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Dan Zahavi
Danish National Research Foundation: Center for Subjectivity Research
University of Copenhagen

Husserl's noema and the internalism-externalism debate

I. The debate between internalism and externalism

Let me start by briefly outlining the two positions known as (semantic) *internalism* and *externalism*. Internalism is usually defined as the view that an individual's beliefs and experiences are wholly constituted by what goes on within the skin of that individual, so that matters in the individual's physical or cultural environment have no bearing on their nature. Thus, according to internalism, mental states depend for their content upon nothing external to the person whose states they are. Since the object of experience is furthermore taken to be that which is prescribed by or satisfies the meaning-content of the experience, internalism takes an experience to be intentionally related to an object solely in virtue of its own *internal* structure.

For internalism the mind has the referential powers it has quite independently of how the world is. In this sense, internalism might be said to imply a thesis concerning the self-containedness of the mind. Thus, internalism would typically argue that the existence of a mental state – say, the perception of a flowering apple-tree – is compatible with any possible worldly state of affairs whatsoever, including the state of affairs that there are no flowering apple-trees at all.

In contrast, externalism is the view that an individual's experiences are influenced by the individual's relation to the environment. According to externalism, contextual factors have a bearing upon the content of our mental states, i.e., what we think, what we refer to, depends upon what actually exists in the (physical and cultural) environment. Our minds are not self-contained, rather they reach out into the environment since they depend for their content and thus for their very identity upon the nature of the environment. What makes an experience of or about its object is the external circumstances, the context, of the experience – as opposed to its internal structure or content. The object of perception for instance is determined not by the internal content of the experience but rather by its context and causal genesis.

To complicate matters slightly, it has recently become customary to speak of narrow and broad content, respectively. Narrow content is content which is defined exclusively in terms of the subject's bodily states or experiences. Broad content is content which involves something external to the mental and bodily states of the subject. If one thinks that narrow content can determine the intentional object one is an internalist. If one thinks that the determination of the intentional object requires broad content one is an externalist.¹

In recent years, it is especially externalism that has prospered. Let me provide a few examples to show why internalism is taken to be in trouble. Let us imagine that I am looking at a can of Heinz Tomato Soup. I then briefly close my eyes, and when I open them again, I once again see a can of Heinz Tomato Soup. On both occasions, I seem to see and intend the same object. But what if the can was replaced without my knowledge? In that case, we would presumably say that the narrow content of the experience was the same, but that the object was different. But if two perceptions can have the same narrow content but still take different objects, their intentional directedness cannot be a function of the narrow content alone, but must also depend upon the context of the experience (cf. Smith 1989, 146). Generally speaking, demonstrative reference (and indexicality) is generally taken to pose a problem for internalism, exactly because demonstratives are taken to refer directly, rather than descriptively, to their object.

It has also been claimed that internalism is committed to the view that a proper name serves as a kind of abbreviation for a definite description, and that it is knowledge of this description that allows the competent user to refer identifyingly to the bearer of the name.² The bearer of the name is the only entity that possesses the properties specified by the description. However, there are numerous reasons why this theory must be challenged.

1. If we are to refer to Cicero for instance, the theory demands that we should be in

possession of an identifying description which we can associate with the name, and which relates it uniquely to a particular person. But as Kripke writes: "In fact, most people, when they think of Cicero, just think of a *famous Roman orator*, without any pretension to think either that there was only one famous Roman orator or that one must know something else about Cicero to have a referent for the name." (Kripke 1980, 81). The description most of us are in possession of is obviously insufficient – if it were that alone that determined the referent, we would be referring indiscriminately to all famous Roman orators when using the name Cicero – but despite this insufficiency, the name still refers successfully (that at least, is what most people would argue).

2. Furthermore, we can refer successfully to a certain person even in the case where we are in possession of a false description. Some people believe that Columbus was the first person to discover that the Earth is round. This is false, of course, but that doesn't prevent them from referring to real Christopher Columbus when using that name (Kripke 1980, 85). In this case, the reference seems to be successful not because of, but *in spite* of, the definite description associated with the name.

3. Finally, as it has also been pointed out, there seems to be something deeply problematic about claiming that the referent is whatever object that best fits our description. As Evans writes: "There is something absurd in supposing that the intended referent of some perfectly ordinary use of a name by a speaker could be some item utterly isolated (causally) from the user's community and culture simply in virtue of the fact that it fits better than anything else the cluster of descriptions he associates with the name." (Evans 1977, 203-204).

II. Dreyfus and McIntyre on Husserl's internalism

Why is this debate between internalists and externalists pertinent for phenomenologists? More specifically, what does it have to do with Husserl? Well, according to some well-known scholars, Husserl's theory of intentionality is an internalist theory, and they take it to be vulnerable to the externalist criticism.

Let me start with Dreyfus who takes Husserl to be a prototypical internalist. It is well known that Husserl argues that mental activity plays an essential role in making reference possible and in determining which object we are intending. But according to Dreyfus, Husserl also holds the view that the mind contains a number of mental representations that all have the function they have regardless of how the world is; that is, they are all essentially characterized by being purely mental, i.e., by being analyzable and describable without any reference to the world. Thus, as Dreyfus puts it, Husserl takes mind and world to be two totally independent realms (Dreyfus 1991, 74). As Dreyfus explains, "In *Ideas* Husserl calls the entities which make intentionality possible, senses or *noemata*, and claims that the phenomenologists can study them by performing the phenomenological reduction, i.e., by bracketing the world and reflecting directly on these senses." (Dreyfus 1991, 73). Thus, according to Dreyfus, Husserl ultimately urges us to investigate the mental content without any regard for whether that which we are intentionally directed at does at all exist (Dreyfus and Hall 1982, 14).

According to this interpretation, Husserl basically claims that the subject is intentionally related to an object by means of some self-contained mental content. But as Dreyfus rightfully remarks, echoing Heidegger, such an attempt to bridge the gap between subject and object gives rise to more problems than it solves (Dreyfus 1991, 51). What is required is a rejection of the traditional view according to which our ability to relate to objects requires a subject or mind containing "internal representations" (Dreyfus 1988, 95). This was the common insight of Husserl's successors, and that is why we, according to Dreyfus, need to abandon Husserl's *transcendental phenomenology* in favor of Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's *existential phenomenology*.

What is the background of this critical Husserl-interpretation? Basically two assumptions: On the one hand, Dreyfus argues that Husserl in his search for an indubitable foundation wished to investigate consciousness from a strictly internal perspective, and that he consequently found it necessary to effectuate a procedure of purification, which would remove all external or transcendent components from consciousness. Dreyfus consequently interprets the reduction as a change of attitude that makes us turn our attention away from the objects in the world, and away from our psychological experiences of being directed at objects, in order to focus on the abstract mental representations that make intentionality possible (Dreyfus and Hall 1982, 6). This is why Dreyfus can interpret Husserlian phenomenology as an enterprise, which is exclusively interested in the mental representations that remain in consciousness after the performance of the reduction has bracketed

the world (Dreyfus 1991, 50).

