

Selfhood and Politics

JAMES MENSCH, *St. Francis Xavier University*

The Social and the Private

Since the close of the cold war, there seems to be a certain constant in the conflicts that have marked multinational conferences. Again and again, we see the smaller states opposing the efforts of the larger to determine the structures of their relations. One of the factors of this opposition is the fear of loss of identity. In a world increasingly determined by global interests, cultural and economic particularity seems to be a luxury that few can afford. For many, the name of this fear is “globalization.” They take the term as signifying a process that threatens to replace individuality with an empty universality. Benignly regarded, globalization promises a world where we all drink the same soft drinks, wear the same jeans, watch the same movies, and listen to the same music—all of it, presumably, American. A darker vision sees within such homogeneity the dangers of totalitarianism. As Hannah Arendt noted, totalitarian systems presuppose a certain uniformity to achieve their effect. The ideal they tend to is that of reducing their subjects to a situation analogous to marbles on a table. The slightest tilt will make the marbles roll in the same direction. When citizens lose their individuality, when each is stripped of his particularizing relations to his neighbors, then the state gains the ability to apply a uniform power to produce a uniform effect. Here the controllability of the response is directly proportional to the reduction of each of us to everyone else. In this less benign view, the globalization that American capitalism promotes is actually a new form of totalitarianism. After the fascism and communism of the previous century, its third, capitalistic wave is now upon us.

We need not accept this dark vision to feel uneasy about the emerging global community. At the root of our disquiet is, I think, a sense that an aspect of our selfhood is under attack. The fear is that when we do become just like everyone else, we will lose our privacy. The privacy that is threatened is not the privacy of the isolated self. Isolation, in fact, is the mark of selfhood in totalitarian systems. It is the connections between people that allow them to resist state power. Those who do resist are both social and private. They are determined by their social situations and they retain the ability to judge them from their individual perspectives. In doing so, they assume a standpoint both within and outside the society they judge. Their privacy is such that it breaks up any attempt at “totalization.” In Levinas’ words, it undermines all attempts (including those of globalization) to “reduce the other to the Same.”¹

Current views are not very helpful in capturing this dual sense of the social and the private. At their extremes, they either see society as a sum of individuals—as an aggregate of essentially private selves—or they take individuals as completely formed by society. The former view expresses itself in the “consumer” or “market society,” where the market is determined by the aggregate of

private purchasing choices. It is also found in the politics that is driven by the latest public opinion polls. The view that sees the individual as completely moldable by society resulted in the collectivism of communist societies. Its most quixotic yet telling attempt was the project of creating "the new socialist man." To attempt this is to assume that we have no inherent private content, that whatever privacy we possess is, in fact, something infinitely accessible. If this view raises the fear of having the self swamped by the collective, its alternative evokes the fear of having the collective swamped by the self. Its nightmare is the destructive individualism that marks certain Western societies.

Both views are obviously one-sided and the failures of each have been used to support the other. In this, they call to mind Kant's antinomies. These are pairs of apparently contradictory positions, each of which maintains itself by refuting its alternative. As Kant points out, the falsity of one of these opposed assertions does not imply the truth of the other since both are based on an inconsistent concept.² The same situation seems to hold here. The failure of collectivism does not imply the individualism of an unfettered consumerism since both presuppose a faulty concept of the self. Assuming the conventions of science, they take the self to be an entity like a thing. They see it as locatable in our heads. As the totality of mental "stuff" in our brains, it is assumed either to be causally determined by the collective or to causally determine it. In neither case is the self grasped in its actual social character. It is not seen in its embodied being-in-the-world. In what follows, I propose to use this character to examine the relation between the social and the private. As we shall see, our being socially determined has a paradoxical result. It actually founds what is inaccessible to such determination. The determination is such that our being exposed to others founds the alterity that allows us to judge these others. Granting the truth of Plato's assertion that the state is the soul writ large, this view of the self has, I think, important implications for political relations in our new century.

