

HEIDEGGER'S RECOVERY OF THE BEING-QUESTION IN LIGHT OF HIS INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION OF HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL REDUCTION

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Martin Heidegger is generally regarded as one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century and in particular as one of the most influential figures within the new phenomenological movement in philosophy, inaugurated by Edmund Husserl at the turn of that century. Yet, despite this reputation, complete agreement about what Heidegger's philosophical relation to Husserl's idea of phenomenology exactly is or about what Heidegger's 'Being-question' actually is and about which particular tradition in the history of philosophy his thinking of Being follows, has not been reached. Heidegger, however, makes two general claims concerning his topic in philosophy that are relevant both to its philosophical and to its historical evaluation. First, Heidegger maintains that the 'Being-question' is a 'simple matter' of thought, but that this simple matter of thought was forgotten in the unfolding of the history of philosophy (metaphysics) itself. Second, Heidegger maintains that the contemporary phenomenological movement in philosophy, inaugurated by Husserl, should take this issue as its main 'theme'. This paper examines both of these claims made by Heidegger, focusing specifically on the way in which Heidegger's topic in philosophy unfolds both distinctively and controversially within Husserl's idea of transcendental phenomenology. It is of course indisputable that there are important influences on Heidegger's thinking about Being that emanate from sources outside of the tradition of Husserlian phenomenology, and these will be noted. Nevertheless, Heidegger's recovery of the 'Being-question' within phenomenology and phenomenological research is dependent in part upon Heidegger's interpretation and evaluation of Husserl's definitive position in phenomenology. Hence, the title of this paper: 'Heidegger's Recovery of the 'Being-question' in Light of His Interpretation and Evaluation of Husserl's Transcendental Reduction'.

'If to think and to be thought are different, from which of these does thinking derive its excellence? For indeed it is not the same thing to be thinking and to be being thought.'
Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Lambda 9.

INTRODUCTION

Husserl characterized his famous reduction of the natural standpoint to the transcendental-phenomenological standpoint in Part Two: 'The Phenomenological Fundamental Consideration of *Idea*' (1913) as a genuine return to 'talk of Being' (*Seinsrede*).¹ Heidegger certainly did not disagree with this claim, or with this understanding of phenomenology.² What, then, does Husserl say about Being in the Fundamental Consideration that has a bearing on Heidegger's philosophical position in phenomenology? This is the issue that I propose to address in this paper. This particular issue is connected to the wider and deeply contentious matter of Heidegger's philosophical relation to Husserl's thought and to the development of that thought, and hence some reference to this matter will be necessary. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will focus on Heidegger's controversial recovery of the 'Being-question' (*die Seinsfrage*) in light of his interpretation and evaluation of Husserl's transcendental reduction.

1. HUSSERL'S 'TALK OF BEING' IN THE REDUCTION AND HEIDEGGER'S TALK OF 'ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE'

'The Fundamental Consideration' of *Ideas* represents a meditation on Being. More particularly, it represents for Husserl a meditation on Being as thing (*Sein als Ding*) given to outer sense perception and on Being as experience (*Sein als Erlebnis*) given to immanent perception (within inner reflection).³ In 'The Fundamental Consideration', therefore, two different ways in which the meaning of Being manifests itself are compared and assessed; namely, a natural(istic) and a phenomenological way of talking about Being. It seems to me that Husserl makes several important

points in his ‘talk of Being’ in the reduction that could have lead Heidegger to believe that *questioning the meaning of Being* is the central issue at stake (*die Sache selbst*) in phenomenological research, and not the singular development of phenomenology as a systematic eidetic science of pure intentional consciousness and its objectivity (as Husserl himself thought), after consciousness has been purified of all naturalistic misinterpretations *via* the reduction.⁴ If this is true, however, then here we have one very important *philosophical* source of the origins of Heidegger’s controversial ‘path of thinking’ about ‘the Being-question’ within phenomenology and phenomenological research.

