

**Between the Transcendental and the mundane:
An Undismissible Tension in Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology**

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy
in
Philosophy

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

September 2013

超越與塵世之間：
論胡塞爾超越論現象學中無法消解的張力

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香港中文大學

2013年9月

**THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED,
IF WORTHY OF BEING DEDICATED,
TO MY MOM ZHU X.P. AND MY HUSBAND JONATHAN,
WHO HAD TO BEAR WITH MY BORING BUMBLINGS ON HUSSERL,
AND THUS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN MORE STRESSFUL THAN I WERE
THROUGHOUT MY YEARS OF WRITING.
I CAN'T SAY HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU BOTH.**

ABSTRACT

The investigations in this thesis are led by a series of questions: Is Husserl's phenomenology a doctrine of subjective idealism as criticized by some modern philosophers? If not, how can we understand it as "transcendental idealism" like Husserl describes? What novelty does it bring and what difficulties does it face? Are these difficulties resolvable?

In *Ideas I*, Husserl introduces phenomenology by conducting the phenomenological epoché and reduction, which suspend the subject's participation in positing the "general thesis" and lead the attention back to the immanent sphere of consciousness. In correlation, the object, originally being factually posited, is phenomenologically modified as *pure givenness and constitution* of the transcendental subjectivity; by the same token, the factually suspended world is thus regained as subjective-related phenomena in the new light of transcendental phenomenology. In this sense, phenomenology is: (1) a methodological idealism, which parenthesizes the factuality to reveal the intentional structure of constitution; (2) a transcendental idealism, which acknowledges the subjectivity as the condition of possible objectivities; (3) and finally it bears an ontological character, because the transcendental-phenomenological endeavors restore the primordial mode of the world.

However, as the transcendental character of phenomenology emerges, the paradox concerning the subject-world relation becomes obvious – the paradox is between the subject as "empirical self" that belongs to the world and the subject as "transcendental subjectivity" that transcends the world and constitutes the meaning of the world. In *Crisis*, Husserl tried to resolve the paradox by interpreting the transcendental

subjectivity as intersubjectivity; however, as he emphasized the transcendental subjectivity's unhuman character in contrast with the concrete human subject, two ontological realms of existence seem to be implied.

In face of yet another difficulty pertaining to the idealistic position of phenomenology, Husserl did not realize that the possibility of resolving it lies in his constitutive studies of the subject in *Ideas II*. As a concrete embodied being intertwined of physicality, animal nature and spirituality, the subject is mortal but possesses the spiritual capacity of participating in constituting meanings which are immaterial and immortal.

Therefore, on the one hand, the paradox can be preliminarily resolved by understanding that the "empirical self" and the "transcendental subjectivity" are actually two modes of the same subject; on the other hand, the paradox is essentially undismissible because it stems from the core of human, who is born mortal but naturally desires eternity.

撮要

本論文旨在回應下列問題：胡塞爾現象學是否如一些現代哲學家所批評，是一套主觀唯心論哲學？若否，我們是否可將其理解為胡塞爾所說的「超越論的觀念論」？它會帶來什麼新洞見、面對什麼困難？我們是否能紓解這些困難？

在《觀念一》中，胡塞爾對現象學的介紹始於現象學懸擱、現象學還原，這兩種現象學方法中止了主體關於世界存在的判斷，並將關注放回主體內在意識。相應地，原本被看作實然存在的對象，則轉變為現象學意義下的純粹現象以及超越論建構的成果。同樣道理，我們在現象學還原中懸擱的（實然存在）世界，則在超越論意義下被重新獲得，成為與主體相關的現象。

在此意義下，現象學：(1) 首先是一種方法論的觀念論，通過懸擱實然存在的領域而揭示超越論主體建構活動的意向性結構；(2) 是一種超越論的觀念論，承認主體性乃對象顯現的條件；(3) 此超越論現象學擁有存在論性格，因為它揭示並重構了世界的原初顯現方式。

然而，隨著現象學超越論性格的浮現，關於主體與世界關係的悖論也愈趨明顯——此悖論產生於主體作為「經驗主體」以及作為「超越論主體性」之間；前者屬於世界，而後者則參與建構世界意義。在《危機》中，胡塞爾嘗試紓解此悖論；他著重詮釋了「超越論主體性」的「交互主體性」內涵，從而強調其非人的特性，使其區別於世界中具體的「經驗主體」。這分析似乎暗示著兩個存在論範疇的存在。

胡塞爾在面對這個與現象學觀念論性格有關的困境時，尚未意識到他在《觀念二》中關於主體在建構性研究或可提供紓解方法。肉身主體的存在由物質性、感官性、

精神性交織構成，故肉身主體雖為有限的、會腐朽的，卻有能力參與建構非物質的、不會腐朽的意義。所以，一方面，若將「經驗主體」及「超越論主體」理解為同一主體的不同樣態，則可初步紓解悖論；另一方面，從本質上來說，此悖論必然存在，因為它植根於人類存在的根本——雖生而有限，卻嚮往永恆。

**BETWEEN THE TRANSCENDENTAL AND THE MUNDANE:
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PHENOMENOLOGY**

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INTRODUCTION

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology has caused much dispute in contemporary philosophy, among which "*whether phenomenology commits subjective idealism?*" is one of the most widely discussed topics. Along with my experience of studying Husserl's writings, this question becomes easier and harder at the same time to answer. On the one hand, it grows easier because at the outset of establishing phenomenology, the metaphysical concerns have already been expressly excluded by the phenomenological epoché, which opens a novel field of queries different from what subjective idealism faces. Therefore the answer to the question is obviously negative. However, on the other hand, as phenomenological investigation goes deeper and more complicated discussions are involved, it is increasingly difficult to elaborate *how* and *why* the non-subjective-idealistic interpretation of Husserl is justified. The difficulties mainly arise from three aspects:

[1] **Language**: Husserl's writings, especially *Ideas I* which aims at introducing phenomenology to readers still immersed in the pre-reflective natural attitude, sometimes adopt intentionally metaphorical expressions in order to indicate a clear path to the phenomenological attitude. Thus Husserl's language may appear to be subjective-idealistic to those who only comprehend the texts at face value. The difficulty lies in disenchanting the seemingly enigmatic language of Husserl and revealing the deeper philosophical sense by contextualizing the passages in question¹ to the entire phenomenological enterprise.

¹ For example, one of the most controversial passages is Husserl's assertion on "the annihilation of the world": "[...] it then becomes evident that *while the being of consciousness*, of any stream of mental processes whatever, *would indeed be necessarily modified by an annihilation of the world of physical things it own existence would not be touched.*" (my underline) Quoted from: Husserl. *Ideas I*, §49, p.110 <91-92>.

[2] *The hermeneutics of interpretation*: Closely related to difficulty [1], since most of Husserl's works are manuscripts or lectures which faithfully reflect the advancement of the phenomenological exploration – problems encountered are usually followed by attempts of re-considerations of methodology and philosophical disposition – the main line of thoughts must be sorted out from the lengthy writings, and each phase of phenomenological development must be understood in light of the whole phenomenological-transcendental project. For example, Husserl has attempted to conduct the phenomenological reduction from three approaches along the path of thinking: the Cartesian approach, the approach through intentional psychology, and the historical-ontological approach.² Although bearing their own theoretical difficulties, the three approaches must be compared to one another to furnish an adequate understanding of the transcendental motif. Therefore, Husserl's phenomenology cannot be explicated in linear sequence, but in a hermeneutical circle.

[3] *Transcendental idealism*: Although not committed to subjective idealism, phenomenology is repeatedly identified as transcendental idealism by Husserl. Thus to give a non-subjective-idealistic account of phenomenology, it simultaneously calls for clarifications of what “transcendental idealism” means and how it is distinguished from subjective idealism. Thus the originally question “*whether phenomenology commits subjective idealism?*” is transformed into the following set of questions: How does the transcendental idealism works in the phenomenological context? How does the phenomenological investigation enter the transcendental realm? What novelty does the transcendental-phenomenological philosophy brings and what problems does

² For detailed discussion, please refer to: Kern, Iso. “the Three Ways to the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl”. Elliston, Frederick. McCormick, Peter. ed. *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals*. [University of Notre Dame Press, 1977].

it face? Can these problems be resolved?

In light of the questions, in this thesis I shall present my response in the following steps.

In **Chapter One**, I will discuss the debut of phenomenology and why it initially appears to be subjective-idealistic by raising textual evidences. Specifically, in *Ideas I*, the phenomenological reduction is claimed to result in the “annihilation of the world” and prove the subject’s immanent sphere as “absolute”. I will show why the subjective-idealistic interpretation has arisen and the possibility of dismissing it by the conceptual distinction of “immanent-transcendent” and understanding the reduction as a “methodological reduction”.

In **Chapter Two**, the transcendental interpretation of phenomenology will be presented. I will show that the reduction is essentially a disclosure of the field of meaning and the subject is in the role of meaning-constitution. Therefore the subjective-idealistic suspicion will be dismissed because phenomenology has disregarded the metaphysical problems, and it has entered the investigation of how the world is related to the subject. We will find that the reduction merely modifies our attitude from natural to phenomenological, in the process of which the world is never lost. However, in the transcendental light, new problems will emerge: the paradox between subject as an individual human person that belongs to the world and as a transcendental ego that constitutes the meaning of the world. This problem is explicitly articulated in Husserl’s last work *Crisis*.

In **Chapter Three**, I will start to explore the possibility of resolving the paradox by

appealing to the achievement of Husserl's constitutive studies in *Ideas II*. On the one hand, the subject, no matter in natural attitude or transcendental-phenomenological attitude, is always an embodied subject inhabiting in the world and thus is bounded by physical causality. On the other hand, the human living Body [*Leib*] is distinguished from mere physical body [*Körper*], because it is intertwined by the capacity of physicality, animal nature and spirituality. The living Body is not a tool manipulated by the subject, but *is* the subject himself, spontaneously embodying his free will and motivations. The twofoldness of the human person implies the possibility of resolving the paradox brought forward in Chapter Two.

In *Chapter Four*, as the constitutive analysis goes on, I will show that the subject as human person is primordially immersed in the pre-reflective personalistic attitude, in which the "world" is not thematized, and by the same token all worldly objects and deeds are taken as meaningful. Thereby, from faithful descriptions of the subject's pre-reflective lived-through experiences, the realm of meaningfulness and spirituality occupies the ontological primacy to those of physical and animal natures – it is essential to human *qua* human. Bringing the fruits of the above discussions to handling the paradox, although the paradox is theoretically resolvable by the distinction of attitude,³ it lies deeper in the human destiny of pursuing the eternal as a mortal being. This insight, in echo with Husserl's diagnosis of the crisis in the modern western culture (elaborated in *Crisis*), brings a humanistic light in the epoch of naturalistic fetishism, and reserves the legitimacy of human's free will.

By virtue of all detailed elucidations, at the end of the thesis, it will be shown that the

³ I.e. there are no two subjects, but only one subject in two different attitudes, namely, the transcendental attitude and the pre-reflective personalistic attitude.

idealistic suspicions repeatedly reappearing in the development of Husserl's phenomenology essentially stem from its transcendental character: by acknowledging the finitude of human subject that her experience and cognitions are bound to the subjective-related structure, simultaneously, the subject's freedom of meaning-genesis for the world is better articulated. As the transcendental meaning-constitution is always in operation in the subject's pre-reflective life, it should not be understood as a substance but a function or capacity of consciousness. Thus the transcendental is always "transcendental in the world". By leading the most ordinary mundane and ontic⁴ life, one is always already participating in the transcendental meaning-constitution, embodying the undismissible tension between the pre-reflective and reflective, finite and spiritually immortal aspects of human existence.

⁴ In this thesis, the expression "*ontic*" is adopted from the English translation of Husserl's *Crisis*. In Husserl's phenomenology, it denotes the *pre-giveness* of the world and worldly objects which "we accept as existing". More specifically, being different from the naïve admission of the factuality in natural attitude, "*ontic*" can only be legitimately used in the post-reduction outlook of phenomenology, where the transcendental meaning-constitution structure of the pre-reflective experience is disclosed and thereby the reality is recognized as the ultimate boundary of truth beyond which we can make no conjecture.

The explanation of "*ontic*" is based on: Husserl. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. 1970 [1936/54], Carr, D., trans. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. p.23, 69 and 145.

CHAPTER 1.

The phenomenological outlook:

Its Cartesian debut with subjective-idealistic suspicions

Phenomenology, established by Husserl who aims at pursuing a philosophically rigorous science, has been widely challenged as a doctrine that falls into the category of subjective idealism together with the philosophy of George Berkeley. In fact, this misunderstanding is closely related to Husserl's initial introduction of phenomenology, especially how the phenomenological reduction is depicted in *Ideas I*. In this chapter, I shall go through the debut of phenomenology by discussing the eidetic reduction, epoché, and the phenomenological reduction; along with the process, I will show with textual evidences how Husserl's way of elaboration may sometimes lead the readers to a subjective-idealistic interpretation. However, towards the end of the chapter, a proposal of understanding Husserl in a non-subjective-idealistic light will be made in brief, i.e. phenomenological reduction to be understood as a requirement of radical modification from the natural attitude to the philosophical reflective attitude, and phenomenology to be understood as a “*methodological idealism*”⁵ – using Paul Ricoeur's famous articulation – devoted to questioning the “origin” of givenness in the stream of lived experiences.

⁵ Ricoeur described the method of transcendental phenomenology of Husserl “[...] in no way prejudges the ultimate sense of consciousness, for it entails a methodological rather than a doctrinal idealism and resolves to hold reality only as a sense for consciousness and to spell out the diverse syllables of sense in temporal ‘moments’ and functional ‘strata’.” Underlines mine. Passage quoted from: Ricoeur, Paul. *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology* (Northwestern University Press, 1967), p.36.

1.1. Eidetic reduction

1.1.1. Phenomenology as science of essence in contrast to science of facts

Before the *Ideas* manuscripts, Husserl has already elaborated his philosophical blueprint in the article “*Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*”⁶ in 1911, in which he proclaimed that compared to psychology which deals with empirical matters and tries to naturalize consciousness, philosophy should be concerned with “pure consciousness” from the phenomenological point of view.⁷ The idea that philosophy should be the “science of essence” – and therefore being more fundamental and universal than any other particular knowledge domain – then became the foremost guidance throughout the philosopher’s lifelong thinking. In 1929, after the *Ideas* manuscripts, Husserl wrote in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*:

“Of the concepts belonging to the ambiguous expression ‘a priori,’ defines the only one to which we grant philosophical recognition. It is exclusively the *eidōs* which is meant wherever I speak in my writings about the *a priori*.”⁸

Similar thoughts can also be found in *Cartesian Meditations*:

“[...] the science of pure possibilities precedes the science of actualities and alone makes it possible, as a science.”⁹

Whether to take the *a priori* and *eidōs* as the subject matter distinguishes what

⁶ Husserl. *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*. English translated by Quentin Lauer, “*Philosophy as Rigorous Science: Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man*”, in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

⁷ “[...] psychology is concerned with ‘empirical consciousness,’ with consciousness from the empirical point of view, as an empirical being in the ensemble of nature, whereas phenomenology is concerned with ‘pure’ consciousness, i.e., consciousness from the phenomenological point of view.” Ibid. p.174.

⁸ Husserl. *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p.219, footnote.

⁹ Husserl. *Cartesian Meditations*. §34, p.72 <106>.

Husserl calls the *science of fact* and the *science of essence*. The science of fact, namely the empirical science, is concerned with “the matter of fact”¹⁰ and aims to grasp the regularity of facts by inducing from particular empirical instances. Consenting to the importance of such endeavor, it is also crucial to realize that the outcome of empirical studies, although an increasing degree of universality may be obtained by inductive inference, is by principle incapable to liberate itself from the empirical level and constitute the pure necessity of truth. Every new instance may alter the outcome just achieved and renders the results of empirical method contingent. In other words, the empirical method, taking the contingent factual experiences as its ground, is unable to obtain the *a priori* truth of absolute necessity and universality. This task must be accomplished by the *science of essence* that concerns the “highest eidetic universalities”.¹¹

“[...] the sense of this contingency, which is called factualness, is limited in that it is correlative to a *necessity* which does not signify the mere *de facto* existence of an obtaining rule of coordination among spatiotemporal matters of fact but rather has the character of *eidetic necessity* and with this a relation to *eidetic universality*.”¹²

In Husserl’s opinions, the mathematical disciplines, including pure geometry and arithmetic, set ideal examples for establishing a science of essence, because “the mathematicians abstains in principle from every judgment concerning real actuality [*reale Wirklichkeit*]”¹³ and explore “not actualities but ‘ideal possibilities,’ not predicatively formed actuality-complexes but predicatively formed eidetic

¹⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.7, <8>.

¹¹ *Ideas I*, p.8, <9>.

¹² Husserl. *Ideas I*, §2, p.7 <9>.

¹³ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §7, p.15-17.

affair-complexes”;¹⁴ their attention is led to the absolute laws of the mathematical domain.

To understand how the *purity* is furnished in such eidetic sciences, we can summarize it in two phases. Firstly, the studied objects are necessarily essence of being, for example, in pure geometry the objects of study are not any particular empirical figure, but the idealized perfect figures which are essentially *ideations* abstracted from the experience by the geometrics’ imagination, and therefore, unlike empirical figures, they are not given in the form of factual-existing. What are being investigated are the essences of each figure and implications thus derived, i.e. what makes a triangle a triangle, and what properties does this “*eidōs*” of triangle necessarily possess, etc. Secondly, since all contingent factors are excluded by reserving only the essence of figures, the laws discovered are therefore applicable to all empirical occurrences in a necessary and universal manner.

The aforementioned “*eidōs*”¹⁵ of triangle does not indicate any particular instance of triangle; it is an idealized shape in the geometrics’ imagination. In fact, it is quite ordinary to see a geometric casually draw a triangle as he ponders over the general rules about all triangles; the triangle is randomly drawn in terms of the length of lines or the corner degrees. When observing the contingent triangle he draws, he is not literally looking at *this* particular triangle, instead he sees through it to reach the idealized triangle “in a world of phantasy”.¹⁶ The idealized triangle has no particular

¹⁴ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §7, p.16 <17>.

¹⁵ In the introduction of *Ideas I*, Husserl declares that to avoid confusions about his conceptions of “idea” (*Idee* in German) and “ideal” (*Ideal* in German), for example to distinguish them with the Kantian “idea”, he would adopt an “unspoiled” term “*eidōs*” as an equivalence of “essence” (*Wesen* in German). Refer to *Ideas I*, p.XXII, <6>.

¹⁶ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §7, p.16 <17>.

form of appearance, therefore when the geometric draws the figure, any instance of triangle would suffice for his eidetic deliberation – as long as it is a triangle, which, in the mathematical terms, is a polygon with three corners and three edges which are line segments. The empirical shape physically appearing to the thinker is merely an indicator of the eidetic object being studied. Husserl wrote:

“Throughout, in every step of their [i.e. the eidetic sciences’] thinking, they are pure of all positings of matter of fact; or, equivalently: *in them no experience, as experience*, that is, as a consciousness that seizes upon or posits actuality, factual existence, *can assume the function of grounding.*”¹⁷ (Remarks in square brackets mine.)

In a nutshell, all requirements of establishing an eidetic science boil down to the principle that “the ultimately grounding act is not experience but rather the seeing of essences.”¹⁸ It penetrates into the very ground of Husserl’s phenomenology, and becomes the “principle of principles” of the whole phenomenological endeavor.

1.1.2. Eidetic seeing [*Wesensschauung*] and eidetic reduction

Eidetic seeing in the *Ideas* manuscripts is an expansion of the notion “intuition” in the *Logical Investigations*, which goes hand in hand with Husserl’s discovery of “categorial object” and “categorial intuition”.

A categorial object is to be understood as an abstract being, and it may refer to a state of affair, a genre, relations, mathematical concepts and so on, standing in contrast with the particular occurrences on the pure sensuous level. The categorial objects can

¹⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §7, p.16 <16>.

¹⁸ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §7, p.16 <17>.

be intended by an empty signitive intention and be fulfilled by a categorial intuition. For example, seeing a triangle drawn on the paper, one is able to identify not only “a triangle” but also “this figure *is* a triangle”. According to Husserl’s *Sixth Investigation*, “this figure” and “a triangle” are sensuously perceived, but not the copula “*is*” expressing the relation (which is a categorial object). It is the categorial intuition that helps to grasp the “*is*”, which calls for certain “thoughtfulness”¹⁹ additional to the sensuous seeing. Another example, seeing a blue cup, one is able to identify not only “a blue cup” but also “this cup *is* blue”. He grasps the genre of “blueness” through this particular instance of blue. Factually he is looking at a blue object, but besides that he is able to abstract the blue-characteristic (as a part of the whole cup) and relate it with other instances of blue by applying the *idea* of blueness.

In the above two examples, the eidetic seeing [*Wesenserschauung*] operates in a rather spontaneous way, as if the element of “thoughtfulness” is absent. However, in another approach of achieving the eidetic seeing, careful conceptual analysis is involved. It is the *eidetic reduction*.