The Hiddenness of the Other

How do I grasp that the other person has a private sphere? Let me begin with a simple observation: I know that the contents of the other's consciousness are not similar to my own when she faces me. When we both regard a common object, I usually assume that the sight that fills our consciousness is roughly the same. If I doubt this, I can ask her, and adjust my viewpoint. I cannot, however, see what she sees when she faces me. *Because I cannot see myself*, the content of her consciousness seems to form a private sphere.³ When I then say to myself, "I am a subject just as she is," I assume that I also have such hiddenness. Of course, relative to this person, I do. Facing her, I see what she cannot see—namely herself. But this realm of privateness is not really shut off, not something apart from the public world. In such a world we both appear. What is actually at work here is the fact that

consciousness as such is inherently transcendent. Its intentionality is such that it "evacuates itself" in favor of the object. In other words, what fills a perceptual consciousness is not itself, but rather the object perceived.⁴ Because of this, every act of perception hides the perceiver. Every act shoves the perceiver into the background even as it moves the object into the foreground.

As Merleau-Ponty noted, this foreground-background structure is essential to consciousness. In fact, it *is* consciousness in its intentional structure.⁵ This is because this structure is based on our embodied being-in-the-world. Our body's senses are primarily directed outward. Turning our heads, focusing our eyes, moving closer to get a better look are all tied to bringing an object into the foreground. When we turn away from it, it sinks into the background as another object occupies our consciousness. Given our embodied finitude, we can only turn in one direction at a time. The other directions form its horizon. They indicate the possibilities of our bodily "I can," that is, the set of bodily abilities that relates us to the world. Such abilities allow us to be in the world in the sense of having bodily projects. Inserted by our bodies into the world, we use them to manipulate its objects to achieve our goals. Every such project involves our own hiddenness. For example, someone is knocking and I walk to the door. Perceptually, it is not I myself but the door that fills my consciousness. My thought runs ahead of myself and sees myself there at the door already reaching with my hand to open it. Already, in intention, awaiting myself at the goal, my present situation is thrust into the background.

The above implies a certain reversal in the sense of intentionality. It implies that rather than being a movement from an essentially private subject to a public object, it is actually the reverse. Intentionality begins with the object taken as what is (or will be) publicly available. Its origin is what transcends the private in its being there for everyone. This is because our being-in-the-world is primordially public. This public quality is implicit in the sense of hiddenness just developed. At its basis is the lack of any private content in the self-evacuation (the self-transcendence) of the perceptual act. If we start with such self-transcendence, we have to say that first we are out there among the things, and then we posit the private sphere from which we suppose our intentions originate. In other words, given that our being there (our *Da-sein*) is originally with the object of our intentions, it is our withdrawal into hiddenness that stretches out this thereness to yield intentionality in the traditional sense. Thus, our intentions transcend our private sphere because they begin outside of this. Their starting point is our being-in-the-world outside of ourselves. The selfhood we do transcend is, in this context, a hiddenness in the world we are "in," a hiddenness that owes its origin to this world.

It is possible to express this relation of self and world in biological terms. Biologically regarded, selfhood is sometimes supposed to be a matter of brain function. In this pound and a half of gray matter lie all our memories, intelligence,

ambitions and projects—in short, the totality of what is a self. All this, we are told, is present in the brain. Yet as long as we remain with this reductionist account, the nature of its presence in the brain seems inexplicable. This is because, biologically regarded, the brain is similar to a large secreting gland. Its pathways, the neurons, are long thin tubes “along which waves of chemical change pass....”⁶ The effect of this “chemical pulse” is either to increase or decrease the firing (the sending off of chemical pulses) of the connected neurons. This is all that seems to happen as long as we limit our focus to what is occurring within our heads. Such a limitation, however, ignores the fact that the human brain along with the rest of the body is “in” the world. Having evolved in response to the world, its functioning cannot be understood apart from it. When, however, we regard the brain in terms of the world that is outside of it, we cease to regard it as simply a secreting gland. We have already placed it in an interpretative context that exceeds its structure as a series of chemical pathways. It now shares in the aboutness, the intentionality of an organism whose functioning must be understood in terms that exceed itself. In this, of course, it is not unique. All organisms evolve in terms of the world. Their functioning, insofar as it is directed to fill their bodily needs, is attuned to it. Since need is directed outward, they function with regard to what is not themselves. Thus, what they are “about” as they engage in their activities transcends their physical being. Inherently transcendent in having a world, they possess a primitive intentionality in being engaged in it. When and if in their evolutionary development they become conscious, their consciousness will share this aboutness. It will be intentional. It is only when we localize the brain’s functioning to its physical structures and limit our attention to its chemistry that we lose the intentionality that is the point of this functioning. We do so because we lose the world, which is where intentionality must begin, given its basis in need. Abstracting from the world, we are in a situation analogous to someone examining the transistors of a radio and attempting to discover its function from its structure alone. In point of fact, the orchestra it receives is no more “in” the radio, than the world is “in” my brain. The functioning of both involves, rather, their being-in-the-world. It begins with this.