Husserl’s meditation in ‘The Fundamental Consideration’ culminates in a number of conclusions about the Being of a thing given to outer sense perception (and by extension about the Being of the ‘world’, which is understood by Husserl as simply the ‘totality of things’ that can be encountered by means of outer perceptual-sense experience) and about the Being of one’s own *actual* consciousness. Between these two modes of Being, Husserl discovers ‘a true abyss of sense’ (*Abgrund des Sinnes*). ‘On the one hand we have a merely contingent and relative being in adumbration, never absolutely given, and on the other hand a necessary and absolute being which, in principle, is not given through adumbration and appearance.’⁵ Husserl’s point is a simple point. A thing, because it is spatial in essence, shows itself ‘one-sidedly’ and ‘in adumbration’ to one’s actual outer perceptual-sense experiences. Further legitimating (*ausweisende*) outer perceptual-sense experiences confirm the appearing of the thing in its very manner of being to consciousness. A thing ‘is never such that it has nothing to do with consciousness and the conscious ego.’⁶ A thing which, in principle, cannot be experienced would be a simple ‘nonsense’. In addition to the one side that is given through perspective variations, then, there is a horizon of ‘co-giveness’ (*Mitgegenbenheit*) that is as yet undeterminate. This *always* makes possible new perceptions of the same legitimating order ‘where the indeterminate becomes determinate’. The perception of a thing, therefore, *at any given time*, points to possible further perceptions of that thing itself. Hence, the actual perception of a thing can never ‘in principle’ be completed. It is always possible, however, that that which is given to one’s own actual outer perceptual-sense experiences could turn out to be other than it actually is. Further outer perceptual-sense experiences may ‘modify’ what is actually given. In fact, further outer perceptual-sense experiences of the same thing may ‘cross out’ altogether the initial perception(s). In such an event, the perceptions I have of the thing ‘abound in conflicts that are irreconcilable, not for us but in themselves’. In such cases, the perceptual experience of the thing itself fails to fit harmoniously together as a connective whole (*Zusammenhang*). Experience (*Erfahrung*) ‘explodes’.⁷ In this event, then, it is the experiences themselves, i.e. the actual acts of outer perceptual-sense experience that ‘cross out’ the very meaning and the very being of the thing itself that is given to experience. Failure of the unity of one’s actual experiences to harmonize, therefore, results in ‘a cancelling’ of the very thing itself, in its very being. Failure of the unity of one’s actual experiences, however, would not result in the non-existence of consciousness. Rather absence of unity implies multiplicity. Hence, what would be left over, after such a ‘world-annihilation thought-experiment’, is consciousness (i.e. unconnected intentional outer perceptual-sense experiences) that would not constitute the world *as we know it*. Things, then, are not *encountered* in their being as the thesis of the natural standpoint would have it. Rather, things are *constituted* in the very manner of being as intentional correlates of one’s own actual consciousness.⁸ Thus, as De Boer aptly comments, ‘Transcendental phenomenology is ‘presuppositionless’ for exactly this reason, for it is aware that the world cannot be accepted as ground since consciousness is the true ground and basis.’⁹

In sharp contrast to the outer perception of a thing, in the immanent perception of a consciously lived psychical act-experience (*Erlebnis*) the experience cannot but be seen to exist. The non-existence of a currently lived psychical act-experience is unthinkable. Thus consciousness — and not things that are presumptively given to one’s actual outer perceptual-sense experiences — can provide Husserl with an apodictic starting point in his philosophy. Transcendental phenomenology, then, is ‘presuppositionless’ for it does not presuppose that things are there, whether attention is directed towards them, or not, as held in the (hypo)thesis of the natural standpoint. Rather, transcendental phenomenology begins with consciousness and its objectivity, with a view to researching the intricate web of intentional experiences that it contains within itself.¹⁰ In sum, the sphere of consciousness is a ‘sphere of absolute positing’.¹¹

The first and most important discovery that Husserl makes in the reduction, then, is that there is an abyss within the meaning (*Sinn*) of Being (*Sein*) itself, when we talk about the meaning of Being that characterizes either *the mode* of the Being of a thing given to outer (sense) perception or *the mode* of the Being of an experience given to immanent perception.¹² However, Husserl can only differentiate these two *modes* of Being as a result of questioning *the way* the meaning of Being itself is given to such experiences, in this particular case, in respect to the way Being as thing is given to outer sense perception and to the way Being as experience (*als Erlebnis*) is given to immanent perception. The

