

GENESIS AND CONSTITUTION IN PHENOMENOLOGY

GENESIS AND CONSTITUTION IN PHENOMENOLOGY:

THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL ONTOLOGY

by

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"I do not believe in things; I believe in relationships."

Braque

Stavragin: "Do you believe in eternal life in the other world?"

Kirilov: "No, but in eternal life in this world."

Dostoyevsky - "The Possessed"

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## PREFACE

It is the aim of my thesis to present a radically empirical exposition of Husserl's Phenomenology, and to establish that Phenomenology, far from being a Radically Empirical Presuppositionless Universal Science, is itself not without metaphysical and dogmatic presumptions. Indeed, I will argue that any philosophy whatever, as a matter of a priori necessity, must be founded on dogmatic or metaphysical presuppositions in so far as it is not merely tautological. My exposition will attempt to show that while any empirical philosophy, in so far as it is to be truly a science, must ultimately involve the presumption that experience is related in some way or other to the object of science (i.e. Being), rationalist philosophies can do little more than explicate the implicitly assumed. Thus I will show that Phenomenology as both Empirical and Rational makes implicit presumptions which are then explicated as phenomenology unfolds itself.

For example, we will see that having bracketed all that might serve to upset the reduction, and having defined reason in terms of the relations of experience, Husserl proceeds to explicate what is implicit, namely that all that is not so bracketed, all that is left, can be reduced to experience, and as such is rational. This very bracketing implicitly assumes that we can establish a Universal Science of Being on the basis of experience, and as we shall see this assumption eventually involves Husserl in Paradoxes when he comes to try to give a description of the constitution or genesis of Being.

There are, as I hope to show, many grounds for doubting that Radical Empiricism has rid Philosophy of the metaphysics from which Husserl believed paradoxes sprang. Indeed, it is partially by explicating some of the Paradoxes in Phenomenology that I hope to establish my thesis. Thus, for example, despite the fact that Husserl, from the first is unprepared to admit that the dichotomy between the Material and the Ideal is anything more than a dichotomy drawn within Transcendental Subjectivity, and as such is Transcendentally Ideal, we will see that many of the paradoxes associated with this dialectical relationship inherent in Dualistic Philosophies are, to some extent, resurrected in Phenomenology and point back to the presumptions that give rise to them.

I shall proceed by explicating most of the Central Phenomenological concepts such as Being, Object, Meaning, Fact, Essence, Transcendental Subjectivity, the Transcendental Ego, Constitution, Genesis, Intentionality, and the relation between Ontology and Epistemology so central to all these concepts, as well as the aforementioned Paradoxes. We will, in the course of this exposition, come across such concepts as "innate association", the "innate a priori", "functional passive constitution", and the "implicit transcendental subject", etc., all of which, as their titles might suggest, would seem to take Husserl beyond the realm of pure description. Thus, I hope to draw attention to the assumptions I believe to be inherent in Phenomenology in an attempt both to clarify the limits of Phenomenology and to highlight the divergence between its claim to be a Radically Empirical Presuppositionless Universal Science and its achievements.

Finally, we will see that in his attempt to reconcile Rationalism and Empiricism, and Idealism and Materialism, Husserl has, in true Rationalist style, not so much synthesised hitherto dialectically opposed concepts, as implicitly presupposed from the start that no thoroughgoing dialectic exists. These presumptions will have involved Husserl in many tautologies and paradoxes, as I hope by then to have established. However, what I hope finally to establish is that the precondition of the reconciliations alluded to above, results in Husserl being unable to establish anything but descriptive distinctions of meaning between, for example, Consciousness and Being, Self and Other, constitution and description, ecology and history, etc., and that this, far from being a reductio ad absurdum, is perhaps one of Phenomenology's most valuable contributions to understanding.

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To start, then, in the first chapter I will begin by situating Phenomenology within the history of ideas in the hope that by so relating it, we will become clearer about exactly what Phenomenology is. I base this hope upon the proposition that Phenomenology springs from Husserl's attempt to resolve the paradoxes of traditional empiricism by attempting to rid it of the metaphysics, which, in Husserl's view, was the heritage of Dualism and the basis of all paradox.



Before doing this, however, I would like to quote Henry Margeneau, a contemporary physicist, whose epistemology seems to me to encompass the essence of Phenomenology:

"It is wholly unwarranted to start a theory of knowledge with the ontological premise characterizing the spectator-spectacle distinction. If experience, on proper analysis, invests this distinction with meaning, we are ready to accept it, but even then only as a property of the content of experience, actual or possible. I do not deny that the tree in front of my window is a real tree - real in a sense to be clarified - a tree which can be seen, touched, climbed, or felled; I refuse to perform the leap from this tree to another entity behind it, an entity which "causes" me to have these experiences ...

"The given, we have urged, is to be sought within experience, not, of course, within mind

"... Nor is there anything external to experience, for such a spatial attribute can at best be only a metaphor. However, in saying this we do not surrender what is commonly meant by an 'external object' if that term is correctly understood. The adjective external as used is in fact gratuitous, added perhaps for the sake of emphasis, but not with metaphysical deliberation, and implies a quality peculiar to certain things of our experience. We shall call this quality objectivity, and we shall indeed find room for it, the rules certifying what is objective in things being a major part of the epistemology here presented. The problem of externality thus becomes the problem of objectivity.

"Ability to invest objects with meaning is what saves the present approach from landing us in Berkeleyan idealism. Berkeley's error was to regard experience as not significant in itself, as requiring transcendental stabilization, which it attained by being the thought of God. For Kant, on the other hand, significance is an essential element of experience, an element with which experience is born and which is attached a priori in different measure to different parts of it. The point we shall endeavour to make is that experience does not come with predetermined significance nor without any significance whatever: significance has to be determined within it ...

"The sensory part of my experience in seeing a tree is the residuum .... This residuum cannot be conjured up at will; it can be thought or represented in memory and yet declares itself to be unmistakably different from thought and representation." \*

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\* H. Margeneau, The Nature of Physical Reality, (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp.46-9.

## CHAPTER ONE

### MEANING AND BEING - THE ONTOLOGICAL PARADOX

To those coming to phenomenology from other schools of philosophy, the phenomenological method is not immediately clear as, due to the previously established habits of thinking and the prejudices inherent in the Natural Attitude (characterised as the belief in a real objective world transcendent to our experiences of it), understanding of the subject matter is likely to be distorted. It is, therefore, my intention briefly to orientate the reader towards the phenomenological method before embarking upon more detailed and lengthy exposition and criticism. This can best be done by looking at the problems Husserl considered inherent in the naive philosophies and thereby introducing the "bare bones", so to speak, of the phenomenological method, before tackling the problem in greater depth.

It had long been evident that the positivistic and naturalistic sciences were fraught with paradoxes. For example, naturalism conceives of all being as existing "in the image of" corporeal and material objects and this finally involves the reduction of consciousness to the materially reified, a reduction that belies our experience of consciousness. On the other hand, once this reduction of all being to physical or material being is achieved, the reduced material being can be subjected to an idealist interpretation, whereby all being is then reduced to consciousness, a reduction that belies our experience of "material objects". In contrast to naturalism, the positivistic so-called "empirical" sciences, with their world view derived from a Dualistic

conception of the universe, come up against the need to distinguish a realm of "Objects in Themselves" from the realm of consciousness, and this automatically involves them in the paradox of being consciously able to talk about the "In Itself" which, by definition, is precisely that which is outside consciousness.

These and other similar paradoxes have arisen from the task of attempting to overcome the supposed dichotomy between consciousness and its object, subjectivity and objectivity, idealism and realism, the subjectivity of knowing and the objectivity of knowledge.

For Cartesian philosophy, the realms of the physical and mental are heterogeneous domains that are self-contained vis-a-vis each other, and we are supposedly only directly aware of the mental realm which somehow represents the physical world to us, while the similarity of the represented and the representation is insured by "a good God who is no deceiver". Apart from the aforementioned paradox involved in talking about representation, from within a realm that, of necessity and by definition, has no direct knowledge of that which is supposedly being represented, not even the knowledge that it is, there is the problem of the interaction of these supposedly heterogeneous spheres, supposedly solved by the Pineal gland, which, presumably, has one real and one ideal end. One is left to speculate about the nature of its mid-point!

While Berkeley recognises this paradox and is content to ascribe all being to the realm of the ideal, his view fails to take account of the fact that in experience, we constantly differentiate ideas from objects, thoughts from those things that are thought about. In short, then, Berkeley fails to give a satisfying and adequate account

of the different types of experience which had previously been explained by the dualist division of the world.

Kant, to his credit, realised that the problems and paradoxes necessarily involved in any attempt to communicate knowledge between the realms of the real and ideal, are only soluble by a transcendentalism of some type. He therefore tried to facilitate the movement from the subjectivity of knowing to the objectivity of knowledge - from epistemology to ontology - by fixing an essence of experience in the subjective operations of consciousness (categorical a priori) and asserting that that which was cognized was necessarily cognized through the categories, thus paving the way for the synthetic a priori, the subjective knowledge of the objective order. However, Kant leaves himself open to the criticism that the categorical a priori - the setting up of the categories that will dictate the necessary modes of experience - necessarily involves dichotomising experience and being (phenomena and noumena) and hence pre-supposes the very knowledge of reality or Being (noumenon) that the categories rule out of experience. In other words, how can one talk of the noumena that by definition does not conform to the categories of experience but is supposed to be known to be the source of experience if it is precisely the role of the categories that they only allow that which is in conformity to them to be given in experience and cognition, and thus to be known?

Husserl, realizing that most of the naturalistic and positivistic paradoxes arise from the Cartesian pre-supposition of dualism and similar metaphysical hypotheses, determined that his philosophy would begin without pre-supposition and metaphysical hypothesis, but would be self-justifying, purely descriptive and radically empirical,

for only such a philosophy could hope to be truly scientific and therefore indubitable. While it had been the view of the seventeenth century that philosophy was a positivistic science, and should adopt the methods of mathematics, physics and the natural sciences, Husserl considered these disciplines to be naive in their concept of empiricism, for they accept, without question, the metaphysical proposition par excellence that there is an "external world". Phenomenology attempted to show that if all Being was understood exclusively in terms of actual and possible conscious experiences of it, then not only could such metaphysics be dispensed with, but no sense of Being was lost or excluded consequent to this "reduction".

Phenomenology was to question the pre-suppositions of the naive sciences in an attempt to establish a rigorous science that was philosophically radical and would therefore abstain from the pre-supposition implied in the natural positing of an "inside and outside" to consciousness. It would be Radically Empirical and would start with the indubitable givenness of consciousness, and would go on to question positivistic pre-suppositions, such as the concept of objectivity popular in such sciences.

Like Descartes, Husserl attempts to subject all pre-suppositions to a radical questioning and only accepts as factual knowledge that which is grounded in a "primordial dator intuition".<sup>1</sup> Husserl starts then with cognition, the basis of all knowledge, and realizes that by questioning all cognition, we are not led to reject it, but that on the contrary, the act of doubt necessarily pre-supposes an object, for

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<sup>1</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier, 1962), Section 24, p.83.

to doubt is to know what you are doubting, therefore that which is experienced directly, what Husserl calls the immanent cogito, is indisputable, for to doubt it is to affirm it:

"But no matter what the status of the phenomenon's claim to actuality and no matter whether at some future time I decide critically that the world exists, or that it is an illusion, still this phenomenon itself, as mine, is not nothing but it is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible and accordingly makes possible whatever has for me sense and validity as 'true' being..."<sup>2</sup>

Conscious experience is empirically indubitable, for it is the very basis of empiricism and to attempt to negate it is to affirm it; therefore, any philosophy which did not accept the empirical indubitability of consciousness would necessarily be involved in paradox. Husserl is, therefore, convinced that if he can restrict himself to describing only that which is given in a "primordial dator intuition" and thus experienced directly or immanently, he must remain on indubitable ground, for experience is the very irreducible basis of empiricism, and empiricism, by its very meaning, denotes knowledge grounded in experience.

According to Husserl's view, Descartes' problem arose by attempting to move from the indubitable realm of the cogito to the problematic realm of the Cartesian cogitatum. Husserl intends to stay within the realm of the cogito, and rather than try problematically to derive the certainty of the cogitatum from the cogito like Descartes, he intends to include the cogitatum within the cogito. In order to do this, he introduces the "epoche" and the "reduction".

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<sup>2</sup>E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), Section 8, p.19.

First he places between brackets, applies the "epoche" or suspends judgement on the reality or indubitability of all that is not part of the cogito, and he then attempts to strip our understanding of objectivities of all but strictly empirical content. Objectivities so stripped can then be "reduced", that is progressively included within the indubitable realm of the cogito. All that is thus included is, so the argument goes, beyond doubt. The bracketing is then the stripping away of all that is not given directly in experience, all that is metaphysically postulated such as the "in itself". As Levin tells us, Husserl, unlike Descartes, eschews "the desire to deduce from 'a little tag-end of the world', the remainder of the world according to innate principles and formal logical arguments".<sup>3</sup> For Husserl, certainty is not derived from the cogito, but is found in the cogito:

"Convinced then, that absolute certitude can be found in the cogito, Husserl introduces the epoche, as a means of eliminating all that is not part and parcel of the cogito and he introduces the reductions, as a progressive inclusion of objectivities in the cogito".<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Husserl tries to include all objectivities within the cogito, the "subjectivity as such ... wherein alone objectivity is contained".<sup>5</sup>

In order that Husserl is subsequently legitimately able to reintroduce that which is subject to the epoche within the realm of the cogito, it is important to note that the reduction is not to be

<sup>3</sup>D.M. Levin, Reason and Evidence in Husserl's Phenomenology, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p.116.

<sup>4</sup>Q. Lauer, Phenomenology: Its Genesis and Prospect, (New York, Harper and Row, 1965), p.134.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



interpreted as a form of Cartesian doubt. Cartesian doubt denies, at least temporarily, the existence of that which is doubted, whereas Husserl does not deny existence, but rather refrains from judgement for or against the existence of the object:

"In the attempt to doubt applied to a thesis which, as we presuppose, is certainly and tenaciously held, the 'disconnection' takes place in and with a modification of the antithesis, namely with the 'supposition' of non-being which is thus the partial basis of the attempt to doubt. With Descartes this is so markedly the case, that one can say that this universal doubt is an attempt at universal denial".<sup>6</sup>

Husserl, in contrast, practises "... the phenomenon of 'bracketing' or 'disconnection' ... a certain refraining from judgement".<sup>7</sup> After the epoche, we are in the realm of the cogito and:

"... we accord the status of absolute self givenness to the absolute phenomena the cogito which has undergone reduction, not because it is particular, but because it displays itself in pure 'seeing' after the phenomenological reduction, precisely as absolute self-givenness".<sup>8</sup>

Husserl shows that after the epoche, the bracketing of all that is not immanent in the cogito, we are able to re-introduce all "objectivities" back into the realm of the cogito in a reduced form as immanent objects of cognition. The world is one Cartesian cogito, and continually I find standing over against me the one spatio-temporal fact world in which I and all other men belong. The reduction then enables us to rid ourselves of all the prejudices and

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<sup>6</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 31, p.98.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, trans. W.P. Alston and G. Nabhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p.44

unquestioning values and metaphysical hypotheses of the natural attitude, such as the belief in a Genuine (reell) Transcendent realm - which, as we have shown, is paradoxical in that it is supposedly outside and independent of consciousness and yet is supposedly known - yet enables us to re-introduce reduced objectivities into the indubitable realm of the cogito and thus establish ourselves within the transcendental relation between cogito and cogitatum as neither subjectivistic nor objectivistic.

I stand here looking at the cup before me. I now walk around the cup and find that I have varied perceptions of it from various angles. I look at it from above and have another different perception of it. I turn away and turn back, and now I have yet further different perceptions of the "same" cup. I close my eyes and remember the cup, and open them to be confronted again by the cup. As a matter of fact, then, we believe in the identity and continuous existence of objects despite the fact that in consciousness we have only momentary and changing perceptions. We do not distinguish the cogito consisting of the various acts of perceptions, from the cogitatum or the "object" perceived. The philosopher in the natural attitude, for example, is faced with an obvious conflict between the multiplicity of perceptions and the desire to ascribe identity to the cup. Upon reflection, we realize that such philosophers usually attempt to solve the problem by a representational theory of perception, the positing of the one Genuine (reell) Transcendent object that is represented by a host of representative perceptions. This results in the problematic hypotheses of the relation between representation and represented previously noted. For the phenomenologist, on the other hand, the identity of an object

What should be clear from the above is that while, by the reduction, we may be able to establish ourselves within the transcendental relation between the cogito and cogitatum, nonetheless it remains a relation and not a synthesis. That is to say that even after the reduction, there is still, within the realm of the cogito, the distinction between the similar and yet admittedly different perceptions, and the thing perceived itself, between the act of consciousness, the cogito, and its object the cogitatum. We do not identify the act of cognition with the content, therefore the act of cognition is always cognisant of something towards which the act is directed. The act of cognizing similar perceptions reaches out beyond itself and becomes cognisant of the identity of the similar perceptions precisely as "essentially" similar, as being of the same object or cogitatum:

"Intentional cognition manifests itself as a form of consciousness constituting something self-given which is not constituted within what is real, and is not at all found as cogitation".<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that the terms intentionality and constitution, as used by Husserl, cannot be concisely defined for much the same reason that Wittgenstein could not define the term "game". However, consciousness is said to be intentional in phenomenology, and we could perhaps provisionally understand the intentionality of consciousness as "consciousness of" an object whereby consciousness "reaches out beyond itself" or transcends itself and becomes conscious of a "content" which is not a part of the "act" of being conscious.

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<sup>11</sup> J.J. Kockelmans, A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology, (New York; Duquesne University Press, 1967), p.33.

In the above instance, for example, it attributes or ascribes the essential similarity of a group of perceptions to the fact that they are perceptions of the same object. The object is said to be "intended" by the act.

Further, the object cannot be said to be genuinely (reell) transcendent as we have bracketed this possibility, and have thus suspended judgement on such a proposition. However, the "intentional unity" of the group of perceptions given to the meta-levelled act that has "intentionally synthesised" the various perceptions into the intentionally unified object is clearly apparent. The object is therefore said to be 'constituted' in the intentional act.

After the reduction objectivity is seen to be inexorably inter-related with, and yet different from the act in which it is given, just as each of the various perceptions of the object - which as intentionally unified collectively constitute the object - are inexorably inter-related to the separate acts in which they are given, and each act in and of itself constitutes an "appearing phase" of the object.

For Husserl, then, objects are neither existent in the genuine (reell) transcendent sense - for judgement on that point has been suspended by the "epoche" or bracketing - nor are they non-existent - for they are clearly something - while they do not exist solely in the act, for they are known to transcend the act in which they are given. Rather they are said to be "intentionally inexistent" or "irreal", and are "constituted" in consciousness as transcendent to the act in which they are given.

Being, then, is not metaphysically hypothesized, it is intentionally constituted and is an intended meaning whereby the cogito reflects on its consciousness and "intends", or becomes conscious of its consciousness as consciousness of an object. It is in my consciousness that all this happens, for:

"... I am the Ego who invests the being of the world which I so constantly speak about with existential validity, as an existence (Sein) which wins for me from my own life's pure essence meaning and substantial validity".<sup>12</sup>

All objectivities, as we have seen, have been reduced to the realm of the cogito. All Being is understood exclusively in terms of actual and potential conscious experience of it. Bearing in mind this reduction, whereby all Being is constituted as a transcendental meaning within the realm of the cogito, it may be said that, despite this reduction, there is, within the realm of cogito the distinction between the "act of meaning apprehension", cogito, and the "meaning apprehended", cogitatum - thus we have a thorough going transcendentalism - and yet every cogito contains a cogitatum. Just as all objects are objects for a consciousness - as we have shown by being able to constitute all aspects of both the immanent and the transcendent within the realm of intentionality - so every consciousness is consciousness of an object, the two being symbiotically related, as inseparable as the two sides of a coin, and yet still two distinct sides:

"Like perception, every intentional experience - and this is indeed the fundamental mark of all intentionality - has its 'intentional object', i.e., its objective meaning or to repeat the same in other words to have a meaning or: to have something 'in mind', is the cardinal feature of all consciousness ...".<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, p.11.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Section 90, p.241.