Aligned with the goal to establish a science of essence, the eidetic reduction directs one’s attention from the particular multiple facts to the *a priori* essence. Husserl also refers it as the *eidetic variation*. In this process, one imagines possible instances of modifying the attributes of the given object, thereby certain attributes would be found as indispensable to constitute the core of the object’s being. A brief example would help to elaborate. A tree with normal appearance stands before me, with a trunk,

¹⁹ The phenomenologist John Drummond describes the categorial intuition as a “thoughtful perception”, stressing the intellectual element – although operates in a spontaneous and implicit manner – that marks the key difference between the purely sensuous perception and the categorial intuition. Refer to Drummond, item “Categorial Intuition”, *Historical Dictionary of Husserl’s Philosophy*. (Scarecrow Press, 2008), p.50.

branches and flourishing leaves. By direct intuition, I identify it as “a tree”. Now I carry out three imaginative variations about its attributes:

- (a) What if there is no leaf?
- (b) What if the trunk is truncated in the middle?
- (c) What if it loses the capacity of self-nutrition?

In variation (a), I can still identify it as a tree, just like trees without leaves in winter. However, in variation (b) and (c), the imaginarily varied object can no longer fit into the genre of “tree” because the absent properties are so essential that without them the object has transformed into some other genre of being, say, “a timber pier” after truncating the trunk in the middle, and “a (dead) wood” if it can no longer nourish itself. While the imaginative variations carry on, more and more features of “a tree” are examined, and we can gradually articulate the necessary moments of “a tree” from other contingent properties; thereby the essence of the object is identified.

1.1.3. Pure phenomenology as an eidetic science of consciousness

In the context of phenomenology, eidetic reduction is substantial as it delineates the border between phenomenology and empirical psychology, although both of them share the common subject matter, i.e. the occurrence of consciousness. Empirical psychology attends to the factual aspect of the conscious flux and tries to deduce positivistic laws concerning the operation of consciousness. Phenomenology, on the other hand concerning consciousness in its own regard, seeks to give an account of the *a priori* universal structure of all acts of consciousness, regardless of the particular content the act is directed to. By applying the eidetic reduction, a phenomenologist questions the essence of each type of consciousness: “What is perception *as such*”, “What is remembering *as such*”, “What is empathy *as such*” and so on, helping him to

trace to the most essential question: “What is consciousness *as such*”, “What features are indispensable to identify an act of consciousness”. To give answers, Husserl was inspired by Brentano’s definition of consciousness in terms of “intentionality”²⁰ and further developed it into the systematic phenomenological reflection upon lived experiences. By eidetic reduction, the contemplations of consciousness are elevated from the matters of fact to the plane of eidetic science.²¹

Of course, to complete the phenomenological reduction, one still needs to perform the transcendental reduction that directs the thinker’s attention from the transcendent objects back to the consciousness of the thinker to her the objects appear; nevertheless, the eidetic reduction is a necessary moment of the full-fledged phenomenological reduction that contributes to establish phenomenology as a genuine science by excluding the factual contingency. Note that in *Ideas I*, the exercise of the eidetic reduction is prior to the transcendental reduction and the epoché, whereas in the *Cartesian Meditations* it is the other way around. However, regardless of the difference of sequence, the result of the reduction remains the same, because the eidetic seeing obtained by operating eidetic reduction goes parallel with the

²⁰ Brentano wrote: “Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.” (Underline mine). Quoted from: Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, edited by Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 1995), p.88-89.

²¹ In the Introduction of *Ideas I*, Husserl says: “[...] *pure or transcendental phenomenology* will become established, *not as a science of matters of fact, but as a science of essence* (as an ‘*eidetic*’ science); it will become established as a science which exclusively seeks to ascertain ‘*cognitions of essences*’ and no ‘*matters of fact*’ whatever. The relevant reduction which leads over from the psychological phenomena to the pure ‘*essence*’ or, in the case of judgmental thinking, from matter-of-fact (‘*empirical*’) universality to ‘*eidetic*’ universality, is the *eidetic reduction*.” (*Ideas I*, Introduction, p.xx <4>)

phenomenological motive to leave the *real* for the *irreal* in pursuing the origin of givenness. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl wrote:

“Thus we raise ourselves to the methodological insight that, in addition to the phenomenological reduction, eidetic intuition is the basic form of all special transcendental methods and that both thoroughly determine the legitimate sense of a transcendental phenomenology.”²²

²² Husserl. *Cartesian Meditations*, §34, p.72 <106>.

1.2.

A primary sketch of the phenomenological epoché and the phenomenological reduction

1.2.1. Natural attitude and the unacceptable naiveté of it in the philosophical pursuit

As discussed above, the eidetic reduction requires us to direct our attention to the essence of beings in order to establish phenomenology as the founding science for all other sciences of humanity and nature; therefore this science should necessarily provide an “Archimedean point” which is of indubitably absolute self-evidence [*Evidenz*]. It means, this science must be “free from presupposition”²³ as discussed in the last section.

To Husserl, the most significant presupposition that prevents one from entering the philosophical attitude is the commitment with *natural thesis*, namely, participation in judging whether the world *factually exists*. To be more specific, what lies problematic here is not the content of judgment; rather the interest in upholding non-reflectively the natural thesis, no matter the stance held here is affirmative or negative. In this unreflective outward-thinking, one is still absorbed in the factual concerning and not able to enter the realm of essences, and thus he is laid off from the track of accomplishing a self-evident science that will, on its own ground, found the experiences about the worldly deeds.

²³ Logical Investigations (1901). The seventh section of the introduction. [refer to Kern, “reduction”, p.127]; this requirement is also closely related to what Husserl calls “presuppositionlessness” pursued by phenomenology as a rigorous science. In the article *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, Husserl has already posed such requirement as self-requirement.

As long as the natural thesis is concerned, one engages in the *natural attitude* – whether the “factual existence of the world” is taken in an affirmative or negative, explicit or implicit manner. According to Husserl’s later elaborations, the natural attitude can be further distinguished into two types, the daily-life natural attitude and the theoretical-naturalistic attitude.

In daily-life living, one necessarily presupposes that the world factually exists in all his doings. For example, one must necessarily believe the food factually exists while attempting to be fed with it; and one would detour around a tree in his way, being convinced that the tree factually exists, to avoid bumping into it. Although the affirmative position regarding the world’s ontological status is not articulated thematically, it underlies all unreflected encounters in one’s dwelling in the world (and among the worldly objects). In the natural attitude, one is unavoidably absorbed in the philosophical naivety. Husserl elaborates:

“In the natural attitude we simply *effect* all the acts by virtue of which the world is there for us. We live naively in perceiving and experiencing, in these acts of positing in which unities of physical things appear and not only appear but also are given with the characteristic of things ‘on hand,’ ‘actual.’”²⁴

On the other hand, in the exact-scientific pursuit, natural scientists also hold an affirmative stance for the natural thesis, and moreover, incorporate it into the theoretical body as an indispensable presupposition, i.e. all the findings are based on the positivistic facts of the worldly facts and the unreflected admission that the world exists independently from any perceiver. Admitting exact sciences do contribute to

²⁴ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §50, p.114, <94>.

broaden our knowledge about facts, however, Husserl disapproves their legitimacy in becoming the ultimate founding science of our cognition and accuses them of wearing the pretended “scientific dress”²⁵ of dominating the truth, for exact sciences are not self-evident and free from presuppositions.²⁶ To distinguish this naivety committed in the theoretical thinking from that committed in everyday living, Husserl later referred to it as the *naturalistic attitude*.

“When engaged in natural science we effect experientially and logically ordered acts of thinking in which these actualities, being accepted as they are given, become conceptually determined and in which likewise, on the basis of such directly experienced and determined transcendencies, new transcendencies are inferred.”²⁷

Since phenomenology itself is also a theoretical endeavor of knowledge, to Husserl, the naturalistic attitude deserves higher vigilance. In *Ideas II* and *Crisis*, the philosopher spends lengthy writings clarifying how naturalistic attitude, as a style of thinking, has emerged in the history of thoughts, and how it has impaired the understanding of ultimate truth (as a subject-related truth) in our epoch.²⁸

No matter how different they might be, the natural attitude and naturalistic attitude share the common root of positing the ontological existence (or inexistence) of the world, preventing one from leaving the habitual perspective for radical reflections upon his own correlation with the objects appearing to him, thus at the entrance of the

²⁵ Husserl. “*Philosophy as Rigorous Science*” English translated by Quentin Lauer, in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

²⁶ Presuppositionlessness and the legitimacy of claiming the universal truth actually explain each other.

²⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §50, p.114, <94>.

²⁸ Elaborated discussions can be found in:

(1) Husserl. *Ideas II*, “Chapter One: Opposition Between the Naturalistic and Personalistic Worlds” in “Section Three: The Constitution of the Spiritual World”, including §49-§53, p.183-222 <174-211>.

(2) Husserl. *Crisis*, PART II: Clarification of the Origin of the Modern Opposition between Physicalistic Objectivism and Transcendental Subjectivism, including §8-§27, p.21-100.

philosophical attitude, all types of naivety related to the “general positing of the world”²⁹ must be abandoned in order to obtain the ontological neutrality. Thereby, one is liberated from the factual concerns and return to the immanent consciousness to search for the absolute self-evident originality that all experiences stem from.

1.2.2. The phenomenological epoché and reduction

In order to purge all dubitable elements from the essential science to be established, Husserl finds Descartes’ “universal doubt” also sharing this epistemological motive. Before introducing the phenomenological epoché, Husserl first clarified the distinction between “doubting” and “attempting to doubt”, the latter of which bearing the Cartesian motive “with a view toward bringing out a sphere of absolutely indubitable being”³⁰ and thus able to help us reach the phenomenological self-evident ground.

Unlike “doubting”, where the subject is genuinely skeptical about the object, “attempting to doubt” does not aim to cast doubt but rather consciously operate the “doubt” as a well-controlled test in order to reveal the indubitable founding point of knowing, a point beyond which we cannot seek for any further validity. “Attempting to doubt” is a “*methodic expedient*” or “*methodic device*” in Husserl’s terms:

“Obviously this is carried over from doubting to *attempting* to doubt.”³¹

“We start from here, but at the same time emphasize that the attempt to doubt universally shall serve us only as a *methodic expedient* for picking out certain

²⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §30, p.56.

³⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §31, p.58 <53/54>.

³¹ Husserl. *Ideas I*. §31, p.58 <54>.

points which, as included in its essence, can be brought to light and made evident by means of it.”³² (Underline mine.)

The doubt is only used as a methodological mechanism to reveal whether the objects [*Gegenstände*] in question can withstand the doubt and remain indubitable. In the process, the subject does not naively engage in the skeptical attitude; he “splits” into two perspectives, a natural “I” that operates the doubt and a transcendental “I” that stands in a reflective position to supervise what is to be yielded from the process. It is as if the subject knowingly “pretends” to cast the doubt. On this “second-degree”³³ operation of methodic doubt founds the phenomenological epoché and reduction.³⁴

The phenomenological epoché is precisely the suspension of interest or participation in making judgment about the ontological status of the world. In other words, the positing of the world is “parenthesized” and considered temporally irrelevant to the phenomenological proceedings. In conformity with the “second-degree” doubt, the epoché is not a conviction of the world’s annihilation, but a pause, a break, a methodic abstain from dealing with the world’s ontological status, in order to disclose the direct

³² Husserl. *Ideas I*. §31, p.58 <53/54>.

³³ Husserl. *Ideas I*. §50, p.114 <94/95>: “In the phenomenological attitude in essential universality we prevent the effecting of all such cogitative positings, i.e., we ‘parenthesize’ the positings effected; for our new inquiries we do not ‘participate in these positings.’ Instead of living *in* them, instead of effecting *them*, we effect acts of *reflection* directed to them; [...] We are now living completely in such acts of the second degree, acts the datum of which is the infinite field of absolute mental processes – the fundamental *field of phenomenology*.” (My underline)

³⁴ Adopting the spirit of the Cartesian “universal doubt”, Husserl, however, thinks Descartes did not understand the transcendental implications of his own project. In a nutshell, Descartes failed to distinguish and articulate that the subject has split into two levels, one of which no longer participates in the doubting but govern the process in order to capture the purely self-evident “Archimedean point”. He misunderstood the “methodological doubt” as a genuine doubt and eventually had to resort to God to ensure the indubitability of the starting point of his philosophy. Husserl thinks phenomenology exactly picks up the Cartesian project from here.

Husserl criticizes: “In the attempt to doubt which accompanies a positing which, as we presuppose, is certain and continued, the ‘excluding’ is brought about and with a modification of the counter positing, namely the ‘*supposition*’ of *non-being* which is, therefore, part of the substratum of the attempt to doubt. In Descartes this part is so predominant that one can say that his attempt to doubt universally is properly an attempt to negate universally.” (my underline). The passage can be found here: *Ideas I*, §31, p.59 <55>.

correlation between consciousness and the objects. It consists of two aspects, the subjective attitude transformations and the corresponding disposition transformation of the correlated objects.

On the subjective aspect, the phenomenological epoché designates a modification of attitude from interested to unconcerned regarding the factual beings:

*“We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of natural attitude [...]”*³⁵

*“I am not doubting its factual being as though I were a skeptic; rather I am exercising the ‘phenomenological’ ἐποχή which also completely shuts me off from any judgment about spatiotemporal factual being.”*³⁶

By doing so, the subject gives away his grasp upon the factual objects and disassociates his attention from ontological concerns. The phenomenological neutrality obtained deprives the world from appearing to him with any factual indications. The worldly objects used to be familiar, “on hand”, and closely associative with all his deeds; but now the habitual familiarity is dismissed. By the phenomenological epoché, he is granted an unfamiliar distance from the world in which he used to be somehow ignorantly immersed in. The world and worldly objects, in intentional correlation with the subjective consciousness, have undergone phenomenological modifications along with the alternation of subjective attitude. It leads us to the broader discussion of phenomenological reduction.

Although some scholars maintain that the phenomenological epoché is equivalent to

³⁵ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §32, p.61 <56>.

³⁶ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §32, p.61 <56>.

the reduction, however, in Husserl's writing, "epoché" is more usually used to specify the bracketing of natural thesis and the neutralization of the subject's attitude. It would be more precise to take the epoché as a moment of the phenomenological reduction. After all, the phenomenological reduction deals with the more complicated problems brought by the attitude modification: what remains as the phenomenological residuum after the epoché; what is the status of worldly objects from the post-epoché phenomenological perspective; etc. These complicated problems are pertinent to the very core of the phenomenological motive, but due to its complexity and novelty, controversy and misunderstandings also arise, especially in Husserl's writing of *Ideas I*, the philosopher himself had not yet developed a full-fledged system of depictions about the phenomenological stance.

Since the upcoming sections 1.3 and the whole Chapter Two will be fully devoted to discussing the two diverged interpretations of the phenomenological reduction (and the phenomenological at large), I shall make a brief statement of my interpretation here and save the details for later.

In the phenomenological reduction, it is our ontological judgment about the world that is parenthesized, not the world (including all worldly objects) itself. In other words, the subject's ontological commitment with the world, which arises in the natural attitude, remains intact when he changes his *point of view* into the phenomenological one, *as if* the world has vanished *in this methodological regard*. Husserl clearly pointed out:

“Nevertheless the positing undergoes a modification: while it in itself remains what it is, *we, so to speak, 'put it out of action' we 'exclude it,' we 'parenthesize*

it'. It is still there, like the parenthesized in the parentheses, like the excluded outside the context of inclusion [wie das Ausgeschaltete außerhalb des Zusammenhanges der Schaltung]. We can also say: The positing is a mental process, but we make 'no use' of it [...]³⁷ (My underline.)

These methodological operations are essentially for the sake of directing the subject's attention to the *pure givenness*. The factual objects are now modified into *phenomena*, which are constituted entirely by the phenomenological-transcendental subject, i.e. the perceived *as perceived*, the hoped *as hoped*, the experienced *as experienced*, the meant *as meant*, etc. They are given to the subject in the absolute apodictic evidence. Since we have suspended to quest about the existence or non-existence of the objects, the objects are no longer being *in themselves*, but become *subject-related givenness for consciousness*; that is to say, except for the status of "being the objectivity [*Gegenständlichkeit*] of the consciousness", they have no other standing. They are *constituted* by the consciousness.

However, on the other hand, although the *phenomena* are constituted by the consciousness, they are not pure *constructions or creation*. For the foremost consideration, the phenomena, being the achievement of the reduction, are already free from ontological indication. Factual concerns are forbidden. Thus it is unlikely that Husserl himself would violate this prominently articulated suspension by committing the subjective idealism that holds the factual existence of the world replies on the consciousness. In the opposite, what Husserl had in mind was a type of ***phenomenological idealism***: it deals with how the phenomenologically reduced object (*noema*) relies on the reduced consciousness (*noesis*) in terms of meaning

³⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §31, p.59 <54>.

genesis. The noema cannot be said without the correlated noesis from which its *origin of meaning* is found, nevertheless, noesis has nothing to do with the *factual-ontological origin* of noema, thus in the scope of noesis, noema is simply a givenness “being there” *for* it. Therefore, in this regard, noema somehow retains its own standing of *being itself* but not part of the noesis. Noema is an index of the subject’s factually experienced object in the natural attitude, although the factual-ontological origin remain beyond the scope of phenomenology – as well as beyond the capacity of our cognition founded by lived experiences. In the Heideggerian terms, this ignorance is the “ontological enigma”.

1.2.3. A preliminary disclosure of the unclarified status of the world and natural experiences

So far we can see the status of the world in Husserl’s writing becomes somehow ambiguous. On the one hand, any judgment about the factual existence of the world is suspended by the phenomenological epoché. On the other hand, Husserl has frequently shown tendency to affirm the world’s “being there”, as if it is the vague “substratum” of what is grasped by the consciousness. For example, Husserl wrote:

“[...] we parenthesize everything which that positing encompasses with respect to being: thus the whole natural world which is continually ‘there for us’, ‘on hand,’ and which will always remain there according to consciousness as an ‘actuality’ even if we choose to parenthesize it.”³⁸ (My underline)

“The same material of being cannot be simultaneously doubted and held to be certain [...] it is clear that the *attempt* to doubt anything intended to as

³⁸ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §32, p.61 <56>.

something *on hand* necessarily *effects a certain annulment of positing* [...] The annulment in question is not a transmutation of positing into counter positing, of position into negation [...] *Rather it is something wholly peculiar. We do not give up the positing we effected, we do not in any respect alter our conviction which remains in itself as it is* [...] Nevertheless the positing undergoes a modification: while it in itself remains what it is, *we, so to speak, 'put it out of action' we 'excluded it,' we 'parenthesize it'.* It is still there, like the parenthesized in the parentheses, like the excluded outside the context of inclusion.³⁹ (My underline)

What goes parallel with this ambiguity is the equally ambiguous status of experiences under the natural attitude. On one hand, the phenomenological reduction requires the subject to disconnect with all habitual commitment with the factual world; on the other hand, Husserl admits that the natural experiences still carry on:

“And yet the old course of my experience goes on as it always has, except that this experience, modified by the new attitude, no longer supplies the ‘basis’ on which I was standing up to now.”⁴⁰ (My underline)

In my understanding, the ambiguous status of the world and the natural experiences are only two sides of the same theme: The ultimate motive of suspending the world is not to deny its existence, but to exit the attitude that we have grown too familiar while conceiving the world, in which we take it for granted that the world and worldly objects exist “on hand”. Thus to parenthesize the factual world is eventually not to disregard it, in the entire opposite, it is to see our relation with it more clearly from a distant perspective.

³⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §31, p.58-59 <54>.

⁴⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §32, p.61<57>, footnote 30.

In this regard, the world does not vanish after the reduction, but is given to the subject in a modified manner; the natural experiences are not eliminated, instead they continue to be there (although in the parenthesis) and provide resources for the phenomenological reflections. The subject, as an embodied living person in the natural attitude and the reflecting ego in the phenomenological attitude, goes back and forth between the two attitudes. This is where Husserl's later query stems from, i.e. the query about the "paradox of human subjectivity" between "being a subject *for* the world and at the same time being an object *in* the world"⁴¹ explicated in the *Crisis*. In the following discussions, this paradox will become gradually clearer and I will show along the way how it eventually becomes a constitutive element for the activities of philosophizing.

⁴¹ Husserl. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. §53, p.178.

1.3.

The immanent-transcendent distinction in the phenomenological scope

The pair of concepts “immanent” and “transcendent” is of great significance in Husserl’s phenomenology, indicating that phenomenology has transcended the conventional distinction between the “internal world” and “external world” of the subject in deliberations of consciousness, removing the misleading physical implications brought by the “internal-external” contrast.

In this section, I would like to analyze Husserl’s “immanent-transcendent” distinction and the principles applied. We will see multiple principles can eventually be concluded by the principle of “evidence [*evidenz*]”, which founds the very basis of all phenomenological achievements.

