



Husserl, Heidegger, and the Transcendental Dimension of Phenomenology

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Abstract

Understanding phenomenology as a philosophical approach in which human-world relationships are analysed, as well as the constitution of subjectivity and objectivity within these relationships, this paper addresses some issues related to the transcendental dimension in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. An attempt is also made to re-address some issues related to phenomenology and its transcendental dimension as understood by adherents of hermeneutical phenomenology such as Paul Ricoeur. In essence, the focus of the paper is on exploring the following issues: what is this transcendental turn in Husserl's philosophy? Is this an 'unfortunate turn' toward a neo-Kantian brand of transcendental idealism? What is the significance of this transcendental dimension in Husserl's phenomenology? Is there any distinctive phenomenological programme that, despite their differences, is common to both Husserl and Heidegger? This line of questioning proceeds from the observations made by Paul Ricoeur that, "with the development of his 'hermeneutics of facticity', Heidegger rejected Husserl's neo-Kantian brand of transcendental phenomenology in favour of a de-transcendental and historicized way of doing philosophy, that Heidegger understood the subject to be 'factic', in contrast to Husserl's pure ego as the source of the world constitution" (Hahn, 1995). Ultimately, however, the thrust of this exploration is towards understanding the transcendental way of doing philosophy and the so-called historicized way of philosophizing as two distinct ways to reach one common goal, the transcendental dimension of meaning.

Husserl, Heidegger, and the Transcendental Dimension of Phenomenology

The question that is posed by Steven Crowell, and the question that I would like to pose, is this: is Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology a counter position to the philosophical phenomenology advocated by Husserl? Can the positions of these two philosophers have anything in common, despite the primacy of consciousness and epistemology in Husserl, and the primacy of ontology of Being in Heidegger? Rather than interpreting Heidegger's thinking as a radical departure from Husserl in the name of concrete existence (existentialism), intuitive non-conceptual experience (mysticism), or the

singularity and multiplicity of life (life-philosophy), Crowell argues that Heidegger's approach transforms rather than destroys Husserl's basic insights about meaning and intentionality. In order to grasp this, we must look at Heidegger's commitment to Husserl's project of transcendental phenomenology in terms of the transcendental space of meaning. In other words, in Heidegger, as in Husserl, there is commitment to doing philosophy phenomenologically and methodologically. Contrary to this view, however, some exponents of hermeneutical phenomenology, including Paul Ricoeur, hold that there are serious methodological differences between these two great exponents of phenomenology evident in their respective philosophical positions. In Husserl,

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philosophy as phenomenology is a quest for the intentionality of the “cogito”, while in Heidegger the central question is the ontology of Being.

Steven Crowell argues that Husserl and Heidegger are nevertheless both working out the transcendental space of meaning, which is presupposed and enacted in all understanding and interpretation. Against this background, I shall make an attempt at understanding why there have always been disagreements about the interpretation of Heidegger’s relation to the phenomenological tradition, and in what manner these differences can be minimized. In order to do this, it is necessary to understand both Husserl and Heidegger as exponents of a common phenomenological methodology that requires serious commitment to a transcendental realm of meaning. This is what I intend to show in this paper. I shall begin with what is meant by the primacy of consciousness in Husserl and the so-called “counter position” of Heidegger with his central focus on the question of Being and the ontological way of doing philosophy.

Husserl, Heidegger, and the “Common Phenomenological Project”

For Edmund Husserl, one of the central questions for philosophy is: “what it is for us to know?” - in other words, “what it is for us to be conscious of anything?” From a phenomenological perspective, this is a question we cannot help asking, because man is essentially an explorer of a transcendental realm of meaning. In other words, we live in meaning, and we live “towards”, oriented to experience. That is the only way we can look for the meaningful realm of anything, since we exist in terms of our intentional nature, with intentionality thus being at the heart of our knowing. To be aware of anything is to be inclined “towards something”. This phenomenological account of our mode of being and our mode of knowing emerged as unique and novel, challenging both the empirical approach and the analytic tradition. The empiricist’s approach to experience and to the measurable content of perception relies on data that leaves out of account the specifically “subjective” dimension of consciousness: if our “immediate experience consists of inherently meaningless sense data represented in the mind” (Feenberg, 1999), there is no scope for accommodating other features of our experience, like the contemplative viewpoint. In the analytic tradition, with its emphasis on linguistic analysis and treatment of language as a system, experience is abstracted and translated into words: the content of this system may refer to things we experience, but it cannot deal directly with experience. Both these accounts of experience therefore fail to take us back to the lived dimension of reality, back to the things as they are in themselves.