negative outcome of such *questioning of the meaning of Being* demonstrates that the gulf between ‘consciousness’ and ‘thing’ is so unbridgeable that consciousness can never be regarded either *to be* a thing (material thing) in the world or *to be* part of a thing in the world that is perceivable, if need be, by means of outer perceptual-sense experience. Without engaging in such a radical questioning of the meaning of Being, therefore, we remain within the natural standpoint *oblivious to the absurdity of the ontological position* contained within that standpoint, which maintains that things given to outer sense perception are simply there (*vorhanden*), whether attention is directed towards them, or not, and they are there, *also*, as constituted intentional correlates of one’s actual experiences.¹³ Furthermore, without questioning the meaning of Being, we, *also*, remain within the natural standpoint oblivious to the fact that one’s own actual consciousness can never in principle be capable of being examined *properly in its manner of being* in the same way that a thing is examined in its relation to other things within the world given to outer perceptual-sense experience. *A fortiori*, natural-scientific investigations into things in and of the world fail to see *in principle* the way my actual consciousness exists in its true being which, as the reduction also unveils, is as a necessary (pre)condition for the appearing of a meaningful world *in its very existence* to actual (human) consciousness. My *actual* lived experiences — and my experiences are the kinds of things that cannot but be lived — and the things within the world given to my acts of outer perception, therefore, cannot be properly understood to be part of one and the same homogenous ‘totality of reality’, no matter how natural this may seem for anyone.¹⁴ My actual consciousness of things (given through outer perceptual-sense experience) cannot be something that sometimes binds itself to the life of my consciousness and sometimes not. That is to say, things cannot be declared to be simply there, *lying-in-stock* (*vorhanden*), whether perceptual attention is directed towards them or not, as erroneously assumed in the thesis of the natural standpoint. Rather, the sole ‘reality’ that truly exists *in itself*, and which I can know apodictically to exist, turns out *to be* not a thing (*res*) at all. My ‘actual’ consciousness is the sole ‘reality’ containing and constituting all world transcendencies within itself.¹⁵ Indeed, in so far as other human beings exist as centres of actual sense-bestowing consciousness of the world, and assuming that other human beings enjoy similar first-person experiences as myself, then the human being *qua* transcendental ego, in Husserl’s view, is a member of a community of monads.¹⁶ Nevertheless, what the reduction unveils is that it is my actual consciousness, and not a thing (matter), that is the ‘ontic presupposition’ (*Seinsvoraussetzung*) of the world.¹⁷ My actual consciousness bears the ontological mystery of the world.

In the reduction, my actual consciousness is demonstrated to be both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the very meaning and being of the reality of the world *in its appearance to human consciousness*. The meaning of the Being of the ‘world’ is thereby clarified in and through the reduction, and the ‘suspension of a natural interpretation of *total* reality is at the same time a *return* to total reality — now in purified form’.¹⁸ The ‘fundamental and essential difference’ between ‘Being as thing’ and ‘Being as experience’, the ‘most cardinal distinction of all’ upon which the entire analysis of ‘The Phenomenological Fundamental Consideration’ rests, is brought, therefore, to its originary givenness through a radical questioning of the meaning of Being that is exhibited in and through a *particularly unique being in Being*, namely, my actual consciousness. And these results are, Husserl insists, repeatable thought-experiments for other actual consciousnesses (as beings) in Being. Thus Husserl’s philosophical meditation in the ‘reduction’ is conducted not only in response to the question ‘what does Being mean?’, but also in response to some understanding of what it is to be a being in Being, that is to say, with some understanding of ‘the difference’ between Being and beings, what Heidegger calls in his thinking about Being, ‘the ontological difference’.¹⁹

One of the central conclusions of Husserl’s questioning of our usual ‘talk of Being’ in the reduction, therefore, is that a thing, as actually given to me through natural modes of outer perceptual-sense experience, cannot be *said ‘to be’* without qualification. This is important, for this conclusion clearly demonstrates that Husserl’s understanding of ‘ontology’ is firmly in keeping within the modern tradition of post-Kantian criticism, and not, say, in keeping within the classical tradition of Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of ‘ontology’ (metaphysics), such as Brentano, for instance, had examined and defended in his 1862 doctoral study *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*. For Husserl, a thing, as it actually exists, exists only as a being *for* an actual consciousness; it exists *only as* an intentional correlate of experiential connections of one’s actual consciousness. A thing is only insofar as it is correlative to the actual harmony of experiences in which and through which it is constituted in its being. A thing is ‘not something absolute in itself’. That is to say, for Husserl, a thing is not a being (*ein Seiendes*) in being (*Sein*) in its own right, and hence, a thing cannot be understood to be a being in itself as such.²⁰ A thing lacks any such ontological self-sufficiency (*Selbständigkeit*).²¹ A thing given to outer perceptual-sense experience is simply not a substance.

