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On the relationship between the Cartesian and the ontological way to the transcendental reduction in the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl

RESUMÉ

Denne artikel forholder sig til en diskussion om, hvordan man skal forstå forholdet imellem Husserls kartesianske vej og den senere ontologiske vej til den transcendentale reduktion: Er den kartesianske vej fejlagtig, og udgør den ontologiske vej således en principiel korrektion, eller er den ontologiske vej en logisk fuldstændiggørelse af en utilstrækkelig, dog nødvendig, kartesiansk vej? Der foreslås i denne artikel en læsning, der har til hensigt at sandsynliggøre, at der i denne diskussion også er plads til et tredje alternativ. Her ses begge veje som tilstrækkelige, og den ontologiske vej ses således som en uddybning af særligt underbetonede men ikke principielt fraværende elementer i den kartesianske vej.

ABSTRACT

This paper assesses a discussion on how to understand the relationship between Husserl's Cartesian way and the later ontological way to the transcendental reduction: Is the Cartesian way flawed to the extent that the ontological way constitutes a principal correction to it, or is the ontological way a logical completion of an insufficient but nonetheless necessary Cartesian way? A reading with the purpose of rendering probable that this discussion allows for a third alternative is proposed in this paper. Such a reading claims that both ways are individually sufficient. The ontological way is thus taken to be a clarification of certain underemphasised though not principally missing elements of the Cartesian way.

EMNEORD

Fænomenologi, subjektivitet, transcendental reduktion

KEYWORDS

Phenomenology; subjectivity; transcendental reduction.

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Introduction

In a very short paper, Dan Zahavi (2005) claims that the future of phenomenology depends upon researchers' abilities to strengthen the Husserlian heritage instead of committing to aggressive and negative criticisms by arguing that Husserlian phenomenology is a collection of non-unified and heterogeneous projects. Zahavi proposes that philosophers should take some of these criticised projects in Husserlian philosophy seriously because they are still relevant. "This is in particular so, given that there are core features of the Husserlian methodology that remain indispensable to contemporary phenomenology, the most prominent one being the transcendental reduction" (Zahavi 2005). Given that Zahavi is correct in arguing that the transcendental reduction is indeed indispensable for any contemporary and future phenomenology, it is important to have a clear understanding of how one should grasp the relationship between the different accounts of the reduction offered by Husserl.

The transcendental reduction can *as of now* be identified as a response to the need for a rigorous and presuppositionless philosophical viewpoint within Husserl's phenomenological philosophy. This viewpoint constitutes an absolute starting point for philosophy. In this sense, 'transcendental reduction' indicates the movement *away from* the natural and everyday-like attitude towards the world and its constituents and *into* a philosophical-phenomenological worldview. I will elaborate this in more detail in the next section of this paper.

At least three different paths to the transcendental phenomenological reduction in Husserl's writings are commonly recognised today: *The Cartesian way*, *the way through intentional psychology*, and *the ontological way*. These distinctions have led to a discussion on how to understand the relationship between especially the first and the last of the ways. Iso Kern (1977) has argued that only the ontological way constitutes a complete way to the desired end of the transcendental reduction. However, in response, John Drummond (1975) has suggested that the Cartesian and the ontological ways presuppose each other in order for the reduction to be complete. In the third and fourth sections of this paper, I will present these two ways to reduction.

In the fifth section, I will attempt to present an interpretation of the passages of *Ideas* from 1913 in which Husserl develops the Cartesian way and subsequently the passages of *The Crisis* from 1936 in which he develops the ontological way. This interpretation differs from the aforementioned positions. I wish to point to a logical space for an alternative third position in the Kern/Drummond debate as well as to outline what this position amounts to. The third position takes each way to be sufficient in itself. Firstly, it does not agree with Kern's (1977) idea that the Cartesian way fails to grasp the

sense of the transcendental reduction and that the ontological way thereby constitutes a principal correction to it, with the result that the ontological way is the only valid of the two. Secondly, it does not agree with Drummond's (1975) conclusion that one must recognise a logical dependence between the two ways. Nonetheless, the third position accepts Drummond's idea that, in order for something to be an absolute starting point for philosophy, it must be both absolutely apodictic and have absolute ontological precedence. It thus becomes clear that I must provide an account of the ways to the reduction and that this account, unlike Drummond's view, renders probable that both of these necessary and jointly sufficient projects of reduction – namely, the establishment of absolute apodicticity and the establishment of absolute ontological precedence – are present in *each* way.