This means that consciousness is far from the Cartesian conception of an interior self-contained realm of relation to itself, but that it is an open realm essentially intentionally related to the other, to that which it is not. Just as the "object in itself" is seen to be paradoxical, so too is a "consciousness in itself". Consciousness is known only in its relatedness to an object just as the object is known only in its relatedness to consciousness and the relation is empirically primary and indivisibly symbiotic while it nonetheless has two distinguishable aspects, cogito and cogitatum

Consciousness, then, is "intentional"; its "intentional object" is the unified meaning which is given in the various similar meanings it apprehends in acts of meaning apprehension. Whereas Descartes recognises only two basic modes of Being (material and ideal), Husserl distinguishes many modes of Being; for example, the being of ideas, memories, fantasies, perceptions (in the narrow sense), etc., each mode of Being "conform(ing) to certain essential laws"<sup>14</sup> particular to it. That is, just as in the previous example, I may be aware of similar but different perceptions and may intend them in an intentional identifying synthesis as one and the same cup, I may become aware in acts of meaning apprehension of a similarity in the modes of being of a whole range of very varied intentional objects, "within the complete noema we must separate out as essentially different certain strata ...".<sup>15</sup> For example, I may become aware of the similarity of the mode of being of a remembered cup and remembered

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Section 91, p.245.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

person, or a remembered clock, etc., thus I intend this similarity in modes of being given as an intentionally unified mode of Being, in this case the mode of memory. Each mode conforms to different essential laws that correspond to the different relations of experience appropriate to that mode.

To return, however, to the main theme, it should also be becoming clear by now that by describing all Being as intentionally constituted, Husserl is transcending the traditional distinction between cogito and cogitatum, between subject and object, ideal and real, psychic and physical, and is claiming that these spheres are intentionally related, that the act of conscious meaning apprehension always necessarily intends the object meaning apprehended:

"... the objective content, the noema, belongs to the very essence of the act. Thus to know the thought is to know what is thought about ...".<sup>16</sup>

Thus, when, for example, I think of "my favourite novel", the object which I think of is neither the mental picture I have of the book in my mind, nor the actual book itself at home on my shelf. It is neither physical nor mental, it is eidetically delineated and is intentionally constituted in conformity to eidetic or essential laws which exist, or so to speak, "... are, only in so far as they are 'constituted' in consciousness".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> E. Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p.114

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.189.

"That which we have developed is not a 'theory', not a 'Metaphysics'. It concerns essential necessities indissolubly involved in the thing noema, and correlatively in the thing-giving consciousness ...".<sup>18</sup>

When in Phenomenology we speak of essences, and indeed of intuition, the process by which we perceive essences, we are not talking of some metaphysical construct like Plato's Forms which we become aware of in some mysterious way. Phenomenological essences are not some form above the world, but are the very form of the world found in the world. Phenomenological essence is not extrapolated from experience, but is the very pre-condition of radically empirical experience for Husserl: "Knowledge of the concrete is determined by knowledge of the laws governing essences ...".<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, in terms of Logical - and not Ontological - priority essence proceeds individual existence. Existence is first and foremost a manifestation of essential relations; therefore, we move away from a contingent view of the world as "mere facticity", towards an essential view of the world as displaying necessary and rational inter-relations:

"... the 'essences' grasped in essential intuition permit, at least to a very great extent, of being fixed in definitive concepts and thereby afford possibilities of definitive and in their own way absolutely valid, objective statements ...".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 149, p.383.

<sup>19</sup> Q. Lauer, op.cit., p.146.

<sup>20</sup> E. Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p.111.



Phenomenologically speaking, the world is, as we have seen above, constituted in conformity to eidetic laws, and therefore experience, as the correlate of the world so constituted, must itself be rational in that each experience must display the eidetic laws in conformity to which its object must have been constituted. Hence:

"Any world whatever, as the objective correlate of experience, reveals the essential structural laws of the Ego as such, which is inseparably bound up with the essence of Experience".<sup>21</sup>

In other words, the structural laws of the Ego are "inseparably bound up" with experience, the correlate of Being, and thereby with Being. Phenomenology is the science of the general essence of consciousness, and its various structures. Thus, if the world is "the objective correlate of experience" and experience is rational, then it would seem that the objects of experience which collectively make up the world must be constituted according to, or in conformity with rational or essential laws. Thus, despite different world views, varying from Ego to Ego, and different horizons, the eidetic essence of world experience is the same for everyone - by definition - and thereby affords a basis for a knowledge of the world which transcends our individual subjectivity towards an essentially constituted and therefore "objective" knowledge. We have reconciled the subjectivity of knowing, and the objectivity of knowledge at the Transcendental level.

Thus, Phenomenological statements, for example, are true in so far as they accurately describe the object as meant, for Phenomen-

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<sup>21</sup> Q. Lauer, op.cit., p.146.

ologically speaking, "There is properly speaking, only one nature, the one that appears in the appearance of things".<sup>22</sup> And this appearing nature of the world "reveals" "essential structural laws". This is not, however, to say that we do not have any prior knowledge of the laws governing the appearance of things. Our prior knowledge is not derived from knowledge of the categories through which reality has to be "transformed" into appearance, à la Kant, but rather the phenomenological synthetic a priori is the result of knowing a priori the necessary logic of the appearance of things, the necessary logic of the appearance of nature. We arrive at the synthetic a priori not like the Naturalists, by imposing logic or reason on experience (dualistically conceived of as contingently related to the world) which therefore in turn necessitates an assumption that logic or reason are properly part of the structure of the world. Not like Kant do we propose a categorically imposed logic of phenomena which therefore holds no implication for the rationality or otherwise of the real noumenal world. Rather, we refrain from metaphysics and therefore offer no root for this paradoxical distinction between the world and experience. Phenomenology is, therefore, able to arrive at a synthetic a priori by finding the logos of experience, which is understood to be the necessary correlate of the world. There is, therefore, no need for the phenomenologist to speculate on the problematic relation between the rationality of appearance and reality as appearance and reality are empirically united in the one experience and are, therefore, only

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<sup>22</sup>E. Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p.106.

logically or descriptively distinguishable while they are empirical, symbiotic correlates which therefore must share the same form of rational relations.

Being is not physical, nor psychological, is not the "object in itself" of the empiricist in the natural attitude, nor merely an abstract psychological meaning devoid of any referent, such as that which we find in analytic philosophy, rather it is irreal and is intentionally constituted in conformity to the eidetic laws governing the experience of things. Therefore, in looking for the Logos of Experience that will give us the synthetic a priori of phenomenology, we are looking for the logic not of physical relations nor of psychological meaning, but for the eidetic laws governing the "experience of reality". The relation of objects and the relation of experiences are united within Phenomena, along with their correlates, the real and the rational. As Merleau-Ponty astutely comments: "Rationality is precisely measured by the experience in which it is disclosed".<sup>23</sup> The only Logos is the world, and this precisely is the core of rationalism.

I think it is now apposite that we reflect on what has been achieved so far. So far we have been introduced to the main core of thought, which I will later subject to criticism, in attempting to establish my hypothesis, for it is indispensable to criticism that one should know what one is criticising.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith (New York; Humanities Press, 1962), p.xix.

We have seen the paradoxical nature of the philosophical views held by those in the natural attitude, and the task that Husserl saw as the overwhelming task of philosophy - the reconciliation of the subjectivity of knowing and the objectivity of knowledge - has been outlined. It has been suggested that Husserl attempts to achieve this reconciliation in a non-paradoxical manner by paying careful attention to ensuring he makes no metaphysical pre-suppositions, and by contenting himself with a purely descriptive analysis of the things themselves in an attempt to achieve the indubitability appropriate to "Philosophy as a Science". In order to achieve the pre-suppositionless starting-point, Husserl sets out to question all assumptions, especially those of the dualist schools. He accepts only the realm of the cogito, of immanent perception as indubitable for the very term empiricism denotes an acceptance of experience. At the same time, he suspends acceptance of the "object in itself" or genuine (reell) transcendent object by subjecting it to the epoche or bracketing. This is Husserl's "radically empirical" approach. Upon introducing the epoche, we become aware of the intentional nature of the world, for in limiting ourselves to the cogito, the realm of meaning, we realise that we do not lose the world, but rather, the world is re-introduced after the reduction in its indubitable form as the "intentional unity of meaning", as *Phenomena*. *Phenomena* thus transcend the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology, for rather than being merely contingent, phenomena are constituted in conformity to essential laws and are therefore rational, but on the other hand, phenomena are not merely meanings

for every meaning is, for phenomenology, intentionally related to a something that is meant. Phenomena, then, are not merely ideal, neither are they merely physical, rather they empirically speaking transcend this distinction, and are irreducibly experiences of the world.

In the following Chapters, I hope to move on to a more detailed explication of Husserl's Phenomenology in an attempt to subject it to criticisms regarding its supposed pre-suppositionlessness and indubitability, and attempt to draw out the paradoxes and tautologies I believe to be inherent in such a position.

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A topic that naturally presents itself for discussion is the closer exposition of how it can be that the object can be inexorably inter-related with, and yet transcendent to the act or acts in which it is given, and it is this that I will begin by considering in the next chapter. As we will see, the exposition of this relationship will center around and necessarily invite a closer examination of the concept "essence". The attempt to clarify exactly what Husserl means by an "essence" will naturally involve a consideration of their origin and herein will arise the roots of one of the major enigmas of Phenomenology, an enigma that the attentive reader will already have glimpsed, namely the puzzle of how the ego is able to constitute the world in conformity to essential laws that govern a priori the experiences of the world prior to the experience of the world (which after the reduction must be constituted by the ego) in which the laws are revealed.

I will address this problem in the hope of highlighting the fact that the very distinction between fact and essence is itself an essential distinction. I also hope to show that closely connected therewith is the fact that the distinction between Idealism and Materialism is itself wholly constituted within the realm of the ideal, and that, therefore, Husserl has not so much transcended the dialectic as, by the epoche, insured that it was never really admitted. Further, I hope to show that the very drawing of such distinctions is itself unempirical in the true sense, and serves merely to resurrect some of the very paradoxes phenomenology was to avoid.

Finally, I will attempt to suggest a resolution of the enigmas and paradoxes that arise out of the attempt to distinguish fact and essence, but will suggest that Phenomenology is left with paradoxes and tautologies of its own; and that a priori any universal science must either be founded on metaphysics or be tautological.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BEING AND ESSENCE -

#### THE PROBLEMS OF AN INTENTIONAL "THEORY" OF CONSTITUTION

The two key concepts to any analysis of Husserl's Theory of Intentionality are the concepts "Act" and "Content". For the purpose at hand, I shall define the act as the particular conscious intention wherein the particular meaning is constituted, and the content as the particular intentional "Meaning" which is constituted. After the reduction consciousness remains as a "Phenomenological residuum", the absolute region of Being of Transcendental Subjectivity. We may examine this cogito, this stream of consciousness and describe it as such:

"Before me lies this piece of white paper. 'I see it, touch it'. This perpetual seeing and touching of the paper, as the full concrete experience of the paper that lies here as given ... precisely with this relative lack of clearness, with this imperfect definition ... is a cogitatio, a conscious experience. The paper itself, with its objective qualities, its spatial extension, its objective position in regard to that spatial thing I call 'my body' is not cogitatio, but cogitatum, not a perceptual experience, but something perceived".<sup>1</sup>

Every active cogito intends a content, cogitatum, and this intentional relation with its two-sidedness holds for any mode of consciousness whatever. It remains to be pointed out, however, that this is not a relationship between a psychological experience and a

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<sup>1</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 35, p.105.

real object, but a relationship itself given to the transcendental subject, in experience, between an act of consciousness and the content of consciousness, the content of consciousness being a reduced object of experience, and not the "object in itself" of the naive empiricist. As Husserl remarks:

"It belongs as a general feature to the essence of every actual cogito to be a consciousness of something".<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen, then, there is:

"... within the immanent a distinction between appearance and that which appears. We thus have two absolute data, the givenness of the appearing and the givenness of the object; and the object within this immanence is not immanent in the sense of genuine immanence: it is not a concrete part (Stuck) of the appearance i.e., the past phases of the enduring (object) ... are now still objective and yet they are not genuinely contained in the present moment of the appearance".<sup>3</sup>

The content, or intentional object, is constituted in experience as a reduced object of experience, and is in no way an "object in itself", but while the intentional object is constituted within what Husserl calls the sphere of "the immanent", it is "not immanent in the sense of genuine immanence". Husserl means that, concomitant with the reduction, we have bracketed what he calls Reell (genuine) Transcendence, the "object in itself" of the Naive Philosopher, that which is supposedly outside of consciousness, and we are left within the realm of Reell (genuine) immanence, from within which all must be constituted

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Section 36, p.108.

<sup>3</sup> E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, p.9.



Husserl describes the fact that we are able to constitute from within this sphere both the psychic phenomena, the appearance which is given in "pure seeing", and that which appears and is given in immanent experience as a Transcendent object. In other words, the Intentionally Transcendent object is intended from within the realm of Immanence. For example, Husserl tells us that if we are:

"... (perceiving) a sound, even after Phenomenological reduction, appearance and that which appears stand in contrast, and this in the midst of pure givenness, hence in the midst of true immanence, then we are taken aback. Perhaps the sound lasts. We have there the patently given unity of the sound and its duration with its temporal phases, the present and the past. On the other hand, when we reflect the phenomenon of enduring sound, itself a temporal phenomenon, has its own now-phase and past phases. And if one picks out a now-phase of the phenomenon there is not only the objective now of the sound itself, but the now of the sound is but a point in the duration of a sound".<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, with all perceptions we can distinguish between the appearance and that which appears, between the act and the content. For example, I have a cup before me. Although I can only perceive one side of the cup at the moment, I know it to have another side and a bottom which are also meant or intended by me and which collectively make up the intentional unity cup. What is more, although I now perceive it in the present, I know that this cup existed in the past, and, if it is not broken, will exist in the future. Admittedly, only the present existence of one side of the cup is given adequately;

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp.8-9.

however, the rest of the cup is also meant as part of the meaning of the Transcendent object cup. Thus, while the act of intending is existentially mind dependent, the intended object may transcend the act in which it is nonetheless exclusively given. Further:

"... the peculiarity of intentional acts is that their objects do not have to exist. An intentional act may have as its object, an existentially mind dependent entity, for example the idea of a mermaid; or its object may be something physical; or it may be an impossible thing such as a round square; or it may be something possible but unactualizable, such as a golden mountain. Any mode or mentality (loving, desiring, believing) may have as its object an 'intentionally inexistent' entity, namely an entity that is neither physical nor existentially mind dependent. The idea of a mermaid is, being an idea, existentially mind dependent. But the mermaid, which is the intention of the idea is neither a physical thing nor is it existentially mind dependent. In contrast to this no physical action requiring an object can be performed upon an intentionally inexistent entity".<sup>5</sup>

So we can see that an immanent perception necessarily guarantees the existence of its object regardless of the physical status of such an object. Thus, it emerges that while the intentional object is constituted within the realm of Reell (genuine) immanence, it is not necessarily a "concrete part of the appearance", and it may transcend the really immanent appearances. Therefore, while the experience is indubitably and adequately given, the object given in the experience may transcend the experience in which it is given, and therefore only be given inadequately. Intentionality, then, while rooted in the Reell (genuine) immanent act may "point beyond",

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.xiv.

or "transcend" this realm in that the unified object may not necessarily be existentially mind dependent, but may, on the contrary, be intentionally transcendent. While: "... the things are and are given in appearance and in virtue of the appearance itself",<sup>6</sup>

"... the things are not contained as in a hull or vessel. Instead the things come to be constituted in these mental processes, although in reality they are not at all to be found in them".<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the full givenness of the object may be more than its particular appearances as it may, for example, be intended as Being even when it is not being given in appearances. It is nonetheless rooted therein. The content is intended by the act, which somehow transcends itself. That the act is different from the content is very easily demonstrable. Take, for example, the case where I, who have never visited San Francisco, am having a discussion with a San Franciscan about the San Francisco Bay. Both of us obviously have the same content or object in mind, but I, being less familiar with it than he, have a less adequate knowledge of the Bay than he. The thing that is intended by both of us, the object or content, is exactly the same, viz. the San Francisco Bay. However, the acts of intending may be very different, for he may include in his acts memories of actual perceptions that I, never having seen the Bay, could not include. Further, I may have a fantasy or vague intention of the Bay; he may have a specific and highly vivid series of intentional acts. The San Francisco Bay, as a common intentional object,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp.9-10.

transcends our individual intentional acts, but is nonetheless known to us exclusively through these acts. Thus, the San Francisco Bay is the intentional object to which all the actual and potential acts in which it is given essentially conform, and in virtue of which conformity they are taken to be acts that intend the same object. Similarly, "My favorite novel" or a "Mermaid" or "this cup", while they are all given in our perceptions of them, transcend these perceptions. They are properly to be understood as the intentional unity wherein the various experiential acts are intentionally unified on essential grounds as intending just this particular object.

Thus, the acts are not the same as the object, as the object transcends the acts, but it is in the acts that the object is given. Having established this, the problem that now emerges - as I indicated in the synopsis at the end of the first chapter - is that if the object is only given in the acts which intend it, how can it be known to transcend these acts?

The solution is that some appearances are given as essentially appearances of transcendent objects:

"Thus a basic and general essential difference arises between Being as Experience and Being as Thing ...".<sup>8</sup>

"The perceived thing in general, and all its parts, aspects and phases, ... are necessarily transcendent to the perception ...".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 42, p.120.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Section 41, p.118 (my emphasis).

"It is evident that intuition and the intuited, perception and the thing perceived, though essentially related to each other, are in principle and of necessity not really and essentially one and united".<sup>10</sup>

That this is not metaphysical speculation can be confirmed by reflecting upon any of our many everyday experiences of transcendent objects. We know them to transcend the appearances in which they are given, and this distinction we draw between immanent perception and transcendent reality, between consciousness and reality, is drawn essentially and exclusively within the realm of immanence.<sup>11</sup>

This relationship between the object and its appearances or Phenomena is crucial, so let us look at another example to support the contention that the object transcends the acts in which it is exclusively given. Osborn gives us a very good example in comparing the two statements, "The Victor of Jena" and "The Conquered of Waterloo".<sup>12</sup> They have different meanings although they relate to the same object. This is neither to say that the object to which both refer exists independently from its meaning both actual and potential - for with the epoche we have obviously reduced ontological Being to epistemological meaning - nor that the object is merely the sum of all the actual and potential meanings it could take. Indeed, Husserl tells us: "The perceived thing can be, without being perceived, without my being aware of it even as potential only ...".<sup>13</sup> Rather

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.117 (some of the emphasis mine).

<sup>11</sup> See E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, Chapter II.

<sup>12</sup> A.D. Osborn, Edmund Husserl and his Logical Investigations (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Photo Lithoprint Reproduction, Edwards Bros. Inc., Lithoprinters, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1949), p.76.

<sup>13</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 41, p.118.

the intentionally unified different meanings point to the full Being of the object (including the margin of determinable indeterminacy), they suggest it and it is comprehended and given as essentially fixed in its essential type, a type that prescribes a priori all the possible senses it could have. Put more simply, the object is not its "particular" Intentional Phenomena of Meaning, otherwise the "Victor of Jena" would be a different person than "The Conquered of Waterloo" (which he is not) nor is it the totality of all its intentional meanings, otherwise all objects would be existentially mind dependent as are the acts that intentionally constitute them, nor does the object exist independently of the intentional phenomena of meaning, independent of all the intentional acts, otherwise we would have to say Napoleon existed independently of meaning (reell (genuine) transcendently - which empirically we cannot), as an object-in-himself, an impossibility after the reduction.

Rather, the object is exclusively given in the totality of all the acts of meaning apprehension that are essentially united as acts of meaning apprehension that have in common the fact that they all intend just this particular object and no other: nonetheless, it is given in these acts as transcendent to these acts. It is constituted on essential grounds as transcendent to the acts in which it is exclusively given, the acts which are fixed a priori in their essential type, and collectively display a teleological coherence or intentional unity which is the correlate of the object:

"... different types of objectivity ... are displayed in something like 'appearances'. These appearances neither are nor genuinely contain the objects themselves. Rather in their shifting and remarkable structure they create objects in a certain way for the ego...".<sup>14</sup>

The object is "pointed to" by the shifting appearances, fixed in their essential type as appearances of just this object, and it is thus constituted as such in a unifying synthesis of identification:

"... cognitive acts, more generally any mental acts, are not isolated particulars, coming and going in the stream of consciousness without any interconnections. As they are essentially related to each other they display a teleological coherence and corresponding connections of realization, corroboration, verification, and their opposites, (these connections) ... bring together the multiplicity of acts which are relative to the same objectivity ...".<sup>15</sup>

"... all treatment of detail is governed by the 'teleological' view of its function in making 'synthetic unity' possible ... the various conscious groupings ... are as it were prefigured ...".<sup>16</sup>

How, we may ask, are they pre-figured or prescribed?

"... objective unities of every region and category 'are consciously constituted' ... all the connexions of our real and possible consciousness of them as essential possibilities are prescribed by their essential nature".<sup>17</sup>

Once we are conscious of the essence of a particular object, we can know a priori the laws that will govern any appearances of the object, although we cannot know a priori what appearances will appear, this being a matter of contingent fact.

<sup>14</sup> E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, p.56.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.59-60 (my addition in brackets).

<sup>16</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 86, p.231.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.232.

