

REDUCTION AND SOLIPSISM

**Edmund Husserl's Method of Reduction and Solipsism Critique
Presented Against It**

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Työssäni tutkin Husserlin reduktion metodia, joka on hänen kehittämänsä suuntauksen, transsendentaalisen fenomenologian, tutkimusmenetelmä. Vastaan kysymykseen, viekö reduktion metodi välttämättä solipsismiin vai ei. Lähtökohtanani on reduktion metodia vastaan esitetty ulkoinen ja sisäinen solipsismi-kritiikki. Vastaan erityisesti Hubert L. Dreyfusin esittämään ulkoiseen kritiikkiin, jonka mukaan Husserlin transsendentaalis-fenomenologinen tutkimus ajautuu välttämättä tilanteeseen, jossa ei voida esittää objektiivisia väittämiä. Analysoin myös Husserl-tutkimuksen keskusteluissa esiintyvää sisäistä kritiikkiä, jonka mukaan reduktion metodi on ongelmallinen tutkittaessa yhteisöllisyyttä ja kokemusta toisista.</p> <p>Työni on eksegeettinen siinä mielessä, että selvitan, minkälainen metodi reduktio on, miten se Husserlin mukaan suoritetaan ja mitkä ovat Husserlin transsendentaalisen fenomenologian ominaiset piirteet. Toisaalta pyrin tutkimuksellani systemaattisesti selvittämään, viekö reduktion metodi solipsismin ongelmiin. Käytän eksegeettisen tutkimukseni tuloksia vastatessani reduktion metodia vastaan esitettyyn kritiikkiin sekä sisäiseen kritiikkiin.</p> <p>Reduktion metodin tutkimukseni on rajattu Husserlin transsendentaaliseen fenomenologiaan, erityisesti Husserlin reduktion metodia käsitteleviin töihin luentosarjasta <i>Die Idee der Phänomenologie</i> teokseen <i>Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie</i>. Keskityn transsendentaalis-fenomenologiseen reduktioon sekä eideettiseen reduktioon. Käsitelen myös Husserlin abstrahoivaa ja solipsistista metodia, nk. reduktiota omimman sfääriin, joka voidaan suorittaa ainoastaan transsendentaalis-fenomenologisen reduktion jälkeen. Työssäni käsittelemäni solipsismi-kritiikki on melko yleinen reduktion metodiin kohdistuva kritiikin muoto, mutta kritiikki on edelleen keskustelunaihe Husserl-tutkimuksessa.</p> <p>Tutkimukseni tuloksena esitän, että reduktion metodi on yleiskäsite usealle Husserlin fenomenologiselle tutkimusmetodille. Transsendentaalis-fenomenologinen reduktio sekä eideettinen reduktio ovat siis kaksi eri metodia, jotka voidaan suorittaa ilman toista, mutta jotka ovat kumpikin välttämättömiä transsendentaalis-fenomenologisessa tutkimuksessa. Solipsismi-kritiikin suhteen väitän, että Dreyfusin esittämä kritiikki ei päde. Husserl-tutkimuksessa esitetty sisäinen kritiikki taas perustuu osin sekaannuksille ja on osittain oikeutettua.</p>	
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>In my thesis, I examine Husserl's method of reduction – the investigation method of his transcendental phenomenology. I answer the question as to whether or not the method of reduction necessarily leads to solipsism. My point of departure is both the external critique and the internal critique of the method. I especially answer the critique presented by Hubert L. Dreyfus, according to which Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation necessarily leads to a situation where we cannot pose objective claims. I also analyse internal critique posed by Husserl scholars, according to which the method of reduction is problematic when investigating intersubjectivity and our experience of others.</p> <p>My work is exegetic in the sense of clarifying what kind of a method Husserl's reduction is, how it is accomplished, and what the distinctive features of transcendental phenomenology are. On the other hand, I aim at systematically examining the question whether the method of reduction leads to problems of solipsism. I apply the results of my exegetic investigation in answering the critiques of the method of reduction.</p> <p>My investigation of the method is limited to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, especially to his works treating reduction, from the lecture series <i>Die Idee der Phänomenologie</i> to the work <i>Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie</i>. I concentrate on the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction. I also discuss Husserl's abstractive and solipsistic method, the so-called reduction to the sphere of ownness, which can be accomplished only after the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. The solipsism critique that I treat in my thesis is a common kind of critique against Husserl, but this kind of critique is still a discussed topic.</p> <p>My conclusions are as follows: The method of reduction is a hypernym for many of Husserl's phenomenological methods. The transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction are two separate methods that can in principle be accomplished without accomplishing the other but are both necessary for the transcendental-phenomenological investigation. Regarding the solipsism critiques, the critique posed by Dreyfus is not justified. The internal critique posed by Husserl scholars is partly based on confusions and is partly justified.</p>	
Key words The method of reduction, transcendental phenomenology, transcenedental-phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction, solipsism	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomenological philosophy can be roughly characterised as the investigation of experience of the world, oneself and others, and abstract entities. The main thrust of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology is to clarify the way we experience the objects of the sciences and everyday life. Instead of relying on scientific theories or everyday presuppositions, Husserl's phenomenological philosophy aims at leaving all habitual beliefs aside and examines objects¹ as they appear to us. For Husserl, this makes phenomenology the grounding field of all philosophy, and, according to him, phenomenology thereby provides a ground for all other sciences.

The examination of experience is achieved by the means of phenomenological reduction, the method of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. By investigating the pure appearance of objects, the method provides an account of how intentional experience is constituted. Understanding the constitution of intentional experience enables us to grasp the constitution of knowledge and experience of objectivity. The method also provides an account of universal invariants of experiences and experienced objects.

In this thesis I examine Husserl's method of reduction in accordance with Husserl's ideas of how the method should be understood. My study is motivated by the traditional criticism according to which Husserl's method leads to solipsism. I will provide an exegetic-systematic reading of Husserl's works concerning the method of reduction. In particular, I will focus on Husserl's key writings about the method of reduction, intersubjectivity, and transcendental ego. In the following I will first provide the motivation and background of my study, and I will then present my research question and the structure and proceeding of the thesis.

1.1 Motivation and Background

Husserl's phenomenology can provide a comprehensive method for investigating sense formation, aims, and the constitution of experience and knowledge. It investigates the constitution of both scientific knowledge and everyday experience (i.e. pre-scientific experience). Husserl's phenomenological examination aims at grasping the world² as it

1 According to Juntunen the object is, in Husserl's context, meant in a very wide sense, i.e. every potential object of knowledge or experience is an object in the Husserlian sense (Juntunen 1986, 46).

2 In Husserlian phenomenology the "world" does not mean the sum of all things "in itself", but is the world for someone. Therefore the "world" in Husserl's texts does not only mean the world of things, but

appears to us, without taking a stand on claims about the existence of entities and objects that are transcendent to pure experience (e.g. the reality of the laws of nature, or if it really was a tram that I just heard passing my apartment). In other words, the aim is to examine how objects manifest themselves in experience. Husserl's phenomenology is thus not limited to any thematic field, but rather its goal is to examine our universal way of experiencing and understanding (Fink 1934, 43).

Phenomenological investigation is done by analysing the act of intentional experience and the sense (*Sinn*) of experienced objects. The method of phenomenological examination is a specific “backwards-inquiring” method called “reduction” (*Reduktion*, lat. *reducere*, to lead back).³ As Sebastian Luft has explained, the method of reduction takes a “step back” from the natural way of relating to the world, to the sphere in which the naturally experienced world is seen as a manifestation (Luft 2012, 250). The method of reduction also includes leaving aside all presuppositions and pre-given beliefs (in the frames of phenomenological investigation), since the presuppositions or beliefs are not included in pure experience. By altering the natural way of relating to objects, the method provides access to the sphere of phenomenological research, that is, to the domain of transcendental subjectivity. In other words, performing a reduction opens up the field of transcendental⁴ investigation by bringing the act of experience itself to the fore.

The method of reduction is characteristic for Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and distinguishes transcendental phenomenology from Husserl's former phenomenological investigations. In fact, transcendental-phenomenological investigation and performing reductions in the frames of transcendental phenomenology⁵ are one: As Eugen Fink says in

primarily the world of values, goods and all kind of practicalities, and as such it is the universal horizon of experience (Hua 8, 161). As Husserl puts it, “the world is the surroundings (*Umwelt*) of the I-subject, experienced and intended by it, and thus not static, but always becoming” (Hua 4, §50, 186). The world is for Husserl also the utmost horizon of all experience and its possibilities (ibid. §51, 195).

- 3 It is worth noting that reduction in Husserl's phenomenology does not mean the same as reduction in the analytic tradition, since phenomenology is not trying to reach the simplest or causally primary stage, but the way in which things appear to consciousness (Heinämaa 2016, 367).
- 4 For Husserl, “transcendental” means the pre-given domain which in the case of transcendental experience conditions the possibility of experience. Husserl's notion of “transcendental” differs from Kant's notion in being a radicalisation of Kant's notion. According to Hartimo, Heinämaa, and Miettinen, in Kant's philosophy, the “transcendental” consists of synthetic a priori judgements that genuinely reveal something novel about the structures of cognition. Kant characterised his method of discovering the transcendentals with the term “deduction”, which is based on the unity of the conscious life. In its apperceived form, Kant has argued, the transcendental ego contains nothing manifold, so that every human is an instantiation of the same transcendental ego. Husserl's relation to the content of transcendental philosophy can be viewed as a radicalisation, a rearticulation, and a distention of the Kantian concept of the transcendental. (Hartimo, Heinämaa, Miettinen 2014 7-8, 13)
- 5 Husserl also presents possibilities of reductions outside the transcendental phenomenology, e.g. in his

Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik (a text which Husserl himself approves of), transcendental-phenomenological study takes place only by performing a reduction. The transcendental-phenomenological way of thinking and the method of reduction are thus inseparable. (Fink 1934, 46) There is no transcendental-phenomenological investigation outside performing a reduction, because transcendental phenomenology examines the transcendental sphere which is uncovered only by the method of reduction.

The method of reduction is distinctive for Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. By relying on many central commentaries on Husserl's philosophy, such as the works by Dermot Moran, Søren Overgaard, Dan Zahavi, and Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, I will show that transcendental phenomenology is not primarily a thematic theory, but a certain kind of methodological philosophical investigation. According to several central commentators, Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation does not start with a statement about a state of affairs in the world but with a disclosing or uncovering act that leads to the phenomenological dimension (cf. Moran 2000, 60-65; Zahavi 2003). Transcendental phenomenology is thus not characterised by a theme, but by a methodology. It follows that we cannot understand the conclusions and outcomes in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology without understanding the method of reduction.

