

THE INFINITY OF THE WORLD AND THE INFINITE PLURALITY OF PHANTASY-WORLDS¹

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Abstract

In my paper, I will investigate the Husserlian concept of the world understood as a *horizon of all horizons*. Firstly, I will focus on the unifying horizontality in perception in order to lay out the fundamental features which determine a phenomenological account of the world. In a second step, I will investigate whether the same features can be found, when one takes up the task of describing the world of phantasy. I will show that for Husserl the all-unifying unique horizon can only be given, if we accept the primacy of perception. Finally, I will sketch out how these considerations can be fruitfully interpreted in the context of contemporary phenomenology, and namely in Marc Richir's refoundation of phenomenology. If for Richir the primacy of perception has to be abandoned and phenomenology should be a phenomenology of *phantasy*-appearances, and if there is no intrinsic unifying tendency in *phantasy* that would account for a unique horizon of all horizons. As a consequence Richir has to deal with an infinite multiplicity of *phantasy*-worlds at the basic architectonical levels of his phenomenology. I suggest that this infinite multiplicity of *phantasy*-worlds has to be understood as a phenomenological description of what he has called the plurality of worlds in the *Méditations phénoménologiques*, his major work from the 90s.

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I. The World of Perception

If we take up the task of a phenomenological inquiry of the world, we can have an immediate access to the phenomenon of the world by describing the perception of a thing. Things indeed do not appear on their own but they emerge from a background that we could simply call – in a still vague sense – “the world”. By describing perception we remain faithful to the principle of principles formulated in the *Ideas* which states that “every ordinary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originally (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ actuality) offered to us in ‘intuition’ is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there”². Indeed, perception is such an ordinary presentive intuition and according to Husserl, it is by perceiving that we encounter the world. However, the way that the world presents itself in perception is a peculiar one. The world does not appear as an object, neither it is something perceptually given. Though it has to be understood as a structural moment of perception. If the world itself does not appear as such without the appearing of an individual thing or of a multiplicity of things, it seems legitimate to start with the description of the appearing of the thing in order to shed a light on the givenness of the world.

Husserl’s insight is that a thing is never given alone, by itself, but always in a surrounding world or in an *Umwelt*. This surrounding world or *Umwelt* can be understood as an immediate but *not yet transcendental* presentation of the world. As Husserl has put it in §27 of his *Ideas*, the givenness of an individual thing implies a series of co-givennesses that form a foggy aura around the individual thing. In Husserl’s own words:

An empty mist of obscure indeterminateness is populated with intuited possibilities or likelihoods; and only the ‘form’ of the world, precisely as ‘the world’, is predelineated (*vorgezeichnet*). Moreover, my indeterminate surroundings are infinite, the misty and never fully determinable horizon is necessarily there.³

There are three points that I would like to emphasize here: 1) the foggy aura surrounding the thing is a misty space of *possibilities*; 2) these possibilities are

² Husserl Edmund, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, The Hague, Nijhoff 1977. For the English translation see: *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, (trans. F. Kersten) The Hague, Nijhoff, 1983, p. 44. (The pages refer to the German edition placed in the margin in the translation.)

³ Husserl E., *Ideas*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

immersed in the *infinite* in the sense that a full exploration of all the possibilities would be an infinite process, and 3) on the ground of this misty “horizon” the form of “the world” is already predelineated (*vorgezeichnet*) or pre-schematized. These three points provide us with three key concepts that should guide any phenomenological investigation that deals with the question of the world: the concept of possibility, the concept of the horizon and the concept of infinity. Thus, in order to understand what the world is, one has to have an understanding of the way in which these three dimensions of world-experience are connected to each other. However, one also needs to take into account the fact that these dimensions are not only implied in world-consciousness on their own but they also constitute the unifying tendency that we encounter in experience. Everything that is given in the experience is given as a part of a unified whole, there can be no “wholes” (in plural) in the experience, because it would precisely make it impossible. If there are “wholes”, they also have to find their place in the whole.⁴