There is one essential difference between the position of Husserl and that of Kant, this being that for Kant, appearances or Kantian Phenomena are different from reality or noumena. For Husserl, by contrast, the continuum of appearances united teleologically by the essence of the intentional unity, is the object.

Identity, then, is not the constantly changing continuum of appearances (otherwise "The Victor of Jena" would mean the same as "The Conqueror of Waterloo" which it does not), but it is constituted as an intentional "unity of apprehension ... grounded in the very essence of different unities of this kind, of synthesis of identification".<sup>18</sup>

The identity of the object is not the different perceptions, but the telos whereby we intentionally synthesise different perceptions into an intentional unity which is essentially transcendent to the perceptions that collectively constitute it:

"Keeping this table steadily in view as I go round it changing my position in space all the time, I have continually the consciousness of the bodily presence out there of this one and self-same table, which itself remains unchanged throughout. But the perception of the table is one that changes continuously, it is a continuum of changing perceptions .... Only the table is the same, known as identical through the synthetic consciousness which connects the ... (different perceptions) .... The perceived thing ... (is) necessarily transcendent to the perception ...".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 41, p.119.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp.117-118 (my additions in brackets).



This one same perceived thing that transcends the various perceptions, is the object. Therefore, as suggested in the synopsis, it is only if we accept the existence of essences that we can account for the intentional synthesis of different perceptions into an intentional unity, the one self-same transcendent object. It is only if we accept that we are conscious of essences that we can explain how we are able to know the various perceptual appearances to be appearances of just this particular object (thing) and no other.

Having thus established what takes place in the act of constituting an object, let us try to determine more closely what we mean by essences, and what their origin is, for it is indispensable to a radically empirical philosophy that relies so heavily - as we have just seen - on essences to describe the constitution of objects that we know exactly what is meant by the term essence.

Essences are, for Husserl, not merely the product of an act of abstraction based upon perceptions, for, as we have seen, it is a necessary precondition of any perception, if it is to be a perception of anything at all, that it be constituted in essential conformity to the intentionally unified transcendent object of just a particular essential type. Nor are essences purely mental constructions that refer to psychological fact, for, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, both act and content are given to the transcendental subject, and are therefore transcendentially constituted. Perhaps we can best understand what essences are by returning to actual examples. For example, in the case above, where we have a cup before us, the very fact that we may see a cup and then another cup, or we may have a

group of fantasies of different cups and know these different presentations, perhaps from different angles also, as presentations of cups necessarily entails, as we have seen, that we must know what the essence of a cup is.

Again, I may imagine a chair, for example, and vary it in imagination as having one, two, three or four legs, different colours, or as being a big or small chair, a chair of this type or that type, and yet I know that all these various imaginings are of a chair. I must have an intuitive knowledge of the essence chair. What, then, we may ask ourselves, do we mean by essences as talked about and given in the above examples? Is it any clearer to us now what an essence is? It would seem that an essence is, to use Kockelman's succinct definition, "... an invariant identical content, in terms of which all these arbitrary variations remain congruent while their differences remain irrelevant".<sup>20</sup>

Essences, then, are not some Form above the world, but the very Form of the world found in the world. However, this is not to say that they are empirical generalisations "extrapolated" from experience, rather they are the very pre-conditions of experience just as the realm of Transcendental Idealism is a necessary pre-condition for all experience of any fact world whatever. As we saw previously, essences eidetically prescribe or pre-figure a priori the range of pure possibilities belonging to the same object whether it be found in this or any possible world whatever.

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<sup>20</sup> J.J. Kockelmans, A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology, p.114.

What above all else should be noted here is the enigma alluded to in the synopsis, namely that on the one hand essences are a "content" of the world found in the world, while on the other hand at the same time they prescribe or pre-figure the constitution - in a unifying synthesis of identification - of the objectivities that collectively make up the world. Before continuing with this point, however, I would like to sum up what we have seen so far.

So far in this chapter we have moved via the consideration of the relation of act and content, immanence and transcendence, to an understanding of the central role essences play in Husserl's attempt to establish this distinction. We then started to examine more closely exactly what an essence was in order to assure ourselves that there was no element of metaphysics implicit in such a conception, and in order to give a radical empirical description of what was meant by essences. In attempting to do this, we were drawn into a consideration of the contexts within which we become conscious of essences, and to a lesser extent of their origin. However, in considering the context wherein our consciousness of essences is rooted, an enigma, as outlined above, has presented itself to us.

We may observe that Husserl has not so much proved or shown that an understanding of essence is tenable within a "radically empirical" philosophy, but that such a philosophy is untenable without such an understanding, which is not the same thing at all. The argument, as we have seen, runs as follows :-

If transcendent objects are known to transcend the appearances in which they are given, and are therefore not fully determinable within finite consciousness, then they can only be reduced to

consciousness in so far as:

"... all the actual and potential subjective processes...are ... 'predelineated' in the sense-producing intentionality of the actual ones ...".

This in turn is only possible if:

"... the complete givenness is ... prescribed ... absolutely fixed in its essential type ...".

Therefore, it is argued, the knowledge of essential types is a logical precondition of our being able to reduce transcendent objects to the realm of Reell (genuine) immanence, and therefore of any "radical empiricism" that is going to transcend the realm of simple subjectivity. However, it would be presumptive at this stage to conclude that we therefore must have knowledge of essential types, as we might equally well at this stage conclude to the contrary that "radical empiricism" is untenable for it has been unable to show how it can transcend the realm of simple subjectivity, and therefore unable to show that transcendent objects can be reduced to finite consciousness. However, Husserl insists that we do have knowledge of essential types; that we are thus able to constitute transcendent objects within finite consciousness:

"... in the flux of intentional synthesis (which creates unity in all consciousness and which, noetically and noematically, constitutes unity of objective sense), an essentially necessary conformity to type prevails and can be apprehended in strict concepts". <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 20, p.49.

This is a synthesis:

"... in which the unity of an intentional objectivity as 'the same' objectivity belonging to multiple modes of appearance becomes 'constituted'".<sup>22</sup>

However, if Phenomenology is to be truly "radically empirical", and pre-suppositionless, it will not do merely to maintain that we just do have such knowledge of essential types and are accordingly able to constitute transcendent objects, but on the contrary, Husserl must convince us of this fact empirically, otherwise it remains open to us, as indicated above, to conclude that the reduction and correlatively the constitution of transcendent objectivity within consciousness is untenable. In an attempt to convince us of the empirical validity of essences, and therefore of the constitution of transcendent objects, Husserl tells us that when we experience an object we experience it as:

"... a unity of synthesis ... in which the unity of an intentional objectivity as 'the same' objectivity belonging to multiple modes of appearance, becomes 'constituted'".<sup>23</sup>

As we have seen, "... in the flux of intentional synthesis ... an essentially necessary conformity to type prevails ...".<sup>24</sup> Now, if this is true, and "... the complete givenness is ... 'prescribed' ... absolutely fixed in its essential type ...".<sup>25</sup> while on the other hand:

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Section 18, pp.41-2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Section 20, p.49.

<sup>25</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 143, p.366.

"... the intentional object plays ... the role of 'transcendental clue' to the typical infinite multiplicities of possible cogitations that in a possible synthesis bear the intentional object within them as the same meant object".<sup>26</sup>

the question inevitably arises, does the synthesis of consciousness in which the appearances appear as belonging to the same intentional object proceed from the role of the intentional object as transcendental clue to the possible cogitations that bear the same intentional objects within them, or does the intentional object as transcendental clue to the possible cogitations that bear the same intentional object within them proceed from the synthesis of consciousness in which the appearances appear as belonging to the same intentional object? Do we synthesise various different appearances into that intentional unity called "the same object" because they each exhibit themselves as being appearances of one and the same object, or do we take them as each exhibiting themselves as appearances of the same object because they are synthesised into an intentional unity?

Thus, the enigma previously alluded to has presented itself with full force precisely when we are attempting to clarify the notion of essence so central to phenomenology. How can essences be both the form of the world found in the world, and at the same time prescribe the world? That Husserl recognised the problem is clear. Indeed, he spoke of "... the problem of all-embracing genesis, which presents so many enigmas".<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 21, p.50.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Section 58, p.135.

To turn again to Husserl, in an attempt to dissolve this enigma, he tells us:

"Empirical or individual intuition can be transformed into essential insight ... the object of such insight is then the corresponding pure essence ...".<sup>28</sup>

This suggests that empirical experience precedes essential intuition. However, if this is so we may ask ourselves how it is that we are able to constitute empirical experiences in conformity to a particular essential type prior to the act of intuition that establishes for us the essential type? How are we able to constitute the appearing phases of the object, prescribed a priori in its essential type before we have been able to experience the object and intuit its essence? After all, Husserl tells us that:

"... the complete givenness is nevertheless prescribed - as a connexion of endless processes of continuous appearing, absolutely fixed in its essential type, ... a continuum of appearances determined a priori ...".<sup>29</sup>

Comparing the last two quotes, it becomes clear that at least there is an indisputable ambiguity, for on the one hand it seems that essential insight is derived from the empirical intuition of the object, while on the other essential insight into the pure essence of the object underlies and is prior to the empirically intuited teleologically coherent appearances in which the object is revealed. On the one hand:

<sup>28</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 3, p.48.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Section 143, p.366.

"... no essential intuition is possible without the free possibility of directing one's glance to an individual counterpart ...".<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand:

"... no individual intuition is possible without the free possibility of ... directing one's glance upon the corresponding essence...".<sup>31</sup>

While I would not go so far as to say there is a contradiction here, and although as an ongoing process we can clearly talk of a dialectical or symbiotic co-arising of essences and their individual counterparts, if we attempt to add an historical dimension and enquire into the genesis of such a situation, "many enigmas" do indeed clearly present themselves. Thus, perhaps not surprisingly, Husserl's conception of experience is very much of experience of Being as an ongoing process:

"The beginning Phenomenologist is bound involuntarily by the circumstance that he takes himself as his initial example. Transcendentally, he finds himself as the ego, then as generically an ego, who already has (in conscious fashion) a world".<sup>32</sup>

"At first, even eidetic observation will consider an ego as such with the restriction that a constituted world already exists for him".<sup>33</sup>

However, although already there for the phenomenologist, the world must presumably have been constituted in its present form at some time, and, when we come to add this historical dimension, the enigma re-asserts itself.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Section 3, p.50.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 37, p.76.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.77.



If knowledge of the essence of the object "points to a single experience (individual intuition) on the basis of which it necessarily must constitute itself"<sup>34</sup> so, too, the single experience must point to knowledge of an essence on the basis of which it is an experience of something at all. On the one hand:

"The *eidos* itself ... is pure, 'unconditioned' ... not conditioned by any fact. It is prior to all 'concepts' ... (which) must be made to fit the *eidos*".<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand:

"It lies undoubtedly in the intrinsic nature of essential intuition that it should rest on ... the visible presence of individual fact ...".<sup>36</sup>

The *eidos*, as we said, is then at once prior to all concepts while it is derived from essential insight that rests upon empirical or individual intuition of facts.

Despite all these ambiguities, Husserl continually asserts that eidetic laws: "prescribe for every factual statement about something transcendental the possible sense ... of that statement".<sup>37</sup>

"In itself then the science of pure possibilities precedes the science of actualities and alone makes it possible as a science ...".<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>J.J. Kockelmans, A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology, p.82 (my additions in brackets).

<sup>35</sup>E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 34, p.71.

<sup>36</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 3, p.50.

<sup>37</sup>E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 34, p.72.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

"That a Nature, a Cultural World, a world of men ... and so forth, exist for me signifies that possibilities of corresponding experiences exist for me ... (which) involves a firmly developed habituality, acquired by a certain genesis in conformity with eidetic laws".<sup>39</sup>

Thus, while the empirical ego, exemplified by any person such as the phenomenologist himself, finds himself in a world already existing for him - in which world he may be able to intuit essential characteristics - it becomes clear after the epoche that this world must have a genesis in which it is constituted by the Transcendental ego. Further, as essences are not some Form above the world, the empirical ego's "essential intuition ... rest(s) on ... the visible presence of individual fact", while after the reduction, the fact world can only exist because of its "genesis in conformity with eidetic laws" by the transcendental ego.

Here then, we have the beginning of an attempt to clarify the seeming ambiguity. By distinguishing constitution from description, and the transcendental ego from the empirical ego, we can attempt to reconcile any apparent contradictions and dissolve any enigmas arising from the "problematic" of the relation between fact and essence. On the basis of these distinctions, it may be claimed that while descriptively speaking the empirical ego finds itself in a world that exhibits conformity to eidetic laws, constitutionally speaking such a world must have been constituted by the transcendental ego in conformity to eidetic essences. To put the same point another way, while for the empirical ego Being or Fact precedes essence in the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Section 37, p.76.

descriptive (or empirical) order, for the transcendental ego essence precedes Being or Fact in the constitutive (or logical) order.

While it is undoubtedly true that such a distinction enables us to do all that I have claimed, we may, I think, justifiably have doubts as to the empirically descriptive validity of such a distinction, for as Bateson says: "It is difficult to see how the dichotomy between substance and form could be arrived at by inductive argument. No man, after all, has ever seen or experienced formless and unsorted matter".<sup>40</sup> However, Husserl tells us:

"... the object of experience is progressively constituted and ... this manner of being constituted is prescribed. We understand that such a constitution is required by the very essence of the experienced object".<sup>41</sup>

What Husserl is here asserting is that after the empirical ego who finds himself in the world has "transformed" his "empirical or individual intuition ... into (an) essential insight ..." of the essence of the object of experience, it comes to realise, in retrospect, that the object of experience must have been constituted according to a prior prescription (that is, in conformity to its essential type). While Husserl clearly means by this that it is given in essential intuition of the essence of the object that it must have been so constituted, and therefore that it is essential intuition that forms the basis for introducing the Transcendental ego, and the concept of constitution, I would like to suggest that it is far from clear here that we do indeed have such an essential intuition. Try as I might, I personally do not seem to have such an intuition, and, insofar as Transcendental constitution is to be distinguished as dialectically separate from empirical description, one cannot help but feel that

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<sup>40</sup> G. Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind, (St. Albans: Granada, 1973).

<sup>41</sup> E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, p.11.

they might just be antithetical to one another. Indeed, one may even get the impression that the basis of our conception of "constitution" and the "transcendental ego" is, in fact, rationalistically deductive and therefore of dubious validity in a philosophy that calls itself a "radically, empirically descriptive pre-suppositionless science". True, Husserl starts from the indisputable empirically describable fact that the empirical ego finds itself in a world that already exists and exhibits conformity to eidetic essential laws. However, one cannot escape the impression, despite Husserl's claim to the contrary, that when he talks of having essential intuition that such a world was constituted by the transcendental ego, what he is really doing is moving from the empirical fact of the experience of the world outlined above, and from the presumption that the reduction has been successful,<sup>42</sup> to the retrospective rational deductive conclusion (rather than empirical description) that such a world must have been constituted in conformity to eidetic laws.

Even if we accept the empirical integrity of Husserl's two-fold distinction, it is not sufficient merely to assert that for the empirical ego empirical or individual intuition precedes essential insight, whereas for the transcendental ego the *eidos* is prior to, and a necessary pre-condition of the constitution of the world, for while such a distinction may, as I have suggested, help to clarify the ambiguities and enigmas involved in the relation of fact to essence, the problem still remains as to how, empirically speaking, the

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<sup>42</sup> Note that the success of the reduction is, as yet, a presumption, for it is precisely in an attempt to show the possibility of reducing transcendent objects to the intentional realm that the whole question concerning the empirical justification of essences (along with the enigmas and ambiguities above mentioned) arose. (See pp.34-5)

transcendental ego is able to so constitute the appearing phases of the object as conforming to the essence of just the particular object in question and to no other before the empirical ego has been able to intuit the essence of the object from its appearing phases? Despite Husserl's complex and sincere attempts to solve this paradox by the radically empirically dubious distinctions between constitution and description, logical and empirical priority, empirical and transcendental ego, I would like to suggest that the paradox is ultimately a pseudo-problem for phenomenology, for its very existence as a problem depends on some kind of metaphysical postulating of the "object-in-itself" which is constituted prior to our being descriptively conscious of it, and it is just this "Being-in-itself" which radical empiricism has bracketed. Clearly, phenomenologically speaking, description and constitution, although distinguishable on essential grounds, are empirically speaking co-arising correlates, in a way analogous to the way in which the subject pole (that describes) and the object pole (that is constituted) co-arise in the one empirical experience, and are therefore empirically indistinguishable but essentially distinct. This is similar to the way that fact and essence are, as we have seen, empirically symbiotic co-arising correlates (essences being the very form of the world found exclusively in the world) and yet are, on essential grounds, distinguishable. To give an example, lest this should be doubted, Husserl tells us on the one hand: "Empirical or individual intuition can be transformed into essential insight",<sup>43</sup> therefore they clearly co-arise. On the other hand:

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<sup>43</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 3, p.48.

"... that does not alter the fact that the two kinds of intuition differ in principle, and in assertions of the kind we have just been making it is only the essential relations between them that declare themselves. Thus to the essential differences of intuitions correspond the essential relations between 'existence' (here clearly in the sense of individual concrete being) and 'essence', between fact and eidōs".<sup>44</sup>

Here, then, we have the forthright assertion that the distinction between fact and essence is essential. If this is correct and empirically speaking fact and essence are co-arising symbiotic correlates, then empirically speaking there can be no order of priority between fact and essence, and therefore the distinction between description and constitution - parasitic, as we have seen it must be upon the distinction between fact and essence and the concomitant distinction between their orders or priority - must be an essential distinction and not an empirical distinction.<sup>45</sup>

What this means in practice is that the distinction between fact and essence, so important if Husserl is to maintain that objects can transcend the acts in which they are exclusively given (and therefore necessary for the success of the reduction) is phenomenologically suspect as being a non-empirical distinction. The concomitant of this, if it is substantiated, is clearly that the distinction between immanence and transcendence is itself immanently constituted, and that phenomenology, far from transcending the distinction between the material and the ideal, never really admits

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the very distinction between an essential distinction and an empirical distinction can itself only be constituted at the transcendent level as an essential distinction, and so on and so on.

it in the first place, but rather from the first limits its conception of the material to precisely that, to an ideal conception.

Clearly, then, my assertion that the distinction between fact and essence, and the parasitic distinction between constitution and description, is not empirical (as they empirically co-arise in the one experience) is of the utmost importance, and therefore I will try to give an example to establish it. Let us take the example of the infant learning process.

In this case, that that which is described must be simultaneously constituted, and that fact and essence must empirically co-arise can be clearly seen. After all, if the object-in-itself has been bracketed, how else can we account for the infant coming to know the world except by saying that he constitutes it? Now he cannot constitute the world of empirical fact in eidetic conformity until he has been able to eidetically intuit its essential laws, and he cannot do this unless he were presented with an already constituted world of empirical fact. For the infant, then, empirically speaking constitution and description, and the consciousness of fact and essence must go hand in hand and co-arise.

"In early infancy then, the field of perception that gives beforehand does not as yet contain anything that in a mere look, might be explicated as a physical thing".<sup>46</sup>

It seems, then, that if the "object-in-itself" is bracketed then from the viewpoint of the child it is impossible to distinguish empirically between description and constitution if enigmas are to be

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<sup>46</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p.79.

avoided. Indeed, we might even venture that notwithstanding Husserl's incomplete attempt to distinguish egological and cosmological genesis - which must itself be parasitic on the distinction between internal and external time-consciousness<sup>47</sup> - it is impossible ultimately for the individual ego from its viewpoint to distinguish egological descriptive uncovering and cosmological genesis on empirical grounds once the object-in-itself is bracketed.

To return, however, to the main point, it seems that I have indeed been able to prove that the distinctions between fact and essence, description and constitution, and perhaps ultimately between the transcendental and empirical are not themselves empirical. What this means in practice is that, despite Husserl's claims for phenomenology the enigmas so long associated with dialectical dualistic philosophies - for example, the enigma of the relationship between the ideal and the material - are in danger of re-emerging in Phenomenology in another form - for example, the enigma of the relationship between fact and essence. Further, it would seem that the only way Husserl is able to avoid such enigmas and transcend the distinctions on which they are based is by never really admitting their empirical validity, and after all is it not precisely this that he does by bracketing? We may ask ourselves whether the epoche is not really an attempt to clear the way for the reduction - and the ensuing claim that the traditional distinction between Idealism and Materialism has been transcended - by suspending acceptance from the start of anything truly empirical that might upset the project.

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<sup>47</sup> A question that is of the greatest ultimate importance to phenomenology but which must be left aside here, is whether such a distinction was incomplete merely on de facto or on a priori grounds.