Husserl’s phenomenology is a proposal for an alternate way of looking at things. Husserl declares his adherence to the “given”: “to safeguard the right of insights, we phenomenologists are positivists” (quoted in Palmer, 2002). Similar pursuit of the lived dimension of experience in Bergson, Dilthey, and many other predecessors of Husserl, establishes the fact that there was great longing for this concrete dimension of life and meaning. William James (1904/1912) was the first ‘phenomenologist’ to conceptualize this lived dimension of experience when he defined consciousness in terms of the “stream of consciousness”. James argued that experience already contains meaning and relationship and thus need not obtain coherence from the synthetic activity of a pre-existing subject. “Experience is an intentional act in which the experienter is directed to an experienced object. In this sense of a reference beyond itself, experience has essentially a minimum of meaning and meaningless experience is a contradiction in terms. It is only by the grace of the experiencing act that the experienced object receives its title of being an ‘experience’.”

Husserl’s phenomenology is a continuation of this trend in philosophy that gives priority to the experiential dimension of meaning, with the power of intuition attaining the utmost significance in Husserl’s phenomenology. In this regard, Husserl considers himself a Cartesian philosopher. For Husserl, “it was Descartes rather than Kant who was the truly decisive thinker in modern philosophy; Kant had failed to fulfil even the promise of his own transcendental philosophy. This belated fulfilment was the aim of Husserl’s own transcendental phenomenology” (Palmer, 2002, p. 3). Kant’s own project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* requires what one might call transcendental psychology, that is, the study of those faculties that are required for us to have cognition. Transcendental psychology thus differs from rational psychology insofar as the former presupposes that we have experience (albeit of a very general sort), whereas the latter is restricted to the mere concept ‘I think’.

Thus, it would seem that many of Kant’s most important claims in the *Critique of Pure Reason* would fall under the domain of transcendental psychology. Husserl is equally critical of Descartes for his failure to do full justice to the intuitive dimension of experience. Husserl thus modified Descartes’s position, introducing phenomenological bracketing of whatever is experienced in our engaged and participatory mode of experiencing in order to lay bare the essential structures of that deeper realm of subjectivity, the source of all our meaning-giving activity. Transcendental philosophy seeks to situate

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itself upon a 'higher', transcendental plane with a view to bringing to light certain a priori structures which are supposed to account for the objectivity of the object. The bracketing strategy is equivalent to allowing experience to take its own structure or highlight its own meanings. This highlighting is essentially intuitional.

Unlike in Descartes, the two realms of the knower and the known are no longer causally related in Husserl's approach. Husserl is Cartesian in the sense that the object known is also an "appearance", a "product in the mind". For Husserl, however, it is constituted by a transcendental meaning-giving realm that differs from the empirical, psychological inner and isolated cogito of Cartesian philosophy. In order to reach that, one has to undergo an epoché of what is empirically given, of the knower "I" and the known "other", with these two now organized as two distinct poles of the concept-making and meaning-giving dimension of transcendental subjectivity. "This requires stripping the phenomenon of its naturalistic interpretation, which perhaps even provides a misleading description with the term 'product', and then giving a 'correct' account of this appearing. One can refer to Husserl's notion of 'constitution', which is actually a title for extensive analysis of a non-causal relationship between the real temporal flow of experiences and whatever objectivities these experiences bring to awareness ... the particular sense in which these conceptual entities are 'produced' by the mind has yet to be adequately described" (McKenna, 1991, p. 185).