It is an implicit assumption in Husserl’s thought, therefore, that only that which can exist absolutely in itself, that is to say, in its own right as a being in Being, can be said truly ‘to be’. Things

given to outer perceptual-sense experience do not qualify under this criterion. In a very important sense, things (*Dinge*) given to perception cannot, strictly speaking, be called beings (*Seienden*) at all. Accordingly, all forms of natural ontology which (allegedly) purport to explain the Being of such things of the world from within the natural standpoint, are based upon an erroneous (hypo)thesis. Such a *metabasis* that underpins all talk of Being in the natural standpoint cannot be the *philosophical* basis upon which to build either a philosophical ontology of the natural world of things given to outer perceptual-sense experience or a philosophical ontology of the mind. Hence Heidegger's insistence in *Being and Time*, following Husserl's insistence in *Ideas*, that no forms of realism are truly philosophical forms of thought at all, if it is the 'understanding of Being' that we seek.²²

My actual consciousness, however, does qualify under the above criterion as a being in Being. Or, perhaps more accurately stated, the non-existence of a perceived experience in an act of immanent perception is unthinkable. We can say, without qualification, of the presently lived (given) experience in the immanent perception of that experience that it *is*. In immanent perception, I have certain knowledge of its being (*seiend*) a being (*Seiendes*) in Being (*Sein*). I can say unqualifiedly of my currently lived psychical act-experience immanently perceived that it is a being (*Seiendes*) in Being (*Sein*). A perceived experience in immanent perception, then, is unqualifiedly a being in Being. Thus Husserl's philosophical meditation in the 'reduction' is conducted in response to the question, 'what does Being mean?', and with some reference to some understanding of the Being of beings (experiences) in Being, hence, to some understanding of 'the ontological difference', because Being itself is *evidently not understood by Husserl, or by anyone else*, to be a being in Being.

2. IMMANENT PERCEPTION, DASEIN AND 'ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE'

In his reduction to the absolute domain of positing that characterizes one's own actual consciousness, Husserl also points out that while reflecting upon this conscious life streaming past me in immanent perception, we can say three things without qualification, 'that I am', 'this life of mine is,' *cogito*.²³ All of these apodictic truths are equally grounded and equally founded in the certainty of knowledge of the Being of beings. All of these truths comply with Husserl's implicit understanding of Being that only certainty in knowledge in respect to the Being of beings can represent genuine *philosophical* 'talk of Being'. No natural science can represent 'talk of Being'. Natural science is not directly engaged in determining with apodictic insight the Being of beings that it methodologically investigates, interprets and systematically analyses. Natural scientists *necessarily overlook* the question of the meaning of Being.²⁴ Husserl made this point in *Ideas* long before Heidegger made the same point later in *Being and Time*. What Husserl himself overlooks, however, is that some 'understanding of Being' in its difference to [the understanding of the being of] beings is also given in the very knowledge of the immanent perception of a currently lived psychical act-experience (and its intentional object, if it exists) and in the discernible, accompanying apodictic facts, 'that I am,' 'this life of mine is', *cogito*. The way Being itself is understood is thus left unthought in Husserl's reduction. Or, perhaps more accurately speaking, the way the question of the meaning of Being is to be addressed in Husserl's reduction must be *curtailed and confined* to an eidetic analysis of the meaning of Being as thing given to outer sense perception and to the meaning of Being as experience immanently perceived. The fundamental consideration of phenomenology on the issue of the question of the meaning of Being itself, then, as far as Heidegger is concerned, is not fundamental enough.

Husserl is quite clear and insistent on the point that phenomenological knowledge-claims must conform to certainty of the knowledge of Being. Husserl, also, is quite clear and insistent on the point that no such criterion is expected of either natural correspondence or natural adequation theories of truth. Nevertheless, Husserl, also, admits and recognizes that the certainty of the understanding of one's own existence — 'this life of mine is' — is not a certainty that is given (or can be given) to outer perceptual-sense experience. Furthermore, the understanding of the being of oneself in existence — 'that I am' — that is given in an act of immanent perception (of a currently lived psychical act-experience) is evidently not itself (reducible to) a currently lived psychical act-experience. Nevertheless, knowledge of one's own existence is still a certainty, an existential certainty, and an experience of what it is to be a being in Being.²⁵ Therefore, what Husserl's reduction uncovers, but without investigating it, is that the understanding of Being that I have of my very existence in Being is an understanding that *I do not gain* either by way of things given to outer sense perception or by way of an immanent perception of a psychical act-experience. So, how is this understanding of Being given? It is in response to this issue that Heidegger develops differently Husserl's return to genuine 'talk of Being' in the reduction. This time Heidegger turns to Kierkegaard and to the existentialist tenet that human existence is the only kind of existence that is experienced *from within*. Thus Heidegger joins Husserl's hand to Kierkegaard's and turns to the *Seinsverständnis* that is deposited in *the awareness of*

the 'There of Being' in which I find myself implicated as a being in Being, that is to say, in what Heidegger calls 'Da-Sein'.²⁶ With this philosophical move, a new concept of 'transcendental phenomenology' as 'fundamental ontology' is born.