On the other hand, Dreyfus basically accepts Føllesdal's noema-interpretation. As Dreyfus writes, it was Føllesdal who first realized what Husserl was actually up to. It was Føllesdal who pointed out that Husserl's noema is an abstract structure by virtue of which the mind is directed towards objects, and it is thanks to Føllesdal's work, that Husserl is now finally seen as the first to have developed a general theory of mental representation that seeks to account for the directedness of all mental activity (Dreyfus and Hall 1982, 2).

Dreyfus's criticism of Husserl is to a large extent shared by McIntyre, who also interprets Husserl as an internalist and who argues that this internalism must be seen in conjunction with Husserl's *methodological solipsism* (McIntyre 1986, 102). This is a term originally coined by Putnam to designate a position according to which no psychological state presupposes the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom the state is ascribed (Putnam 1975, 220).

Just like Dreyfus, McIntyre also subscribes to Føllesdal's noema-interpretation, and he therefore argues that the noematic Sinn is a complex descriptive sense (of the sort that would be expressed linguistically by use of a definite description) for which reason, "an act is *intentionally related* to a certain object if and only if that object is the one and only entity having (all or a sufficiently important subset of) the properties prescribed by the content of the act's Sinn." (McIntyre 1982, 222).

If this interpretation holds true, Husserl's theory of intentionality bears a striking similarity to the descriptive theory of reference, but as we have just seen this theory has come under heavy attack.

At this point, McIntyre actually admits that there are elements in Husserl's account that seems to point in a somewhat different direction. Although Husserl does argue that meaning determines reference, it would be a mistake to think that his theory is only geared towards handling those types of reference where the matter of the act prescribes a certain object by detailing its properties descriptively. On the contrary, already early on, Husserl was aware that "this" refers directly, rather than attributively, and what is even more important, he even realized to what extent perception involves a demonstrative content of sense. When I perceive an object, I intend *this* object, and not just any object with similar properties. But as McIntyre then points out, this appeal to such external factors as the *de facto* relation to the environmental object of reference is not compatible with Husserl's views on the phenomenological method and with his claim that intentional reference is existence-independent and determined purely by the "phenomenological content" of an act, i.e., by its internal character (McIntyre 1982, 226, 229). Let me quote McIntyre in full:

A theory of intentionality modeled on the reference of demonstratives would accordingly not be a purely phenomenological theory appealing to the meaning-content of an act alone. Rather, it would also bring into the theory, as essential to an act's intentionality, factors that philosophers of language classify as 'pragmatic' rather than 'semantic' – contextual factors concerning the subject of the act, the particular occasion on which the act takes place and the empirical situation in which it occurs. But it is precisely factors of this sort which Husserl's phenomenological conception of intentionality and his method of phenomenological reduction are designed to remove from consideration (McIntyre 1982, 229-230).

McIntyre concedes that Husserl eventually came to expand the notion of phenomenological content to include the horizon, past experiences etc. but as he concludes, these modifications do not solve the basic problem which concerns Husserl's very conception of intentionality. No matter how much the (narrow) content includes, a theory of intentionality that confines itself to the phenomenological content of consciousness will never be able to explain our actual involvement with the existing reality – which is exactly what existential phenomenologists have always been emphasizing (McIntyre 1982, 231).

Given this brief overview, it should be clear that this criticism of Husserl is motivated not only by his apparent inability to account for certain basic types of reference, but also by a deep dissatisfaction with his very way of conceiving the mind-world relationship.³

III. Husserl's noema

I have now presented what is taken to be a rather incisive criticism of Husserl. What I intend to do in

the following is to show that there is something highly problematic about classifying Husserl as a traditional internalist. Both Dreyfus and McIntyre recognize that existential phenomenology evades the criticism directed at internalism. I think the same holds true for Husserl's phenomenology. Contrary to what Dreyfus and McIntyre are claiming, I think there are elements in Husserl's thought that makes him very congenial to a certain kind of externalism, but ultimately I wish to argue that his phenomenology simply doesn't fit the traditional divide between internalism and externalism.

This defense or clarification will proceed in two steps. I will first discuss Husserl's concept of the noema in some detail, and then turn to Husserl's transcendental methodology.

A. *The concept of noema*

Dreyfus and McIntyre both favor Føllesdal's noema-interpretation. In the following, I wish to show that although Føllesdal's *Fregean* noema-interpretation does in fact make Husserl into an internalist, there are other noema-interpretations available.⁴ My aim is not *per se* to argue in defense of such an alternative – this has already been done convincingly by Drummond and Sokolowski, for instance – but simply to show that *if* one adopts their noema-interpretation it becomes highly doubtful whether Husserl should be characterized as an internalist.

It is widely acknowledged that the noema is something that is only discovered due to the epoché and the reduction. It is only then that we thematize the intended qua intended, that is, exactly as it is meant and given. But does the epoché imply that we parenthesize the transcendent spatio-temporal world, in order to account for internal mental representations, or does the epoché rather imply that we continue to explore and describe the transcendent spatio-temporal world, but now in a new and different manner? Is the noema, the object-as-it-is-intended, to be identified with an internal mental representation, with an abstract and ideal sense, or rather with the givenness of the intended object itself?

Føllesdal, Dreyfus, Miller, Smith, and McIntyre (often known as the California school, or the West Coast interpretation) have defended a Fregean interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality. According to them, the noema must be sharply distinguished from both act and object. It is an ideal meaning or sense which mediates the intentional relation between act and object. Thus, and very importantly, the noema is not taken to be that toward which consciousness is directed, but that by means of which it is directed, that by virtue of which we achieve a reference to the external object. The decisive feature of the Fregean approach is consequently that the intentionality of consciousness is conceived in analogy with the reference of linguistic expressions (Føllesdal 1974, 96). In both cases the reference is determined by the sense, in both cases the reference is effectuated *via* the sense. In short, the noema is an intermediary ideal entity which is instrumental in our intending the objects themselves. As Smith and McIntyre writes: "Husserl's theory of intentionality is not an object-theory but a mediator-theory [...]: for Husserl, an act is directed toward an object *via* an intermediate 'intentional' entity, the act's noema." (Smith and McIntyre 1982, 87).