1.3.1 The emergence of the “immanent-transcendent” distinction in the phenomenological sense; the paradox caused

In the ordinary sense, “immanent” and “transcendent” generally indicate whether an object is inherent to another object. While applied to discussions about consciousness, the “immanent-transcendent” contrast is usually taken as equivalent to the “internal-external” contrast, whereby the consciousness is understood somehow as a spatial substance with “inner space” and “outer space”. The development of Husserl’s philosophy had shown a gradual divergence from the conventional conception.

[1] “Immanent” as really [*real*] inherent

In the early stage of Husserl's thinking before the phenomenological reduction, he identifies his philosophy as "descriptive psychology" with the aim to examine the subjective condition of acquiring objective knowledge. Thus it mainly focuses on analyzing the subjective elements genuinely included in the act of consciousness. This stance holds that the flow of consciousness is a factual psychic process like other worldly events, and all psychic moments are really [*real*] inherent to the act of consciousness. In this sense, "Data of sensations" (such as sensations of color⁴²) are really [*real*] inherent to the act and therefore are *immanent*; the objects of the act are *transcendent*. Here the distinction of "immanent-transcendent" has not yet completely discarded the physical implications.

[2] "Immanent" as really [*reell*] inherent

After the phenomenological reduction is carried out, in §41 of *Ideas I*, Husserl refers "immanent" to those which belong to the stream of the subject's lived-experiences; beings not compliant to this definition are "transcendent". He explicitly wrote:

“[...] by intentional mental processes related to something immanent, we understand those to which it is essential that their intentional objects, if they exist at all, belong to the same stream of mental processes to which they themselves belong.”⁴³ (My underline)

⁴² Husserl. *Ideas I*, §41, p.88 <75>.

⁴³ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §38, p.79 <68>. Note that the underlined "intentional" is translated as "intensive" in F.Kersten's translation, in which the original German word „intentionale“ is sometimes translated as "intensive" and other times "intentional". For example, the original German text of the quoted paragraph is: „[...] unter immanent bezogenen intentionalen Erlebnissen verstehen wir solche, zu deren Wesen es gehört, daß ihre intentionalen Gegenstände, wenn sie überhaupt existieren, zu demselben Erlebnisstrom gehören wie sie selbst.“ The originally identical „intentionalen“ are translated respectively as "intensive" and "intentional" by Kersten. To avoid confusions, I shall adopt "intentional" in all instances of „intentionale“.

In this sense, when I perceive a table, my intending consciousness and the hyletic data involved all belong to the stream of my lived-experiences, thus are *immanent*; on the contrary, the intended table, as a physical object therefore obviously does not belong to my lived-experiences, is *transcendent*. My lived-experiences and the table are beings substantially independent from each other.

Identifying the table as transcendent and other components involved in the intending act are immanent, this result of analysis seems to be similar with those in [1]. One may suspect whether the sense of “immanent-transcendent” distinction has remained the same regardless of the phenomenological reduction. But if we examine the reduction with deeper circumspection, the novel sense of “immanent” and “transcendent” will be more accurately spelled out, however the status of the “table” (as noema) will become more complicated due to the difficulty in demarcating “immanent” and “transcendent” in a phenomenological context.

After the phenomenological reduction, concerns on factual matters are suspended, and the subject’s attention is directed to the relation between the consciousness and its object. In the phenomenological attitude, the object is taken merely as intended and is phenomenologically reduced into an intuitively given phenomenon, i.e. the table I perceive is no longer taken as a *de facto* physical object, but “table as phenomenon” or “table as intentional noema”. All attributes of the table, including the physical attributes, are no longer directly attached to the phenomenon (as a nonphysical being), but becomes a part of the transcendental constitution of the consciousness.

In other words, the factual-ontological layer of the table *de facto* is parenthesized; what is in correlation with the consciousness is “table” the phenomenon, but not the

physical table-itself. The object is placed in a subjective-related perspective, i.e. the table showing itself as such-and-such is all due to the apprehension of the perceiving subject in the first place, otherwise the object would not have been “there”. The consciousness participates in constituting the “table”.

Now the status of the “table” becomes ambiguous. On the one hand, the table is given in the field of consciousness; it would not have been “(perceived) as it is” if not involved in the correlation with the subjective consciousness. In this sense, it should not be entirely excluded from the immanent sphere. However, on the other hand, the table itself, as a physical Object, is not ontologically *created or materially constructed* by the consciousness, and therefore it is factually independent from the consciousness, rendering it inappropriate to be identified as immanent. To solve this dilemma, Husserl distinguished the notion of “immanent” into two further categories: **“immanent as really [*reell*] inherent”** and **“intentionally immanent”**.

By “immanent as really [*reell*] inherent”, Husserl means the *noesis* and *hyletic data*.

Noesis is the intentional apprehension that correlates the intentional object. The hyletic data is the sensuous contents involved in the intending act, including the sensuous feelings about the attributes of the objects (such as color-Data, touch-Data, tone-Data, etc.)⁴⁴ and emotions (such as pleasures, angers, etc.). In the structure of intentionality, noesis and hyletic data both participate in constituting the noema.⁴⁵

Noesis initiates the intentional act and animates the acquiring of hyletic sensuous data,

⁴⁴ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §85, p.203 <172>.

⁴⁵ In fact, Husserl once hesitated to explicitly distinguish hyletic data from noesis due to their affiliation. He wrote in the footnote of §88 in *Ideas I*: “[...] ‘noesis’ signifies the same thing as ‘concrete-complete intensive mental process,’ with ‘emphasis on its noetic components.’ Thus the hyletic moments belong to the noesis in so far as they bear the functions of intentionality, undergo sense-bestowal, help constitute a concrete noematic sense. [...] I myself have vacillated before in distinguishing noetic and hyletic moments.” (My underline). Quotation from: Husserl. *Ideas I*, §88, footnote 2 on p.203 <181>.

so that the noema is constitutively furnished in a concrete fashion. Husserl signified the noesis as “*intensive μορφή* (intensive morphé)” and hyletic data as “*sensuous ὕλη* (sensuous hylé)”; they respectively play the roles of formal function and matter concretization,⁴⁶ therefore without each other they would turn into “stuffless forms” and “formless stuffs”.⁴⁷

[3] “Transcendence” as ir-real [*irreell*] contents and as “intentionally immanent”, “transcendence-in-immanence”

After the phenomenological reduction, all objects are taken as correlates of the transcendental consciousness. Being constituted by the intending noesis and the concrete sensuous hylé, the world and worldly objects, as noema, are no longer genuinely transcendent to the consciousness. Insofar as the noema is not the real [*reell*] contents of the intentional act, neither an entirely independent being beyond the consciousness, Husserl accounted for it as “intentionally contained” in act. In other words, noema is “transcendence-in-immanence” – not ontologically-factually constructed, but phenomenologically-intentionally constituted in the consciousness.

“The [...] most radical of all ontological distinctions [is] [...] being as consciousness and being as something which becomes ‘manifested’ in consciousness, ‘transcendent’ being – which, as we see, can be attained in its purity and appreciated only by the method of the phenomenological reduction.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Refer to the title of §85 in Husserl’s *Ideas I*, p.203 <172>.

⁴⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §85, p.204 <173>.

⁴⁸ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §76, p.171 <141-142>.

The paradoxical status of noema eventually gives rise to the tension in phenomenology between the mundane living and the transcendental accomplishment.

So far, the novel conception of the “immanent-transcendent” distinction is no longer spelled in the physical “internal-external” terms. In what follows, I shall introduce how Husserl’s further articulations on the “transcendent-immanent” distinction have aligned with the primary principle of “evidence”. Meanwhile, we will see more clearly that phenomenology is not a doctrine of naïve subjective idealism, but has established its new set of methodology.

1.3.2. Whether given in the adumbrated manner; transcendence as “phenomenal” and immanence as “absolute”

Among all beings given to the subject, two types can be identified in terms of the adequacy of givenness. The first type of being is given to me evidently and adequately, not partially, for example the tactual sensation I have when holding a cup. I can grasp the tactual sensation in complete at once. There is nothing hidden from me. The other type of being, on the other hand, is always shown to me from a perspective at a given moment. For example, in perception of a table, I necessarily perceive it from a certain angle, and thus grasping a profile, a side, or an aspect of the whole table. While I move, more aspects of the table are shown to me. In this process, what changes is *not* the object itself, but my *perception* of it. By accumulating the various manifolds and unifying them, I obtain a continuous flow about the table, and gradually constitute an increasingly adequate apprehension of it, although I can never exhaust all its aspects (no matter spatially or temporally).

In Husserl's terminology, the object's aspects grasped by the subject are "*adumbrations*", and the object is "*adumbrated*" by the intending consciousness. The beings given to me in an adequately evident manner belong to the immanent sphere; they are inherent to the intending act itself. On the contrary, the beings given to me adumbratedly belong to the transcendent sphere; they are not really [*reell*] inherent but merely "intentionally contained (as noematic sense)" in the intending act.

This means that a transcendent object is always given to me with some aspects hidden, undetermined.

"A physical thing is necessarily given in mere 'modes of appearance' in which necessarily a *core of 'what is actually presented'* is apprehended as being surrounded by a horizon of '*co-givenness, which is not givenness proper*, and of more or less vague *indeterminateness*."⁴⁹

"*To be in infinitum imperfect in this manner is part of the unanullable essence of the correlation between 'physical thing' and perception of a physical thing.*"⁵⁰

Nevertheless, I have the freedom and thus possibility in making the currently hidden become directly given. I know there is always some aspects of the thing not yet shown but possible to be shown; in this way the un-given sides are phenomenologically implied. Underlying this awareness is the recognition that the transcendent being is an identical object factually independent from my intending. Husserl wrote:

"Necessarily there always remains a horizon of determinable indeterminateness, no matter how far we go in our experience, no matter how extensive the continua of actual perceptions of the same thing may be through which we have

⁴⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.94 <80>.

⁵⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.94 <80>.

passed.”⁵¹

Thus from the subject’s perspective, the immanence is given in apodicticity – not that the perceived is definitely free from error, but that there is no good reason to doubt what is being captured. It is in this sense that Husserl designated the immanence as “absolute” and the transcendence, on the contrary, as “phenomenal”.⁵²

“[...] the perception of a mental process is a simple seeing of something which is (or can become) *perceptually given as something absolute*, and not as something identical in modes of appearance by adumbration.”⁵³

To Husserl, “whether given in adumbration” is the most essential definition of the immanent-transcendent distinction. It has surpassed the internal-external conception (which is difficult to cast off the physical implications) and approached the problematic from *how* a being is given to the subject – a very phenomenological approach.

1.3.3. Immanence vs. transcendence: “indubitability” vs. “dubitability” in perception

In fact, the essential spirit of the phenomenological approach is to establish the legitimacy of the subjective point of view that all undertakings of consciousness are necessarily correlated with the subject. In other words, in the act of consciousness, what is absolute and indubitable are the subject’s immanent experiences – regardless of what contents are involved or whether the experiences correctly reflect the

⁵¹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.95 <81>.

⁵² Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.94. The title of §44: “Merely Phenomenal Being of Something Transcendent, Absolute Being of Something Immanent”.

⁵³ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.95-96, <81>.

factuality, the experiences themselves are undeniably as such.

Take the experience that “I see a ghost” as example. There are two components, (a) “a ghost” being the noema of the intentional act, and (b) “I see” that comprises the noetic form and the hyletic sensations. In the phenomenological vision, the experience of “I see” is absolute and indubitable unconditionally. The “ghost” I perceive may not reflect the factuality (it may not even factually exist, rendering the experience illusive), but it does not undermine the validity of the immanent experience per se in any aspect:

“In this [immanent] absolute sphere there is no room for conflict, illusion, or being otherwise. It is a sphere of absolute positing.”⁵⁴ (Remarks in the square brackets mine)

On the opposite, the “ghost” perceived is dubitable in the sense that my perception of it will always be open for revision, correction or negation, because the “ghost”, as a transcendent being not really [*reell*] inherent to my experience, is given in adumbrations. By principle, the transcendent shall always be cognized in a “presumptive”⁵⁵ manner, awaiting further apprehensions to furnish.

“It can always be that the further course of experience necessitates giving up what has already been posited with a *legitimacy derived from experience*.

Afterwards one says it was a mere illusion, a hallucination, merely a coherent dream, or the like.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §46, p.102 <86>.

⁵⁵ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §46, p.102 <86>. Husserl wrote: “[...] whatever is there for me in the world of physical things is necessarily only a *presumptive actuality* and, on the other hand, that *I myself*, for whom it is there [...] am *absolute actuality* or that the present phase of my mental processes is an absolute actuality, given by an unconditional, absolutely infeasible positing.”

⁵⁶ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §46, p.102 <86>.

It is worth notice that Husserl was careful enough in descriptions; he titled §46 “indubitability of the perception of something immanent, dubitability of the perception of something transcendent”. The “indubitability” and “dubitability” do not directly predicate the immanence and transcendence, but the manner *how* they are given. That means the descriptions are not contributed to the factual-ontological status of the immanence and transcendence, but their mode of givenness, *how* they are correlated in the structure of intentionality. All in all, this distinction traces back to the principle of evidence.⁵⁷ By judging whether the givenness is in adequacy, in adumbration and in indubitability, the self and his immanent sphere are distinguished from the undetermined transcendence.

Unlike the doctrines of subjective idealism, the phenomenological transcendent sphere is clearly not considered as constructions of the immanent consciousness, otherwise there would not have been room left for adjusting the “presumptive” cognition of the object at hand. However, as his stress on the primacy of subjectivity reaching the summit, Husserl’s language in *Ideas I* appear to be increasingly idealistic and somewhat misleading.

⁵⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §46, p.102-103 <86>: “This is the eidetic law defining this necessity [of the perception of immanence] and that contingency [of the perception of transcendence].”

1.4.

Possible interpretation of the phenomenological reduction [1] –

The phenomenological reduction as elimination of the transcendent sphere; “the annihilation of the world”; the seemingly tendency of naïve subjective idealism.

Although the phenomenological descriptions intend to stress the primacy of the immanent sphere in experiences, it may appear to some that Husserl’s delivery in writing has grown more idealistic, which usually causes him the accusation of committing subjective idealism. Among the vast amount of seemingly misleading assertions, these are a few extracts:

*“Over against the positing of the world, which is a ‘contingent’ positing, there stands then the positing of my pure Ego and Ego-life which is a ‘necessary,’ absolutely indubitable positing. Anything physical which is given ‘in person’ can be non-existent [...]”*⁵⁸ (Underline mine)

*“[...] the perceived physical thing can be cancelled and regarded as non-existence, as an illusion [...]”*⁵⁹ (Underlines mine)

Husserl’s depictions of the transcendent sphere developed from “contingent” to “non-existence” and eventually he spoke of the possibility of “the annihilation of the world”:

“[...] it then becomes evident that while the being of consciousness, of any stream of mental processes whatever, would indeed be necessarily modified by an annihilation of the world of physical things its own existence would not be

⁵⁸ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §46, p.102-103 <86>.

⁵⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.97, footnote.

touched.”⁶⁰ (Underline mine)

As the analysis carries on, while the existence of the transcendent sphere grows contingent and uncertain, On the other hand, the immanent sphere and immanent sensibilities seem to be increasingly affirmed.

“[It is indeed evident also that the adumbrative sensation-contents] themselves are beyond question in their absolute being.”⁶¹ (The contents in the square brackets are directly quoted from: *Ideas I*, p.97, <82>)

“*Consequently no real being, no being which is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances, is necessary to the being of consciousness itself [...]*”⁶²

The existence of the consciousness seems to be absolute regardless of whether the world of physical things is there. In other words, it is as if the immanent consciousness is the only absolute *factual* existence, and whatever other beings (including physical objects) arise from it. If we take Husserl’s writings at face value, phenomenology could be easily interpreted as another doctrine of subjective idealism, where the consciousness is the ontological origin of all other beings; and the entire universe of material beings are actually dependent on the “mental”⁶³ experiences.

⁶⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §49, p.110 <91-92>.

⁶¹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §44, p.97, footnote.

⁶² Husserl. *Ideas I*, §49, p.110 <92>.

⁶³ To be rigorous, the wording “mental” should be no longer adopted in a phenomenological context, because “mental” still has physical implications – consciousness is still taken as a series of “psycho-physical process”, not being distinguished from the material realm. Nevertheless, it again reflects the entire landscape of thinking has relocated by phenomenology from the natural straight-forward level to the reflective level. The everyday living experiences should not be directly handled and interpreted by philosophy; only their universal structure can be interpreted (which is obtained by the phenomenological reduction). As the analysis proceeds, it will become clear that the pre-reflective experiences of everyday life, the personalistic surroundings and the life-world should be held untouched by the philosophical reflections, since they precedes (both logically and historically) and founds all possible reflective activities.

As far as I disagree with this subjective-idealistic interpretation, I do not agree to impute the aforementioned misunderstandings all to the misuse of language. In addition, although we may charge the readers for being impatient and unjust when tearing some texts apart from the others, and although the effect of reduction is always latently in play so that all post-reduction texts should not be taken in the ordinary (natural-naïve) literal sense, we should admit that there is something essential and structural to this problem - the status of “transcendence-in-immanence” has not been fully clarified, neither the relation between the immanence and the transcendence, nor the sense of “origin” when the subjective consciousness is referred to as the “origin” of the transcendent.

In other words, it is time for us to examine in further discreetness the structure of intentionality, especially the phenomenological significance of “noema”. Only so can we deepen our understanding in the transcendental constitutive role of the subject to the world, and thus why it is phenomenologically just to claim “there is no reality beyond the subject” without falling into the subjective-idealistic speculation.

CHAPTER 2.

The transcendental-phenomenological disposition and the “world” regained under the new light

In Chapter One, the outlook of phenomenology has been primarily introduced.

Although some key concepts have been analyzed, the phenomenological disposition is still not elaborated enough to give a comprehensive account regarding the idealistic debate: Is phenomenology a doctrine of subjective idealism? If not, in what sense it is a transcendental idealism?

Therefore, in Chapter Two, I shall explicate the major dispositions of phenomenology in further concreteness and profundity, which includes the structure of intentionality, the transcendental nature of the doctrine, and finally how the transcendental-phenomenological position infers the restoration of “world” and “reality”. During the process, it will become increasingly clear that phenomenology is not a doctrine of subjective idealism, but what Ricoeur alleged “methodological idealism” that undermines nothing about the reality but merely levering a new scope of reflection upon the habitual living. As a result, the new science of phenomenology will disclose the most primordial layer of our world-apprehension, which, nevertheless, has been latent in all acts of consciousness and experiences since the beginning of any possible cognition.

2.1.

Intentionality and the dispute of noema

2.1.1. The *a priori* structure of intentionality

In the Husserlian phenomenology, the articulation of “intentionality” is the core of the whole doctrine. In general, we may understand the structure of intentionality in two levels.

Firstly, let us attend to the elements comprising the intentional structure. Husserl’s basic conception of “intentionality” is inherited from his teacher Brentano, who formulated the idea as “directed-ness”, in other words, every act of consciousness is an act of something, for example, a perception is always perception *of* some object; a remembering is always *directed to* some past experience; a judgment is always *about* the judging of certain state of affairs. These concrete scenarios of the act of intentionality showcase the universal two-pole structure, i.e. on the one pole is “the *components proper* of intensitive” lived experiences, and on the other pole is the “*intentional correlates*” as the object [Gegenstand] of intending.⁶⁴ These two components are respectively the subjective pole (*noesis*) and the objective pole (*noema*) of intentionality. When carrying out an act of consciousness, the noesis bears the meaning-intending (towards the noema), fashioned with certainthetic manner or volitional motivation (such as hoping, imagining or disapproving), determining *how* the intended object is given in the intentional correlation.

It is worth noticing that the noesis itself is only an empty intentional act, ready to be

⁶⁴ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §88, p.213 <181>.

fulfilled by the concrete hyletic sensations. While the subject is given a temporal duration to grasp adumbrations of the object [Gegenstand], the sensations about the object's attributes will gradually furnish the empty intention, whereby the noema, as the intentional object,⁶⁵ is constituted in an increasingly adequate manner. In other words, the subject's apprehension of the object grows.

“[...] the *hyletic* moments belong to the noesis in so far as they bear the functions of intentionality, undergo sense-bestowal, help constitute a concrete noematic sense.”⁶⁶

So far the examination of intentionality has been focused on the components of the intentional structure. However, in order to account for the matter of constitution, the discussion must be elevated to a higher level – through the standpoint of transcendental phenomenology, which arises from the phenomenological reduction. By reduction, I withdraw my participation of the habitual straightforward attending to the object, and become concerned with how the object is presented to me as such, in other words, how the object relates to my apprehension. By reflecting upon my own experiences, the intentional structure is found to underlie every act of consciousness. In this structure, the status of “I” is restored – the transcendental “I” become explicitly aware of the subject's participation in revealing the object; the “I” (in the natural attitude) usually being self-forgetting and thus immersed in object-directed experiences is now acknowledged in the phenomenologically reduced manner,⁶⁷ as

⁶⁵ In Husserl's phenomenological terminology, “noema” is identical with “intentional object”, which is to be distinguished with “intended object”. This distinction between “intentional object” and “intended object” and related interpretations pertain to the most fundamental level of understanding phenomenology. Thus it is not surprising to find the division of schools of phenomenologists also stem from their different interpretations in this pair of concepts. Related analysis will carry out later in Chapter Two.