Mohanty (1991) observes: "The possibility lies in the ambiguous status of consciousness as being, on the one hand, an empirical domain, a part of the world about which there might be theories of various sorts; and, on the other hand, a transcendental domain and thereby the source of all those interpretive frameworks which make theories possible. The confusion arises in self-mundанизation of transcendental subjectivity by which this subjectivity constitutes itself as a 'private, inner domain that is inserted into public, outer, nature'. This is not a genuine competitor to transcendental subjectivity" (p. 199). Experience in this manner is a process in which the knower pole of that subjectivity, the experiencing concrete subject and its intuitiveness, is the field in which those supposedly lifeless bare sense-datums of empiricists also undergo transformation as "lived-objects", the meant and understood contents of experience, "the things themselves".

Feenberg (1999) points out that "In Hegel, this concept of experience served to eliminate the substantialist notion of subjectivity inherited from Descartes. The Hegelian subject is no cogito but a

self-constituting process". In the sense that experience takes place necessarily in the subjective space, and cannot take place anywhere else, phenomenological understanding of experience in Husserl is naturally within an idealist framework. This is evident in his phenomenological approach to the concrete and the lived dimension of reality. Brentano's new psychology, based on an "empirical foundation", takes experience in a sense which includes a certain ideal intuition. This is like adding specific meanings to experiences. Brentano substituted an intentional account of the intrinsic connection between subject and object for the usual causal account. The act of experiencing is part and parcel of the indubitable sphere of Husserl's absolute consciousness. In Husserl's transcendental idealism, according to which the transcendental world owes its being to the constituting acts of the pure ego, it is the centrality of the concrete dimension of transcendental subjectivity that is to be understood phenomenologically. Phenomenology thus provides a much wider scope to experience. Besides sense experience, it includes experiences of relations, meanings, values, requiredness, and of other minds, as well as social and cultural phenomena. The predicative stage of judgments and propositions, with its polarization of subject and predicate, differs essentially from the unpolarized structure of our experience. Predicative knowledge is based on this. All that phenomenology can attempt is to clarify the essential structure of experience.

If phenomenology in Husserl is a bold attempt at relocating both the experienced and the experiencing in that meaning-giving centre of transcendental subjectivity, experience as "ontological foundation" in Heidegger is also a revealer of the "always already present ground even of reflection itself". This is a dimension of our existence and our experience that was familiar to philosophers like William James, Whitehead, and Bertrand Russell, although what it meant to them differed due to their adherence to different methodological approaches to this realm of meaning. Russell called this latter non-psychological version of pure experience a "neutral monism". "Experience has a temporal pattern opening from the very start toward future phases and subsequently also to the past ones" (Russell, 1951). From Merleau-Ponty's body to Max Scheler's experience of value, there is one basic motto: "for experience is the manner in which each existing perceiver lives his body and his world" (Feenberg, 1999).

This insistence on the primacy of experience is common to both Husserl and Heidegger - which, when all is said and done, is something we have in support of their common phenomenological programme. We would, however, have to re-define certain other words such as "theory" and "praxis", or

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else we will enter into a debate as to whether philosophy as phenomenology is a way of life, or praxis, as opposed to philosophy as *Sophia*, a theoretical quest and love of wonder for the sake of wondering. This is the perspective that made Heidegger's hermeneutics a counter position to Husserl's philosophy as essentially theoretical. But is that really so? We can identify Husserl's way of doing philosophy as theory-centric and Heidegger's as praxis-centric only if praxis refers to what we actually do in life and how we make sense of that. However, if phenomenology deals with experience uninterrupted but allows it to take the form which is built into it, then phenomenology in Husserl can be practical and ontology in Heidegger can be theoretical. Experience is not limited to what is not practical but includes any experience. It would be a completely different matter if Husserl had misunderstood Heidegger's phenomenological concern as purely "ontological" and anthropological; for Heidegger, however, these are not just existential or anthropological concerns. He believes his position to be phenomenological, a phenomenology of 'care'. With more emphasis on structure and on methodological concerns than on the historical manner of accepting pre-conceptions, Husserl became apprehensive of Heidegger's sole emphasis on the interpretive approach to the question of man's Being unaided by reflection and a critical stance. For Husserl, it was not sufficient to have a "basic experience" to communicate. This could lead to a distortion of experience - avoiding which was Husserl's reason for his phenomenological method, as it is a method that, in practice, leaves experience unfettered by theory, prejudice, and so forth.