In contrast, Sokolowski, Drummond, Hart, and Cobb-Stevens (often known as the East Coast interpretation) argue that intentionality is a fundamental feature of conscious experience, and they therefore strongly deny what seems to follow from the mediator-theory favored by the Fregean interpretation, namely that the intentional directedness of the act is a function of the intensional nature of meaning. In their view, the purpose of the epoché and reduction is not to replace the worldly objects with mental representations. After the reduction, we continue to be concerned with the worldly object, but we now no longer consider it naively, rather we focus on it precisely as it is intended and given, that is as a correlate of experience. But to examine the object-as-it-is-intended, that is, the object in its significance for us, is, as Sokolowski rightly emphasizes, to examine the object itself, it is not to examine a structure of consciousness (Sokolowski 1987, 527). As a consequence, it is argued that the noema is neither to be understood as an ideal meaning, a concept, or a proposition, it is not an intermediary between subject and object, it is not something that bestows intentionality on consciousness (as if consciousness prior to the introduction of the noema would be like a closed container with no bearing on the world), rather it is the object itself considered in the *phenomenological* reflection (in contrast to a psychological or linguistic reflection). The noema is the perceived object as perceived, the recollected episode as recollected, the judged state-of-affair as judged etc. The object-as-it-is-intended is the object-that-is-intended abstractly considered (namely in abstraction from the positing that characterizes our natural attitude), and thus something capable of being given only in a phenomenological or transcendental attitude (Sokolowski 1987, 526-527). On this background, the East Coast interpretation would criticize the Fregean noema-interpretation for

confusing what is an ordinary object considered abstractly in a non-ordinary (phenomenological) attitude with a non-ordinary abstract entity (Drummond 1992, 89). In so far as an investigation of the noema is an investigation of any kind of object, aspect, dimension, or region, considered in its very manifestation, in its very significance for consciousness, the object and the noema turn out to be the same differently considered. In fact, the difference between an object and its meaning is not an empirical distinction, but rather a difference in the way one and the same object is taken, first in straightforward experience and then again in a reflective inquiry. As Crowell puts it: "Meaning is the thing as it presents itself to phenomenological reflection." (Crowell 2001, 89). This does not imply, however, that there is no distinction (within the reflective stance) between the object-as-it-is-intended and the object-that-is-intended, but this distinction is exactly a structural difference *within* the noema (Drummond 1990, 108-109, 113). The noema does not direct us towards an object which is ontologically distinct from the noema, rather the intended object is itself the most fundamental moment *in* the noema, is itself a noematic component. As Drummond puts it, we do intend the object through its sense, but not through it in the sense of going beyond it, but through it in the sense of penetrating it (Drummond 1990, 136).

Each of these two competing noema-interpretations has sought to corroborate its own reading by referring to specific textual passages in Husserl's oeuvre. These passages are well known and I will not cite them here. However, I couldn't resist the temptation of quoting one single passage, which is not very well known, but which in my view speaks against the Fregean interpretation: The passage is from a still unpublished B manuscript and was probably written in 1922:

To claim that consciousness "relates" itself to a transcendent object through its immanent noematic Sinn (i.e. the meaning-pole X in its noematic determinations and its positional mode as existing) is a problematic and, to be more precise, false way of speaking. I have never meant something like this. I would be surprised if this formulation could be found in "Ideas", but in its proper context it would then surely not have this meaning (Ms. B III 12 IV, 82a).⁵

Let me return to the East Coast interpretation of Husserl's concept of noema. Given this interpretation, is Husserl then to be characterized as an internalist or as an externalist? He is certainly not an internalist if internalism is understood as a theory claiming that internal representations (existing in some worldless mental realm) are the necessary and sufficient condition for any kind of reference. In its resolute showdown with representationalism, the East Coast interpretation fully shares Dreyfus's rejection of the traditional view according to which our ability to relate to objects requires the existence of internal representations in the mind. But it also strongly questions the claim that Husserl's theory of intentionality ignores our involvement with existing reality and that the noema has the function it has regardless of how the world is. After all, the noema is nothing but the worldly object-as-it-is-intended. On the East Coast interpretation, Husserl does not take meaning to be hidden in the head, on the contrary, he conceives of meaning as being embedded in the world. It is the world that is meaningful, or to be more exact, it is the world which constitutes the ultimate meaning-horizon. As intentional beings we are centers of disclosure, permitting worldly objects to appear with the meaning that are their own. Given this reading, it might not be completely farfetched to liken Husserl's theory to Gibson's ecological approach, with its discussion of the concept of affordance and its stress on the coupling and co-emergence of agent and environment. As Neisser once put it: "Perception and cognition are usually not just operations in the head, but transactions with the world." (Neisser 1976, 11).

But is Husserl then to be described as an externalist? Well, it all depends on how one defines externalism. Anybody familiar with the discussion will know that the term is used in a variety of ways to designate a quite heterogeneous group of different positions. Is externalism the view that meaning doesn't determine reference, or rather the view that reference depends upon meaning, but that the meaning in question is externally based? Is it the view that meaning is not sufficient, or rather that it is not even necessary for reference? Is externalism the view that beliefs are in the head, but that they get the content they have in virtue of how things are outside the organism, or is it rather the view that beliefs are not in the head in the first place? If externalism is denying that reference is determined by meaning and conditioned by subjectivity, but rather holds that it is reducible to causal co-variation, Husserl is certainly not an externalist.⁶ But as I have just indicated this is not the only way to define externalism. Just like internalism, externalism can hold that meaning determines reference as long as the meaning in question is externally embedded or world-involving. One concrete advocate of this

latter form of externalism is McDowell, who in a recent article argues that an externalist account of meaning should be complemented by an externalist account of the mind. Putnam is famous for having argued that meanings “just ain’t in the head” (Putnam 1977, 124), but as McDowell has subsequently added, neither is the mind (McDowell 1992, 36). The moment both mind and meaning are taken to be environmentally embedded, there is no reason to separate them any longer and to deny that meaning is related to the working of the mind, and that meaning determines and fixes reference. To put it differently, the moment mind is embedded in the world – and why not use the term “being-in-the-world” – there is nothing mysterious in ascribing it an intrinsic referentiality or world-directedness. As McDowell writes, “The need to construct a theoretical ‘hook’ to link thinking to the world does not arise, because if it is thinking that we have in view at all... then what we have in view is *already* hooked on to the world; it is already in view as possessing referential directedness at reality.” (McDowell 1992, 45. Cf. McCulloch 2003).

Husserlian phenomenology should be sympathetic to this form of externalism, and it is clear that both have common enemies. Not only do both reject the kind of internalism known as *Cartesian materialism*, i.e., the view that the mind can be identified with the brain, and that the brain is a self-contained organ that can be understood in isolation from the world, but both would also oppose the kind of externalism that seeks to reduce intentionality and reference to brute causal mechanism.