We can thus formulate the thesis that the world is a unifying horizon of infinite possibilities of appearing. It is indeed in this sense that one has to understand the definition of the world as the *horizon of all horizons*⁵, or in other words the ever unifying and universal horizon. I propose that we refine this way of comprehending the world by starting with the analysis of what a horizon can be. As we know, Husserl makes a difference between several kinds of horizons – spatial horizons, value horizons, sense horizons, etc. Nevertheless, there are some types of horizons in which the *world* presents itself in a more authentic way than in others. And especially if we take into account the principle of principles, a privileged way of having an access to the world should be found in perception and in the horizon we encounter in perception. And it is indeed by describing the perception of an external object that Husserl introduces a crucial difference between the internal and the external horizons:

[...] the perception of a thing is perception of it within a perceptual field. And just as the individual thing in perception has meaning only through an open horizon of “possible perceptions”, insofar as what is actually perceived “points” to a systematic multiplicity of all possible perceptual exhibitings belonging to it harmoniously, so the thing has yet another horizon: besides this “internal horizon” it has an “external horizon”

⁴ One could certainly argue that some psychopathological cases show precisely, and so to say “negatively”, this transcendental functioning of the unifying tendencies. A trauma for example could also be understood as something that resists this unification tendency and thus threatens to fissure the world of the traumatised subject.

⁵ For an in depth analysis of this concept see Geniusas Saulius, *The Origins of the Horizon in Husserl's Phenomenology*, Dodrecht, Springer, 2012, pp. 95–98.

precisely as a thing within a field of things; and this points finally to the whole “world as perceptual world”⁶

The possible appearances implied by the givenness of a thing constitute its internal horizon. A thing appears always with its specific adumbrations (*Abschattungen*); and there is always an adumbration of the thing that is exhibited or presented (*dargestellt*). However, all the other possible adumbrations are co-given as possibilities. But besides these possibilities the thing also has an external horizon, insofar as it appears in a field of perception that functions like a sort of background for the appearing of the individual thing. This background or external horizon has its own possibility dimension. Indeed, by being able to change my focus or by being able to change my place in the perceptual field, I can make parts of this external horizon appear which are not exhibited when I have this particular focus and this particular place in the perceptual field. Moreover, the external and the internal horizons are bound together by a unifying horizon of which we only perceive a sector. It is in this sense that Husserl can claim that “the momentary field of perception, always has the character for us of a *sector ‘of’* the world, of the universe of things for possible perceptions”⁷.

We thus see that the very concept of the *horizon* implies the concept of possibility. As a matter of fact, a *horizon* is always a *possibility-horizon* or even better a *potentiality-horizon*, while the appearing of the sector of the world which points to a universal horizon as well as the possibilities that are implicated in this horizon are anchored in the “*Ich kann, ich tue*” (*I can, I do*) and in “*Ich kann anders als ich tue*” (*I can otherwise than I do*). It is this capacity of the subject – to whom a sector of the world is given “through a nucleus of ‘original presence’”⁸ – to act differently that transforms a pure speculative infinity of possibilities into an infinite potentiality.⁹ Instead of an *a priori* system of possibilities we have to deal with the facticity of potentialities rooted in the facticity of an agent. As Husserl claims in §19 of his *Cartesian Meditations*, if the “horizons are predelineated potentialities”¹⁰ and these potentialities depend on the capacity of the subject to act differently as he does,

⁶ Husserl E., *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1962. For the English translation see: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, (trans. D. Carr), Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 162. (The page numbers refer to the English translation.)

⁷ *Idem.*

⁸ *Idem.*

⁹ Husserl E., *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, p. 47.

¹⁰ *Idem.*

we could state that *potentiality* arises precisely as a possibility anchored in the *Leib* of a subject. As far as all exposing sensations – and thus all sensations that expose the horizon of perception – are carried by *kinaesthesia* and the latter are anchored in the living body, the *Leib* and its capacity to change its position is a constitutive element of horizontality in general. Potentialities are thus embodied possibilities and therefore the concept of the *horizon* has to be understood as a bodily or as a *leiblicher* horizon. Already in his 1907 lessons on *Thing and Space* – so already before developing the concept of horizontality –, Husserl claimed that every exposition of an external object is bound to a sensation of movement or to *kinaesthesia*. In §46 and §47 he enunciated clearly the idea stating that no sensation of an external object is possible without an underlying dimension of kinaesthetic sensations which are embodied in the *living body (Leib)*. In other words, the circumstance that the things are given to us through their adumbrations points to the fact of the incarnation and to what Husserl described as the “point-zero” of orientation.¹¹ To put it more clearly, in order to speak about a horizon, *one has to presuppose* a point of view or a central point from which the horizon appears as a horizon. For the perceptual field of this central point is the living body which is inhabited by the I. And the “*Ich kann, ich tue*” has, thus, a clearly embodied dimension. It is from the point of view of my bodily presence that the things appear through adumbrations and it is because the possibilities of the appearing of an object are connected to my potential movements that a horizon of indeterminacy surrounds each appearing.