If this is true and all distinctions, such as the ones alluded to above, can only be reduced insofar as they are never really admitted as empirical but only as ideally constituted, albeit "transcendentally" ideally constituted, then ultimately the distinction between subject and object must eventually be recognised to be a retrospective essential distinction similarly transcended by the one Empirically indivisible Experience. That this is no idle metaphysical speculation can be seen from the works of Piaget or the Gestalt school, both of whom present Empirical verification. Consciousness and the world of objects, or "Otherness" as it is sometimes called, are mutually inter-defining or symbiotic and are inexorably linked in the one experience, "... the transcendental ego (in the psychological parallel, the psyche) is what it is solely in relation to intentional objectivities".<sup>48</sup> Now as consciousness is intentional and we have performed the reduction, this is the same as saying that it is only because the subject exists that the world (as intended by him/her) exists and it is only because the world (as intended by him/her) exists that the subject exists. As a result of reduction, then, not only are subject and object, self and other mutually inter-defining, but they are also co-dependent.<sup>49</sup> The world is in consciousness and consciousness is in the world. If what I have said is correct, the very distinction is itself wholly constituted in consciousness. Thus

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<sup>48</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 76, p.65.

<sup>49</sup> I am here refraining from considering inter-subjective constitution, but as for phenomenology, the realm of inter-subjectivity must itself be intentionally constituted it may perhaps be clear that the qualification indicated by the words "as intended by him/her" above can ultimately be dispensed with. We shall be examining the implications of this in the last chapter.

by never really admitting the dichotomy between Idealism and Materialism it has therefore been possible to transcend it and with it necessarily also the problem of the priority of subject and object, as experience must now be recognised as an indissoluble unity between the subject pole and the object pole. In other words, we no longer face the choice between naive Idealism wherein the world is seen as a product of consciousness, and Materialism wherein consciousness is a product of the world:

"The difference between idealism and realism will consist solely in that, for the latter being engenders belief, while for the former, belief creates the fiction of being. But for transcendental phenomenology the 'I' no more constitutes objects than it suffers them. It is beyond action and passion".<sup>50</sup>

Obviously, Idealism depends upon the "radically empirically" absurd proposition that we could be conscious of the world without the world existing, while Materialism depends on the "radically empirically" absurd proposition that the world could exist without our being conscious of it. Both are "radically empirically" absurd propositions precisely because both take existence to be something other than that which is given in our experience or consciousness of it, and as such both propositions are metaphysical.

Having suggested, as I indicated in the synopsis, that in a sense Husserl possibly eschews his transcendental reconciliation of the Material and the Ideal by refusing from the first any validity to the distinction between them, I want to suggest that Husserl is

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<sup>50</sup> G. Berger, The Cogito in Husserl's Philosophy (Evanstone: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp.81-2.

still faced with problems, for if such a distinction is radically empirically untenable, then the genesis of one side of the dialectic can no longer be explained in terms of the other, therefore leaving the problem of explaining how the indissoluble experience is itself generated. Having established this, I want to show that phenomenology is a priori incapable of doing this, and thereby to establish the contention outlined both in the preface and the synopsis to this chapter, that Phenomenology no less than any other universal philosophy must involve itself in dogmatic metaphysics or tautology.

Thus, although it would seem that as a result of the reduction, we are now in a position to constitute/describe the dichotomy between Idealism and Materialism at a transcendental level and are therefore able to avoid the paradoxes and problems inherent in constituting/describing the genesis of one side of the dichotomy in terms of the other, it seems that if phenomenology is to be a truly Radically Empirically Universal Science, it must do more than blandly maintain that the two poles - consciousness and the world - arise simultaneously in the one experience. That is, in the light of the reduction and intentionality, it is clear that consciousness and being, the realms of epistemology and ontology, co-arise in the one experience and it therefore makes little sense, as the quote from Berger cited above makes clear, to try to account for the genesis of the one in terms of the other. However, if phenomenology is to be a Radically Empirical Universal Science, it must at least describe the genesis of the indissoluble experience. Indeed, it is precisely its inability to empirically describe the genesis of experience - an inability that, as I hope to show later, is inevitable on a priori grounds, that ultimately detracts from Husserl's claim that phenomenology is Empirical and Universal.

Husserl himself recognises the need, if not the a priori impossibility, of trying to account for the genesis of experience:

"... far reaching problems of Static and Genetic constitution make themselves keenly felt, those of genetic constitution as part of the problem of all-embracing genesis, which presents so many enigmas".<sup>51</sup>

In his attempt to account for the genesis of experience, Husserl starts by drawing a distinction between Active and Passive Genesis. He tells us that:

"In active genesis the ego functions as productively constitutive, by means of subjective processes that are specifically acts of the ego".<sup>52</sup>

However, Active Synthesis works: "On the basis of objects already given ...".<sup>53</sup>

"In any case, anything built by activity necessarily presupposes, as the lowest level, a passivity that gives something beforehand; and when we take anything built actively we run into constitution by passive genesis. The 'ready-made' object that confronts us in life as existent mere physical thing ... given with the originality of the 'it itself' in the synthesis of a passive experience".<sup>54</sup>

Husserl assures us that: "... precisely this synthesis as a synthesis having this form has its history ...".<sup>55</sup> He then goes on to explain that we can make these formations:

<sup>51</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 58, p.135.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Section 38, p.77.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.78.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.79.

"... knowable as formations subsequent to other essentially antecedent formations ... (and explains that) we soon encounter eidetic laws governing a passive forming of perpetually new syntheses (a forming that in part lies prior to all activity and, in part takes in all activity itself)".<sup>56</sup>

Husserl assures us that: "Thanks to the aforesaid passive synthesis ... the ego always has an environment of 'objects'".<sup>57</sup> Husserl goes on to tell us that:

"The Universal principle of passive genesis, for the constitution of all objectivities given completely prior to the products of activity, bears the title association. Association ... is a matter of intentionality ... standing ... under eidetic laws".<sup>58</sup>

"Association is ... a title for a conformity to eidetic laws on the part of the Constitution of the pure ego. It designates a realm of the 'innate' a priori, without which an ego as such is unthinkable".<sup>59</sup>

Correctly, then, Husserl recognises that active synthesis relies on an apriori stage, and that active synthesis must have laws governing its operations. Active synthesis is then supposedly built on antecedent passive constitution.

Passive constitution is clearly responsible for the "environment of objects" that the ego always has.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Section 39, p.80.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.81.

This passive constitution must itself proceed according to eidetic laws and Husserl assures us that we soon encounter these laws, presumably by essential intuition of empirically given passively constituted objects. This passive genesis or passive constitution in accordance with eidetic laws is called association and so these eidetic laws which we discover are laws of association.

But all this notwithstanding, Husserl has still to give a Radically Empirical Description of this passive constitution or genesis of the "environment of objects". And we cannot escape the impression that, as I previously noted, his assertion that this does happen owes more to retrospective rationalistic deduction than essential intuition.<sup>60</sup> However, as we have just seen, "... the ego always has an environment of objects", thus the conscious ego obviously cannot describe their constitution for they are always there for that ego.

There is further problems in that if we "soon encounter eidetic laws", how does association take place correctly according to these laws prior to our knowledge of them? Husserl's answer is that these eidetic laws of association are "INNATE A PRIORI", "without which an ego as such is unthinkable".<sup>61</sup>

In other words, the enigma is re-asserting itself and it is obvious that the eidetic laws governing the passive synthesis, that is the synthesis of the objects that form the environment in which, as we have seen, any ego necessarily already finds himself before he

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<sup>60</sup> See the argument between pp.41-3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

is able to actively constitute anything - are not to be derived from the passively synthesised objects, for the very existence of such objects supposes that association, or passive genesis under eidetic laws has already taken place. On the other hand, as I previously demonstrated at length, it is clear that as a matter of describable fact we are neither conscious of the eidetic laws governing passive constitution, nor conscious of any acts of constitution prior to finding ourselves as an ego who already has a world, an environment of passively constituted objects. It is clear, then, that if indeed all this is correct, and if we are also to maintain the intentional "theory" of Being, the eidetic laws according to which passive constitution takes place must be INNATE, and the act of passive constitution cannot be subject to description and is therefore certainly not radically empirically substantiable.

Therefore, I would contend that the "theory" of passive constitution according to innate laws of association, does not describe how experience is constituted. Ultimately, it is nothing more than a rationalistic deduction from the undeniable empirical fact that the empirical ego is not conscious of how experience is constituted together with the "assumption" that experience is nonetheless constituted.<sup>62</sup>

Further, as I previously suggested, I believe not only that Husserl has been de facto unsuccessful in giving a radically empirical or descriptive account of the genesis of experience, but that a priori he must be unsuccessful, for if after the epoche consciousness and the world co-arise empirically speaking, it seems that on a priori grounds

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<sup>62</sup> See again Fn. 60.

we cannot account for the genesis of the one unified experience empirically for we cannot account for the genesis of experience in either ideal or material terms as these spheres only exist as symbiotically related in the very experience whose genesis is to be accounted for; just as we could not account for the constitution of the world in terms of essences found only in the world.

There seems at bottom to be more than a coincidental parallelism between the metaphysical postulation of the "object in itself" as found in dualistic philosophies and the idea of unconscious constitution in conformity to the laws of innate association. Perhaps this is inevitable as both these propositions represent separate attempts by would-be empiricists to explain or describe what a priori or necessarily must fall outside the scope of empirical knowledge, namely the origin or genesis of experience.<sup>63</sup>

Husserl claims, however, that these innate eidetic laws of association are not metaphysical but can be empirically derived from the structural categories of the ego.<sup>64</sup> However, the structural categories of the ego can be nothing else but the ego's conformity to eidetic laws of association under another name. Thus, Husserl's claim is tautological and, as such, does not offer an explanation of the genesis of experience. Further, even if this were not so, to say that the transcendental ego constitutes the world (taken here to

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<sup>63</sup> Clearly any such attempt to empirically describe the origin or genesis of empirical experience must indeed fall outside the scope of empirical experience for the ability to experience the genesis of experience logically pre-supposes a transcendental level at which we experience both absence and presence of experience and the experience of the absence of experience would necessarily be self-negating in its affirmation on a priori grounds.

<sup>64</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 39, pp.80-81.



include all actualities and potentialities, together with the empirical ego as object) would still in no way be a Universal Scientific description of constitution for we would still have to account for the constitution of the transcendental ego, unless, like God, it were taken to be the "uncaused cause". Can it be that the transcendental ego is nothing but a limit concept?

Whatever the answer, it remains true that, as I have shown, any pre-suppositionless Universal Science, insofar as it is truly Universal and thus attempts to give an account of the genesis of Being, must, insofar as Being has been reduced to experience, either involve itself in pre-supposition or tautology.

While I think Husserl has not given us a description or even an explanation of the process of constitution or genesis, that it happens is a fact that, for a Phenomenologist, is attested to by every descriptive experience we have. To continue, as I have pointed out, it seems to me problematic as to whether we accept the Phenomenological, metaphysical hypothesis of passive constitution or its parallel dualist metaphysical hypothesis of the "in itself", and indeed I am not at all sure that at bottom they need be different. However, assuming that we continue with our Phenomenological explication, the whole of what we know, including all our knowledge of the relations of Being to consciousness, the transcendental ego to the empirical ego, etc., etc., is, as I have shown, all known within the realm of transcendental consciousness, and therefore must have been intentionally constituted. And, in turn, this knowledge must be known to transcendental consciousness and must also be intentionally constituted, and so on ad infinitum. From this it follows,

as I have indicated, that transcendental idealism is strictly speaking an idealism of idealism, by which I mean that having bracketed the object-in-itself, Phenomenology has from the start refused to truly recognise the distinction between empirical Being and the consciousness of it, and perhaps therefore does not really distinguish consciousness from its object but rather distinguishes consciousness of consciousness from consciousness of objects. As I have said, the distinction between being and consciousness is not so much transcended, as never really admitted, for from the first Being-in-itself is bracketed. That is, Husserl dispenses with metaphysical speculation about Being outside of consciousness with the obvious result that the distinction between Being and consciousness is a distinction of meaning, an essential distinction drawn wholly within consciousness.

Therefore, it follows that all we have so far come to know concerning the relation of Being and consciousness has itself been constituted within consciousness, albeit at a transcendental level, although, as I have noted, Husserl's "theory" of innate constitution is far from a radically empirical explanation of HOW this constitution is achieved.

Thus, the pre-condition of being able to make intelligible statements about the relations between Being and meaning, ontology and epistemology, empirical ego and transcendental ego, fact and essence, etc., is that we recognise these distinctions between these pairs, which inevitably requires that we recognise that we are within the realm of essential meaning, for all such distinctions are semantic and epistemological rather than existential or ontological.<sup>65</sup> For example,

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<sup>65</sup>See quote 44.

while the book in my bookcase may be a copy of my favorite novel and Napoleon may be the victor of Jena, the book in my bookcase does not mean the same as my favorite novel, and Napoleon does not mean the same as the victor of Jena.

Further, this very distinction between the identity of the Being of my favorite novel and the book in my bookcase and the divergence of the meaning of "My favorite novel" and "The book in my bookcase" is itself obviously drawn within the realm of conscious meaning. We therefore have an infinite regress in which the distinction between Subject and Object must itself be drawn by and in transcendental subjectivity.<sup>66</sup>

"... the phenomenological Ego establishes himself as 'disinterested' onlooker above the naively interested Ego. That this takes place is then itself accessible by means of a new reflection, which as transcendental, likewise demands the very same attitude of looking on 'disinterestedly'".<sup>67</sup>

However, Husserl has so far merely shown that it must be within the transcendental ego that the distinction between the naively interested ego and its objects is drawn and has nowhere shown HOW this is achieved. Indeed, one may wonder whether Husserl ever really proceeds beyond the individual egological domain. Let us, for the moment, bear in mind Lauer's remark:

"Husserl speaks of the 'essence of Consciousness', the 'essence of perception', the 'essence of experience'; but one cannot escape the impression that he is really saying, 'the essence of what I<sup>68</sup> mean' by Consciousness, perception, experience".

<sup>66</sup> See fn. 44.

<sup>67</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 15, p.35.

<sup>68</sup> Q. Lauer, op.cit., p.82.

Indeed, one might go further than Lauer and wonder whether every statement made by Husserl should not be prefaced with the personal subjective, and similarly whether every piece of knowledge is not in the final analysis personally subjective. Clearly, Husserl's writings support this interpretation:

"In other words: The path leading to a knowledge absolutely grounded in the highest sense, or (this being the same thing) a Philosophical knowledge, is necessarily the path of universal self-knowledge - first of all monadic and then intermonadic. We can say also that a ... universal self-cognition, is philosophy itself and encompasses all self-accountable science.

"The Delphic motto 'know thyself!' has gained a new signification".<sup>69</sup>

Thus, despite Husserl's attempt to break out of this infinite regress by an "intermonadic" phenomenological explication of the Other, as this inter-monadic constitution must ultimately itself be constituted within consciousness, this phenomenological Idealism of Idealism at once guarantees the success and limits the scope of his project:

"... the whole spatio-temporal world ... is according to its own meaning mere intentional Being, a Being therefore, which has the merely secondary relative sense of a Being for a consciousness ... but over and beyond this it is just nothing at all".<sup>70</sup>

If, indeed, there is the infinite regress into the transcendental ego, as I have suggested, and the distinction between constitution and description is itself an intentional, subjectively drawn distinction

<sup>69</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 64, pp.156-7.

<sup>70</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 49, p.139.

and so on, we would expect that no descriptive empirical experience of the empirical ego can invalidate a constituted phenomena for all empirical experiences are empirical experiences precisely because they are constituted as such:

"But no matter what the status of this Phenomena's claim to Actuality, and no matter whether, at some future time I decide critically that the world exists or that it is an illusion, still the Phenomena itself, as mine is not nothing but is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible and accordingly, makes possible whatever has for me sense and validity as 'true' being ...".<sup>71</sup>

Husserl has achieved absolute indubitability by progressively reducing all Being to consciousness, but at the cost of being only able to constitute Being ideally. It is for this reason that I believe the reduction may ultimately be a failure in that it only reduces the meaning of Being to meaning, the consciousness of Being to consciousness, and does not successfully reduce Being to meaning as even from the start such Transcendent Being is bracketed. However, it remains an open possibility that what has been bracketed exists unperceived. If I might borrow from Heidegger, Husserl has not shown that we can reduce "Primordial" or pre-conceptual (pre-epistemological/ontological) Being to meaning:

"Between the meanings of consciousness and reality yawns a veritable abyss. Here a Being which manifests itself perspectively, never giving itself absolutely merely contingent and relative; there a necessary and absolute Being, fundamentally incapable of being given through appearances and perspective patterns".<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 8, p.19.

<sup>72</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 49, p.138.

Phenomenology is only able to reconcile idealism and empiricism by an idealisation of both Being and idealism, and it can only succeed in this insofar as it has bracketed all that might invalidate this reduction, thereby tautologically ensuring the success of its project. However, as we have seen, the result of this is that Husserl is unable to give an adequate empirical description of the genesis of experience.

It is clear from what we have said that the relationship of the transcendental ego to the empirical ego, and the transcendental ego to the world, and the transcendental origin of this relationship, is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we will now examine the transcendental ego and its phenomenological implications.

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In the following chapter, we will begin by examining more closely the relation between immanence and transcendence; and will come to see how this very distinction is itself drawn within the realm of immanence. Further, we will see how, along with the realization that transcendence is an immanently constituted characteristic, comes the "realization" that the world is constituted by the transcendental ego.

I will then attempt to demonstrate that this knowledge, far from being Radically Empirical Descriptive knowledge, is, rather, based upon rationalistic induction. Further, I hope to show that once the epoche has been effected, then there is no reason why the transcendental ego should be considered an exception to the concomitant necessity to account for all Being in terms of intentional constitution, and that it is Husserl's inevitable inability to give a radically empirical description of the intentional constitution of the transcendental ego

that ultimately represents the greatest short-coming in phenomenology's declared aim to rid philosophy of the paradoxes and enigmas so long associated with naive empirical and non-transcendental dialectical philosophies.

Finally, I want to show, not only that phenomenology has been de facto unable to resolve the paradoxes and enigmas related to the problem of constitution, but that insofar as phenomenologically speaking constitution and genesis are indistinguishable (perhaps on a priori grounds), phenomenology, or indeed any radically empirical descriptive philosophy, must be unable to solve such enigmas and paradoxes on a priori grounds.

CHAPTER THREE  
TRANSCENDENTAL SELF-CONSTITUTION

THE INEVITABLY METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT OF ANY EMPIRICISM

We have seen that, in his attempt to reach a pre-suppositionless indubitable science, Husserl has bracketed Transcendence. All indubitability rests with the immanent: "Every immanent perception necessarily guarantees the existence of its object".<sup>1</sup> We bracket the transcendence of the world and are left with the reduced experience as indubitable:

"As radically meditating Philosophers, we now have neither a science that we accept nor a world that exists for us. Instead of simply existing for us - that is, being accepted naturally by us in our experiential believing in its existence - the world is, for us, only something that claims being .... In short, not just corporeal Nature but the whole concrete surrounding life-world is for me, from now on, only a phenomenon of being instead of something that is".<sup>2</sup>

However, as Husserl points out:

"If I abstain ... from every believing involved in or founded on sensuous experiencing ... this life is continually there for me".<sup>3</sup>

Everything remains as it always was and is:

"... the only difference is that I, as reflecting Philosophically, no longer keep in effect the natural believing in existence involved in experiencing the world ... the same is true of all processes of meaning ... judgments, valuing, deciding ... position-takings ... likewise everything 'meant' ... is still retained completely - but with the acceptance modification, 'mere phenomena'".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 46, p.130

<sup>2</sup>E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 8, pp.18-19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p.19.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp.19-20.



"The world is for me absolutely nothing else but the world existing for and accepted by me in such a conscious cogito. It gets its whole sense, universal and specific, and its acceptance as existing, exclusively from such cogitations".<sup>5</sup>

It is, therefore, clear that the whole world is retained, but merely its sense is changed, in that it becomes mere phenomena, and insofar as we have always been able to make the distinction between the stream of subjective processes and the world, between the acts and the contents, this distinction must be retained within the phenomena if everything is to truly remain as before with only a "change of signature":

"... the own-essentiality belonging to me as ego, comprises more than merely the actualities and potentialities of the stream of subjective processes. Just as it comprises constitutive systems, it comprises the constitutive unities .... Where and so far as the constituted unity is inseparable from the original constitution itself ...".<sup>6</sup>

In the spirit of a transcendental subjectivity, the subject must draw within itself the distinction between subject and object, just exactly as we saw in the previous chapter that within the realm of meaning we must be able to recognise the distinction between the meaning of meaning and the meaning of being:

"We see forthwith that the entire reduced 'world' ... belongs in this sphere and is rightly included in the positively defined concrete make-up of the ego: as something peculiarly his own".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Section 47, p.103.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.104.

