all its descriptions in the basic, pre-reflexive foundations of intentional experience and situates the roots of interpersonal understanding in such pre-reflexive, basic forms of intentional other-directedness. Moreover, Husserl's writings on the I-You-relation investigate actual communicative connection with others and the complex motivational and affective intertwinements achieved in second-personal engagement.

What is even more important here, Husserl's remarks on self-responsibility can show that he does not ground the meaning of holding oneself and others responsible in the solipsistic mental activity of self-address. Instead, his work points towards a plural conception of self-responsibility. On this view, self-responsibility is grounded in an experience of the plurality and distinctiveness

[90] This is the kind of perspectival ownership condition that the Husserlian account of self-experience would insist on. For a proposal that reads Husserl's account of second-personal direction in this direction, see Dan Zahavi's recent remarks on a more minimal notion of "perspectival autonomy" (Zahavi, 2023, p. 97) based on his reading of Husserl's account of self-experience and intersubjectivity (Zahavi, 2020).

of the other's experiential perspective. Consider Husserl's account in a reflection on the idea of 'absolute self-responsibility' in *Erste Philosophie. Zweiter Teil* (Hua VIII):

> "[J]ust as the community is not a mere collection of individuals existing externally to and alongside one another, but a synthesis of the individuals through interpersonal intentionality, [which is] a unity instituted through the social living-and-effecting-for-and-in-one-another; accordingly, self-responsibility, the will to self-responsibility, rational reflection on the meaning and the possible paths of such self-responsibility for a community is not a mere sum of the self-responsibilities taking place in the individual persons and so on, but again a synthesis, which precisely intertwines the individual self-responsibilities and establishes an inner unity between them." (Husserl, 2019, pp. 446–447)

In their practical lives, individual subjects are first and foremost already members of a community. Their intentional lives are thus intertwined through interpersonal intentionality. This starting point is crucial for Husserl's reflection on the meaning of responsibility. In other words, Husserl's plural conception of practical self-responsibility has its roots in a constituting intersubjectivity *(konstituierenden Intersubjektivität*). It is not a solipsistic capacity where actual others come into the picture in a secondary step as constituted others (*konstituierte Andere*). I think recognizing this achievement of the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity is important to appreciate first in order to, in a second step, adequately situate and understand its possible shortcomings with respect to the idea of performatively taking responsibility.

With this clarification in place, I now turn back to the claim that the performative force of being addressed by a claim from the other is about a proto-normative moment in experience that requires an account beyond the description of the intentional within-on-another. In the following, I try to articulate how this proto-normative moment of experience goes beyond a description of the intentional affective and motivational intertwinement of our practical lives. The specific dimension of action relevant to grasp this structural moment of experience allows us to oppose others in a specific sense. More precisely, this specific sense of opposing others can account for how it is possible to hold incompatible perspectives on concrete practical issues. This is what

allows us to call out another's actions and responses towards us as wrongs. Highlighting this proto-normative moment in experience is thus important to substantiate the case for why second-personal responsiveness should count as a distinctive aspect of the second-person phenomenon that is not captured by merely emphasizing repulsive or attractive attunement in mutual intersubjective encounters.

5.2 Opposing Others

5.2.1 Being 'Against-One-Another' in Husserl's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

Husserl distinguishes the With/For-One-Another (*das Miteinander*) and the Against-One-Another (*das Gegeneinander*) as two viable modes of interpersonal interaction in second-personal engagement (Husserl, 1973a, p. 477). Yet, there is somewhat of a preference for more co-operative scenarios in his reflections on intersubjectivity, communication and community. This is partly because Husserl sees his reflections on the reciprocal I-You-relation and community to work towards the (infinitely open) ideal of an "absolute self-responsibility" where our interpersonal intertwinements and extensions into one another's responsibilities make it so that "[e]verybody is co-responsible for everybody else and for everybody's decision and actions" (Husserl, 2019, p. 447):

> "Everybody is co-responsible for everybody else and for everybody's decision and actions, albeit in different measure: to the extent that I could ever effect, him now or earlier, him or, in the social plural, a plurality or totality, to this extent I can and must take responsibility" (Husserl, 2019, p. 447)

However, this does not mean that Husserl's descriptions are entirely oblivious to the real possibilities of opposition and conflict. The Against-One-Another (*Gegeneinander*) is, up to a certain degree, a natural part of this striving for absolute self-responsibility. Particularly important is its function to allow us to point out each other's shortcomings and educate one another in our ways of acting. Consider, the continuation of the above passage on universal co-responsibility:

> "On the other hand, in this real and possible nexus it belongs to my self-responsibility that I make the other responsible, that I possibly turn against the violations that he commits against the demand of his self-responsibility or possible self-responsibility." (Husserl, 2019, p. 447)

Although it is certainly true that Husserl does not simply present a naïve, harmonious vision of second-personal engagement[91], I still find that there is something puzzling about the few scenarios which imply conflict and opposition in his work. To illustrate this, I now turn on two passages from '*Gemeingeist I',* his remarks on (1) the master-servant relation and (2) his considerations about the possibilities of resisting and refusing as one party (literally) forces themselves on the other.

A prominent example is the case of the master-servant relation in §3 on 'The Practical Community of Wills' (*Die praktische Willensgemeinschaft*) (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 169–170). On Husserl's account, submitting to someone's will might, without previous communicative intertwinement, often involve (physical) force or threat of painful circumstances. Such "means of coercion (*Zwangsmittel*)" (ibid., p. 169) are then what motivate you to obey me. However, once the habitual intertwinement is established, as is the case in the master-servant relation, the relation of submission attains, on Husserl's description, the character of a more co-operative attunement to one another. The servant (*Diener*), dutiful by disposition, obeys the master *(Herr)* as they form a practical community of wills:

> "Once the relationship is established, every action in which the relationship is actualized, is characterized by the established intertwinement of wills from which both persons originate. I command, as master, he follows 'dutifully' (*'pflichtgemäss'*) as servant, in awareness of having-subjugated-himself (*im Bewusstsein des Sich-unterworfen-habens*), of being subjugated (*Unterworfensein*), and with respect to the consciously dutifully

[91] According to Zahavi's interpretation of Husserl's account of the I-You-relation he would allow that "up to a certain point, relations of conflict or even abuse" would qualify as second-personal (Zahavi, 2023, p. 94).

> execution of his actions (*hinsichtlich des Tuns im Bewusstsein seiner Pflichtgemässheit*)." (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 169–170)

With reference to this example, some commentators on Husserl's phenomenology of communication have highlighted the tendency to immediately resolve any "hint of conflict" (Knoblauch, 1985, p. 46) into habitual, practical communities. The case of the master-servant-relationship can give an initial idea what kind of reflections might be missing in this analysis. However, the shortcoming I am interested in here is not simply about Husserl's neglect to thoroughly theorize the antagonistic nature of our social relations.[92] Rather, I am interested in a particular way in which we can experience that mutual actions are practically incompossible. This gives rise to the dimension of action which I find insufficiently demarcated in Husserl's descriptions. The second passage I have selected from *Gemeingeist I,* on the possibilities of resisting and refusing, can highlight this more concretely.

I find the remarks on the possibilities of resisting and refusing someone's will in §8 on 'The Community of Enjoyment' (*Die Gemeinschaft des Genusses*). As part of a reflection on basic embodied, affective, and motivational intertwinement in second-person experience, Husserl gives a description of sexual enjoyment (*Geschlechtsgenuss*) (Husserl, 1973b, pp. 176–177).[93] In the ideal case, the two parties do not only enjoy by themselves and treat the other as a mere means for

[92] To follow this trajectory, we might want to investigate the intersection of phenomenological approaches and Hegelian analyses of mutual recognition. Influential here is Alexandre Kojève's philosophical anthropological reading of Hegel. Kojève's insistence on the antagonistic nature of human social relation notably influenced Sartre's (Bauer, 2001b; Marmasse, 2013) and Beauvoir's (Bauer, 2001a; Lundgren-Gothlin, 1996) respective adaptations of mutual recognition into a phenomenological framework.

[93] Husserl is not alone with this intuition. Schütz (1967, p. 168), for instance, is likewise convinced that affective and motivational attunement in second-person experience can manifest in a particularly intensive manner in sexual intercourse:

> "Compare, for instance, the knowledge two people have of each other in conversation with the knowledge they have of each other in sexual intercourse. What different degrees of intimacy occur here, what different levels of consciousness are involved! Not only do the partners experience the We more deeply in the one case than in the other, but each experiences himself more deeply and his partner more deeply. It is not only the *object*, therefore, that is experienced with greater or lesser directness; it is the *relationship* itself, the being turned toward the object, the relatedness." (Schutz, 1967, p. 168)

their own enjoyment, but they experience unification in enjoyment. "[T]hey can exist for each other as those who enjoy and strive for enjoyment together and through each other" (Husserl, 1973b, p. 177, my transl.). After outlining the ideal case of matching affective and motivational intertwinement and attunement to each other where the two involved persons form an unanimously and mutually participatory community of enjoyment, Husserl considers cases where the other party does not want the enjoyment and the sexual intercourse is forced against the will of "the other subjectivity" (*die andere Subjektivität*). Interestingly, rather than to reflect on the performative function of the social act 'refusing', Husserl jumps to a description of the different possibilities for the passive, affective and dispositional attitudes of resistance or endurance that the other subjectivity might take up as 'she'[94] is raped or violated[95]:

> „It is possible that the forced party had no wish, but that pleasure grows in submission and incites a wish to be sexually satisfied. It is possible, that no pleasure is felt. Instead, the suffering is bought into (*wird in Kauf genommen*) to avoid greater suffering. It is possible that suffering is born and accepted but not "bought into", finally, that suffering is not even born, but constantly reared up against (*unter ständigem Aufbäumen*). Enduring (*Erdulden*)

[94] In the passage Husserl uses the German third-person singular female personal pronoun 'sie', probably simply because the grammatical gender of the noun 'Subjektivität' is female, 'die'. Given Husserl's other writings on sexual encounters (Elliston, 1981; Husserl, 1981; Oksala, 2004) and the context of the passage, I think it is at the same time fairly clear that what Husserl had in mind here were heterosexual sexual encounters with a woman passively submitting to a man's will – but some may argue otherwise and find this too speculative.

[95] I use 'rape' here because this is effectively what is described. Husserl does not use the word '*Vergewaltigung*' or the at the time more common term '*Notzucht*'. Moreover, the possibilities that 'rape' can also occur inside a marriage, that it can also happen to men, and that one does not have to be a virtuous virgin that "rears up against" the attack to count as a victim and not an accomplice were outside the horizon of the time. I have also added the term 'violated' as an alternative to 'raped'. This reflects Linda Alcoff's (2018) suggestion to use the broader issue 'sexual violence' to reflect cases and experiences that are not recognizable as obvious physical coercive action but still concern "violation of sexual agency, of subjectivity, of our will" (Alcoff, 2018, p. 12). Since going against 'the will' of the partner is how Husserl describes all the nuances he then lists, it is safe to describe them as experiences of sexual violation from the perspective of the "other subjectivity". An expressed awareness of sexual violence as a severe societal problem is absent in Husserl remarks and we might speculate by the tone of the passage that he would in some cases rather suggest that the other subjectivity was complicit and asked for it.

> is a kind of resistance, but it, at the same time, involves dispositional acceptance that lacks the unbroken and unyielding rearing up." (Husserl, 1973b, p. 177, my transl.)

I am, for now, not concerned with possible ethical considerations we might want to amend here. What stands out to me in Husserl's musings is that they are entirely focused on a more dispositional dimension of action. The description is concerned with the motivational and affective intertwinement of the involved parties. In order to suggest that there is something wrong about the scenario of forced sexual 'enjoyment', Husserl diagnoses a severe conflict of values (*Wertwiderstreit*) that "not only lessens the value, but repeals" (Husserl, 1973b, p. 177) the felt value of the one-sided enjoyment.[96]

What is not at all considered in this rough eidetic variation over different possible passive-affective reactions, motivational attitudes and dispositional qualities the forced party might undergo is refusing as a social act. Refusing – whether by verbally saying 'No, you can't do that to me' or non-verbally articulating it through bodily expression – does mark the performance of a social act/speech act that calls for a response. Even though you might physically or otherwise force me to do what you want anyway – and you show that you *can* in fact force yourself on me – *that* I have addressed a claim towards you by expressing my refusal does not simply become practically

[96] Among the early phenomenologists, Max Scheler (2014) is best known for developing the full program of a material ethics of value (*materiale Wertethik*) in opposition to the alleged Kantian formalism that neglects the affective side of felt values in '*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*'. Inga Römer's (2018) monograph '*Das Begehren der reinen praktischen Vernunft'* succinctly covers the basic problem with such a material ethics of value compared to a Kantian framework (cf. Römer, 2018, pp. 220–235). There, she convincingly argues that Husserl's own approach is harder to situate (cf. Römer, 2018, pp. 235–247). In his early work on ethics (Hua 28, '*Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre. 1908-1914'*), Husserl is committed to a more or less theoretical approach towards a formal and material axiologoy, i.e., a science of values, that is *a priori* valid. There is a significant shift towards instead thinking his approach from a more sophisticated conception of the person as loving and reasonable in his later work. While it is still formulated in the concepts of a value ethics Römer finds "a *certain opening towards an ethics of the always-my-own rational desire [jemeiniges vernünftiges Begehren] under the conditions of genuine plurality of persons*" (Römer, 2018, p. 247, my transl.) in Husserl's later work (Hua 37, '*Einleitung in die Ethik. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1920 und 1924*').

meaningless when you ignore my act of refusal and deny it uptake. The normative force of the claim is in the performance of the social act 'refusal' itself and cannot be properly understood through a description of the underlying foundational motivational and dispositional qualities of the experience.