A natural way to present the choice between internalism and externalism is by asking the following question: Is reference determined by factors *internal* to the mind, or by factors *external* to the mind? However, this straightforward way of cutting the cake is on closer inspection rather problematic, for whereas internalism typically operates with a gap between mind and world, externalism is exactly arguing that the world is *not* external to the mind. And the moment externalism is seen as arguing that mind and world are inseparable, it could also very well be defined as a position that takes reference to be determined by factors *internal* to this whole. However, thus defined externalism is difficult to distinguish from the kind of internalism, which insists that reference is determined by factors internal to the mind, but which conceives of the mind in sufficiently broad terms.⁷

Ultimately, the basic question is whether the very choice between internalism and externalism – an alternative based on the division between inner and outer – is at all *phenomenologically* acceptable.⁸ Already in *Logische Untersuchungen* Husserl argued that the notions of inner and outer, notions that he claimed expressed a naïve commonsensical metaphysics, were inappropriate when it came to understanding the nature of intentionality (cf. Husserl 1984a, 673, 708). This rejection of a commonsensical split between mind and world is even more pronounced after Husserl’s transcendental turn. In *Cartesianische Meditationen*, for instance, Husserl writes that it is absurd to conceive of consciousness and true being as if they were merely externally related, when the truth is that they are essentially interdependent and united (Husserl 1973a, 117). When it comes to Heidegger, he also famously argues that the relation between Dasein and world can not be grasped with the help of the concepts “inner” and “outer”. As he writes in *Sein und Zeit*: “In directing itself toward...and in grasping something, Da-sein does not first go outside of the inner sphere in which it is initially encapsulated, but, rather, in its primary kind of being, it is always already ‘outside’ together with some being encountered in the world already discovered. Nor is any inner sphere abandoned when Da-sein dwells together with a being to be known and determines its character. Rather, even in this ‘being outside’ together with its object, Da-sein is ‘inside’ correctly understood; that is, it itself exists as the being-in-the-world which knows.” (Heidegger 1986, 62. Cf. Heidegger 1999, 75). In my view, the phenomenological analyses of intentionality (be it Husserl’s, Heidegger’s or Merleau-Ponty’s) all entail such a fundamental rethinking of the very relation between subjectivity and world that it no longer makes sense to designate them as being either internalist or externalist.

As already mentioned, one of the classical distinctions within the theory of intentionality is the distinction between an object-theory (also called a dyadic theory), and a mediator-theory (also called a triadic theory). Brentano is known as an advocate of the first type of approach. For him intentionality is a dyadic relation, holding between an experience and an object. In itself the intentional relation is an ordinary relation, and as an ordinary relation it presupposes the existence of both relata. However, this apparently so innocent assumption has some rather problematic consequences. When I am imagining a faun, or when I am hallucinating a pink elephant, I remain intentionally directed, but neither the faun nor the pink elephant exist in reality. The object-theoretical approach is consequently forced to claim that the faun and the pink elephant are objects with a very peculiar form of (intentional in-)existence. In itself this is not a very comforting solution, and given the need for a unified theory of intentionality, it also causes grave problems when we are to account for veridical perceptions. When

seeing a blooming apple-tree am I then in reality seeing an intentional object with a very peculiar ontological status (the same object that I would be seeing if I were merely hallucinating the apple-tree), and is the only difference between hallucinating and perceiving the apple-tree the (phenomenally undetectable) fact that in the latter case, the extraordinary intentional object corresponds to an real ordinary object?

Usually, Husserl has been taken to oppose the object-theory proposed by Brentano. For Husserl intentionality is not an ordinary relation to an extraordinary object, but an extraordinary relation to an ordinary object; an extraordinary "relation" that can persist, even if the object doesn't exist. When it comes to intentions that are directed towards "unreal" objects, they are just as much characterized by their *directedness* towards a transcendent object as are ordinary perceptions. In contrast to normal perceptions, however, the referent does not exist, neither intra-mentally or extra-mentally. In the case of a hallucination, the pink elephant exists neither inside nor outside of consciousness, but the act of hallucination is still directed towards a transcendent, extra-mental, object (cf. Husserl 1984a, 206). This account dispenses with the need for ascribing a special kind of existence (or intentional inexistence) to the hallucinated object in order to preserve the intentionality of the act.

According to the Fregean interpretation, however, it is only their reconstruction of Husserl's theory of intentionality and their noema-interpretation that enable Husserl to account for hallucinations and other objectless acts in this way. Only a mediator-theory which emphasizes the ontological *difference* between the noema and the object can account convincingly for those cases where the experience is intentional (has a noema), but where the object doesn't exist. Apparently, the only alternative left for the East Coast interpretation is to opt for a Brentanian (or even Meinongian) solution and this is not really an option. To put it differently, the Fregean interpretation has typically argued that the East Coast interpretation has a hard time accounting for cases of hallucination, whereas it can easily do so itself.

If this line of argumentation sounds slightly familiar, it is no coincidence. It does bear a rather striking resemblance to the famous *argument from illusion* favored by many internalists. The argument from illusion (which nowadays is actually more like an argument from hallucination) starts out by observing that hallucinations and perceptions can at times be subjectively indistinguishable. The argument then maintains that since there is no distinguishable difference between the two mental states, we must give a broadly similar account of them both. This suggests that the veridical state consists of two elements, one (the common element) which obtains even in hallucination, and the other (the presence of the outer object) which obtains only if we are lucky. Considered in very general form, the argument from illusion consequently argues from the indistinguishability of two states, one of which is a success and the other a failure, to what has been called the "conjunctive thesis": what one gets in success is a conjunction of two independent elements: (1) something which success and failure have in common and (2) something only present in successful cases.

If we transfer this way of looking at the issue to the present discussion, we find a neat symmetry. The Fregean interpretation would argue that perceptions and hallucinations are intentional experiences, it would argue that both types of experiences have a noema (the common element), and finally it would argue that the object referred to is present in perception, but absent in hallucination. This symmetry can be taken to confirm the earlier diagnosis: The Fregean interpretation of the noema does constitute an internalist reading of Husserl. But the symmetry also suggests a possible retort by the East Coast interpretation. The argument from illusion has typically been used as an argument for internalism and for some kind of representationalism. Needless to say, this is not an argument that externalists have in general been persuaded by. To put it differently, the validity of the argument has been questioned by externalists and non-representationalists alike. An interesting possibility consequently presents itself. Perhaps the East Coast interpretation's ability to handle different cases of objectless intentions might profit from a closer study of externalist replies to the argument from illusion, and more generally from ecological accounts of hallucination.⁹