"Within this 'original sphere' (the sphere of original self-explication) we find also a 'transcendental world' which accrues on the basis of the intentional phenomena 'objective world', by reduction to what is peculiarly the ego's own ...".<sup>8</sup>

"... I ... begin with myself, the Ego given in experience of myself as a man. After all, I could exercise reduction only by starting out from myself; and therefore I arrive only at the ego who has as his worldly counterpart, his own psyche .... What are others, what is the world for me? - constituted phenomena, merely something produced within me".<sup>9</sup>

"The objective world ... derives its whole sense and its existential status ... from me as the transcendental Ego".<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, the ego is transcendental to the world and bears the world as an accepted sense within itself:

"Just as the reduced ego is not a piece of the world, so, conversely, neither the world nor any worldly object is a piece of my ego .... This 'transcendence' is part of the intrinsic sense of anything worldly, despite the fact that anything worldly necessarily acquires all the sense determining it, along with its existential status, exclusively from my experiencing, my objectivating ... my grounding acts".<sup>11</sup>

Although every cogito is a cogitatum:

"... we continue to distinguish - despite the necessary interrelationship - the experience itself from the pure ego of the experiencing process ...".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp.104-5

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Section 21, p.52.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Section 11, p.26.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 80, p.214.

Therefore it is clear that within the realm of epistemology or meaning left after the reduction, and circumscribed by the ego, we distinguish the experience itself from the experiencer or ego. The ego has at once subjective and objective aspects. It has constituted objectivity within the sphere of ownness.

Thus Husserl is not to be taken for a naive idealist, for the world is, for Husserl, not merely an accepted sense within my ego, it is also intentionally transcendent to my ego. The world is at once an accepted sense within the ego, and yet alien to the ego:

"The Objective world ... derives its whole sense and its existential status ... from me as the transcendental Ego ...".<sup>13</sup>

"Consequently there belongs within my psychic being, the whole constitution of the world existing for me and, in further consequence, the differentiation of that constitution into systems that constitute what is included in my peculiar ownness and the systems that constitute what is other".<sup>14</sup>

Thus, while in the natural attitude we believe that the empirical ego experiences the "in itself", after the reduction, after I have bracketed every Reell (genuine) Transcendent sense the world could have for me, and have likewise bracketed other egos and disregarded the constitutional effects they could have on the world, I am left with a "Nature included in my ownness".<sup>15</sup> However, I notice after I have completed this "ownness purification" that all my experiences, including my "experience of what is other is

<sup>13</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 11, p.26.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Section 44, pp.98-9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.96.

wholly unaffected by screening off what is other".<sup>16</sup> Thus, the other must somehow be constituted in the self:

"Transcendancy in every form is an immanent existential characteristic, constituted within the ego. Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being, whether the latter is called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of the transcendental subjectivity as the subjectivity that constitutes sense and being".<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, after the epoche, the bracketing of all reell (genuine) transcendent objectivities, we find that we still have the same experiences as before, and we therefore come to realize explicitly what was always implicit, that the world is constituted by what we come to know as the transcendental ego:

"Natural being is a realm whose existential status is secondary; it continually presupposes the realm of transcendental being. The fundamental Phenomenological method of transcendental epoche, because it leads back to this realm, is called the transcendental-phenomenological reduction".<sup>18</sup>

"... as an Ego in the natural attitude, I am likewise and at all times a transcendental Ego, but ... I know this only by executing the phenomenological reduction".<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in true phenomenological spirit this transcendental ego is supposedly not metaphysically hypothesised but is gradually descriptively uncovered by the empirical ego. There is no actual movement from the empirical to the transcendental realm, but rather a change in attitude is affected. The transcendental ego is not separate from the empirical ego (see above quote), just as we have seen in the wake of

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.98.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Section 41, pp.83-4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Section 8, p.21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Section 15, p.37.

the reduction, that the empirical ego is not separate from its objects. Just as the empirical ego intends its "objects", which are at once intentionally related to the ego and transcendent to it (the content being intentionally constituted in the act as we saw in the last chapter ) the transcendental ego is intentionally related to the empirical ego. The phenomenological reduction merely makes explicit the already implicit fact that the empirical ego is merely the empirical correlate of the transcendental ego.

Further, as we have seen, I only come to know myself as a transcendental ego by executing the phenomenological reduction "... the being of the pure ego and his cogitations, as a being that is prior in itself, is antecedent to the natural being of the world".<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that the order of description is again to be distinguished from the order of constitution. Descriptively speaking, after the epoche, the empirical ego becomes aware of the fact that there must be a transcendental ego. Constitutively speaking, the transcendental ego must already have constituted the world (including the empirical ego as an object) and must therefore, as indicated above, be antecedent to the natural being of the world. Thus, in the face of the epoche, I realise that the world that I, the empirical ego, pre-occupied with the world describe, must be transcendently constituted. I even come to realize that I, as empirical ego, am transcendently constituted:

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Section 8, p.21.

"The transcendental ego emerged by virtue of my 'parenthesizing' of the entire Objective world, and all other (including all ideal) Objectivities. In consequence of this parenthesizing, I have become aware of myself as the transcendental ego, who constitutes in his constitutive life everything that is ever Objective for me ... (and) also himself as identical ego".<sup>21</sup>

"The 'I' does not confront a reality to be contemplated. Being arises from its very regard".<sup>22</sup>

And, indeed, even the "I" itself, insofar as it is in the world, must be constituted. The empirical ego is transcendentially constituted by the transcendental ego.

"I the reduced 'human ego' ('psychophysical' ego) am constituted accordingly, as a member of the 'world' with a multiplicity of 'objects' outside me. But I myself constitute all this in my 'psyche' and bear it intentionally within me ... in the Ego's self-explication, his peculiarly own world (would) be found as 'inside' and on the other hand ... the Ego (would) find himself as a member among its 'externalities', and (would) distinguish between himself and the external world".<sup>23</sup>

(The psyche is, of course, the "worldly counterpart" or "psychological parallel" of the transcendental ego. Husserl talks of "... the transcendental ego (in the psychological parallel, the psyche) ...".)<sup>24</sup>

Now in order that we be able to reflect like this on the relation between the ego and its intentional objects, it is necessary that a reflective act has taken place, as a result of which I am able to "objectify" the relation between my ego and the world. The ego has transcended itself and is thus both the "subject" that intends

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Section 45, p.99.

<sup>22</sup> G. Berger, The Cogito in Husserl's Philosophy, p.61.

<sup>23</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 44, p.99.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Section 30, p.65.

the original "objects" and at a transcendental level the "subject" that objectifies itself as the "subject" that intends the "objects". Not only, therefore, do we, in an act of reflection, "objectify" the relation between the naive "subject" (ego in the world) and his "objects", but we further reflect on this act at a higher transcendental level, and therefore we objectify the relation between the "naive ego and his objects", and the ego that objectifies them both. We move from the empirical ego to the transcendental ego to an objectification of the intentional relationship between these two egos themselves:

"If the Ego, as naturally immersed in the world, experiencingly and otherwise, is called 'interested' in the world then the phenomenologically altered and, as so altered, continually maintained attitude consists in a splitting of the Ego: in that the phenomenological Ego establishes himself as 'disinterested' onlooker, above the naively interested Ego. That this takes place is then itself accessible by means of a new reflection, which, as transcendental, likewise demands the very same attitude of looking on 'disinterestedly' ..." <sup>25</sup>

The transcendental ego is intentionally related to the empirical ego, and the ego that reflects on this relationship is itself intentionally related to the relationship upon which it reflects. Now if all objects must be constituted, then presumably the transcendental ego wherein all experience is constituted, must itself be constituted within subjectivity. Therefore, insofar as transcendental subjectivity:

"...precedes the being of the world, in so far as it constitutes within itself the world's sense of being ... which consequently carries entirely in itself the reality of the world as an idea actually and potentially constituted in itself", <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Section 15, p.35.

<sup>26</sup> E. Husserl, Formale und Transcendental Logik, p.273, in Gesammelte Werke, (Chicago: Adler).

it must constitute all intentional objects including itself as object in itself, and must precede them. Thus, as the transcendental ego is an object, if it is not to be metaphysical it must be so constituted. Further, if this is so, we may ask ourselves what constitutes it as such? Clearly it will not do merely to say that the transcendental ego is the final intentionality of consciousness - like its obvious analogue God, the uncaused cause - and does not need to be constituted, for we have talked about it and brought it within consciousness as an intentional object. On the other hand, it is no good merely to postulate that the transcendental ego is constituted by an ego that transcends it, otherwise we will inevitably have to account for that ego's constitution by another ego that transcends it, and so on - ad infinitum.

Husserl's solution is, as has been hinted at, that it is self-constituting. He talked of:

"... the transcendental ego, who constitutes in his constitutive life everything that is ever objective for me - the ego of all constitutions who exists in his actual and potential life-processes and Ego-habitualities and who constitutes in them not only everything objective, but also himself as identical ego".<sup>27</sup>

This entails that the transcendental ego must be both subject and object, an intentional object and the subject that constitutes the world including "... himself as a member among its 'externalities'..."<sup>28</sup> (Further, as I have pointed out, this knowledge in itself presupposes yet a further act of reflection and a further act of constitution at a still higher transcendental level.)

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<sup>27</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 45, p.99.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Section 44.



There seem to me to be two basic points that should be made at this juncture. Firstly, Husserl tells us that:

"The attempt to conceive the Universe of true being as something lying outside the Universe of possible consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence the two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law, is nonsensical. They belong together essentially; and in belonging together essentially, they are also concretely one, one in the only absolute concretion: transcendental subjectivity".<sup>29</sup>

"... the constitution of the ego contains all the constitutions of all the objectivities existing for him ...".<sup>30</sup>

"... phenomenology is eo ipso 'transcendental idealism' ... a ... self explication in the form of a systematic egological science, an explication of my ego ...".<sup>31</sup>

Thus, insofar as Being and Consciousness are "concretely one... in transcendental subjectivity", it would seem that to say that the transcendental ego is self-constituting, as we have seen Husserl does, in no way opens up the possibility of a radically empirical account of the constitution of the world in terms of the transcendental ego, but ultimately is little different from the bare assertion that the world is self-constituting.

Secondly, no matter how I, a meditating ego, sit here and try, I have no radically empirically descriptive consciousness of the self-constitution of the transcendental ego. Rather, what I have is a radically empirical descriptive awareness of the world, and of myself as psychophysical unity in that world. Further, I am reflectively

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Section 41, p.84.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Section 37, p.75.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Section 41, p.86.

aware of this, that is I am aware that I am aware of it, and so on and so on. However, the fact remains that I have no empirical descriptive awareness of this self-constitution of the transcendental ego, therefore such a claim must be, as I hope now to show, ultimately metaphysical.

There are, logically speaking, three possibilities regarding the transcendental ego's constitution. We may say that it was constituted by something external and separate from it, which would itself stand in need of constitution, thereby not only involving us in a regress, but requiring that the "Universe of true being" was not concretely one with the "Universe of possible consciousness"<sup>32</sup> and thereby invalidating the reduction. Alternatively, we could claim that the transcendental ego was "uncaused cause", that which constituted the world without itself standing in need of an act of constitution. To the objection that this, like its theosophical counterpart, was in the most literal sense a "meta-physical" speculation, we might expect the rejoinder that the whole of experience was indeed the empirical foundation of such a claim. However, this assertion depends on: (a) the hypothesis that Being per se must have a cause or genesis (inductively inferred from the fact that changes in the state of Beings are in all observable instances seen to have been caused); and (b) the altogether problematic postulation of the particular form this cause must take. Therefore, while this inductively based hypothesis might well be no less empirical than the "object in

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<sup>32</sup> ibid., p.84.

itself" of naive empiricism, it is certainly not empirical in the radical or descriptive sense of the term.

The third, and last, logically possible account of the constitution of the transcendental ego, would be to say that it was self-constituting, as Husserl does. However, as I have indicated, no matter how hard I try, I have no radically empirical awareness of this self-constitution. Husserl tells us:

"The beginning phenomenologist is bound involuntarily by the fact that he takes himself as his initial example. Transcendentally he finds himself as the ego, then as generically an ego who already has (in conscious fashion) a world ...".<sup>33</sup>

This is obviously true. I begin to meditate and I find that I am already in a world constituted by my transcendental ego which, as self-constituting, must therefore already have constituted itself. This presents no more or less of an enigma than that presented by any non-transcendental, dialectical philosophical attempt to account for the "first cause". The only difference is that whereas for dialectical philosophy the problem is that of trying to explain whether the ideal constitutes the material or vice versa<sup>34</sup> for transcendental philosophy the problem is how the transcendental ego can "get a grip on itself", so to speak. Indeed, to say that the transcendental ego is "self-constituting" seems to me to be an enigmatic retreat, similar to that of the dualist who asserts that the genesis of experience is "dialectical"; and just like this assertion it is not so much a solution to the problem as a concise

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Section 37, p.76.

<sup>34</sup> The "chicken and egg" problem.

statement of it. In short, Husserl is certainly not describing this self-constitution radically empirically. Rather, on the one hand he is, as we have seen, inductively hypothesising that because all changes of state of Beings have a cause, then Being itself has a cause and on the other hand, metaphysically hypothesising the self-constitution of this inductively hypothesised cause. Husserl would claim, of course, that the knowledge that the ego was self-constituting was gained by "essential insight". It should be clear that this "essential insight", if it is not to be concrete empirical experience, yet is not to be a metaphysical or mysterious flight of fancy, can only be understood as a judgement, deduction, or some such similar operation, based upon the salient facts.

The salient facts, as outlined above, are (a) that we find ourselves in a world already there for us, (b) that Husserl seems to have concluded by induction that the world was subject to genesis and is not eternal in time, and lastly (c) that of the three logically possible "explanations" for the genesis of the world, the first two are obviously and immediately inadmissible for the reasons outlined above. This leaves only the third possibility which seems to be "chosen" as an "explanation" for no reason other than that the other two obviously won't do. It matters little that Husserl calls this "choice" of "explanation", based on weighing the salient factors, "essential insight", so long as we remember that as "explanation" rather than description, and as "chosen" rather than empirically indubitable, it has little claim to be phenomenological.

Therefore, it is claimed that the transcendental ego is, as we have seen, to be understood as the subject that constitutes both the world (including himself as object) and, at a still higher

transcendental level, himself as subject. As self-constituting, the transcendental ego would not stand in need of constitution by a something outside it which as precisely something outside the "Universe of possible consciousness" would invalidate the reduction, nor would it have to claim itself to be uncaused cause. It is for this reason that I believe Husserl "chooses this particular explanation", and it seems that any claim by Husserl to know by "intuitive insight" that the transcendental ego is self-constituting must ultimately merely be to claim to have based the choice on precisely the logical considerations outlined above.

However, it is not merely a matter of fact that all the attempts to account for genesis of the transcendental ego have involved empirically insubstantiable hypothesis and logical deduction of one sort or another, but a matter of a priori necessity. This I now hope to demonstrate.

We have seen previously that as the "Universe of true being" and the "Universe of possible consciousness" are "concretely one", etc., etc., and "... the constitution of the ego contains all the constitutions of all objectivities existing for him ..."<sup>35</sup> there is a correlation between egological genesis and the constitution of the world. Thus it should come as no surprise that just as in the previous chapter the attempt to give a radically empirical description of the constitution of the "world experience", or phenomenologically reduced world was doomed to failure on a priori grounds,<sup>36</sup> the attempt here

<sup>35</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 37, p.75.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter II, fn. 63.

to give a radically empirical description of the genesis of its correlate "experience of the world" the phenomenologically reduced ego, is also doomed a priori. Truly, both the ego and the world as two halves of the irreducible experience are "... the final intentionality of consciousness".<sup>37</sup> In other words, it becomes clear that the problem of the genesis of the transcendental ego for itself is the correlate of the problem of the constitution of the world.

"As developed systematically and fully, transcendental phenomenology would be, ipso facto, the true and genuine Universal ontology".<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, not only does it follow that any attempt to explain the constitution of the world in terms of transcendental ego, is rather than an explanation, a correlative re-statement of the problem, but it also becomes clear that a priori there can be no radically empirical description of the constitution of the world, for prior to the constitution of the world, there can be no transcendental ego as it "... is what it is solely in relation to its intentional objectivity".<sup>39</sup> Thus, prior to the constitution of the world there is no transcendental ego to describe its constitution. They must co-arise as after all, the "Universe of true being" and the "Universe of possible consciousness" are "concretely one", therefore we cannot describe the genesis of one in terms of the other as the dualist dialecticians try to do.

<sup>37</sup> See G. Brändt, Weit, Zeit, und Ich, (The Hague: Martinez Nijhoff, 1955), pp13-25.

<sup>38</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 64, p.153.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Section 30, p.65.

If the self-constitution of the self which was then to continue and constitute the world were to be the object of "essential insight", who would or could have the essential insight into the genesis but the very self that was being generated? Now as genesis, at least in its full sense of "passive genesis" means the creation of something from nothing, the consciousness of the actual process of genesis (that is empirically descriptive consciousness) requires at the beginning, a consciousness of nothing, and yet the logical pre-condition of such a consciousness is that there be a something which is so conscious. Thus the empirically descriptive knowledge of the genesis of the ego requires that an ego initially be conscious of nothing, in which case the transcendental ego and its correlate, the Universe of true being, must already exist a priori. Husserl claims Transcendental Subjectivity:

"... precedes the being of the world in so far as it constitutes within itself the world's sense of being".<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, it is firmly acknowledged by Husserl that the ego must precede the world whose sense of being, including presumably itself as object, it constitutes. However, he is clearly trying to explain how it is that the ego can precede itself by drawing a dichotomy between the transcendental ego as subject and transcendental ego as object. However, there seem to me to be substantial objections to this ploy. If, as Husserl tells us:

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<sup>40</sup> E. Husserl, Formale und Transzendental Logik, p.273.

"Objects exist for me and are what they are only as objects of actual and possible consciousness"<sup>41</sup>

and:

"... it becomes clear that the transcendental ego ... is what it is solely in relation to the intentional objectivities".<sup>42</sup>

Then, not only do we have the "chicken and egg" problem arising in any attempt to describe the relation between consciousness and the world, but insofar as the transcendental ego is both subject and object, we have a similar problem in trying to describe the genesis of the ego. That is, if, as Merleau-Ponty points out, the self "constitutes the totality of being and its own presence in the world ... and ... never finds anything outside itself but what it has put there",<sup>43</sup> then the transcendental ego is only object, insofar as it is intentionally constituted as such by itself as subject, and it is only subject by virtue of its relation to objects (including itself). Clearly, then, the subjective and objective aspects of the transcendental ego are indissolubly related in experience. Thus, the one cannot be empirically described as generating the other as they must co-arise in experience. Though Subject and Object may have different meanings or be epistemologically different, they are ontologically symbiotic in the Being of the one experience. However, as I have said, notwithstanding the above assertion that the subjective and objective aspect of the transcendental ego must be ontologically or empirically indistinguishable, Husserl nonetheless continually

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<sup>41</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 30, p.65.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, p.373.



attempts to distinguish the subjective aspect from the objective, for it is only by making this distinction that Husserl can ever hope to show how the transcendental ego can "get a grip on itself" and so constitute itself.

Further, even if it were possible to empirically distinguish between the transcendental subject and the transcendental ego as object and thereby to claim that transcendental subjectivity constituted "the Universe of possible consciousness" the transcendental ego, one would still have to account for the constitution of transcendental subjectivity, and in so doing would find oneself in the very type of regress that, it will be remembered, "essential insight" told us the "theory" of self-constitution would allow us to avoid.<sup>44</sup>

Husserl attempts to avoid this problem by claiming that while the transcendental ego constitutes the world (including itself as object presumably) the transcendental subject is not an object, and therefore does not itself stand in need of an act of constitution, thereby avoiding any regress. The world (including the ego itself) is therefore supposedly constituted by the transcendental subject in:

"... constitutive performances with a multiplicity of motivations and motivational systems which according to Universal laws of genesis, produce a unity of Universal genesis of the ego. The ego constitutes himself for himself in, so to speak, the unity of 'history'. We said that the constitution of the ego contains all the constitutions of all the objectivities existing for him".<sup>45</sup>

The transcendental subject is nothing more nor less than the "uncaused cause". Just as in the last chapter we saw Husserl attempt

<sup>44</sup> See pp. 73-5.

<sup>45</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 37, p. 75.

to account for the constitution of the "environment of objects" that the "ego always has" by claiming them to be passively constituted, we now see that he claims that the transcendental subject is "nothing to be taken in itself", is not an object, but is, so to speak, implicit while the laws governing the passive constitution are said to be innate.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, while the transcendental ego on the one hand "precedes the being of the world in so far as it constitutes the world's sense of being" on the other the constitution of the ego contains all constitutions of all objectivities existing for him, and therefore, in a sense, the transcendental ego co-arises with the world. The solution to this seeming contradiction whereby the transcendental ego as constitutor of the world precedes the world with which, as co-relate, it co-arises, must be to draw a distinction between Logical priority and Ontological priority, between the implicit transcendental subject which logically must "precede" the world from the explicit transcendental ego which ontologically (or empirically) co-arises with the world as "concretely one" with it. Only by drawing such a distinction can we show how the transcendental ego can "get a grip on itself" and "constitute( ) himself for himself". However, there seems to me to be one over-riding objection to allowing phenomenology to avail itself of the fruits of such a dichotomy, and that is that the very basis of such a dichotomy, far from being phenomenological, is precisely an exercise in the very metaphysics that phenomenology has strived so hard to avoid.