In order to fully appreciate that this incompatibility of two practical stances is a distinct way of conceiving of mutual actions as incompossible, I will next consider Matthias Haase's account of three different ways in which we can think about mutual actions as incompatible with one another. I then highlight that Husserl's account in *Gemeingeist I* either neglects the dimension that is most distinctive for second-personal responsiveness or blends it together with the other dimensions of action and agency so that the distinctive import of the second-person relation and our practical responsiveness towards each other is blurred.

5.2.2 Three Ways to Think about Mutual Actions as Incompossible

In his article 'For Oneself and Toward Another: The Puzzle about Recognition' Matthias Haase (2014b) uses a somewhat less ethically volatile example to highlight the specific dimension of action that, on his view, warrants a distinctivist and Dialogical approach to the second person. To do so, he considers the question 'What is it to oppose a wrong?' and imagines a scenario where the protagonists Smith and Wesson both want to claim the last remaining apple on a tree. What interests Haase about this scenario are three different ways in which the conflict might come to their consciousness:

> "Their actions are incompossible in that only one of them can reach completion. Such a thing might happen without either of the two being aware of the other. Each might be minding their own business, unsuspecting of the conflicting force at work in reality. When the conflict comes to consciousness, it can enter their practical thinking in different ways. These different ways of representing conflict in thought constitute different shapes that the incompossibility between actions can take in material reality." (Haase, 2014b, p. 132)

Based on this scenario, Haase considers three ways in which we can think about mutual action as incompossible. Each is demarcated by Smith voicing her protest to Wesson's pursuit of the last apple in a different way. Here are the three ways in which the scene could play out. Smith may respond in one of the following ways:

(1) "No, you aren't. For I am going to stop you!"
(2) "Don't do that to me. I'll teach you a lesson!"
(3) "You can't do that, it's mine."

In (1) the first case Smith and Wesson (Haase, 2014b, pp. 133–134) both go for the apple, but they are not having a mutual race. Neither of them is aware of the approaching conflict. As they get closer to the tree, Smith recognizes Wesson and a quick exchange of words establishes the conflict. Smith asks 'What are you doing?' and Wesson may respond 'I'm getting the apple from that tree'. This is the cue for Smith to voice her protest and oppose this action by saying 'No you aren't, for I'm going to stop you'.

An analysis of this way of opposing Wesson's action makes apparent that Smith's opposition only holds as long as the action is still in progress. Expressed in this way, the protest is meaningful as long as Wesson's progressive action 'I'm φ-ing' holds. As soon as Wesson succeeds and triumphantly holds up the apple and says 'I got it', i.e., 'I φed', her act of protest "*falls to the ground*" (Haase, 2014b, p. 134): "What is already done cannot be stopped – no more than one can decide, plan or intend to do it" (ibid.). The material facts established by Wesson completing the action of getting the apple have resolved the conflict in this dimension of action. In this way of becoming conscious, the opposition does not concern two genuinely opposing practical stances but a material state-of-affairs (*Sachlage*).

It seems to me that this is the dimension of action at play in Husserl's description of the role of coercion (*Zwang*) in establishing the master-servant relation. He imagines that the future

servant's obedience of the master's orders is initially insured through physical force or threat of pain. The servant is confronted with a state-of-affairs where he cannot do much to stop the master's action. Once the servant's obedience is established by these material facts there is, on this account, nothing to protest anymore.

In the second case (2), Smith may express her opposition by saying 'Don't do that to me! I'll teach you a lesson!'. This could still be uttered after Wesson has claimed the apple. Here, what Smith's utterance expresses is an evaluation of Wesson's general way of acting that is reflected in this particular pursuit of the apple. Smith's call aims to educate and to sanction this kind of behavior in a way that is not restricted to this particular pursuit of the apple. Her opposition is about Wesson's habitual way of acting. She is upset that he, by disposition, does not mind her. As Haase insightfully remarks, an opposition in this department could mean that "they will be locked in conflict forever" (Haase, 2014b, p. 135).[97]

This habitual and dispositional dimension of action features most prominently in Husserl's account. This dimension of action matches the nuanced descriptions of affective and motivational interpersonal intertwinement in the respective passages in *Gemeingeist I*. What is more, there is a tendency to resolve cases which hint at a possible conflict into an opportunity for us to mutually educate each other in our ways of acting.[98] Consider again the brief mention of the against-one-another in our communal pursuit for absolute self-responsibility. Here, "making the other

[97] These 'eternal conflicts' about our ways of acting are sometimes the basis of a constitutive, infinite competitiveness and antagonism at the heart of some close social relationships. Siblings and some couples might intentionally arrange such scenarios for their partner as an opportunity to humiliate or establish superiority over the other while striving for the other's admiration in an endless struggle. Smith might get a lot of gratification out of having set up a scenario where Wesson grabs the apple in front of her, as it gives her an opportunity to reprimand and humiliate him for never minding her, and so on (Haase, 2014b, p. 135).

[98] See (Schuhmann, 1988, pp. 161–180) for a more elaborate assessment of how the idea of mutual education (*Erziehung*) features in Husser's reflection of absolute self-responsibility and his account of the ideal teleological striving for pure humanity.

responsible" means to "turn against the violations that he commits against the demands of his responsibility or possible self-responsibility" (Husserl, 2019, p. 447), i.e., it is oriented towards guiding and educating the other on his way to act in a more self-responsible manner.

It is the third case (3) where Smith says 'You can't do that, it's mine' and Wesson might taunt back 'Oh, I can, you just wait and see!' that highlights the dimension of action that I find insufficiently demarcated in Husserl's account. This case highlights that we often oppose each other in our practical stances towards a specific issue in such a way that it is impossible to affirm both poles. As already shown, Wesson *can* very well materially succeed in claiming the apple. However, even if that is the case, Smith's call to stop Wesson does not become practically meaningless. Smith's call to stop is an act of protesting what Wesson is about to do does a wrong by Smith. Afterall, the apple belongs to her. Smith does not "merely oppose Wesson's way of acting; rather she *opposes it as a wrong*" (Haase, 2014b, p. 136). This is not resolved by determining who effectively grabbed the apple, or by granting that Wesson's deed did eventually teach Smith a valuable lesson to build her character. As Haase diagnoses: "There is a *present* practical issue concerning the particular apple that has been taken. And it is not enough to just let go of it" (Haase, 2014b, p. 138).

My argument is that this third dimension of action correlates with the "very specific sort of responsiveness to the force of normative claims" (Crowell, 2015, p. 572) that Steven Crowell diagnoses as missing in the Husserlian account of intentional acts of communication. However, before considering ways to attend to this dimension while maintaining a phenomenological method, I first want to point out how this dimension of action can be formally demarcated by reflection on grammatical form and ordinary language and the inherent normativity in certain (human) practices. I believe that this is helpful to fully appreciate why it is important to understand second-personal responsiveness as concerning this particular dimension of action. I argue that it is

crucial to conceptually and analytically distinguish second-personal responsiveness, that pertains to the meeting of practical stances about concrete practical issues, from any underlying foundational affective and motivational responsive orientation towards one another. This does not have to contradict the insight established in the previous chapter that these more basic intersubjective intertwinements play an important part in how we qualitatively experience second-person encounters.

5.3 Grammar and Ordinary Language: Stopping Modals and Acknowledging

By drawing on Haase's imagined scenario, I have, in a first step, attempted to make the relevant dimension of action for second-personal responsiveness intuitively plausible. In this section, I want to motivate the demarcation from a more methodological perspective. First, I outline the theoretical background of Haase's proposals in Anscombe's (1978) work on so-called *stopping modals* and the self-referentiality of rules, rights and promises. Then, I turn to Cavell's (2002) reflection on difference between failing to know something and failing to acknowledge something. I take his work on *acknowledging* to offer a related but more existential perspective on the dimension of action in question. I find Cavell's account particularly helpful to understand the relation between more foundational affective and motivational, reciprocally responsive intertwinements between persons and the specific second-person responsiveness in question where we are actually confronted with and addressed by the claims and appeals of others.[99]

[99] The words claim and appeal would both translate to *'Anspruch'* in German. The German word has a somewhat double-layered meaning that is important to understand the responsive interpretation of phenomenology developed in German phenomenology (see section 4 in this chapter). The noun *'Anspruch'* has the meaning of 'normative claim', i.e., a legal, moral, etc. claim (*der rechtliche, moralische, etc. Anspruch*) but it is also the noun of the verb *'ansprechen'*, which translates as 'to address' (literally the word is composed of the prefix '*an-' (engl. to)* and the stem verb '*sprechen' (engl. speak)*. Appeal might somewhat better convey both these layers of meaning.

5.3.1 A Point from Grammatical Form: Stopping Modals and Practical Necessity

On Haase's account, it is the grammatical structure that Elizabeth Anscombe (1978) calls stopping modals that can play a pivotal part in highlighting the specific dimension of action that warrants an inquiry of the second person as a philosophically significant phenomenon. Stopping modals concern a type of speech that is "by itself, an act of opposing the other's action" (Haase, 2014b, p. 137). As Anscombe herself illustrates the idea: "If I say 'You can't wear that!' and it's not, for example, that you are too fat to get it on, that's what I call a stopping modal" (Anscombe, 1978, p. 321).

It is the use of linguistic expressions such as 'You can't do that, it is mine' or 'You can't wear that' that constitutes the act of stopping. The necessity expressed in this specific way of using modal verbs like 'can/cannot' and 'must/must not' is of a peculiar kind for it is neither about a logical or physical necessity. Compare this to other uses of modal verbs where the corresponding proposition can be verified if the expressed state of affairs actually is the case, like in 'It *must* be in this drawer!', or if it will be the case in the future, as with 'So and so can't but win!' (Anscombe, 1978, p. 321). By contrast, the use of a stopping modals, i.e., 'you can't φ', and their counterpart forcing modals, i.e., 'you must φ', is entirely compatible with the idea that you very well physically and logically *can or cannot* wear that or do that to/for me.

Stopping modals and practices that make use of analogous linguistic instruments, as Anscombe demonstrates for rules, rights and promises, display a characteristic self-referentiality where the prescription, i.e., 'You can't', and the justification, i.e., 'It's Ns', are interdependent and only obtain their specific meaning in relation to one another.[100] Recent engagements with Anscombe's

[100] I will not have space here to give the analogous argument for promises, rules and rights. See (Nieswandt, 2017) for an attempt to systematically reconstruct this point from Anscombe's essays. Analogous to stopping modals, a promise is essentially about putting a specific linguistic instrument, 'I hereby promise',

essays on rules, rights and promises have worked to provide a more systemic account of the kind of practical necessity at stake in these linguistic practices. The general idea is that Anscombe's argument by analogy for the necessity at stake with stopping modals, rules, rights, and promises hinges on the self-referential nature of these practices. Katharina Nieswandt (2017), for instance, suggests that "[t]he necessity that such modals express is of its own kind; it is the necessity to act in accordance with the prescription because of the prescription" (Nieswandt, 2017, p. 148). As an example for this self-referentiality, Anscombe draws our attention to how the use of stopping and forcing modals to communicate about the rules is second nature to us when we play games. While playing a game of chess we might say things such as 'You can't move your pawn there', 'You can't move your knight like this', or 'You have to move your king'. This illustrates the peculiar necessity in question. Quite obviously, you can physically leave your king there or invent a different logic for moving the pieces – but then we are not playing chess or disagree about the practice in such an incompossible manner that we have to find a resolution for the issues at stake if we want to continue playing.

The self-referential nature of practices in which we make use of such linguistic instruments and their peculiar necessity becomes even more apparent when we consider a developmental

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in front of a prediction in the future tense. This makes it so that it is an offence to not make the attached prescription come true. The content of the promise and the act of uttering the formula 'I hereby promise' are interdependent. So that "[a]ny definition of the concept 'promise' will have to mention promises again, as will any justification for why promises (can) bind us" (Nieswandt, 2017, p. 144). Or, as Anscombe formalizes for the more abstract linguistic practice 'blipping':

> "Or, because we know it too well, let's invent one: 'I blip.' It's not the *prediction* by itself that it's an offence not to make come true, it's the 'blipping' of it, or its being a blip. And what is the meaning of its being a blip? That it's an offence not to make the attached description come true. But *what* offence? The offence of going contrary to a blip." (Anscombe, 1978, p. 320)

Similarly, the necessity of the rule expressed by a sign that prohibit to turn left is brought into existence by that very sign and the rule as its content (Nieswandt, 2017, pp. 145–146). With rights, someone's right to their wage (Nieswandt, 2017, pp. 146–147) is about more than prompting the employer to give them money or the employer traditionally giving them money. The necessity concerns their right to the wage itself.

perspective. Anscombe considers how we teach very small children to play very simple games. This might in a first instance involve physically stopping the child from doing what the adult says they 'can't do'. However, the adult will gradually work towards merely instructing the child verbally until at some point the words used "become themselves instruments of getting and preventing action" (Anscombe, 1978, p. 321). They then work in the self-referential manner that marks the practical necessity in question.

> "Think of the game played with very small children where several players pile their hands on top of one another. Then, if one of them doesn't pull his hand out from the bottom, you say 'You have to put your hand on top it' if he pulls it out too soon you say 'No, you can't pull it out yet, so and so has to pull his out first'. 'You have to,' and 'you can't' are at first, words used by one who is making you do something (or preventing you), and they quickly become themselves instruments of getting and preventing action." (Anscombe, 1978, p. 321)

The focus on language dependent instruments here might seem controversial to many contemporary phenomenologists. Phenomenologists such as Dieter Lohmar (2016a, 2017) have convincingly highlighted that not all our thinking is governed by language and that some theorists after the linguistic turn might have gotten a bit overexcited about the influence of language to understand human cognition and thinking. However, I think that he would not necessarily have to disagree with Anscombe's restricted claim about the language dependence of particular entities such as promising. Quite often language *is* an important instrument for thinking although it might not exhaust all possibilities of human cognition.