However, a quite different response is also possible. It could be objected that the reference to hallucinations and objectless intentions is not as unproblematic as some might seem to think. Particularly not if we remember that our reference to them – in the context of a discussion of the noema – is supposed to take place *within* the phenomenological attitude, are supposed to take place *after* the effectuation of the epoché. To put it differently, when the Fregean interpretation demands that a theory of intentionality must be able to account for cases where we intend something that despite being intuitively given doesn't exist in reality, and that their noema-interpretation exactly permits them to do so, one might ask whether they are not vacillating between the phenomenological

attitude and the natural attitude, and thereby introducing queries into the discussion that are fundamentally alien to it (cf. Mohanty 1992, 53). This is not to say that phenomenology cannot or should not address the problem of hallucinations etc., but it has to do so in its own way. Not by comparing the experience of a pink elephant with a description from a view from nowhere, i.e., not by appealing to a mysterious "viewer from nowhere" that can distinguish subjectively undistinguishable perceptions and hallucinations, but by confronting and comparing the hallucination with other worldly experiences, and with the experiences of the world made by others. To put it differently, from a phenomenological point of view it would not be permissible (or intelligible) to operate with hallucinations that are subjectively, i.e., experientially, indistinguishable from perceptions. But the question, of course, is whether they ever are. To put it differently, the moment the phenomenologist ceases to engage in the abstraction that it is to analyze the hallucination in isolation, and instead considers its experiential context (the hallucination is not confirmed by further experiences, and it cannot be shared with others), the hallucinatory character of the experience will reveal itself. If the context in which the veridical perception and the hallucination are occurring is different, then the two experiences will also be subjectively and experientially distinguishable, since they are influenced by their context and horizon. I believe that the East Coast interpretation would appeal to factors like these in its attempt to account for hallucinations. However, a thorough treatment of this issue would burst the scope of this article. Let me just add that I do think the Fregean interpretation is right in claiming that the East Coast interpretation should address the problem of hallucinations and other objectless intentions in more detail than they have done so far.

Let me briefly return to the criticism leveled against the idea that meaning determines reference. The crucial objection seems to touch on the question of how to account for reference to particulars. If the only meaning available is the meaning of general terms, the only way to intend particulars would be through a cluster of definite descriptions, but this is basically to adopt a version of the problematic descriptive theory of reference. But what if the meaning available includes components that allow us to refer to particulars independently of definite descriptions? According to Husserl, this is precisely the case for demonstrative reference. When I see a red ball, the ball is my intentional object, not because it satisfies the general meaning "the red ball", but because it satisfies the demonstrative content "*this* red ball". To perceive an object is not simply to perceive a certain type of object, that is, any object having the type of properties prescribed by the content, rather it is to perceive *this* particular object. Some would argue that the direct character of demonstrative reference is due to the fact that it is based not on meaning but on causality. The assumption being that the only way for meaning to "capture" particulars is by doing so attributively, i.e., on the basis of definite descriptions. But Husserl's point is exactly that "this" is a non-descriptive meaning, and that it refers directly and non-attributively. For him the directness of demonstrative reference is founded on the immediacy of *intuition*. Thus, Husserl's theory of intentionality seems to incorporate elements that make his theory differ in kind from a traditional descriptive theory of reference. This at least is McIntyre's view, but as he then goes on to say: If Husserl's theory of intentionality includes demonstrative components it is incompatible with Husserl's methodological solipsism. Whereas the latter decrees that it is the phenomenological content alone which determines the object of reference, Husserl's theory of intentionality seems to admit that some types of reference are contextually constrained, but in that case they cannot depend on phenomenological content alone, which *by definition is narrow*. Thus McIntyre claims to have revealed a most unfortunate tension or contradiction in Husserl's thinking (McIntyre 1982, 230-231).

But how convincing is this criticism? As far as I can see, the whole brunt of it rests on the assumption that the phenomenological content, that is, the phenomenon or the phenomenal quality (to use two different discourses), is in fact narrow, is in fact located *in* the subject. But is that really Husserl's view? Or does it not rather reflect a psychological or perhaps even psychologististic interpretation of the phenomenon? Benoist has recently argued that the decisive merit of Husserlian phenomenology is its discovery of a new non-mentalistic notion of phenomenon (Benoist 1997, 228). As, Benoist insists that we are ultimately dealing with a question of givenness. This givenness is more fundamental than the fact that it is a givenness of something for somebody. If Benoist is right, and I think he is, McIntyre's criticism seems seriously misguided. As Husserl himself writes in *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie* from 1906-7: "If consciousness ceases to be a human or some other empirical consciousness, then the word loses all psychological meaning, and ultimately one is *led back to something absolute that is neither physical nor psychical being in a natural scientific sense*. However, in the phenomenological perspective this is the case throughout the field of givenness. It is precisely the apparently so obvious thought, that everything given is either physical or psychical that

must be abandoned.”(Husserl 1984b, 242). It cannot be emphasized too much how important it is to keep this admonition in mind.¹⁰

B. Husserl's transcendental methodology

Let me at this stage anticipate a critical rejoinder. Since everybody knows that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology comprises an unprecedented form of methodological solipsism the attempt to deny that he should be an internalist is just downright ludicrous. To put it differently, the East Coast interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality suffers from one major drawback: It utterly fails to take his more overarching transcendental project into consideration, and the moment this is done the internalist and representationalist character of his thinking will become evident. The East Coast interpretation consequently presents us with a reading of Husserl's theory of intentionality that makes it incompatible with the rest of his system. Adhering to a principle of charity, we should consequently choose the Fregean interpretation instead. Even though it presents us with a problematic account of intentionality (an account that is vulnerable to the criticism against internalism presented above), the interpretation in question at least makes Husserl's theory coherent.