The tension between these two conceptions of the method of philosophy - the one leaping into involved concern, the other maintaining a detached reserve - is resolved in a phenomenological manner in both the philosophy of Husserl and the ontology of Heidegger. There is phenomenological reduction in Husserl from facts to essence, and in Heidegger from beings to Being and to meaning of Being. Just as there is centrality of "life world" concerns in Husserl's theory-centric phenomenology, Heidegger's praxis-centric manipulator man has equivalent distance to that of the poet and the mystic from the average everydayness. Philosophy is still a primal science for Heidegger that uncovers the a priori categories of *factis* life. With his concern for avoiding a philosophy of consciousness that leads to the solitariness of a disembodied cogito, Heidegger substitutes a broader conception of Dasein as a finite being-in-the-world. In this way, Heidegger thus exhibits equal concern for restoring the experiential and the lived dimension of meaning, of meaning of Being, but in a language that is different from Husserl's. Husserl did not part with

the language of consciousness, although he sought to re-define it, purging it of its psychological and mentalist connotations. Husserl believed that phenomenological bracketing would purify the language of psychologism. The question remains: did he succeed in doing that?

Heidegger opted for a radical break with the traditional use of consciousness-centric descriptions of experience. It would be a different matter again if Heidegger had actually succeeded in creating a new language that he hoped would keep room for re-defining the notion of experience, stripping it of the reference to its usual subjectivistic aspect. "Facticity becomes ontologically important as a finite subject is essentially in the world, in a time and place, acting out of its concerns (*Sorge*). These determinations become ontologically general once they describe the special type of being to which being is revealed, and not a mere thing, e.g. the human animal. Consciousness is no longer the essence of subjectivity. More fundamental than consciousness is the 'circumspection' (*Umsicht*) with which Dasein moves amidst its objects and grasps them in action" (Feenberg, 1999). This "non-mentalistic revision of the concept of experience" is evident in his attempt at re-defining so much a subject-centric term like "mineness" (*Jemeinigkeit*) "as an existentielle, a structure of being-in-the-world" (*ibid.*).

Andrew Feenberg (1999) gives a beautiful description of Heidegger's unsuccessful but desperate attempt to come out of the subjectivistic conception of phenomenology. Making a comparative study of Heidegger's and Nishida's paths "to the things themselves", he asks: "But again, what is the status of such structures? Are they Kantian transcendental conditions? The Kantian interpretation brings back the whole subject/object paradigm Heidegger is attempting to escape. In Heidegger's language it is. With an eye on the parallel problem in Nishida's retreat from the concept of experience, I would suggest that we understand 'mineness' as the irreducibility of first personhood, the fact that it cannot be dissolved into objective determinations, that it is not present-at-hand like ordinary things." Unlike in Kant, and like in Husserl, Heidegger could not avoid making reference to a transcendental dimension and a non-reductive noumena that can be experienced in its otherness. These he called "existentials", that a priori realm of experience, the non-reductive realm of "existential analytic". Interestingly, these analytics acquire value as they are situated in the human context, inferring that meaning must be created by people if it is to exist at all. This phenomenological insistence on establishing meaning at the personal level of human existence is a key to the human dimension, and therefore the ethical

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dimension, of Husserl's thought and also of Heidegger's thought.

Paul Tillich (1951) described the issue this way: "This approach [Heidegger's method in *Being and Time*] must, however, be protected against a fundamental misunderstanding. It in no way assumes that man [sic] is more easily accessible as an object of knowledge, physical or psychological, than are non-human objects. Just the contrary is asserted. Man is the most difficult object encountered in the cognitive process. The point is that man is aware of the structures which make cognition possible. He lives in them and acts through them. They are immediately present to him. They are he himself" (quoted in Hunter, 2004). Man is essentially a contemplator and also a manipulator. Both theory and practice become indistinguishable in one existential being, the human Dasein, the embodied, destiny-stricken man for whom his own life is itself a mystery that is beyond his grasp. For Husserl, it is the most wonderful and the most striking realization of his phenomenology that complete reduction is an impossible dream, that man is both one who knows, and the one who knows that he does not know! "(E)ven though Husserl the founder of phenomenology 'was wedded to his terminology of 'transcendental idealism', in his philosophy the concept of 'constitution' has a central place. Human 'intuitions' of reality are constituted, not given. And Merleau-Ponty 'claimed that the implication of phenomenology was not transcendental, with all the hubris of a total and self-contained system, but existential'" (Verbeek, 2003, p. 2, citing Idhe, 1999).