Moreover, because the Anscombian perspective clearly identifies the kind of entities that originate from language dependent practices, it allows us to clearly designate where the idea of 'original communicative uptake' becomes relevant in our social lives. A particularly relevant case, where linguistically expressed second-personal address is crucial, are our practices of giving and withdrawing consent. Consider Haase's description of the importance of such practices to understand the right I have against you with respect to my own body:

> "If the right I have against you with respect to my limbs is not to turn into a peculiar monadic duty that I have – for instance, to never let you touch me – then the account of what you owe to me has to make space for the possibility of my giving consent and perhaps later withdrawing it. I can let you stand on my foot or move my arm. I might like how it feels. Perhaps I don't enjoy it per se, but may still want you to try, as I enjoy wrestling you or pursue some end that involves it. Maybe I just want to compete." (Haase, 2014b, p. 141)

Consenting or withdrawing consent will in virtually all cases require more than going by the other's primitive expression of pleasure and pain and our feelings of intimate affective and motivational attunement with others. It will typically involve linguistic signs of consent (ibid.). Interestingly, introducing practices of giving and withdrawing consent is a particular challenge with partnered physical activities that naturally rely on a certain pre-reflexive attunement to one another to function smoothly – such as having partnered sex. In this sense, the example chosen by Husserl in his description of the community of enjoyment might have been a particularly tricky case to pick.

Nonetheless, it might be exactly such cases that are particularly interesting to revisit from a phenomenological perspective. In line with what I have suggested in the previous chapter about transformative communicative communities, such work could connect to contemporary philosophical work on the meaning of good sex (Angel, 2021; Garcia, 2023; Q. R. Kukla, 2023). In such approaches, consenting is not understood in a legal sense. Rather, the suggestions highlight a conception of practices of consent that are about more than mere contractual, affirmative consent by saying the words 'Yes' or 'No'. By engaging with one another in an acknowledging and communicatively responsive manner, we can work towards the active expression of desires and fantasies to each other. This may involve a combination of linguistic and non-verbal expressions,

for instance, 'Please touch me like this', or 'Try this'.[101] In order to revisit the intuition that sexual encounters are somehow relevant to understand intimacy as an important aspect of the second-person phenomenon[102], this literature would be an important starting point for a more elaborate account of the overlap between linguistic and non-linguistic elements in practices of consent.

To do so, it is particularly important and interesting form a phenomenological perspective to understand the link between specific dimension of action that concerns second-person responsiveness proper and its foundation in affective and motivational attunement. In this direction, Stanley Cavell's work on the meaning of acknowledging provides an important perspective to motivate the distinction between second-personal responsiveness proper and more basic affective intentional intertwinements.

5.3.2 Acknowledging and Foundational Affective and Motivational Intertwinements

Another way to mark the specific sphere of action which originally concerns second-personal responsiveness is to consider the concept of acknowledging. In his essay *Knowing and Acknowledging*, Stanley Cavell (2002) distinguishes acknowledging (*anerkennen*) from thing-

[101] Under the heading 'Sex as a Conversation', Garcia (2023, pp. 186–217) suggests that "the solution to good sex is to be found not in the exchange of consents once and for all but in a conversation between consenting subject about their consent" (Garcia, 2023, p. 201). Kukla (2023) proposes to think about initiations of sex as invitations. Both also consider "the rather complex BDSM practice of voluntary temporary nonconsent" (Garcia, 2023, p. 203). They do not want to propose BDSM as a "straightforward model for how to practice egalitarian sex" (Garcia, 2022, p. 438) but rather as a "magnifying glass [..] to the tension, inherent to all sexual practice, between risk mitigation and the desire to relinquish control in the exploration of fantasies" (Garcia, 2022, p. 444).

[102] This intuition is not only articulated by Husserl and Schütz but seems a more or less implicit aspect in other works in the dialogical tradition from Fichte to Buber and Levinas. All of them base their account more or less explicitly on the patriarchal idea that the most perfect union of two persons in sexual intercourse will be achieved when the woman's passive capacity for love complements the satisfaction of male desire (in marriage). Revisiting with contemporary feminist literature might have the neat side effect that we can engage with suggestions on how to introduce practices of consent so that the idea of good sex involves actual mutual enjoyment.

oriented (*sachorientiert*) knowing (*erkennen*).[103] The difference becomes particularly salient when we consider what it means when we speak of a 'failure to know' vs. a 'failure to acknowledge':

> "A 'failure to know' might just mean a piece of ignorance, an absence of something, a blank. A 'failure to acknowledge' is the presence of something, a confusion, an indifference, a callousness, an exhaustion, a coldness." (Cavell, 2002, p. 243)

When we reflect on failures to acknowledge we are concerned with the proto-normative moment of experience I am concerned with in this chapter. Cavell highlights that the responsiveness at stake in acknowledgment is not restricted to affirmative responses to the actions and claims of another. In most communicative situations, it is perfectly normal to respond with a negation such as 'No, I don't want to do this' or 'No, I don't believe you' without this constituting a failure to acknowledge. After considering the grammar of stopping modals, this observation should not come as a surprise.

My reason for drawing attention to Cavell's work on acknowledging at this point is that I think he provides an important link to the phenomenological method. Cavell self-describes his concept to function like "the sort of concept Heidegger calls an *existentiale*" (Cavell, 2002, p. 243). As an existential category, "[a]cknowledgment is not a description of a given response but a category in terms of which a given response is evaluated." (Cavell, 2002, p. 243). Interestingly, he highlights

[103] The English term 'recognition' can mean both the mere act of identifying a thing (*erkennen*) and the normative process where we recognize someone as a person in some capacity (*anerkennen*). With the latter we are concerned with questions of how we treat others and in which capacity we recognize them. The German term 'Anerkennung' is often translated with recognition. (Recognition theory typically targets recognition in the latter practical, normative sense.) By using the term 'acknowledging', Cavell outlines an approach that insists that knowing and identifying others, on the one hand, and normatively acknowledging them, on the other hand, do not concern a continuous problem set. Treating knowing and acknowledging as notions on a continuous spectrum might make us think that acknowledging is merely a downstream issue. We add a normative attitude of respect in a second step after establishing how we gain basic epistemic access to other minds. Rather, the focus on 'acknowledging' implies a set of problems about the normativity of acknowledging that deserves distinguished treatment. This set of problems is typically not captured by the kind of question we ask when we are primarily occupied with the problem of our epistemic access to other minds.

the plurality of possible responses that we evaluate in terms of acknowledgement by considering the underlying affective and motivational stances.

Consider Cavell's reflections on the sentence 'I know you are in pain' (Cavell, 2002, p. 242). He points out that the use of expressions about pain as expressions of certainty are pretty special, so that philosopher's overexcitement over this special case has skewed the picture. He draws attention to the second-person case, which he finds oddly neglected in the analytic discussions of what it means to know someone's pain. Cavell observes that when we say 'I know you are in pain' we usually do not mean to express our certainty about a statement of facts. Rather, we might want to convey something like 'I know what you are going through' and 'I have done all I can'. In order to acknowledge someone's suffering, we express our sympathy. The response expressed in the sentence 'I know you are in pain' thus falls under the existential category of acknowledgment rather than an expression of certainty about something.

In a second step, Cavell makes clear that such an attitude of sympathy towards the other is only one way to responds to the other's pain. Responses as acknowledgments are not necessarily affirmative responses. We might very well imagine a scenario where someone inflects the sentence 'I know you are in pain' in a different tone, for instance in anger, exasperation, or glee. If inflected in a particular tone, the response 'I know you are in pain' can just as well express an indifferent and cold 'I told you so'. All of these possibilities are the kind of responses that we evaluate under the heading of acknowledgment. Some of the latter possibilities are typically what we mean when we say that someone failed to acknowledge our suffering.

Despite the importance of the underlying affective and motivational responsiveness towards the other, it is important to understand that the underlying feelings of sympathy, anger or exasperation alone are not enough to stand in a second-personal responsive relation towards the other. This requires us to enter the dimension of action where we necessarily address claims to

each other and thus make use of acknowledging as a category where we can evaluate a given response to a present practical issue.

In his later essay 'Notes on Empathy', Cavell gives an example that shows that we can experience affective responsiveness towards us in a unilateral manner. He gives the description of a woman who has been wrongly convicted for a crime and after her release becomes a public sensation on TV:

> "[I]n the course of watching an interview aired on the evening national news of a distinctly self-possessed and charming woman of a certain age who had just been released after serving seven years of imprisonment for a crime she had not committed, and who in the course of her responses to questions at one juncture memorably replied, "People have been quite empathetic toward me." (Cavell, 2022b, p. 179)

What the woman feels here and expresses in the third person are clearly "expressions of concern and gestures of solace" (Cavell, 2022b, p. 179) that have come her way and make her feel validated. However, the concrete wrong that was done to her gets swept up in the public wave of sympathy. This does not mean that we have to discredit the experience of such immediate affective responses outright.[104] However, Cavell's point here is that in this scenario it is rather hard to enter a relation of acknowledging that involves second-personal responsiveness proper.

> "My immediate response to this perfect use of the concept was to form the thought: Who would dare to say to her, in the active mode, "I empathize with you," even if one felt in the moment stricken in facing her?" (Cavell, 2022b, p. 179)

[104] What does it mean for an underlying affective attitude to be fitting? What for it to be appropriate? In order to understand how we evaluate responses under the heading of acknowledging, Cavell's account would have to be supplemented by more detailed works on affectivity and emotions in the recent phenomenological literature on sociality. See Szanto (2021) on the importance of distinguishing fittingness and appropriateness of the underlying affective responses. See also (Szanto & Tietjen, forthcoming) for a helpful taxonomy to understand the appropriateness of political and group-based emotion, which might apply to assess the case of the public sympathy of the victim of legal injustice in Cavell's example.

We could extend the case and imagine a reporter who might have ridiculed the woman a couple of years ago when she was convicted and used her case to gain follower for their True Crime podcast. If the reporter then has the courage to go up to her to say 'I apologize to you. I am sorry for what you had to suffer' with an underlying empathetic attitude of concern and remorse. They enter in a more specific practical relation of acknowledging where they can now address a concrete wrong. If all goes well, this may be a first step to work towards a process of forgiveness. What comes into play when we enter such a second-personally responsive relation of expressed acknowledgment is a practical attitude.

> "[A]cknowledgment 'goes beyond' knowledge, not in the order, or as a feat, of cognition, but in the call upon me to express the knowledge at its core, to recognize what I know, to do something in the light of it, apart from which this knowledge remains without expression, hence perhaps without possession." (Cavell, 1979, p. 428)

Importantly, this is not a higher-order cognitive capacity that overrides our affectively felt responses. What goes on when we address another, for example to apologize, is ideally in sync with an underlying affective response. Thus, acknowledging, understood in this way, cuts across the affective vs. cognitive response divide. Acknowledging is the practical attitude that is necessary to address concrete practical issues in a first place.

5.3.3 Insights for Phenomenological Inquiries

What insights can a phenomenological approach to second-personal responsiveness gain from these approaches in the philosophy of language? Let me sum up the most important points from what I have introduced in this section. Firstly, the reflection of stopping modals makes the language dependence of the particular dimension of action in question plausible. Such an approach insists on the need to actually address one another to develop the linguistic instruments needed to the create the practical necessities in question. This is useful to understand Karl Mertens' brief assessment that Husserl might miss out on the original meaning-making important from

communicative exchange and the interdependence of consciousness and language better. An advantage of the approach from grammatical form is that it allows us to precisely target the claim about language dependence and restrict it to particular practical entities such as stopping modals, practices of consent, rights and promises.

Secondly, Cavell's reflections on acknowledging highlight the importance of the 'practical-performative' nature of our relation to others that was flagged as a lacuna in Husserl's account by Waldenfels and Crowell. Their concerns can be translated to the more precise idea that Husserl does either not fully appreciate that acknowledging is a necessary existential dimension to evaluate a given response or that he at least blurs the line between underlying other-oriented attitudes and the experience of intentional intertwinement with one another and attending to the inherent incompossibility of practical stances in the kind of conflicts at stake with failures to acknowledge.

In this section, I have used pointers from grammatical form (Anscombe) and ordinary language (Cavell) to clearly demarcate second-personal responsiveness proper from foundational affective and motivational intentional intertwinements. It is in the dimension of action, where we address claims and appeals towards an other, that we come to understand and evaluate failures to acknowledge concrete practical issues at stake between us. For the remainder of the chapter, I want to point out, how we can approach second-personal responsiveness with a phenomenological approach and where it may complement the approach from grammatical form and ordinary language. I show that a phenomenological approach to the normativity of second-personal responsiveness is concerned with articulating it as a structural moment of experience. Like in the previous chapter, the difference in method is between a more formal approach to normativity in philosophy of language and the phenomenological approach to study normativity as a qualitative moment of experience. Moreover, I argue that a phenomenological approach can highlight that second-personal responsiveness is grounded in the plural intertwinements of a manifold of subjects

and not a result of individual affective, motivational, or cognitive achievements. In this department, approaches from philosophy of language have a tendency to implicitly endorse a more individualistic account of our capacities for self-expression. – partially due to the tradition they engage with.[105]

5.4 Phenomenological Contributions: Second-Personal Responsiveness and Asymmetrical Intersubjectivity

The more formal approach from grammatical form (Anscombe) and ordinary language (Cavell) comes with some advantages to demarcate the appropriate dimension of action in question with second-personal responsiveness. What can a phenomenological approach add and contribute to these insights? Both the phenomenological line of critique, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, and the approaches from philosophy of language outlined above connect the performativity of acts of second-personal address to a (proto)-normative structure that pays specific attention to our responsiveness to the claims and appeals of others. According to the phenomenological approach, this does not only indicate a formal feature, i.e., the self-referential nature of certain linguistic practices, but is first and foremost an experience of normativity, namely the experience of 'being addressed by a claim'. Here again, we find a tension between a more formal approach that justifies the grounds of the proto-normative dynamic relative to an external reference point and the phenomenological ambition to ground the justification in experience.