It is, of course, true that I can see myself (in natural psychological apperception) as a being among other beings in the world. This natural knowledge I have of myself as a being amidst other beings in the world, however, totally overlooks, and thus totally undermines the hidden phenomenological truth, made visible only in the reduction, concerning the way my *actual* consciousness does exist as a necessary and sufficient condition for the very being and meaning of the world of things. The natural positing of the world 'out there' in the thesis of the natural standpoint absolutizes the world; that is to say, in the thesis of the natural standpoint the world (of material things) is hailed and held presumptively as a primary and undifferentiated manifestation of Being itself. In doing so, however, this natural position blocks access to knowledge of the essential being of consciousness and to the discovery that one's own actual consciousness is both a necessary and sufficient condition for the very existence of the world of things of experience. Thus the natural standpoint blocks access to questioning the fundamental meaning of Being in any genuine 'talk of Being'. For Husserl, of course, this means that the transcendental-constituting power of consciousness can never be seen as it truly *is*, as long as one remains in the natural standpoint. Rather, 'we will arrive at a radical insight into consciousness only via a special phenomenological reflection, a reflection which does not participate in the general positing of the natural world.'²⁷ In a very important sense, therefore, for Husserl the *joint* discoveries of the apodictic certainties of the relativity of the being of the world and of the necessity and absoluteness of the being of pure consciousness go together in his famous 'reduction' to genuine 'talk of Being', and hence to his subsequent revision of our natural ontology.²⁸ Both of these discoveries, however, leave unaddressed and unthought the 'understanding of Being' that is part of one's own awareness of the 'There of Being' in which one finds oneself implicated as a being in Being. And if Heidegger is right, and if 'we', from an *existential-phenomenological* point of view, are implicated in our existence as beings in Being in such a fashion so as to have always some understanding, however vague, of what it means to be a being in Being, then the 'Being-question' in its relation to *Dasein* is never that far off. In what way, therefore, does *Husserl* understand what it means to be a being in Being in his reduction to the question of the meaning of Being? And how does *Heidegger* differ in his understanding of what it means to be a being in Being in his reduction to the question of the meaning of Being? It is outside the limits of this paper to discuss this matter, however, it is suffice to say that it will make all the difference to one's quest to reach such an 'understanding of the Being of a being in Being' which Husserl's transcendental reduction invites, whether one takes an innerworldly being as thing within the world given to outer sense perception, or an experience immanently perceived, or one's own manner of being-in-the-world, where the world is not understood as simply the totality of things that can be given, if need be, to outer perceptual-sense experience, as Heidegger chooses to do in *Being and Time*.

3. CONCLUSION

According to Husserl, the 'usual meaning of the talk of Being is reversed' as one moves from the natural standpoint to the philosophical-transcendental-phenomenological standpoint.²⁹ That is to say, the way we naturally regard both things to be simply there (*vorhanden*) and encountered in Being and our consciousness to be something that is secondarily and relatively related to such things in Being, is turned around. Things do not exist, and then I become conscious of them, as I naturally presume. Rather my consciousness actually exists first, then things appear; that is to say, only *then* does Being as thing (*Sein als Ding*) appear. Accordingly, just as things are seen in their proper manifestation as beings in Being that exist in relation to my *temporal* consciously lived experiences, my *temporal* consciously lived, psychical act intentional experiences are, also, *now* seen as the proper manifestation of beings in Being. This philosophical 'inversion' of the understanding of Being that occurs in Husserl's 'reduction', however, would appear to leave the question of the meaning of Being itself and its temporality not addressed, as paradoxically as this may sound. And the very being *who* has some understanding of Being and to whom such an understanding of Being is given, *Dasein*, is left out of the equation in Husserl's reduction to genuine 'talk of Being'. Hence, Heidegger can say that in Husserl's reduction the question of the meaning of Being itself is *closed off* because it is both raised and answered. And a question that is acknowledged *and* answered is a question that is overlooked *als Frage*. This is why the *question* of the meaning of Being is something that does not *and cannot* become the 'thematic topic' of concern in Husserl's reduction. Thus, in this respect, Heidegger (justifiably) asserts that the question of the meaning of Being is something that remains 'unthought in the matter of philosophy' of Husserl's phenomenology.³⁰ Hence, it is in light of the absence of any

such questioning of the meaning of Being itself that is *already* deposited in the ‘understanding of Being’ that is talked about in the reduction, that Heidegger is forced to remark to his students towards the beginning of his lecture course on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which he began to deliver some six weeks after the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927,