"In line with the 'edifying' character of contemporary continental philosophy, it can be elaborated that, within these human-world relationships, both the objectivity of the world and the subjectivity of those who are experiencing and existing in it are constituted. Our world is 'interpreted reality' and our existence is 'situated subjectivity'. What the world 'is', and what subjects 'are', arises from the interplay between humans and reality" (Verbeek, 2003, p. 3).

The central issue of current research into Heidegger's early thought is whether, and to what degree, Heidegger remained committed to the transcendental philosophy of his teachers - Husserl, Lask, and Rickert. A principal direction of Heidegger's thought, formulated in his doctrine of care, is the claim that this alienation can only be overcome through active involvement in finite concerns. In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger footnotes his claim that his own phenomenological investigation "would not have been possible if the ground had not been prepared by Husserl, with whose *Logische Untersuchungen* phenomenology first emerged", by adding that, "if

Being and Time has taken any steps forward in disclosing the 'things themselves', the author must first of all thank E. Husserl, who, by providing his own incisive personal guidance and by freely turning over his unpublished investigations, familiarized the author with the most diverse areas of phenomenological research during his student years in Freiburg" (quoted in Feenberg, 1999). During these years of 1919-1923, Husserl spoke of his assistant as his "favourite student" and the "phenomenological child", even saying to Heidegger that "You and I are phenomenology". And, in 1923, Heidegger seems to accept this position when he writes, "Husserl gave me his eyes." But, as Van Buren notes, whereas Heidegger's doctoral dissertation had been "for the most part" an "uncritical appropriation" of Husserl's position, by 1925 Heidegger was presenting his own lecture course which "eventually became 'Division One' and the first third of 'Division Two' of *Being and Time* as a 'fundamental critique of phenomenological inquiry'" (Van Buren, quoted in Feenberg, 1999).

Transcendental Subjectivity and its Critics

Michael Dummett (1978) feels that it is a serious drawback of phenomenology that it was unable to take the "linguistic turn" and as such remained at the level of a style of thinking, a cluster of relatively independent voices. Phenomenology therefore could not attain the dignified status of a viable research programme. Contrary to these claims of Dummett, phenomenology, as Ricoeur understands it, differs from mere aestheticism, a view that philosophy is a loose tradition that can be interpreted as 'an art of living', "as exemplified in the lives of Nietzsche, Foucault and others" (Dummett, 1978). For Husserl, philosophy is not a continuation of other sciences, but is autonomous in the sense that it does not borrow its premises from other cognitive domains, such as history, physics, psychology and so on, as an aesthetic position is entitled to do. One can say that the hermeneutical turn in phenomenology is not a break with Husserl's prime objective of safeguarding a non-reductive approach to consciousness study, although interpretations differ regarding the proper description of that transcendental domain. Ricoeur understands his own hermeneutical turn and the *factual* turn in Heidegger as continuations of the philosophy of intentionality, and, as such, as diverse attempts at liberating Husserl's phenomenology from its unholy association with a kind of Neo-Kantian brand of subjective idealism.

From Ricoeur's understanding of this unfortunate transcendental turn in Husserl's phenomenological position, one can identify Heidegger's own "ontological phenomenology" in *Being and Time* as a

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“more radical internal development” of Husserlian phenomenology, which turns on what Heidegger calls the “working out of the hermeneutical situation” (Hahn, 1995). Differing from the contemplator man of transcendental phenomenology, Heidegger’s Dasein exists hermeneutically. “It is to participate in the endless chain of interpretation that makes up the history of apprehending being. Says Heidegger, one enters into dialogue with the doctrines of past thinkers, which were ‘in turn learned by listening to the great thinkers’ thinking.’ One participates in the endless chain of listening that constitutes essential thinking. ‘Each human being is in each instance in dialogue with its forbears and perhaps even more and in a more hidden manner with those who will come after it’” (Palmer, 1980, quoting Heidegger, 1959/1971, pp. 40 & 135).