However, even granting that this is the case, the Cartesian way must have seemed insufficient to Husserl (1970) in some manner inasmuch as he subsequently provided another way. Given that the Cartesian way is easily misunderstood in that it is taken to be logically or principally insufficient for the proper sense of the reduction, the third alternative position argues that the two ways could equally depend on each other in an *explanatory* manner.

To be clear: The point of this paper is not to argue that one must dispense with Kern's (1977) and Drummond's (1975) theses in favour only of the proposed third alternative. Rather, the aim is to bring more nuance to the discussion by showing that Kern's and Drummond's theses are not logically exhaustive in the debate on how to grasp the relationship between the Cartesian and the ontological ways to Husserl's transcendental reduction.

The point of the transcendental reduction and its preparation

Prior to discussing whether the different ways to reduction grasp the sense of the reduction as Husserl (2012, 1970) intended, we must clarify the nature of this sense or intention.

Even though the turn to transcendental philosophy in his later writings (Husserl 2012) constitutes a break from the ideas of pure, non-metaphysical description in the *Logical Investigations* (Husserl 2002), this earlier work introduces some themes and concepts upon which Husserl never turned his back (Zahavi 2003, 43). The very project of seeking to isolate the constituents of knowledge in order to establish a rigorous foundation for philosophy and science in general persists, as do some of the early concepts used in this search. These include the idea that consciousness is intentional (Husserl 2002, v.2, 95-97) and the notion of epistemological priority, called *evidence* given to experience, which is brought to cognition by the originary giving intuition (Husserl 2002, v.1, 177). In other words: Firstly, every conscious act is directed at an object by way of intentionality, which means that consciousness is

always consciousness of something, whether physical or mental. Secondly, epistemological certainty can best be secured when the intention can be fulfilled in intuitive perception. This view is maintained in the later work *Ideas* (Husserl 2012) as “the principle of all principles”, which states:

“that every primordial dator intuition is a source of authority (Rechtsquelle) for knowledge, that whatever presents itself in ‘intuition’ in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality), is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be, though only within the limits in which it then presents itself.” (Husserl 2012, 43)

Now, as Husserl (2012, 51-60) sees it, we are in the *natural attitude* in our everyday lives. This concept describes our relationship with the entities in our sensual and non-sensual surroundings when we engage with them in the ordinary. In the natural attitude, we take things to simply be real and to straightforwardly exist: We are free to infer from the existence of entities in the present perceptual field to the existence of things that are not present in this field. This worldview gives reason to take for granted the independently meaningful reality of the world around us and serves as a basis for assuming a metaphysical realism in science (Husserl 2012, 44-47 & Husserl 1970, 5-7).

Such realism is, according to Husserl, naïve since, as Luft describes it, when we posit ‘truths’ about reality while in the natural attitude, we do not know that we are in this attitude and consequently take this attitude to be “the only possible ‘way of life’” (Luft 1998, 159). In fact, Husserl (2012, 53-54) argues, the mere act of thematising the natural attitude makes it possible to stand outside it (in another attitude) and describe it. One is thus naïve in believing these truths to be apodictic (Luft 2004, 206-207 & Husserl 2012, 35-37 & Husserl 1970, 5-7).

In order to avoid the naivety of the natural attitude, Husserl (2012) introduces the *epoché*. Evocation of the epoché does not amount to discarding the natural attitude; it merely disqualifies the natural attitude’s validity and brackets the naïve positing made on the basis of this attitude. The epoché serves as a necessary methodological preparation for establishing a rigorous epistemological foundation based on the phenomenological evidence of which we have previously spoken. In other words, the epoché conditions the possibility for a radically new approach to the world, an approach in which one gains access to the things as they show themselves in contrast to the naïve view in which they show ‘themselves’ as they ‘are’, fitting into preconceived theories (Husserl 2012, 59 & Zahavi 2003, 46).

The transcendental reduction, though part of the same methodological contemplation, is distinct from the epoché in not being part of this conditional preamble. The epoché signifies the bracketing of the naïve positing of the natural attitude. In contrast, the reduction represents the methodological

decision to inquire into the relationship between subjectivity and the world in which, because of the performance of the epoché, subjectivity is disclosed as *necessarily* contributing to the constitution of meaningful worldly objects (Smith 2003, 27).