⁶⁶ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §88, footnote on p.213 <181>.

⁶⁷ There are two senses of “I” in the current discussion. (1) The transcendental “I” is the phenomenological subject given rise by the break from the world; it stands out of the habitual lived experiences in natural attitude to investigate the *a priori* relation between the object and the

the intending act that functions to *disclose* the object as it is from different aspects in certainthetic manners. Thus the noetic “constitution” in the transcendental-phenomenological context does not mean to *materially construct* the object (out of nothing), but to *reveal* the object as a perceiver, to bestow a unity of noematic sense that bears the subjective mark.⁶⁸

Although in the role of initiating the intending acts, the noesis is in a passive status when *given* the objective phenomena. In this sense, noesis and noema actually constitute each other, making them two poles of the intentional correlation instead of two independent entities. They are only two structural dimensions of consciousness, i.e. every perceived object is always already a constitutive achievement of the subject, and every subjective apprehension is always a set of givenness of objective phenomena. The notion of “noema” is always subject-related; in other words, “noema” is precisely the “noematic sense” conferred by the subject.

2.1.2. The “intentional object” (noema) and the “intended object”

It is crucial to distinguish the meaning of “sense” (as in “noematic sense”) in the phenomenological context from the common usage in natural attitude. In ordinary language, “sense” is what attached to the object; the expression “the sense of ...” (e.g. “the sense of a behavior”, “the sense of the quoted text”) usually presupposes that the

consciousness. (2) The “I” signifies the “unreflective I” in the natural attitude; it participates in every straightforward attending to the objects. Some readers may accuse Husserl for splitting the subject; however, Merleau-Ponty’s interpretation provides an intellectual account of Husserl’s intention. Merleau-Ponty, in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, suggests the transcendental subject and the natural subject are only two modes of the same “I”, i.e. the philosophically reflective mode and the pre-reflective mode.

⁶⁸ It parallels with the idea discussed in Chapter One that, unlike noesis and hylé, noema is not really (*reell*) immanent to the act of consciousness, but transcendent to the act which is always open for further possibility of being constituted. Nevertheless, the participation of the noesis in transcendental constitution makes noema intentionally immanent to the act.

object itself pre-exists and the sense *of* it is discovered or bestowed afterwards. However, in the post-reduction phenomenological orientation, the object-sense dichotomy is replaced by the radical conception that the alleged “object itself” is always already a unity of sense, more specifically, a unity of noematic sense as sediment of former noetic constitutions. As a result, the meaning of “sense” is broadened and radicalized by the phenomenological reduction. The objects are no longer habitually posited as if they exist independently; now while the subject’s attitude turns inwards to his own operation of consciousness, the object is taken purely as achievement of the subject-related experiences, as *meant*. There is no “substratum” “beneath” the given phenomena; even the attribute of “physicality” of an object belongs to the constituted “sense”, constituted by the embodied subject through sensuality.

This is precisely the conversion from “intended object” to “intentional object”, which are not two existences or even two layers of an object, but only the identical object correlated in two different attitudes. The phenomenologist John Drummond writes:

What the reduction does is to shift our attention from the “significant *object*” to “the *significance* of the object *for us*”.⁶⁹

The object as such is taken for granted in the natural attitude; after undergoing the reduction, the natural attitude is suspended whereby the sense of the object (as noetic constitution) is spotlighted. The modification from “intended object” to “intentional object” compromises nothing about the object.

By the same token, the Husserlian conception of “thing itself” is not a hypothetical

⁶⁹ Drummond, John. *Historical Dictionary of Husserl's Philosophy*. p. 13.

positing that exists independently from any perceiver, but always as a body of noematic sense. Unlike the naturalistic disposition, from the phenomenological point of view, there is nothing “more real”, “more essential” or “more objective” behind the constituted sense. Some scholars, such as Føllesdal, hold that the “noema” is a type of ideal existence on top of the object itself, which *per se* is not ideal by nature. In light of the above deliberation, their understanding has not yet dispensed with the naïve natural attitude. It also pertains to the difference in understanding “natural attitude”. Scholars like Føllesdal take the natural attitude in a negative manner, to be abandoned while entering the philosophical activities.⁷⁰ However, if we understand the Husserlian phenomenology to a substantial extent, it would emerge that the ultimate aim of reduction (which is methodological by nature) is not to deny the experiences in natural attitude, but to re-affirm their foundational status of nurturing intellectual reflections (including philosophical activities, natural-science pursuit, etc.) in light of transcendental retrospection.

In parallel, the analysis above will also clarify our previous puzzle about Husserl’s frequently mentioned “world itself” or “thing itself” while discussing the subject’s freedom in modifying his attitudes, as if there is a “substratum” (like in the Aristotelian sense) underlying the perceived. For example, I first intend to an apple in a desiring manner, thereby the correlated apple is given to me as desired; I then change into an aesthetic attitude, now the apple is given to me as an aesthetically appreciated (or unappreciated) objectivity. In the various intentional correlations, it is

⁷⁰ Main arguments regarding the Fregean interpretation held by Føllesdal (as well as numerous other phenomenology scholars such as Ronald McIntyre and David Woodruff Smith) can be found in two classic papers:
(1) Føllesdal, Dagfinn. "Husserl's Notion of Noema" *Journal of Philosophy* LXVI:20, 1969, p.680-687.
(2) Føllesdal, Dagfinn. "Noema and Meaning in Husserl." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Fall 1990), 50 (Supplement), p.263-271.

always *the* identical object being correlated, which is not due to an underlying “substratum” that collects my subjective sensations about the object; instead, from the transcendental-epistemological perspective, the existence of the “object itself” is initiated by my perception, i.e. my lived experiences constitute the object itself. Therefore, all correlations in different thetic characteristics are not mere representations of the object, but constitutions of the object itself.

Husserl wrote:

All these concepts must now be pinned down, their “origin” [Ursprung] must in each case be investigated. Not that psychological questions as to the origin of the conceptual presentations or presentational dispositions here in question, have the slightest interest for our discipline. This is not what we are enquiring into: we are concerned with a [*logical*] *origin*, or – if we prefer to rule out unsuitable talk of origins, only bred in confusion – we are concerned with *insight into the essence* of concepts involved [...]⁷¹

The phenomenological investigation is a journey to explore the origin of meaning of the world, transcendently put, the origin of the world.

⁷¹ Husserl. *Logical Investigation*. P.237-238.

2.2.

Possible interpretation of the phenomenological reduction [2] –

The reduction as a methodic device; the phenomenological idealism in its methodological, transcendental and phenomenological-ontological orientation

2.2.1. The phenomenological reduction as mere modification of attitude with methodological intentions

As discussed before, the presented objectivity constitutedly depends on the mode of *how* noesis correlates to the object intended. And when one adopts a thematic attitude, she is entering a certain nexus of meaning where other types of meaning are temporally suspended. For example, when one carries out arithmetical activities, she is in the arithmetical attitude, i.e. he engages in the mathematical thinking *as if* she has left the worldly surroundings. However, obviously it does not imply the non-existence of the habitual world she has been dwelling in:

*“The arithmetical world is there for me only if, and as long as, I am in the arithmetical attitude. The natural world, however, the world in the usual sense of the word is, and has been, there for me continuously as long as I go on living naturally. As long as this is the case, I am ‘in the natural attitude,’ [...]”*⁷²

*“In that case the natural world remains ‘on hand:’ afterwards, as well as before, I am in the natural attitude, undisturbed in it by the new attitudes.”*⁷³

The natural world, although not heeded by the arithmetician, is still there as the background of her mathematically-thinking activities. It is *as if* the natural world has

⁷² Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.54, <51>.

⁷³ Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.55, <51>.

vanished and faded out from the focused nexus of arithmetical meaning, and the objectivities presented to her are necessarily arithmetically *meant*; however, she can still make descriptions about the natural world. In other words, the habituality is firstly “deliberately forgotten” by the subject’s attitude modification, then “redeemed” by the post-modification subject in a new light, where the originally factually concerned objects now appear to the subject as arithmetical phenomena correlated to the arithmetically concerned noesis. The natural world is never lost.

Likewise, the phenomenological reduction depicted in *Ideas I* is also of a methodological nature. In order to scrutinize the objectivities in the light of sense-constitution, Husserl pedagogically leads the readers to undergo the hypothetical setting of “annihilation of the world”, thereby return to the pure immanence, the realm of absolute givenness, where “the general essences of the ‘cogitationes’ [...] are seen in ideation, and the intentional object as such (the ‘cogitatum qua cogitatum’).”⁷⁴ It is in the same line of thoughts with our former discussions on “intentional object” versus “intended object”, between which only the subject’s point of view has transformed.

In this sense, by interpreting the phenomenological reduction as a change of the subject’s thematic attitude, the “phenomenological residuum” must not be naively understood as a factual-physical entity that is left over after the “negation” of the “external world”. Instead, the pure consciousness as “phenomenological residuum” is a space of sense-constitution, a bearer of the space of meaning, a subject-pole of the meaning genesis.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Kern. *The Three Ways to the Reduction*, p.128.

⁷⁵ This understanding of “phenomenological residuum” is inspired by: Crowell, Steven. *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning – Paths toward Transcendental*. [Northwestern University Press,

“[...] we direct our seizing and theoretically inquiring regard to *pure consciousness in its own absolute being*. That, then, is what is left as the sought-for ‘*phenomenological residuum*,’ though we have ‘excluded’ the whole world with all physical things, living beings, and humans, ourselves included. Strictly speaking, we have not lost anything but rather have gained the whole of absolute being which, rightly understood, contains within itself, ‘constitutes’ within itself, all worldly transcendencies.”⁷⁶ (My underlines)

Therefore phenomenology, being a philosophical investigation on meaning-genesis, deploys the reduction only as a methodological entrance of the philosophical mentality. Paul Ricoeur famously remarks:

“Such a method in no way prejudges the ultimate sense of consciousness, for it entails a methodological rather than a doctrinal idealism and resolves to hold reality only as a sense for consciousness and to spell out the diverse syllables of sense in temporal ‘moments’ and functional ‘strata’.”⁷⁷

Together with elucidations to come in this thesis, it will be shown that the “methodological” character of phenomenological idealism consists in several aspects: Firstly, the phenomenological reduction is not an abolishment of the world, but is operated as a methodic device to suspend the natural attitude. In this sense, it prudentially delineates phenomenology’s domain of discussions on sense. Secondly, “idealism” signifies a type of philosophical stance that holds the dependence of objects on the consciousness. In the case of Husserlian phenomenology, being different from subjective idealism, such reliance is in the sense of meaning-constitution. Last but not least, as the discussions proceed, the

2001].

⁷⁶ Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.113, <94>.

⁷⁷ Ricoeur, Paul. *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*. p.36.

phenomenological idealism will eventually give rise to a novel form of realism, which acknowledges meaning-constitution as the primordial structure of all human activities, and the spirituality as the essence of human existence.

2.2.2. Refutation of the subjective-idealistic interpretation; phenomenology as transcendental idealism

Generally speaking, a philosophical theory of idealism holds that the reality is dependent upon the consciousness. Among all types, the subjective idealism (or metaphysical idealism) claims the most realistic sense of “dependent”, i.e. the existence of objects experienced depends on the subject’s consciousness, and the objects are really inherent to consciousness. George Berkeley’s philosophy is a famous example of subjective idealism, holding that mind is the only existence beyond which no any other type of being can be found, which can be summarized as “To be is to be perceived.”

Phenomenology is similar to the subjective idealism in the regard of affirming the primacy of consciousness; however, phenomenology does not appeal the existence of material objects to the subjective mental construction. As numerous arguments of refuting phenomenology as subjective idealism have been touched upon in the former discussions, I shall summarize and elaborate in brief.

(1) The metaphysical nature

Subjective idealism concerns the metaphysical-ontological problems, which, at the outset of the phenomenological investigation, have been suspended and left unconsidered. In other words, although both admitting the primacy of consciousness

over the objects, phenomenology and subjective idealism are dealing with two entirely different set of problems: subjective idealism is dealing with the “naïve” problems of the world’s factual status, which is non-philosophical or non-rigorous according to Husserl’s requirement for genuine philosophy; while phenomenology has transcended this naïve level and intends to study the world *as* experienced by the subject, namely “the world *for me*” (or “*for us*” in the later inter-subjective sense) instead of “the world *in itself*.” In a nutshell, subjective idealism is of metaphysical nature which phenomenology lacks.

(2) The subjective side

Following the above line of thoughts, the senses of “dependence” of object upon the subject’s consciousness are different between phenomenology and subjective idealism. Subjective idealism speaks of the “dependence” in the causal and material sense; however, phenomenology only takes it transcendently. In fact, phenomenology takes up the Kantian tradition of transcendental idealism that turns the philosophical examination back to the cognizing subjectivity which acts as the condition of the possibility of knowledge as such, and the objects are taken so-and-so perceived or cognized in conformity with the *a priori* structure of subjectivity. In other words, in transcendental idealism the objects are taken as experienced. In this regard, by identifying the subject as the revealer and constitutor of the sense of the world, phenomenology thematizes the correlation between the subject and the world in entirety, rendering the world as “*transcendental world*” (i.e. the world transcendently understood or determined) and the subject standing over against the world (as a whole, as a collection of senses) as “*transcendental subjectivity*” or “*transcendental consciousness*”. The transcendental subjectivity conditions the possibilities of worldly experiences on the pre-reflective empirical level. Therefore

the role of subject in phenomenology, as a transcendental-idealism philosophy, is totally different from that in the subjective idealism.

“[...] the world itself has its whole being as a certain ‘sense’ which presupposes absolute consciousness as the field where sense is bestowed [...]”⁷⁸

(3) The objective side

Although phenomenology and subjective idealism both approve that the objectivity is the result of subjective achievements, Husserl has attempted to draw a distinctive line between the phenomenological transcendental constitution and the naïvely metaphysical subjective construction. After the phenomenological reduction, in the realm of pure consciousness where only senses are concerned, the objects are taken as purely meant and therefore “unities of senses” constituted by the subjectivity. There is no pre-assumed existence of objects prior to the subjective sense-bestowal process - even the physical characteristics, usually seemed the most “primary” attributes over others, are phenomenologically taken as constitutive results. The objectivities live in the infinite flow of phenomena given to the subject; beyond the evident “appearances”, no further “truer” existence can be found.

“[...] *all real unities are ‘unities of sense.’* Unities of sense presuppose (as I again emphasize: not because we can deduce it from some metaphysical postulates or other, but because we can show it by an intuitive, completely indubitable procedure) a *sense-bestowing* consciousness which, for its part, exists absolutely and not by virtue of another sense-bestowal.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §55, p.129, <107>.

⁷⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §55, p.128-129, <106>.

The validity of constitution stems from the “principle of evidence”. This is repeatedly emphasized by Husserl in *Ideas I* whenever he tries to refute the charge of committing subjective idealism. The phenomena are given “in person” [Leibhaftig] to the subject’s pure intuition, thus they *are* the object itself, rather than mere “representations” or “signs” that point to the object.⁸⁰ There is no “stratum” to which attributes of the objects are attached. However, the constitution of “object itself” is not dominated by the current givenness, but with the temporal dimension: the object itself is a unity of senses in the infinite becoming, thus the current affirmed attributes could be verified or rectified by the future givenness. By the subjective endeavor of comprehension, contradicted apprehensions will be adjusted to cohere with other givenness. At large, the validity of pure intuition in constituting objectivities is in contrast with the naturalistic fashion of postulating the hypothetical-theoretical space. From the perspective of modern exact sciences, the actual givenness in the subject’s lived experiences are less “real” than the naturalistic determinations of the objects,⁸¹ because the subject’s experiences are mere “appearances” inferior to the “essences” captured by the naturalistic abstraction. Obviously, the “appearances” apprehended in the naturalistic scope is not yet elevated to the phenomenological-philosophical level, underlying which is their failure to recognize that the exact-scientific activities are founded on the life-world, the natural scientists are always persons immersed in the personalistic environment, and the reality is always a subjective-relative reality in the most primordial sense.

2.2.3. Reality and world in the phenomenological scope – Restoration of the primordial sense of reality from the naturalistic impairment

⁸⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §40, p.84 <71-72>.

⁸¹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §40, p.85 <72-73>.

In contrast to the naturalistic attitude which views the transcendence as “existing in itself”,⁸² phenomenology takes them only as *experienced*. The “experienceableness” inevitably founds the naturalistic postulates of the objects, because the allegedly transcendence “existing in itself” is always to be demonstrated by the lived experiences, the ultimate resort of all activities of cognition or theoretical abstraction.⁸³

Phenomenology teaches us to step back from the habitual living in order to disclose the objectivities as transcendental-subjective achievement of sense-bestowal. Then it becomes obvious that the natural life and the habitual reality are never meant to be negated by Husserl; on the contrary, they are suspended because only in this way can one pause from the unreflective business and take the whole sphere of experiences as a subject-matter of philosophical investigation. In phenomenology, we suspend in order to scrutinize.

In this manner, when applying our phenomenologically converted⁸⁴ regard to the world that has been taken as granted, it strikes us that the world is no longer an “Objective” existence, but a *correlate* of consciousness. In the natural attitude of living, contextualization of meaning precedes the theoretical postulates.⁸⁵ In this

⁸² Husserl. *Ideas I*, §47, p.106 <89>.

⁸³ “It must always be borne in mind here that *whatever physical things are – [...] they are as experienceable physical things*. It is experience alone that prescribes their sense; and, since we are speaking of physical things in fact, it is actual experience alone which does so in its definitely ordered experiential concatenations.” Quote from: *Ideas I*, §47, p.106 <88>.

⁸⁴ In *Crisis*, Husserl metaphorically describes that the phenomenological reduction is similar to the religious conversion that demands radical change in mentality: “[...] it will even become manifest that the total phenomenological attitude and the epoché belonging to it are destined in essence to effect, at first, a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such.” (my underline, *Crisis*, §35, p.137).

⁸⁵ This makes the natural living attitude substantially different from the naturalistic attitude that holds the theoretical-hypothetical postulates prior to the sense bestowed in the actuality.

sense, what phenomenology does is not to establish yet another theory to explain the world, but to reveal the brutal truth – our naturalistic efforts intended to grasp the “ultimate truth” of the reality are ironically only concealments that cover the genuine primordial truth, which has always been laid bare before our eyes if we dare to admit. The world appears to us in the most primordial manner, as if the modern predications had not occurred, and as if we are the first to encounter the world.⁸⁶ From the perspective of finite consciousness, the legitimate sphere of knowledge is the transcendental horizon.

“[...] it is conceivable that our intuited world were the ultimate one, ‘behind’ which would be no world of physics whatever [...]”⁸⁷

Now it seems urging to clarify the sense of “world” as the discussions have brought us afar from the ordinary understanding:

[1] In the pre-reduction natural attitude, the world is understood as an aggregation of “external” Objects.

[2] Now the phenomenological analysis shows that the world in its entirety is a correlate of the transcendental subjectivity, from which its meaningfulness is originated.

[3] However, we realize that our lived experience is an infinite flow that spreads temporal-wise and spatial-wise, also discloses new aspects of the reality as the attitude varies. In other words, there are always indeterminateness beyond the given phenomena; for example, the unseen sides of the perceived object, and the objects which are in the back ground of perception now but can be actionally thematized as

⁸⁶ This conception is essentially pertinent to Husserl’s later idea of “ontology of life-world” in *Crisis*, §51, p.173. The life-world is taken as the sediment of meaning constitution by the transcendental subjectivity, thus is “derived from pure self-evidence” and requires to be studied “purely as experiential world” in the phenomenological light.

⁸⁷ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §47, p.105 <88>.

the center of focus. The currently “hidden” givenness are actually co-given to me together with the seen and thematized phenomena, because in the flow of time as well as in the vast spatial sphere, as I transit as an embodied subject, as I shift attention and vary my attitude as a free ego, it is *actually possible* to turn the currently indeterminateness into determinedness. The field of all possible experiences is my *horizon*, the ultimate background of all possible intended objectivities – this is the third sense of “world” in transcendental phenomenology. In the perspective of intentional analysis, on the *noetic side*, horizon is the recognition of indeterminateness when performing an intending act that one could infinitely disclose the currently hidden sides of the object, or the objects in the background but can be actionally thematized; on the *noematic side*, horizon is the field for the occurrences of all possible intended and constituted objectivities.⁸⁸ Every given phenomenon is always accompanied by the co-positioned horizon as the background, as the sphere of “experienceableness”:

“*Experienceableness never means a mere logical possibility, but rather a possibility motivated in the concatenations of experience. This concatenation itself is, through and through, one of ‘motivation,’ always taking into itself new motivations and recasting those already formed.*”⁸⁹

And the “possibilities” of lived experiences are *actual*, not merely logical.