The tension between these two conceptions of the method of philosophy - the one leaping into involved concern, the other maintaining a detached reserve - could lead to the positing of the being-centric phenomenology espoused by Heidegger against the consciousness-centric phenomenology of Husserl. They both, however, have claimed to be doing it for the sake of safeguarding the human and spiritual dimensions of life, and to be doing it phenomenologically. My question to the critics of transcendental subjectivity in Husserl is: can there be a rejection of the meaning-giving transcendental realm, the so-called consciousness-centric transcendental subjectivity that Husserl was so keen to safeguard, without at the same time compromising one’s claim to be doing philosophy phenomenologically? If phenomenology is a novel way to look at phenomena and at noumena such that they become one and indistinguishable, “the thing experienced”, both these philosophers have placed a renewed value on the thing as it is encountered in actual experience. This indeed is a personal encounter between two distinct individualities, the one which appears in its own distinct manner of appearing, the “thing itself”, and the appearance that cannot be completely unveiled by any human observer and his usual subject-object relational mode of knowing. Husserl’s scheme of transcendental subjectivity is a proposal for transcending the limitations of empirical and psychological subjectivity, the inner, disembodied cogito of Cartesian philosophy and its counterpart, its transcendent “other”, in order to re-define consciousness as the universal means to our having the world. In short, consciousness, through capacities intrinsic to it, is interpretive, and the meaning-bestowing realm. For Husserl, the transcendental ego functions as the philosophically necessary anchor of his phenomenology. The study of the “constitution of the world” involves tracing the genesis of meanings to their last origin, which is transcendental

consciousness.

Why is this meaning-giving realm of transcendental subjectivity so crucial for Husserl’s way of doing phenomenology - and why, on the other hand, are critics so allergic to the notion of a consciousness-centric meaning-giving realm? To be more specific, what are the motives for this rejection of Husserl’s brand of transcendental subjectivity? Why was Husserl so determined to keep it as part of his philosophy? What were his motivations? It would seem that the critics feared that this centrality of the subject-centric transcendental realm of meaning is an unfortunate lapse into the language of the subject-centric neo-Kantian brand of transcendental idealism, and that it permits those “unknown and unknowable” metaphysical entities “back door entry” to the prestigious academy of philosophy. After two world wars, philosophers have been sceptical about anything that dealt with anything except the world we have to live in. The spiritual in culture had failed and the transcendental had all the vagueness of the spiritual. Can we say that, like all European philosophy, phenomenology too has been Americanized - which is to say, re-thought by philosophers who retain the basic pragmatism of their culture, which is not all that sympathetic to ideas like the transcendental?

I feel that Husserl was strongly motivated to keep this part of his philosophy when there was a strong urge in him to address the context of the anonymous alienation brought about by a technological mass society. “Husserl made the relevance of the questions that are decisive for a genuine humanity a central issue within phenomenology. In the *Crisis* and the *Vienna Lecture*, Husserl turned from the formal structure of consciousness as noesis/noema to the idea of the spiritual becoming of European humanity. The fruit of his close theoretical work in these statements indicate how a concern for ethical renewal was a theme in Husserl’s work, but this social concern was arrived at on the basis of a doctrine of philosophy as grounded in transcendental consciousness, with which Heidegger fundamentally disagreed” (Feenberg, 1999). For both Husserl and Heidegger, the basic concern of phenomenology is to restore the world in all of its concreteness as against all cognitive representations. Husserl’s talk about a transcendental dimension of meaning is his maiden attempt to grasp the first person standpoint from the first person standpoint itself, an attempt which leads to its depersonalization and identification with the given in its givenness.