Does this mean, however, that phenomenology has to be understood as a subjectivism? Isn't the world only something subjective, if the horizon is immediately connected to the *Leiblichkeit* of the perceiving *ego*? It is especially with these questions that the infinity of the horizons and of the horizon of all horizons gains its meaning. In order to answer these questions, I would like to refer to László Tengelyi's recent analysis of the infinity of the world in Husserl's thinking. He states that the horizontality of perception does not have to lead to a subjectivism. On the contrary, if we pay attention to the infinite dimension of the horizon, we may be able to eliminate the spectre of subjectivism that threatens to haunt phenomenology, if it is not correctly understood.¹² Indeed, the theory of adumbrations, which one can understand as a theory of perspectivism, would only be a type of subjectivism, if one single adumbration would be the same thing as the appearing of the object. However, as this is made clear by introducing the concept of the internal horizon, an adumbration is never isolated. It is always connected with an infinity of other

¹¹ See for example Husserl E., *Ding und Raum*, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, §83 and pp. 297–996.

¹² Tengelyi László, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, Alber, Freiburg, 2014, p. 319.

possible adumbrations and this infinity plays a crucial role in the constitution of the thing. Husserl conceives the thing as an *idea in the Kantian sense* – even if we can have a bodily experience of the complete givenness of the thing itself. Furthermore, since the experiencing subject with its *Leiblichkeit* is a finite subject, he can never effectively actualize all the possibilities implicated in the horizon. He or she can however still have an experience of the thing, in spite of their own finitude, and moreover they can have an experience of the infinity implicated by the horizon. But what is then the exact meaning of infinity here? As Tengelyi reminds us, the infinity of the horizon of an individual thing, and *a fortiori* the infinity of the world, has to be understood in Husserl’s phenomenology as an *openness (Offenheit)* that does not imply the totality of every individual thing, nor the totality of all unifying tendencies, precisely because such a totality is never given. The world is not the summation of all things and of all horizons but is itself a horizon of all horizons and as such it is never objectifiable.

As the horizon of all horizons, the world is unique and universal, although it keeps floating as a never reachable focal point of the misty halo of possibilities that surround not only every individual act of perception but also every formation of meaning. And if we understand the world as the *one and unique* horizon of all horizons, we also have to agree with Husserl when he claims that the discourse on various worlds such as the religious world, the mythical world, the modern world and so on, is just a figure of speech.¹³ But in which sense can we then speak of phantasy-worlds? One could argue that by talking about phantasy-worlds, one does not use the term “world” as a *terminus technicus*, just as in the case of talking about “the world of Proust” or about “the world of Vermeer”. To what extent is it a figure of speech to refer to a world or to several worlds given in phantasy?

II. The Worlds of Phantasy

In order to answer these questions, let us briefly recapitulate three major points of Husserl’s phenomenology of phantasy. 1) Husserl makes a crucial distinction between image consciousness and phantasy arguing that the first is always aiming at something that is represented through something which represents the thing in question, whereas phantasy does not necessarily imply such mediation. In Husserl’s own words: “The phantasy appearance, the simple phantasy appearance

¹³ This was at least Husserl’s hypothesis in a text dating from 1894 on intentional objects: Husserl E., *Aufsätze und Rezensionen (1890–1910)*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1979, pp. 328–329.

unencumbered by any imaging built on it, relates to its object just as *straightforwardly* [*einfältig*] as perception does"¹⁴. Or "[i]n itself [...] the phantasy presentation does not contain a manifold intention; presentification [*Vergegenwärtigung*] is an ultimate mode of intuitive objectivation [*Vorstellung*], just like perceptual objectivation, just like presentation [*Gegenwärtigung*]"¹⁵. 2) Precisely because phantasy-appearances are presentifications, there is something originally not present that is intuited in them. 3.) The field of phantasy is completely separated from the field of perception and "the transition from a phantasy presentation just now being carried out to a perceptual presentation is a break, an enormous difference"¹⁶.