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<sup>46</sup> See Ibid., Section 39, p.81.

To recapitulate, I have argued that the attempt of phenomenology to account for the genesis of experience is doomed on a priori grounds. Nonetheless, we have seen Husserl attempt to account for this genesis by the "theory" of self-constitution of the transcendental ego on the grounds that the other two logical possibilities, namely genesis by an external entity or genesis by an "uncaused cause" both involved metaphysical postulates that would precisely invalidate phenomenology's pretension to radical empiricism. However, we have just seen that despite Husserl's claim to have an intuitive essential insight into the empirical validity of self-constitution, the transcendental ego can only "get a grip on itself" and constitute itself if we draw a distinction between the explicitly ontological transcendental ego and the implicit or logical transcendental subject, and this latter must, I am claiming, be metaphysical, and as such, would undermine the very claim to be radically empirical that phenomenology is trying to establish.

Having presented the framework, I want now to show that this is the case, that the logically implicit transcendental subject can only be metaphysical. As this would, of course, exhaust the third and last logically possible way of accounting for the genesis of the world, it would prove conclusively that my initial contention that on a priori grounds no empiricism can empirically account for the genesis of the world is indeed correct, and would, therefore, substantiate my thesis that any empiricism - that does not experience the world as eternal and infinite - finds itself in an inevitably metaphysical context.

The very idea of an implicit transcendental subject, if it is to make any sense at all in this context, must be based on the claim to know that there is indeed a subject, while claiming not to know what it is (as if we knew what it was, it would be explicit and such an explicit transcendental subject would then be an intentional object of consciousness and require constitution at a higher level of transcendence, and on and on in regress). However, any claim to know that a thing is without knowing what it is, can hardly be based on empiricism, for empirical knowledge is based on experience by its very meaning, and to experience something directly is to know it explicitly, to know what it is. Rather, the transcendental subject that "precedes the being of the world" the implicit logical transcendental subject that is responsible for the genesis of the world, but is not known for what it is, is, as I have suggested it must be, logically implicit and therefore, as I have just demonstrated it must be metaphysical.

Perhaps the use of an analogy will serve to clarify how I have reached the conclusion that any attempt to understand the self-constitution of the ego - as (as I have shown) it can only be understood - employing the device of a logical implicit transcendental subject, must involve an inductive argument and a metaphysical hypothesis.

Scientists for a long time suspected that there were certain sub-atomic particles that they had not yet observed. They inductively hypothesised the laws of causality to be general, and then from the observable fact that certain observable particles acted in a particular way, they deduced from this hypothesis that this behaviour could be explained as

a "reaction" to or effect of other, as yet unobserved, particles. In other words, they based the claim that there were other unobserved particles on logical deduction from an inductive hypothesis and not on empirical observations of what they were. These sub-atomic particles remain unobservable in the direct sense, and are known only "functionally". That is, their existence is deduced to be the "cause" of what "effects" we observe in the directly observable behaviour of matter. This deduction in turn depends upon the inductive hypothesis of the general validity of the law of causality. Now whereas Positivistic Science seems content with such pseudo empiricism, the resulting paradox that the sub-atomic constituents of matter must be thought of as "wavicles"<sup>47</sup> should serve only to strengthen Phenomenology's resolve to avoid the metaphysics on which such paradox thrives. However, the parallel between "wavicles" and the transcendental subject, in terms both of the justifications offered for them by their adherents, and their "functional" role in accounting for our experiences, is too striking to miss. In both cases, we start with direct experience and move, via an inductive hypothesising of the general validity of "causality" to a deductive definition of a "function" that is reified. Thus, from the fact that: "The beginning phenomenologist ... finds himself as ... an ego, who already has a world"<sup>48</sup> and from the inductive hypothesis that Being itself has a cause, Husserl concludes that there must be "something" that "precedes the being of the world ... (and) constitutes within itself the world's sense of being". This constituting "function" is reified and called the transcendental subject. In other words, by

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<sup>47</sup> exhibiting

As/both the properties of particles and of waves, properties which, according to Bohr's Principle of Complementarity are irreducible to one another.

<sup>48</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 37, p.76.

inductively hypothesising the general applicabilities of the law of causality not merely to changes in the state of Beings (active constitution) but to the genesis of Being itself (passive constitution) it can then be claimed that the Being of the world points to the fact that there must be a cause. Not only does such a causal analysis undermine Husserl's claim to be purely descriptive, but as the transcendental subject is supposed to be the final intentionality of consciousness, the "cause" known only in terms of its "effect", it must on a priori grounds be beyond direct verification<sup>49</sup> even in principle, and therefore, despite the claims of "essential insight", "Meta-Physical" (sic).

This metaphysically postulated entity cannot itself be a Being in the usual sense - otherwise it could only account for changes in the state of Beings (active constitution) and not for Being itself (passive constitution). Further, if it were a Being in the usual sense, it would stand in need of an act of constitution itself, and therefore on a priori grounds it cannot be subject to empirical verification; thus, we can never know it as what it is, but the fact that it is, is said to be attested to by every experience of the world that we ever have. This obviously is only so if we accept the inductively hypothesised general validity of the law of causality. The metaphysical hypothesis (for all that it is claimed to be derived by essential insight) of the implicit transcendental subject is no more empirical nor less metaphysical than the "wavicle" of positivistic pseudo-empiricism or the "in itself" of the naive philosophies whose function, as the cause of experience, it replaces.

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<sup>49</sup>See A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, (London: Victor Gonzalez, 1967).

Thus, having investigated all the logically possible attempts to account for the genesis of the world, and having seen that they all involve unverifiable metaphysical postulates (unverifiable that is at least in the radically empirical sense of the term) we must conclude that insofar as any empiricism may attempt to account for the genesis of the world experience; it must involve itself in metaphysical speculation, as we previously saw it must, on a priori grounds.

Further, it should also be clear that as "the Universe of true being" and "the Universe of possible consciousness" (as "world experience" and "experience of the world") are "concretely one" - in the only way which has any validity for radical empiricism - in "experience", then, empirically at least, the self-constitution of the ego must be coincident with the genesis of the world (notwithstanding Husserl's incomplete attempt to distinguish internal and external time consciousness, which remains, perhaps on a priori grounds, incomplete):

"Consequently the phenomenology of this self-constitution coincides with phenomenology as a whole".<sup>50</sup>

Or as Berger points out:

"In the strict sense of the term ... the constituting life of the ego is neither active (for activity, which pre-supposes time, is in the world), nor passive, for there is absolutely nothing outside the I (since everything is constituted) and in relation to which it could be said to be passive".<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Section 33, p.68.

<sup>51</sup> G. Berger, The Cogito in Husserl's Philosophy, p.93.

Thus, as Merleau-Ponty notes:

"... this self of mine which constitutes the totality of being and its own presence in the world ... and which never finds anything outside itself but what it has put there ... is no longer a finite self ... it is ultimately with God that the cogito brings me into coincidence".<sup>52</sup>

Thus, the "outside of consciousness" is intentionally constituted within consciousness. The world is in consciousness and consciousness is in the world.

To conclude, then. As a Radical Empiricist, Husserl has not been able to account for experience in terms of the ego's experience of metaphysical "objects in themselves" as the naive empiricists do. Nor has he been able to reduce objects to consciousness as this is a psychologism that fails to recognize the fact that we are conscious of objects. Thus, as a transcendental subjectivist, Husserl must consider consciousness and the world to be intentional correlates. However, the unavoidable result of such an intentional correlation is that as consciousness is so inexorably inter-twined with the world, it has no essence of its own. The problem of the interaction of mind and body is replaced by the transcendental problem of the constitution of objects for the ego or the genesis of Being.

"The difference between idealism and realism will consist solely in that, for the latter being engenders belief-while for the former, belief creates the fiction of being. But for Transcendental Phenomenology, the 'I' no more constructs objects than it suffers them. It is beyond action and passion".<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, p.373.

<sup>53</sup> G. Berger, The Cogito in Husserl's Philosophy, p.82.



Truly, then, it seems that the transcendental ego is a meta-physical limit concept, the final intention, either the "uncaused cause", or the title of an infinite regress. In either case, it seems to be the final symbol of Husserl's inevitable inability to account empirically for that which by definition goes beyond empirical experience for what is the problem of the constitution or genesis of Being other than the Essentially insoluble problem of Empirically describing that which preceded Being, and therefore, phenomenologically speaking, preceded Experience?

"When I say that things are transcendent, this means that I do not possess them, that I do not circumambulate them; they are transcendent to the extent that I am ignorant of what they are, and blindly assert their bare existence".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, p.369.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PHENOMENOLOGY: RADICAL EMPIRICISM AS RATIONALIST METAPHYSICS!

Having touched upon what I consider to be more central themes of Husserl's Phenomenology, and having so far produced only a piecemeal critique of these themes, I will attempt in this final chapter to give a more coherent structural analysis in the form of an over-view. In this analysis I will attempt to draw attention to some of the meta-level movements or philosophical directions taken by Phenomenology and to situate these within the Philosophical historic context, as well as to draw out some of the implications implicit in Phenomenology.

Husserl claims that Phenomenology is a Radically Empirical Universal Science. In order to be Radical it must have no presuppositions whatever. If it is to be Empirical, it must base all its knowledge claims upon experience. As a Universal Science it must concern itself with the true object of such a Science, namely Being in its entirety. If it is to be Universal, it must not only deal in eidetic or essential truth, truth that is, which is applicable to this or any world whatever but it must also be "Self-justifying", for to attempt to seek "external" or "outside" justification is to admit to such an "outside" thereby undermining the claim to Universality.

"... If there be a Universal Science wherein is contained the justification of all particular Sciences; there can be no Science superior to it wherein it would find its justification ..."<sup>1</sup>

Now it is my contention - as I now hope to demonstrate - that Phenomenology's claim to be a radically "Empirical Universal Science",

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<sup>1</sup>Q. Lauer, op.cit., p.126.

must a priori either rest upon assumptions (whether implicit or explicit) or upon a tautology, and therefore must necessarily be false.

In order to justify its claim to be radically empirical, Phenomenology must make experience its sole criterion of validity and it must do so without making any presuppositions. In order to justify its claim to be a Universal Science, Phenomenology must ensure that it can study Being in its entirety. It follows directly that there can only be a radically empirical universal science if Being in its entirety is presuppositionlessly reducible to experience. I contend not only that Phenomenology does not show this to be the case, but that a priori no Philosophy can.

As the "Reduction" is clearly at the crux of this attempt to reconcile radical empiricism and universal science, I propose to start by examining this reduction. Now before Husserl can perform the reduction, he must, as we previously saw, apply the "Epoche". The epoche or bracketing limits Being to that of which we can potentially be conscious in one mode or other.<sup>2</sup> Eugen Fink claims that the epoche contains an implicit a priori assertion, namely that that which can not manifest itself to us in one mode or another as Being-for-us, Simply IS NOT. Fink claims that this is a dogmatic assertion that does not solve the fundamental Philosophical problem of whether or not all Being is in principle experienceable, but simply evades it without reason.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>For example consciousness is here to be understood as perceiving things in the physical world, imaginings, fantasies, dreams, etc., etc.

<sup>3</sup>E. Fink, L'Analyse Intentionnelle et le Probleme de la Pensée Spéculatives in Problèmes Actuels de la Phénoménologie ed. H.L. Van Breda, (Brugge-Paris: Disclée et Brouwers, 1952), pp.53-87.

In other words Fink claims the reduction of Ontology to Transcendental Epistemology must be based on a presupposition that must undermine Phenomenology's claim to be radical. If radical empiricism is to be Universally Scientific then, as Lauer notes:

"... experience can admit to absolutely nothing coming in so to speak, from outside .... Nor does this mean denying that there is some sort of reality outside the subject; it simply means refusing to this sort of reality any being ...".<sup>4</sup>

And this Husserl does with the epoke ensuring tautologically that upon performing the reduction:

"We subtract just as little from the plenitude of the world's Being ... as we do from the plenary geometric Being of a square when we deny ... that it is round. It is not that the real sensory world is 'recast' or denied, but that an absurd interpretation of the same, which indeed contradicts its own mentally clarified meaning is set aside".<sup>5</sup>

While Husserl has undoubtedly invoked a tautology, it seems that one could argue on his behalf against Fink's criticism that the epoke, far from being a dogmatic assertion, is rather a suspension of judgement on the Being or Non-Being that was bracketed.

"In the attempt to doubt applied to a thesis which ... is certain and tenaciously held, the 'disconnexion' takes place in and with a modification of the antithesis, namely with the 'supposition' (Ansetzung) of Non-Being ...".<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, Phenomenology employs the epoke which is: "... (epokhe-abstention), a certain refraining from judgement...".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Q. Lauer, op.cit., p.77.

<sup>5</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 55, p.153.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Section 31, p.98.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

There is then no a priori assertion. However, later upon performing the reduction we find good empirical evidence that everything remains as as before, and consequently that no aspect of Being is denied by the epoke. However, this is clearly tautologically, and therefore "trivially" true as it demonstrates not that all Being in its entirety is experienceable but that all that was initially experienceable before the reduction is experienceable after. While Husserl does not evade the Philosophical question in the manner that Fink suggests he does, by an a priori assertion that all Being is reducible to experience, it should be clear that this assertion is implicit in the acceptance of radically empirical criteria as methodologically appropriate to a Universal Science.<sup>8</sup>

"... methods imply metaphysics; unconsciously they disclose conclusions that they after claim not to know yet".<sup>9</sup>

Therefore it is the acceptance of radical empiricism that constitutes the art of evasion that undoubtedly takes place. Having accepted such criteria, then the verification of the Being or Non-Being of the world depends precisely on the very experience whose ontological status we might wish to question.

"But no matter what the status of this Phenomenon's claim to actuality and no matter whether at some future time, I decide critically that the world exists or that it is illusory, still this phenomenon itself as mine, is not nothing, but is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, we might note here that all valid conclusions must always be implicit, in one way or another in the assumptions upon which they are necessarily based. Indeed, if they were not we might rightly suspect that our reasoning was incorrect. (See also quote 12.)

<sup>9</sup> A. Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, trans. J. O'Brien, (London: Hamish and Hamilton, 1955), p.17.

<sup>10</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 8, p.19.

No Being can invalidate the experience in which it is exclusively given. However, herein lies radical empiricism's strength and weakness, for as empirically unfalsifiable, it is in the paradoxical position of being a Metaphysical doctrine that denies the validity of all metaphysics.

Now as the acceptance of radical empiricism as appropriate to a universal science has indeed proved to entail an empirically unfalsifiable and therefore metaphysical doctrine, we will now examine the grounds for the acceptance of radical empiricism itself in the hope of identifying the root of this metaphysics.

The only two logically possible sources of justification for radical empiricism (as indeed for any philosophical tenet whatever, including, as we shall see, Rationalism), are external or internal sources. Now Phenomenology, as a Universal Science, must, for reasons I have already explained, be self-justifying.<sup>11</sup> However, self-justifying Philosophy must ultimately in the final analysis presuppose that the method by which it seeks to justify itself is itself justified; and in so far as it does this it presupposes what it purports to prove.

Radical empiricism can only justify itself if experience is taken to be a valid criterion of justification, and yet is precisely this that is in question and stands in need of justification. As Merleau-Ponty notes:

"Unless thought itself had put into things what it subsequently finds in them it would have no hold upon things ...".<sup>12</sup>

However there is a still more general case to be made, for even if one were to drop the pretension towards Universality (and along with

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<sup>11</sup> See quote 1.

<sup>12</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit.; p.371.

it, therefore, the requirement of Self-justification) and allow radical empiricism (or whatever the general philosophical tenet in question was) to seek justification outside itself, this "external" source must either be itself self-justifying or must seek its justification from another external source and so on. It should therefore be clear that ultimately this process, if it is not to end in infinite regress must as a matter of logical a priori necessity, either be circular, thereby establishing a tautological or trivially true position, which implicitly assumes what it purports to prove, or must end in an overt explicit metaphysical assumption. It should also be clear that this is a priori true of any Philosophical system whatever.<sup>13</sup>

However, to return to the case in point, the empirical unfalsifiability of radical empiricism ultimately has its grounding in the metaphysical presupposition in favor of radical empiricism. This I shall henceforth refer to, as the "Empirical Assumption".

It would be a mistake to believe that this is the only assumption that undermines Husserl's claim that Phenomenology is radical. While the empirical assumption ensures that experienceability is taken to be a necessary criterion of Being, and therefor ensures a priori that whatever is "dignified with the title Being" is experienceable, Husserl must do more still if he is to ensure that experience is a sufficient criterion; if, in other words, he is to ensure that experience is "Constitutive". While he has ensured all Being is experienceable, he has not yet ensured that all experience is of Being. This he does by

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<sup>13</sup> See E. Nagel and J. Newman, Godels Proof, (New York: New York University Press, 1958).

another presupposition which again further undermines Phenomenology's claim to be radical. This is the "Doxic Cogito" In the final analysis it is only the doxic cogito that allows Husserl to transcend the naive idealist position, for while:

"... to 'see' and to intend absolutely nothing more than what is grasped in 'seeing' and then still to question and doubt, that is nonsense".<sup>14</sup>

"... only the doxic cogito actually exercises the objectifying function".<sup>15</sup>

In other words, "to see" merely ensures the "self-evidence" of the experiential act per se, and it is only by employing the doxic positionality that we are able to move from the self-evidence of the act to the self-evidence of the object given in it.

"Certainly each mental Phenomenon has its relation to objects; and each has its genuine (reellen) content, which is a belief in those aspects which compose it in the genuine sense".<sup>16</sup>

"... every thetic act character generally ... conceals in its essential being a character of the genus 'doxic thesis' which coincides with it in certain ways".<sup>17</sup>

As Osborn remarks:

"It is the character of belief that distinguishes the perception from the illusion; the object perceived alone exists in 'belief' as really there".<sup>18</sup>

While after the reduction it becomes clear that:

<sup>14</sup> E. Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology, p.39.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Ideas, Section 117, p.307.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., The Idea of Phenomenology, p.58.

<sup>17</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 115, p.299.

<sup>18</sup> A.D. Osborn, op.cit., p.91.



"The very experience of transcendental things is possible only provided that the project is borne and discovered within myself".<sup>19</sup>

It is only the Doxic Cogito that ensures that:

"Transcendancy in every shape and form is an immanent existential characteristic constituted within the ego".<sup>20</sup>

And as Lauer notes:

"... the gap highlighted by Descartes can be bridged only if consciousness is constitutive of being".<sup>21</sup>

Just as the reduction serves to rid Phenomenology of any Materialist metaphysics such as that metaphysical object par excellence: the object as it is in itself, the doxic cogito, ensuring as it does the intentionality of consciousness serves to refute the suggestion that Phenomenology is merely an Idealist Philosophy in the naive sense. Together, the reduction and the doxic cogito allow Husserl to transcend the dialectic between Idealism and Materialism that has haunted philosophy at least since Plato gave his discourse on the cave, and therefore to avoid the paradoxes associated with questions concerning the relation of one sphere to the other.

To give but one example, prior to Transcendental Phenomenology Idealists accounted for the constitution of the world in terms of conscious activity while the Materialists accounted for the constitution of conscious activity in terms of the world. Both explanations only explained the constitution of one half of the dichotomy in terms of the other, both involved metaphysical postulation of the prior existence of

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<sup>19</sup> E. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit., p.369.

<sup>20</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, pp.83-4 (my emphasis).

<sup>21</sup> G. Lauer, op.cit., p.80.

one half of the dichotomy, and a priori neither could account successfully for the constitution of the primary half of the dichotomy. The paradox therefore manifested itself in a circularity whereby material Being was accounted for in terms of conscious constitution, and consciousness was accounted for in terms of material Being. When questioned about the first cause, the starting point within this circle, Dualists offer the enigmatic pseudo-solution that the process is "dialectical" which is but a restatement of the problem. The empirical assumption, and the *doxai cogito* have allowed Husserl to rid philosophy of this dialectic between the Ideal and the Material, and thereby reduce the distinction to the status of a Transcendentally Ideal distinction.

This distinction, being drawn wholly within the ideal realm, albeit the transcendently ideal, can only be between consciousness of Consciousness (which as an object for transcendental consciousness must have undergone a reification) and consciousness of Being (here taken to include every mode of being and not merely the being of the Physical world). As the distinction is drawn wholly from a Transcendental level, there can be, from the beginning, absolutely no question of there being a dialectic between the two, and therefore no question of any problem or paradoxes involved in their relation to each other. They must be "concretely one ... in ... transcendental subjectivity"<sup>22</sup> within which the distinction is drawn.