To answer the question what ultimately grounds the necessity of entities such as stopping modals, practices such as promising or interpersonal dynamics such as acknowledging, both

[105] Anscombe's main opponent is an empiricism that only know the particular individual subject. Cavell famously struggles against other mind scepticism in this essay 'Knowing and Acknowledging' which leads to a rather complex argument until he gets to articulate his reflection on acknowledging as I have sketched them above.

Anscombe and Cavell, refer us to "a necessary task in human life" (Nieswandt, 2017, p. 145), "human need" (Anscombe, 1981, pp. 136, 145, 155) or a "human gesture […] before the depth of the mystery of human separateness" (Cavell, 2022b, p. 180). Both see a need to further justify the original necessity of the dimension of action and practice in question. This is a particularly pressing question given that this dimension of action is contingent on humans actualizing it. For Cavell, the fact that we *can* outright deny the call to respond is expression of a "human wish to deny responsibility for speech" (Cavell, 2022a, p. 144) and "to deny the humanity of others (hence of oneself)" (Cavell, 2022a, p. 249). We can read this as the claim that necessity of acknowledging is ultimately again dependent on us recognizing something about our 'shared humanity' or form of life. The problem with this is, as Haase diagnoses for Anscombe's preferred solution, that "[i]f one takes the relevant […] human needs to be something the agent can cognize independently of standing in a relation of mutual address to other, then the account is as monological" (Haase, 2014b, p. 146) as the Analytic or Reflexive approach. The risk with pointing to the recognition of something about our shared humanity and form of life is that we view the practical necessity again as an individual cognitive achievement and not as an actual response to the appeals and claims of the other with origins in the actual scene of address.

The challenge is therefore to ground the structure that gives rise to the dimension of action where we can oppose another's action as wrong not in "the self-constitution of an individual agent, but as *originally* the constitution of a manifold of subjects related to each other" (Haase, 2014b, p. 146). It is here, that I think the phenomenological exploration of alterity and plurality has an interesting approach to a solution to offer. A phenomenological description allows us to understand the necessity of acknowledging in the Cavellian sense as an original experience of normativity in the face of the other.

Where the approaches from philosophy of language ground this original necessity in a further argument about the human form of life and the necessary practices associated with it, phenomenologists look for such a justification in a foundational experience of normativity. As this experience does not operate on the level of concrete 'oughts' and does not operate on the level of deonticity proper, it is often referred to as a proto-normative structural moment of experience. The claim is that we can, in fact, have a qualitatively felt access to the idea that "[n]ormativity as such […] entails universality" (Crowell, 2013, p. 235) that comes before any concrete practice of reason-giving to justify the relative Good of a practice (ibid.). These phenomenologist propose that the gap of justification, identified correctly by Anscombe and Cavell, concerns an experience of the "normative excess of the other" (Bedorf, 2010, p. 136, my transl.). As I will outline in more detail in the next chapter, paying attention to this normative excess of the other requires to understand intersubjectivity as an inherently asymmetrical notion.

The theoretical groundwork for such an asymmetrical account of intersubjectivity has been laid out in the works of Levinas, Derrida and Waldenfels.[106] I will not be able to attend to this literature in detail in this dissertation. Instead, I will introduce a selected set of concepts and descriptions to get the general line of inquiry in this trajectory in phenomenological research across. A phenomenological approach that attends to the normative excess of the other and the primacy of demand and appeal by the other follows a responsive interpretation of intentionality (Waldenfels, 2003). This responsivity to claim and appeal of the other is revealed as a structural feature of experience. The qualitative experience of normativity in question is a foundational experience of

[106] There are several complicated interpretative issues attached to these approaches. For instance, how to understand Levinas notion of the Third and its link to the idea of justice and the downstream question how this rather abstract reflection might be of institutional or political relevance (Buddeberg, 2016; Delhom, 2000). Waldenfels himself is inspired by Levinas and Derrida and draws on a hard to untangle synthesis of their work.

the alterity of the other. This experience of alterity cannot be incorporated in our unfolding horizons of meaning, as it is possible with underlying motivational and affective intentional attitudes towards the other's experiential life. Intersubjectivity in a responsive reading of intentionality is thus always asymmetrical intersubjectivity that answer to the appeal of the other's alterity.

To make the idea of such a foundational experience of alterity somewhat more concrete, it is helpful to distinguish two forms of alterity. I here draw on Thomas Bedorf's distinction between primary and secondary alterity (Bedorf, 2010, pp. 139–149) because it allows for a clear articulation of how Levinas' abstract idea of an infinite and absolute alterity relates to our everyday social experience. First, I try to articulate the qualitative experience at stake with each form. Based on the interplay of the primary, absolute form of alterity and secondary, social form of alterity, we can then understand the phenomenological justification for the normativity of being addressed by the claim and appeal of the other.

Primary alterity concerns an experience of infinite and absolute alterity. This is what Levinas calls the experience of 'the face' that persists. Famously, he articulates this with the description of the face of the other that even resists murder. Even though you can factually kill me or do other injustice by me, the primary experience of the demand does not die. This proto-normative experience of absolute alterity cannot be fully grasped linguistically, conceptually, or practically (Bedorf, 2010, p. 139). Or, as Crowell assesses, "the fundamental experience in which the other is given to me cannot be a perceptual one, no matter how broadly perception is construed. The face 'is neither seen nor touched' (TI: 194) but *obeyed* or 'welcomed'" (Crowell, 2015, p. 579).

Secondary alterity concerns "the social alterity with which we ordinarily and in the social sciences in theory operate" (Bedorf, p. 129, my transl.).[107] This secondary alterity is something we experience as the inevitability of responding. Consider the social act of asking questions. I have just arrived in a big city and ask someone for the way. This someone can describe this as a matter of fact and report what I said: 'You have asked me for the way'. This, however, does not answer the normative appeal that makes the situation a communicative situation in first place. I am lost in the city and will have to rely on your answer by hearsay. There is no guarantee that you will respond in a responsive manner or provide me with a trustworthy answer. However, viewed as a relation of responsivity, my appeal to you puts us in a relation where you cannot not respond (Waldenfels, 2003, p. 33); even if you choose to not give me the information I ask for or to only give me a vague, practically useless description because you cannot be bothered.

In practice, we will always experience these two moments of alterity, primary and secondary alterity, in intertwinement. While we are always thrown into situations of social alterity, the primary absolute alterity of the other is never reducible to social alterity. The normative excess of the other has its origins in the fact that there is always something beyond the social roles, social identities and public personas which we confer to the other to integrate them in our intentional horizons. It is in this interplay of primary and secondary alterity that we experience our own subject position as the position of someone who is addressed. It is this experience of a subjectivity in the accusative that is the phenomenological justification for the necessary normativity of the appeals, claims and demands that others address towards me.

An advantage of the phenomenological approach is that it pays attention to intersubjective constitution as a basic structural feature of experience. By contrast, both Anscombe and Cavell

[107] This is the level of analysis targeted in Waldenfels (2003) calls the alien (*das Fremde*).

inherit the struggle against the dominant individualism in their tradition and need to justify why the intersubjective perspective should matter at all. As Haase himself diagnoses for Anscombe, the idea that the practical necessity in question is "originally the constitution of a manifold of subjects related to each other" (Haase, 2014b, p. 146) more difficult to grasp.[108] Both Anscombe and Cavell thus struggle to reflect on the underlying intersubjective constitution of a subjectivity that is in a primary and basic sense always related to others. This would have helped to emphasize and further justify the risky and preliminary character of acknowledging that is central and compelling in Cavell's analysis.

Moreover, an approach to the phenomenological method that insists on a responsive interpretation of intersubjectivity might leave the meaning of what constitutes "humane" and "inhumane" responses more open. It can thus further highlight the risky and preliminary character of acknowledging at the heart of Cavell's approach. In response to Cavell, Thomas Bedorf (2010, p. 144) suggest that a responsive interpretation of intersubjectivity leaves it open what 'humane' and 'inhumane' behavior as a choice of action mean. Such an approach avoids the search for a "shared universal human residuum" that remains even in cases of dehumanizing treatment (ibid.). Rather, what resists and remains is a responsibility that does not go away even if we choose the inhumane deed (Bedorf, 2010, p. 144). "Even an inhumane answer remains an answer to a claim, that we did not make ourselves and that because of this cannot be rejected" (Bedorf, 2010, p. 144, my transl.). In this sense, even the most dehumanizing, callous response remain in Cavell's words "the presence of something" – this something is in phenomenological terms an experience of the normative excess of the other and is grounded in the asymmetrical nature of intersubjectivity.

[108] For Haase, the solution to consider a manifold of subjects from the start is a Hegelian approach to ethical life.

5.5 Second-Personal Responsiveness as a Proto-Normative Moment in Experience

To conclude this chapter, I want to reiterate and highlight why it matters to demarcate the proto-normative moment at stake with second-personal responsiveness. I have shown that, while Husserl is well aware that communicative address is grounded in our relatedness to one another in an open and plural manifold of experiential perspectives, he somewhat neglects to reflect the primacy of a specific kind of performative-practical access to the other. In order to articulate better what it means to performatively take responsibility, phenomenologists can appeal to an experience of the normative excess of the other. I experience myself in the accusative, as a subject that is addressed by the claims of others. What warrants a distinctivist inquiry of the second person from this perspective is that it becomes intelligible to us what it means to address concrete practical issues in the face of the other.

A first important result of my analysis in this chapter is that we do not arrive at the proto-normative structure in question by emphasizing the importance of antagonistic encounters over harmonious engagement. Rather, second-personal responsiveness can only be understood beyond the distinction of repulsive vs. attractive intentional intertwinements with one another. It demarcates an existential category in terms of which we evaluate given responses. The relation of acknowledging that constitutes second-personal responsiveness proper never settles on a fixed, shared identity between us but always remains risky and preliminary in character. Any search for authentic communicative connection – an idea outlined in the previous chapter - will have to take that into account.

Importantly, the proto-normative dynamic in question has its origin in the actual scene of address and cannot be explained in terms of an individual cognitive capacity. As Haase's analysis points out, the appeal of the other is nothing we can "cognize independently of standing in a relation of mutual address to one another" (Haase, 2014b, p. 146). However, the phenomenological

method highlights that such experiences of social alterity where we already stand in relations of mutual address works in tandem with more basic experiences of intersubjectivity and alterity. This has the advantage that a phenomenological account starts from our openness towards an open manifold of experiential perspectives and avoids the danger of falling back into an individualistic justification of the necessity to respond to appeals and demands of others.

An open question concerning the notion of second-personal responsivity as a proto-normative moment in experience outlined in this chapter is how it relates to traditional normative concepts. So far, I have insisted that the moment of experience in question is proto-normative and is not about providing concrete reasons for action or justification for concrete normative principles. However, we will still want to inquire into the relation of this proto-normative moment of experience to traditional normative concepts such as responsibility, moral respect, or justice.

Haase (2014b) and Thompson (2004), for instance, boldly suggest that a Dialogical approach can ground "the necessity of justice" (Haase, 2014b, pp. 113, 114, 124, 144, 145, 147) for which the idea of actually standing in a mutual relation of address is key. What they have in mind is justice *as a virtue* where "[t]he just person does what is just, because it is just. She acts from her recognition of her obligation and not from an ulterior motive" (Haase, 2014b, p. 144). However, the question is whether the phenomenon of recognizing the normative force of the claims and appeals addressed by the other is really best captured by the notion of justice. Thompson concedes that the conception of justice in question is justice in the "traditional sense". These reflections name, in a first instance, "a virtue of individual humans like you and me, and not a feature of the larger social structures in which we fall" (Thompson, 2004, p. 337).

The question is whether the concept of justice can be so neatly separated from considerations about the role of the communities and social structures we are embedded in. I think that (moral) respect might be the more traditional normative concept that aligns better with the interpersonal

dynamic in question. Interestingly, Haase occasionally uses the notion of respect in the same line of inquiry. When I demand you to stop, "the addressee stops, because of this demand. That is what gives the protest the force of a demand to be recognized as a person - in traditional terms: the force of a demand for respect" (Haase, 2014b, p. 145).

Which traditional normative concepts to invest in is important to consider before exploring further how the proto-normative structure underlying second-personal responsiveness might be used to investigate complex social issues. For instance, in the case of sexual encounters the notion of second-personal responsiveness may provide an important trajectory to reflect further on how we might best address and attend to the fundamental difference and separateness between you and me. However, as demonstrated by the contemporary philosophical literature on sex and consent, a dedicated awareness of injustices in the wider social structure we interact in would have to be integrated in such an investigation. In particular in sexual encounters structured and mediated by heterosexual expectations, dedicated attention to such wider social norms that may be outside a description of second-personal dynamics is crucial.[109]

Rather than to claim that the proto-normative dynamic in question can provide an entirely new foundation for moral philosophy or ground a theory of justice, I suggest that its potential lies more in providing a detailed account of how we are addressed by demands and appeals of others. In the next chapter, I want to assess how such a conception of moral respect that prioritizes the necessity

[109] Particularly tricky here is what in the feminist literature is called the 'grey zone' between sex that is fully consensual and sex that is fully non-consensually and therefore legally identifiable as rape. Manon Garcia (2023) gives the scenario of a woman who lets sex happen to her after a man walks her home from a party because she "does not want to be a tease, male desire is conceived as irrepressible, and the woman feels like she owes the man for the favor of walking her home. These norms lead the woman to have a sexual relationship she did not want. Meanwhile the man may well go home believing he has not just had nonconsensual sex. It is unlikely that he feels he was in the wrong, even if he may know, more or less consciously, that the woman did not seem really excited" (Garcia, 2023, p. 11).

of actually being addressed by the claims and appeals of others might play out in communities and social structures given the fact of social injustices. With these preliminary reflections, I wanted to highlight that addressing matters of social (in)justice with a second-person approach will be limited to a particular sphere of application. By considering the dynamics of acknowledging and mutual responsivity we can consider personally experienced social identities – between you and me. Even an approach that amends considerations about institutional dimensions of marginalization and social struggle will therefore come with limitations in other domains that are highly relevant in a dedicated investigation of social (in)justice. For instance, an account of social justice that exclusively focuses on the recognitive relations between you and me might struggle to understand demands for redistribution of resources and the injustices produced by a capitalist structure of society (Fraser, 1995, 1999; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In order to appreciate the next and final chapter, the distinction between addressing social justice broadly conceived and the particular idea of moral respect from being addressed by the claims and appeals of the other will be of particular importance.