The Visible and the Invisible

For the child, the sense of being-in-the-world starts with the caregiver. Initially, its intentionality begins with its straining toward the latter. The withdrawal into hiddenness that accompanies this gives the child its first sense of self-hiddenness, its first sense that it cannot see itself. This sense both begins with the other and is compensated by the other. At the beginning, as the phenomenologist Gail Soffer writes, the infant expects “to experience sensations in the hands and feet of the other.” Even later, the child assumes that the other can see through its eyes. Thus, it fails to turn its picture book about when “showing” it to the other.⁷ When

experience disappoints these expectations, the child learns that the other sees what he does not (namely himself), while he sees what the other does not (namely, the other). Together these imply that he can compensate for his lack of self-perception by relying on the other’s perception of him. This is a strategy that serves us throughout our lives. Such reliance, however, involves us in a new hiddenness.

To see this, we must first observe with Merleau-Ponty that “to see the other’s body is to see my body as an object.”⁸ I need the other to gain an objective sense of myself. I can see my hand, but I cannot see my backside. To complete my body image I must acquire a sense of this from the other—originally from my caregiver or parent. He has a backside; I must have one too. It is, in fact, the sight of the caregiver that originally brings a wholeness to the body that the child can only grasp in parts.⁹ The other does not just allow me to grasp the integrity of my body as something that can be viewed in the round (something that has simultaneously both a front and back). The other is also crucial for my sense that this body is capable of objective motion. As Merleau-Ponty observes, “my body is never *in movement perspektivisch*, as are the other things.”¹⁰ I can leave other things behind. As I do, they become smaller. In their own change of position, they show first one perspective and then another. I cannot, however, leave my own body behind. It remains “here,” never departing in space from me. To get a sense of its having an objective motion, of transiting in space like other objects, I must pair it with another person’s body. I must transfer to myself the sense of the other’s moving from one position to another in the world. Thus, I need the other both for the sense of my being objectively out there in the world and as capable of objectively transiting it. Such being in the world is never solipsistic. Its sense always presupposes the givenness of the other.

This presupposition involves me in a kind of alternating hiddenness. On the one side, I have the immediate sense of my body as mine—this is the body whose movement is “not perspectival.” Broadly speaking, this is the body of the “I can,” the body that I directly experience in my ability to move myself. On the other side, I have my body’s sense as there in the world, as objectively present and moving within it. The body in its first sense is invisible with regard to the second. My body’s incapacity to depart from me means that it is incapable of the perspectival unfolding that would allow it to appear objectively. Similarly, the body in this objective sense is invisible with regard to its first, immediate sense. In the sphere of what Husserl calls “my own” (*mir Eigenes*), I never leave the here. A movement from here to there in such a sphere cannot be made. The result of these two senses is an alternating invisibility or hiddenness, one that depends on the perspective we take. What we have, in fact, is the presence of the invisible in the visible. We are in the objective world because from childhood on we are never alone. But this being in the world is fissured. It conceals an invisibility which is that of the body in its immediate presence. The body of “I can” cannot appear within it.¹¹

Hiddenness and Causality

For Kant, the objective invisibility of this “I can” is expressed in his phenomenal-noumenal distinction. The noumenal is the realm of the freedom that cannot appear. The phenomenal realm is that of objective presence. It is also the realm of causality. The tie between causality and objective presence comes from Kant’s insight that being in an objective world presupposes a common temporal ordering of our perceptions. Thus, when I assert that an objective event has occurred, I presuppose that the sequence of perceptions by which I grasp it is the same as that experienced by others who see it. A common sequence gives us a common, objective sense. It can be common, however, only if its ordering is necessary rather than random.¹² Kant, following Hume, defines causality in just these terms. Phenomenologically speaking, the assertion that A causes B is simply the claim that the perception of A is always followed by that of B. Thus, to assume a common, objective world is, for Kant, to assume that its objects are causally determined.¹³ The upshot is that nothing can be without its cause in the objective world. Everything must have its “sufficient reason.” Such necessity, of course, is not apprehended like a thing. It is not some object in the world. It is rather an interpretive stance or “category” I assume in relating my perceptions to a common world. When I do assume it, I once again fissure my world. On the one side, I have my self-movement and the freedom of the “I can”—for example, I can move myself, turn my head, etc. On the other, I have the causal necessity that marks the motion of objects out there. “Out there,” in the objective world, nothing moves itself. This is because the freedom of the “I move myself” violates the interpretative stance I must assume to enter the objective world. Freedom, in other words, becomes invisible in this world. It cannot appear. It is, in Kant’s terms, strictly “noumenal.”