This last point shows us, on the one hand, that the possibilities implied by the horizon we have in perception are not mere phantasy-possibilities. The horizon we have in perception is not completely separated from the field of perception; on the contrary, as we have seen, it plays a crucial role in the constitution of perception. We can thus introduce, as Husserl himself does it,¹⁷ the difference between real possibilities and mere phantasy-*presentifications* (*Vergegenwärtigungen*). For example when perceiving the corner of a street, a real possibility would be that once I get at the end of the street I can have a coffee in a restaurant. A mere phantasy-possibility would be that I encounter a centaur in the restaurant. The first possibility belongs to the horizon of perception, on the contrary the second one does not, precisely because of the complete separation of the field of perception and field of phantasy.¹⁸ On the other hand, if such a separation exists, would that mean that we can also speak of a world of phantasy? And can we speak of a world of phantasy not only in a metaphorical sense (as we could say that the phantasized mythological scene implies a mythological world), but in a narrower sense conceiving the world as horizon?

We can sketch out an answer to this question by looking at the description that Husserl gives of the world of an image.

¹⁴ Husserl E., *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1898–1925)*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1980. For the English translation see: *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, (transl. J. B. Brough) Dordrecht, Springer, 2005, p. 85. (The pages refer to the German edition, placed in the margin in the translation.)

¹⁵ Husserl E., *Phantasy*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁶ Husserl E., *Phantasy*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁷ See the text no. 19 of Husserl, *Phantasy*, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ On this point see Claudia Serban's excellent book on *Phénoménologie de la possibilité*, Paris, P.U.F., 2016.

I consider this cemetery presented in an image. Don't I have a place there, a relative position in the world of phantasy, from which I see the cemetery as I see it? Doesn't the appearing of the thing refer to a here, to a point-zero of orientation? Certainly.¹⁹

Insofar as an image offers us the appearing of a phantasy-world, but from a specific point of view, we have to admit that we deal with adumbrations of things in the phantasy-world itself. These adumbrations, just like in perception, refer to a point-zero of orientation which functions as the anchor of the exposing *quasi-sensations* of phantasy. Nevertheless, this is not only true in the case of an image that has a clear image-object but also applies to the phantasy-appearances that are without any physical support:

If I imagine a land of centaurs, a Martian world, etc. and if I imagine things, events, forming and transforming them freely: To what extent am I there? I am there as the I who imagines, here and now, living with my body (*Leib*) in this factual world, I, the empirical person: it is me who imagines. However, we would also say: living in the fiction, I can imagine [*hineinfingieren*] there this same empirical I, with its body, etc., that is to say in this world of phantasy, but I don't need to. I can imagine things without imagining myself within [*hineinfingieren*], me (the empirical I) as a spectator, or simply as a participant of this imagined world, living, acting, etc. [...] Furthermore, in order to be able to be in this world as a practical I, I have to already be something more, in a certain way something like an I given *leiblich*, who belongs to the phantasy-world.²⁰

Phantasy-appearances are, on the one hand, anchored in the act of phantasizing of the empirical subject. It is the empirical subject, present in the perceptual field that surrounds him, with its perceptual horizons anchored in his empirical body and his perceptual world who imagines. On the other hand, as long as this empirical subject is immersed in the world of his phantasy, he has a *Phantasieleib* with a point-zero of orientation and with phantasy-appearances that imply their own horizons and even a unifying horizon that makes up the phantasy-world. This phantasy-I with its phantasy-*Leib* can be a phantasized version of the empirical I, however, as we can see in the quoted passage, this is far from being necessary. Thus, one can speak about phantasy-potentialities anchored in the "*Ich kann, ich tue*" of a *Phantasieleib* that does not necessarily have to be the presentified version of the empirical *Leib*.

¹⁹ Husserl E., *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Erster Teil. 1905–1920*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1973, p. 290.