In reply, let me first say that I also think that it is true that an interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality cannot stand on its own. It must necessarily be integrated into a more general interpretation of Husserl's transcendental-philosophical theory of reduction and constitution. As Husserl himself points out in his introductory remarks to the discussion of the relation between noesis and noema in part three of *Ideen I*: "Without having seized upon the peculiar ownness of the transcendental attitude and having actually appropriated the pure phenomenological basis, one may of course use the word, phenomenology; but one does not have the matter itself"(Husserl 1976, 200). Contrary to what is being claimed above, however, it is not the East Coast interpretation but the Fregean interpretation that fails to comprehend the basic nature of Husserl's transcendental project. To claim that the phenomenological reduction involves an exclusion of the world, that the world is henceforth ignored in favor of mental representations; to claim that questions concerning the being of reality are suspended, that existing reality is lost of sight, and that no attention is paid to the question of whether that which we are intentionally directed at does at all exist, are all egregious misunderstandings. The same goes for the claim that Husserl is a methodological solipsist, and that he – to mention a further allegation of Dreyfus – is unable to handle and account for perceptual givenness, since this would require that he took our bodily interaction with the object of perception into regard; something Husserl is prevented from doing, since his phenomenology, according to Dreyfus, only operates with a detached, disembodied, ego (Dreyfus 1982, 108, 119). These contentions overlook the central constitutive, i.e., transcendental, role attributed by Husserl to the moving, acting, body. They ignore the true radicality of his phenomenology of intersubjectivity. They fail to notice that Husserl is constantly stressing the constitutive impact of alterity. Generally speaking, they involve what might be called a mentalistic misinterpretation of the phenomenological dimension. Rather than seeing the field of givenness, the phenomena, as something that questions the very subject-object split, as something that stresses the co-emergence of self and world, the phenomena are interpreted phenomenologically, as part of the mental inventory. And finally, these criticisms slight all the places where Husserl explicitly denies that the true purpose of the epoché and the reduction is to doubt, neglect, abandon, or exclude reality from our research, but rather emphasizes that their aim is to suspend or neutralize a certain dogmatic *attitude* towards reality. For as he says, it is only through such a suspension that we will be able to approach reality in a way that will allow for a disclosure of its true being. Since I have argued in detail against these misinterpretations elsewhere,¹¹ I will not repeat myself here, but simply add two remarks.

1. My first remark concerns the textual evidence put forth in support of the claim that Husserl is a methodological solipsist. It is almost invariably one and the same paragraph that is adduced as evidence, namely the notorious § 49 in *Ideen I*. This is the paragraph where Husserl writes that "pure" consciousness can be considered as an independent realm of being, and that even though consciousness would be modified if the world of objects were annihilated; it would not be affected in its own existence (Husserl 1976, 104-105). Given such assertions, it might once again be claimed that Husserl's methodological solipsism is so glaringly apparent that it is absurd to try to deny it. But, as it is often the case, the truth of the matter is more complex. First of all, even § 49 is open for interpretation, and it has certainly not always been read in support of methodological solipsism. To mention one famous, but divergent interpretation: In his classical *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (1967/1970) Tugendhat argues that only a very superficial reading of Husserl's

transcendental reduction would lead to the assumption that its purpose is to isolate consciousness from that which it is directed towards: the world. As Tugendhat points out, Husserl's transcendental reduction does not lead us back to a worldless subject. On the contrary, it leads us towards the transcendental phenomenon world. And as Tugendhat then goes on to say, what is at stake in § 49 is not an attempt to bracket the world, rather what is bracketed is the naively posited world, and it is exactly through this procedure that the world as phenomenon is discovered, a world that is essentially correlated to subjectivity, and which subjectivity is essentially related to. In conclusion Tugendhat then makes a remark that effectively illustrates how different his interpretation is from the one advocated by Dreyfus and McIntyre:

It is exactly through the epoché that Husserl enters the dimension of Heidegger's being-in-the-world. Heidegger does not need the epoché any more in order to gain entrance to the dimension of the modes of givenness, since he, after it was opened by Husserl, from the very start stands in it, and from now on can articulate it according to its own conditions – and not simply in exclusive orientation towards a world of objects (Tugendhat 1970, 263).

Not only is it possible to read *Ideen I* differently than Dreyfus and McIntyre, it is certainly also possible to question what seems to be their implicit assumption, namely that Husserl until the very end remained committed to the same approach to phenomenology that he had advocated in *Ideen I*; an approach that (since Kern's classical article from 1962) has been known as the *Cartesian way to the reduction*. This assumption is also highly problematic, however, since it overlooks Husserl's own criticism of the Cartesian approach. Husserl eventually realized that this approach was confronted with some serious problems, the chief one being that it very easily gave rise to a serious misunderstanding of the proper aim and topic of phenomenology. One is easily led to the belief that the task of phenomenology is to investigate pure subjectivity in isolation and separation from both world and intersubjectivity. In part, it is exactly this distortion which Husserl sought to address and overcome in his so-called *ontological way to the reduction*. The ontological way (developed in *Krisis* for instance) does not take its point of departure in the immediate self-givenness of the subject, but starts with an analysis of the givenness of a specific ontological region (say the region of ideal objects or of physical objects). This region is investigated qua appearing and the question concerning the condition of possibility for this appearance is then raised. The ontological description consequently serves as a guiding line for the subsequent transcendental analysis. If we restrict ourselves to that which shows itself (be it in a straightforward perception or in a scientific experiment), and if we focus more specifically on that which we tend to ignore in our daily life (because it is so familiar), namely the very appearance, we cannot avoid being led to subjectivity. Insofar as we are confronted with the appearance of an object, that is, with an object as presented, perceived, judged, or evaluated, we are led to the intentional structures that these modes of appearance are correlated to. We are led to the acts of presentation, perception, judgment, and valuation, and thereby to the subject (or subjects) which the object as appearing must necessarily be understood in relation to. Through the phenomenological attitude we become aware of the givenness of the object. But we do not simply focus on the object exactly as it is given, we also focus on the subjective side of consciousness, thereby becoming aware of our subjective accomplishments and the intentionality that is at play in order for the object to appear as it does. When we investigate appearing objects, we also disclose ourselves as datives of manifestation, as those to whom objects appear. The attempt to reach a philosophical comprehension of the world leads, in other words, *indirectly* to a disclosure of subjectivity, since the phenomenological perspective on the world must necessarily be through the appearance of the world *for subjectivity*. Whereas Husserl's Cartesian way to the reduction *seems* to emphasize the subject's status as a separate and independent realm of being (as a thinking substance), thereby providing ammunition for the widespread misinterpretation that the task of phenomenology is to explore this autonomous, isolated and worldless subject, his ontological way to the reduction makes it clear that the investigation of subjectivity is something that takes place in connection with and inseparable from a philosophical clarification of the world. As it has occasionally been said, Husserl is only interested in consciousness insofar as it is the field or dimension where the world appears. It is worth emphasizing that on this account, although being no part of the world, transcendental subjectivity is not worldless. After all, as the subject of intentionality, it cannot be described without reference to the world; it is nothing in isolation from the world. As Husserl himself points out in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität III* (with an obvious critical jab at his own

former position): it is an abstraction to speak of a pure, worldless I-pole, for full subjectivity is a world-experiencing life (Husserl 1973c, 287).