Husserl (2012, 33-47 & 1970, 127-129) does not believe that science limits its beliefs about the world to that which can be precisely fulfilled in intuition, which entails that science, generally speaking, commits to some form of naïve realism. As a result, Husserl wishes to make phenomenology the one science that does not extend its judgments beyond the borders of intuition as described in the principle of all principles (Husserl 2012, 56-58 & 1970, 121-122). In other words, he wishes to establish a rigorous science that can serve as an absolute starting point for philosophy and all other sciences (Husserl 2012, 1 & 1970, 16-18). With the thematisation of the naivety of the natural attitude as well as the realisation that the reason for this naivety is the natural attitude's inability to go beyond itself, so to speak, and critically assess its own epistemological foundation, the philosophical search for *transcendental* ground has been proclaimed.

Drummond (1975) argues that, assuming that the transcendental reduction aims to identify the absolute starting point for philosophy, it must commit to two projects. 1) The starting point must be absolutely indubitable, that is, apodictic. 2) The starting point must be absolutely ontologically precedent and in principle independent of the world. Drummond (1975, 48) takes both of these requirements to be necessary and only jointly sufficient, and the position presented in this paper adopts this view. However, for reasons explicated in the following sections, this paper does not adopt Drummond's main conclusion, namely that the Cartesian way exclusively corresponds to the first commitment and the ontological way to the second commitment, so that one must recognise a dependence not only between the commitments but also between the ways.

When seeking rigour in this manner, it is evident that one cannot remain in the naivety and doxic beliefs of the natural attitude. One must leave this attitude in order to *qualify* a point as apodictic and begin world investigations from this point of view. This is, however, insufficient. The starting point must itself be ontologically prior to all other beings since it would otherwise epistemologically 'qualify' the ground upon which it itself rests (Drummond 1975, 63-64). In order for the starting point to be absolutely fundamental to our world investigations in the way intended, it cannot itself be something worldly or necessitated by something worldly. Both criteria pertain to the *transcendental* attribute, which must be ascribable to the starting point to which Husserl (2012; 1970) wishes to reduce.

In the following, I will attempt a reading of the different ways to the reduction inherent in Husserl's *Ideas* and *The Crisis*. This reading incorporates the premise that both of these necessary parts of the reduction already are to be found in *each* of the ways, so that they can be regarded as sufficient in themselves – at any rate, on a purely principal level.

The Cartesian way to the transcendental reduction in *Ideas*.

The first step in the Cartesian way to the transcendental reduction is to reduce to the indubitable foundation of cognition by putting aside all that can be doubted. This methodological doubt is not universal doubt; rather, it should be thought of as *the attempt to doubt* every intention that I have. It is simply to be thought of as a provisional device, not as an epistemological position. One can only hold a position like this when the epoché has not yet been put into action, seeing as the epoché brackets any such position (Husserl 2012, 57 & Smith 2003, 21). Continuing with this idea of attempting to doubt in order to reduce to something indubitable, Husserl investigates the mode of givenness of spatio-temporal entities and compares this with the mode of givenness of the *experience* of these entities. In other words, Husserl seeks to point out the difference between how transcendent objects relate to consciousness and how the immanent experience of the objects relates to consciousness. Things in the world always give themselves in a perspectival or adumbrated manner, meaning that in every 'now', there are sides to a given thing that are not perceptually accessible to me. One can therefore say that the givenness of transcendent things can be doubted whereas, on the other hand, the immanent experience of the thing is always given *in its entirety* because it stands in a certain unity with consciousness (Husserl 2012: 78-80).

By way of methodological doubt, Descartes regresses back to the *mind*. This mind is not, in Husserl's (cf. 1970, 80) view, transcendental: In quite a peculiar manner, it is part of the objective world since Descartes' doubt is performed out of the natural attitude, without intervention from the epoché. That which Husserl, on the other hand, uses the Cartesian way to the transcendental reduction to reduce to is a *transcendental ego* (Husserl 2012, 87-89). This ego, however, stands in a certain constitutive relationship with the world but is not itself a part of this world.