“[...] something transcendent necessarily must be experienceable not merely by an Ego conceived as an empty logical possibility but by any *actual* Ego as a demonstrable unity relative to its concatenations of experience.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ For the analysis of “horizon”, please refer to: Drummond, John. “Horizon”, *The Historical Dictionary of Husserl’s Philosophy*, p.96.

⁸⁹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §47, p.107 <89>.

⁹⁰ Husserl. *Ideas I*, §48, p.108 <90>.

2.3.

The paradox of human subjectivity and the emerging conception of concrete sensibilities as the ground for possible resolutions

2.3.1. The distinction and the paradox: the transcendental subjectivity and the empirical self

As the transcendental-phenomenological orientation is established, the understanding of “world” is elevated from the natural to the transcendental level, and the status of subject becomes more complicated. On the one hand, the post-reduction transcendental subjectivity (or “transcendental consciousness”) stands over against the world (as the world in its entirety) that is an accomplishment of meaning-giving. This transcendental subjectivity is revealed by the subject itself by phenomenological retrospection, where she becomes self-aware as the functionary of sense constitution. On the other hand, the activities of “reflection” and “self-awareness” can also be found in mundane living; for example, when one realizes she himself is the agent of her activities, and when she realizes her own subjective feelings and “first-person perspective” are not accessible by other subjects. How shall we properly distinguish between the transcendental subjectivity and the empirical subjectivity?

The phenomenologist David Carr has elaborately discussed this issue in his work *The Paradox of Subjectivity*.⁹¹ According to Carr’s analysis, the essential difference lies in that the transcendental ego is enlightened of its meaning-constituting capacity. In the phenomenological orientation, the world is transcendent to the subjectivity, which

⁹¹ Carr, David. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity: The Self in the Transcendental Tradition* [Oxford University Press, USA, 1999].

gives rise to the transcendental status of the subjectivity – it steps away from the concrete world and takes it in entirety as purely meant and constituted. Therefore the transcendental ego relates to the world “purely and exclusively intentionally”.⁹² By contrast, the empirical self-awareness, not touching the meaning-genesis issue, still remains on the natural level, and the retrospection that discloses the empirical self remains “natural” reflections but not transcendental-philosophical.⁹³ He is still immersed in the nexus of worldly deeds as a human subject, although being capable of psychological retrospection, rendering him still belonging to the world. Hence the empirical ego relates to the world, in both “intentional and real-causal ways”,⁹⁴ as part to whole. Carr summarizes:

“The key to the difference between transcendental and empirical subjects is to be found not in the internal structures of consciousness – that is, in its relation to itself – but rather in its relation to the world.”⁹⁵

As the status of subject is formulated in terms of its relation to the world, the paradox becomes more obvious: How is it possible that the subject is on the one hand “a subject for the world” whereas at the same time “being an object in the world”? How is it possible that a subject, as a part of the world, meanwhile encompasses everything and acts as the ultimate source of the meaning of the world?

“WHAT IS THE STATUS, now, of the paradox presently under discussion – that of humanity as world-constituting subjectivity yet as incorporated in the world itself?”⁹⁶

⁹² Carr, David. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity*, p.90.

⁹³ Carr, David. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity*, p.85.

⁹⁴ Carr, David. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity*, p.90.

⁹⁵ Carr, David. *The Paradox of Human Subjectivity*, p.90.

⁹⁶ Husserl. *Crisis*, §54, p.182.

This line of questions is raised by Husserl himself in his last work *Crisis*.⁹⁷

2.3.2. The ground of possible resolutions: the twofoldness of human subject

After posing the questions to himself in §53 of *Crisis*, Husserl attempted to resolve the paradox in the following section by appealing to the reinterpretation of “transcendental subjectivity” as “*transcendental intersubjectivity*”. Firstly, Husserl claims that after the phenomenological reduction, the “I” is no longer a human subject that can be perceptually presented, but transformed into the subjective-poles (as phenomena) which in itself encompass the indication of “many ‘I’s’”:

“[...] what was lacking was the phenomenon of the change of signification of [the form] ‘I – just as I am saying ‘I’ right now – into ‘other I’s,’ into ‘all of us,’ we who are many ‘I’s,’ and among whom I am but *one* ‘I’. What was lacking, then, was the problem of the constitution of intersubjectivity – this ‘all of us’ – from my point of view, indeed ‘in’ me.”⁹⁸ (My underline)

Husserl stresses that in this functioning ego-pole, “nothing human is to be found, neither soul nor psychic life nor real psychophysical human beings”.⁹⁹ The transcendental subjectivity is purely taken as the source of meaning-constitution for the world, and the humanistic characteristic of the subject is discarded on the transcendental level. The paradox is to be dealt with in an idealistic fashion. In this way, it seems that the distinction between the transcendental ego and the empirical ego, which was originally merely articulated in terms of the attitude they hold, is now substantialized as if there are two layers of ontological existence. By the same token,

⁹⁷ Husserl. *Crisis*, §53: The paradox of human subjectivity: being a subject for the world and at the same time being an object in the world. p.178.

⁹⁸ Husserl. *Crisis*, §54, p.182.

⁹⁹ Husserl. *Crisis*, §54, p.183.

theoretically, the channel of self-elevation from the empirical ego to the transcendental subjectivity is cut off.

By this attempt of resolving the paradox, ironically, Husserl seems to once again fall into the idealistic suspicion by implying two layers of ontological existence and thereby two existing subjects: the empirical human subject that lives in the mundane life, and the unhuman transcendental subjectivity that lives a separate life in the transcendental realm. However, being pushed to stress the radical gap between the two subjects, actually Husserl is aware that the two subjects must be theoretically bonded to prevent severe (metaphysical-) ontological difficulties. In his writing, the struggles are obvious:

“[...] it was wrong, methodically, to jump immediately into transcendental intersubjectivity and to leap over the primal ‘I,’ the ego of my epoché, which can never lose its uniqueness and personal indeclinability.”¹⁰⁰

“[...] each human being ‘bears within himself a transcendental ‘I’ [...]’”¹⁰¹

Transcendental intersubjectivity is too large a theme to be covered in this thesis. Although discussions on intersubjectivity are to be found in other manuscripts of Husserl, as far as it is concerned in *Crisis*, this approach has derived more complications. At this stage, Husserl is still not aware that the possibility of dealing with this difficulty as well as dismissing the repeatedly occurring metaphysical-idealistic inclination already lies in his discovery of the subject as embodied human subject, which is on the one hand in the causally determined nexus with other worldly Objects, whereas on the other hand with the capacity of sensibility

¹⁰⁰ Husserl. *Crisis*, §54, p.185.

¹⁰¹ Husserl. *Crisis*, §54, p.186.

and conducting free activities of motivation and volition.

To be concise, the subject is always a subject in the world, and the transcendental-philosophical contemplation is only a mode, although a mode core to humanity, of his multiple attitudes. The twofoldness of the subject (i.e. capable of being ontic as well as transcendental) gives rise to the aforementioned paradox, and renders the paradox not only unresolvable but also constitutive in accomplishing the philosophizing activity – the pre-reflective and reflective undertakings must dialectically co-exist, which actually is already implied in the phenomenological reduction as a radical break from the mundane life. The tension between the human subject's mundane mortality and spiritual immortality also stems from here.

The lesson of staying faithful in the phenomenological descriptions of the subject as always embodiedly inhabiting the world is reinforced by Merleau-Ponty, who later confessed that all his thoughts are originated from Husserl, especially *Ideas II*. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes:

“The most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction.”¹⁰²

It well echoes Husserl's acknowledgement of the peculiar necessity of paradox in *Crisis*:

“Its fate (understood subsequently, to be sure, as an essentially necessary one) is to become involved again and again in paradoxes, which, arising out of uninvestigated and even unnoticed horizons, remain functional and announce

¹⁰² Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, p.viii/xiv.

themselves as incomprehensibilities.”¹⁰³ (My underlines)

“If the paradox [...] were insoluble, it would mean that an actually universal and radical epoché could not be carried out at all, that is, for the purposes of a science rigorously bound to it.”¹⁰⁴

In the following two chapters, I shall elaborate how the paradox is derived from the embodied human subject’s twofold capacity in ontic and transcendental activities, and how this paradox reflects the philosophical rigor of phenomenology as the science of all sciences.

¹⁰³ Husserl. *Crisis*, §53, p.181.

¹⁰⁴ Husserl. *Crisis*, §53, p.180.

CHAPTER 3.

The twofold character of human Body:

Body as material Object and as subject

In this chapter, I shall examine Husserl's *Ideas II* and elaborate on his conceptions of the three intertwining layers of the human Body: physicality, animalia and spirituality. The localized sensations and the kinesthetic sensations will be deliberated in detail, due to their essential role in constituting the Body as Body-subject, who is actually unconceivable without embodiment. In parallel, it will be shown that the Body-subject is always spontaneously embodying his own freewill in practical comportments. He is his living Body.

3.1. A primary sketch of the naturalistic and personalistic attitudes and their understanding of the Body matter

3.1.1. *Körper* and *Leib* and the translation matter

According to the analysis in Chapter Two, the naturalistic attitude, being influenced by the modern natural-scientific mentality, attempts to explain all phenomena in terms of physical causality, including the human living Body.

In view of this, Husserl distinguishes two conceptions of “Body” in *Ideas II*, “*Körper*” in the sense of material corpus and “*Leib*” signifying the animated flesh of a human being or an animal. Before going further, the translations of the two concepts should be clarified to avoid confusion.

As both “*Körper*” and “*Leib*” are translated as “body” in English, Rojcewicz and Schuwer, the translators of *Ideas II* suggest to distinguish them by capitalizing the first letter:

[...] But Husserl often plays on the distinction between the two, and so some sort of device was called for to make these passages intelligible. We are proposing, then to translate *Leib* as “Body” (with a capital) and *Körper* as “body,” and the same applies to the derivative words, “bodily,” “corporeal,” etc. *Leibkörper* thus becomes “Corporeal body.”¹⁰⁵ (My underlines)

As the conception of “Body” pertains to the lived-experiences that found the whole phenomenological orientation, I shall adopt the usage of “**living Body**” for *Leib* as many scholars suggest and “**body**” for *Körper*.

¹⁰⁵ Husserl. *Ideas II*. P.XIV-XV.

3.1.2. The two contrasting attitudes on “Body” and the project of *Ideas II*

It is of no dispute that the Body, no matter that of human or animal, can be understood in physical terms, the Body being consisted of different components of material basis, i.e. flesh, blood, nails, hair, etc. From a natural-scientific perspective, each part of the Body can be examined in the chemical-physical approach to identify basic elements. Even in everyday life, one can easily observe that the Body has no exception in obeying the physical causality than other physical spatial Objects.

Thus the Body, possessing physical characteristics, is constantly “in the nexus of physical causality”.¹⁰⁶ From a *purely physical* perspective, the material Body is of no difference than other physical Objects; it is in the chain of causality as an equal member as other Objects. Husserl writes in *Ideas II*:

“People and animals *have* material Bodies, and to that degree they have spatiality and materiality [...]”¹⁰⁷

Admitting that the living Body is with physical attributes, however, Husserl urges that human (and animals) cannot be taken as mere physical Objects, because from a phenomenological perspective (which shows that objectivity is always originally given as a unity of meaning) they are primordially living subjects in the nexus of meanings:

“[People and animals] *are*, however, not material, and, consequently, taken *also as concrete totalities*, they are *not material* realities in the proper sense.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.36.

¹⁰⁷ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.36.

¹⁰⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.36.

For example, when we ask an injured friend “how are you?”, the expected reply should be more than mere physical recovery reports, but also includes how he *feels* about his own condition and so on. Another example would be when asking why someone commits suicide. When I ask “why did he kill himself?”, I am not expecting an explanation in the physical terms such as “the gravity causes him to hit the ground”; instead, I am wondering about the *motivation* and *meaning* of such behavior in the personalistic sense.

Before proceeding, a brief clarification should be made on the two contrasting attitudes, i.e. naturalistic and personalistic. First of all, they are both a species of the natural attitude, which according to Husserl’s *Ideas I*, is characterized of unreflectively engaging in objectifying activities, with the heed fully directed to the objects; therefore, in the natural attitude, since the attention is not focused on how the objectivity is such-and-such given in the intentional correlation, the world is factually posited.

Both being on the unreflective plane, the naturalistic and personalistic attitudes diverge in regard of whether they abstract from the cultural-meaningful achievements of human, and what they hold as the “primordial truth” of life. In the naturalistic attitude, being a result of radicalizing the exact-scientific perspective, it is believed that physical-causal explanations exhaust the world, and the world is essentially an aggregation of material Objects. Therefore the naturalistic attitude considers the physical laws as the *only* ultimate truth “behind” the given “appearances”,¹⁰⁹ and ***absolutizes*** the nature as purely material, naturalizing the cultural and axiological activities in the approach of empirical psychology.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Of course, the “appearance” in the naturalistic understanding is still in the ordinary factual sense.

¹¹⁰ The elaboration of naturalistic and personalistic attitudes is based on my study of John Drummond’s *Historical Dictionary of Husserl’s Philosophy*, p.142 and p.155.

By contrast, the personalistic attitude does not naturalize nor abstract from the cultural achievements, but apprehends the worldly deeds in the nexus of personal relations, free motivations and volitions. Therefore, the world is not absolutized but *relativized* as the subjective-relative surrounding world which consists of human persons' experiences, and furthermore, the spiritual layer of the world is held as the most primordial actuality over the physicalistic abstractions. In short, the naturalistic attitude holds an *Objective perspective*, contrasted with the *subjective perspective* held in the personalistic attitude.

It should be emphasized that the *subjective attitude* repeatedly mentioned by Husserl in *Ideas II* is not phenomenological attitude, but it is revealed and thematized by the phenomenological method established in *Ideas I*. Specifically, phenomenology discloses how the objectivities are constituted in the noetic-noematic intentional correlation of meaning bestowal, and thereby affirms the priority of meaningfulness in the pre-reflective habitual living of human. In *Ideas II*, Husserl aims to apply the phenomenological method to the concrete reality in order to reveal the world as a primordially cultural world (encompassing cultural achievements, e.g. arts, language, history, as well as empirical sciences, etc.), to restore the legitimacy of the subjective perspective regarding the world where human-subjects inhabit, to convert the physio-physical causality into "conditionality", and to redeem human's freewill from the naturalized world-view born in the modern epoch.

In the context of Body-discussions, the naturalistic attitude naturalizes the living Body as a mere material Object, mere physical *Körper*, and examines the animate and spiritual-cultural aspect of human from the perspective of empirical psychology. However, the personalistic attitude understands the living Body as possessing the capacity of sensations and free movements. More fundamentally, it sees the living

Body *as* the concretization of the person-subject – the person always *as* an embodied person. Being more specific, from the faithful phenomenological descriptions, *the person is unconceivable without embodiment*. Hence, the naturalistic conception of “body” is a mere physical abstraction from the living environment of human activities. In what follows, I shall explicate on the Body’s sensuous capacity, especially the “localization” and kinesthetic sensations. Phenomenological implications will be articulated along the way.

3.2.

The primacy of the tactile sensation over other types of sensation.

My following discussions do not necessarily follow the content sequence in Husserl's *Ideas II*, because most of his writings are manuscripts thus the analysis on one topic may disperse to various sections.

With a normal Body, one has various types of sensations, such as seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, etc. According to Husserl, the tactile sensation is the most primary among all. We shall understand the primacy from the following aspects:

[1] First of all, compared to other sensations, the sense of touch is always necessarily there; it cannot be shut off. The optical sight would be lost if there is no light; the hearing would be muted if the earholes are blocked. In contrast, the tactile sensation is impossible to be blocked. Even in the vacuum, one's tactile sensation still continues. The touching capacity disperses over the skin.

To elaborate, Husserl describes an imaginary setting where one is completely blind or in a completely dark night.¹¹¹ With the optical capacity lost, he would plough around by touching the Objects nearby, or just hold his hands in the air to prevent running into obstacles.

“By means of the sense of touch, I am always in the world perceptually, I am able to find my way around it, and I can grasp and get to know whatever I want.”¹¹²

Unlike other perceptual organs (e.g. the eyes, the nose, the ears), the organ of

¹¹¹ Husserl. *Ideas II*. P.74.

¹¹² Husserl. *Ideas II*. P.74.

touching is not a centralized one, instead, it spreads all over the Bodily surface. As a result, the tactile sensation is a universal capacity of all Bodily parts, marking the boundary between one's sensational Body and other physical Objects.

[2] It naturally leads us to Husserl's second explication on the "privilege of the sense of touch"¹¹³ – each sense organ (including the organs of seeing, hearing, smelling, etc.) possesses the tactile capacity. When a mosquito lands on one's nose, it itches, because the nose is "covered" by the field where tactile sensations occur. When the eyes alter the direction of sighting, the tactual sensation of eyelids is always accompanied. The case of tasting is more obvious: to acquire the taste, direct tactual contact with the Object is necessary.

"It has become night, all things retain their color, but it is permanently night, light is now no more [...] In any case one fact remains: I still have eyes, which touching tells me [...]"¹¹⁴ (My underline)

All Bodily parts bear the capacity of "always ready" to be tactually affected, and this constant readiness constitutes one's implicit acknowledgement that the Bodily parts are there. In other words, the sensation of touching is essentially with a "double" character, i.e. when touching, it is always being touched; unlike other sensations such as seeing, where to see does not necessarily means it is being seen. Therefore, the tactile sensation, with passive nature, can occur without intentional behavior; the entire living Body is constantly already in the *state* of readiness to be touched. The tactual capacity always accompanies my living Body, and more essentially, it constitutes the sensuous Body as such. Thus every Bodily organ is *firstly* a part of the Body, which is essentially characterized with the tactile capacity, *then* it bears another

¹¹³ Husserl. *Ideas II*. P.74.

¹¹⁴ Husserl. *Ideas II*. P.75.

specific sensantional function. This accounts for the privilege of the tactile sensation over any other type of sensations.

3.3.

“Localization”, the exemplary case of “double sensations”, and the dual character of the living Body [*Leib*]

3.3.1. Localization and the localized sensation

Actually the discussion of Section 3.2 has already touched upon the matter of “localization”, which is an indispensable step stone to understand Husserl’s line of thoughts on Body.

[1] In his writing of *Ideas II*, Husserl has formulated a rather precise definition of “localization”; i.e. *when a sensation occurs, it always locates on a certain locus of the Body-corpus*. Husserl writes:

“All the sensations thus produced have their place on the appearing Corporeality, and they belong phenomenally to it.”¹¹⁵

“ ‘Touch’-sensations belong to every appearing Objective spatial position on the touched hand, when it is touched precisely at those places.”¹¹⁶

“ [with the fingers moved on the Corporeal surface] a content having its localization in the interior of the digital space.”¹¹⁷

In the quoted passages, Husserl emphasizes that the sensation occurs *exactly on the place being tactually affected*.

¹¹⁵ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.153.

¹¹⁶ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.152.

¹¹⁷ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.153.

[2] Although a localized sensation is always on the physical Corporeal surface, yet it is not a property of the Body as mere real [*real*] material; in other words, a localized sensation only occurs on a living Body as “*Leib*” that *is able to sense*.

“The localized sensations are not properties of the Body *as* a physical thing, but on the other hand, they *are* properties of the thing, Body, and indeed they are effect-properties [...] they arise there *where* it is touched and at the time *when* it is touched [...]”¹¹⁸ (My underlines)

Husserl’s formulation of “effect-property” actually describes a *relation* between the tactually affected living Body and the Object. The localized sensation does not solely belong to either the Object or the Body; rather it is the content of **how the Body experiences about the Object**. The physical contact of the sensing Body-subject and the Object creates a correlation between the two poles, providing a field for the occurrence of sensing, more precisely, the occurrence of the *hyletic data*. By virtue of this process, the embodied subject and the Object (as in its physical concretion) establish an intentional relation with one another.

Here we encounter a key characteristic of the localized sensations – the *double-sidedness*. I shall discuss in the next paragraph Husserl’s analysis of the “double sensation”.

3.3.2. Double sensation and the constitutive implications of the dual character of the living Body [*Leib*]

Speaking of the phenomenon of “double sensations”, the factual description about it is

¹¹⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.153-154.

actually rather simple, namely, touching one's left hand by his own right hand;¹¹⁹ but phenomenologically it essentially pertains to the constitution of subjectivity, whereby the complexity of the phenomena lies in the sphere of subjective perception.

I now attend to the experience of my right hand (which is in the *touching* role). When it slides over the surface of my left hand, I find "a series of touch-sensations" localized in my right hand, i.e. the smoothness or roughness, the warmth or coldness of my left hand. In this scenario, it seems that I am taking the left hand as a *physical thing*, and its tactual properties are actively grasped by my right hand as (part of the)¹²⁰ *sensing living Body*.