2. My second remark concerns the relation between descriptive phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Dreyfus has argued that a convincing theory of perception has to operate with "an incarnate meaning, a meaning which is not abstractable from the intuitive content which it informs." (Dreyfus 1982, 105). This intuitive sense would be the sort of sense, "whose existence would be essentially inseparable from the intuitive content of the object whose sense it was." (Dreyfus 1982, 105). In short, a convincing theory of perception would let the intentional correlate of the perceptual act be dependent upon there being something to intuit. According to Dreyfus, however, Husserl was prevented from ever operating with such an incarnate meaning, since his theory of intentionality decreed that every intentional act has the intentional correlate – the sense – it has regardless of whether or not it also corresponds to a real object. All intentional acts intend something, and they do so by virtue of their own internal meaning-content, but it is not possible to pass from what is intended to what is given, since the meaning in question is purely mental, is something that is cut off from the world. Given this theory, Husserl had to abandon the attempt to account for outer perception altogether, and as Dreyfus then remarks, Husserl eventually made a virtue of this necessity, namely in so far as he chose to take the step from a descriptive to a transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology explicitly aims at accounting for how objects are taken or intended, and not for how they are given or presented. To do the latter would entail taking existence into account, but it is exactly existence that is bracketed by the transcendental move in *Ideen I* (Dreyfus 1982, 108). It is against this background that Dreyfus can then conclude that one needs to abandon the transcendental project as such, and pass on to existential phenomenology, if one wishes to integrate the actual givenness of the objects into the intentional analysis.

I find this line of argumentation highly problematic, and for a variety of reasons.¹² One of them concerns Dreyfus's account of the shift from a descriptive to a transcendental phenomenology. In *Logische Untersuchungen* Husserl is very explicit about the fact that he regards the question of whether consciousness can attain knowledge of a mind-independent reality as a metaphysical question which has no place in phenomenology. The same goes for the question of whether there is at all an external reality (Husserl 1984a, 26). Whereas metaphysics is concerned with questions concerning existence, this is not the case for the theory of science that Husserl is out to establish (Husserl 1975, 27). It is in part as a consequence of this methodological restriction – a restriction that might well be designated as a form of *metaphysical neutrality* – that Husserl in his subsequent account of intentionality in the Fifth Investigation can write that the *existence* of the intentional object is phenomenologically irrelevant, since the intrinsic nature of the act is supposed to remain the same regardless of whether or not its object exists (Husserl 1984a, 358, 360, 387, 396). What is remarkable about these statements is that they very clearly demonstrate that it is Husserl's pre-transcendental phenomenology (long before any mentioning of epoché and transcendental reduction) that excludes questions concerning existence.¹³ The interesting question is then whether this is also true for Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In a text from 1906-7 (published in *Husserliana XXIV*), Husserl criticizes his own former position by arguing that it reduced phenomenology to a kind of descriptive psychology. And as he then puts it, if one wants to overcome this restriction, and if one wants to understand the relation between true being and knowledge, and clarify the correlation between the act, the meaning, and the object, one has to turn to transcendental phenomenology (Husserl 1984b, 427). If one then continues to works like *Erste Philosophie II, Krisis*, or *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität III*, one will encounter repeated statements to the effect that the theme of transcendental phenomenology includes the world itself with all its true being (Husserl 1959, 432, 1973c, 366, 1962, 154-5).¹⁴ Even in *Ideen I*, Husserl makes it clear that phenomenology eventually integrates and includes everything that it had at first bracketed for methodological reasons (Husserl 1976, 107, 159, 337). Obviously these statements cannot stand alone. They are in need of further interpretation and raise questions of their own, but at least they illustrate that the apparently so obvious fact, namely that the essential feature of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is that it suspends or excludes questions concerning the being of reality is in fact not at all that obvious. This fact would have provided a much needed support for the claim that Husserl is a methodological solipsist, but it is a "fact" with little root in reality.¹⁵

IV. Conclusion

The Fregean interpretation has typically argued that the East Coast interpretation has a hard time accounting for cases of hallucination, whereas they themselves can easily do so. In reply, the East Coast interpretation has often pointed out that by conceiving of the intentional relation as involving some kind of mediation the Fregean interpretation offers an account which is vulnerable to the standard problems facing classical mentalism and representationalism, whereas their own interpretation brings subjectivity and world much closer together, thereby making Husserl's theory more akin to the position held by later phenomenologists.

This article can be seen as a contribution to that debate. The point I have been trying to make is not only that if the East Coast interpretation can avoid construing Husserl's theory of intentionality in such a way that it becomes vulnerable to the arguments directed against classical internalism, it has a systematical edge over the Fregean interpretation. I have also tried to argue that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is in fact closer to existential phenomenology than is frequently assumed - at least by the people who need Husserl as a handy whipping boy against whom they can then display the brilliance of Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty.¹⁶

However, even people who might agree with this could raise the following objection: If Husserl is in fact on his way to existential phenomenology, why then not go the whole way? Why not proceed directly to Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty's theories? The answer, of course, is that a theory that attempts to integrate the more overarching approaches of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty with the fine-grained intentional analyses of Husserl's will get us further, than a theory that simply ignores the latter.¹⁷

NOTES

¹ But as we will soon see, the distinction between internalism and externalism is in fact less clear than these initial statements might suggest.

² Whether this claim is actually justified is a different issue. Searle has famously argued that the kind of internalism criticized by the externalists is in fact a straw man (Searle 1983, 232-233).

³ Dreyfus and McIntyre are not alone in formulating this criticism. In his recent book *Existential Cognition* McClamrock argues that Husserl's concept of noema as well as his transcendental methodology commits Husserl to internalism, and that only the existential turn in phenomenology, represented by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, involved the realization that the mind is essentially determined by its intentional relationship to the world (McClamrock 1995, 3, 180-193).

⁴ The plural must be emphasized. It is a major mistake to think that the only alternative to the Fregean interpretation is Gurwitsch's noema-interpretation, and to identify Gurwitsch's interpretation and the East Coast interpretation, as it has occasionally been done (cf. Beyer 1997, 167-168). One decisive difference between Gurwitsch's position and the East Coast interpretation is that (briefly put) Gurwitsch conceives of the relation between the intended object and the noema as that of a whole to a part, whereas the East Coast interpretation conceives of it as that of an identity to a manifold. For an extensive discussion of this difference, cf. Drummond 1990.

⁵ "Zu sagen, daß das Bewußtsein sich durch seinen immanenten noematischen Sinn (bzw. den Sinnespol X in seinen noematischen Bestimmungen und seinem Setzungsmodus als seiend) auf einen transzendenten Gegenstand 'beziehe', ist eine bedenkliche und, genau genommen, falsche Rede. Ist so verstanden nie meine Meinung gewesen. Ich würde mich wundern, wenn diese Wendung sich in den 'Ideen' fände, die im Zusammenhang dann sicher nicht diesen eigentlichen Sinn hätte." (Ms. B III 12 IV, 82a). I am grateful to the director of the Husserl-Archives in Leuven, Professor Rudolf Bernet, for permission to consult and quote from Husserl's unpublished research manuscripts.