For Husserl, phenomenological reduction, which he worked out for the first time expressly in the *Ideas toward a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913), is the method of leading phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being whose life is involved in the world of things and persons back to the transcendental life of consciousness and its noematic experiences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. For us, phenomenological reduction means leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever might be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the Being of this being (projecting upon the way it is unconcealed).³¹

In Heidegger’s view, therefore, the intentionality of consciousness, the celebrated theme of Husserl’s phenomenology, is founded upon a more original intentionality, namely, ‘the understanding of Being’. Explicating *this concept of intentionality* becomes the basic (neo-Kantian) problem of phenomenology for Heidegger. As Heidegger had already put it and tried to work through in *Being and Time*, ‘(O)ur analytic [of Dasein] raises the ontological question of the Being of the ‘*sum*’. Not until the nature of this Being has been determined can we grasp the kind of Being (*Seinsart*) which belongs to *cogitationes*’.³² With this insistence on securing ‘Dasein’ as the ‘phenomenal basis’ upon which to retrieve ‘the question of the meaning of Being’ (*die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*), Heidegger invariably and necessarily displaces the overtly Cartesian emphasis on the actual consciousness of the ‘mentally active subject’ in phenomenology and phenomenological research that Husserl had unquestionably inherited from Brentano (the descriptive psychologist).

The critical question that Heidegger raises *within* phenomenology, then, is this. Is the temporal intentional structure of one’s own *actual* experiences a psychical event that can be abstracted from my own finite temporality in being and from my own awareness of the ‘There of Being’ (*Dasein*) in which I find myself implicated as a being in Being? If not, then the apodictic experience of the absolute givenness of a presently lived psychical act-experience (and its intentional object, if it exists) in immanent perception *points to* the existence of the being of a radical and unreduced ontological finiteness *and* temporality *within* that actual experience itself. Consequently, the phenomenal basis upon which Husserl’s own transcendental *deduction* of the infinity of experiences for inner reflection within the transcendental-phenomenological *reduction* to pure intentional consciousness rests upon the givenness of the ontological finiteness of experiences in themselves that lies outside of the parameters of research that Husserl methodologically set both to and for eidetic and transcendental phenomenological inquiry. If this is true, however, then the infinity of *actual* experiences for such a phenomenological science is ontologically indemonstrable, or, more exactly stated, ontologically indefensible, for the very idea of an infinity of (inner) reflections on actual experiences is as much a fictional thesis on (the *way to understand*) Being, as is the ‘original’ idea of the infinity of the *actual* world of things posited pre-predicatively in the thesis of the natural standpoint a fictional *philosophical* thesis on (the *way to understand*) Being of things given to outer perceptual-sense experience. If it is Heidegger’s intention to call us back to a correct understanding of Being that is appropriate to the experience of the finiteness of the being of beings in their Being, and it seems to me that it is all of his intention, then an acknowledgement of the being of the being of beings that are given finitely in their originality and in their temporality has to be granted first, *before any understanding of Being has arrived*. However, such a ‘metaphysical’ acknowledgement is expressly excluded, first by Husserl in his transcendental-phenomenological reduction, and second by Heidegger in his reduction to ‘fundamental ontology’. And yet, such a metaphysics is clearly acknowledged in both of their respective phenomenological ‘ontologies’, but it is, also, clearly left ‘unthought’. Heidegger’s recovery of the ‘Being-question’ in phenomenology and in phenomenological research, therefore, is, like Husserl’s, but a partial recovery.

ENDNOTES

¹ Cf. E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Erstes Buch, *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, § 50. ‘Die phänomenologische Einstellung und das reine Bewußtsein als das Feld der Phänomenologie, pp. 93–95, (p. 93). Husserliana, Band III/ I, ed. by Karl Schumann (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995); *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, First Book, *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, § 50. ‘The Phenomenological Attitude; Pure

