Recognition and intersubjectivity are two key concepts that have traversed the most important philosophical traditions, including German Idealism, Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Pragmatism, and ethics broadly construed. However, while the philosophical roots of recognition are often associated with Classical German Philosophy, it is a matter of disagreement whether recognition and intersubjectivity can be taken as synonyms. For instance, Robert R. Williams argued for the existence of the concept of intersubjectivity in German Idealism, exploring the convergence between Husserl’s and Hegel’s phenomenology. According to Williams, the problem of recognition is the problem of the other. Essentially, it is a question of carrying out Descartes’ programme, i.e. the primacy of subjectivity, without lapsing into Cartesian solipsism. In this respect, Fichte’s and Hegel’s philosophy provide the ground to conceive of the other as a category that is inextricably linked to the metaphysics of Geist.

However, it is worth noting that the concept of recognition calls into question issues of ontological individuation, metaphysical identity, moral responsibility and acknowledgment that shift significantly not only from Fichte to Hegel, but even more substantially from German Idealism to Phenomenology. While the former is broadly concerned with the metaphysical architecture of subjectivity, the latter brings forth issues related to our affective and epistemic appraisal of other

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1 Williams 1992, 35.
embodied subjects. And yet it is undeniable that both concepts share a common philosophical task, which consists in shedding light on the structure and development of our basic acquaintance with the alien world. From this point of view, Critical Theory has played a crucial role in addressing the social implications of the concept of recognition as well as in uncovering its different modalities, which range from the sphere of affectivity to the linguistic and pragmatic dimensions of interpersonal encounters. By and large, however, the relation between recognition (Anerkennung) – as conceived by German Idealism (esp. Hegel and Fichte) – and intersubjectivity – as developed by the XX century phenomenological movement, represents an open question sporadically addressed in the literature.

One can explore the philosophical connection between intersubjectivity and recognition from different perspectives that either reconstruct specific philosophical debates, or focus on selected issues that shed new light on the reaches and scopes of both concepts. In any case, the dialogue between German Idealism, Phenomenology, and Critical Theory proves to be fruitful and deserves more work and research, especially in light of the open questions it raises. Leaving aside whether and how philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, or Levinas did consciously attempt to inherit and pursue the original problems posited by Hegel and Fichte, it is still a matter of controversy whether and how (1) recognition and intersubjectivity overlap social and moral issues, especially in Hegel’s case, and (2) whether the concept of intersubjectivity has enough explanatory power to explicate the many different phenomena it is supposed to cover.

2 See, in particular, HONNETH 1995 and PETHERBRIDGE 2013.
3 While the questions that inspired this issue are specifically concerned with the convergence between recognition and intersubjectivity, the parallels and philosophical connections between German Idealism and Phenomenology have been the objects of a number of studies in recent years. See, for instance, STAHELER 2003 and 2016 as well as the essays edited by WAIBEL, BREAZEALE, ROCKMORE 2010, FABBIANELLI and LUFT 2014, MANCA, MAGRI, FERRARIN 2015, and MORTON and MAGRI 2017. Concerning Hegel and Critical Theory, see the articles edited by O’CONNOR and GILADI 2017.
Problem (1) involves not only textual and exegetic analysis of Hegel’s texts, but also a deeper engagement with the extraordinary stratification of readings of the famous IV chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. While, for many scholars, the master-servant relationship is inexorably linked to the problem of sociality, others have stressed that this represent a reductionist reading that neglects to take into consideration the systematic development of the self throughout the *Phenomenology*. It is undeniable that the concept of *Anerkennung* introduces to the I-Thou relation, but it is questionable whether such relation corresponds to the discovery of intersubjectivity as plurality of egos, or to the dimension of sociality (implying anthropological and moral issues), or rather to a different form of self-knowledge and practical development of rationality. In this sense, the philosophical dialogue between intersubjectivity and recognition helps us re-read Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* in light of its unexplored issues and problems, such as the genesis of the self and its different forms of affective and reflective awareness.