6 | Asymmetrical Reciprocity and the Distinctivist Approach

In this chapter, I finally engage with the perhaps most straightforward sense to think about the distinguished status of second-person relations and the dialogical form of encounter in human social experience. The intuition is that dialogical, second-personal encounters also concern a form of relation that is about treating other beings 'well' or, at least, 'respectfully'. The reflections on notions such as communicative authenticity, second-personal responsiveness, and acknowledging in the previous chapter touched on intuitions about an ethical import of the second-person phenomenon. However, I have insisted on the minimal, preliminary, and proto-normative character of the structural moments of experience discussed. As of yet, I have avoided a more thorough reflection on how the second-person phenomenon relates to more traditional normative concepts such as respect, responsibility, or justice. In this chapter, I want to put my distinctivist framework to work by discussing practical challenges of mutually respecting one another in communicative exchange. In practice, actually engaging in interpersonal understanding so that each party feels acknowledged in their own perspective or even just as a fellow person and human being comes with some challenges – for some more so than for others.

The case of disability can illustrate this intuitively: If able-bodied persons are asked to imagine themselves in the position of a wheelchair user, many will respond that they would rather be dead than in a wheelchair. Not only does this exercise nothing to make them reflect on the actual experiences and perspectives of wheelchair users. In actual communicative encounters, this type of thinking about others often fosters patronizing attitudes of pity towards persons with disability, even in well-meaning able-bodied interlocuters.[110] This raises the question if experiences of

[110] This is one of three cases in Young's paper 'Asymmetrical Reciprocity' to demonstrate the irreversibility of standpoints and "render the idea intuitively plausible through some stories" (Young, 1997a, p. 343).

asymmetry and irreversibility might be more fundamentally involved in communicative understanding than typically assumed.

To investigate this from an angle that is of particular contemporary interest in phenomenological research, I consider Iris Marion Young's contested notion of 'asymmetrical reciprocity' and take on her challenge to reflect on the meaning of interpersonal understanding each other in a morally respectful way given the fact of social injustices. I defend her ambitious claim that all communicative exchange is structured by what she calls asymmetrical reciprocity against the suspicion that the notion might merely be a 'postmodern oxymoron' according to which our experiences are so different that they are ultimately incommunicable. To do so, I put my proposal for a distinctivist, phenomenological approach to the second person to work. I show that Young's proposal would benefit from making explicit that second-personal, communicative engagement manifests itself in experience in a distinctive way and thus has to be distinguished from more basic other-oriented attitudes. After establishing this, I highlight avenues for future research in this direction.

In section 1, I briefly outline the context of Young's proposal for asymmetrical reciprocity in political theory and point out on what grounds it has often been dismissed as a postmodern oxymoron. In section 2, I suggest that, in its general thrust, her work aligns with proposal of the Dialogical approach to emphasize actual engagement with others over reflexive internalized dialogue. In section 3, I outline how Young's normative proposal aligns with different phenomenological dimensions of intersubjectivity and alterity. In section 4, I then show how Young's claim that all communicative exchange is structured by asymmetrical reciprocity is essentially concerned with the same proto-normative structure of experience discussed in the previous chapter and the responsive interpretation of intentionality. In section 5, I conclude that asymmetrical reciprocity as a (proto)-normative condition to experience one's own ability to

participate and engage in shared communicative practices becomes particular salient when we consider cases that involve real asymmetries.

6.1 Asymmetrical Reciprocity: Just a 'Postmodern' Oxymoron?

Most philosophical accounts of mutual recognition and communicative understanding in political philosophy treat cases that involve asymmetry and irreversibility as deviations from the norm. In her essay '*Asymmetrical Reciprocity: On Moral Respect, Wonder, And Enlarged Thought'* Iris Marion Young (1997a) argues for the opposite.[111] She advocates for a norm of asymmetrical reciprocity in communicative understanding. According to her, structures of asymmetrical reciprocity enable communicative action and mutual recognition, even in situations that are typically described as symmetrical, for example in relations of love, care and friendship (Young, 2007).[112] For her, mutual recognition must entail an acknowledgment of asymmetry between subjects if it is to capture the meaning of recognition and communicative understanding in a normatively relevant sense.

Some have dismissed the possibility of asymmetrical reciprocity as a basic structure of communicative action and understanding outright. Elaine Stavro diagnoses that Young's insistence on the asymmetry of communicative relations "implies that our experiences are so

[111] Young explicitly establishes the notion in this essay and I will therefore mainly engage with it here. However, her work on communicative democracy in the essay 'Communication and the Other' can be read as a continuation of this line of thought (Young, 1997b). Both essays where later published together in the volume '*Intersecting Voices*'. The chapter 'Inclusive Political Communication' from '*Inclusion and Democracy*' expands on this idea (Young, 2002). This can dispel concerns that her focus on asymmetrical reciprocity as a form of "moral respect" is merely an 'unpolitical', 'social-pedagogical' contribution to ethics. I take her to be interested in a dimension of 'ethico-political normativity', i.e., phenomena that are neither purely 'ethical/moral' nor purely 'political' in a traditional sense of the distinction that, for instance, Arendt following Kant would insist on.

[112] In critical engagement with Honneth's theory of recognition, in particular his reflections on the dimension of love, Young (2007) shows that the care structure is inherently asymmetrical and cannot be conceived of in a harmonizing framework of reciprocal achievement.

different as to be ultimately incommunicable" (Stavro, 2001, p. 144). And, Lorenzo Simpson argues that she is "logically forced into the untenable position that mutual understanding, even among those who are *similarly* situated socially and culturally, is impossible" (Simpson, 2001, p. 14). On their view, asymmetrical reciprocity is a postmodern oxymoron. They argue that reciprocity in mutual recognition logically implies symmetry and therefore requires the assumption of an ideal reversibility of standpoints.

While the idea that successful intersubjective relations simply entail ideal structures of symmetry and reversibility is prevalent in normative theory, Young's proposal should not be dismissed so prematurely. I argue that she captures interesting phenomenological nuances of communicative understanding that are typically overlooked in standard normative accounts of mutual understanding in political and ethical theory. More precisely, I will show that her account aligns well with the approach to (second-personal) responsivity outlined in the previous chapter. Young herself was not keen to align herself with any systematic school of thought and draws on several influences to outline her proposal.[113] I nonetheless want to read her notion of asymmetrical reciprocity through a more explicitly phenomenological lens in this chapter. I think that drawing attention to and distinguishing between several dimensions of intersubjectivity implicit in her proposal can qualify Young's suggestion and show that asymmetrical reciprocity is indeed a

[113] In phenomenology, Young is mainly acknowledged for her work on embodiment, for example in her landmark essay 'Throwing Like a Girl'. I think that in light of the recent interest in 'Critical Phenomenology' it might be very beneficial to also consider her less explicitly phenomenological work. Young's overall approach to theorize with a practical, emancipatory intent and her genuine interest in political activism and policy make for an interesting critical project. Throughout her work, she attempts to attend to lived experiences women and political activism without losing sight of the effects of social structure and structures of oppression and privilege – whether she explicitly engages with canonically phenomenological authors or not.

proposal about experiences of communicative reciprocity and not a rejection of the communicative, second-personal nexus per se.

Asymmetrical reciprocity is a structural moment of experience that constitutes the ground for our ability to recognize and engage with the other in their alterity and particularity. The interesting and subtle point of Young's notion is that asymmetrical reciprocity still *is* a kind of reciprocity. She does not set up her proposal over and against the reciprocal nexus of communication and exchange. This distinguishes her proposal from the notions she appropriates from Levinas and Derrida (Caze, 2008; Herrmann, 2017; Meindl et al., 2019). They both understand their respective work on radical alterity and the impossibility of the gift as a critique of reciprocity and the communicative nexus per se.[114] Young, on the other hand, sees more immediate practical value in thinking about what it would take to make the political communicative nexus socially inclusive.[115]

Nonetheless, her proposal is a provocative challenge of the prevalent idea that reciprocity logically and conceptually implies symmetry. She stresses that in everyday situations it may be perfectly fine to encourage someone to "just look at it from their perspective" (Young, 1997a, p. 340). *That* we can understand each other in communication and that this may involve a variety of different cognitive and creative processes is not something she wants to contest (Young, 1997a, p. 354). Rather, her point is that this common place should not be taken-for-granted in normative accounts of intersubjective relations in political and ethical theory. While Young also has ideological objections against the ideal of symmetrical reciprocity because it "obscures difference"

[114] In the case of Levinas, this then leads to a problematic association of "reciprocal relations" of proximity, care and love with feminine essence. This has been thoroughly critiqued by feminist thinkers. For probably the earlies articulation of this critique see Beauvoir's footnote on this in the introduction to 'The Second Sex' (Beauvoir, 1949, pp. 17–18).

[115] This becomes particularly apparent when also considering her related work on the topic of inclusive political communication (Young, 1997b, 2002).

(Young, 1997a, pp. 346–347) and may have "politically undesirable consequences" (Young, 1997a, pp. 349–350), she substantiates her account by arguing for the "impossibility of reversing positions" (Young, 1997a, pp. 348–349). She claims that "it is ontologically impossible for people in one social position to adopt the perspective of those in the social positions with which they are related in social structures and interaction" (Young, 1997a, p. 346). Her problem, in brief, are models of intersubjectivity and moral respect that assume symmetrical reversibility of our standpoints as is often the case in normative theory.

This latter point is the part of her argument I want to focus on in this chapter because I think it can be beneficial to expand on it. To do so, I highlight that Young's work could benefit from making explicit that the main target of her critique is the distinctive second-personal, communicative dimension of intersubjective and social experience. It is here that the phenomenological distinctions motivated throughout my inquiry will prove useful to understand how more foundational other-oriented experiences and the dynamics of acknowledging in the distinctly second-personally responsive form of intersubjective encounter depend on one another.

Moreover, the general motivation behind Young's work on asymmetrical reciprocity at the intersection of political and ethics seems very much in line with Beata Stawarska's (2009, 2017) motivation to use the Dialogical approach to a 'second-person' phenomenology to reflect on the conditions for disempowered speech and avenues for politically inclusive, participatory meaning-making. Overall, a more thorough account of how my distinctivist proposal of the second person relates to traditional normative concepts and a more elaborate discussion of the scope and limitations of a second-person approach might be desirable. However, for now the reader will have to be content with me highlighting how a distinctivist approach to the second-person and to second-personal responsiveness may aid Young's case for the claims (1) that all communicative

experience is grounded in asymmetrical reciprocity and (2) that this proto-normative structures becomes particularly salient in the face of what I will call 'real' communicative asymmetries.

6.2 Young's Dialogical vs. Benhabib's Reflexive Approach

Young's chosen sparring partner in her essay 'Asymmetrical Reciprocity' is Seyla Benhabib (1992). Both insist on the importance of mutual understanding to investigate a transformative notion of enlarged thought that allows us to respectfully attend to others in their differences.[116] Young endorses Benhabib's attempt to take specific differences among people and the standpoints of concrete others seriously. She finds it a fruitful direction of critique of the standard Habermasian unity and consensus-oriented account of communicative democracy and moral communities.

Their disagreement can be mapped on the distinction between the Dialogical and the Reflexive approach introduced in the previous chapter. Young insists on the importance of actually addressing others in their alterity to achieve mutual understanding and engage in transformative communicative exchange. Benhabib's account of mutual recognition in dialogical encounters – while not denying that we will actually have to talk with one another in a democracy - ultimately

[116] Here, both Young and Benhabib draw on and appropriate the Arendtian notion of enlarged mentality/thought (*erweiterte Denkungsart*, a notion Arendt herself appropriates from Kant) but link it to a discussion of mutual recognition and understanding in a dialogical setting. Note that moving the discussion of "enlarged mentality" from an inquiry about the phenomenological conditions for political judgment to a discussion of mutual recognition in a dialogical setting introduces an interpretative shift. Linda Zerilli (2005) has pointed out that Arendt's enlarged thought is about a much more basic perspectival orientation towards the human condition of plurality. "[I]maginative visiting involves not the mutual understanding of 'one another as individual persons' but the understanding that involves coming to 'see the same world from another's standpoint, to see the same in very different and frequenting aspects. At stake is the difference between understanding another *person* and understanding the world, the world not as an object we cognize but "the space in which things become public,' as Arendt says" (Zerilli, 2005, pp. 177–178). As a more basic pre-condition of political judgment, the original Arendtian idea of enlarged thought insists that the position from which I judge is characterized by a certain outsideness and distance without being a solitary, private affair.

endorses an account of dialogical, discursive understanding that relies on a model of internalized self-address.

In her monograph '*Situating the Self',* Benhabib (1992) explicitly attempts to account for how we can overcome differences in social identity but aims to maintain the ideal of a mediating reflexive stance that allows us to recognize something universal that is shared between us. To do so, Benhabib supplements a Habermasian framework with activities that preserve the figure of the "concrete other". For her, establishing a normatively binding communication community will require reversibility and symmetry of perspectives in mutual recognition, but we can only "recognize the dignity of the generalized other through an acknowledgment of the moral identity of the concrete other" (Benhabib, 1992, p. 164). She presents this process as taking place in an *anticipated* dialogue with others where one has to justify one's moral standard from a standpoint outside one's own belief system. The key to understand the difference between Benhabib's Reflexive and Young's Dialogical proposal is that the process proposed by Benhabib relies on an individual cognitive capacity rather than the binding force of the actual encounter of address.