For Heidegger, too, “first personhood loses the character of a present-at-hand thing in the world and becomes a horizon that cannot be directly thematized. All experience, including the experienced self, falls

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under that horizon, which is ‘nothing’ insofar as it is not a being in the world, not a cogito, but a field of appearance in something like Husserl’s sense”. It was Husserl’s firm conviction that the intentionality of consciousness is the foundational ground of philosophy. For Husserl, resources to transform are within us, but our pure look lies not in participation, but in storing that energy for re-building. For Heidegger, the modern world view is “the gnawing of an empty scepticism”, and “presupposes not too much but too little”. It arises when “we take our departure from a wordless ‘I’ in order to provide this ‘I’ with an Object” (Feenberg, 1999). Ultimately, Heidegger re-discovered the spiritual root of this alienated worldless Dasein not in uncritical commitments to presuppositions of worldly Daseins, but in the realization that authenticity emerges in the openness of the individual to his own being. Otherwise philosophy will lose its intuitive and reflective grip on experiencing one’s own mode of being and it will be like any other way of looking at life, a world view, a cultural and anthropological way of defining the meaning of situated and existential Daseins. Or else, there will be recognition of an essential and a spiritual dimension of meaning, but, as the ‘noumenal other’, beyond the grasp of the destiny-stricken man of the world who is torn between the two worlds, the actual, and the ideal. Attending with “unerring seriousness” to the “thematic meaning of the transcendental mode of inquiry”, Husserl tells us that the “transcendental ego is clearly different from the natural human ego yet is anything but second, something separate from it; this is necessary in order to avoid transcendental psychologism” (Palmer, 2002).

Paul Ricoeur justifies Heidegger’s rejection of transcendental subjectivity in Husserl’s phenomenology, identifying it as a neo-Kantian brand of transcendental idealism. Interestingly, Husserl offered his own justification for why he was resistant to the claim to apodicticity made by the Cartesian cogito and Kantian “I think”. Ricoeur introduced Husserl’s phenomenology to the French audience largely in the way he understood and appreciated Husserlian phenomenology. Ricoeur distinguishes, in Husserl’s presentation of the phenomenological reduction, the competition between two ways of approaching the phenomenality of the phenomenon. “According to the first, ratified by Max Scheler, Ingarden, and other phenomenologists of the time of the *Logical Investigations*, the reduction made the appearing as such of any phenomenon stand out more sharply; according to the second, which was adopted by Husserl himself and encouraged by Eugen Fink, the reduction made possible the quasi-Fichtean production of phenomenality by pure consciousness, which set itself up as the source of all appearing, more original than any received externality” (Hahn,

1995). Ricoeur has preferred to carefully respect the rights of the realist interpretation with a resistance to the orthodox interpretation of phenomenological reduction.

Husserl wanted to advocate a kind of transcendental psychology about which many had no idea as to what it implied, although there are always a handful of thinkers for whom it makes sense to identify it as a realm of meaning that transcends the language of both realism and idealism. That way, one may find a close similarity between Edmund Husserl’s account of transcendental experience and Eastern insights into experience, insofar as both need a language that transcends the subject-object dichotomies. Most would be reluctant to go down that path, because it is so alien to the contemporary philosophic, scientific (not entirely) and political culture on which globalization is founded and which governs all or most of our academic pursuits. Maintaining a safe distance from a self-conscious cogito that could be immediately grasped, Ricoeur makes a selective assimilation of Husserl’s phenomenological methodology with his own brand of hermeneutic phenomenology. Ricoeur is one of the forerunners of the main representatives of this movement, along with Heidegger and Gadamer, for whom phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive (rather than purely descriptive as in transcendental phenomenology). Ricoeur understands the hermeneutical turn in Husserl’s phenomenology as a natural outcome of Husserl’s phenomenological movement that kept room for a continuous development from the notion of intentionality to that of being-in-the-world. Ricoeur is drawn to a kind of hermeneutical phenomenology and its sole business of expressing a definite task, “the task of interpreting”.

Ricoeur interprets hermeneutics as the “learned word” for the task of interpretation. Hermeneutical interpretation is suspicious of any claim made for the primacy of immediacy. He accordingly defines hermeneutics in negative terms as a “mourning of the immediate”. Hermeneutical phenomenology begins parting with the projects of intuitionist philosophy either in the tradition of Platonism, neo-Platonism, or in some aspects of phenomenology that make this intuitionist claim in the tradition of Descartes, “as though we could be without distance to ourselves”. The task of hermeneutics is the explication of all the symbolic structures that relate us indirectly to reality. Despite these differences, Ricoeur understands hermeneutics to be a continuation of Husserl’s phenomenology. For him, there is no real opposition between the two. It appears that hermeneutics tries to establish a link between experience and language and does not rely on the structure of language in an

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analytic way.