The difficulty in this Kantian dichotomy may be stated simply. Other human subjects appear to me and they appear as free. If they did not, I would not take them as *subjects like myself*. To be like me, they must be responsible for their actions. They must embody the freedom of the “I move myself.” *It is precisely such others I must presuppose in order to have an objective world.* This world is common to me and my others. But these others must be subjects like me. The grasp of this common world, however, is simultaneous with my grasp of myself as objectively present in the world. It marks the transition from the “I move myself” to “I transit space” like other objects out there. To make it, of course, I need to transfer to myself the sense of the other person as also “in” space, the other as part of the objective world. Such an other, however, is not free but rather causally determined. He is in a world whose positing as objective assumes that there is nothing within it without its cause. The inference is that to enter the objective world, I have to grasp the other as both caused and free. The same holds for me insofar as I enter this world by transferring his sense to myself.

There is, in fact, a dual transfer of sense, one which goes on simultaneously and continuously. I transfer my sense of freedom (my “I can”) to the other to grasp her as a subject like myself. I also receive from her my sense of being an object in an objective world. As a result, we take on the dual sense of being both subjective and objective. We appear as both free and caused, as objectively hidden and present. Thus, I take the other as vulnerable to the assaults of the world, as capable of being crushed by it. Yet I also take her as an agent, as able to employ its causality to accomplish her purposes. As a causal agent, she moves objects by moving herself. While her moving objects is apparent, her self-movement is not. Objectively, the most I can imagine is a little person within her moving her. Since this fiction is untenable, I have to say that this appearance conceals an essential hiddenness. In this appearing, the other “gives” herself as not being able to be objectively given. This giving points to her necessary role in the constitution of the objective world—the very world in which she cannot be given. In this world, she is “like me” in being both present and hidden. The essential point here is that such hiddenness is inherently intersubjective. It is not something prior to or extraneous to the intersubjective world. It is part of its constitution.¹⁴

Language and Hiddenness

No account of the intersubjective grounding of hiddenness can be complete without mentioning the dominant feature of our common world: its linguistic structuring. Ours is a world where we speak with each other. The objects within it are clothed with the meanings that our common language provides. The reason for this springs from the way we learned our language. Our initial life projects—such as learning to eat at the table—were accompanied by a constant commentary from our caregivers. Each new object or activity was introduced to us with a verbal description. As the child learns to speak, a remarkable phenomenon arises: it also learns to lie. In this, it shows itself capable of both truth and falsity, of both openness and hiddenness. Because it can lie, its words cannot automatically be taken as revealing what it has “in mind.” Thus, the very thing that opens this mind up to me—the child’s learning to speak—also brings about the possibility of its concealment. In fact, the sense of its mind as a place of hiddenness, of privacy now comes to the fore. In adult life, I get this sense each time I begin to mistrust the words of others. The thought that they are concealing their intentions makes me regard the latter as hidden. I say to myself, “I don’t know what they are thinking,” making their intentions part of their interior, hidden life.

When the suspicion of lying makes me posit an inaccessible life, I do so on the basis of language. Language, however, is intersubjective. It is part of our being in the world along with others. Given this, the hiddenness of intentions must be inherent in our common world. One way to see this is to observe how we reveal the objects of the world through our intentions. If, for example, my intention is to write, then this paper appears to me as “what you write upon.” If it is to start a fire,

then it appears as “combustible.” In each case, the object’s sense is its instrumental character; it is its function as a means for the accomplishment of my projects. As William James noted, objects only appear as correlates of the projects that reveal them.¹⁵ In fact, as Heidegger stresses, it is only in terms of such projects that the world appears at all, i.e., as articulated into objects with disclosed properties.¹⁶ Thus, what gives the world its common cast is the interweaving of our projects. This makes the senses of its objects intersubjective and hence capable of being expressed by language, which is inherently intersubjective. Yet language does not just express the senses of the world as given by similar sets of projects. Insofar as the same object can be the goal of different projects, its disclosed sense can be multiplied. As intersubjective, language itself is open to this multiplicity. In describing an object, the words it uses are not limited to the single meaning that this object must bear. In the very multiplicity of the meanings available to it, language, rather than being the unambiguous recorder of intentions, has the ability to conceal.