If we want to understand what the method of reduction is based on, we also need to understand Husserl's goals related to his transcendental-phenomenological investigations. As several commentators have emphasised, the method relates directly and essentially to Husserl's scientific ambitions (cf. Moran 2000). I will therefore provide an account of Husserl's reasons and motivations⁶ for transcendental-phenomenological investigation. I will do this by describing and analysing central goals of his transcendental phenomenology, presented in works of his where he takes up the method of reduction.

Husserl's reduction is not an easy issue to treat or understand. For example, Dan

Encyclopedia Britannica article.

6 Husserl speaks of motivation also as the determining feature in life between the subject and worldly things, as analogous to causality, but as being in subject, it is originally given (in transcendental subjectivity he finds the word "compossibility" not suitable). He means motivation not quite as a rational or emotional reason for doing something, but rather motivation is the causality system between the subject and the world. It comes close to the conscious and willing teleological reason, but motivation is the causality that also does not need to be conscious. Husserl therefore divides the motivation into the immanent and transcendent. The system of motivation happens according to certain rule categories, the different attitudes, which make it possible to understand how exactly different types of acts make each other possible and how particular experiences and instituted meanings acquire for themselves a temporally lasting character. (Hua 4, §56, 220-4, Hua 1, §37, 109) Phenomenology takes place in a certain motivation, of course, but in this text I am more concerned with the reason for turning into the phenomenological attitude and performing the reduction there in the first place.

Zahavi characterises the method straightforwardly as “a long and difficult analysis” (Zahavi 2003, 47). Bernet, Kern, and Marbach describe performing a reduction as especially challenging because it is such an unnatural (i.e. phenomenological) way of relating to experience (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 60). The method of reduction is widely studied and discussed, but commentators still often disagree about what kind of method it actually is and how it should be understood. The reason for disagreements and confusion lies in the fact that Husserl has not given a completely coherent and clear definition of his phenomenology and its method and has throughout his career developed and changed the reference points of his research. As Luft characterises the situation, rather than being a certain method that was once developed and could henceforth simply be applied, for Husserl “the reduction” has become the title for an ongoing topic posing ever-new questions (Luft 2012, 244). Arguments about how Husserl's method of reduction should be understood and described vary between different authors. Relating to the contemporary discussion, I aim at providing a coherent and meaningful account of what kind of method Husserl's reduction is. My interpretation is based on Husserl's published works rather than, for example, on his lectures or notes, since in the latter he may provide contradictory ideas.⁷

Confusion and obscurity about the method of reduction have led to various criticisms concerning the validity of the method. For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty famously claims reduction to be an infinite task (Merleau-Ponty 1981, xiv). In addition, Suzanne Cunningham claims that transcendental-phenomenological investigation remains circular because of the general nature of language which even the phenomenological investigation cannot escape (Cunningham 1970, 65). One of the most widespread critiques against Husserl's reduction claims that the method necessarily leads to solipsism. This has been so common a judgement that Zahavi even calls this sort of critique a “standard criticism against Husserl”. According to this critique, Husserl remains caught in a solipsistic paradigm, and in contrast to later phenomenologists, he fails to appreciate the importance of intersubjectivity and is hence unable to conclude a reasonable outcome of phenomenological investigation. (Zahavi 2003, 108)

In order to make transcendental-phenomenological investigation provide a rigorous⁸

⁷ For example, Walter Biemel claims in the introduction to the *Erste Philosophie* lecture series that the work is so contradictory that it was first even considered for exclusion from the Husserliana publications (Hua 8, xi).

⁸ Rigorousness, “streng”, does not mean the same as mathematical rigorousness, which Husserl calls

account of how experience of knowledge and objectivity are constituted, reduction should uncover the constitution of experience in an objective, not subjective, manner. This does not mean that we could not investigate the constitution of objectivity by the means of reduction to the subjective sphere. Rather, the investigation must be possible for everyone to perform with the same outcome. In other words, if the method of reduction turns out to end up in solipsism, the method fails the task it should fulfil. The transcendent objects in experience would in that case remain transcendent only for me, with the possibility that they are merely intended mental representations and do not refer to any objectively transcendent realities (that exist independently of a subject experiencing them) (Moran 2005, 225). In other words, if the solipsism critique against Husserl's method is justified, reduction would uncover only the constitution of one's own experiences. This would result in transcendental phenomenology investigating *only* subjective experiences, without any necessary reference to the real world or other intentional subjects. This would be a problem for making any conclusions about the universal structure of how objects manifest themselves to us.

In this thesis I will critically investigate two kinds of solipsism critiques presented against Husserl's method of reduction. The first kind of critique is based on the *Fregean* reading of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and can be characterised as an external critique against Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation. According to the *Fregean* interpretation, the transcendental sphere is a sphere of pure acts of consciousness, i.e. purified of any positing of existence, where the sense of physical and mental objects is constituted. As a particular case of this kind of critique, I will discuss Hubert L. Dreyfus's⁹ interpretation and criticism against Husserl's method, and I will see if his critique is justified or not. Even if Dreyfus's reading of Husserl is *Fregean*, he confuses the idea of transcendental sphere as the sphere of pure acts of consciousness with something that takes place in real empirical subjects. The second kind of solipsism critique that I will discuss is an internal critique, presented by other phenomenologists rather sympathetic to Husserl's work. Whereas for Dreyfus solipsism is an inevitable outcome of Husserl's method, it is merely a reflective tool for the latter. The internal critique points out problems in Husserl's

“Exaktheit”.

9 Similar critiques are presented by Dagfinn Føllesdal, Leslie Stevenson and others who have defended a *Fregean* interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality, the so-called West Coast interpretation. According to this interpretation, the meaning-given object *as experienced* must be distinguished from the act and the object itself, which makes the intentional observed object in experience into an ideal meaning that in turn functions as a mediator between the intentional act and the experienced object. In this thesis I will use Dreyfus's critique as an example representing the wider interpretation.

account of intersubjectivity and objectivity and criticises the egoic nature of the method of reduction. This second kind of solipsism critique does not totally question the possibilities of meaningful scientific investigation by the means of reduction. Thus, this second kind of critique is not actually criticism *against* Husserl's method of reduction in general, but concentrates on more detailed problems related to the method. According to this internal critique, Husserl has not succeeded in providing a fully satisfying account of intersubjectivity by the means of transcendental-phenomenological investigation. Thus, according to the critique, the investigation also leaves out important historical and cultural influences in experience. As examples of this kind of critique, I discuss criticism presented and discussed by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, as well as Zahavi.

Dreyfus interprets Husserl's method of reduction as being both methodologically solipsistic and leading to solipsistic conclusions. In Dreyfus's critical approach, transcendental phenomenology is seen as being unable to grasp the real world and being instead caught in the mental life of an individual. According to Dreyfus's interpretation, Husserl claims that all reference is made possible only by mental activity. Thus, Dreyfus reads Husserl's method of reduction as if it were revealing merely abstract mental structures. According to Dreyfus, intentionality is a complex of representational content, and since reduction is a means for studying intentionality, Dreyfus understands the method as an investigation of the representational content in one's mind. At the same time he is of the opinion that meaning is in the world rather than in one's mind. Therefore, he concludes that the possibilities of Husserl's phenomenological investigations to ground meaning and intelligibility remain limited (Dreyfus 1982, 2-3, 9).

Dreyfus interprets the first step of reduction, the phenomenological epoché (the bracketing of natural assumptions about the existence of objects), as an act of totally excluding the entire objective existence of the world. This would leave a subject merely with her own pure experience. This leads Dreyfus to pose the question if the method of reduction leads to retroactive illusion, that is, to a situation where my experiences are indifferent to reality. (Dreyfus 1982, 4, 15) It follows that according to Dreyfus's critique, the method would lead to epistemological solipsism where one cannot be certain of anything else than one's own subjective experiences. In Dreyfus's opinion, after bracketing all natural assumptions, i.e. after not positing or denying the existence of anything that is not found in pure experience, there remains nothing that would hinder transcendental-

phenomenological investigation from taking illusion to be reality or vice versa.

The solipsism critique which questions the egoic nature of the method of reduction relates partly to Husserl's Cartesian starting points and to seeming similarities between the method of reduction and the method in Descartes's doubting. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is strongly inspired by Descartes's sceptical method and the ancient sceptics (in addition to other former philosophers and mathematicians, such as Kant, Hume, Brentano, etc.). According to Heinämaa, Husserl, like Descartes, takes the ancient sceptics' restrained attitude to epistemological investigation. But, in contrast to Descartes, Husserl radicalises Descartes's task by extending the restriction to theoretical dogmas that characterise the nature and structure of scientific action. (Heinämaa 2016, 359-61) Similarly with Descartes, Husserl uses the term “ego” and also takes methodologically solipsistic steps in his phenomenological investigations. Husserl takes the “pure ego” as the meaning-giving source of experience. Also, in *Cartesian Meditations* and *Ideas 2*¹⁰, Husserl discusses a methodologically solipsistic and abstractive reduction (not the same method than the transcendental-phenomenological reduction or eidetic reduction). But, unlike Descartes, Husserl does not aim at securing metaphysical certainty, but at understanding how our experience of others, the world, and objectivity is constituted (Hua 6, §55, 175).¹¹ As Heinämaa emphasises, the method of reduction must be kept apart from Descartes's hyperbolic doubt that questions the validity of our connection with other subjects (Heinämaa 2013, 84).

None of these critiques has to do with metaphysical solipsism, since transcendental phenomenology does not take a stand on metaphysical questions. Husserl strongly emphasises that metaphysical solipsism is absolutely nonsense (Hua 3, §79, 155). He does not aim at arguing pro or contra metaphysical solipsism, but remains metaphysically neutral.¹² His position of transcendental idealism is not traditional idealism but can be interpreted as an attempt to overcome both metaphysical realism and metaphysical idealism (Zahavi 2003, 42). Husserl takes no stand on the discussion between metaphysical realism or metaphysical idealism. As Luft puts it, Husserl's transcendental idealism is merely a theory of transcendental constitution, and for Husserl, like for Kant,

10 *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy, second book. Phenomenological investigations of constitution* (henceforth *Ideas 2*).

11 According to Husserl, Descartes failed the transcendental turn and consequently fell back into a naïve metaphysical attitude (Hua 1, §10, 63).

12 It can be debated whether Husserl actually succeeded in this attempt. However, he is of the opinion that metaphysics must be approached critically in order not to end up in naïve and speculative traditional metaphysics. In *Cartesian Meditations* he even strives for a kind of metaphysics that would overcome the problems of former traditional metaphysics. (Hua 1, §60, 166-7, §64, 182)

transcendental idealism and empirical realism are compatible (Luft 2012, 250).