Benhabib's example for such an anticipated, self-addressed dialogue involves a member of a Mormon sect or Arab dynasty who considers polygamy the right way to live (Benhabib, 1992, p. 42). According to their conventional belief system polygamy is just a given fact dictated by a sect leader or the scripture. Can they also imagine a situation in which they can justify to someone who is not a part of their conventional belief system that polygamy is the most just marital order among sexes? She concedes that there may be a "cognitive barrier" that does not allow them to distance themselves enough from their own conventional believes to admit that it may be right not to practice polygamy. Then their position is simply not reflexive and comprehensive enough to enter reciprocal relations of mutual recognition in the communicative community. However, as soon as they admit that practices that contradict their own conventional position may also be moral and

just, they have entered this reflexive space and are bound by norms of communicative reciprocity and not just by conventionality. They move from a narrow self-regarding perspective to an enlarged reflexive perspective that includes the standpoints of others. So according to Benhabib, it is the ideal reversibility and symmetry of positions that each agent can cognize for themselves by engaging in the imaginative activity of looking at it from the other's perspective. In doing so, they achieve a reflexive stance that makes them move beyond their conventional cognitive barriers and allows them to enter into a rational communicative dialogue.

In this context, Young claims that what makes us move beyond our narrow self-regarding perspective does not have its origin in an individualistic cognitive capacity. Imagining to be in the other's place by virtue of a reflexive capacity is not what makes us move beyond our narrow self-regarding perspective. According to Young, this is a relational process that is about more than overcoming cognitive barriers; and goes in particular for a social reality where structures of privilege and oppression are social fact and damaging stereotypes and ideology mediate relations "between men and women, between Christians and Muslims, between Euro-Americans and African-Americans" (Young, 1997a, pp. 349–350).

Young illustrates this for the case of the Hill-Thomas hearings on sexual harassment allegations in front of the US Senate Judiciary Committee in 1991 (Young, 1997a, p. 345). Black law professor Anita Hill testified against the Black conservative supreme court nominee Clarence Thomas for whom she had worked as an assistant attorney. While white feminists claimed to understand the situation of an ambitious woman that was "sexually harassed by her boss" (Young, 1997a, p. 345), African-American women tended to be more conflicted over the case. Some sided with Thomas following an unwritten rule of Black solidarity according to which Black women support Black men, no matter what, and do not "air dirty laundry" in front of the (white) public (Collins, 1996,

p. 14).[117] Others, typically college educated Black women, believed and supported Hill's testimony but still showed some understanding for Thomas' claim that he was subjected to "high-tech lynching for uppity blacks". They accused white feminists who claimed to "get" Hill of oversimplifying the complexity of the case and the communicative asymmetries involved and thus of ultimately aiding Thomas' strategy to render Hill's testimony noncredible by playing out the dynamics of racialized oppression against the dynamics of gendered oppression in the public perception of the case. What this case shows is that even if people find themselves in 'physically' similar life situations it may become really hard to discern which similarities and differences are supposed to count and to determine who has to overcome which cognitive barriers.

According to Young, something about how our own perspective is related to others in social structures and interaction "makes it impossible to suspend our own positioning, and leaves and excess of experience when I try to put myself in the other person's place" (Young, 1997a, pp. 348–349). Young identifies two sources of asymmetry that leave behind this excess of experiences and make it impossible to symmetrically reverse positions and anticipate the appropriate response. Firstly, there is already a basic asymmetry between self and other whenever we apprehend others in their subjectivity. Understanding others rests on the "knowledge that they have a perspective on me that is different from my immediate experiences of myself, I experience them as subjects, as 'I''s" (Young, 1997a, p. 348). Secondly, not only can we apprehend others in their subjectivity, we also experience their perspective on us and thus our own standpoint is always also constituted by our relations to others:

> "Who we are is constituted to a considerable extent by the relations in which we stand to others, along with our past experience of our relations with others.

[117] See Patricia Hill Collins (1996); also for an in-depth analysis of the tensions between Black nationalism and Black empowerment and the by no-means homogenous positions of African-American women on what constitutes "the Black women's standpoint".

> Thus the standpoint of each of us in a particular situation is partly a result of our experience of the other people's perspectives on us. It is hard to see how any of us could suspend our perspective mediated by our relations to others, in order to adopt their perspectives mediated by their relation to us." (Young, 1997a, p. 348)

Critical and feminist theorists with a more outspoken social constructivist position than Young might be completely satisfied with this explanation. However, this also leaves somewhat underdetermined what it means to stand in communicative relations with others. It leaves Young's subtle and phenomenologically interesting point that asymmetrical reciprocity is a kind of reciprocity and not just about asymmetry between my social standpoint and other social standpoints underexplored.

This is where I think my distinctivist approach to the second person with the emphasis on the proto-normative moments of this form of intersubjective encounter in experience can provide helpful clarification to situate Young's claim about the experience of 'normative excess' from relating with others. My argument in the following will combine elements from two previously discussed perspectives: (1) the normatively cautious, descriptive approach to second-personal, communicative engagement as a specific kind of intersubjective involvement and (2) the approach to acknowledging and responsiveness as a specific proto-normative moment of the phenomenon.

Firstly, I flag the need for more precise phenomenological distinctions with respect to different moments of our intersubjective experiencing and in particular the form of intersubjective encounter involved in communicative exchange. On a phenomenological account, it is one thing to experience that others' have a perspective on me because I perceive them and they perceive me and another thing to engage with them in communication. In the next section, I will consider experiences of perceiving others and being perceived by others in turn to highlight that neither of these dimensions of intersubjectivity account for the kind of reciprocity we experience in communication.

Secondly, I show that Young's account of an experience of normative excess from relating with others should highlight the interplay of a primary alterity in the face of the other and a social alterity. This can again highlight how the proto-normative dynamic of acknowledging and responsivity can complement the 'normatively cautious' Husserlian approach to intersubjectivity and second-personal engagement. This may help us reflect on embodied and affective aspects that gear into normative processes of recognition.

6.3 Phenomenological Distinctions and Asymmetrical Intersubjectivity

In this section, I develop and situate Young's claim that we experience a normative excess of the other whenever we engage with them in actual dialogical encounters. I already noted that Young tentatively distinguishes between a more basic, primary experience of alterity and a level of analysis that starts from our social situatedness. However, a more thorough reflection on different moments of our intersubjective experiencing is absent in her account. For the most part, Young is content to start her reflections from the perspective of our already established social entanglements in positions that are mediated by our social roles and identities. I argue that a more thorough distinction between different aspects of intersubjective experiencing and different moments of alterity can help to make Young's claim about asymmetrical reciprocity plausible. Conversely, Young's proposal can flag somewhat of a tendency to neglect the performative-practical primacy of our access to others in contemporary phenomenological applications of the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity at the intersection with the cognitive sciences.

6.3.1 Perceiving Others and the Primary Alterity of the Face

We can already find what Young calls an "excess of experience" (Young, 1997a, p. 349) when relating to others on the most basic level of awareness of other subjects. Phenomenologically, this 'excess of experience' distinguishes other-directed intentionality from (physical) object-directed

intentionality. The essential feature of understanding others in perception is that it requires self-other differentiation in a minimal sense. Throughout my experiencing of the other an awareness of the other as different from me but likewise experiencing subject is established and maintained.

Classical phenomenology and phenomenology-inspired approaches in the cognitive sciences have extensively explored and defended the claim that the asymmetrical nature of self-other differentiation is constitutively involved in how we come to understand others in perception (Gallagher, 2012; Krueger, 2018; Zahavi, 2014). To do so, phenomenologists hold that there is a basic comprehending experience of others (*Fremderfahrung*)[118] that is already distinct from how we perceive physical objects. Understanding others in perception is characterized by a specific other-directed intentionality (Zahavi, 2014). When I see a person in distress, I perceive their sadness. Experientially, their bodily expressions are not just symptoms or behavioral signs from which I infer that they are most likely sad. Their embodied experiencing is directly involved in how I perceive and, in this minimal sense, 'understand' their experience of sadness. Although this experience of the experiencing other comes with a similar directness as the perceptual experience of an object, the difference between the givenness of my awareness of your experience and how it is given for you as experiencing subject is crucially involved in the comprehending experience.

However, beyond calling this basic other-perception 'empathy'[119], this perceptual account does not say much about the proto-normative moment that is crucial to understand the link between its

[118] In classical phenomenology, this is discussed in the debate about empathy (Einfühlung), for example by Stein, Husserl and Scheler, where they argue against Theodor Lipps's, an important figure in early psychology. See the comprehensive treatment of the historical origins this debate in (Zahavi, 2014). In the contemporary debate with the cognitive sciences, this phenomenological proposal is discussed as direct social perception (DSP) account.

[119] For an excellent discussion of normativity and empathy from a phenomenological perspective following Scheler's work see (Schloßberger, 2019). Incidentally, Young discusses Sandra Bartky's (2002) discussion of how to appropriate Scheler's analysis of empathy and sympathy for feminist purposes in a footnote of her 'Asymmetrical reciprocity' paper.

description of a basic intersubjective experience and primary alterity. The asymmetry involved in the basic perceptual experience of others has inspired some phenomenologists (Bernet, 2002; Overgaard, 2003; Taipale, 2014) to ask whether the perceptual account of basic other-directed intentionality gives rise to a corresponding and for the most part complementary (proto)-normative point of view.[120] To make this idea plausible, it is important to note that self-other asymmetry is not something we have to think about a lot when we perceive others. We experience others with a rather immediate 'here-and-now' givenness. It is quite essential for smooth social cognition that there is nothing particularly puzzling about understanding others in this basic way. Proponents of the so called direct social perception account in the cognitive sciences articulate this by saying that perception is "smart".[121] A related feature that comes with the idea that perception is smart is that we tend to anticipate similarity and accommodate disturbances.[122] This makes it feel like we can easily attune to others in perception.

[120] They do this, either by thinking about the ethical implications of the Husserlian account of empathy (Taipale, 2014) or in analysis of Levinas' critique of Husserl (Bernet, 2002; Overgaard, 2003).

[121] For a criticism and assessment of the potential dangers of this terminology for interdisciplinary and empirical research see (Flakne, 2017): 'Is direct perception arrogant perception?'. I agree with her overall critique of the rather naïve use of the concept of smart perception while it is often simultaneously claimed that direct perception can also make a contribution to critical theory (Gallagher, 2013; Varga & Gallagher, 2012). However, Flakne's critique is somewhat all over the place. For instance, it is not clear to me why 'transcendental' phenomenology should be inherently problematic just because it engages in "metaphysical" questions.

[122] For an example of a rather uncritical use of the idea of attunement in a direct social perception framework see (De Jaegher & Froese, 2009). For these authors, failures and asymmetry are simply chances around which social understanding happens: "Failures in understanding an other's behaviour are not exceptional. On the contrary, they form part and parcel of the ongoing process of social understanding. More even, misunderstandings are the pivots around which the really interesting stuff of social understanding revolves." (ibid. p. 540), "More often than not I feel myself disagreeing or questioning when my interaction partner has already reacted accordingly before he or I even formulate that disagreement or questioning for ourselves. Loss and recovery of coordination are mediated through the interaction itself – a coordination which, as we have seen above, is not a constant attunement, but rather a variable, sometimes even discontinuous process" (ibid. p. 540)

Form here, the (proto)-normative challenge corresponding to the social cognition account of other-perception becomes apparent. If perception comes with a tendency for attunement by anticipating similarity and immediately correcting failures to understand an other's behavior, this also means that we are already on a very basic level biased to assimilate the other in our self-comprehension. We do not automatically respect the other in their alterity and particularity in perception. We might say that perception is both smart and lazy. From a more normative point of view, experiencing alterity in our relation to others cannot simply be a about taking our access to others through their embodied expressions for granted. Instead, the challenge is to highlight how the experiential gap and constitutive asymmetry between self and other, in a first place, enables the basic other-directed intentionality that we can, under ordinary circumstances, take for granted.

A proper elaboration on this primary experience of a normative excess in the face of the other would require a more thorough appreciation of the radicality of the proposal. As briefly indicated previously, the Levinasian conception of alterity in the face of the other is an absolute conception that is not captured in our reciprocal social engagements with others. Young spends little time on the idea of such a primary experience of excess as she is mostly interested in our social engagements. However, for her project a possible strategy might be to match an account of perceiving others with a proto-normative complement. This might be useful for her aim to account for relations of privilege and oppression. Such a complement to a socio-cognitive description of our basic perceptual awareness of others could be a normative attitude that allows us to see our own position in relation to others differently.

One important aspect of such a respectful attitude to work against the perceptual laziness of other-perception could be an attitude of humility. According to Young, humility is one aspect of the kind of recognition she has in mind (Young, 1997a, pp. 350, 354, 360). For her, humility is

about understanding that there is a great deal I do not understand.[123] This is more important than acquiring knowledge about specific similarities and differences about the other's standpoint.

> "The more I understand about the multiple aspects of her life, the differences and similarities between her life and mine, however, the more I should also understand that there is a great deal I do not understand." (Young, 1997a, p. 355)

A good example might be realizing one's own embodied relative position of privilege and/or oppression when walking the streets with someone. To argue for a notion of "intellectual humility" in the context of discussions about empathy, Johnson (2019) describes how she as a white American woman walking through the city with her white cis-male friend might be particularly aware that they are wandering through a part of town that she would usually not walk through if she were on her own. This might lead her to reflect on parts of the city where she takes accessibility for granted but that might be closed for others. Johnson's example shows, that understanding something about others' embodied experience might already contribute not only to an ethical but also to a politically relevant aspect of interpersonal understanding.