Subjectively regarded, this concealment points back to me, to my intentions. The different senses of the object point back to the different possible projects which can disclose it. Thus, when you doubt my words, you doubt that I will actually engage in the behavior (the project) which they promise. Objectively, however, the place where the different senses of the object are hidden is the world. It is because the world affords multiple possibilities of behavior, each with its own intentions, that we can speak of its objects having different senses. Here, the question of our hiddenness concerns these different possibilities of behavior. How are they inherent in our world? What is the feature of the world that in concealing multiple possibilities allows us to conceal ourselves?

The answer is implicit in what was said above. Our being-in-the-world is mediated by language. The objects within it are drenched in linguistic meanings. We learned these by participating, actually or imaginatively, in the different projects of our others. The result is that to apprehend the world through language is to see it as implicitly containing multiple possibilities of behavior, possibilities that are expressed by its multiple senses. Mediated by language, the objects of my world have, in fact, a sign-like character. Like the words that express them, their primary referent is the range of possibilities they afford me. My openness to these possibilities is my freedom. It is my having the world as a field of choices. This freedom is not within me. It is out there in the world, i.e., in the possibilities it offers to me. The same holds for my hiddenness. When I speak, I reveal myself as open to the possibilities of the world that I share with my others. *Their multiplicity is simultaneously contained in the openness of my language.* It is, in fact, essential for its communicative function. It is also essential for my use of language to evaluate different choices. This openness, however, is also a concealment since, *given my finitude, I cannot simultaneously realize their multiplicity.* Speaking, then, I reveal myself as open to more than I can reveal. I give myself as not being

able to be given. This inability is my privacy; yet it follows from my being in communication with others and their possibilities. So regarded, my concealment is an inherent part of the constitution of a common world. Along with my freedom, it is a function of the possibilities it affords me.

Implications

Aristotle believed that the actuality of something is where it is at work, where its activity manifests its concrete presence. Color, for example, is in the seeing eye. It is not in the electromagnetic waves that pulse through the ether. Similarly, sound is in the ear, not in the pressure waves of the surrounding air. The view that I have been sketching makes the same point regarding our selfhood. To think of it as being-in-the-world is to see the world as the place of its actualization. The world is the place where its activity manifests its concrete presence as both intersubjective and private, that is, as both given and not able to be given. A number of implications follow from this. I shall mention only the most important. It follows from the fact that selfhood requires an intersubjective, speaking community for its manifestation. This implies that it is vulnerable to the impoverishment of language. In particular, the expressions of power that deform communication by preventing people from speaking their minds can diminish the very selfhood—the “mind”—that speech is supposed to manifest. This is because they prevent our access to the possibilities that constitute our freedom. The implication here is that the safeguards of selfhood are all the human rights that defend speech and action against the encroachments of arbitrary power. The universality of such rights does not point to subjectivity as some uniform quantity. It is not in any sense tied to the uniformity of culture implied by globalization. Such rights are rather conditions for the privacy of selfhood. They are founded on the recognition that its inaccessibility is a function of the public realm. As such, it is something that can be lost.

There are failed communities. There are societies that, given their history of dictatorship, have great difficulties with freedom. Their attempts to restore it tend to go awry. These negative examples point to the political imperative of maintaining the public realm as a place where freedom can manifest itself. Positively, this involves fostering the richness of the intersubjective world. The task is no less than that of multiplying the mutually enriching possibilities of our being-in-the-world. Such possibilities involve our living in large and small states, with all the diversity this implies. Any diminishment of this, in limiting the possibilities of our world, limits our selfhood.

This can be put in terms of the care of the self. The view I have just sketched implies that such care is not just a personal but also a political goal. Ancient writers took this link as a matter of course. It is implicit in Aristotle’s writing his *Ethics* as a necessary introduction to his *Politics*. It is also implied in Plato’s assertion that the state is the soul writ large. As Plato interpreted this, the

state actually “writes” the soul. Its character determines that of its citizens. I would only add that the success of the state in caring for the soul is measured by the ways in which it allows it to escape from the uniformity of its action. The measure of the public realm is the possibilities of hiddenness it alone can foster. The state that writes well gives the soul the freedom that allows it to judge its text.