"The indicational sensations of movement and the representational sensations of touch, which are Objectified as features of the thing, 'left hand,' belong in fact to my right hand."¹²¹

Now I shift my attention to my left hand (which is in the *touched* role), and I suddenly realize that the left hand is not merely a physical Object, because it has sensations regarding the tactual contact with the right hand.

"[...] it [i.e. the left hand] is not that the physical thing is now richer, but instead *it becomes Body, it senses*."¹²²

I find that in this scenario, the tactual sensations are now localized in my left hand, although it is in a static position in contrast to the sliding right hand. In my left hand, I feel the smoothness or roughness, and the warmth or coldness of my right hand,

¹¹⁹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.152.

¹²⁰ Actually the bracketed content is put here merely to temporarily suspend some deeper dispute that would call for lengthy elaborations, namely whether in the discussed circumstance "I" explicitly realize it is *the* right hand performing the touch, or "I" just pre-reflectively take the right hand as *the* Body since in practice the Body comports as *a motivated unity*, embodying the subject's will. This dispute is related to the *kinaesthetic sensations* I will discuss in later parts of this chapter.

¹²¹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.152.

¹²² Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.152.

which now renders the right hand to be Objectified and qualified *about* its properties.

When reflecting further about the phenomena above, it could be said that the “*touching*” and “*touched*” roles are only presupposed, since either hand is touching and being touched at the same time. By shifting the attention, both hands could be circumstantially taken as a *physical Object*, and both hands are meanwhile *living Body* with sensing capacity. This again reinforces the two-fold characteristic of the *living Body* [*Leib*]. Husserl briefly summarizes:

“Hence the [living] Body is originally constituted in a double way: first, it is a physical thing, *matter*; [...] Secondly, I find on it, and I *sense* ‘on’ it and ‘in’ it [...]”¹²³ (my underline; “[living]” is supplemented by me)

On the one hand, it is precisely the physicality of Body that enables it to comport among physical Objects, for example, to stand by landing one’s feet *physically* on the ground, to write by *physically* holding the pen, etc. Factually, these processes all occur by virtue of the physical causality, and the living Body, with its physical character, is bounded to physical causation from a naturalistic perspective. In Husserl’s terms, my living Body can “*enter into the physical relations* (by striking, pressing, pushing, etc.) *with other material things*”.¹²⁴ None of one’s practical compartments is possible without this basis. Thus a person is always already among the physical Objects. From a phenomenological perspective, one’s “being there” is always accompanied – or simply *is* always *the* “being there” of the Body. I *am* my living Body, and my living Body *is* me. Without embodiment, my ontological existence is essentially unconceivable.

¹²³ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.153 <146>.

¹²⁴ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.153 <146>.

The case of double sensation shows that, although each hand could be naturalistically abstracted as a mere thing, yet they eventually distinguish themselves from mere things by the capacity of sensing – when I attend to either hand, I no longer perceive it as a mere physical Object, due to the sensations localized in it.

In other words, the sensations *belong to* and are localized in the sensing Body, although they may be sensations *about* the Object in tactual contact. The localized sensations of the tactual organ essentially bridge my Body and other Objects, and by the same token bond my lived-experiential consciousness with the properties of the Objectified material things.¹²⁵ The following brief yet extremely concise passage shows Husserl's affirmation about the *correlating* role of the localized sensations:

“The touch-sensing is not a *state* of the material thing, hand, but is precisely the *hand itself*, which for us is more than a material thing, and the way in which it is mine entails that I, the ‘subject of the Body,’ can say that what belongs to the material thing is its, not mine. All sensings pertain to my soul; everything extended to the material thing.”¹²⁶ (*Ideas II*, p.157, my underline)

The localization of tactual sensings somehow dissolves the border between the Body and the physically contacted Object. Therefore the organ of tactual sensations, namely

¹²⁵ Noted that the expression of “the Objectified material things” mentioned here does not necessarily mean lifeless material Objects, mere things. But here I would tend to focus the discussions on the relation between Body and mere things because of two reasons:

(1) Although the sensed Object may also be a Body (which also senses itself), our context, including the case of double sensations, has been proceeded in an attitude that “Objectifies” the temporarily unattended hand. In this regard, the originally sensing hand is *circumstantially taken like* a lifeless mere thing.

(2) Two sensing Bodies touching each other pertain to the matter of intersubjectivity, which will be put into brackets in this thesis due to the scope, with a full awareness that it is an essential element of Husserl's transcendental philosophy. In fact in his own writings, Husserl also suspends the concern of intersubjectivity and hypothesizes the situation to include only one conscious subject, to prevent unnecessary confusions.

¹²⁶ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.157; *Ideen II*, p.150.

the whole Body surface, is with a rather paradoxical role: by localized sensing, on the one hand, I am reminded of the border between my Body and the Object; while on the other hand, the sensing participates in the constitution of my “being-in-the-world”, whereby I am *sensibly immersed* in the worldly deeds and able to comport in the world *pre-reflectively* without deliberately planning beforehand. To put it in a poetic language, I am “dissolved” in the world in the way that I do not feel alien in the worldly deeds like an intruder. By the sensing border of Body, I do not thematize the occurrences between my Body and other physical Objects; without explicit thinking, I take the surrounding world like a natural extension of my being and living. I feel at home.

3.3.3. Supplementary elaborations on the primacy of the tactual realm and its constitutive role of subjectivity

From the above discussions, it is clarified that the case of “double sensation” spotlights the “double role” of the localized sensations, namely, when my Body is touching an Object, it is at the same time *touching and being touched*; in other words, it experiences the properties of the Object as well as *the fact that it* itself is experiencing exactly when and where it is tactually affected. This twofold character of tactual sensation is given rise by the localized sensing, which endows the living Body with the capacity of *directly experiencing* the external world.¹²⁷ Thereby, the living Body inhabits among the external Objects, although the Body-subject can always

¹²⁷ In *Ideas I*, Husserl uses “transcendent” instead of “external” to signify the world and the worldly Objects which do not belong to the stream of the subject’s consciousness, and thus distinguish the world from the “immanent” beings. However, in *Ideas II* “external” appears constantly, because the context of discussion is the constitutive relation between Body and the world, where Body, with physical character and does not belong to the stream of “my” consciousness, is itself a “transcendent” Object according to the definition in *Ideas I*, thus Husserl employs “external” to signify Objects other than the subject’s Body.

distinguish his Body, more specifically his own embodied self, from other Objects by the lived-through experiences of sensing.

This *double-ness* constitutes the primacy of the tactual realm. Phenomenologically, the living Body is firstly a tactual Body, then it bears other perceptual capacities.

When the living Body is tactually in contact with the Object, it is touching and meanwhile being touched. In the comparison of the tactual realm and the visual realm, Husserl describes:

“I do not see myself, my Body, the way I touch myself. What I call the seen Body is not something seeing which is seen, the way my Body as touched Body is something touching which is touched.”¹²⁸

When I look at an external Object, say a cup, I am not being looked at. Now if I grasp the cup by my hand, I am touching it and meanwhile being touched precisely at the place I touch it. The distinction becomes even more significant when it comes to the relation between the sensations and one’s own Body.

The localized sensations mark the boundary of my living Body. The localized sensations participate in constituting the implicit pre-reflective self-awareness of my own living Body, i.e. my own embodied self. However, in the visual realm, by looking at my own Body, I somehow do it in an “Objectifying” manner, taking my living Body as an Object [*Objekt*] as well as an object [*Gegenstand*]. This “Objectifying” perspective can never be accomplished in the tactual realm, which is unable to “suspend” the fact that the sensing organ belongs to the Body in the way that the eye could temporarily “forget” about its relation with the living Body, because

¹²⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.155 <148>.

unlike the double-sensing localization, seeing is unable of “inward” sensing.

In light of the double sensations, we can see that the living Body is a unity intertwined with physicality and sensibility. In this sense, even the expression “tactual realm” is an abstract result of reflection, since *the realm is already the living Body in flesh itself*, pre-reflectively participating in the worldly deeds.

“The subject, constituted as counter-member of material nature, is [...] an Ego, to which a Body belongs as field of localization of its sensations.”¹²⁹ (*Ideas II*, p.159, my underline)

In this sense, the tactual realm obtains the primacy among all Bodily sensations. It outlines the boundary of my *embodied subjectivity* in practical compartments, and meanwhile blends the embodied subject in the world. Tactual capacity is essentially constitutive to my subjectivity. As a result, *I am not only the “embodied I”, but more importantly, the “embodied I in the world”*, which primarily discloses the mutual constitutions of the subjective consciousness and the world. Thereby, Husserl’s phenomenological discovery goes further: the consciousness is never an abstract one, but always an *embodied consciousness*. The operation of consciousness would not be adequately accounted for if being abstracted from the context of embodiment.

¹²⁹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.159; *Ideen II*, 152.

3.4.

Kinaesthetic sensations and the embodied “freewill”

3.4.1. The kinaesthetic sensations and its motivating role

In the last section, we discussed the localized sensations, which Husserl deems as a primordial field in constituting the living Body. In his own terms, Husserl indicates:

“The distinctive feature of the Body as field of localization is the presupposition for its further distinctive features setting it off from all material things.”¹³⁰ (My underline)

Thus the living Body is *the* field of localization, and vice versa, the field of localization must be a living Body in flesh. But the localized sensations must be motivated by Bodily movements. For example, in the case of double sensation, Husserl describes the right hand moving on the surface of the left hand, experiencing the smoothness and warmth of the left hand. The right hand is led by the Bodily movements to unfold new tactual adumbrations of its Object. The movements are driven by my *free will*.

In Husserl’s terminology, such *moving sensations together with the readiness to move* are signified as “*kinesthetic sensations*” or “*kinetic sensations*”. In the following, I shall elaborate further about the characteristics of the kinesthetic sensation and its relation with other Bodily sensations.

¹³⁰ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.159 <151-152>.

Firstly, as briefly mentioned above, unlike the localized sensations, the locus of kinesthetic sensations is indeterminate. The localized sensations disperse on the Body skin, thus when the Body is touched, the touched area is immediately identified by the sensations localized in it. In contrast, when I carry out Bodily movement, I cannot pinpoint where the kinesthetic sensation exactly arise; being more precisely, my living Body comports as a whole in the pre-reflective attitude, embodying my free volitions. I am not just aware that *my Body is moving*, but *I am moving*, and I do so mostly without thematizing any specific part of my kinesthetic living Body in the personalistic attitude. Husserl describes:

“[...] the kinesthetic sensations do not spread out in a stratified way over the appearing extension, and they receive only a rather indeterminate localization.”¹³¹ (My underlines)

Comparing the localized sensations and the kinesthetic sensations, the latter is more wholistic due to its role in the Bodily comportment as a unified organ. It directly points to the *motivating* character of the kinesthetic sensations.

The relation between the kinesthetic sensations and the localized sensations is one between *motivating* and *being motivated*. By Bodily movements, a certain Bodily organ is brought into the process of unfolding further aspects and adumbrations of the Objects. Also, the movements preserve the possibility and create potential chances for each Bodily organ to participate in the localized sensing.

“Those sensations which undergo extensional apprehension (leading to the extended features of the thing) are motivated as regards the courses they take

¹³¹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.158 <151>.

either actually or possibly and are apperceptively *related to motivating series, to systems, of kinesthetic sensations*, which freely unfold in the nexus of their familiar order in such a way that if a free unfolding of one series of this system occurs (e.g., any movement of the eyes or fingers), then from the interwoven manifold as motive, the corresponding series must unfold as motivated.”¹³² (My underlines)

Out of free will, I, as a person-subject, unreflectively stretch towards the cup and drink when I am thirsty, in the process of which a series of different sensations are motivated, e.g. tactual, visual, gustatory, etc.

“We constantly find here this two-fold articulation: kinesthetic sensations on the one side, the motivating; and the sensations of features on the other, the motivated.”¹³³ (My underlines)

“[...] It is a reality with respect to nature as the world of things given in intuition and is at once a reality with respect to the spirit. Thus it is a *double reality*, to which pertain two lines of real circumstances. Thereby the aesthesiological stratum is the substrate for the stratum, “free movement” and is always a presupposition for it, whereas the lower stratum, the aesthesiological can be separate from motility. [...]”¹³⁴

In other words, the kinesthetic sensations motivate the compartments of the whole living Body as the totality of sensuous organs. In the kinesthetic movements, the subject-Body is brought into constantly new circumstances where the embodied subject experiences and establishes sensuous correlation with the surroundings by

¹³² Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.62 <57-58>.

¹³³ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.63 <58>.

¹³⁴ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.298 <284>.

sensing. With the kinesthetic capacity, namely, the readiness of moving, the embodied subject is aware that: it is always *practically possible* that “***I can***” disclose further about the Objects by kinesthetic movements and comportments, insofar as “***I am willing to***”.

3.4.2. The unity of kinaesthetic Body as the organ of freewill

My living Body is intertwined with my free will, therefore from the phenomenologically rigorous perspective, expressions such as “In order to grab the food, *I move my right hand* towards it” are problematic, because the way of statement is as if “I” am operating “my right hand” *as a tool or an instrument*.

In order to shed lights on my living Body’s spontaneous embodiment of my free will, which is in contrast of using tools, I shall briefly discuss a scenario how a Westerner operates chopsticks.

Being unfamiliar to chopsticks, to master how to clamp and hold the food, a Westerner needs to enter the reflective attitude and thematize how the chopsticks can be operated properly, for example, in what position he should hold the two sticks, what angle the two sticks should form to allow an appropriate space for the food size, etc. He deliberately attends to the cooperation and interaction between his Bodily parts and the tools, being clearly aware that he is attempting to *use* the chopsticks *in order to* hold the food. However, if now he is allowed to drop the chopsticks and grab

the food by hand, he immediately leaves the attitude of thematic thinking and spontaneously reaches out for food. From an *external* perspective, he accomplishes the act by using the hand; however, from his *subjective-personalistic* perspective, he has neither thought about nor explicitly realized which Bodily parts had been involved or how he should cooperate all Bodily organs in the flow of kinesthetic movements, for example, reaching out the hand, standing up a bit if the food is placed in distance, etc. The whole comportments occur in an unreflective manner, spontaneously embodying his wills.

Phenomenologically, two essential characteristics of the kinesthetic living Body are disclosed from the stated scenario:

(1) *In the straight-forward attitude of living, the Body moves and comports as a wholistic unity.* I do not purposively make a plan on how various organs should cooperate. The movements are not accomplished step-wise, i.e. “firstly lift the arm”, “now move the arm towards the food”, “stretch the fingers and clamp the food”, etc. Instead of taking the whole comportment as a series of movements “built up” by various organs, actually, the entire Bodily comportment is a *fluent continuum* led by the wholistic forward-looking motive (e.g. I want the food!) that transcends and drives the mechanical order of psychophysical movements.

(2) Thus, *the kinesthetic Body, as a unity, is the organ of my freewill.* Husserl describes meticulously:

“[...] Body [...] is an organ of the will, the one and only Object which, for the will of my pure ego, is movable immediately and spontaneously and is a means for producing a mediate spontaneous movement in other things, in, e.g., things

struck by my immediately spontaneously moved hand, grasped by it, lifted, etc.”¹³⁵ (My underline)

The subject’s kinesthetic sensations, which are (unlike the stratified localized sensations) *intertwiningly “filling”* the living Body, essentially constitute the living Body as the spontaneous embodiment of freewill. Therefore, in the practical Bodily compartments, *the unity precedes the parts*, and *the (spiritual) will precedes the (psychophysical) operations*. By the same token, examining the kinesthetic phenomena of the living Body, *in the personalistic attitude of pre-reflective living, the sphere of spiritual phenomenologically-existentially precedes the sphere of psychophysical; likewise, the subject-persons’ compartments must be understood in terms of free “motivation” and volition, rather than the naturalistic “causation” which is incapable of accounting for our life-world that is given to us primordially as a nexus of meanings.*

3.4.3. The kinesthetic Body’s role in constituting the transcendent Objects as a unity and the *horizon* as a field of “I can”

In *Ideas I*, Husserl distinguished the transcendence and the immanence by whether it is given to the subject in an *adumbrated* manner.

Since a transcendent being is not really [*reelle*] inherent to the streams of my lived-through experiences, it cannot be grasped adequately at once; instead, the apprehension of a transcendent Object is constituted by the subject’s perceptions from different perspectives. Hence, to apprehend a transcendent material Object in an

¹³⁵ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.159 <151-152>.

increasingly adequate manner, I must grasp adumbrations from various *spatial* aspects.¹³⁶

As a primary outlook of the phenomenological methodology, the analysis in *Ideas I* is mainly a formal one that stays on a relatively theoretical and technical level, which calls for further concretization. For example, in *Ideas I*, the constitution of transcendence is merely analyzed in the *a priori* structure of intentional correlation. However, in *Ideas II*, Husserl starts to investigate *how* (including *how possible*) such constitution can be accomplished in the habitual living of person-subjects. In this concrete context, the kinesthesia of Body occupies an essential role.

As discussed, the kinesthetic spontaneity motivates the Body-subject to sensuously grasp new adumbrations (or aspects) of the Object. For instance, when I perceive a table from a certain angle, I can only see one side of it; then if I walk around or bend down, I can visually grasp the aspects which were hidden from me. Then if I touch the table, I learn about the texture of the table by tactual sensations. The Bodily kinesthesia enables the subject to apprehend the transcendent spatial beings in an increasingly adequate manner.

“Each of these aspects and the unfolding of continuously changing aspects are thereby phenomenologically related to corresponding ‘circumstance’ and are shown [...] to be related to concomitant complexes of kinetic sensations.”¹³⁷

The kinesthetic capacity of Body *can* unfold the originally hidden aspects and make the originally unseen seen. In the supplements after the main text of *Ideas II*, Husserl writes:

¹³⁶ Of course, the process is meanwhile a temporal one, for example, the process that I walk around the table to grasp it from different aspects occupies a time duration. To Husserl, the inner time-consciousness is an essential constituting element in the subjective lived-through experience, but due to the limit of scope, related issues will not be discussed in this thesis.

¹³⁷ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.136 <128>.

“A position-taking is not a practical possibility like just any kinesthesia in the system of my kinesthetic ‘I can’.”¹³⁸ (My underline)

Although the context of the quote does not mainly thematize kinesthesia, one can still clearly see that in Husserl’s opinions, the subject’s system of kinesthesia (or the kinesthetic capacity in entirety) constitutes the *practical possibility*, which can be *actualized* into perceptions, i.e. to unfold the unperceived sides, “*I can*” make it happen as long as I carry out kinesthetic compartments, for example, walking around, or to spin the Object to see every aspect of its spatial surface. Phenomenologically, my consciousness of “*I can*” preserves the openness of obtaining new sensuous experiences about the transcendent Objects. Although the unperceived aspects are not “directly” given to me, they are “*indirectly*” *co-given*, because I *always* have *practical possibilities* to make the unperceived perceived, the indirectly givenness direct. Thereby, even in the pre-reflective attitude, the Object is always given to me as a unity (of meaning), not because I have seized upon all of its adumbrated aspects, but that the currently unseized aspects are *always* accompanied by the *practical potentiality* of being seized, the actualization of which can be accomplished so far as “*I will to*”.

“The originary or, in every case, fully intuition consciousness of the identity of the form within the continuous change of its modes of givenness, which we are calling here its aspects, essentially presupposes the continuous unfolding, played out in the background of attention, of the concomitant kinesthetic sensation-complexes or of the corresponding transitional phenomena (‘kinetic phenomena’) of the sensation-complexes [...]” (My underlines)

Essentially, such freedom and capacity in actualizing the practical possibilities also

¹³⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, Supplement XI, p.342 <330-331>.

constitutes my *sense of spatiality*. In the process of practical comportments, the spatial horizon is open to me. Husserl concisely articulates:

“The processes of the kinesthetic sensations are free processes here, and this freedom in the consciousness of their unfolding is an essential part of the constitution of spatiality.”¹³⁹ (Ideas II, p.63, my underlines)

The kinesthetic-practical capacity of me (the embodied subject) constitutes a field of spatiality that lies as a “background” for the presentations of spatial Objects, and the field itself has both the noetic and the noematic side, lying between the two poles of the intentional structure. This field is given rise by my subjective kinesthesia, making it an unphysical space¹⁴⁰ full of practical possibilities; it is here that the physicality, as “meanings” in the phenomenological-transcendental sense, being constituted by the embodied subject. It is a *horizon* that is open for any occurring of perceptions by virtue of my *free* movements and comportments. In *Ideas I*, Husserl writes:

“[...] not even with the domain of this intuitionally clear or obscure, distinct or indistinct, co-present – which makes up a constant halo around the field of actual perception [...] it [i.e. the world] reaches into the unlimited. What is now perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (or at least somewhat determinate), are penetrated and surrounded by an obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality.”¹⁴¹ (My underlines)

The precisely same conception of *horizon* recurs in *Ideas II*, only contextualized in view of the subject’s embodiment. Essentially, the *horizon* of indeterminate actuality is the field of “*I can*”.