Kern notices problems in this way to the reduction. These problems seem to be fundamental impediments, which eventually force Husserl (1970) to depart from the Cartesian way and come up with an alternative way in *The Crisis* (Kern 1977, 131). This would imply that, when following the Cartesian way to the transcendental reduction, Husserl relinquishes any possibility of positing anything about the world that accords to the idea of evidence from the perspective of this ego since, as we saw, such positing can always be doubted. By considering the immanent cognitive sphere of the transcendental ego as

the residuum of the reduction, the transcendent world is epistemologically disconnected or 'lost', to the effect that the transcendental reduction cannot establish the basis for philosophical knowledge about the world (Kern 1977, 130).

Kern (1977, 131-134) derives two other specific problems from the general problem of disconnection. The Cartesian way can lead neither to inter-subjectivity nor to the temporally streaming consciousness of the subject performing the reduction. These problems will not be considered in detail since a critical assessment of them is unnecessary for the argument in this paper. Rather, if it can be made probable that the general problem of disconnection is untenable, then the derivative problems will seem untenable as well due to the argumentative dependence between the derivative problems and the general problem. The dependence can be described in the following way: The problem concerning the Cartesian way's inability to give an account of the temporality of the experiencing subject is because the notion of immanent experience inherent in the Cartesian way cannot incorporate any conception of objective time on which time-consciousness, according to Kern, is dependent (1977, 132). Objective time is disconnected along with the 'outer' or transcendent world (Kern 1977, 133-134). By the same token, the other derivative problem is that the Cartesian way cannot lead to inter-subjectivity because the experience of other subjects is dubitable, just like the experience of any other transcendent phenomena (Kern 1977, 131-133).

Kern (1977, 130) concludes that the problems in fact result from a misunderstanding of the scope of the Cartesian way. The criticism only applies if one uses the Cartesian way in order to grasp the proper sense of the transcendental reduction. The Cartesian way misses the point of the transcendental reduction. It does not establish an absolute philosophical viewpoint based on apodictic evidence that can serve as a basis for knowledge about the world – not, at any rate, without ending up with the aforementioned problems (Kern 1977, 131, 133-134). In order to render probable the idea that the Cartesian way is, contrary to this conclusion, sufficient in itself, it is thus necessary to give an account of it that at least opens up the possibility for its reaching the transcendental starting point in the proper sense, without entailing the problem of disconnection.

One way of looking at Kern's (1977, 130) conclusion is by taking him to say that the phenomenon, which appears to the transcendental ego reached through the Cartesian way to the reduction, bears no secure connection to the world. Then it all comes down to whether Kern can plausibly maintain that no other notion can validly be given on the basis of the Cartesian way than that of *subjective representation* to determine the nature of the *phenomenon* (Kern 1977, 130). With this idea Kern (1977, 130-134), seems to argue that that which is determined as *phenomenon* by the Cartesian way is something that is

merely *phenomenal* to the subject, that is, some kind subjective copy of a noumenon.

When considering more attentively the implications of the dubitability regarding the experience of transcendencies as opposed to the apodicticity regarding the immanent experience of transcendencies, a certain priority in epistemological status is disclosed. Husserl (2012, 95) also attaches this hierarchy of priority to the ontological side of the distinction. Being as experience, which in its totality we call subjectivity, is ontologically prior to being as object. This becomes clear through a Cartesian thought experiment: It is conceivable, says Husserl (2012, 93-97), that subjectivity can be given without the presence of any transcendent objects whatsoever, whereas the opposite scenario (that objects can be given without subjectivity) is inconceivable. Subjectivity is precedent to other beings. It is the cause for the givenness of other beings but is not itself dependent upon other beings for its givenness since it is that which conditions the possibility of givenness as such. What appears to subjectivity is apodictic, and subjectivity appears to itself as a precedent being.