In the foreword to Fink's *Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik* Husserl claims that all critiques of his work completely dismiss the main idea of his phenomenology. According to him, the critiques could not target transcendental phenomenology. (Fink 1934, 4) Husserl is not necessarily right when positing such a claim, but saying that no critique has actually targeted ideas of his phenomenology makes it worth taking another look at what Husserl means with his transcendental phenomenology and its investigation method.

To sum up, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, carried out by the method of reduction, can provide a profound account of constituting experience. This account includes the constitution of experience of knowledge, objectivity, and intersubjectivity. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology also provides an account of the universal essential invariants of the acts of experience and experienced objects. We experience continuously when doing science and leading everyday life, but the constitution of the experience itself remains unrealised until it is uncovered by phenomenological investigation. Because the method of reduction discloses such an elementary and universal factor of all conscious life, it is also important to discuss critiques presented against the method.

1.2 Research Question and the Structure of the Work

Based on the motivations and reasons that I have given above, my research question is, How does Husserl characterise the method of reduction in his transcendental phenomenology, and does the method necessarily lead to solipsism? The research question is related to questions about starting points and character of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, about the role of transcendental ego in transcendental-phenomenological investigation, and about characteristic differences between phenomenology and other sciences.

The reason for characterising defining my own study by the term “transcendental phenomenology”, and also using this term in the title of the thesis, lies in the distinction usually made between different phases or stages of Husserl's thinking. Often, Husserl's phenomenology is divided into three stages originally proposed by Fink: The first of these is *psychologism* (and Husserl's struggles with it)¹³, the second, *descriptive phenomenology*,

¹³ The relation between the psychology (of psychologism) and theoretical philosophy can be seen as a starting point for the development of phenomenology, and as Husserl struggled with psychologists and

and the third, *transcendental phenomenology*, which is marked by Husserl's development of reduction in his works starting from *Ideas I* to *The Crisis*¹⁴ (Moran 2000, 65-6). As is known, Husserl has claimed that reduction as the phenomenological method of investigation was part of his phenomenological thinking already in *Logical Investigations* (henceforth *LI*), but only implicitly (Fink 1934, 10). Husserl does, though, mention reduction for the first time already in his manuscripts from the year 1905, in the so-called *Seefelder Blättern* (Zahavi 2003, 151). According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the achievement proper to reduction is discussed already in *LI*, when methodically and distinctly delimiting the domain of phenomenological research to pure, unmixed givenness (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 59). However, Zahavi claims that Husserl's concept of phenomenology and his (anti)metaphysical¹⁵ position in *LI* are characterised by a number of unfortunate limitations and ambiguities. According to Zahavi, because of these problems, Husserl developed transcendental phenomenology in *Ideas I*. (Zahavi 2003, 43) The problems in *LI* which Husserl himself also noticed (see e.g. Hua 2, ix-x) make the work partly vague and contradictory with Husserl's works written after *LI*. Therefore, I limit my discussion only to the works from *The Idea of Phenomenology* onwards, and I use Husserl's former works only to understand the starting points and background of his mature works.

I will first discuss Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and his motivations for transcendental-phenomenological investigation. Then I will provide an overview of the two attitudes which are central to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. These are the natural attitude and the phenomenological attitude. The first is the attitude of everyday life and the positive sciences, and the latter is characteristic to phenomenological research.

After discussing the characteristics of transcendental phenomenology, I will examine the method of reduction by examining first the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and then the eidetic reduction. The chapter discussing the transcendental-phenomenological reduction includes sections discussing the phenomenological epoché

anti-psychologists during his early career. Psychologism is a view according to which logical and mathematical (or other ideal objects) are dependent on psychical processes. Some scholars are of opinion that Husserl's early work *Philosophie der Arithmetik* argues for this kind of view. Other scholars argue that this is not the case and that Husserl's anti-psychologism is original and not Fregean. Namely, mathematical tasks are, for Husserl, not psychological or psychical processes. However, e.g. Juntunen is of an opinion that the twofold structure of rigorous philosophical science and philosophical psychology is a permanent feature of Husserl's phenomenology (Juntunen 1986, 41-2).

14 *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenology* (henceforth *The Crisis*).

15 Husserl aimed at remaining metaphysically neutral. Zahavi's characterisation of Husserl's metaphysical position as anti-metaphysical is based on Husserl's aim of not taking a stand on metaphysical questions.

and the “backwards-inquiring” analysis (from now on I will refer to the phenomenological epoché simply as “the epoché”). “Epoché” means the suspension of all natural assumptions functioning in everyday life and the positive sciences. “The backwards-inquiring analysis” refers to the reductive steps following the epoché.

In this chapter concerning the two reductions I also discuss the transcendental ego and intersubjectivity. I also examine the reduction to the “sphere of ownness” as the part of Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigations which has raised questions about solipsism among commentators. After examining the transcendental-phenomenological reduction I will examine the eidetic reduction. Finally, I will discuss solipsism critique presented against the method of reduction.

As I have explained above, the method of reduction is the investigation method of transcendental phenomenology. In my examination of the method, I will focus on how the method of reduction is used and accomplished as a philosophical tool. Reduction is not merely a methodological principle explicated by Husserl, but it is a practice to be followed in order to achieve the transcendental sphere. Namely, according to Moran, the transcendental sphere that Husserl is after, is thinkable only through the method of reduction (Moran 2000, 146). Therefore, one should not examine the method of reduction merely by asking what it is, but by following the process of the reductive phenomenological investigation (Himanka 2000, 125-7). In other words, the method of reduction cannot be understood merely by defining the method, but only by also asking how reductions are accomplished. Therefore, instead of merely defining the method of reduction, I will proceed by describing the way reductions are accomplished (*vollzogen*). Since reduction is a process, a mere definition would not give a satisfactory account about what kind of method reduction is. Rather, in order to understand the method, one needs to see how transcendental-phenomenological investigation proceeds. I thus approach Husserl's method of reduction as a specific method of investigation, that is, I do not approach reduction as a static concept or a theme in Husserl's philosophy. The chapters where I discuss the reductions will thus include both a description of performing a reduction as well as a discussion of the irreal¹⁶ forms and spheres that are disclosed by the

16 In Husserl's earlier works the word “irreal” is also called “ideal”. With these words Husserl refers to entities that are not real beings in the world with their interrelations such as causality (such as a book, a dog, myself, a water bottle, etc.), but e.g. numbers, the laws of logic, grammar, concepts etc. In Cairns's characterisation of the irreal of the investigated experiences, while the reality-thesis is bracketed, the reduced world-phenomenon is not taken as real or not-real, which in turn makes transcendental subjectivity a realm of being that is ontically prior to being and not-being (Cairns 2013, 9).

reductions.

Husserl uses alternative terms for characterising the method of reduction and the kinds of reductions in different texts. For example, in *Ideas I*¹⁷ he calls the reduction that is questioning back the “transcendental reduction”, but he elsewhere also calls the same methodical process also “transcendental-phenomenological reduction”. In *The Crisis*, the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis are treated as two separate tasks, and the latter is called simply “reduction”. Despite the differences, the term “transcendental-phenomenological reduction” seems to refer primarily to both the epoché and to the backwards-inquiring analysis, as one can see in Husserl's works from *Ideas I* onwards. The varying method which investigates essences (*eidé*) of experiences and experienced objects is called “eidetic reduction” or also “eidetic variation”, “imaginative variation”, “*Wesensschau*”, or in English also “essential insight”.¹⁸ Husserl applies the method of reduction outside transcendental phenomenology as well, for example in phenomenological psychology where he uses a reduction called “phenomenological-psychological reduction” (see e.g. Hua 6, part 3b).

Commentaries on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology also refer to the method of reduction with many different terms such as “reductive method”, “*the* reduction” as one, “*a* reduction” as an instance in a category of certain kinds of analyses, “reductions” in plural, or “method of reduction”. I will use the latter formulations, the “method of reduction” (henceforth also “reduction” as this method), and “a reduction” and “reductions” for indicating particular reductions. While Husserl does refer to the method and particular reductions with different terms in different texts, I will due to clarity and consistency follow the usage in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and the central commentaries used in this thesis. Following these works, I call the phenomenological or transcendental reduction the “transcendental-phenomenological reduction”, which includes both the epoché and the other steps which I will call “backwards-inquiring analysis”. The varying reduction I will call the “eidetic reduction”. The varying reduction and the backwards-inquiring reduction are two separate and independent reductions. They are both still accomplished in the frames of phenomenology, since they both take place only in the phenomenological attitude. Accordingly, I discuss the two reductions separately but in the

17 *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy, first book: general introduction to a pure phenomenology* (henceforth *Ideas I*).

18 Joseph Cohen and Dermot Moran list seven terms for this reduction, namely, “eidetic reduction”, “eidetic variation”, “imaginative free variation”, “free variation”, “imaginative variation”, “free arbitrary variation” and “free fantasy”(Cohen and Moran 2012, 204). Husserl himself (and also i.a. Fink and Heidegger) also uses the term “*Wesensschau*”.

same chapter.

The reason for using these terms is that my aim is to stay away from renaming or reconstructing Husserl's reductions. I do not intend to reformulate the method of reduction or to develop it further but to explicate what Husserl himself means by the term "reduction". Since I read Husserl's works in an exegetic-systematic manner, my method for examining Husserl's method of reduction is interpretative. I outline Husserl's notions of reduction mainly based on his works, considering also the ego and intersubjectivity.

I will examine Husserl's works from his phase of transcendental phenomenology, with an emphasis on the literary works meant for publication, i.e. books and articles.¹⁹ I will especially emphasise Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and *The Crisis*. In these works Husserl discusses relations between subjectivity and intersubjectivity as well as an abstractive solipsistic reduction called "the reduction to the sphere of ownness". I will also rely on eminent commentaries central to Husserl studies. Among the central commentaries are Zahavi's *Husserl's Phenomenology* and *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology* written by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach. I will discuss solipsism critique mainly on the basis of two kinds of sources: on the one hand, on the basis of a relatively harsh critique presented in *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science*, and on the other hand, on the basis of presentations that are more sympathetic to Husserl's work and discuss the function of solipsism in Husserl's thinking. Among the latter are the commentaries by Zahavi and by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach which I mentioned above.

I expect the reader to be somewhat familiar with Husserl's phenomenology. Because many of Husserl's concepts may still be unclear to the reader, I clarify central concepts in the footnotes. When there is a specific central Husserlian concept that is not explained in the text, the concept is explained in the footnote referred to by the number next to the concept.

19 This kind of emphasis is not uncommon amongst studies about Husserl's reductions, even if the motivations between different authors may differ. For example, my motivation for emphasising the mature works of Husserl is thematic, whereas Luft, for example, treats the topic from the standpoint of the late Husserl because, according to him, Husserl continued to rework and refine this method throughout his career and never produced a comprehensive and completely satisfying account of his central methodological tenet (Luft 2012, 244).