“To exist hermeneutically as a human being is to exist intertextually. It is to participate in the endless chain of interpretation that makes up the history of apprehending being” (Palmer, 1980). This orientation is evident in the work of Heidegger, who argues that all description is always already interpretation. Every form of human awareness is interpretive. Especially in Heidegger’s later work, he increasingly introduces poetry and art as expressive works for interpreting the nature of truth, language, thinking, dwelling, and being. Steven Crowell reads Heidegger’s explicit criticism of Husserl against the background of his implicit dependence on him: “For instance, Heidegger’s rejection of Husserl’s ‘theoretism’ conceals his dependence on Husserl’s idea that phenomenology is not a theory but reflective clarification. One should always read Husserl’s explicit criticism of Heidegger against the background of his own megalomania: since Heidegger refused to be Husserl’s disciple, he could only be ‘anti-scientific’, ‘anthropological’, not a phenomenologist at all.” Crowell continues: “What is subjectivity for Husserl? The non-criteriological presence-to-self that characterizes the first person stance is just as much the non-criteriological presence-of-world. The priority of subjectivity is ethical” (Crowell, 2001).

Crowell believes that Husserl introduced this dimension in terms of transcendental subjectivity, but this appeal to subjectivity no more distorts the transcendental realm than an appeal to being does. For Husserl, the real motivation for the reduction and the real priority of the irreducibly first person perspective (subjectivity) is ethical: because an autonomous philosophy is the solitary and radical self-responsibility of the one who is philosophizing. There is a lot in Husserl which sounds meditative. Reduction leads to this dimension of solitary self-reflection. Husserl used traditional concepts from psychology, and the feud with Heidegger is the price paid for that linguistic practice. Through reduction, a transcendental dimension is achieved that differs completely from all psychology. This emphasis is on a certain change of focus, from the objects perceived to the ways in which the object is consciously known/perceived/imagined and so on. Husserl puts the term “subjective ways” in scare quotes to the extent that it is clear that phenomenological reflection is not introspection, that solitary reflection is not a turning away from the object to the inner ghost in the

machine. As a philosopher, Heidegger takes the phenomenological reduction at Husserl’s word. The reduction reveals that transcendental realm for Heidegger as well. The mode of being human, Dasein, is totally different from all other entities, since “it harbours within itself the possibility of transcendental constitution”. The “concrete human being”, as understood under the reduction of naturalism, can accomplish this without falling victim to the paradox that a “piece” of the world constitutes the whole world precisely because it is not a piece of the world: “the human being is never merely present-at-hand, but exists”. The fact that Heidegger still used the term “human being” implied for Husserl that he had reduced the transcendental dimension of phenomenology to the ontic dimension of anthropology.

But in what sense do the two egos of Husserl differ? The mode of being of this absolute ego is in some sense also the same as the ever-factual “I”, but in what sense? Dermot Moran (2000) finds it difficult to understand in what sense the two differ: is it only our different ways of regarding the one and the same ego? For Husserl, regional ontology takes into account the contingency of the human being, allowing for a distinction to be made between the notion that man can be defined only historically, and the concern of the methodological philosopher with Dasein as the site of disclosure, as “human being” neutrally understood within its own realm of transcendental dimension. For Husserl, Heidegger’s Dasein was anthropos, the object of the worldly sciences of man. Crowell comments: “But being-in-the world is no more in the world in that sense than is Husserl’s ambiguously described transcendental subjectivity with its ‘mundanizing self-apperception’ by which it also, in a manner of speaking, becomes part of the world. Yet when Heidegger implies that Husserl’s transcendental subject is still too Cartesian - that it is ‘subjective’ in the sense that it ‘loses the world’ - he too is mistaken. The charge does hold true of the kind of psyche that emerges from the parallel abstraction, but the transcendental subject is not a ‘subject’ in that sense and cannot, as I have tried to show, be reached by way of it” (Crowell, 2001). Crowell justifies his claim that Heidegger introduced the factic subject to undermine the claim that there can be no philosophical, but only empirical-psychological, inquiry into concrete subjectivity, by arguing that Heidegger is able to do so while remaining within the framework of transcendental philosophy only because he adopts Husserl’s phenomenology.

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