Husserl has thereby reduced to the *cogito* by saying that the only thing about which absolute certainty can exist is the object of immanent cognition, entailing that the cognising of transcendent objects necessarily involves epistemological doubt. In light of the intentionality of consciousness (cf. Section 2), however, it is quite probable that we will not end up with disconnection because the world continues to exist for us only in a new way. We now take it to be the *cogitatum* of our *cogito*. This is not a disconnection but is, in fact, the establishment of a connection. This notion of phenomenon as *cogitatum*, which can be established through the reduction is not equal to mere subjective representation. 'Phenomenon' does not denote something merely phenomenal, that is, a state of consciousness or a purely mental image. What we realise due to these investigative thought experiments is that things can exist in no other way than as they are given to subjectivity. The result of the Cartesian way is the philosophical realisation that "An object that has being in itself (*an sich seiender*) is never such as to be out of relation to consciousness and its Ego." (Husserl 2012: 91)

The ontological way to the transcendental reduction in *The Crisis*

Kern (1977, 144) argues that only the ontological way grasps the proper sense of the transcendental reduction because it is concerned with the relationship between subjectivity and the 'outer' world and because it does not confine its field of investigation to the purely mental.

"There is no talk even of the ambiguous opposition 'immanence-transcendence', which is typical of the Cartesian way. It is replaced with the

opposition between 'mundane' (or 'objective') and 'transcendental'. The whole line of thinking is determined by the task of clarifying or criticizing objective logic and ontology." (Kern 1977, 142)

Indeed, Husserl begins by stating that, in its search for objectivity, scientific investigation neglects our individual, relative, and intuitional experience of entities in the 'life-world'. The 'crisis' is precisely that the objectivistic or positivistic sciences have, over the course of time, become so immensely successful that they have become haughty. They have 'forgotten' that they are continuously motivated by and immersed into the pre-scientific wonderment caused by puzzles arising in the life-world (Husserl 1970, 5-7 & Zahavi 2003, 125-127). This becomes the heart of the matter in *The Crisis*, and Husserl discusses this by identifying "the specifically human questions" as those that are overlooked or 'forgotten' (Husserl 1970, 7). He states: "Scientific, objective truth is exclusively a matter of establishing what the world, (...), is in fact. But can the world, and human existence in it, truthfully have a meaning if the sciences recognize as true only what is objectively established in this fashion, (...)" (Husserl 1970, 6).

After having carefully put the epoché into action, one can learn something from this mistake. Thanks to the epoché, one realises that the modern objectivistic sciences are built upon naïve and idealised constructions. It is thus obvious for Husserl (1970, 123-135), when seeking to establish an absolute ground for cognition, to begin in the life-world and to then work in the exact opposite direction than would the scientist, namely by not forming yet another "idealizing accomplishment" (Husserl 1970, 140). As a result, the ontological way begins with the decision to 'reduce' from seeking objective truth in a hidden static reality behind mere appearance to giving philosophical-phenomenological attention to the life-world. It pays to be careful when initially performing the epoché since that into which one is actually enquiring by way of phenomenological reflection is the world correlative to the natural attitude. One can do so because only the attitude itself is bracketed. What remains is the naturalness pertaining to world of the natural attitude, which now seems to be "the primary basis of all objectivities" and "the 'meaning fundament' of all objective sciences" (Drummond 1975, 61-62).

The next step in the reduction is to 'narrow down' the ontological investigation of the life-world and concentrate on the question of what ultimately conditions the possibility of appearance in the life-world.

"One must fully clarify, i.e., bring to ultimate self-evidence, how all the self-evidence of objective-logical accomplishments, (...) has its hidden sources of grounding in the ultimately accomplishing life, the life in which the self-

evident givenness of the life-world forever has, has attained, and attains anew its pre-scientific ontic meaning." (Husserl 1970, 128)

Husserl (1970, 157) notices that when we, for instance, look at a thing, we always *see* only one out of many possible surfaces of this thing. So we never sensually see the thing as whole, that is, as that thing which we conceptually take it to be. "This implies that, while the surface is immediately given, I mean more than it offers" (Husserl 1970, 158). In the life-world, I do not merely *see* things, I *intend* them. And this *intending* is key to understanding what Husserl (1970, 128) means by the life of subjectivity being *ultimately accomplishing* (cf. quote above). By analysing how things are given immediately in the life-world, it has become evident that they never just give the actually perceived, sensuously felt, heard, etc. surface of themselves but are *themselves* understood as consistent wholes. This leaves the final contribution of passively synthesising the perceived, felt, heard, etc. into meaningful things to the sense-bestowing activity of transcendental subjectivity, which is then established in its ontological priority to things.