⁶ In his book *Phenomenological Epistemology* Pietersma consistently defines externalism as a third person account of cognition, perception, etc. (Pietersma 2000, 9). Given this definition, phenomenology would of course not be a kind of externalism.

⁷ On one reading of what Husserl's transcendental idealism amounts to, this might exactly be what Husserl was up to. Husserl is known for arguing that the world is conditioned by transcendental subjectivity (Husserl 1976, 104-6, 159). However, it is crucial not to miss the way in which the transcendental discourse transforms the concepts "subjectivity" and "world". Husserl's concept of subjectivity is eventually expanded in such a way that it surpasses or undermines the traditional opposition between subject and object (cf. Husserl 1962, 265). For instance, Husserl's concept of the

‘monad’ – which is his term for the subject in its full concretion – encompasses not merely the intentional life, but also all the objects which are constituted through it (Husserl 1973a, 26, 102, 135, 1973b, 46). On this background, we are consequently faced with the following choice: On one reading, Husserl’s theory of intentionality shares important features with one form of externalism. On another reading, Husserl’s transcendental idealism might be said to embody a form of internalism, but an internalism so radical that it undermines the gap between mind and world, thereby approaching a form of externalism. It might be of interest to notice that the same ambiguity can also be found in Heidegger. Heidegger of course is primarily known as an externalist. But in some of his early lectures, Heidegger makes claims that sound remarkably like internalism. In *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (1925), for instance, Heidegger denies that a perception only becomes intentional if its object somehow enters into a relation with it, as if it would lose its intentionality if the object didn’t exist. Rather the perception, be it correct or deceptive, is in itself intentional. As a perception, it is, as Heidegger writes, *intrinsically intentional*, regardless of whether the perceived is in reality on hand or not (Heidegger 1979, 40). In *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1927) Heidegger basically repeats this characterization, and adds that it is a decisive error to interpret intentionality as a relation between a psychical subject and a physical object, as if the subject, in itself, in isolation, would lack intentionality. The truth of the matter is that the subject is intentionally structured within itself. Intentionality does not first arise through the actual presence of objects but lies in the perceiving itself, whether veridical or illusory (Heidegger 1989, 83-85). These statements do sound rather internalistic, and they match well with another recurrent idea of the young Heidegger, the idea namely that life is characterized by a self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*), in the sense that the intentional and world-directed character of life is a feature of life itself, and not something that is added from without (Heidegger 1993, 261).

⁸ I thus find myself in some sort of agreement with David Woodruff Smith who has also argued that the opposition between internalism and externalism is spurious when it comes to intentionality (Smith 1989, 27, 155). The main difference between us seems to be one of exegesis. Smith thinks that Husserl remained a traditional internalist.

⁹ Perhaps it could be objected that although “local” hallucinations might be handled in this way, the East Coast interpretation would still remain incapable of dealing with the kind of “global” hallucinations envisaged in the “evil demon” or “the brain in the vat” scenarios. I think this is correct, but I also think that phenomenologists would in general simply reject such scenarios (Husserl 1973a, 32, 117, Heidegger 1986, 229). Both Husserl and Heidegger would argue that the scenarios presuppose the possibility of distinguishing in principle between the world as it is understood by us and the world as it is in itself, but it is exactly this possibility and this distinction that they reject (Husserl 1959, 441, 462).

¹⁰ Recently, a number of analytical philosophers have criticized the idea that phenomenal qualities are narrowly determined, and have argued in defence of an intentionalistic or representationalistic interpretation (cf. Tye 1995, Dretske 1995). Thus, as the argument goes, experiences do not have intrinsic qualities of their own, rather the qualitative character of experience consists in the qualitative properties objects are experienced as having (Dretske 1995, 1). For an appraisal of the advantages and shortcomings of this proposal, cf. Zahavi 2003b.

¹¹ Zahavi 1999, 2001a, 2003a.

¹² How Dreyfus can claim that Husserl’s analyses can only account for the objects as they are intended and not for how they are given is even more mysterious. This is particularly so, given Husserl’s classical distinction between the signitive, the imaginative, and the perceptual mode of appearance, and given Husserl’s frequent description of perception as the act where the object is bodily present (*leibhaftig gegeben*) and intuitively given *in propria persona* (Husserl 1984a, 434).

¹³ For a more extensive discussion, cf. Zahavi 2002a.

¹⁴ In *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, Heidegger accounts for the phenomenological methodology developed by Husserl, and at one point, he delivers the following surprisingly acute characterization: “This bracketing of the entity takes nothing away from the entity itself, nor does it purport to assume that the entity is not. This reversal of perspective has rather the sense of making the being of the entity present. This phenomenological suspension of the transcendent thesis has but the sole function of making the entity present in regard to its being. The term ‘suspension’ is thus always misunderstood when it is thought that in suspending the thesis of existence and by doing so, phenomenological reflection simply has nothing more to do with the entity. Quite the contrary: in an

extreme and unique way, what really is at issue now is the determination of the being of the very entity.”(Heidegger 1979, 136).

¹⁵ Of course, apart from discussing whether Husserl is a methodological solipsist (in Putnam’s sense of the term), one might also wonder whether Husserl is a methodological solipsist in a much more traditional sense (cf. Husserl 1959, 174). This has of course been one of the standard criticisms against his phenomenology. For a thorough demonstration of why this criticism is unfounded, since Husserl did in fact develop a very sophisticated theory of intersubjectivity, cf. Zahavi 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2003a.

¹⁶ In their book on Foucault, Dreyfus and Rabinow write that Foucault’s account of Husserl was influenced by Merleau-Ponty’s reading of Husserl. Merleau-Ponty had for instance argued that Husserl’s effort to go beyond the theoretical, thetical, and objectifying level of act-intentionality made him discover the existence of an operative intentionality characterized by anonymity and passivity (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1945, xiii, 1960, 217-218). But as Dreyfus and Rabinow point out, although this interpretation of Husserl is still dominant in France, more recent research has shown that the Husserl Merleau-Ponty was writing about was basically Merleau-Ponty’s own invention. Merleau-Ponty was simply reading his own ideas back into the posthumous works of his master (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 36). Dreyfus and Rabinow do not give any references to this more recent Husserl research. No wonder. If there is anything recent Husserl-research has shown it is that Merleau-Ponty’s Husserl-interpretation was indeed well founded. Merleau-Ponty’s attempt to follow the spirit rather than the letter of Husserl’s writings, his endeavor to distinguish between Husserl’s programmatic statements and his actual phenomenological analyses, and his effort to think along with Husserl and to articulate his unthought thought, might not live up to the standards of modern text-philology. But the amazing fact is, that his reading was ahead of its time, and that it to a large extent anticipated results that have only much more recently been confirmed by Husserl-scholarship. For an extensive account of this, see Zahavi 2002b.

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