By making us understand something about their embodied experience, even the structures of meaning that arise from basic self-other differentiation may play an important role in acknowledging. In practice, actually stabilizing such an attitude of humility towards one's own privileges will probably involve talking to others and engaging with them. However, merely considering this basic asymmetry between self and others does not yet account for reciprocity or

[123] Caze (2008) has correctly pointed out that Young's analysis is rather one sided because it focuses on the standpoint of the privileged and is about them realizing their privilege. Caze argues that it might be as important to rethink the standpoints of the oppressed and marginalized. An equal amount of dedication to the experience of agency despite positions of oppression might help highlight the thoroughly relational approach to theorize privilege and oppression as a particular merit of Young's proposal that distinguishes it from approaches that develop any kind of epistemic standpoint theory.

even the unilateral experience of the other's perspective on me as more immediately relevant structures of meaning in interaction. This is what I will consider next.

6.3.2 Being Perceived by Others, Communicating with Others, and Social Alterity

Not only can we see others, we can also be seen by others. For the most part, Young explains the normative excess of the other as "partly a result of our experience of the other people's perspectives on us" (Young, 1997a, p. 348). For the point about social difference and injustice Young want to make in her essay, it is crucial to integrate the idea of an infinite, primary alterity of the other with the dynamics of social relations where we occupy positions and perspectives mediated by particular social roles and identities. To do so, she appropriates some elements of a Sartrean account of mutual recognition from his analysis of the other's gaze in the famous voyeur vignette:

> "Through my interaction with others I experience how I am an 'other' for them, and I internalize this objectification to myself through others in the formulation of my own self-conception." (Young, 1997, p. 348)

On the one hand, Sartre is an obvious point of reference for Young due to her interest in recognition. Sartre's account of the other's gaze can highlight an interesting normative dimension of affective recognition (Anderson, 2021; Herrmann, 2021). Steffen Hermann (2021) has recently discussed the potential for a Satrean notion of what he calls "misrecognizing recognition" to highlight mutual recognition as an ambivalent concept. In contrast to normative theories of recognition that view mutual recognition as a positive achievement between subjects, the idea of "self-subjection" where those affected by injustice and inequality are "not only victims of these conditions but, are also involved in maintaining them" (Herrmann, 2021, p. 59) is central to this proposal. Similarly, Ellie Anderson (2021) has recently pointed out that Sartre offers an interesting affective account of mutual recognition despite him (not unlike Young) often being misread to argue that mutual recognition is impossible. From the affective point of view, recognition is a "felt

experience of difference" (Anderson, 2021). What would it mean to integrate this in a normative account of interpersonal understanding? It might mean that we learn to grapple with the feeling of uneasiness from contradictions and ambiguities that arise from relating with others. A strength of such an account is undoubtedly that it can highlight the embodied and affective nature and basis of acknowledging in interpersonal understanding. Mutual recognition in this context is not primarily a cognitive process or a teleological achievement.

However, in Sartrean picture the primary focus is on unilateral forms of intersubjective encounters where we experience *being perceived* by the other. This somewhat neglects a further phenomenological distinction of intersubjective encounters: The experience of communicative connection cannot be reduced to a combination of unilateral perceptual acts. A valuable insight from Reinach's and Husserl's classical phenomenological analyses of social communicative acts in the earlier chapters and my distinctivist proposal to the second-person phenomenon was that reciprocal communicative interaction is a relevant subclass of experiences that alters the way in which we experience the other's perspective on us compared to the Sartrean focus on objectification by the other's look. As shown previously, it is not trivial to describe how communication as a responsive relation with the other is a characterized by felt experiences of dependency, openness, and risk. Since Young is not particularly careful to distinguish more basic recognitive attitudes, such as humility or felt ambivalence, from communicative address the critique that she fails to explain what makes our experiences communicable seems to some extent justified.

An emphasis of the embodied and affective dynamics underlying processes of recognition can serve as an important counterbalance in a landscape of normative theory that presents interpersonal understanding and recognition as rationality driven, cognitive achievements. However, just considering the embodied and affective foundation of recognition processes does not allow us to

get communicative relations and the responsive structure of acknowledging in view. In the next section, I will suggest that the proto-normative structure Young is engaging with for her project to reconceive moral respect in political communications should be theorized form a perspective on intersubjectivity that explicitly foregrounds the practical-performative experience of being addressed by others. Moreover, this point provides another avenue to articulate the subtle shift from the classical phenomenological accounts considered earlier in this dissertation. Reinach's and Husserl's respective investigations of social acts still have a tendency to favor a starting point from the speaker's act of addressing rather than to forefront the more provisional experience of speech that starts from the experience of being put in a position to respond as we are addressed by the appeals of others.

6.4 Communicative Reciprocity as Asymmetrical Reciprocity and Real Asymmetry

I propose to understand Young's provocative claim according to which all communicative interaction is grounded in asymmetrical reciprocity as an appeal to attend to the proto-normative structure of responsive intentionality. However, I have pointed out that Young does not really articulate her own account of communicative reciprocity in her reflections on political communication. As I have shown, a thorough reflection on this is necessary to get at the distinctive form of intersubjective encounter in communicative exchange. In the previous section, I have suggested that we can read Young's analysis to work at the interplay between a primary, absolute and a secondary, social alterity to reflect on the necessary normative moments in our interpersonal relations.

As indicated in the previous chapter, authors such as Levinas, Derrida and Waldenfels have developed intricate proposals to investigate the proto-normative structure in question. One aspect from the literature dedicated to such a proto-ethics of alterity that Young explicitly takes up in her work is the Levinasian distinction between the Saying and the Said as two aspects of

communication (Young, 2002, p. 58). The aspect of the Saying captures a moment of acknowledgment and openness between subjects that highlights the riskiness implicit in the communicative situation. It is "[p]rior to and a condition for" (ibid.) discussing content of the world in symmetrical, reciprocal exchange by making assertions, providing argument and giving reasons, i.e., the aspect of the Said.

Following this trajectory, it is very plausible to argue that the experience of reciprocity in communicative interaction is always an experience of asymmetrical reciprocity. Making communications is an intrinsically risky affair; it is not sure that they will be taken up or if they will be taken up in the way we intended them to be heard. In order to acknowledge this in a phenomenological account of communication, it is necessary to shift attention from the experience of addressing, where we still tend to emphasize *what* someone has to say and *what* is being said, to the provisional experience of being addressed. By this shift in attention, I do not mean a mere shift from the speaker 'role' to the listener 'role' but a shift to bring a relation of responsivity into focus that is implicit in all communicative situations. It comes without promise for uptake but is an experience of normative excess as an appeal to respond.

To a certain extent, the idea that the intersubjective involvement and co-dependency in communication is not merely about passing on the active speaker role to a passive listener was already a result of my analysis of the Husserlian notion of second-personal engagement in chapter 4. Second-personal engagement is qualitatively characterized by experiences of a specific co-dependency and openness towards the other. Already these subtle nuances of second-personal engagement are rather hard to capture in a symmetrical picture of communicative exchange where active speakers pass on their turn to passive listeners. Hence, even this more cautious phenomenological proposal with respect to the normative import of second-personal address

challenges the prevalent ideal in normative theories to conceive of communicative exchange as a process of a symmetrically reciprocal exchange of roles.

One way to cash out how Young's proposal and the responsive interpretation of intentionality goes beyond my reading of Husserlian second-personal engagement in chapter 4 is that the account of asymmetrical intersubjectivity implicit in her account more radically forefronts the experience of *being addressed* by others' claims and appeals. With Reinach and Husserl, there is still a latent tendency to start the reflections from *the act of addressing*. For the most part, their conception of social acts starts from the position of an addressee that can throw his communications out into the world where they usually penetrate their target.[124] They focus on communicative acts such as commanding, requesting and informing (*mitteilen)*. Thus, the subtle dynamics of acknowledging and a conception of speech as a provisional experience are not an explicit concern in Reinach's[125] or Husserl's work.

Young does not present an elaborate theory of radical alterity, responsivity or acknowledging. Instead, she suggests a more subtle shift away from the tendency to start the investigation from the act of addressing. To do so, she (in a way) exploits Reinach's discovery that we can shift which types of social acts we prioritize and contrast in an analysis. According to Young, a theory of communication that heeds asymmetrical reciprocity should attend more to the structure of questions (Young, 1997a, pp. 341, 343, 357). For her, respectful questions rather than expecting

[124] Reinach uses the spear metaphor: "It can of course happen that commands are given without being heard. Then they fail to fulfil their purpose. They are like thrown spears which fall to the ground without hitting their target." (Reinach, 2012, p. 19)

[125] Reinach (1989c), for instance, concludes for his reflections on a theory of judgment that it is better to avoid the term *Anerkennung* (recognition/acknowledging) entirely due to a "dangerous double meaning" that he finds in Brentano's and Windelband's theories of judgment. He warns against conflating the judgment (*Urteil)*, i.e., the act of making a claim (behaupten, das Urteil setzten), and approving recognition (*Zustimmungsanerkennung), i.e., 'Yes, A is B'* - a bastard of the idea of valuing recognition (*wertschätzende Anerkennung*) from the sphere of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) transferred to the analysis of objective judgments.

statements allows for communicative actions that show an interest in the other's expression and acknowledge that the questioner does not know what the issue looks like for them. Overall, her proposal is to look for such new starting points that highlight the dynamics of asymmetrical reciprocity and acknowledging in "the most everyday non-political communication gestures" (Young, 2002., p. 56). Along these lines, she also suggests that investigating practices of greeting might be interesting. As indicated in chapter 4 and 5, I think that other communicative encounters that might be particularly interesting to scrutinize along these lines are any kind of playful peripheral speech, invitations, and apologies.

A challenge of Young's presentation of 'asymmetrical reciprocity' is that as she both advocates for a shift against the traditional tendency to favor objectivity, achievement and symmetry in communicative ethics and politics while at the same time developing an account of communication that can help us work towards transformative shared identities in the face of social injustices. As such, her claim about the asymmetrical character of communicative reciprocity is easily dismissed as a mere effect of what I want to call 'real' asymmetries from historically grown structures of oppression and privilege. I suggest that it is important to distinguish this important overall aim of her analysis from the claim that all communicative reciprocity is structured by asymmetrical reciprocity. 'Real' asymmetries should not be confused with the proto-normative structure of asymmetrical reciprocity. However, I think that, while real asymmetries should not be conflated with the more basic existential claim about asymmetrical reciprocity as a proto-normative structure of communicative experience, we can understand the foundational role of asymmetrical reciprocity in communicative encounters at sights of real asymmetry where our taken-for-granted communication patterns break down.

If asymmetrical reciprocity is a structure of all communicative action, it is important to distinguish this more foundational claim from the specific complications of considering and

highlighting the possibilities and limitations of dialogue and communication given the fact of social injustices. Real asymmetries are the target of her critical emancipatory analysis because Young's ultimate goal is not to provide the most nuanced phenomenological description of the experience of reciprocity in communication but to think about socially inclusive political communication. To do so, she follows two strategies. The first is the already mentioned method to shift which types of communicative encounters to contrast in order to make the inherently asymmetrical character of communicative relations salient. The second is to show how the temporality of our (communicative) interactions often reinforces real asymmetry between subject positions. This second strategy, again, works against the idea that we can access the other's standpoint by activating an individual cognitive capacity without considering the actual scene of address.

> "Persons may flow and shift among structured social positions, and the positions themselves may flow and shift, but the positions cannot be plucked from their contextualized relations and substituted for one another." (Young, 1997a, p. 353)

With respect to this latter strategy, Young identifies history as an important source of asymmetry (Young, 1997a, pp. 352–353). There are at least two ways in which the temporal structure of communications plays a role. Firstly, the involved parties come with particular personal experiential histories that determine the total communicative situation. Even this particular personal history can already determine how we can do things with our words and expressions. It can for example determine whether I am more likely to enter a room and confidently demand and command from others or will more likely issue a careful apologetic request. Secondly, while communicative engagement can enable the formation of habitualized groups and communities, we are often already part of multiple real social groupings when we communicate. The experiential histories of these social groupings that can span generations can act as a further source of asymmetry. For instance, being a member of an African-American community in the United States not only comes with a history of experiences of enslavement, subordination and

violence but also a particular history of civil resistance and building communities of solidarity. This shapes communication styles, codes and preferences. Research in sociology documents an African-American preference for introductory talk and greeting sequences that focus on the immediate environment and only invite the interlocutor to volunteer information about social category and hierarchy (Rawls & Duck, 2020, pp. 33–56). The white American preference for directly asking about social category information such as age, occupation, current residence and hometown is experienced as nosey and morally questionable (ibid.).

A further point we might want to be cautious about when using Young's strategies to rethink moral respect in communicative encounters is that we should be wary of naively idealizing and essentializing certain types of communication as model processes for communicative exchange. Young herself notes that her idea to forefront questions comes with such caveats. Questions can easily turn probing and uncomfortably inquisitive. For example when people exoticize the other (Young, 1997a, p. 357). In these cases, the questioner is not really interested in the answer of the other but will usually rephrase the question until they get the answer they were already looking for. Think about: "Where are you from?", "No, where are you really from?".