When examining how things appear to us in the life-world, we analyse the different modes of givenness. So in a somewhat indirect way, by undertaking this analysis, we become aware that it is essential for objects in the life-world to appear *as they really are* to subjectivity (Husserl 1970, 165-170).

The search for an apodictic point of departure is at play in the ontological way to reduction as well. It is inherent in the epistemological question regarding the manner of givenness of things in the life-world as opposed to the manner of givenness of things in the scientific worldview. This distinction unveils the same hierarchy of epistemological security as does the distinction between immanent cognition and transcendent cognition in the Cartesian way (Husserl 1970, 139). Drummond (1975) does not ascribe any significance to this similarity –he does not, at any rate, take this turn towards the manner of givenness to concern the project of apodicticity. To be sure, Husserl seems to have left behind his old Cartesian jargon, meaning that the use of words such as 'apodictic' and 'indubitable' is very scarce. However, these are only words, and their limited use does not entail that the search for absolute epistemological rigour has been shelved. Drummond (1975, 62) admits that apodicticity is still a concern in *The Crisis*, though not as a part of the ontological way to the reduction. The reading of the ontological way to the transcendental reduction attempted in this paper opposes Drummond's (1975) reading because it takes the meaning of the question concerning the manner of the givenness of things in the life-world to be a matter of pointing out in which way our experience of things cannot be doubted. The *appearance* to subjectivity in the life-world is apodictic because the thing *as it appears* is constituted by that very same subjectivity.

What Husserl has supposedly discovered following the ontological way to the transcendental reduction is a necessity in the relationship between subject and object.

“(…), no conceivable human being, no matter how different we imagine him to be, could ever experience a world in manners of givenness which differ from the incessantly mobile relativity we have delineated in general terms.” (Husserl 1970, 165)

By discovering the life-world to be the basis of all objectivities and subsequently discovering that this world is constituted by subjectivity, it has become evident that it would make no sense to talk about the world and its things as always-already-determined – as ready-mades, one might say, independent of subjectivity (Zahavi 2003, 52). By first describing the ontology of the life-world, we have seen that it is impossible for the world and the entities in it not to be given as they are. They *are* relative to the one to whom they are given. And because this is relative to subjectivity, it establishes apodicticity to the experiences of the life-world made from within the 1st person perspective.

The development of a third alternative position

By structuring the incompatibilities between Kern’s (1977) reading, Drummond’s (1975) reading, and this paper’s proposed reading of Husserl’s two ways to the transcendental reduction, it is possible to work out a basis for the development of a third alternative position in the discussion on how to understand the relationship between these ways.

At some point, Husserl (1970, 154-157) himself seems to acknowledge what is implied in Kern’s (1977) objection to the Cartesian way, saying that it does not, in fact, clearly prove the constituting contribution of subjectivity but instead entails that the undertakings of phenomenological investigation are confined to the realm of the purely mental. Husserl states in *The Crisis* that, with the Cartesian way, it is too easy to: “fall right back into the naïve-natural attitude” (Husserl 1970, 155). Indeed, if the Cartesian way advocates solely for the investigation of the purely mental, it has not succeeded in showing us the way to the strict phenomenological viewpoint – a viewpoint from which we take subjectivity to be the condition for the possibility of the manifestation of objects. In addition, such a failure would indicate that, in our investigation of the subject, we would take it to be just another object, meaning that we have not established subjectivity as *transcendental* subjectivity because subjectivity has not been established as ontologically prior.

Drummond’s (1975, 48-56) reading of the transcendental reduction proposed by Husserl in *Ideas* does not differ from the reading proposed in this paper. However, Drummond seems to take the ‘Cartesian way’ as terminating with

the ascription of epistemological apodicticity to immanent perception. If this is the case, then this way is insufficient for the purpose of the transcendental reduction for somewhat the same reasons as those formulated by Kern (1977, 130-134). Only a sphere of cognitive apodicticity in the immanent experience of the transcendental ego has been achieved so far since the transcendental ego has not yet been qualified as an ontologically precedent existent (Drummond 1975, 62). Drummond thus has to say that both the Cartesian way and the ontological way are present in *Ideas*, seeing as this work does in fact account for the transcendental reduction proper. The account of the transcendental reduction in *The Crisis* is, according to Drummond (1975, 62), focussed solely on the part concerning the establishment of an absolutely precedent existent and is as such only exhibiting the ontological way, though in a more explicit manner than in *Ideas*. In order for this exhibition to be complete, it must presuppose that which is obtained regarding apodicticity in *Ideas*.