Consciousness as the Field of Phenomenology’, trans. by F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), p. 112–114, (p. 112). Heidegger was probably one of the few critics who realized this significant ‘ontology’ supporting Husserl’s reduction in *Ideas* at the time of its original publication in 1913, even if Heidegger’s interest in the ‘Being-question’ was initially ignited in 1907, through his reading of Brentano’s 1862 doctoral dissertation *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, and hence independently of and prior to Heidegger’s reading and re-reading of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* from 1909 onwards and his reading of Husserl’s *Ideas* in 1913. Cf. M. Heidegger, ‘Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie’, in M. Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Niemeyer: Tübingen, 1969), pp. 81–90; ‘My Way to Phenomenology’, in Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 74–82. Heidegger’s self-evaluation of the significance of Brentano’s dissertation as his ‘rod and staff’ (*Stab und Stecken*, p. 81, which Stambaugh translates as ‘chiefhelp and guide’, p. 74) in his endeavour to raise anew the question of the meaning of Being, however, should not obscure the fact that the question of the meaning of Being in its relation to ‘Dasein’, as published by Heidegger in his unfinished treatise of *Sein und Zeit* (1927), bears little to no resemblance to issues in classical metaphysics that Brentano addresses in his 1862 doctoral dissertation. Rather, Heidegger’s interest in the ‘understanding of Being’ (*Seinsverständnis*) in *Being and Time* clearly advances Husserl’s neo-Kantian transcendental line of inquiry in philosophy and phenomenological research, notwithstanding Heidegger’s substitution of Husserl’s celebrated theme of the intentionality of consciousness with the ‘understanding of Being’ as the direct object of inquiry.

² ‘Only as phenomenology’, Heidegger famously retorts in *Being and Time*, ‘is ontology possible.’ *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (London: Blackwell, 1962, 2000), p. 60. This sentence, however, cannot be turned around to read, ‘(O)nly as ontology is phenomenology possible’, as suggested by many commentators, without entire loss of the import of this statement in (1) Heidegger’s understanding of Husserl’s position, in (2) Heidegger’s understanding of his own position in phenomenology and in (3) Heidegger’s understanding of the relationship between the two positions in phenomenology. Husserl’s understanding of phenomenology as ‘ontology’, conducted as it is from a post-Kantian transcendental-idealist perspective, is *not what is in question here* for Heidegger. Rather, another *version* of understanding phenomenology as ‘fundamental ontology’, conducted as it is from a post-Kantian existential-phenomenological transcendental perspective, is proffered by Heidegger.

³ *Ideen*, p. 75.

⁴ Heidegger never rejected the possibility of Husserl’s concept of transcendental phenomenology, or Scheler’s version of phenomenology. What Heidegger maintains is that ‘the critical question cannot stop here.’ *Being and Time*, p. 73:48.

⁵ Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. by Kersten, p. 111, Section 49, English translation modified. ‘Zwischen Bewußtsein und Realität gähnt ein wahrer Abgrund des Sinnes. Hier ein sich abschattendes, nie absolut zu gebendes bloß zufälliges und relatives Sein; dort ein notwendiges und absolutes Sein, prinzipiell nicht durch Abschattung und Erscheinung zu geben.’ (*Ideen*, p. 93).

⁶ *Ideen*, p. 88 ff.

⁷ *Ideen*, pp. 78–85.

⁸ Cf. Theodore De Boer, *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, trans. by Theodore Plantinga (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), Paragraph Nine. Consciousness as the Necessary and Sufficient Reason of the World, pp. 354–357.

⁹ De Boer, *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 357.

¹⁰ Husserl’s ultimately in vain effort to bring with him a community of scholars on this collaborative idea of transcendental phenomenology as a pure eidetic science of purified intentional consciousness is well known. However, this issue will not be discussed in this paper.

¹¹ *Ideen*, pp. 83–85.

¹² However, as De Boer points out, ‘The fact that there are cardinal differences in modes of being between certain regions does not exclude the possibility that there are relations between these regions.’ *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 361, footnote 7.

¹³ Cf. Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. by Kersten, p. 112: 93, note 31 Insertion in Copy A, and Husserl’s remarks in 1931 in his ‘Author’s Preface to the English Edition’ of *Ideas*, trans. by Boyce-Gibson. ‘I must not hesitate [...] to state quite explicitly that in regard to transcendental-phenomenological Idealism, I have nothing whatsoever to take back, and that now as ever I hold every form of current philosophical realism to be in principle absurd, as no less every idealism to which in its own arguments that realism stands contrasted, and which in fact it refutes’ (p. 12).