²⁰ *Idem.*

In the so-called *Bernau Manuscripts* from 1917–18, Husserl analyzes what we could thus call a phantasy-horizon, and he notes that even in phantasy the different appearances remain unified to some extent.²¹ It is especially this unification tendency that makes up a phantasy world. Even phantasy objects appear with a horizon of indeterminacies and it depends on our freedom to fill the indeterminacies of the horizons of phantasy. For example, when phantasizing a mythological scene, the appearing of a centaur through an adumbration implies all the other possible adumbrations of the centaur. Still it also implies an external horizon, a background, a phantasy-space and a phantasy-time, etc. Each individual phantasy implies hence a phantasy-world. And as Husserl notes, there is an infinite number of possible *phantasies*.²² Thus, in the domain of phantasy one has to deal with an infinite multiplicity of possible phantasy-worlds with their own infinite phantasy-horizons. There is no unique world for phantasy-appearances, but each phantasy-appearance implies its own indeterminate and infinitely determinable world. These worlds might overlap though they might also exclude each other; they might be interwoven or separate, but they will never make up a one and unique phantasy-horizon of all phantasy-horizons.

The only possibility of unification of this infinite multiplicity of phantasy-worlds dwells not in phantasy itself but it is founded in time-consciousness. Husserl recognizes indeed that there is a profound truth in the Kantian idea of time being the form of sensibility.²³ Furthermore, he states that objective time is to perception what immanent time is to phantasy. Certainly, the conceiving of the infinite possibility of phantasy-worlds in the form of unified infinity is grounded in the interconnectedness of all the acts of *phantasizing* by the inner time consciousness and therefore they can be understood as modifications of the original temporalization of *presentification*. It is ultimately the presence of the temporal consciousness that unifies the infinite plurality of its possible phantasy-worlds. By virtue of the fact that phantasy-appearances have the mode of temporalization of *Vergegenwärtigung*, understood by Husserl as a modification of the *Gegenwärtigung*, they can be unified and compose this complex multiplicity of phantasy-worlds that thus become horizons unified by the unique horizon of the world in which the subject is phantasizing among their co-subjects.

²¹ Husserl E., *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewußtsein (1917/18)*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001, p. 335.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

III. The architectonical reversal

Before reaching the end of my paper, I would like to address briefly the implications that these conceptions – the world of perception and the infinite plurality of phantasy-worlds – might have in contemporary phenomenology and especially in Marc Richir's thinking. One of the major theses of Richir's phenomenology is the methodical substitution of the register of phantasy for that of perception. According to M. Richir, a *phenomenon* is always an appearing in phantasy, and perception is nothing else than a phantasy-appearance and a positional act of the consciousness which however can be bracketed, in the same way as one brackets the positing of the existence of objects. Performing this step, we open up the realm of what constitutes the phenomenological field for Richir and which is populated by appearances described by Husserl as obscure *phantasies* similar to shadows:

Now how do those “shadows” function? They are “vaguely” mutable, unstable, frequently changing appearances, indeterminate in many ways—with respect to colour, and so on. The object appears in them, only indistinctly, “imperfectly,” “indeterminately.” As if through a veil, a mist, as if in twilight.²⁴

And most importantly for Richir these shadows are not remains or ruins of perceptual data, but make up the original architectonical field on which every experience – and even perception – is grounded.

In other words, in Richir's phenomenology it is not because phantasy is a modification of a presenting act that it offers us an intuition of something that is not present but it furnishes us with an intuition of something non-present because at this register of phenomenality, we can only speak about a presence without any assignable present.²⁵ Surely, reversing the architectonic registers of phantasy and perception also implies the reversal of the relation between presentation and presentification. And it is precisely the thesis of such a reversal that Richir announces in his *Phénoménologie en esquisses*: he argues that “[...] the *Vergegenwärtigung* is plurivocal and it does not have an end, the *Gegenwart* never occurs in it as such, if not in the architectonic transposition”²⁶ of a phantasy-appearance in an imagination understood as a modification. And in his later works, he goes even further arguing that even perception has to be understood as an architectonic transposition

²⁴ Husserl E., *Phantasy*, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

²⁵ Marc Richir calls this specific temporality of *phantasy*-appearances “présence sans présent assignable”. (Richir Marc, *Phénoménologie en esquisses*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2000, p. 9).

²⁶ Richir Marc, *Ibid.*, p. 92.

of phantasy.²⁷ These transpositions could be understood as moments of coagulation of the originally fluid phantasy-field. Each transposition introduces a fixation that results in the loss of the richness of phantasy.