Problem (2) concerns more closely the extent of the concept of *Intersubjektivität*. For Husserl, the concept of intersubjectivity is linked to the problem of the phenomenological reduction. While he tries to work out the individuality of the ego in relation to other egos, he borrows the notion of *Einfühlung* from Theodor Lipps, but he is careful to distinguish his own approach from Lipps’. In this way, the notion of intersubjectivity is crucial to uncover the phenomenology of the alien world, to paraphrase Waldenfels, namely to bring to attention the richness of the self-other relation (which is not restricted to human beings, but includes non-human beings and even, as shown by de Warren in this issue, the departed selves). Yet intersubjectivity appears, sometimes, as an umbrella term that covers many different aspects of interpersonal experience, including the constitution of a

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4 For a historical overview, see BODEI 2007.
5 See, for example, the different views on recognition of Herrmann and Cobben in this issue. See also de BOER 2013 and FERRARIN 2016.
6 For a critical reconstruction, see ZAHAVI 2014.
pre-objective world as well as the basic and primordial encounter with another self. To be sure, for Husserl, several distinctions apply when it comes to articulating the sphere of subjectivity as such (e.g. the transcendental self, the personal ego, the subject of practical and moral action, the monad, etc.). It appears then worthwhile to reconsider the goals and reaches of the concept of intersubjectivity in light of the different levels of recognition that the phenomenological method enables, and in this sense the connection to contemporary research in Critical Theory looks very promising.

This issue of *Metodo – International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* aims to provide the ground for new discussions on the philosophical connections between these different philosophical traditions (German Idealism, Phenomenology, and Critical Theory). It also aims to investigate more deeply whether and how the conceptual relation between recognition and intersubjectivity is fruitful for our understanding of the life-world and social reality more generally. On the one hand, the contributions of Cobben, Gardner, Herrmann, Moran, Jardine, Russell, de Warren, and Dahlstrom engage with a number of issues, that surround the concepts of intersubjectivity and recognition, with particular regard to the constitution of the intersubjective world. The topics discussed range from the appraisal of the other in Hegel’s philosophy as well as in the phenomenological and critical traditions to responsibility, shame, after-life, and pragmatics. On the other hand, Hartz and Ponzio explore in detail the hidden relevance of Fichte’s and Hegel’s thought in Arendt and Levinas respectively.

Paul Cobben’s paper, *Recognition and Intersubjectivity in Hegel’s Philosophy*, frames the problem of recognition in Hegel’s philosophy drawing attention to the fact that the subjects involved cannot be taken as concrete individuals. Referring to Sartre and Heidegger, Cobben weaves together a subterranean dialogue between Hegel and Phenomenology. For Cobben, the concept of recognition in Hegel’s philosophy must be explored systematically and cannot be reduced to the *Phenomenology*. In this way, Cobben instructively illuminates the
problematic relation between Hegel’s account of recognition and the concrete intersubjective terrain provided by the sphere of institutions and ethical life.

Sebastian Gardner’s paper, *Sartre’s Original Insight*, is an elegant and fine-grained analysis of the problem of intersubjectivity in Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* that draws on Sartre’s criticism of Hegel. Gardner shows that Sartre’s account requires an apriori, transcendental level of justification of intersubjectivity, and this provides the ground for an altogether different account of the I-We relation compared to Hegel’s. At the same time, Gardner shows that Sartre’s account has political and ethical implications that are capable of overturning the Hegelian-Marxian traditional approach to social philosophy.

Steffen Herrmann’s paper, *Asymmetrical Reciprocity. From Recognition To Responsibility and Back* draws an original and thought-provoking parallel between Hegel’s logic of recognition and Levinas’ theory of responsibility. For Herrmann, the master-servant relationship in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* exhibits an asymmetrical relationship that is ontologically relevant for sociality. More specifically, Herrmann argues that the IV Chapter of the *Phenomenology* contains an asymmetrical dependency that is rooted in the structure of communication and is paralleled by Levinas’ account of responsibility. Ultimately, however, Herrmann suggests that both Hegel and Levinas overlook a fundamental aspect about recognition that is grasped by Arendt’s reflections on the self-exposure that is distinctive of our response to the other.