- ¹⁴ And this, of course, includes Kant and all his followers (Windleband, Rickert, Brentano, Dilthey) who subscribe to some version of Kant's 'two-domainism' theory. Cf. De Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, pp. 393–394, p. 502.
- ¹⁵ 'We have actually lost nothing [in the reduction] but have gained the entirety of absolute being which, rightly understood, contains all worldly transcendencies within itself and 'constitutes' them within itself.' *Ideas*, Kersten, English translation modified, p. 113:94. 'Wir haben eigentlich nichts verloren, aber das gesamte absolute Sein gewonnen, das, recht verstanden, alle weltlichen Transzendenzen in sich birgt, sie in sich, 'konstituiert'.' *Ideen*, p. 94.
- ¹⁶ The theme of transcendental intersubjectivity occupied Husserl's later thought after *Ideas*, and hence will not be treated in our study. Cf. Husserl's remarks in his 1931 'Author's Preface to the English Edition', *Ideas*, Boyce, 'but besides myself, the fellow-subjects who in this life of mine reveal themselves as co-transcendental consciousness, within the transcendental society of 'Ourselves,' which simultaneously reveals itself [...] is thus within the intersubjectivity, which in the phenomenological reduction has reached empirical givenness on a transcendental level, and is thus itself transcendental, that the real world is constituted as 'objective,' as being there for everyone' (p. 14–15). Heidegger's concept of *mitdasein* in *Being and Time* at first sight seems to be moving towards an awareness of the significance of human intersubjectivity, but Heidegger's account of being-there-with-others is clearly an insipid account of human partnership-in-the-world, hence lacks any real contribution to the difficult topic of human intersubjectivity. A dialogical approach to this issue bears much better fruit, as 'later' phenomenologists realized.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Husserl, 'Author's [1931] Preface to the English Edition', *Ideas*, Boyce, p.14.
- ¹⁸ De Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, p. 371.
- ¹⁹ Cf. M. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1974). Originally published by Heidegger under the title *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Verlag Günter Neske, 1957).
- ²⁰ A thing cannot be said to be a being in Being without reference to the constituting and transcendental dimension of human intentional consciousness. Husserl re-iterates this point in 1931 in his 'Author's Preface to the English Edition' of *Ideas*: 'Our phenomenological idealism does not deny the positive existence of the real (*realen*) world and of Nature — in the first place as though it held it to be an illusion. Its sole task and service is to clarify the meaning of this world, the precise sense in which everyone accepts it, and with undeniable right, as really existing (*wirklich seiende*). That it exists — given as it is as a universe out there (*daseiendes*) in an experience that is continuous, and held persistently together through a thread of widespread unanimity — that is quite indubitable. It is quite another consideration, although in the light of the discussions of the text of this work one of great philosophical importance, that the continuance of experience in the future under such a form of universal agreement is a mere (although reasonable) presumption, [...] the non-existence of the world [...], and whilst it is in point of fact the object of unanimous experience, always remains *thinkable*.' (p. 14). Hence, '(T)he result of the phenomenological clarification of the meaning of the manner of existence of the real world [...] is that only transcendental subjectivity has ontologically the meaning of Absolute Being, that it only is non-relative, that is relative only to itself; whereas the real world indeed exists, but in respect of essence is relative to transcendental subjectivity, and in such a way that it can have its meaning as existing (*seiende*) reality only as the intentional meaning-product of transcendental subjectivity' (ibid.).
- ²¹ *Ideas*, trans. by Kersten, p. 113:93–94.
- ²² *Being and Time*, p. 251:207, and p. 493, n.xvi.
- ²³ *Ideen*, p. 85.
- ²⁴ Furthermore, for Husserl, all forms of philosophical naturalism necessarily *render a false account* of the meaning of Being.
- ²⁵ Here, Heidegger, it seems to me, is indebted philosophically to (part of) St Augustine's way of interiority.
- ²⁶ Heidegger *gives* the German word 'Dasein' this meaning in the context of his philosophy, and for this reason it is perhaps better left untranslated, with the proviso that it is with this *entirely new (unique) meaning* that Heidegger gives to the term that we are likewise using it.
- ²⁷ De Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, p. 371.
- ²⁸ Ibid., pp. 371–372.
- ²⁹ 'So kehrt sich der gemeine Sinn der Seinsrede um.' *Ideen*, § 50, p. 94. 'Thus the sense commonly expressed in speaking of being is reversed.' *Ideas*, trans. by Kersten, p. 112:94

- ³⁰ Heidegger, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,' in M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 55–73, (p. 64), my emphasis.
- ³¹ M. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1982), p. 29. *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Marburg lectures, 1927.
- ³² *Being and Time*, p. 72: 46: 'Die Analytik stellt die ontologische Frage nach dem Sein des sum. Ist dieses bestimmt, dann wird die Seinsart der cogitationes erst faßbar'.