The reading suggested in this paper cannot agree with either Kern's (1977) or Drummond's (1975) theses for two basic reasons.

Firstly, in the analysis at hand, we do not observe any principal difference between the 'final insights' that the two ways to the transcendental reduction end up stating. In other words, both Drummond's (1975) and Kern's (1977) readings argue that the ways terminate with different conclusions, so to speak. Drummond takes each of the ways to tell only half of the story, and Kern thinks that we need to dispense with the Cartesian way because it does not fulfil the purpose of the transcendental reduction. In this paper, however, both ways end up stating that subjectivity is unavoidable when epistemological rigour is desired: That is, both ways give us the *complete* understanding of the meaning-constituting contribution of subjectivity – both ways lead to transcendental subjectivity, though via different routes.

Secondly, the Cartesian way is taken to be the sole exposition of the transcendental reduction in *Ideas*, and the ontological way is likewise taken to be the sole exposition of the transcendental reduction in *The Crisis*. Drummond's (1975) reading concludes that the transcendental reduction in *Ideas* leads to full transcendental subjectivity because the Cartesian way with which it begins is supplemented by the ontological way. On the contrary, the reading in this paper suggests that this is so because the Cartesian way in *Ideas* actually incorporates *both* aspects of the absolute starting point and that the same is true for the ontological way in *The Crisis*.

Husserl himself seems to distinguish between the ways by assigning only one way to each of these works, and this most directly evident in §43 of *The Crisis*, where he proclaims *a new way* to the transcendental reduction as opposed to, as he describes it: "the much shorter way to the transcendental epoché in my

Ideas toward a Pure Phenomenological Philosophy, which I call the ‘Cartesian way’” (Husserl 1970: 155). He continues: “Let us begin our new way by devoting an exclusive, consistently theoretical interest to the ‘life-world’” (Husserl 1970: 155). This gives reason to argue that the distinguishing factor for Husserl when talking about different ways to the reduction is the point of departure for the given way. This opposes Drummond’s (1975) argument that the distinguishing factor has to do with whether Husserl discusses transcendental subjectivity as given absolutely apodictically or absolutely ontologically precedent. However, in contrast to Drummond’s view, it could be argued that, in *Ideas*, Husserl (2012, 76-80) initiates the transcendental reduction inwardly, that is, by assessing different acts of experiencing as he travels along the path of the Cartesian way. In *The Crisis*, he initially focuses the transcendental reduction outwardly, that is, aims at the description of the ontology of the life-world as he travels along the path of the ontological way. In both cases, the way takes a radical turn and seeks to commit to the other of the two jointly sufficient projects in the reduction than that with which the way was initially concerned. Taking this turn when performing the reduction does not, as Drummond (1975) argues, necessarily entail stepping onto another way to the reduction. It is my contention that this turn could just as well be taken to be an integral part of the way with which one initiated the reduction.

In the presentation of the Cartesian way in *Ideas*, it was rendered probable that it is not solely an epistemological investigation seeking apodictic knowledge. It certainly begins as such, but as the investigation proceeds, the epistemological questions entail assumptions about the ontological status pertaining to the specific manners of givenness as well. Following this idea and on the basis of the thought experiment in *Ideas*, Husserl gives ontological priority to subjectivity:

“It is thus clear that in spite of all talk (...) of a real Being of the *human ego*, and its conscious experiences *in* the world and of all that belongs thereto in any way in respect of ‘psychophysical connexions’ (...) consciousness, considered in its ‘purity’, must be reckoned as a *self-contained system of Being*, as a system of *Absolute Being*.” (Husserl, 2012, 95)

It similarly became evident when presenting the ontological way that this way incorporates some of the epistemological notions about manners of givenness to subjectivity, which is the point of departure for the Cartesian way. Husserl (1970, 155-157) is concerned with the life-world and with how things appear to subjectivity in it in order to avoid the naïve realism that he believes science commits to when it takes appearance to be some sort of shadow of the *real thing*, a noumenon behind the appearance. What actually interests him is thus that things in the life-world give themselves as they are, that is, completely and apodictically to subjectivity.