2 HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

According to Husserl, the method of reduction makes phenomenology a rigorous science that provides a basis for all other sciences (Hua 6, §73, 269).²⁰ The method dissociates from natural assumptions, that is, from positing the existence of objects that are transcendent to pure experience. That is, the method takes the phenomenological investigation to the transcendental sphere. Therefore, it is a necessary method for the type of transcendental investigations that Husserl aims at performing.

This means that, transcendental phenomenology as a discipline (“discipline” in a wide sense) determines the method of transcendental reduction by its aims and tasks. In the following I will study Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as the discipline and context in which the method of reduction is explicated. I will first examine the aims of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology in general. Then I will give a characterisation of the phenomenological attitude crucial to the method of reduction, and I will contrast this attitude to the natural attitude of the everyday life and the empirical sciences. Finally, I will investigate the motivations of the transcendental-phenomenological investigation.

2.1 Transcendental Phenomenology

The method of reduction emerges explicitly in Husserl's mature works where he criticises his earlier approach as developed in *LI*. According to Husserl, in that work the approach is relying partly on empirical evidence instead of being strictly rigorous. (Hua 2, ix-x) By developing the methodology of phenomenology and introducing the method of reduction, Husserl's phenomenology turns from what he calls “descriptive phenomenology” (descriptive analysis of intentional content) to “transcendental” phenomenology.²¹ In *LI*,

20 According to Heinämaa the motivation of Husserl's phenomenology was at first epistemological, but as it developed, its field became the whole transcendental sphere, dealing with the conditions and unity of consciousness and phenomena (Heinämaa 2016, 362). In *The Crisis*, Husserl does describe different applications of transcendental phenomenology, for example empathy and the question of the sexes (Hua 6, §55).

21 Husserl also develops an approach called “psychological phenomenology”. He nevertheless says that psychological phenomenology does not aim at the goals of transcendental phenomenology (Hua 9, 237). According to Heinämaa, even if Husserl was also interested in phenomenological psychology, his phenomenology is not any kind of psychology. Even if phenomenology treats consciousness and its structures and the phenomena it constitutes, phenomenology is neither psychology nor semantics nor in any way philosophy of mind. (Heinämaa 2016, 361) Reduction as a method of analysis can also be applied to different sciences (for example, to psychology), but according to Mohanty all naturalistic reductionism needs to be refuted if philosophy is to be grounded on a sound basis. All such reductions are, according to him, based on some science of fact or another, notably on psychology, and as such are mistaken, because they distort and so are incompatible with the very essence of the reduced. (Mohanty 1997, 3)

Husserl's method of investigation is a descriptive correlation analysis of constitutive acts and constituted content. By turning the interest towards the way in which the intentional content is constituted²² Husserl changes his investigation method to the method of reduction.

Phenomenological philosophy is for Husserl a rational and rigorous science that investigates the eidetic²³ structures of intentional experience.²⁴ (Hua 9, 244-5, Hua 5, 141). As an eidetic a priori science, Husserl's phenomenology differs radically from empirical-inductive sciences. Husserl defines phenomenology as different also from the deductive sciences, such as mathematics, which Husserl defines as the deductive science of facts. (Hua 3, §75, 141) In order to be rigorous, phenomenology must not investigate objects that bear in themselves thick layers of intuitions and assumptions but must start from extra-empirical and extra-logical objects that are free from any presuppositions.

According to Moran, the peculiar manner in which the world and the objects in the world appear to consciousness, i.e. their phenomenality, is for Husserl not an objective fact of the world but rather an accomplishment of an interwoven web of subjectivities. Phenomenology reveals the subjective stances and attitudes which themselves can never be wholly brought into view in the everyday life or the positive sciences (i.e. sciences of fact, both empirical and logical-mathematical sciences). (Moran 2013, 90) According to Mirja

22 According to Cohen and Moran, the term “constitution” (*Konstitution*) is a term commonly used by the Neo-Kantians to refer to the manner in which an object is formed and given its particular structure and attributes by certain a priori acts of consciousness. According to the Neo-Kantian tradition (to which the mature Husserl broadly belongs), objects do not exist simply on their own but receive their particular intelligible structure from the activity of the conscious subject apprehending them (e.g. *Ideas I* §83). For Husserl, objects and other classes of entities (divided into various ontological regions) do not simply exist but are experienced by consciousness according to pre-delineated sets of acts of consciousness to which they are correlated. “Every object is constituted in the manner peculiar to consciousness” (*Ideas I* §149). These acts are closely interrelated (e.g. perceiving, remembering, judging, etc.). The constitution of an object is determined by certain predetermined meaning-forms as laid down by the essential nature of the object in question (e.g. a material object can only be perceived in profiles and this process is inexhaustible, *Ideas I* §149). Everything experienced is constituted in some specific way. (Cohen & Moran 2012, 91) The concept of constitution was, according to Juntunen, also used in psychologistic logic, where the fundamental concepts of logic were seen as constituted in psychological acts (which also meant that, according to the psychologists, logic needed an analysis of constitutive acts) (Juntunen 1986, 35).

23 By “eidetic” Husserl means ideal (“irreal”) as distinguished from the real (Hua 3 §46, 87) and does not refer to Platonic ideas, for example.

24 In *Ideas I* Husserl characterises the ideal objects as pure possibilities, dependent essences or “abstracta” (Hua 3, §16, 35). Jitendranath N. Mohanty gives an example of an ideal object as a red circle: “Red circle” refers to a dependent essence; it cannot be by itself. Any individual red circle has more determinations than merely being red and being a circle. According to Mohanty, that a pure possibility is an *abstractum* or dependent essence for Husserl is borne out by the facts that necessary truths on his view are about pure possibilities, and that, in the third *Logical Investigation*, he defines synthetic necessary truths in terms of dependent objects. (Mohanty 1984, 15)

Hartimo, Sara Heinämaa, and Timo Miettinen, philosophy for Husserl charts possibilities, not realities. Philosophy as phenomenology is for Husserl not a logical construction but establishes itself as a transcendental inquiry into the conditions of possibility of our experience of the world and everything within it. (Hartimo, Heinämaa, Miettinen 2014, 5) Therefore, according to Husserl, when properly pursued, phenomenology grounds all other philosophical methods and clarifies the basic concepts of all the other sciences by analysing the essences (*Wesensanalyse*) of those concepts (Hua 5, §15, 80).

According to Husserl, because of the revolutionary way of treating objects, phenomenology should be understood as a turning point in philosophy (Hua 9, 237). For Husserl, the radical grounding of scientific philosophy is provided by overcoming metaphysical problems, that is, by not approving any conclusions, hypotheses, or methods of other sciences (Hua 9, 237).²⁵ This means for Husserl that phenomenology does not partake in traditional argumentation about things in the world. Rather, phenomenology must be anti-metaphysical. (ibid., 253) The basis for Husserl's phenomenology is therefore metaphysics (the word meant in the widest sense) without any presuppositions. This means stepping back from positing the existence of objects that are transcendent to the experience itself. (Hua 3, §65)

According to Moran, Husserl's phenomenology first started as a philosophical addition to mathematical studies by describing and uncovering essences and essential structures of various regions of phenomena (starting from the phenomenon of number but proceeding to those of space, material nature, human existence, consciousness) (Moran 2000, 60, 65-67). Husserl's earlier "descriptive" phenomenology is characterised by the slogan "back to the things themselves" ("*Zurück zu den Sachen selbst*").²⁶ "Things

25 According to Hartimo, Heinämaa and Miettinen, Husserl's radical philosophical aspiration does not just demarcate phenomenology from those theoretical approaches that call themselves "naturalistic", but the very same radicalism separates Husserlian phenomenology also from those constructivist approaches that study the ideas of nature, the natural world, and human nature by inserting them in social, historical, or social-historical circumstances. In them the fundamental presupposition of the world is left intact even if the senses of nature and the natural world are investigated as social or historical accomplishments since these accomplishments are still conceptualised as worldly events or processes. In other words, on Husserl's analysis, the social and historical constructivist approaches are not radical enough for philosophical purposes. (Hartimo, Heinämaa, Miettinen 2014, 4)

26 What needs to be emphasised, is that, according to Merleau-Ponty, this "return" does not refer to the Kantian turn towards the noumenal, but the return is rather a turn to that world which precedes knowledge (Merleau-Ponty 1981, ix). Phenomenology, and especially Husserl's investigations, have been accused of failing really to grasp the things themselves and, instead of getting to the noumenal, staying with the phenomenal and only being directed towards the real things as they are, without ever being able to investigate the reality. For example, Tom Sparrow makes this kind of a claim and for this reason takes part in a philosophical movement called "speculative realism" (Sparrow 2014, 1-2). However, Husserl argues that there is no meaningful distinction between the so-called "primary" and "secondary" qualities, but all the objective qualities are experienced in a sensed way, which means that the objective things are sensed directly, and the objective qualities are understood by sensing them (Hua 4, §18g, 85-6).

themselves” mean here objects as they are experienced and the essences and essential structures that characterise various regions. (Hua 3, 1-6) By a transformation of the concern of his phenomenological investigation, imposed by the problems in the descriptive phenomenology, Husserl begins to investigate the sense of experienced objects and the intentional acts themselves. In the lecture series *Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl starts to define phenomenology as the study of the correlation “between” the world and the conscious pure subject²⁷ (Hua 2, 22). In other words, Husserl turns phenomenological investigation from specific thematic regions towards the universal sphere of transcendental experience.²⁸

Transcendental phenomenology aims at grasping the world and objects-as-experienced, i.e. how objects manifest themselves to us in original²⁹ experience. Therefore,

27 The subject in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology has as its core the pure subject, and is indistinct (*untrennbar*) from the ego that belongs to every cogito (*das untrennbar zu jedem cogito gehörige ego*) (Hua 4, §4, 4).

28 The experience as correlation between the world and the subject includes the concepts of *noesis*, the temporal conscious act of meaning, and *noema* the atemporal meaning in the intentional act. The latter is the immanent object as meant, a purely intentional ideal object, and as the meaning in the act, it is originarily dependent on the act (Husserl also emphasises that one must not confuse it with the essence of the perceived thing and adds that the meanings as concepts come to be through the generalisation from the experiences even if, as concepts, they are essentially atemporal) (Hua 5, §7, 25). Since Husserl's characterisation of *noema* and *noesis* is ambiguous and there is an extensive scholarly discussion about the nature and interpretation of *noema*, I will not treat this issue here. However, it can be said that the atemporal meaning is not time-dependent since, as it is the meaning itself, it can be a meaning of many different acts, for example the meaning of redness which exists independently of time, whereas an experience of a red thing, the act of meaning as being conscious of *noema*, begins and ends and is thus temporal. The meaning itself is dependent on the act in the sense that it exists only in an intentional conscious act. *Noema* is not the same as the real thing in the world but the meaning given to it, for example, a perceived object as it is perceived. Husserl exemplifies this by discussing the *noemata* of the objects of natural science and evaluated objects: Real things in the world can be objects of natural science (for example, a brick of stone can be a certain object of mass and matter), but in the everyday the same thing can be seen as a building block of a house. In other words, the same real thing in the world can have different meanings, and the meanings of the real things do not exist independently in the world (Hua 4, §11, 26).