Radically empirically speaking, all distinctions must be non-dialectical "descriptive" diacritical distinctions of sense or meaning, albeit transcendental sense or meaning, drawn reflexively and retrospectively to the unity of the one continuous Present experience.

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<sup>22</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, p.84.

"If what is experienced has the sense  
'transcendent' being then it is the  
 experience that constitutes this sense ...".<sup>23</sup>

Radically empirically there can be no "in itself" whether the  
 "in itself" of material Being or the "in itself" of consciousness.  
 Radically empirically speaking, both consciousness and its objects must  
 be given in experience, and all experience must have both an "experiencer"  
 and an "experienced", an experiencing subject and an experienced object,  
 in dissolubly related in the one unified experience. If all Being is  
 reduced to consciousness, and all consciousness is intentionally  
 constitutive of Being, then Being is what it is solely by virtue of its  
 relation to consciousness, and consciousness is what it is solely by  
 virtue of its relation to Being. Empirical experience is, to borrow  
 Sartre's phrase, a "synthesis of interiority and transcendence".<sup>24</sup> To  
 suppose any other relationship is precisely supposition and as such  
 metaphysical:

"Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being  
 whether the latter is called immanent or trans-  
 cendent, falls within the domain of transcendental  
 subjectivity, as the subjectivity that constitutes  
 sense and being. The attempt to conceive the  
 universe of true Being as something lying outside  
 the universe of possible consciousness, possible  
 knowledge, possible evidence, the two being  
 related to one another merely externally by a  
 rigid law, is nonsense. They belong together  
 essentially; and as belonging together essentially  
 are also concretely one, one in the only absolute  
 concretion: transcendental subjectivity".<sup>25</sup>

As Lauer notes: "... Subjectivity is constituted concomitantly with  
 objectivity".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> E. Husserl, Formal and Transcendental Logic, trans. D. Cairnes,  
 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), section 94, p.233.

<sup>24</sup> J.-P. Sartre, Transcendence of the Ego, trans. F. Lilliams and  
 R. Kirkpatrick, (New York: Noonday, 1957), p.111.

<sup>25</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, pp.83-4.

<sup>26</sup> R. Lauer, op.cit., p.108.

That this is not ideal metaphysical speculation can be seen if we study the work of Gestalt psychology for example. We see that a radically empirical description of ontogenesis describes how the "self" and the "other", the subject and object of experience, are mutually inter-defining or symbiotically co-related. It is only through its concept of the self that consciousness comes to understand the other or object, and it is only through its concept of other or object that consciousness comes to understand itself.

Being and consciousness are, radically empirically speaking, Transcendentally constituted co- arising correlates, empirically symbiotically unified in the one experience. As Berger so rightly states:

"It is the error of dogmatism to set one against the other, mind against things, thus creating the illusory and insoluble problem of their communication .... The difference between idealism and realism will consist solely in that for the latter, being engenders belief, while for the former, belief creates the fiction of being. But for transcendental phenomenology, the 'I' no more constructs objects than it suffers them. It is beyond action and passion".<sup>27</sup>

The empirical assumption and the doxic cogito, by enabling Husserl to rid Phenomenology of the metaphysical "in itself" of Material Being and Ideal Consciousness respectively, has undoubtedly enabled Husserl to transcend the paradoxes resulting from the attempt to explain the relationship between the two dialectically related realms, paradoxes which were grounded - as, according to Husserl, all paradoxes must be - in metaphysics. However, as I previously showed, the empirical assumption and the doxic cogito both invoke metaphysical presuppositions themselves, and therefore we should not be surprised to find that Husserl

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<sup>27</sup> E. Berger, op.cit., pp.91-2.

has merely replaced the paradoxes traditionally ascribed to dualist metaphysics with Transcendental paradoxes. Conversely, for those who still doubt that Husserl has made any prescriptions, the exposition of these paradoxes will serve to convince them of this fact.

For example, radical empiricism shows the object and the subject, Being and consciousness, the Ideal and the Material, to be co-arising concomitant correlates, that are "concretely one" in "transcendental subjectivity ... the subjectivity that constitutes all being". The dialectic between Idealism and Materialism has been transcended in that it has been reduced to a non-causal "descriptive" distinction drawn wholly within Transcendental Subjectivity, with the result that Husserl has rid Philosophy of the "chicken and egg" paradox whereby one side of the dialectic was supposed to be causally related to the other, leaving the problem of explaining the constitution of the first side itself. No longer do we have to face the paradoxical explanation that while A caused B, B also caused A,<sup>28</sup> for radically empirically or descriptively speaking, both sides are clearly co-arising symbiotic correlates, constituted concomitantly in Transcendental Subjectivity.

However, as I have previously suggested, Phenomenology has merely exchanged these traditional paradoxes for Transcendental paradoxes. To begin with, if the ideal and the material are co-arising correlates, Phenomenology must be unable to give any causal dialectical historical change, but can only "describe" it. If subject and object are constituted concomitantly in Transcendental Subjectivity ... the subjectivity that constitutes all beings", then unless this Transcendental

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<sup>28</sup> i.e., for example, Karl Marx' 3rd Thesis on Feuerbach, in K. Marx and F. Engels, Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973).

Subjectivity is to be a meta-hysical entity, some description of its own constitution must be given which must, on a priori grounds, end as we saw in the last chapter, either in a self-constituting circularity or in an infinite regress and which, either way, presents a paradox.<sup>29</sup>

As Bateson points out:

"The Newtonian world ascribes reality to objects and achieves its simplicity by excluding the context of the context - excluding indeed all meta-relationships - a fortiori excluding an infinite regress of such relations. In contrast, the theorists of communication insist upon examining the meta-relationships while achieving its simplicity by excluding all objects".<sup>30</sup>

Further, Husserl's phenomenology, as a "descriptive" philosophy, can only assert THAT Being and Consciousness are co-arising correlates, and while this is undoubtedly radically empirically speaking, absolutely correct one cannot escape the impression that this assertion, like the dualist assertion that the two halves of the dichotomy are dialectically related, is an enigmatic pseudo-solution. To barely assert That "the Universe of true Being" and "the Universe of Possible Consciousness" are "concretely one" in no way explains How this is possible.

"And you give the choice between a description that is sure but that tells me nothing and hypotheses that claim to teach me but are not sure".<sup>31</sup>

It is only by virtue of the fact that phenomenology is prepared to forgo the knowledge of How for the assurance That, that the Transcendental paradoxes that we exlicated in Chapters Two and Three are ultimately warded off. They are not so much resolved as side-stepped. As soon as we

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 3 for a full exposition of this paradox.

<sup>30</sup> C. Bateson, op.cit., p.21. N.B. The theorist of communication is Bateson's term for the radical empiricist.

<sup>31</sup> A. Coates, op.cit., p.23.



Apart from these paradoxes of constitution, which threaten to replace the traditional philosophical paradoxes if Phenomenology should at any time resort to explanation, there is also another equally important, and perhaps even more fundamental enigma in the Phenomenological description of the world. It will be remembered that we noted in passing Fink's objection to the reduction, namely that rather than showing that all Being in its entirety was reducible to experience, it simply evaded the question.<sup>36</sup> Now we noted at that time that it was perhaps the empirical assumption which ultimately provided the grounding for this act of evasion in that the acceptance of radical empirical criteria as appropriate to a Universal Science implicitly presupposed that the object of such a Science, Being in its entirety, was reducible to experience. As we saw, the acceptance of such criteria, although supposedly self-justified, ultimately must have presupposed what it purported to justify as indeed must all self-justifying Philosophical tenets. We should not, then, be surprised to see an enigma arising here on the fertile ground of presupposition. This I will now attempt to explicate.

To begin then, we cannot escape the impression that Husserl has been able to reduce Being to consciousness for the very reason that the empirical assumption has allowed him to justify the limiting of Being to Consciousness a priori, and thereby to tautologically derive the validity of the reduction. By the epoke, Husserl has implicitly limited Being to our experience or our Consciousness of Beings. Heidegger would say that Husserl has confused Beings (Seienden) with Being (Sein), that he has confused the Ontological question concerning

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<sup>36</sup> See page 89 of this Chapter.



the nature of Being, with the epistemological question concerning what we mean when we say a thing is. As Lauer notes:

"Husserl is concerned exclusively with that which is (das Seiende) and not at all with being (das Sein)".<sup>37</sup>

That Husserl's work supports this interpretation cannot be denied, as we may see this attitude exemplified in many places, as, for example, when Husserl states:

"Thus the investigations concerning the transcendental constitution of a world ... are precisely the beginning of a radical clarification of the sense and origin ... of the Concepts: world, Nature, Space, Time ... and so forth".<sup>38</sup>

Or as Fink states in an article which received Husserl's explicit approval if not his active collaboration:

"... the whole being of the world consists in a certain 'meaning' which presupposes absolute consciousness as the field from which all meaning is derived ... this field (is the) existential realm of absolute origins".<sup>39</sup>

Now while

"the attempt to CONCEIVE the Universe of true being as something lying outside the universe of possible consciousness ... is nonsense",<sup>40</sup>

it may surely nonetheless exist there even if it were unconceivable even in principle. However, in contrast, if the epistemological realm of meaning "is the existential realm of absolute origins", then clearly

<sup>37</sup> G. Lauer, op.cit., p.129.

<sup>38</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 64, p.154.

<sup>39</sup> Eugen Fink, in The Phenomenology of Husserl, ed. and trans. R.G. Elverton, (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), p.96 (my addition in brackets).

<sup>40</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, p.84 (my emphasis).

whatever is outside this realm, Simply Is Not. Husserl is only able to move from the former assertion to the latter if he can "refuse to this sort of reality" (the reality that MAY exist as unconceivable), any Being; and thereby tautologise his position; and he can only do this if he can actually discount or refute the ontological status of what has been bracketed. Therefore despite Husserl's assurance that the epoche is merely a "suspension of judgement", it must be admitted that there is at least an implicit judgement involved (namely that without consciousness there is nothing), and it is this very judgement that leaves phenomenology open to the Heideggerian objection that while there are no things or Beings without consciousness there is not nothing, or no Being. Clearly both Husserl's position and Heidegger's position making as they do assertions concerning what may or may not exist beyond or "outside" of consciousness are precisely metaphysical. Husserl has exchanged the problem of moving from consciousness to Being (epistemology to ontology) so masterfully expositied by Hume for the Transcendental Problem of deciding whether all Being in its entirety is reducible to consciousness. Whereas Hume was wise enough to refrain from judgement, Husserl and Heidegger both make speculative judgements. As Camus notes: "The mind, when it reaches its limits, must make a judgement and choose its conclusions".<sup>41</sup> Husserl chooses one way, Heidegger the other.

I hope, then, that I have stabilised that Phenomenology does indeed exchange traditional paradoxes for Transcendental paradoxes and enigmas, which, like the traditional paradoxes and indeed like all paradoxes everywhere, are based upon presumption. I hope also to have established that these paradoxes and enigmas - namely the paradox of self-constitution which manifests itself both as the circular "enigmen

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<sup>41</sup> A. Camus, op.cit., p.28.

and egg" paradox (discussed at length in Chapter 2) and as the paradox  
of infinite regress (discussed at length in Chapter 3), and the origin  
of the relation between Transcendental epistemology and ontology  
 (discussed immediately above), are not only de facto paradoxes, but  
represent the a priori limits of any true empiricism whatever. Clearly  
this is so, for it is obvious that on a priori grounds no experience can  
constitute/describe its own limits, for the very affirmation of an  
experience of limits negates precisely what it attempts to affirm: for  
radical empiricism questions concerning the absence of experience are  
reduced to questions concerning the experience of absence. Now as all  
 paradoxes are necessarily founded on presupposition according to Husserl,  
 then this is the same as saying that on a priori grounds radical  
 empiricism must be founded on presupposition, namely the presupposition  
 of the extent and limit of its applicability which is implicit in its  
 very essence, and which we have explored earlier in this chapter. Indeed,  
 to make the even more general case, as I previously suggested, any  
 philosophical tenet whatever must make similar presuppositions, albeit  
 implicitly and therefore a prioriany philosophy whatever must ultimately  
 be founded on presupposition and will therefore necessarily end in  
 paradox, which limits its field of knowledge to precisely those limits  
 implied by what is, as for every "what it is" there must precisely be a  
 "what it is not" and this must be its limit. I want to now draw out  
 these paradoxes so that we may exactly understand the limit of  
 Phenomenology and the nature of these limits.

To return to radically empirical Phenomenology, as Fink notes:

"The basic question phenomenology is in the process  
 of raising ... can be formulated as that concerning  
 the origin of the world. The critique can also go  
 so far as to dispute the possibility of having know-

"-ledge of the world with respect to a 'transcendent' world-ground in general ...".<sup>42</sup>

By reducing Being to consciousness, Husserl has ensured that there can be nothing outside consciousness except what consciousness has put there, for after the reduction, as I have noted, the absence of experience can only be understood as the experience of absence, or to put the same a different way: "Non-Being is only a modality of Simple Being".<sup>43</sup>

Not only have questions concerning Being been reduced to questions concerning the Consciousness of Being,<sup>44</sup> but questions concerning non-Being have been reduced to questions concerning the Consciousness of non-Being, with the paradoxical result that the attempt to describe the spatio-temporal limits of "... the Universe of true Being ..." or its symbiotic correlate, "... the Universe of Possible Consciousness" must take place precisely within this Universe.

"If transcendental subjectivity is the Universe of possible Sense, then an outside is precisely non-sense, but even nonsense is always a mode of sense and has its nonsensicalness within the sphere of possible insight".<sup>45</sup>

As a result of the reduction, then, the limits of the Universe of true Being or its correlate the Universe of possible sense have been reduced from limits of constitution/description to constituted/described limits, which, as such, are self-negating in their affirmation, for as a

<sup>42</sup> Eugen Fink, in The Phenomenology of Husserl, ed. R.G. Elverton, pp.95-6.

<sup>43</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 24, p.78.

<sup>44</sup> Thereby giving rise to Heidegger's major objection to transcendental epistemology.

<sup>45</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, p.84.

result of the reduction, as Merleau-Ponty points out:

"... whatever he thinks, the subject makes himself his point of support, and takes his place beyond and behind his various representations ...".<sup>46</sup>

Thus, if consciousness, or its correlate Being, are to have any limits, it must as a result of the reduction, transcend itself and constitute/describe its limits with the paradoxical result that the very attempt to constitute/describe limits undermines the claim of whatever is constituted/described, to be a limit. Husserl himself notes that:

"Through the Phenomenological reduction consciousness has forfeited not only its apperceptive 'attachment' ... to material reality ... its relations in space ... but also its setting in Cosmic time".<sup>47</sup>

After the reduction, then, while we may still draw a distinction, for example, between internal and external space and time, this distinction must needs be itself drawn within internal time/space, thus rendering the attempt to maintain a thoroughgoing dialectic - between the internal and external, the immanent and the transcendent - within the immanent, necessarily impossible.<sup>48</sup> The "outside of consciousness" can no more be outside of consciousness after the reduction, than can Non-Being be said to be the negation of Being. Rather, just as non-Being is for Husserl "a modality of Simple Being", so the "outside of consciousness" must be constituted within Consciousness. Correlatively the outside of the Universe must be inside the Universe. For Phenomenology, then, "Consciousness is in the world and the world is in Consciousness".

<sup>46</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit., p.373.

<sup>47</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 81, p.215.

<sup>48</sup> See E. Husserl, The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, ed. Martin Heidegger, (trans. J. Churchill, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964). Husserl himself specifically attempted to do this, and this project was left incomplete upon his death, but I would clearly maintain that it was on a priori grounds rather than de facto grounds that it was so left.

In short, then, Phenomenology has transcended all dialectic and replaced it by descriptive dichotomies of sense or meaning drawn wholly within Consciousness/The Universe. Let us now before leaving this area, consider some of the very important implications of this fact.

To begin with:

"The transcending of the world which takes place in performing the phenomenological reduction does not lead outside of or away from the world, for an origin that is separate from the world ...".<sup>49</sup>

For while after the reduction:

"The hypothetical assumption of a Real Something outside this world is indeed a 'logically' possible one ... if we question the essential conditions for its validity, the kind of evidence (Anweisung) demanded by its very being ... we perceive that the transcendent must needs be experienceable...".<sup>50</sup>

Consciousness can find nothing outside itself except what it itself has put there for after the reduction, as Fink states in an article which, as we have previously noted, received Husserl's explicit approval:

"... The whole being of the world consists in a certain 'meaning' which presupposes absolute consciousness as the field from which all meaning is derived ... this field (is the) existential realm of absolute origins ...".<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>E. Fink in The Phenomenology of Husserl, ed. R.L. Elverton, p.99.

<sup>50</sup>E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 46, pp.135-6.

<sup>51</sup>E. Fink in The Phenomenology of Husserl, ed. R.L. Elverton, p.99. (My addition in brackets.)

It therefore follows, for example, that even though:

"... genetic Phenomenology was not meant as an historical enterprise destined to show the genesis of the world in chronological order, but to determine the structural order according to which constitutive acts are built upon one another ...",<sup>52</sup>

while ultimately we may be able to draw an analytic distinction of meaning or sense between the two enterprises, the tasks are inseparable in the performance.<sup>53</sup> In other words, as a result of the transcending of the dialectic the distinction between cosmological genesis and ecological constitution is no longer dialectical but phenomenologically speaking they are only distinctions of meaning empirically united in the performance. As Fink so correctly notes:

"The basic question phenomenology is in the process of raising ... can be formulated as that concerning the origin of the world .... The critique can also go so far as to dispute the possibility of having knowledge of the world with respect to a 'transcendent' world-ground in general and remove the problem of Philosophy to the level of a world-immanent knowledge of beings".<sup>54</sup>

In other words, for a radical empiricism, cosmogenetic history that stretches "back beyond" my ontogenetic existence to a time before my birth, and will extend "forward" to a time after my death, must be exclusively constituted/described/generated within my living present if it is to have any radically empirical or what comes to the same thing,

<sup>52</sup> H. Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930), Vol. I, p.147.

<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that we are talking here of "showing" or "describing" the genesis of the world and not of giving a causal analysis of change which, as we have seen, is impossible for Phenomenology.

<sup>54</sup> E. Fink in The Phenomenology of Husserl, ed. E.C. Elverton, pp.95-6.

Transcendental epistemological validity. For phenomenology truly, then "... the instant is not the refutation, but the incarceration of eternity ...".<sup>55</sup>

"Since the methodically concrete ego includes the whole of actual and potential conscious life, it is clear that the problem of explicating this monadic ego phenomenologically (the problem of his constitution for himself) must include all constitutional problems without exception. Consequently the Phenomenology of his self-constitution coincides with Phenomenology as a whole".<sup>56</sup>

"... a universal self-cognition" is Philosophy itself and encompasses all self-accountable science.

The Delphic motto, "Know thyself!" has gained a new significance."<sup>57</sup>

Truly, then, consciousness finds nothing outside itself but what it has put there. As Merleau-Ponty so astutely observes:

"... this self of mine, which constitutes the totality of being and its own presence in the world, which is defined in terms of 'Self-possession', and which never finds anything outside itself but what it has put there ... is no longer a finite self .... It is ultimately with god that the cogito brings me into coincidence ...".<sup>58</sup>

That is:

"If the cogito reveals to me a new mode of existence owing nothing to time and I discover myself as the Universal Constituent of all being ascribable to me ... it must be said then with no qualification that my mind is God".<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Octavio Paz, Claude Levi-Strauss, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p.96.

<sup>56</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 33, p.68.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Section 64, pp.156-7.

<sup>58</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit., p.373.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.372.



Radical empiricism has effected a fundamental shift in the tradition that has dominated western philosophy at least since the time of Plato. No longer can empirical philosophy search outside or beyond the world for an explanation of the origin and form of the universe, as it must, in the wake of phenomenology, recognise all such searches to be essentially metaphysical and paradoxical. Radically empirically speaking, any such "explanation" must ultimately find itself limited by paradoxes on a priori grounds. Indeed, we have also seen that even a radical empirical "description" of the origin or limit of "the Universe of true Being", or its empirical correlate "the Universe of Possible Consciousness" is ruled out on the grounds that it is a priori self-negating. However, there is still one implication of this shift which we have yet to explore, and that is the fact that after the reduction it becomes apparent that the "Forms" that prescribe "aesthetically" and with "essential necessity" the form of this and every possible world, exist, if they exist at all, not above or beyond the world in some rarified atmosphere, but rather within the world of experience and must be the very form of the world found exclusively within experience. In other words, if the reduction upon which radical empiricism is dependent is to be a success, then it must leave nothing outside or beyond consciousness but what consciousness has put there with the result that:

"The Phenomenological self-explication that went on in my ego, this explication of all my ego's constitutings and all the objectivities existing for him ... (is) one that gives the fact their place in the corresponding Universe of Pure (or eidetic) possibilities ... and (i.) valid ... for every world imaginable".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 41, p.84. (Note the words "is" is my addition, but "or eidetic" is in the text and bracketed by Husserl.)