If the ways do not logically presuppose each other, and if it is not the case that only one of them grasps the full sense of the transcendental reduction, what then is the relationship between the two? How can the third alternative position explain Husserl's reason for proposing the ontological way? Husserl's addition of the ontological way is, in fact, a *clarification* of some underemphasised, though not absent, points in the Cartesian way. These underemphasised points are those concerning understanding of the phenomenon as the constitution of the thing as it is and not just as a subjective representation as well as understanding that subjectivity is the condition for this constitution. The ways thus depend upon each other in an *explanatory* sense and not in a strict logical sense. Either way helps to elucidate and explicate the full sense of the other.

Dan Zahavi (2003, 47-56) seems to agree, at least in part, with this thesis. To be fair, Zahavi does not explicitly address this particular Kern/Drummond discussion and consequently cannot be an active participant in it. He does, however, actively distance himself from the view that the Cartesian way is inadequate, stating the following about Husserl's motivation for invoking the ontological way:

"By focussing on the immediate self-givenness of subjectivity and by stressing the difference between this givenness and the givenness of objects, one is easily led to the belief that the task of phenomenology is to investigate pure subjectivity in isolation and separation from both the world and intersubjectivity. In part, it is this distortion that Husserl seeks to address and overcome in his so-called *ontological way* to the reduction." (Zahavi 2003: 50)

The confusion regarding the Cartesian way to which Zahavi draws attention in this quote is, as we saw earlier, what motivated Kern to argue that this way implicates a loss because it confines the phenomenological investigation to the solely mental. The third alternative position takes this confusion to be based on a misunderstanding of the Cartesian way rather than on a logical deficit inherent in the way itself.

Sebastian Luft also seems to assume a position not completely different from the third alternative position proposed in this paper. Luft calls attention to a systematic order of the ways "where none of these ways devaluate, but rather explicates and compliments, the others" (Luft 2004, 205). He further emphasises "Husserl's assertion that the Cartesian way retains its 'right' and 'validity' despite the problems Husserl sees with it" (Luft 2004, 205). However, Luft's *reasons* for saying this make a complete compatibility between his position and the position proposed in this paper impossible. Luft (2004, 226-228) does not take the Cartesian way to devaluate with the presentation of the ontological way because the two ways serve different purposes. "Whereas the 'Cartesian Husserl' pursues a path of scientific

grounding and foundationalism, the 'life-world Husserl' is interested in what can be called a hermeneutics of the world of everyday life" (Luft 2004, 226). In this paper, the ontological way is interpreted to *ultimately* serve the same purpose as the Cartesian way, which is the designation of the viewpoint from which rigorous philosophy can be conducted. The hermeneutical consultation of the ontology of the 'life-world' is instead a means to achieve this end. Thus, if Luft were to be an explicit participant in the Kern/Drummond discussion, his position would be a fourth. This simply underlines a primary point of this paper, namely that there remains much to be said about the transcendental reduction in Husserl's philosophy and that it is philosophically enriching to keep thinking about it.

Closing remarks

Through a reading of some of the central passages in Husserl's works on the transcendental reduction, this paper proposes an interpretation of the relationship between the Cartesian way and the ontological way to the reduction, stating that the two ways are dependent upon each other in an explanatory way. This dependence is not logical but contingent.

One should be careful, however, not to underestimate the importance of the ontological way. It is more than probable that the charitable reading of the Cartesian way proposed in this paper is tacitly dependent upon the clarifying intentions of the ontological way in more than a simple explanatory way. The constitutive relationship between subjectivity and objects is underemphasised in the Cartesian way to the transcendental reduction to the extent that it is probable that it would have been practically impossible for a reader to grasp Husserl's intention before the publishing of *The Crisis*.¹

But no matter the importance of the ontological way, its invocation might not be motivated by strict logical necessity but instead for the sake of elucidation. Husserl might not, in other words, be correcting a severe mistake in the Cartesian way with the ontological way. It is quite probable, and I hope that this paper gives credibility to this idea, that he is not radically revising his fundamental philosophical outlook with the presentation of the transcendental reduction some 20 years later than the publication of *Ideas*.

CV

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¹ I owe thanks to Prof. Dan Zahavi for valuable discussion on this reservation.

ninger af vejen til den transcendentale reduktion i det tredje nummer af MEF-Tidsskriftet.

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