There is a wide discussion between many commentators about what kind of an entity is Husserl's *noema*, and I will not present the different interpretations here. As examples, I only mention the following readings: Dagfinn Føllesdal identifies *noema* with the *Fregean* notion of sense, which John Drummond criticises by claiming (and defending Aron Gurwitsch's position) that *noema* is ontologically identical with the intended objectivity itself (but differing from Gurwitsch in claiming that the relation between *noema* and the intended object itself is analysed as objectivity-in-manifold, rather than whole-part, relation, Drummond 1992, 6). Among the phenomenologists in the United States one can distinguish between the so-called West Coast schools and the East Coast schools. In the former, the *noema* is, following Føllesdal's reading, taken either to be similar to the *Fregean* concept of *Sinn*, or an intended worldly object.

29 “Original” or “originary” (*Originarität*) refers to an empirical perception or experience that is given directly as an object in the perception, and is grasped by an embodied self, that is, from a first-person perspective (cf. Hua 3, §3, 14). One's own experience of something is always original, but when experienced as experienced before, e.g. via memory, or as experienced by an other, for example, in listening to another's opinion about a colour, it is given no-originally (Hua 5, §18a, 39).

transcendental phenomenology is concerned with the pre-given domain of pure experience. According to Husserl, since logical laws are not experienced as manifestations in pure experience, in the transcendental-phenomenological investigation, such laws are not taken as given (Hua 2, 21). As Moran formulates it, the method of reduction removes the reliance on logic and mathematics (Moran 2000, 131). The point is to perform as rigorous investigation as possible. This happens by freeing the investigation of all presuppositions. Thus, what is left for the investigation is the transcendental sphere.

The word “transcendental” refers to everything that is given in pure experience, that is, everything that is found in the pre-given sphere of experience (Hua 6, §26, 100). Since transcendental-phenomenological investigation is interested in transcendental experience, the investigation is centred around the subject of experience. This subject is a transcendental subjectivity, called the “transcendental ego” (Hua 4, §4, 4). The ego is an ideal condition of any possible experience. Indeed, experience is always experienced by someone, that is, objects manifest themselves to an experiencing subject.

The role of the transcendental ego is the distinctive feature between transcendental phenomenology and Husserl's former phenomenology. Unlike the descriptive-phenomenological investigation, the transcendental-phenomenological problematic starts from the I as the pure ego and the consciousness (*Seele*) as a universal sphere of experience. The starting point of the investigation is the ego's experience of “I-myself” (*Ich-selbst*) with the whole real and possible rational life of the I. The problematic is directed at the intentionality of the ego (*Bewusstseinsleben*) and the world known through intentional acts of knowing. (Hua 6, §26, 100-1) Transcendental experience is always intentional, i.e. the experiencing transcendental ego always intends something. This intentional experience is the correlation between an experienced object and an intentional subject (Hua 1, §30, 100). As transcendental experience, the correlation is not static but an always changing stream of sensations.³⁰ For Husserl, only by investigating this correlation, that is, that between transcendental experience and the manifestation of objects, we are able to investigate the way we form sense of knowledge, objectivity, and the world in general. This is because, by freeing the investigation from dogmatics, presuppositions, and natural assumptions, what is left for investigation is the sphere of pure experience.

In order to put dogmatics, natural assumptions, and presuppositions aside, transcendental phenomenology refrains from posing claims about the existence of

³⁰ With the “stream of experiences” Husserl means the unity of all experiences of the consciousness, and as a unity all its experiences are essentially indistinguishable (cf. Hua 3, 70).

empirical, worldly states of affairs. The existence of empirical objects is not experienced originally, that is, the existence of empirical objects is transcendent to pure experience. Husserl calls the not-positing-existence “scepticism” towards natural assumptions (Hua 6, §26, 101). That is, transcendental phenomenology does not rely on assumptions about the existence of objects in the world, but transcendental-phenomenological investigation also does not negate any of those assumptions. Thus, Husserl says that transcendental phenomenology is not objective in the same sense that the natural sciences are (Hua 4, §11, 27). However, this does not mean that transcendental-phenomenological investigation would be subjective in the sense of being interested only in particular subjective views. Rather, transcendental-phenomenological reflection asks how the conclusions of the positive sciences or everyday assumptions are constituted in experience.³¹ As Husserl writes in *The Crisis*, transcendental phenomenology investigates especially the basis of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and acts of knowing (Hua 6, §26, 100).

Transcendental phenomenology investigates *phenomena*, i.e. objects-as-experienced. In other words, phenomenology does not investigate an empirically existing thing, but a “thing” (*ein “Ding”*) as a *phenomenon* of that thing. (Hua 5, §15, 85) According to Zahavi, this central object of investigation in Husserl's phenomenology can roughly be characterised as a manifestation of a sensed object (a thing, the world, an animated being, etc.) (Zahavi 2003, 55). A phenomenon is thus a manifestation of an object, not that object itself. This means that phenomena are *irreal* (but not unreal or false), in contrast to real³² empirical objects (Hua 4, §18b, 64).³³ A phenomenon does not exist in itself in the world, which means that a phenomenon is dependent on the experiencing subject to whom the manifestation appears and on the object appearing. In other words, a manifestation of an object is essentially dependent on the object itself and could not be if the object did not exist (i.e. a phenomenon is not a mental representation). Therefore, according to Fink, the

31 According to Hartimo, Heinämaa, and Miettinen, in contrast to a common misconception, transcendental-phenomenological reflection is not something that would transcend our lives and understanding but is an investigation into the senses that are operative in experiences (Hartimo, Heinämaa, Miettinen 2014, 2-3).

32 Husserl uses the term “real” in multiple ways. As in *Ideas 2*, the term can refer to entities in the world that exist independently of an experiencing subject. Especially in *LI* “real”, as opposed to “ideal”, refers to objects whose existence is temporal, for example intentional acts, tea bags, or a dream. In turn, the concept “reell”, which could also be translated into English as “real”, refers to that which is itself present in consciousness (Boer 1978, 134).

33 Even if the object of which they are a manifestation does not really have to exist but can also be a memory, dream, etc.

transcendental field of phenomenology is neither transcendent nor immanent³⁴ (that which exists when it is given and vice versa) being as real being. The transcendental sphere is that of phenomena, and one cannot say in which sense the appearing objects as phenomena exist. That is, claims about the existence of appearing objects have no truth value. (Fink 1934, 18, 29)

The region of transcendental-phenomenological investigation is not immediately accessible in the natural (i.e. everyday, “normal”) way of treating objects. This means that transcendental analysis becomes possible only through a methodical suspension of all transcendent preconceptions, practical as well as theoretical (Hua 8, 427). This is where the first step of the method of reduction, i.e. the bracketing of natural assumptions, is needed, but I will examine this step more in the chapter 3.1.1. In contrast to the transcendental-phenomenological reflection, the natural reflection³⁵ of the everyday and the positive sciences, the so-called “normally” intended reflection, relates to objects in a goal-oriented way. That is, natural reflection concentrates on objects as goals, and not as objects of experiencing. This means that the natural way of reflection leaves the correlation, the experiencing itself, unnoticed and does therefore not provide access to the transcendental sphere and the constitutive subjectivity. (Hua 6, §38, 147-8)

As I have already mentioned, Husserl defines transcendental phenomenology as an eidetic science, which means that transcendental phenomenology is a study of the eidetic invariants of experience, the experienced objects, and the experiencings. Thus, in his transcendental phenomenology, Husserl is interested in the sphere of essences. This means that phenomena are central objects of investigation in transcendental phenomenology but only as a means for investigating a more profound object of interest, that is, universal essences and constitutive structures in experience. Thus, according to Husserl, particular phenomena as coming and going in the stream of transcendental experience, in the so-called “Heraclitean stream”³⁶ (*heraklitischer Fluß*) of pure consciousness, are not proper

34 Husserl makes a distinction between the experience itself and what is experienced (*Erscheinung und Erscheinenden*). In other words, there are two absolute objects included in immanence, but the experienced object is not really included in the experience (it is not part of it). Therefore, in transcendental experience the experiencing act and the experienced object (object-as-experienced) are immanently given.

35 “Reflection” means for Husserl something more precise than what it means in ordinary language use. It is for him turning away from the straightforward way of looking at the objects of perception and turning towards the experiencing itself of those objects of straightforward perception. Thus one objectifies something that is not a real thing in the world. (Hua 18, §71, 255) For example, I can make a judgement about something while being turned towards the object of my judgement and then reflect on the judgement itself by turning away from the object of the judgement. For Husserl the reflection can happen in the natural as well as the phenomenological attitude, but of course it is based for different assumptions in different attitudes.

36 In *Ideas 2* Husserl clarifies that the conscious life is necessarily a stream or flux (*Fluß*) in the sense that it

objects of transcendental phenomenology. Rather, transcendental phenomenology is interested in the universal absolute givenness of objects that holds good no matter who or what is the real experiencing individual. (Hua 2, 55-8)

Particular cases of pure transcendental consciousness are used merely as examples in Husserlian phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology as a concrete eidetic science proceeds by using every particular perception for understanding the essence (*Wesen*)³⁷ of that which is perceived (Hua 3, §69, §73). That is, the ultimate object of interest in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is the universal way of constitution of experienced objects, e.g. the constitution of the everyday experience of a non-living object, or the constitution of knowledge, or the constitution of "me". In the investigation of the essences of these experiences and experienced objects, Husserl starts by using particular experiences and phenomena. These could be, for example, perceptual experiences such as "seeing a banana on the table at home", or cognitive ones such as "knowing that it takes eight minutes for sunlight to arrive here", or axiological ones such as "I like bananas".