Dermot Moran’s paper, *The Phenomenology of the Social World: Husserl on Mitsein as Ineinandersein and Füreinandersein*, provides a detailed reconstruction of the quest for sociality within the phenomenological movement, making references not only to Husserl, but also to a constellation of thinkers that are often neglected in the literature, such as Jan Patočka, Alfred Schutz, and Tomoo Otaka. Moran argues that Husserl refers to many different forms of social constitution that one can also find in Heidegger, such as *Mitsein, Weltlichkeit, Alltäglichkeit*,
Zeitlichkeit, and Geschichtlichkeit. These different concepts point to a stratification of sense in Husserl’s philosophy that is not devoid of problems, as shown by Schutz’s criticism of Husserl.

James Jardine’s paper, Elementary Recognition and Empathy: a Husserlian Account explores the affinity between Honneth’s account of elementary recognition and Husserl’s theory of empathy. In particular, Jardine’s fine-grained insight shows that both elementary recognition and Husserl’s view of empathy lie below the level of judicative thinking as they depend on a net of motivational nexuses that form the basis for our response to others as persons. In this way, Jardine illuminates the dual stratification inherent in both Husserl’s and Honneth’s modes of recognition, thereby establishing the basis for their dialogue.

Matheson Russell’s paper, Habermas and the ‘Presupposition’ of the Common Objective World, is a thought-provoking contribution regarding the significance of the pre-objective world or life-world in both Habermas and Husserl. Russell focuses particularly on the linguistic modes of intersubjectivity, thereby advancing the debate on the connection between Habermas’s pragmatic model and Husserl’s phenomenology. In particular, Russell suggests that there is an important convergence between Habermas and Husserl, which involves the articulation of our practical involvement with the world as sustained by linguistic practices.

Nicolas de Warren’s paper, Souls of the Departed. Towards a Phenomenology of the After-Life, argues that it is possible to decline the problem of intersubjectivity in a specific and non-egological way when the loss of another person is at stake. Combining in a fascinating and insightful way philosophy and literature, de Warren makes a case for the conceptual articulation of the relation to the departed, drawing on Ingarden’s notion of metaphysical intuition and Patočka’s writings. In this way, de Warren shows that, while the death of the other interrupts the circularity and mutual constitution of intersubjective relationships, there is still room not only for surviving the absence of the other, but also for surviving our own absence in the other’s departure.
Daniel O. Dahlstrom’s paper, *Scheler on Shame: A Critical Review*, investigates the relation between shame and intersubjectivity, providing a thorough and critical review of Scheler’s account of shame. Dahlstrom draws attention not only to Scheler’s distinction between bodily and spiritual shame, but also to the relation between shame and self-protection as well as to the peculiar entanglement between universality and particularity that characterises the experience of being ashamed. Thus, Dahlstrom shows that shame includes different levels for Scheler, involving a complex stratification of bodily feelings, self-worth awareness, and love.

Emily Hartz’s article, *The Existential Dimension of Right: Individuality, plurality and right in Fichte and Arendt*, investigates closely the relation between Fichte’s and Arendt’s account of right. The author’s view is that it is possible to conceive of the sphere of right as an existential dimension in a way that is not captured by standard treatments of right. Drawing on Fichte’s *Foundations of Natural Right* and Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition*, Hartz argues that both Fichte and Arendt conceive of right as the dimension in which we ontologically come to express ourselves as human subjects. Yet Hartz also points out the fundamental contrast between Fichte’s emphasis of modern State and Arendt’s view of “the right to have rights”, which is essentially linked to the problem of vulnerability inherent in any system of rights.

Julia Ponzio’s article, *Il riconoscimento e la possibilità del dire in Levinas*, articulates the problem of recognition and forgiveness in Levinas drawing on Levinas’ appraisal of Hegel’s view of forgiveness and reconciliation in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The author’s view is that Levinas offers the tools to reconceptualise the problem of recognition in a way that does not depend on the Hegelian logic of self-justification and self-appropriation. Yet Ponzio also develops the hypothesis that Levinas’ approach to the problem of forgiveness contains *in nuce*, albeit implicitly, a fundamental Hegelian inspiration that does not seek to reduce the other to the self.
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