¹³⁹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.63 <58>.

¹⁴⁰ The “space” here is not meant literally; rather, it is synonymous with “vacuum” or “void” in the sense that it is nothing but *non-spatial*. Actually the non-spatial character is given rise by its noetic side, which is really inherent in the subject’s immanent sphere, characterized as non-spatial.

¹⁴¹ Husserl. *Ideas I*, p.52 <49>.

“Everywhere, apprehension includes in itself, by the mediation of a ‘sense,’ empty horizons of ‘possible perceptions;’ thus I can, at any given time, enter into a system of possible and, if I follow them up, actual, perceptual nexuses. We can say that the spatial body is a synthetic unity of a manifold of strata of ‘sensuous appearances’ of different sense.”¹⁴² (My underline)

The structurally sketched “horizon” in *Ideas I* is concretized in *Ideas II* as a space of practical possibilities in obtaining perceptive experiences, which existentially comprise my habitual living in the personalistic attitude. Such concretization is correlated with the concretization of the subject from the rather technical articulation of “pure ego” to its embodied status, from the theoretical context to my *actual* circumstances of life full of meanings.

Obviously, the transcendent world, which was methodologically described as “annihilated” in *Ideas I*, no longer appears to be a “(naively) idealistic” conception – although – although it never is if we examine carefully the text of *Ideas I*, as I discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. But by revealing the embodiment of subject, it becomes more convincing that the “horizon” itself is already a constitution that *presupposes* the *practical possibilities* given rise by the Body-subject’s practical “*I can*”. In this regard, my embodied life in natural attitude (specifically, personalistic attitude) seems to be constitutive to the phenomenological understanding as a soil of meaning in the positive terms, and, in the negative terms, as the *facticity* that cannot be ignored even in the phenomenological reflective of subjective experiences.

Therefore, by the analysis of Body in flesh, Husserl’s phenomenological framework is able to relate with, as well as elucidate, the “real” life of the subject, since the living Body (intertwined by physical corporeality and psychic sensations) is the medium for

¹⁴² Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.42-43 <39>.

the subject to transcend itself and have “real” contact with the transcendent world. Nevertheless, the sense of “real” here has substantially diverged with the naturalistic-physicalistic “real” that undermines subjectivity and denies the personalistic living as the meaning-fundament for any cultural accomplishments (including the naturalistic pursuit itself).

3.5.

the spiritual ego founded by the psychophysical Body

As repeatedly analyzed, my living Body has a twofold character, namely, physical and psychological, making it a member of the *physical world* (or physical nature) and the *animal world*. According to Husserl, there is a third ontological region of objectivities, the spiritual world, which includes values, cultures, languages, and all other spiritual accomplishments including the phenomenological pursuit itself. It is a human world given rise by the spirituality of all human subjects. In the former discussions on Body, we see that the subject's *will* and *intentions* are able to motivate the kinesthetic movements; this occurring actually illustrates the intercourse and relation between the subject's spiritual sphere and the Body (that is psychophysically intertwined). In what follow, I shall elaborate more on this matter.

Firstly, the Bodily sensations are given in the subject's consciousness. When my Body is injured, I, in my spiritual consciousness, realize and experience the pain. Thus my sensations are always grasped and apprehended by the spiritual me, although in actual the physical, animated-psychological, and the spiritual psycho-somatic aspects intertwine to form me as a person. Husserl writes:

“[...] the primary sensations undergo *apprehension*, are taken up in perceptions, upon which, then, perceptual judgments are built, etc.”¹⁴³ (My underline)

Secondly, spirituality is *founded* and *conditioned* by the psychophysical embodiment, notwithstanding that the spiritual occurrences do not belong to the Body as a stratum.

“[...] to be sure, the intentional lived experiences themselves are *no longer*

¹⁴³ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §39, p.160 <153>.

directly and properly *localized*; they no longer form a stratum on the Body.”¹⁴⁴

Essentially, the relation between the subjective spirituality and the psychophysical animated Body is not one between two realities, but between the irrealty and the reality, thus what relates them must not be the physical causality that only governs the purely material things. To contrast with the conception of causality, Husserl articulates this “psychophysical causality” as “*conditionality*”.¹⁴⁵ All material things must be given to the pure subjective consciousness via the psychophysical conditionality, thus the former has dependency on the later.¹⁴⁶ But the dependency does not mean “causally derived by” in the naturalistic sense; instead, the psychophysical is a necessary existential condition or *foundation* for the spirituality. In my understanding, the conceptions of “conditionality” and “embodiment” are substantially related, i.e. “conditionality” is an emphasis of the significance of “embodiment” in the personalistic context. The psychophysical Body “anchors” the pure subjectivity in the physical world by inhabiting it among the material Objects. Only by such conditionality can the pure ego genuinely *lives in the world* by practical accomplishments. Thus conditionality is an indispensable bridge of between the material world and the spiritual world, about which Husserl speaks:

“Here we have the *primordial state of psychophysical conditionality* (under this heading are included *all conditional* relations which run back and forth between thingly and subjective being).”¹⁴⁷ (My underline)

“Reality and irrealty belong together essentially in the form of reality and

¹⁴⁴ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §39, p.160 <153>.

¹⁴⁵ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.69 <64>: “[...] the sphere of psychophysical ‘causality’ or, rather ‘conditionality,’ to say it better.”

¹⁴⁶ “Something thingly is experienced (perceptually apperceived, to give privilege to the originary experience) in such a way that, through a mere shift of focus, there emerge relations of dependency of the apperceived state of the thing on the sphere of sensation and on the rest of the subjective sphere.”

From: Husserl. *Ideas II*, §18, p. 60. The underline is mine.

¹⁴⁷ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §18, p.70 <65>.

subjectivity, which on the one hand mutually exclude one another and on the other, as is said, essentially require one another.¹⁴⁸ (My underlines)

There is a necessary break between the psychophysical Body and the spiritual sphere; however, they are intertwined and unified as a human person, which, always embodied, nevertheless also transcends the spheres of nature and animal by constituting the sphere of spirituality and culture. Precisely, to view the human not from an exclusively naturalized perspective, and correlatively to admit the world not merely as physical nature is what Husserl articulates as *the personalistic attitude*, being a type of the non-reflective natural attitudes other than the *naturalistic attitude*, which attempts to reduce all phenomena to the natural causality by abstracting from the psychological and humanistic elements.

In the two natural attitudes, the *ontological priority* is conferred to different ontological regions. By the naturalistic perspective, physical events not only precede but also explain the psychical and cultural occurring in terms of natural causality. However, by the personalistic perspective, the human cultural world precedes but does not cancel the other two ontological regions, but deems them as objectivities with values and meanings, e.g. useful and useless, good and bad, beautify and ugly, moral and immoral, etc. As a non-reflective attitude, the personalistic perspective does not investigate the intentional structure of the consciousness performed by a phenomenological philosopher. Nevertheless, it outlines the world *for* the subject-person, whose straight-forward lived experiences become the soil of all reflective investigations such as natural science and phenomenology itself.

¹⁴⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §18, p.69 <64>.

CHAPTER 4.

The concrete subjectivity constituted in the personalistic attitude and its ontological significance in understanding the paradox

By discussing the Bodily sensations, especially the localized sensations and the kinesthetic sensations that mark the most fundamental characteristics of Body, I have sketched Husserl's line of thoughts on how the living Body is not merely a material Object but the embodiment of subjectivity in the world. In the current chapter, I shall focus on the concrete subjectivity, as well as the personalistic attitude that correlatively discloses the subjectivity as subject-person.

After that, I shall elaborate on the substantial significance of the distinction between "personalistic attitude" and "naturalistic attitude", both of which were generally designated as the "natural attitude" in *Ideas I*. In fact, this specific distinction, being correlatively given rise by the circumspect demarcation of the concrete subject's three ontological layers, goes parallel with Husserl's articulation of how the *world* is positioned in the phenomenological picture, and thereby how phenomenology can prevent itself from falling into either the *naturalistic realism* or the *metaphysical idealism*, but pave a path for investigations of humanity, which stands neutral against the speculative question "whether the world *factually* exists (beyond any actual consciousness)".

In the end of this chapter, I shall revisit Husserl's paradox raised in *Crisis*, and try to understand it in the context of human's desire of participating in the eternity. Thereby, we will see Husserl's paradox is essentially correlated with what Plato articulated as "Eros", the love of wisdom.

4.1.

The constituted Body-subject as the absolute “here”

With my embodiment, I must perceive Objects from a certain orientation – which does not mean that I am forever restricted in a particular orientation, but that even with free mobility I am only allowed to encounter the Objects in *one of the* possible orientations at a time. For example, I can only perceive a certain side of the table at once; while if I change my spatial position, some further sides of the table are grasped by me from the new orientation.

But no matter where my Body stands in the space, my subjective consciousness is always an embodied concretion, making the living Body my ultimate and constant “here”. I, as a person, am always coincided with my “here”, in contrast of the surrounding Objects as “there” in numerous directions. In this regard, I am always the *center* around which all other Objects are arranged *for me*,¹⁴⁹ and from my perspective, they are in my nexus of perception, regarded as afar or near, left or right, front or back according to their spatial relation with the embodied *me*. Husserl analogizes my “here” as the *zero point* (as in the mathematical coordination):

“The Body then has, for its particular Ego, the unique distinction of bearing in itself the zero point of all these orientations.”¹⁵⁰ (My underline)

“[The Body] is always characterized in the mode of the ultimate central here: that is, a here which has no other here outside of itself, in relation to which it

¹⁴⁹ “[...] the ‘subjective’ sphere [...] as a center around which the rest of the spatial world is arranged, and as being in causal relationship with the real external world.” From: Husserl. *Ideas II*, §42, p.169 <161>. My underline.

¹⁵⁰ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §42, p.166 <158>.

would be a ‘there.’”¹⁵¹ (My underline)

All other Objects and surroundings are “there” in relation to my ultimate “here”,¹⁵² but I am always practically free to transport to the currently “there” thanks to the kinesthetic capacity. Thus my *subjectively* “here” is only absolute in my subjective perspective; it has the practical potentiality of mobility. When I move, carrying the absolute “here”, the appearances of the surroundings vary accordingly. In principle, my surrounding world is a *horizon* that bears all the possible “here” for me, and at every temporal moment there must be one and only one “here”- one of the infinite possibilities is actualized.

Therefore, the ultimate “here” of me is a conception emerged in the subjective-personalistic perspective. In my pre-reflective personalistic experience, I never leave this “here” as my subjectivity is inconceivable without my living Body. More precisely, the embodied “here” is never articulated nor thematized in the habitual living; my living Body, my subjectivity, and my always “being here” are all taken for granted, and they all must be understood in the context of embodiment. Furthermore, we can see that our apprehension of abstract concepts of direction also arises from concrete experiences; such knowledge is only possible because the pure consciousness is always embodiedly dwelling in the spatial horizon of the world.

¹⁵¹ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §42, p.166 <158>.

¹⁵² “I have all things over and against me; they are all ‘there’ – with the exception of one and only one, namely the Body, which is always ‘here’.” From: Husserl. *Ideas II*, §41, p.166 <159>.

4.2.

The human subject-person, the surrounding world, and the personalistic attitude

4.2.1. The subject as person and the surrounding world

As an embodied concretion, the subject is bestowed with the capacity of dwelling among material things and practically participating in worldly deeds in his actual environment, and its being is intertwiningly comprised

with three ontological layers, namely, the physicality, the psychic animated sensibility, and the intellectual and cultural spirituality. While the Body's comportments are directed by the subject's freewill and volitions, the Body is no longer merely psychophysical but becomes a *human living Body*, which coincides with the human subject, as person.¹⁵³

Actually, the conception of "person", although as a composition of three ontological layers is elaborated at the later stage of *Ideas II*, is nevertheless the most intuitive givenness, since it is what every human subject lives as in everyday life, while the three ontological layers are merely theoretical abstractions from my actual being, the operation of such abstraction is accomplished by the phenomenological examination.

¹⁵³ Husserl has a very concise passage expressing the idea in §49 of *Ideas II*: "We had previously first introduced the person and his personal modes of behavior as component parts of *nature* as human. In fact, naturalistically considered, all consciousness, and, in general, all lived experience, is founded Bodily, and hence, in addition, so is the total content of that which, in the persons, intentionally constitutes the world and all its properties. The person sees things round and about himself, and all the thing-apprehensions and thing-positings with their contents of noetic matter and form are psychical (physio-psychic). Likewise, the person evaluates the thing, apprehends it as beautiful or useful, as a garment or as a drinking cup, etc., and as such the thing is perceptually present to him. The apperceptions which refer back to the spheres of affect and will and everything that belongs to them, the sensuous feelings and drives, the modes of evaluating and practical consciousness related to things, all this pertains phenomenally, in the consideration of nature, to man as animated Body." From: Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.193-194 <184>.

As a person, I am immersed in my straightforward and non-reflective interacting with Objects and the other person-subjects in the world, which is primordially a nexus of meanings, senses, values, human relations and interactions. In this nexus, I am not the only person-subject, therefore I can only perceive or constitute part of the senses; however from my perspective, everything in my personalistic surroundings are arranged *for* me. Husserl explains:

“As person, I am what I am (and each other person is what he is) as *subject of a surrounding world*. The concepts of Ego and surrounding world are related to one another inseparably. Thereby to each person belongs his surrounding world [...]”¹⁵⁴

The surrounding world is a collection of objectivities for me as a person, towards which I direct my acts of consciousness (in various thematic attitudes such as feeling, evaluating, judging, describing, hoping, etc.) as well as acts of practical comportments embodying my freewill. Thus, as my lived-experiences expand along with the temporal flow, more and more objectivities are disclosed, and therefore my surrounding world also grows. It is not a static establishment; the ultimate horizon of experiences bears the potentiality for me to expand my surrounding world. Husserl summarizes:

“[the surrounding world is] experienced by the subject or grasped consciously in some other way and posited by the subject in his intentional lived experiences with the sense-content of the moment. As such, the surrounding world is in a certain way always in the process of becoming [...]”¹⁵⁵

Phenomenologically, the articulation of the relation between person-subject and his

¹⁵⁴ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §50, p.195 <185>.

¹⁵⁵ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §50, p.196 <186>.

surrounding world discloses the most primordial mode of consciousness and the living of human. It not only restores the subject's life as meaningful thus lying far beyond the mere physicality, more importantly, it elaborates the existential priority of the personalistic surrounding world for the subject-persons, in other words, the surrounding world is the ultimate fundament and source of any other thematic pursuit (e.g. natural science, philosophy, art, etc.) which are only possible if the subject makes effort to turn away from the default personalistic attitude.

4.2.2. The personalistic attitude in contrast to the naturalistic attitude

The conception of “personalistic attitude” is closely related to the discussions of person and surrounding world. While the person lives in his surrounding world, he is carrying out the personalistic attitude. In this attitude, I unreflectively presuppose that I am living in the environment of meaningfulness, and I am freely engaged in feelings, activities, events, etc.

“[...] in my theoretical, emotional, and practical behavior – in my theoretical experience and thinking, in my position-taking as to pleasure, enjoyment, hoping, wishing, desiring, wanting.”

I not only take it for granted that the objectivities are meaningful *for* me, more substantially, the meaningful status of the objectivities is the most primordial mode of givenness to me. In other words, the Objects, persons, events in my surrounding world do not firstly present to me as mere physical and then gradually constituted to be something with meanings and values; reversely, their debut is always already inseparable with meanings and values – they are the actuality of my originary

experiences.

As discussed briefly at the beginning of Chapter Three, Husserl puts the personalistic attitude in opposition to the naturalistic attitude, which takes the world (together with the worldly Objects and events) as pure physical nature without any personalistic significance, and absolutizes the physical nature as the only truth of the world.

Thereby the naturalistic attitude denies the human as person to whom meaningfulness is the primordial mode of life.

Not only the Objects and events the subject encounters are taken as mere physical, the subject's own Body is deemed to operate entirely under the determination of natural causality, whereby the animated sensations and the founded spiritual activities are all explained as physical and physiological results "stimulated" by physical excitations.¹⁵⁶ In this perspective, all human activities are reduced to the natural causal level, and the matter of free will of the subject is cancelled as the predictability (or even determinability) of the human's volition drives any possibility of freedom out of the picture. However, in the personalistic attitude, the physical "stimulation" is in a secondary position:

"Instead of the causal relation between things and men as natural realities, there is substituted the *relation of motivation between person and things*, and these things are not the things of nature, existing in themselves [...] but are the experienced, thought, or in some other way intended and posited things as such, intentional objects of personal consciousness. Thus it is from the things which, in terms of the consciousness of the personal Ego, are 'meant' as actually existing that 'stimuli' arise."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.198 <188-189>.

¹⁵⁷ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §50, p.199 <189>.

On the one hand, the personalistic attitude *relativizes* the physical nature as the subject's surrounding world that partly conditions my actual being; on the other hand, the world as physical nature is already a constitution of meaning based on the "world" I encounter as person. The naturalistic understanding of the world, being a theoretical abstraction from the actual world rich in meanings and values, is not possible without the subject's free motivation to leave the everyday-life attitude and thematize the physicality. In this regard, from the perspective of the person's actual lived experience, the naturalistic attitude is (existentially) secondary to the personalistic attitude, and similarly the physical-physiological "stimuli" is (existentially) secondary to the *free motivation* of the subject.

“[...] the naturalistic attitude is in fact subordinated to the personalistic, and that the former only acquires by means of an abstraction or, rather, by means of a kind of self-forgetfulness of the personal Ego, a certain autonomy – whereby it proceeds illegitimately to absolutized its world, i.e. nature.”¹⁵⁸

Alternatively put, the essential distinction between the personalistic and naturalistic attitude is whether it is a *subjective* perspective. In the personalistic attitude, the subject is oriented as the center of the world as a nexus of values, which are constituted in virtue of the intentional correlation between me and the intended; however, in the naturalistic attitude, the subject commits *self-forgetfulness* by denying that the natural-scientific investigation itself is actually an spiritual activity, an intellectual pursuit, which is unexceptionally structured by the intentional correlation between the intending subject and the intended objectivities. In this sense, the beholder of naturalistic attitude mistakenly takes the world as the physical nature “*in itself*”, which is neither faithful nor rigorous because he claims beyond his

¹⁵⁸ Husserl. *Ideas II*, §49, p.193 <183-184>.

experiential capacity. The world, as an actuality, is always already the world *for me*, where my perspective does not *construct* the world but *transcendentally constitutes* the “*being there*” of the world. Thus, just as how Husserl deems the person and the surrounding world as inseparable, the subjectivity and the actual world are always given simultaneously as a correlated pair; their correlation becomes a field which enables the genesis of meaning.

Essentially, the person and the surrounding world are articulated in virtue of the intentional analysis in the concrete context of pre-reflective living. However, the personalistic attitude, together with the naturalistic attitude, still belongs to the non-reflective natural attitude, and thus not able to disclose the intentional structure from a transcendental perspective. Only when the subject withdraws his straightforward attention from the transcendent sphere and retrospects upon his own lived experiences, can he leave the non-reflective order and enter the intentional analysis.

4.3.

The significance of the naturalistic-personalistic distinction

Since in *Ideas I*, Husserl has started to discuss on the natural attitude, the beholder of which participates in the “general thesis” and unreflectively posits the factual existence of the world. To enter the phenomenological-philosophical attitude, the natural attitude must be suspended, whereby the subject retrospects on his own lived-through experiences and examines how the objectivities are constituted in the noesis-noema correlation.

In *Ideas II*, instead of emphasizing the distinction between natural attitude and phenomenological attitude, Husserl further demarks the natural attitude into two species: the naturalistic attitude and the personalistic attitude. This is an extremely crucial step as a prelude to the philosopher’s ontological turn in *Crisis*, because the demarcation articulates what really lies in the way of philosophizing. Thereby, it echoes with Husserl’s original intention of building a novel philosophy with substantial rigor, and retrieves the foundational role of the subject’s unreflective lived-through experiences in the personalistic order. In parallel, Husserlian phenomenology further clarifies its stance in the idealism-realism picture.

In what follows, I shall summarize in brief how the personalistic-naturalistic distinction pertains to Husserl’s outlook for philosophy, and how it helps to understand the seemingly paradoxical attitude Husserl has for the “general thesis”.

4.3.1. The World:

physical nature versus personalistic nexus of values; causality versus motivation; the world *in itself* versus the world *for me*; determination versus freewill.

As I have discussed in the previous section, the two attitudes apprehend the world differently. The naturalistic attitude *absolutizes* the physical nature as the mere valid domain,¹⁵⁹ and thus all other phenomena are to be explained by the law of this domain, namely, the *physical causality*. While in the personalistic attitude, the physical nature is *relativized* as a mere layer of the world, where all Objects and events are primordially taken as *experienced* and *meant* by the person, thus they are always presented in my experience as a meaning *for me*. In this attitude, my activities and comportments in the world are deemed to be *motivated* by my free volitions rather than the causality. Therefore, only in the personalistic attitude, does the subject have freedom, which is always actualized in every activity the subject carries out.