Based on exemplary transcendental experiences, transcendental-phenomenological investigation proceeds a priori. According to Husserl, the investigation must be strictly intuitive and study the invariants of essences in the frames of all possible forms of being. Since the objects of interest are universal essences, the difference between the empirically real and possible states of affairs is not taken into account. (Hua 1, §64, 180) Indeed, according to Husserl, the possibilities of experience include the essences of the experienced objects and the "object-being" (*Gegenständlichkeit*) of experiences. The sense of essences is determined a priori by experiences and experienced objects. (Hua 9, 253) For Husserl, the field of essences is universal, which means that it is the field of absolute knowledge. According to him, this is because essences can be found "a priori in absolute self-givenness". This absolute self-givenness is the realm that excludes all meaningful doubt. (Hua 2, 55) Husserl also defines the absolute self-givenness as the self-grasping evidence³⁸ (*selbst erfassenden Evidenz*), also called "phenomenological evidence" (Hua 6,

includes no existing static realities, but rather it is a row of constantly changing dispositions: Every experience leaves dispositions behind itself and creates a new one based on the former. In this way, the experiential mind is an essential unity that cannot be separated into different pieces, unlike material objects. (Hua 4, §32, 133) With this Husserl does of course not mean that one would not sometimes be unconscious or asleep, but that one does not experience the borders of experience. Rather, the experience is experienced as continuous.

37 Husserl defines the essence as the characteristic being (*selbsteigenen Sein*) of an individual as its *What* (*Was*) (Hua 3, §3, 13).

38 Evidence (*Evidenz*) is according to many commentators a little unclear concept, but basically it means

§55, 193).³⁹ Thus, empirical truths and conclusions are of no use in transcendental phenomenology, but the investigation takes place fully in the eidetic sphere.

Because transcendental phenomenology investigates phenomena and essences, conclusions in transcendental phenomenology are eidetic-descriptive and not factual-empirical. According to Heinämaa, transcendental phenomenology thus provides clarification about the necessities of appearance and the meaning-giving subjectivity (Heinämaa 2016, 165). According to Zahavi, this makes phenomenology a philosophical reflection on the conditions of the possibilities of how objects can show and manifest themselves (Zahavi 2003, 66). Since transcendental phenomenology investigates a priori the essences of experiences and experienced objects, Husserl claims that both every normative and non-normative discipline belongs to the sphere of phenomenology. According to him, phenomenology clarifies the basis of all other disciplines. (Hua 9, 254) To sum up, transcendental phenomenology investigates the universal essences of experiencing, meaning, and manifestation. Therefore, according to Husserl, transcendental phenomenology provides the fundamental framework within which all other sciences take place.

2.2 The Phenomenological Attitude and the Natural Attitude

As mentioned above, transcendental phenomenology takes place in a phenomenological dimension. This dimension is achieved by suspending the natural assumptions characteristic to the attitude of everyday life and the positive sciences. Husserl distinguishes different ways of studying things by the concept of “attitude” (*Einstellung*). The term “attitude” refers to a specific way of directing attention to objects and thus also to

the direct and adequate self-givenness (Hua 2, 59), an experience of something as exactly a mental seeing of something itself (Hua 1, §5). Husserl characterises evidence as experience of being and thus-being (*Seiendem und So-Seiendem*), as given in experience, and it can be more or less “full” (*vollkommen*). In other words, it can be either true or imagination, dream, illusion, etc. (Hua 1, §5, 52) Or, as Husserl writes in the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, evidence is the insight that occurs when the meant (*das Gemeinte*) comes into complete correspondence with the given (Hua 20, §36). Juntunen characterises it as being based on the distinctions between different forms of givenness, that is, between the original/ unoriginal, apodictic/ assertory, or adequate/ inadequate forms of givenness, that gives the analogous forms of evidence (such as an inadequate evidence). For example, Regis Debrey can be given for me in a thought, which means that R.D. is given to me as assertory (not apodictically) evident. (Juntunen 1986, 85-8)

- 39 The ongoing question in Husserl's whole transcendental phenomenology is also the problem of achieving true knowledge (*episteme*, as distinguished from the *doxa*, the dogmatic “knowledge” based on invalid assumptions of existence) by the empirical sciences that act in the natural attitude. As he puts it: “How can the pure phenomenon of knowledge meet something that is not immanent to it, and how can the absolute self-givenness of the knowledge meet that which is not self-given, and how should one understand this meeting?”. (Hua 2, 36) It is according to him unclear how knowledge can meet anything transcendent as that which is not self-given but meant outside the givenness (*Hinausgemeintes*) (Hua 2, 6).

the objects of attention.⁴⁰ Indeed, an attitude always has an object. Different attitudes can even intend a common object, but the object of investigation is apprehended in different ways within different attitudes. For example, in the natural everyday attitude, a glass on the table is seen as a real, existing, practical tool for drinking, in the attitude of a natural scientist it is studied as a purely physical thing, and in the phenomenological attitude the same glass on the table is taken as the phenomenon “a glass on the table”. The character of the object of investigation depends on the way of directing attention, that is, on the attitude taken.

According to Husserl, we are always in one or another attitude, but we may never realise this. Everyday life, which presupposes the presence and existence of experienced objects, takes place in the attitude that Husserl calls the “natural attitude”. He opposes this attitude to the “phenomenological attitude”, which is the attitude of phenomenological investigations. In the latter, the phenomenologist is turned towards objects as mere phenomena, i.e. as targets of phenomenological investigations. The phenomenological attitude opens up the field of transcendental phenomenology by turning the interest from entities that are transcendent to pure experience towards that which is given in pure experience. Since the phenomenological attitude is merely a direction of interest, the change of attitudes means going thematically over from one point of interest towards another (Hua 4, §53, 210). In the change of attitude characteristic of phenomenology, the constitution of experience which is left unnoticed and taken for granted in the natural attitude becomes the central object of investigation. This means that transcendental-phenomenological investigation takes place always and only in the phenomenological attitude. In contrast to phenomenological investigations, and in addition to everyday experiences, all empirical sciences and all positive world-examining sciences take place in the natural attitude. Therefore, in order to understand the difference between transcendental phenomenology and other sciences, it is necessary to understand the difference between the natural and phenomenological attitudes.

The difference between these two attitudes is mainly a difference between turning one's interest towards objects associated with transcendent assumptions (i.e. what is not given in pure experience) or towards objects in the transcendental sphere (i.e. what is given

40 There are also other attitudes besides just the everyday attitude within the natural attitude, such as the “theoretical” attitude of the sciences, or “aesthetic” attitude in aesthetic perception. As these attitudes are still within the natural attitude (non-phenomenological), they are anyhow dogmatic. (Hua 4, §6, 14)

in pure experience). This means that the objects of the phenomenological attitude are what is found in pure experience itself, whereas the objects of the natural attitude are objects involved in relations and existence that are not found in pure experience. (Hua 2, 5) Immanence always intendeds the transcendent, but in the natural perception only the transcendent is thematized. In the phenomenological attitude, the object becomes the immanence itself, i.e. the transcendental sphere of experience. Luft characterises these two attitudes by saying that in the natural attitude the world is taken to exist independently of an experiencing subject, whereas to a phenomenologist the world is part of the correlational *a priori* (Luft 2012, 250). That is, investigation that takes place in the natural attitude trusts that the world and relations in it, such as causality, exist and operate. In turn, investigation that takes place in the phenomenological attitude does not rely on any assumptions that are not made evident in transcendental experience. Thus, the investigation in phenomenological attitude can proceed only *a priori* on the basis of the transcendental experience.

The experience that transcendental phenomenology is interested in is the natural experience. The motivation for investigating natural experience in the phenomenological attitude is that we cannot investigate the structures and foundations of experiences in the same way as we investigate worldly things and events on the basis of experiences. That is, we cannot investigate natural experiences in the natural attitude but must take distance from the experiences that we study and from the existential preconceptions that they imply. Therefore, we can investigate natural experiences only by the phenomenological approach. The natural attitude is often evaluative and practical. Also, this attitude is necessarily “naïve” in the sense that in order to be interested in real and causal relations and in order to study these relations, one must believe that these relations and the relating entities exist. That is, we live always in a *cogitatio*, i.e. a subjective uniform act of thinking in which we do not have the act itself as an intentional object. Thus, in the natural attitude one does not reflect upon the constitution of the experience itself of objects. This means that in the natural attitude, one is not aware of the constitutive process of understanding and experiencing and does not pay attention to it. Rather, one's attention is goal-directed at transcendent factors, and therefore the investigation of natural experience must take place in the phenomenological attitude.

As I have already mentioned, most of scientific research also takes place within the natural attitude. The natural attitude is based on *doxa*, that is, on systems of assumptions, whereas a rigorous science is based on genuine knowledge, *episteme*, which is based on

absolutely evident grounds (Hua 6, §44, 158, Hua 4, §2, 2). Husserl characterises the natural attitude as inductive because in the natural attitude one makes judgements and conclusions based on previous experiences and generalisations based on particular experiences (Hua 2, 17-18). Thus, the distinction between rigorous science and the positive sciences is that the first takes place in an attitude that is free of natural assumptions, i.e. the phenomenological attitude, whereas the non-rigorous sciences, e.g. the natural sciences, take place in the natural attitude. An object of the natural attitude is always given only presumptively, because it is given only one-sidedly (i.e. inadequately, partly, versus adequately, given completely and exactly as it is)⁴¹. In contrast, a transcendently given object does not include any presuppositions about the existence of the object outside the meaning-giving act. The natural attitude essentially includes this kind of assumptions.

In everyday life we must all the time make ontological assumptions about existence and sense of experienced objects. This is because we could not operate in our environments without making various assumptions about what is the case. For example, in order to go for lunch, I need to believe that the university cafeteria is open, that my bank card functions, and that my hunger will vanish after I have eaten the food that I assume the cafeteria will provide. We are constantly aware of our surroundings, actually or non-actually (potentially), so that we are constantly perceiving or thinking about objects in a goal-oriented and evaluative way (Hua 3, §39). For example, I take my bank card (object) as a means for paying for the food (object) that tastes good. In *The Crisis*, Husserl explains the natural attitude by connecting it to the concept of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*)⁴². This concept refers to the way we live in the world, always already making different kinds of evaluations about what is given to us, around us or available at a distance. The natural attitude of everyday life can be practically directed at things as utensils or means for something, but it can also be non-practically directed, either pure cognitively directed or axiologically directed (“axiology” for Husserl covers the sphere of acts of evaluating,

41 For Husserl, the term “apodictic” refers to insights that are necessary, infallible, and indubitable. “Adequate” refers to insight that is absolute but not necessarily apodictic. (Cohen and Moran 2012, 43, 179) According to Dermot Moran and Joseph Cohen, for Husserl “apodicticity” means the highest level of evidence or self-evidence (Cohen and Moran 2012, 43). Apodicticity is opposed to empirical certainty (Moran 2000, 194). Himanka translates apodicticity as “indubitable” (Himanka 2002, 100). Juntunen, in turn, interprets the apodictic knowledge to be knowledge about essential necessities (Juntunen 1986, 68).