The thesis of M. Richir could be summed up as follows: regarding *phenomena*, we always have at first a *Perzeption* (and not a *Wahrnehmung*)²⁸ in a *perceptual* phantasy that is neither positional nor objectifying. As a second step, the *perceptual* phantasy can be erased to give place to imagination and thus can become an image object, that is to say something representing something else, namely the image subject. At its own turn this image object can be bound to an object and transformed in an *Abschattung*, in an adumbration that offers us a positional and objectifying perception without any mediation and implies a horizon of infinite other adumbrations which are also transposed *phantasies*.²⁹ To formulate the same idea from the point of view of temporalization, we can say that for M. Richir, perception and its specific mode of temporalization, namely *Gegenwärtigung*, are not original but need to be explained genetically as the results of several transpositions of phantasy and the mode of temporalization that is the *Vergegenwärtigung*. It is this latter dimension that he calls the “wild” phenomenological field populated by the “*Wesen sauvages*”, by the “wild essences” that appear as shadows, as if through a veil of mist. If for Husserl the ultimate unifying tendency underlying the concept of the world has to be found in temporalization, Richir conceives the archaic temporalization as originally plurivocal, never attaining the unity of a present (be it a present already past or yet to come) and this implies that we also have to renounce the idea of a unifying *horizon of all horizons*.

Such a reversal of the registers of phantasy and perception challenges the idea of the unity and uniqueness of *one* infinite horizon as the horizon of all horizons. If we take into consideration seriously Richir’s architectonical reversal, we have to give up the idea of an ever unifying horizon, and understand the phenomenological access to world as an access to an infinite multiplicity of world-appearances that we have in phantasy which however can never be unified in an all embracing

²⁷ See for exemple Richir M., *Variations sur le sublime et le soi*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2010, p. 228.

²⁸ The major difference between *Perzeption* and *Wahrnehmung* is that a *Perzeption* does not necessarily objectify what appears in it and it is originally non-positional. A *Wahrnehmung*, on the other hand, is objectifying and positional. For a deeper discussion of this difference see: Carlson Sacha, “Phantasia et imagination : perspectives phénoménologiques (Husserl, Sartre, Richir)” in *Eikasia*, no. 66, 2015, pp. 53–58. (<http://www.revistadefilosofia.org/66-01.pdf>); Dufourcq Annabelle, *La dimension imaginaire du réel dans la philosophie de Husserl*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2011, p. 73; Richir M., *Phantasia, imagination, affectivité*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2004, pp. 503–504; Richir M., *L’écart et le rien. Conversations avec Sacha Carlson*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2015, p. 115.

²⁹ Richir M., *Variations sur le sublime et le soi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–230.

horizon. There is no temporalization that could synthesize this original multiplicity of world-phenomena but each of them deploys its own rhythm.

To describe this infinite multiplicity of worlds, from now on regarded as plural, Richir takes up a pair of concepts introduced by Henri Maldiney. For Richir these floating worlds that appear to us in phantasy, which has to be considered as the most archaic register of the phenomenological field, are *transposable* and *transpassible* in relation to each other. For Maldiney, something is transposable if it is beyond all the possibilities that exist for the *Dasein* or an *ego*, and transpassibility describes the permeability of the *Dasein* or the *ego* to what is transposable for them.³⁰ So for Richir from one phantasy-world to the other there is no possible continuous passage, since one phantasy-world is beyond all the horizons that are potentially present in another phantasy-world. In spite of this fact, the phantasy-worlds stay permeable to each other in what one could call, as Richir does in his works,³¹ a *phenomenological unconscious* of which he also recognizes a cosmic dimension even in his earlier writings.³² This unconscious is phenomenological in the sense that it makes up the most archaic dimension that precedes even the positional self-apperception of an *ego*. The world can no longer be conceived of as a unique and all unifying horizon of a transcendental *ego*. Instead of that, Richir introduces the concept of a phenomenological *apeiron* in which the multiple world-phenomena are intertwined with each other without ever being unified under a unique, all-embracing horizon.³³ Any world-idea (*Weltidee*) that the *ego* could have is transpassible to an infinity of other world-ideas, every perceptual phantasy of a world-phase is transpassible to a virtually infinite number of other perceptual *phantasies*. The unique world of perception is in this sense nothing else but an *institution* of a common world, and it is correlative with the institution of intersubjectivity.³⁴ Thus, the all-unifying horizon of all horizons is revealed

³⁰ Maldiney Henri, "De la transpassibilité", in *Penser l'homme et la folie*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2007, pp. 263–308 and in particular p. 306.