4.3.2. The truth:

theoretical versus practical; construction versus constitution; illegitimate domination versus necessary presupposition.

The naturalistic attitude is a *theoretical attitude* carried out in pursuit of knowledge,¹⁶⁰ which presumably is expected to operate rigorously and yield results that faithfully reflect the reality. By absolutizing the physical nature, the naturalistic attitude arrogates its corresponding domain of thematization (i.e. the physical nature) and

¹⁵⁹ To Husserl, the naturalistic attitude has overstated the sphere of physical nature because: "Nature is an object of possible knowledge, but it does not exhaust the total realm of such objects. *Nature, as mere nature, contains no values, no works of art, etc.*, though these are indeed objects of possible knowledge and science." From: Husserl, *Ideas II*, p.4 <3>.

¹⁶⁰ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.5 <3>.

attempts to explain all domains of objectivities by physical causality. However, as a regional science, the natural-science's domination of the truth is illegitimate.

In opposite, the personalistic attitude is a *practical attitude* thus bears no burden of theoretical cognition. Although the personalistic attitude, as a practical attitude, unreflectively presupposes the factual existence of the world in the person's activities, yet it preserves space for every type of objectivities and also makes no arrogating claims about the theoretical truth. Therefore the positing of the world is legitimate in the personalistic attitude. Also, the personalistic attitude reflects the most primordial reality of human life – it is life of meaningfulness.

4.3.3. The subject:

self-forgetfulness versus self-awareness (in operation);

In parallel to the contrast between the conceptions of world as “*in itself*” and “*for me*” respectively in the naturalistic attitude and the personalistic attitude, the two attitudes demonstrate different stances on the matter of subjectivity.

In the personalistic attitude, all Objects are taken as *experienced by me*, thus I participate in constituting the givenness of the Objects that are rich in values and meanings. Furthermore, during the practical activities, there is always the *self-awareness* and *self-affirmation* underlying, without which the practical compartments are impossible. Although the person subject's self-awareness is not explicitly articulated in the personalistic attitude, it is always implicitly in operation as the emitting center that motivates thoughts, behaviors, talks, doings, etc. In fact, activities in the personalistic attitude are the concretization of *how* the person's lived experiences are formed in the unreflective order, which become the source for the

eidetic philosophical reflection.

In contrast, in the naturalistic attitude, the role of subject is deliberately subtracted in order to achieve the so called “Objectivity” [*Objektivität*], thus the naturalistic attitude is nothing natural. By doing so, the beholder of the naturalistic attitude commits what Husserl calls “*self-forgetfulness*”. The naturalist neglects that even the natural-scientific pursuit is an act of consciousness that conforms to the noesis-noema intentional structure. By the same token, he denies that the natural-scientific results are essentially achievements of the subject, who is of the intellectual and spiritual capacity.

4.3.4. The significance of the distinction which echoes with other works of Husserl.

From the above, we can see the substantial difference between the naturalistic and the personalistic attitude. In a nutshell, the naturalistic attitude is to be criticized as a *theoretical* stance that does not operate in full rigor, and such inexactitude arises from the naturalist’s perspective hypothesized as independent from all consciousness, as well as his naïve denial of the subject’s constituting role in disclosing the world *as meant*. In other words, the naturalist neglects that he himself is primordially a person always already in the personalistic world, and his natural-scientific pursuit is one of the modes of consciousness among the vast possibilities, each mode of which is achieved by the subject’s modification of attitude. The naturalistic attitude is unexceptionally a modification from the personalistic attitude, and thus the naturalistic contemplation obtains its “data” and “resources” from the personalistic lived experiences.

In fact, various textual evidences show that the naturalistic attitude, together with the corresponding claims about the philosophical truth, is what Husserl has strived to pinpoint and avoid on the path of establishing phenomenological philosophy as a rigorous science, and this idea is expressed in his work *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* written in 1911.¹⁶¹ The “absolute Objectivity” free from any subject advocated by the naturalistic mentality is what Husserl deems the major obstacle in pursuing knowledge since the modern epoch, on which he has given elaborative discussion in the *Crisis* written in the 1930s. During the period between 1911 and 1930s, the three volumes of *Ideas* are written and revised over and over again. We can see from the text that Husserl has made imaginable effort to pave the way step by step by articulating the very subtle ideas. It is very important to notice that the texts we read today are not finished works, but manuscripts that faithfully reflect the extremely difficult proceedings of the philosopher.

In *Ideas I*, Husserl’s analysis is still on the primary stage, thus the naturalistic-personalistic distinction has not shown its crucial significance, and the articulation of the phenomenological attitude and the disclosure of immanent sphere is the most important task at hand, rendering both the naturalistic and the personalistic attitude fall into the category of unreflective. But as the immanent sphere of subjectivity is articulated as the necessary foundation of (transcendental) philosophy, it is gradually clear that the naturalistic inclination of the modern thinking needs to be removed in order to establish the rigorous attitude towards philosophical cognitions; while the personalistic attitude and the personalistic surrounding world need to be “redeemed” from the epoché as the ontological foundation in the vision of phenomenology.

¹⁶¹ Husserl. “*Philosophy as Rigorous Science*” English translated by Quentin Lauer, in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

Although the distinction is not explicitly spelled out in *Ideas I*, the following passage should be clear enough to illustrate Husserl's awareness of the distinction and the original intention to direct his criticism to the naturalistic attitude. In the very first section of *Ideas I* titled “§1. *Natural Cognition and Experience*”, Husserl writes:

“The world is the sum-total of objects of possible experience and experiential cognition, of objects that, on the basis of actual experiences, are cognizable in correct theoretical thinking. This is not the place to discuss how the methods of experiential science look when seen more closely, how that method grounds its right to go beyond the narrow bounds of direct experiential givenness. [...]

Likewise all the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften* belong here: the science of history, the sciences of culture, sociological disciplines of every sort.

Concerning these we can, for the present, **leave it an open question** whether they should be treated as like the natural sciences or contrasted with them, whether they should be regarded as themselves natural sciences or as sciences of an essentially novel type.”¹⁶² (Underlines and bolding are mine)

Obvious enough, the problem “whether the natural science (naturalistic way of thinking) is adequate and legitimate to account for all possible objects and experiences” is regarded as the leading question of the entire philosophical enterprise of Husserl, who raises it at the very beginning of the voluminous *Ideas* and immediately followed by his engagement of establishing of phenomenology starting from §2.

¹⁶² Husserl. *Ideas II*, §1, p.6 <8>.

4.4.

The concrete subjectivity as the clue to understand the paradox

4.4.1. The transcendental constitution underlying human activities in-the-world

So far, as we have examined in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, the subjectivity is always a concrete embodiment in the world, possessing three essential characteristics: the physicality of the living Body, the sensuous and animated capacity, and the spiritual capacity that constitute the subject as a human-person immersed in meaningfulness. Therefore the “transcendental subjectivity”, which is phenomenologically conceived as the origin of meanings, is itself a theoretical conception instead of a substantial existence. In other words, it is a technical term that used to articulate the meaning-genesis capacity of human subject in the context of phenomenological analysis.

After enlightened by the transcendental vision, we should learn to jump out of the formal-structural context and apply the transcendental insights to the concrete actuality. That is exactly what Husserl does in *Ideas II* following the theoretical establishment in *Ideas I*. In *Ideas II*, the methodology of constitutive analysis is applied to examine the three regional ontological realms of the world. It is where Husserl reveals and thematizes how the transcendental meaning-genesis is actually operated in all concrete human activities. Then we understand better that phenomenology itself does not participate in the meaning-bestowal, but merely provides a perspective to spotlight the meaning-bestowing structure essentially underlying the concrete operation of human consciousness. The transcendental constitution is always in-the-world, implicitly being carried out by the concrete

subjects, in pre-reflective or reflective attitudes. Such capacity stems from the human subject's nature of spirituality. In this sense, even the phenomenological reflection itself belongs to human's spiritual-cultural activities, undertaken in the world by concrete human persons in a peculiar reflective attitude.

Hence, the phenomenological subject has never left the world, just like the natural scientists have always been in the world although they are self-forgetful. All activities occur in the world, in the horizon of possible experiences and meanings. We have only one world. In the very first section of *Ideas I*, Husserl writes:

“Natural cognition begins with experience and remains *within* experience. In the theoretical attitude which we call the ‘*natural*’ <*theoretical attitude*> the collective horizon of possible investigations is therefore designated with *one* world: It is the *world*. [...] every real joins together to make up the unity of the world – ‘being in the world’ coincide.”¹⁶³ (*Ideas I*, §1)

4.4.2. Understanding Husserl's paradox in light of the mortal-immortal tension

Having cognized that the human person's ontological existence is intertwiningly consisted of physical character and spiritual capacity, human's twofold nature of mortal and immortal is disclosed.

On the one hand, we could say that Husserl's paradox between the transcendental subjectivity (that transcendently constitutes the meaning of the world) and the empirical self (that belongs to the world) can be dismissed, especially after clarifying that the transcendental constitution is actually an inborn capacity of human, and the transcendental subjectivity is actually a mode, among various possible modes, of the

¹⁶³ Husserl. *Ideas II*, p.5 <7>.

subject in its phenomenological-reflective attitude.

However, on the other hand, if we do not bind ourselves in the literal sense of the problematic and put it in the context of spiritual accomplishment, it will gradually emerge that the paradox Husserl faces is essentially pertaining to the tension between human's *mortality* (as an embodied person that must face death) and *immortality* (as a spiritual being that participates in cultural endeavors, the fruits of which sediment in the intersubjective life-world and last in the intersubjective history beyond each human individual's mortal life).

Philosophy, obliged to unfold the universal structure of what we encounter in the world, necessarily faces the paradox. Philosophy must acknowledge and investigate the habitual living on the concrete level, yet not be absorbed in the empirical experiences otherwise the reflections are not possible. For philosophers who feel obliged to account for the reality and humanity in full rigor, it is destined to find themselves in such paradox, because they, as “functionaries of mankind”,¹⁶⁴ should confront this struggle that reflects the core of human's fate. It is a noble undertaking.

Therefore, being recognized that the paradox is destined to occur in the human spiritual endeavors, we philosophers should admit its peculiar legitimacy, and furthermore, take advantage of it to elevate ourselves to the transcendental-reflective contemplation. Philosophy, as “*philosophia* (φιλοσοφία)” that embodies human's love of wisdom, should always be the activities of philosophizing that pave the way from human's mortality towards the eternity. This essence of philosophy is clearly and poetically articulated in Plato's conception of love (as Eros). I shall end my thesis by quoting a passage from *Symposium*:

¹⁶⁴ Husserl. *Crisis*, p.17: “[...] we are *functionaries of mankind*. The quite personal responsibility of our own true being as philosophers, our inner personal vocation, bears within itself at the same time the responsibility for the true being of mankind [...]”

“Then, what could Love be?” I asked. “A mortal?”

“Certainly not.”

“Then, what is he?”

“He’s like what we mentioned before,” she said. “He is in between mortal and immortal.”

“What do you mean, Diotima?”

“He’s a great spirit, Socrates. Everything spiritual, you see, is in between god and mortal.”

“What is their function?” I asked.

“They are messengers who shuttle back and forth between the two, conveying prayer and sacrifice from men to gods, while to men they bring commands from the gods and gifts in return for sacrifices. Being in the middle of the two, they round out the whole and bind fast the all to all. Through them all divination passes, through them the art of priests in sacrifice and ritual, in enchantment, prophecy, and sorcery.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Plato. *Symposium*, 202d – 203a. English translation by A.Nehamas and P.Woodruff, in *Plato – Complete Works*, edited with introduction and notes by John M. Cooper; associate edited by D.S. Hutchinson [Hackett Publishing, 1997], p.485-486.

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction, I have raised several questions which I wished to investigate in the thesis: *Does Husserl's phenomenology commit subjective idealism? How does the phenomenological investigation enter the transcendental realm? How does the transcendental idealism work in the phenomenological context? What novelty does the transcendental-phenomenological philosophy bring and what difficulties does it face? Can these difficulties be resolved?*

Here I shall briefly summarize how these questions have been answered in my thesis.

The philosophical orientation of phenomenology is primarily established by the phenomenological epoché and reduction, which suspend the subject's metaphysical concerns regarding the "general thesis" (i.e. "whether the world factually exists") thus bringing the subject's attention from the objects back to her own lived-through experiences about the objects. In this process, the subject turns to take the objects purely as how they are *given* or *meant* to her; correspondingly, the status of the objects is phenomenologically modified from "*intended objects*" to "*intentional objects (noema)*" which possess no standing other than being correlated with and constituted by the phenomenological subject. In this sense, phenomenology not only distinguishes itself from the subjective idealism because it does not hold that the material existences are constructed by the mental being, more substantially, it has surpassed the factual-metaphysical concern and entered an entirely novel field of problematics – the field that arises from the disclosure of subjectivity as the origin of meaningfulness in which objects are taken as subjective-related, the field of meaning genesis that can only be elucidated transcendently. This field is the alleged

“residuum of reduction” in Husserl’s writings.

Thus the reduction does not deny or eliminate the world; it only transforms the subject’s attitude from natural to phenomenologically reflective. By disregarding the factual existence of the world (depicted as “the annihilation of the world” in *Ideas I*, causing much subjective-idealistic suspicions), the subject returns to the immanent sphere of lived-through experience and regards the objects as pure phenomena. In this radical modification of mentality, the objects are firstly factually disregarded but then redeemed as subjective-related pure givenness, hence nothing is lost. Furthermore, as the phenomenological reduction has revealed that the objects are essentially objectivities constituted by the subjectivity, we realize that the “truth of the world” has always been lying bare before our eyes: all experienced objects (as unities of meaning) in my living are already the ultimate reality, behind which there is no “truer” existence. Then it suddenly enlightens us that any attempt of pursuing purely “objective” truth are ironically only distancing themselves from the aim, because the subjective lived-through experience [*Erlebnis*] is the only legitimate source of judgment, beyond which only abstract conjectures can be made. This is what meant by the famous phenomenological motto “Back to the things themselves.” [*Zu den Sachen selbst*]

Therefore, after the phenomenological reduction, the pre-reflective life is parenthesized. The subjectivity now stands transcendent to the world (in its entirety as the subjectivity’s transcendental constitution). A difficulty regarding the subject-world relation becomes obvious: on the one hand, the subject is a human person that belongs to the world; on the other hand, she also acts as the transcendental subjectivity that bestows meanings of the world. How is it possible that the subject, being a part of the

world, is at the same time the origin of the world? How can we make sense of the paradoxical position of the subject?

In *Crisis*, Husserl attempted to resolve the paradox by re-interpreting the transcendental subjectivity as *intersubjectivity*. However, as he emphasized the unhuman character of the transcendental (inter)subjectivity in contrast with the concrete human subject, it seemed that two ontological realms of existence are implied and, as a result, phenomenology has once again fallen into idealistic suspicions.

Regarding this difficulty, I tried to sketch a possible solution by utilizing Husserl's own discovery in *Ideas II*. The human subject is always an embodied subject intertwiningly consists of three ontological layers: the physicality, the animal nature and the spirituality. Therefore, from the faithful descriptions, the human subject's twofold character is articulated. On the one hand, she is a finite human being in concrete embodiment; on the other hand, she is able to conduct spiritual activities, constituting the meaning of the intersubjective and historical world. Following this line of thoughts, it is not entirely false to describe the transcendental (inter)subjectivity as "unhuman"; nevertheless, it would be more accurate and phenomenologically faithful to relate the transcendental character of (inter)subjectivity with the spiritual capacity of the concrete human subject, in other words, to clarify that *even the transcendental activities are always in the world therefore there is always only one world*. To disenchant the mystique people incline to have for "transcendental (inter)subjectivity", it can be understood as *the capacity of "transcendental constituting" always in operation in the pre-reflective ontic life*.

Therefore, the paradox can be preliminarily understood by referring back to the phenomenological reduction. The “empirical self” is the concrete human subject in the pre-reduction natural attitude, inhabiting in the world as a part of it; while by virtue of the reduction, the subject enters the phenomenological attitude and realizes that in her activities the transcendental subjectivity always prevails, which is constantly in operation throughout her life (as primarily a spiritual life). Thereby, the *paradox* is theoretically handled by clarifying the two “subjects” as two modes of the subject. However, if we consider it in context of human’s existential condition, the *tension* remains between the human’s mortality and her inborn inclinations and capacity of pursuing immortality.

By living the most ordinary everyday life, one is already implicitly participating in transcendental meaning-constitution that, together with the meaning sediment from other subjects, forms human culture and history. As a mortal being that must face death, one contributes to the immortal spiritual fruits by both pre-reflective and reflective activities (such as natural science, arts, philosophy itself, etc.). Thus the finite human subject’s nobleness in pursuing eternity is not created but disclosed by philosophy, and philosophy is responsible reserving space for the human freewill (against any form of determinism) that nurtures the possibility of spiritual pursuit.

In terms of methodology, the tension derived by the twofold character of human subject is well articulated by the transcendental philosophy. The transcendental philosophy, initiated by Kant’s transcendental turn, acknowledges the finitude of human subject as the necessary presupposition of philosophy. In the legitimate field of experienceableness, surprisingly and paradoxically, the subject’s freedom is more accurately and prominently spelled out. In Husserl’s phenomenology, the

transcendental character is furnished in two steps: *firstly*, the epoché suspends the ungrounded metaphysical wonderings and delineates the scope of legitimate judgment, acknowledging the finitude of the subject; *secondly*, the reduction discloses the intentional structure and the (inter)subjectivity's role of meaning-bestowal in her legitimate horizon of possible experiences. By identifying our own finitude, we become aware of the freedom we have – and destined to have – in the form of constituting the world.

Following this line of thoughts, discussions can proceed in several directions, which, although cannot be covered in my thesis due to the scope concern, are to be briefly stated here for future investigations.

[1] Transcendental motive and philosophy *per se*

Transcendental philosophy is characterized by acknowledging the subject's finitude and thereby taking subjectivity as the condition of objectivities. Being initiated by Kant and developed by Husserl, transcendental philosophy is nurtured in the modern western environment where the “subject” and “self” are thematized. However, given the discussions on the tension between human mortality and their desires for eternity, the transcendental endeavor is essentially a faithful recognition of humanity. Then, would it be possible to find the transcendental motive in other philosophies – philosophies before Kant (for example in Plato as I quoted), as well as philosophies in other cultural communities?

In my thesis, insufficient discussions are contributed to this issue, but I am rather interested to investigate the history of philosophy from this perspective. If similar motive can be discovered in philosophies of various epochs and cultures, it would

help to contemplate upon the nature of philosophy *per se*.

[2] Philosophy and art

The paradox of the subject-world relation well articulated by transcendental philosophy provides us with resources to understand the artistic appeals. The artist is, on the one hand, a concrete human person immersed in the pre-reflective everyday life; on the other hand, in the artistic activities, she pauses the habitual living and transcends the natural attitude, then she depicts (the objects) by virtue of reflecting and expressing the meaning-sediment of her pre-reflective lived experiences.

Philosophy (as in the transcendental sense) and art, although having different forms of expression, both embody the disclosure of the mortal man's capacity in meaning-constitution. Then in this sense, maybe we can find the channel to relate philosophy and art, refuting the claim that philosophy and art are two completely distinguished and unrelated endeavors. More essentially, it may help us understand "philosophy" or "philosophizing" in a broader sense by identifying it as a certain capacity of spiritual pursuit that can be accomplished in drawing, music, dancing, literature, etc.

Regarding the resemblance of philosophical activities and art, some quotes from a Chinese art critic may provide inspirations. The passages were meant to comment on poem writing; however, to my great surprise, I find it equally appropriate and insightful if the subject matter is hypothetically imagined as "philosophical pursuit":

"A poet must have a contemptuous attitude towards external objects; then he will be able to master the poem writing. On the other hand, he must have an

esteem for external objects; then he will be able to share sorrows and happiness with the flowers and birds.”¹⁶⁶

“A poet must enter into the world and into life, and at the same time he must be able to transcend them. Because of his involvement with the world and life he is able to describe them; because of his freedom from them he is able to contemplate them”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ 王國維：人間詞話 [1910]。

For the English translation, I have referred to: Wang, Kwo-wei. *Poetic Remarks In the Human World (Jen Chien Tz'u Hua)*. Translated and annotated by Ching-I Tu [Chung Hwa Book Company, Ltd., Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China], Section (61), p.43.

The original text in Chinese reads: 「詩人必有輕視外物之意，故能以奴僕命風月；又必有重視外物之意，故能與花鳥共憂樂。」Note that 「風月」 here does not literally mean “wind and moon”, but “poem writing”.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Section (60), p.42.

The original text in Chinese reads: 「詩人對宇宙、人生，須入乎其內，又須出乎其外。入乎其內，故能寫之；出乎其外，故能觀之。」

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