42 According to Zahavi, Husserl's lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) can be regarded as a new introduction to one's way towards the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, a way that radically questions a number of Cartesian motives in Husserl's thinking and that understands the relation between subjectivity and world in a very different manner than *Ideas I*. (Zahavi 2003, 125)

pleasing, displeasing, and all other such relations that belong to the affective sphere, Hua 4, §4, 4).

According to Husserl, the lifeworld provides the ground for the everyday life and the positive sciences, which means that the lifeworld is also the basic and fundamental horizon⁴³ (everything in the world is given in a certain horizon of relations, i.e. a contextual background) (Hua 6, §38, 148, §46, 161). This means that we are always already embedded within evaluated meanings and a kind of naïveté regarding things and situations around us. In other words, while leading one's life, one's experiences are stratified and layered, but one does not pay attention to this. There is nothing wrong with the natural attitude and the unquestioning acceptance of the existence of things for the purposes of our daily lives. At the same time, the natural attitude does not allow us to realise how the experiential processes take place, what they consist of, and what they presuppose.

In contrast to the natural way of thinking and responding to our surroundings and to oneself, phenomenology is acting in a specific suspensive attitude that differs radically from the natural one. In the phenomenological attitude, attention is turned towards the constitutive relations and processes of experiencing, i.e. the layers and factors of the constitution of experience (Hua 4, §4, 4). Thus, for Husserl, philosophy is in a completely other dimension when compared to the positive sciences and has a completely different starting point than the positive sciences (Hua 2, 24). According to Husserl, all positive sciences are transcendently naïve, which means that they investigate in and are based on factual and empirical experiences of the world (Hua 9, 250). That is, according to Husserl, positive sciences do not reflect on how the experience of objectivity and knowledge is constituted, i.e. how the experience of being scientific and justified takes place.

Every experience and act of concluding, evaluation, or willing can, according to Husserl, be turned into an object of phenomenological investigation (Hua 4, §4, 11). But, in order to depart from the natural attitude, one needs to perform a total change (*totale*

43 According to Joseph Cohen and Dermot Moran, mature Husserl distinguishes various intentional contexts or horizons (*Horizont*) in which our experiences appear (Cohen and Moran 2012, 36). The term “horizon” is based on an analogy with the meaning of the term in ordinary language, as a visual horizon defines the range of one’s vision and means everything that can be seen from a particular standpoint. For Husserl the term means a context of our experience which acts as an apparent unsurpassable limit (the Greek *horos* means “boundary”). Horizons can be temporal, spatial, historical, cultural, etc. There are both subjective individual horizons and shared horizons (e.g. the horizon of a language or a culture). According to Cohen and Moran the first discussion in print of the concept of horizon occurs in *Ideas I* where Husserl talks about the world as the “collective horizon of possible investigations” (§1). For Husserl objects are not perceived in isolation but against a *background* (*Hintergrund*) and in the midst of a “surrounding world” (*Umwelt*) of other objects and also of other living bodies which are also other persons, animals, and so on (*Ideas II* § 51). The “horizon of all horizons” is the world (*Ideas I* §27) which has the sense of being infinite and unbounded in every direction. (Cohen and Moran 2012, 189)

Änderung) of the view point (*Blickwendung*). That is, one must change one's attitude to the phenomenological one in a comprehensive way. Since experienced objects manifest themselves only in experience, Husserl claims that it is possible to understand the constitution of intentional performances only in the universal phenomenological reflection. In other words, only in the investigation that takes place in the phenomenological attitude does one come to understand how the world of experiences and knowledge is experienced as valid. (Hua 9, 239-40) According to Husserl, only in the phenomenological attitude is one able to achieve the field of the “givenness of the world as it is” (*Vorgegebenheit der Welt als solcher*). This is the world as it is given in experiencing consciousness, as valid and meaningful, without any further assumptions about the existence of empirical objects in the world (Hua 6, §39, 151).

When taking the phenomenological attitude, one turns the attention towards the way objects manifest themselves. Also the way of experiencing objects is investigated, since the manifestation of objects and the acts of experiencing them is one and the same event. (Hua 9, 237) The manifestations are manifestations to someone who experiences the objects in a certain way, either in directly seeing them, hearing, remembering, dreaming, or imagining them, etc. This means that the manifestation and the experiencing act can be distinguished only analytically. Also, a manifestation of an object can vary according to the way of experiencing. That is, an appearing object can be the same in many different modes of appearances. For example, a cube can appear in a memory, in a direct perception or in imagination, but the intended object, the cube, is the same in each case (ibid. 238). What is taken as the objective presentation of something in the natural attitude becomes in the phenomenological reflection a perceived consciousness-relative predicate (Hua 5, §6, 15).

Through the phenomenological attitude one becomes aware of the subjective accomplishments and intentionalities, that is, the experiencing consciousness. By turning the attention to the experience itself, one comes to see the “Heraclitean stream” of consciousness which otherwise remains unseen. According to Husserl, the stream of consciousness is passive and effortless, thus it is by no means active. Therefore, it is not readily available for reflection. One does not have to pay attention to the stream of experiences in the natural attitude but can direct one's attention directly to the objects themselves experienced in the stream. However, this stream of experiences and the constitution of experience can become an intentional object in the phenomenological

reflective turn. Instead of the objects experienced (not objects-as-experienced), the object of investigation becomes the *cogitatio* itself. (Hua 3, §38, 67) Only by turning away from the interest in worldly objects one can focus on the givenness of objects in the experience.

In the phenomenological attitude the experience of the “I” also becomes a phenomenon. That is, one metaphorically inflicts “a split of the self”. While remaining a living person in the world, the phenomenologist takes a reflective stand towards the investigated experience and examines the experience as a phenomenon. This means that the self in the phenomenological attitude is strongly differentiated from the experienced self in the natural attitude. Husserl calls this “the I-split” (*Ichspaltung*). This means that instead of remaining merely a person who is interested in her or his surroundings, one now also investigates the first-person experience itself (Hua 1, §15, 73). One is simultaneously in the phenomenological attitude as non-participating and “not-interested” and considers an experience reflectively, and also in the natural attitude having natural experiences (Hua 1, §13, 69-70).

The reflection upon the natural experience takes place retentionally (by recalling the lapsed moments or phases)⁴⁴, so that one is reflecting upon an experience as an already had experience (Hua 1, §14, 70). In other words, in order to reflect on an experience, one needs to retain the experience. One can thus never perform a reduction on an experience that is experienced right now. With this Husserl means that in the transcendental-phenomenological investigation, the phenomenologist is herself not interested in the objects in the investigated experience but the experience itself. Since the phenomenologist is still a person in real life, one always already acts in the natural attitude. Therefore, even when one has a phenomenological attitude towards the experience that is investigated, one always already lives in a real life situation where one has a natural attitude towards that which is not included in the transcendental-phenomenological investigation. For example, while a phenomenologist is investigating the phenomenon of food and eating, one still has also a natural attitude towards the world. That is, one can, for example, investigate the phenomenon of eating and use a pen for the investigation at the same time. Only, one must not use the thesis of the existence and reality of food when reflecting phenomenologically on food and eating.

44 As Cohen and Moran formulate it, in Husserl's theory, each temporal experience in the present consists of three phases or moments – the now phase, the retention, and the protention. The retention is the echo or “trace” of what has just gone before, the experience immediately prior to the present and out of which the present is experienced as coming. It is experienced in the present, but it presents the retained experience as modified in the form of “having-been”. (Cohen and Moran 2012, 362)

According to Overgaard, transcendental phenomenology requires one to “wear two hats”, as it were. One could also compare the situation with standing on two attitudes at the same time, with one foot on each. That is, on the one hand, one is a subject of straightforward experience, and on the other hand one is a phenomenologist reflecting on another experience. Thus, the “I-split” does not mean that there would be literally two distinct egos present, but that the reflecting, phenomenologically attuned ego and the ego whose experiences are reflected upon are the investigating ego and the ego of the investigated phenomenon. The ego of the investigated experience may even be the ego of the investigator's own experience that is investigated as a phenomenon. According to Overgaard, Husserl envisages a procedure in which the phenomenologist reflects upon a past experience, perhaps still held in retention or memorised or constructed. This experience is possibly experienced straightforwardly with all that it involves for a naturally attuned subject. In this case it is only the subsequent reflection that happens in the phenomenological attitude. (Overgaard 2015, 189-90)

This means that the phenomenological and natural attitude are not separated in time and place but in the sense of directing attention in investigation. One is always already living in the natural attitude, also while doing phenomenological investigation. When doing phenomenological investigation, one is thus necessarily in the two attitudes simultaneously. This means that the experience as phenomenon is not taken as an experience of something real, but it is considered as a means of study. At the same time, one always lives in the natural attitude towards the spontaneously and originally experienced world (Hua 8, 44). Thus, the phenomenological attitude can never fully cover the investigator, since the investigator remains a natural being with a natural life.

2.3 Motivations for Performing Reductions

As I have pointed out above, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is meant to provide a rigorous foundation for all other sciences. The motivation for transcendental-phenomenological investigation does somewhat change during Husserl's philosophical development, but the urge to clarity and the interest in understanding the formation of knowledge and experience remains throughout his work. The method of reduction is Husserl's tool in aiming towards clarity. We can find various motivations in the different phases of Husserl's thinking related to the central motivation of providing rigorous science

that is free from dogmas and presuppositions.

In the following I will present Husserl's other central motivations⁴⁵ for performing reductions in transcendental phenomenology⁴⁶. In his works concerning transcendental-phenomenological investigation, he motivates his investigations by 1) the phenomenological project of clarifying the experience of objectivity and knowledge, by 2) understanding the constitution of objects in consciousness by interrupting the natural way of treating objects and turning towards the transcendental subjectivity, by 3) clarifying the conceptual basis of all sciences, and in the end also by 4) a practical and ethical aim to lead an epistemologically self-responsible and clear science and life. These different motivations are closely linked to and followed by each other. Therefore they cannot be sharply distinguished but are discussed in connection to one another.

The method of reduction as suspension of natural assumptions is throughout Husserl's career motivated by his idea of a rigorous science that could provide a ground for all other sciences. For Husserl, a rigorous investigation must not rest on anything transcendent, and thus the phenomenological-transcendental reduction is needed in order to interrupt the use of all transcendent positings (Hua 2, 5). This is because no factual construction, be it naturalistic or historicist, can settle philosophical questioning. In fact, Husserl considers the positive scientific way of explaining something as just putting the explained object in other terms, that is, as replacing the investigated object with another scientific object. The point of transcendental phenomenology is not to ensure the objectivity, but to understand and clarify it, which is according to him possible only if one proceeds transcendently. (Hua 6, §55, 193) The original object, the experience, is thus investigated as another kind of object than the original object as it was experienced in the first place. For Husserl, this kind of explanation that is characteristic of the natural sciences is abstractive, and it does not move away from the naïve natural attitude. In turn, phenomenology stays with the concrete in the sense that phenomenological investigation does not transform the investigated object into something else. At the same time, transcendental-phenomenological investigation treats only those objects, i.e. those of pure experience, that can be treated rigorously without assuming anything more than is given.