Revisiting Anita Hill's case can illustrate further limitations of merely relying on the second-personal force of moral respect to attend to social injustices. In 2019, 28 years after her testimony about Clarence Thomas' sexual harassment towards her in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Anita Hill received a surprise phone call from then presidential candidate Joe Biden where he apologized for his role in the hearings (Stolberg, 2019). As chair of the confirmation hearings, Biden had refused to admit further (female) witnesses that could have supported Hill's public testimony, thus playing a crucial role in preventing that the issue of sexual harassment was appropriately addressed and instead creating a her-word-against-his situation. In a recent interview with the New York Times (Stolberg, 2019), Hill reflects on the experience of receiving his apology

after all this time. In a first instance, the communicative gesture of the apology addressed towards her personally clearly had an effect on Anita Hill:

> "STOLBERG: I do want to ask you a little more about the phone call, because it has, after all, been 28 years. So I'm wondering: Did it come out of the blue? Were you surprised? Did he have an aide arrange it? How did it happen?
>
> HILL: Oh, yeah. I was surprised when I was first approached that it would happen in that way. It was — somebody approached me about, would I accept a phone call. And again, you're right, it has been 28 years, and I had in fact moved on, not necessarily expecting an apology and have moved on really, as I had said earlier to being forward thinking about accountability in the future." (Stolberg, 2019)

However, Hill also assesses that the apology is only one thing. Beyond the moral respect shown towards her specifically through the gesture of the apology, she finds it more important that leaders demonstrate a forward thinking and future-directed accountability for the issue of gender violence:

> "STOLBERG: Do you consider it an apology?
>
> HILL: Again, I keep saying this. The focus on an apology to me is one thing. But there needs to be an apology to the other witnesses, and there needs to be an apology to the American public, because we know now how deeply disappointed women all over the country were about what they saw — and not just women. There are women and men now who are just — really have lost confidence in our government to respond to the problem of gender violence.
>
> […]
>
> HILL: I'm hoping that all of our leaders are going to be looking at this and thinking about ways to move the country forward.
>
> STOLBERG: He last month said "to this day I regret I couldn't come up with a way to get her the kind of hearing she deserved, given the courage she showed by reaching out to us." I wonder how you reacted when he said that to the public?
>
> HILL: Well, right now I react the same way. I react to that by saying, "When the next instance occurs, can you come up with another way? When will you be able to come up with a way to address what happened in 1991?" Because we need leadership to take the mantle on this." (Stolberg, 2019)

The real complexities of Anita Hill's case can highlight that we might want to be extra careful to reflect on the scope of the notion of moral respect as outlined in this chapter and thus the scope of any second-person approach to attend to matters of justice and responsibility. With the posthumously published '*Responsibility for Justice'*, Young's (2011) work indicates that the normative notions of responsibility and justice require considerations that go beyond a second-person framework. For Young, responsibility for justice is both a collective task for the whole society and oriented towards accountability for the future. The focus on moral respect and second-personal address might uncover certain opportunities for collectively experiences that allow us to take up such a demanding transformative attitude of responsibility and open up pathways to address injustices of social structures. However, communicative gestures such as invitations, greetings, or apologies need to be followed up on by collective action and attitudes of accountability for the future. Thus, if my suggestion holds that moral respect is the traditional normative concept that aligns most with the normative significance the second person, then we should be cautious about the claim that attending to the second-person phenomenon can ground an entirely new Dialogical paradigm in moral philosophy or serve as a theory of justice.

6.5 Recognizing the Asymmetry of Subjects

I began this chapter by introducing the critique according to which asymmetrical reciprocity implies that our experiences are too different to be communicable. Anticipating this objection herself, Young replies that she does not believe her argument to lead to this conclusion:

> "It would seem to follow from this argument that we cannot understand each other. Thus it would seem that there is no point in trying to take account of the perspective of others in making moral and political judgments. I do not believe, however, that my argument leads to this conclusion. Understanding across difference is both possible and necessary. Recognizing the asymmetry of subjects, however, does imply giving a different account of what understanding is and what makes it possible" (Young, 1997a, p. 354).

In this chapter, I have highlighted how a distinctivist approach to the second-person can help to untangle and distinguish several aspects of recognizing the asymmetry of subjects. These different aspects would have to be part of "giving a different account of what" interpersonal "understanding is and what makes it possible" (ibid.). Young's critical assessment can get embodied and affective aspects of recognizing the asymmetry of subjects into view that are usually not considered by normative theories of recognition. At the same time, she does not want to leave more complex communicative encounters to overly rationalist and cognitivist accounts that ultimately reduce the transformative potential of second-personal address to an individual cognitive achievement rather than a genuinely communicative and relational form of meaning-making.

By drawing on my distinctivist approach to the second person, I have defended the claim that all communicative interaction is governed by the dynamics of asymmetrical reciprocity. I have argued that this more basic existential dynamic should be distinguished from our intuitive understanding of real asymmetries due to social injustice and inequality. However, I have also suggested that attending to such real asymmetries can reveal aspects of communicative experience that make its foundation in asymmetrical reciprocity particularly salient.

Based on these clarifications, I find two complementary strategies in Young's comprehensive reconceptualization of moral respect with a critical, emancipatory intent. Firstly, we can reflect on the embodied and affective basis of communication. Structures of privilege and oppression passively group and divide us along different lines and thus enhance the asymmetries involved in many communicative situations. Secondly, we might also want to rethink which communicative acts are particular interesting to analyze and to contrast with one another from this phenomenological perspective.

Appealing to the first strategy is interesting for critical and feminist philosophy, because it highlights that a phenomenological approach is not the same as developing a form of standpoint epistemology but nonetheless allows us to reflect on relative positions of privilege and oppression. A phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity does not merely appeal to the social construction of standpoints. Yet, by questioning what we take for granted about experiences in different dimensions of intersubjective relations, phenomenologists can thematize the relative and inherently relational structuring of our positions of privilege and oppression. The second strategy should encourage phenomenologists to explicitly tackle what is often considered too cognitive territory. Phenomenological analysis is not limited to more passive, pre-reflective experience and accounts of our basic embodiment and affective orientation towards the world but can also contribute to a critical assessment of our interpersonal engagements in communication, speech, and language.

Concluding Remarks

What is distinctive about the second person? In this dissertation, I have shown how second-personal address gears into important structural features of our experiential lives in the social lifeworld. How we turn ourselves towards others when we address them manifests distinctively in experience. Moreover, I have supported the argument that the second-person phenomenon is essential to conceive of the possibilities of speech and discourse. By employing different variants of the phenomenological method to describe the intentional structure of experience, I have made nuances thematic that show themselves in our ordinary experiences of communicating with one another.

My dissertation defended a distinctivist approach to the second person by discerning the intentional structure in social acts such as promises, requests, orders, or invitations. These experiences are about turning oneself towards another in address. Compared to other kinds of other-directed experiences, the addressee features in a way that makes the nature of the communicative second-person relation irreducible to unilateral acts of empathy or a set of composite mental states. Beyond describing this specific experience of intersubjective engagement, I have investigated the normative significance(s) of the particular kind of dependency on others experienced in second-person relations.

Despite my insistence on the normative significance of second-person relations, I somewhat distanced my investigation of the second-person phenomenon from more ambitious projects of the Dialogical approach that call for a more encompassing scope of their second-person approach. In different ways, these projects develop a second-person approach to address problems and establish new paradigms in areas such as moral philosophy, political philosophy, philosophy of action, epistemology, or social philosophy. In these concluding remarks, I want to summarize my

argument for the normative significance of the second-person relation and offer further reflection on why I am somewhat wary of such more ambitious projects.

I. The Normative Significance of the Second-Person Phenomenon

My approach to the normative significance of the second person was to highlight different kinds of normativity as they intersect with the intentional structure of (intersubjective) experience. These kinds of normativity are best described as proto-normative dynamics as they do not start from traditional normative concepts and are not about justifying concrete principles for action or providing answers or value judgments to applied moral or political questions.

Firstly, drawing on Reinach and contemporary work on the normativity of speech acts, I have analyzed how second-personal address enables a bipolar form of normativity. Here, the analysis isolates the bipolar nexus of our bonds of commitment based on the idea that social act/speech acts are teleologically oriented to strive for the fulfillment of their claims. Social acts/speech acts are 'in need of uptake' (*vernehmungsbedürftig*) in this formal sense. The advantage of this perspective is that it broadens our perspective on normativity in a particular direction. The bipolar form of normativity is not specifically or exclusively the ground for moral judgments. In fact, the bipolar form might be most salient in the sphere of civil law, where it is typically essential that legal claims are addressed to a counterparty. More interestingly, bipolar normativity also underpins particular kinds of social normativity, for instance when we experience social control being exercised through the performance of speech acts such as greetings, questions, or invitations.

Secondly, I provided a detailed analysis of the Husserlian account of the I-You-relation as second-personal engagement. This perspective on the experience of being turned towards one another in address does not investigate a structure of commitment. Rather than uncover a deontic or discursive structure, this approach gives a detailed description of the pre-obligatory

intersubjective and social dynamics in communicative exchange. This gives a normatively thin account of the kind of co-dependency that underpins experiences of second-personal engagement. Although this analysis operates on a pre-deontic level, it nonetheless reveals an operative normativity if we consider that we typically experience second-personal engagement from within communicative and speech communities to which we already belong. Following current work on the phenomenology of normativity and normality as well as sociolinguistic and language pragmatic research, I have suggested an interesting angle to reconsider the relevance of such lived-through experiences of the ordinary. We can shift attention to sights where such experiences of normality break down as well as to transformative and playful opportunities for relational meaning-making in communicative interaction.

Finally, by carefully inquiring about possible limitations of a starting point from the notion of social acts and the Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity, I have suggested that a dynamic that we might call second-personal responsiveness or acknowledging uncovers yet another proto-normative structural moment in experience. Here, we are dealing with proto-normativity in the narrower sense that constitutes the proto-ethical ground for moral judgment and respect. This requires a shift in attention towards the experience of being addressed by the claims and appeals of others, i.e., the experience of being confronted by an imperative 'ought'. This perspective on our dependency on others in second-personal address forefronts the primacy of practical and performative access to others. This allows us to move towards the somewhat more radical claim that the Husserlian discovery of our relatedness to one another in an open and plural manifold of experiential perspectives underpins the structure of subjectivity in inherently (proto)-ethical terms. Such an approach to second-personal responsiveness never settles on a fixed, shared identity between us but forefronts the risky, preliminary, and asymmetrical character of communicative reciprocity. Against some views in normative theory, this articulates that the transformative force

of second-personal address as an inherently relational form of meaning-making has its origin in the actual scene of address and cannot be accounted for as an individual cognitive achievement with its source in a reflexive capacity for self-address.

This nuanced approach to the normative significance of the second-person phenomenon is well-equipped to defend the focus on the second person against the concern that such a focus inevitably leads to an all too romanticizing approach to our social reality. Some Dialogical approaches, particularly the older, historical resources, tend to conflate what we experience as intimate and respectful encounters with others with the normative dynamics outlined above. I have suggested that the intuition that we experience *occasional* intimacy in second-person relations is not completely on the wrong track. However, returning to Simmel's remarks quoted in the introduction, it would be important to insist on the more modest but distinct claim that the second-personal dynamics in question are essential to conceive of the possibilities of the intimacies *and estrangements* of social relations that we experience in communicative interaction.

Moreover, a phenomenological approach allows us to relate the specific form of intersubjectivity in the second-person relation to other aspects of intersubjectivity. In chapter 1, I have engaged with the concern that phenomenology is too focused on basic and unilateral forms of intersubjectivity such as empathy, thus missing the mark of the second-person relation. Here, I want to turn the critique around. In an attempt to counter an individualistic bias in philosophy or philosophy of language specifically, the more ambitious Dialogical approach generally advocates for the primacy of a fundamentally relational concept of the person and agent. These approaches tend to make it overly hard on themselves to attend to the theme of intersubjectivity. By effectively starting an account of intersubjectivity from mutual, second-personal encounters, some proponents of the Dialogical approach tend to miss out on the opportunity to investigate the relation between

more basic forms of intersubjectivity and the specific intersubjective encounter in second-personal address.

However, I have suggested that there is potential for a productive exchange between approaches from the philosophy of language and phenomenological analysis by going against a tendency in the contemporary phenomenological debate to work with a somewhat too easy divide between a pre-reflective, affective 'level' and a reflective, cognitive 'level' of analysis. In particular the notion of acknowledging (in the Cavellian and Youngian sense) cuts across this divide. Reflection on the second-person case reveals acknowledging as the practical attitude that is necessary to address concrete practical issues in the first place and not as a higher-order capacity that overrides pre-reflective or affective experiences.

II. Outlook on Future Research

To close with, I want to draw attention to two areas to indicate issues that might be interesting to develop in future research. They concern 1) the phenomenology of normativity and 2) possibilities to substantiate the argument for the significance of second-personal address in our experiential lives through cross-disciplinary collaboration with research in the social sciences.

One of the challenges ahead is to more closely develop how the modest, distinctivist approach to the second-person phenomenon relates to traditional normative concepts. Partially, this is inherent to an insistence on the philosophically relevance to investigate *proto*-normativity. Such approaches tend to find philosophical projects to develop a comprehensive guide to moral action and principles uninteresting or even ethically suspect. However, I think it might be worthwhile to engage in more detail with more traditional projects to ground moral philosophy in a second-person approach than I have done in this dissertation. For instance, I only briefly mentioned Stephen Darwall's work on the second-person standpoint to immediately dismiss it as a Reflexive

approach in chapter 5. Engaging with such approaches could bring out interesting issues at the intersection of the phenomenology of normativity and normative theory proper. Moreover, it might help to more adequately situate and further delimitate the scope of the distinctivist approach of the second person with respect to concepts such as responsibility, justice, and moral respect.

Finally, throughout the dissertation, I have hinted at trajectories to engage with research in the social sciences, such as the study of talk in interaction and conversation analysis. Here, we might find a further consideration of why philosophers might want to be more careful about defining the scope of a second-person approach. Social scientists have pointed out that philosophers tend to somewhat sweepingly claim the relevance of a certain philosophical concept to hold the key to understanding all of human sociality (Archer & Donati, 2015). Building on the phenomenological insight that our intersubjective experiences of the social lifeworld form a plural and complex field of inquiry, offers promising avenues for cross disciplinary collaboration. Such collaboration might illuminate subtle nuances of our everyday interaction that have traditionally been overlooked as philosophically inconsequential.

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