After the reduction, Reason, truth and even existence itself can and must be epitomised and found exclusively within experience, and can no longer be regarded as epitomised by some form found in some metaphysical realm above and beyond the world of experience of which the world is an imperfect example. As Camus notes, for Phenomenology, "... there is no truth, but merely truths".<sup>61</sup> Even Husserl notes:

"A truth then, is a truth within its horizons or region, and every truth is an essentially relative truth, one of the 'relative truths' of this relative region".<sup>62</sup>

Presumably this truth is itself relative. As for truth, so also for reality. Husserl tells us that: "An absolute reality is just as vain as a round square".<sup>63</sup>

That is, an absolute reality, far from existing beyond consciousness, is, like a round square, or like any radically empirical object, intentionally constituted and can only exist as such. When we perform the reduction:

"We subtract just as little from the plenitude of the world's Being, from the totality of all realities, as we do from the plenary geometric Being of a Square when we deny ... that it is round. It is not that the real sensory world is 'recast' or denied, but that an absurd interpretation of the same, which indeed contradicts its own mentally clarified meaning, is set aside".<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, it clearly follows that Husserl is not "denying" that essences or "forms" exist, any more than he is recasting the idea of an absolute reality; rather he is setting aside an "absurd

<sup>61</sup> A. Camus, op.cit., pp.39-40.

<sup>62</sup> E. Husserl, Formal and Transcendental Logic, Section 105, p.278.

<sup>63</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 55, p.153.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

interpretation" that such a reality exists somehow beyond our conscious experience of it in some metaphysical realm. For radical empiricism, as Camus notes:

"... the order of procession has been changed. This world has ceased to have its reflection in a higher Universe, but the heaven of forms is figured, in the host of images of this earth".<sup>65</sup>

From this standpoint "The Fall", for example, was not due to the essential or eternal truths being denied us, but rather, in searching for knowledge outside or beyond the world, mankind lost sight of the only true source of knowledge. We seem not to be able to see the wood for the trees, to be guilty of what Professor Ryle would term a category mistake.<sup>66</sup>

It follows directly from Radical Empiricism that:

"The attempt to conceive the Universe of true being as something lying outside the Universe of possible Consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence the two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law, is nonsensical".<sup>67</sup>

Truth has been reduced to truths, essentially relative to their particular region, so to Reality, and even Reason itself, must, for the radical empiricist, be intentionally constituted in conformity to essences that themselves are wholly revealed in the experience so constituted.

What, then, are the implications of this fundamental shift in the "order of procession" for the tradition that stretches back at least as far as Plato's theory of Forms? Firstly, as all that might transcend experience is to be so constituted exclusively from within

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<sup>65</sup> A. Camus, op.cit., pp.42-3.

<sup>66</sup> See Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind, (Harmondsworth: Penguin/Penguin Books, 1963).

<sup>67</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, section 41, p.84.

experience, then Reality, Reason, Truth, etc. are no longer consistently conceivable as existing beyond experience and of imposing themselves upon experience; rather they must be derived from experience, with the result that the role of experiencer, as an essential component of any such experience, tends to be seen as increasingly significant in the determination of the experience. Reality, Reason, Truth, etc. are no longer considered to exist beyond consciousness and impose themselves upon it, rather they must now be seen as being constituted within consciousness, albeit from transcendently constituted as transcendent to the act of constitution.

With the increase in the significance of the role of the subject or experiencer in the determination of the experience, the "position", "standpoint", "viewpoint", or "perspective", both literal and metaphorical, of the subject, is seen by some Philosophers to be of increasing significance in the determination of experience. This Phenomenology, with its reduction, and the bracketing of the (genuine) Transcendent, offers a foundation upon which the Paradigmatic<sup>68</sup> and Existential Phenomenological conceptions of Reality, Reason and Truth are built. Sartre, for example, writes at great length on the significance of the subject in the process of experience, and this significance is explicitly recognised in the Sartrean "methodological" or "instrumental" conception of Reality, for example. In this context, Sartre tells us:

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<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

"The thing ... both rests in the quiet beatitude of indifference and yet points beyond it to the task to be performed .... This instrumentality is not subsequent to or subsequent to the structures already indicated (categories in the Husserlian sense): in one way it presupposes them; in another it is presupposed by them. The thing is not first a thing in order to be subsequently an instrument; neither is it first an instrument in order to be revealed subsequently as a thing. It is an instrument - thing".<sup>69</sup>

Thus, while the "Instrument-thing" is not first of all an instrument, and therefore the subject does not have a totally free hand in the determination of the thing, neither is it "first a thing", and therefore the subject does, nonetheless, have some freedom. Husserl might say that the thing is constituted by the subject in conformity to the essential type revealed in the experience of the thing so constituted. The content is intended exclusively within the act and yet is wholly separate from it. While the subject is not free to experience Reality, Reason and Truth in any way, he/she might see fit, nonetheless, as one of the symbiotically correlated poles of experience the subject is an irreducibly significant factor in the determination of the experience. Alan Watts illustrates this point very clearly when he says:

"What we call things, facts or events, are after all no more than convenient Unities of Perception, recognizable pegs ... selected from the infinite multitude of lines and surfaces, colours and textures, spaces and densities which surround us. There is no more a fixed and final way of dividing these varieties into things than of grouping the stars in constellations".<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> J.-P. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, Trans. H. Barnes, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), pp.274-5 (my addition in brackets).

<sup>70</sup> Alan Watts, This is It, (New York: Random House, 1957), p.36.

Thus, while "there is no fixed and final way of ... grouping the stars in constellations" and therefore the subject can choose how to do this, the fact that they are stars is an essential fact that the subject must recognise. This illustrates very nicely the fine line that the Transcendental Idealist must step between "vulgar" Idealism, and "vulgar" materialism.

Husserl himself, of course, never discusses this matter in quite this context, and it is debatable whether Husserl's conception of eidetically intuited essences would tend to militate against such Existential and Paradigmatic conceptions of Reality, Reason and Truth, etc., but I am here merely trying to illustrate and delineate the possibly legitimate implications of Phenomenology from the obviously illegitimate. Thus we may say that Phenomenology, by bracketing the real (genuine) Transcendent, has, with important qualifications, at least implicitly provided the foundations for Existential and Paradigmatic conceptions of Reality, Truth and Reason.

"... Phenomenology has no already-given actualities or concepts of actualities, but from the very beginning, derives its concepts from the originariness of the constitutive performance ...".<sup>71</sup>

Thus, even Reason itself can no longer be regarded as a form existing above and beyond experience and must for any radical empiricism, be derived from experience "from the originariness of the constitutive performance ...". As Lauer notes:

"Husserl wants to regulate the relationship of reason and experience according to a law which is intrinsic to both. This does not involve disregarding either. Instead it involves suppressing the distinction between the two. In tune with the history of philosophy Husserl will, on the one hand credit experience with an immediate contact with reality, but he will seek to suppress the contingency

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<sup>71</sup> L. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 64, p.154.

"commonly assumed to be involved in immediacy. On the other hand, he will credit reason with necessity in its grasp of reality, but he will except no mediation in reason's operations. The result then is a necessary experience and an immediate reason - which is but another way of saying a 'rational experience' and 'an experimental reason'".<sup>72</sup>

By the reduction and by the *cogito* Husserl has ensured that experience is in "immediate contact with reality". He will be able to "suppress the contingency commonly assumed to be involved in immediacy" as we shall see. For radically empirically speaking, essences must, as we have seen, be the very form of experience itself, therefore all experience must be constituted in eidetic conformity or, to say the same thing another way, all experiences must be necessary or non-contingent.

Husserl is attempting to Unite Rationalism and Positivism, not as Kant did, by establishing a "synthetic a priori" whereby reason is one of the categorical relations and all that is experienced will be experienced through the categories and therefore will be rational. This leaves the rational status of the noumena undecided. Husserl wants to establish the rationality not just of the form of experience but also of its content. By reducing Being to experience and defining Reason empirically in terms of the relations of experience, he is attempting to establish that Reason necessarily governs the relations of Being, or to put the same thing a different way, a rational science. It would be a necessarily or essentially rational science, for no reason derived from experience of Being would ever contradict the experience of Being from which it was derived.

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<sup>72</sup> J. Lauer, op.cit., p.121.

However, there is one problem confronting Husserl in his project to unite Nationalism and Positivism by defining Reason empirically. For Phenomenology, Being is intentionally constituted, and if reason is to be empirically defined as the relations of experience, then no experience may be discounted on the grounds that it is irrational or that it is not an experience of Being.

"Primordial self-evidence" is clearly "the primary source of all rightness...".<sup>73</sup> Therefore:

"... No matter what the status of this phenomenon's claim to actuality and no matter whether at some future time I decide critically that the world exists or that it is an illusion, still this phenomenon itself, as mine, is not nothing but is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible".<sup>74</sup>

If, in keeping with radical empiricism, it is from experience that reason is derived and Being is constituted, there can no more be a contradictory experience than there can be an object that contradicts itself. However, experience does, on occasions, appear to contradict itself. For example:

I see before me what I take to be a book shelf. Upon going to take a book down, I experience what is clearly a facade designed to disguise the door of the library.

I perceive a picture of two faces in profile looking at each other. Before my eyes the picture turns into a vase.

Another time I see before me a horse which turns into a unicorn.

Again, another time I watch a caterpillar and over a period of time it changes into a butterfly.

<sup>73</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 141, pp.361-2.

<sup>74</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section E, p.19.



Each of these examples appear prima facie to offer contradictory experiences which would undermine Husserl's attempt to "suppress the distinction" between reason and experience. However, as we shall see, Husserl is able to resolve this apparent dilemma.

The first apparent contradiction is resolved by ascribing the essence "disguised door" to the object. The second is resolved by ascribing the essence "Gestalt picture" for it is of the essence of such pictures that they change while being observed. The horse turning into a unicorn could either be an act of imagination or an hallucination, depending upon the "mode" of the experience. The caterpillar turning into a butterfly could be rationalised by ascribing the essential characteristic metamorphosis to the event.

What should now be clear is that none of the experiences were inherently irrational, rather they seemed to run against previous experience, and as such seemed to be irrational only in the sense that they seemed at first sight not to conform to the essential relations displayed in previous experience of book cases and doors, pictures etc. The point is then that they were only apparently contradictory with respect to other experiences, and therefore, far from undermining Husserl's attempt to unite positivism and rationalism, merely stood to underline the fact that reason was defined in terms of experience. In fact, if caterpillars are constantly experienced as turning into butterflies, then this is not taken to be irrational or contradictory but is taken to precisely be the empirical experience from which the essential concept metamorphosis which prescribes the rational relations governing experience of this type of change, is derived.

In the above examples, it is the ascription of the "correct" essence to each experience that allows Husserl to resolve the apparent

contradictions or irrationalities. Essences are both derived from (via eidetic intention) and prescribe the experience of objects. While every:

"essence ... prescribes the rule that determines how an object subordinate to it is to be brought in respect of its meaning and mode of presentation to full determinacy".<sup>75</sup>

"... phenomenology has no already given actualities, but from the very beginning derives its concepts from the originariness of the constitutive performances ...".<sup>76</sup>

The object constituted in conformity to the essences derived from experiences of these objects, can never contradict these experiences.

Thus, while:

"... we find infinitely prescribed in the essential nature of every category of formative synthesis ... the possible shapes ... which it can take",<sup>77</sup>

still it is:

"Following the rational motives which the consciousness of experience suggest ... (that Physical thought, for example) ... is compelled to adopt certain forms of apprehending its material, to construct such intentional systems as the reason of the use may require ...".<sup>78</sup>

And as with physical thought, so too clearly with all thought if essences and reason are not to be metaphysical.

Therefore, on the one hand reason, if it is to be empirical must be defined in terms of the relations of eidetically PRESCRIBED experiences of objects, while on the other objects are constituted in conformity to the essences DERIVED in accordance with rational motives, from these very experiences. Therefore, on a priori grounds, Husserl can suppress any

<sup>75</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 142, p.365.

<sup>76</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 54, p.154.

<sup>77</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 141, p.365.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Section 52, pp.146-7, (my addition in brackets).

distinction between experience and reason, (by empirically defining reason in terms of the relations of experience), while no can ensure that no experience of an object will ever upset this (by constituting object in eidetic conformity to the rational relations revealed in co-experience of them). As Kockelmans correctly observes, then:

"If we are to construct the idea of a completely rationalized empirical science of nature, obviously the realization of this idea will be essentially dependent on the cultivation of the corresponding eidetic sciences. It will depend ... on the constitution of material-ontological disciplines which analyse in rational purity the essence of nature and also all essential articulations of nature's objectivities as such. The same holds good, of course, for all other regions".<sup>79</sup>

It is then the essence that: "... brings with it its own constitutive phenomenology, and therewith a new concrete doctrine of the reason".<sup>80</sup>

Essences are therefore: "... called to discharge the ... function of rationalizing the empirical".<sup>81</sup> As Sartre so appropriately notes:

"Essence is not in the object, it is the Sense of the object, the reason of the series of apparitions that unveil it".<sup>82</sup>

Therefore:

"... corresponding to the double heading 'reason' and 'unreason', the unity of the objective content of every objective region and category can and must in accordance with rational insight be 'brought out' or 'broken up' respectively".<sup>83</sup>

Therefore Husserl ensures a priori that he will indeed be able to suppress the distinction between reason and experience, that a priori

<sup>79</sup> J.C. Kockelmans, op.cit., p.93 (my emphasis).

<sup>80</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, section 152, p.390.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., section 9, p.59.

<sup>82</sup> J.-P. Sartre, L'Être et le Néant, (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), p.10.

<sup>83</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, section 86, p.232.

all experience will be rational, and therefore that Positivism and Rationalism are indeed united in radical empiricism.

For a radical empiricism essences and reason can only be derived from experience. Therefore:

"... all acts generally ... are the necessary source of different regions of being and of the ontology that belongs therewith".<sup>84</sup>

Thus:

"The perceptions in their limitless unfolding along all the systematic lines of development approximate to the purity of the covering relation; and these are being continually confirmed. Here we have closer determination only, never determination otherwise. No thing-determination that has come to be posited as the outcome of a previous course of experience (within this ideally closed system) undergoes 'cancellation' and substitution through other determinations of the same category of quality which is formally prescribed through the rational essence. Nothing disturbs the agreement .... But these counter-cases must be no less taken into our Phenomenological reckoning, since they also play or might play their part in connection with the possible constitution of an empirical reality. Thus the courses of perception, in which the partial breaches of agreement occur, and the agreement can be maintained only through 'corrections', must be systematically described in respect of all its essential constituents, noetic and noematic: the changes in the mode of apprehension, the transvaluings and devaluings of the previously apprehended as 'illusory' or 'deceptive'; the transition into 'conflict' still unresolved along certain lines, and so forth. Over against the continuous synthesis of agreement, the synthesis of conflict, of misinterpretation and differing definition, and whatever they may also be called, must come into their rights, for a Phenomenology of 'true reality' the phenomenology of 'vain illusion' is wholly indispensable".<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 117, p.301.

<sup>85</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideas*, Section 151, p.288.

This, then represents the apogee of the attempt to reconcile rationalism and positivism for clearly even the apparently completely contingent and conflicting experiences can be synthetically united under the appropriate regional ontology whose objects are constituted in conformity to the eidetic laws "revealed" in our experience of them. Lauer tells us: "It is however precisely as a phenomenology that its ultimate basis is choice. It matters little that this choice is called intuition".<sup>86</sup>

If Phenomenology truly has "no a priori given actualities or concepts of actualities", then "consistency (makes) it inevitable that intentional intuition be looked on as a constitution of essences".<sup>87</sup> Therefore the new region, prescribing as it does an appropriate "regional ontology" to which all experiences must conform if they are to be considered to be experiences of precisely this particular region and no other, is described exactly as it presents itself. Therefore a priori no objects constituted in conformity to essences derived (via eidetic intuition) from our experiences of them, will ever contradict the eidetically prescribed experiences in which they are exclusively constituted, especially if this eidetic intuition is, in fact, a chance to choose essence as Lauer suggests it is.

Thus, for example, if I have experiences that are apparently contradictory or irrational and are given in such a way and in such a sense that I do not seem to be able to reconcile these apparently contradictory irrationally contingent experiences in the usual way, then I will describe the experiences as they present to me. I would

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<sup>86</sup> G. Lauer, op.cit., p.147.

<sup>87</sup> G. Lauer, op.cit., p.122.

say that they appeared contradictory or irrational and were apparently irreconcilable; what else is this description than a description of the essence of the region Hallucination? Quite clearly no object constituted in conformity to the essence derived from our experience of it, will ever contradict this experience.

"With the general understanding of reason ... stretched to its widest to cover all varieties of the positioning act ... the general elucidation of the essential correlations which unite the idea of a true Being with the idea of truth, reason and consciousness, must eo ipso be secure".<sup>88</sup>

Thus, if Reason is derived from the intentional relations it prescribes, then paradoxically enough, radical empiricism has made the unity of Rationalism and Positivism, empirically unfalsifiable for no experiences can contradict the rational rules derived radically empirically from experience. As Husserl notes:

"... Phenomenology constructs a priori (yet with a strictly intuited essential necessity and universality), on the one hand the forms of conceivable worlds and, on the other hand conceivable worlds themselves within the limits set by all conceivable forms of being and their system of levels. But it constructs them 'originarily' - that is: in correlation with the constitutional a priori the a priori of the intentional performances that constitute them".<sup>89</sup>

Truly, then we have: "... an all-round A Priori, resting on itself and justifying itself by itself".<sup>90</sup>

However, as we previously saw, a self-justifying philosophy must ultimately presuppose what it purports to prove. Therefore, just as we previously saw that radical empiricism was ultimately based upon a

<sup>88</sup> E. Husserl, Ideas, Section 142, p.364.

<sup>89</sup> E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, Section 64, p.154.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.156.

metaphysical presumption in favour of experience as a valid methodology for a Universal Science, we now see that the synthesis of Reason and Experience is ultimately an empirically unfalsifiable tautology, in which Rationality is precisely measured by the experiences in which it is revealed, and that Rationalism itself as the other element in this tautology is metaphysically grounded just as was radical empiricism. "Methods imply metaphysics, unconsciously they disclose conclusions that they often claim not to know" yet.<sup>91</sup> This is so, for clearly:

"The critique of such a reason does not demand a criterion whereby its objects can be evaluated, it is its own guarantee by the very fact that it is reason".<sup>92</sup>

We may still ask:

"What validity has the value judgement that puts rational thought above other forms of thought?"<sup>93</sup>

It is a choice, as is the choice in favour of a Radical Empiricist's methodology, as appropriate to a Universal Science.

"The mind, when it reaches its limits, must make a judgement and choose its conclusions".<sup>94</sup>

Radical empiricism is, then, based on Rationalist metaphysics.

It is my conclusion, then, that Philosophy, like an ethical code, whether it be empirical, rational or both can do no more than explicate what it implicitly assumes. (Indeed, this conclusion lies if not uncovered by precisely these limits and therefore is itself a priori true and as such empirically unfalsifiable, and so on and so on.) These assumptions must have taken the form of a judgement in favour of radical empiricism (the metaphysical doctrine that paradoxically underlies the very

<sup>91</sup> A. Cassin, op.cit., p.17.

<sup>92</sup> G. Imbert, op.cit., p.119.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p.120.

<sup>94</sup> A. Cassin, op.cit., p.23.

all metaphysics), and a judgement in favour of reason that puts it above other forms of thought. From here Husserl goes on to explicate what is rationally implicit in these assumptions. "For the one who expresses a true assertion proclaims simultaneously that it is true, and so on ad infinitum."<sup>95</sup>

As Merleau-Ponty points out:

"Unless thought itself had put into things what it subsequently finds in them it would have no hold upon things ...".<sup>96</sup>

Phenomenology has, then, offered us the greatest insight of which any philosophy is capable, namely an insight into the limits of philosophy.

"Shall I teach you the meaning of knowledge?" said Confucius. "When you know a thing to recognise that you know it, and when you do not, to know that you do not know - that is knowledge".<sup>97</sup>

Phenomenology offers us a still higher knowledge, and that is the essential knowledge of what it is that we a priori cannot know.

Husserl has done for Philosophy what Heisenberg subsequently did for the Physical Sciences and Gödel did for Mathematics. He has shown that all inclusive certainty or knowledge does not and cannot exist, as such a certainty must be circumscribed by the assumptions on which all systems must necessarily be based.

<sup>95</sup> Aristotle being quoted in ibid., p.21.

<sup>96</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit., p.371.

<sup>97</sup> E. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful, (London: Sphere Books, 1974), p.76.



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