Notes

1. *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 43.
2. In Kant's words, “If two opposed judgments presuppose an inadmissible condition, then in spite of their contradiction (which is not actually a genuine one), both fall to the ground, inasmuch as the condition, under which alone each of these propositions is supposed to hold, itself falls.” (“Kritik der reinen Vernunft,” B531; 2d ed., in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed. Berlin, George Reiner, III: 345–6) For Kant, this condition was that the appearing object was the thing in itself.
3. With this, we reverse Descartes' order of certainty. From a Cartesian perspective, self-certainty is first; certainty regarding others must be deduced from this. The self, in this perspective, is the sphere of the unhidden, while the other, in transcending this, remains hidden. Here, however, it is the fact of my own self-hiddenness which makes me say that the other, in regarding me, is inaccessible to me. Her inaccessibility is based on my own. The original hiddenness is, in fact, that of myself to myself in my being-in-the-world.
4. This is why, as Merleau-Ponty notes, “Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question of setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed.” (*Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967], 374)
5. To posit an object “absolutely” without this structure is, then, to posit it in a way that it can never be grasped by consciousness. In fact, as Merleau-Ponty writes, “the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness” since it dispenses with this structure. (*Ibid.*, 71)
6. Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 15.

7. Gail Soffer, “The Other as Alter Ego: A Genetic Approach,” *Husserl Studies* 15 (1999), 158.
8. *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 225.
9. Lacan believes this occurs with the child's recognizing “his own image in the mirror.” For Lacan, this stage, in which “the I is precipitated in a primordial form,” occurs “before it [the I] is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.” (“The Mirror Stage” in *Écrits: A Selection* [New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977], 2) My position is that the original “mirror” is the bodily presence of the caregiver.
10. *The Visible and the Invisible*, 224.
11. Two temporalities correspond to this fissure. One is invisible with regard to the other. We have “inner time consciousness,” which is given by the “I move.” Its moments arise in the registering of my impressions (both bodily and optical) as “I move.” We also have objective time, which corresponds to my body placed in space through others. This is the time that measures objective movement. Its moments are given by time pieces.
12. “Kritik der reinen Vernunft,” B 240.
13. *Ibid.*, B246–7. An example will make his position clear. By virtue of my bodily “I can,” I can turn my head to the right or the left. Here, the ordering of my perceptions is perfectly arbitrary. The freedom implicit in my “I can” determines whether I first see A and then B or the reverse as I turn my head. To assert, in this instance, that A precedes B, is to make what Kant calls a “judgment of perception.” Its only claim concerns the subjective ordering of my perceptions. To move from this to an objective claim is for Kant to engage in a “judgment of experience.” This judgment is about the objects I experience. In making it, I assume that the perceptual series that displays these objects is necessary—that is, that it is necessarily determined by the objects themselves. (See Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, §§18–19) This, however, places the objects judged in the realm of causality. If A always precedes B, A must cause B. (*Ibid.*, §29) The same holds for every situation I make a public claim about.
14. All this affects how we take the traditional, Kantian account of the visible-invisible split. From the Kantian (and Husserlian) perspective, I do not appear insofar as I constitute. The deepest layer of constitution is that of temporalization.

Thus, as Kant argues, all appearance is temporally extended. Everything temporally extended requires temporal synthesis. But that which synthesizes cannot be the result of its synthesis. Thus, it cannot itself be temporally extended and, hence, cannot appear. (“Kritik der reinen Vernunft,” B156–9) If, however, temporal synthesis were founded in my bodily “I can,” i.e., in my being-in-the-world, then the ground would naturally appear. Its non-appearing would be a function of its appearing. It would be a function of its giving itself as not being able to be given. It would be an implication of appearance itself. What we have, then, is a reversal of the Kantian procedure. Kant explains appearance in terms of the hiddenness of temporally constituting subjectivity. The reversal explains the hiddenness of subjectivity in terms of appearance. It does this in terms of its being-in-the-world—the very being that, in the appearance of its “I can,” grounds temporalization.

15. See William James, “Reasoning” in *Psychology: Briefer Course* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1948), 354–57.

16. This is why, as he writes, “World is only, if, and as long as Dasein exists.” (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, revised edition, trans. Albert Hofstadter [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988], 170) As an “equipmental totality,” which is uncovered by our projects, it depends on us. (See *ibid.*, 163–4) Such a world, of course, is not “nature,” which “always already is.” The elements of nature become objects in our “world” when through our projects we disclose them. (*Ibid.*, 169)