³¹ The notion of a phenomenological unconscious appears relatively early in Richir's works. His *Méditations phénoménologiques* deal with this question in depth but the problem remains a central one even in his latter period that starts with the publication of *Phénoménologie en esquisses*. On the notion of a phenomenological unconscious see also Schnell Alexander, *La dehiscence du sens*, Paris, Hermann, 2015.

³² See for example: Richir M., "Ereignis, temps, et phénomènes", in *Heidegger: Questions ouvertes*. Collège International de Philosophie, Paris, Osiris, mars/avril 1988, pp. 13–36; Richir M., *Méditations phénoménologiques*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 1992, pp. 27–65.

³³ *Idem*. See also Sacha Carlson's excellent analysis of this Richirian idea: Carlson S., *De la composition phénoménologique. Essai sur le sens de la phénoménologie transcendantale chez Marc Richir*, Thèse doctorale, U.C.L., Louvain-la-Neuve, 2014, pp. 488–491.

³⁴ See also Richir M., *Méditations phénoménologiques, op. cit.*, pp. 191–197.

as a symbolical institution which has an infinite plurality of phantasy-worlds as its underlying phenomenological basis.³⁵ The symbolical institution of a unique world means precisely an implosion, a *sum-ballein*, of the original plurality in *one* horizon. However, the “one” is nothing else than a symbol that holds together a phenomenological plurality.

Nevertheless, instead of going into a detailed analysis of Richir’s phenomenology of the world, which is not the topic of my paper, I would like to simply sum up the main points of this paper. I have shown that if we try to describe the world in phenomenology, the principle of principles offers us the way to do so by analyzing perception. By doing so, the world can be defined as an infinitely open horizon of all horizons, as the ever unifying focal point of all embodied possibilities, *i.e.* potentialities. In a second step, we have also seen that even phantasy-appearances present a horizontality and that phantasy-appearances could thus be understood as sectors of a phantasy-world. However, an all unifying phantasy-world that would be the world of all possible *phantasies* cannot be given without anchoring this focal unity in something that is exterior to phantasy. Finally, I pointed out some consequences of these analyses in Richir’s phenomenology, while showing that by defining the field of phantasy as the most archaic field of phenomenology, Richir has to deal with the idea of an infinite and non-unifiable multiplicity of worlds on this basic phenomenological level. Instead of treating the idea of an infinite plurality of phantasy-worlds – upon which the symbolical institution of a unique world is grounded – as a non-solvable problem, in the context of the Richirian phenomenology one can ground on this idea a new phenomenological metaphysics of the world. The phenomenological descriptions of phantasy offer us a way to account for the plurality of worlds in the phenomenological *apeiron* that Richir has put in the centre of his attention in the 90s. Nonetheless, developing a more

³⁵ One could consider some forms of art – insofar as they offer us a glimpse of the unperceivable – as perceptual-*phantasies* of worlds that are transmissible to the symbolically instituted world of our perception. An example for such an artwork that Richir gives in his *Méditations phénoménologiques* is Vermeer’s little yellow wall of his *View of Delft* described by Proust in his *A la recherche du temps perdu*. *Ibid.*, p. 227. Proust himself has formulated a similar idea concerning art in his *Time Regained*: “Through art alone are we able to emerge from ourselves, to know what another person sees of a universe which is not the same as our own and of which, without art, the landscapes would remain as unknown to us as those that may exist on the moon. Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world only, our own, we see that world multiply itself and we have at our disposal as many worlds as there are original artists, worlds more different one from the other than those which revolve in infinite space, worlds which, centuries after the extinction of the fire from which their light first emanated, whether it is called Rembrandt or Vermeer, send us still each one its special radiance.” (Proust Marcel, *Time Regained*, (trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, T. Kilmartin, A. Mayor) New York, Random House, 1981, pp. 931–932).

detailed analysis of Richir's own phenomenology of the world-phenomena would be a task of another paper.

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