According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the background for Husserl's urge to clarity

45 It is good to bear in mind that Husserl uses the word "motivation" in a deterministic sense, instead of the word "causality" when referring to animated beings, since "causality" relates to the objects of natural sciences, and animated beings as spontaneous free subjects are motivated as agents.

46 According to Husserl reductions can also be performed outside transcendental phenomenology, for example in phenomenological psychology where the reduction is called "phenomenological-psychological reduction" (see. Hua 6, part 3b).

is inspired by sceptical argumentation, especially the argumentation of Hume, ancient sophists, and Descartes. Bernet, Kern, and Marbach claim that in scepticism Husserl has discovered a hidden “transcendental motivation”. He has proceeded to work this motivation out in a consistent fashion. The task was for Husserl to elucidate the enigma of the possibility of cognition as such, doing so on an ultimate basis, beyond which one cannot go any further and which is presupposed as valid in all other cognition. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 63)⁴⁷

One of Husserl's motivations for performing the transcendental-phenomenological reduction is the urge to clarify the experience of knowledge and objectivity. This motivation relates to Husserl's aim of understanding how our experience of scientific knowledge and sense of objectivity are constituted. This motivation has a central role especially in the earlier works in Husserl's phase of transcendental phenomenology. He presents this motivation already in the lecture series *The Idea of Phenomenology*. As I have mentioned above, according to Husserl, the constitution of experiencing knowledge cannot be studied in the same attitude where the knowledge is experienced. That is, the natural attitude cannot be understood by the means of the natural attitude itself. (Hua 2, 19) Therefore, in order to study the constitution of knowledge and the sense of objectivity, one must perform a reduction. By the means of the method of reduction, Husserl claims to reach the sphere of absolute knowledge, the sphere of immanence⁴⁸, which is the first starting point in the theory of knowledge.

The aim of understanding the constitution of knowledge and objectivity relates to Husserl's larger motivation for performing reductions. That is, to understand the universal structure of the constitution of intentional experience and the manifestation of objects. As Bernet, Kern, and Marbach put it, Husserl's method of reduction rests on the requirement of a methodically pure apprehension of consciousness itself (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993,

47 That is, Husserl wants to move away from the naïve pre-giveness of the world as the natural basis of all objectively oriented cognition in the sceptical argument. Indeed, in that case the world itself would be thereby drawn into question both in respect to the essential possibility of its being known and in respect to the fundamental sense of its “being-in-itself” (*Ansichsein*).

According to Walter Biemel, the determining tendency in Husserl's thinking in *The Idea of Phenomenology* and *Ideas I* is transcendental idealism. However, Biemel claims that transcendental idealism transforms during the development of transcendental phenomenology. It drew Husserl's attention to the problem of the constitution of objects in consciousness (“*die Auflösung des Seins in Bewusstsein*”). (Hua 2, viii)

48 The transcendence that Husserl talks about is precisely transcendence as opposed to this kind of immanence. In other words, the transcendence is that which is not self-perceptual and not directly or self-evidently given (Hua 2, 35).

60). This means that, instead of being interested in the naturally or objectively oriented thematic of cognition, Husserl's interest is in the clarification of cognition in accordance with the essential possibilities for its achievement (Hua 2, 11). Husserl seeks to clarify consciousness in its own essentiality (*Eigenwesentlichkeit*). This is because, according to him, it is a question of becoming aware of the transcendental consciousness itself, experiencing it thematically in its purity and making it the thematic field of cognition. (Hua 3, §33)

Suspending the natural assumption relates to Husserl's aim of consistently desisting from making consciousness a theme of research within naturalisation. As Bernet, Kern, and Marbach claim, "Husserl's gradually attained clarity regarding the basic form of the method of reduction as a return to pure consciousness, or a return to transcendental subjectivity, can be understood as an expression of the insight finally gained into what philosophy ought to be about." (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 62) According to Zahavi, in Husserl's phenomenology every object must necessarily be understood in its correlation to experience constituting⁴⁹ subjectivity (Zahavi 2003, 68). Because, if one truly wants to understand what the objects are that we experience, one has to turn to the subjectivity that experiences these objects. This is because it is only there that the objects show themselves as they truly are. (ibid. 52) Subjectivity is a condition of possibility for appearance, which means that in order to grasp the possibility of appearance and knowledge, one needs to investigate the transcendental field instead of empirical things in the world.

The aim of the suspension of all our theoretical and practical, scientific, and everyday beliefs and cognitions is not to doubt or negate the world or to establish another foundation for human knowledge. Rather, the aim is to interrupt the natural belief in the presence and reality of the world for the single purpose of clarifying transcendently the conditions and the origin of this belief and everything that depends on it. (Hua 3, §20, 37) Husserl's idea is that the independent nature of phenomenology demands a starting point that is free of dogmatism and the naïve attitude of the everyday beliefs and the positive sciences (Hua 3, §62, 118). In order to avoid presupposing commonsensical naiveté or speculative hypotheses concerning the metaphysical status of reality, it is necessary to suspend our acceptance of the natural attitude (Zahavi 2003, 52). By performing the epoché, the investigation returns to the basis of the intuitive convictions that govern the everyday life and the sciences. Thereby everything that can be meaningfully questioned is

⁴⁹ Zahavi characterises constitution as a process that permits that which is constituted to appear, unfold, articulate, and show itself as what it is (Zahavi 2003, 73).

set aside. Such are the claims about the existence of worldly things, beings, events, laws, processes, etc., that is, everything that one can question, or as Husserl calls it, everything that is “questionable” (*fraglich*). The suspension of natural assumptions makes it possible to understand the connection between experiences and forms of knowledge and its objects, without any assumptions about the existence of worldly things (Hua 2, 75).⁵⁰

Performing reductions is also motivated by Husserl's ideas about providing a clear foundation for all other sciences. As I have mentioned above, according to Husserl, the natural attitude is problematic as a basis for philosophical knowledge. Therefore, philosophy must start and proceed in a completely new dimension with a new method. (Hua 2, 23-5) In other words, according to Husserl, one must necessarily find new methods for philosophical investigation in order to understand the basis of the sciences and experience. This is because, according to Husserl, as a foundational science, philosophy desires something fundamentally different than what the positive sciences desire. This is why phenomenology must move beyond the natural goal-oriented way of treating objects in everyday life and science. (Hua 5, 147)

According to Heinämaa, the goal of transcendental phenomenology is to establish a system for figuring out the basis of all meanings and beliefs about the world. This covers both the everyday (pre-scientific) and scientific ways of forming knowledge. This means that the investigation also concerns the basics of positive sciences that investigate abstract truths, such as mathematics, theology, and logic.⁵¹ Thus, the aim of Husserl's philosophy is in general to clarify what the reality, stability, and being mean in different types of cognitions and experiences and explicate the structure of the meanings in the world. (Heinämaa 2016, 360-2)

50 According to Cairns, the world-knowledge is, as actuality and as ideal (atemporal and general), an evident part of the world-phenomenon (Cairns 2013, 13). This means that in order to understand the formation of knowledge, one must understand the phenomena in which the knowledge is formed, and as the world is the utmost horizon, it bears the knowledge in it, and it follows that it is crucial to understand the world-phenomenon in order to be able to understand the possibilities of knowledge in general. As Cairns continues, the valid knowing of facts in the world (knowing in the natural attitude), involves a certain mundane (“real”) factual relation between two world-objects, the knower as a being in the world and the known also as a being in the world, whereas transcendental knowing does not involve this mundane relation. Neither of the terms of the transcendental knowledge-relation (neither the transcendental nor the world-phenomenon) is “real” in the sense of being “in the world”. “Natural” knowledge must therefore have its sense explicated anew, as evident in the transcendental sphere, in order to be clarified. (Cairns 2013, 13)

51 This is one factor that makes Husserl different from Descartes: He does not set mathematics to be the ground for the sciences yet really radicalises Descartes's method. Thus Husserl does not take his method to be deductive, but descriptive, since he wants to begin from the start without any normative ideal in order really to be able to get rid of dogmatism and end up in rigorous science.

With transcendental-phenomenological investigation, Husserl also aims at providing a basic conceptual system for all positive sciences which according to Husserl have until now been using their terminologies as given, without studying them.⁵² According to Husserl, naïve assumptions in the natural attitude lead to problems in the conceptual basis of the sciences. He claims that the method of reduction is the way for thoroughly clarifying that basis. As he writes at the end of *Cartesian Meditations*, phenomenology has no ready-made concepts of the ready-made reality. Therefore, the system of concepts in phenomenology must arise from the basic concepts of the general scientific realm (not from any specific science). According to Husserl, the experiential side of world-constitution is so foreign to everyday life that there is no readily available terminology for capturing its specificities. The basic concepts refer to formal demarcations of universal possibilities of being and are therefore also free from paradoxes since they are based on the original concepts that one cannot reduce (now in the usual sense of the word) to any other concepts (such as “one”, “everything”, “being”, etc.). Therefore Husserl concludes that the investigation of the constitution of experience is actually clarification of the sense and origin of the words such as “world”, “nature”, “space”, “time”, “animated being”, etc. By performing the transcendental-phenomenological investigation one should then be able to clarify all scientific concepts without leaving anything obscure. (Hua 1, §64, 180)

Especially in his later works, Husserl's ethical and practical motivation for transcendental-phenomenological investigation comes to the fore. In *The Crisis* Husserl speaks a lot about the scientific but also cultural crisis in Europe. Here the problems are great segregations between fields and presuppositions as well as ignorance between different fields. This has, according to Husserl, led to a situation where we should rely on rigorous knowledge instead of relying on different dogmas. The method of reduction is for Husserl the method for solving the questions of knowledge. By questioning back the constitution of knowledge is uncovered and one can gain eidetic insight on the constitution and the essence of knowledge and other concepts. (Hua 6, §44, 158-9)

A little earlier still, in the *Erste Philosophie* lectures, Husserl states that the motive for doing philosophy as transcendental phenomenology is not primarily theoretical, but practical or even ethical. That is, striving towards a life in absolute epistemological self-responsibility regarding science and knowledge (Hua 8, 197). In addition, Husserl says in

52 “Es ist klar, dass die wirkliche Durchführung der bezeichneten Untersuchungen zu all den Begriffen führen müsste, die unerforscht als Grundbegriffe der positiven Wissenschaften fungieren, aber der Phänomenologie in allseitiger Klarheit und Deutlichkeit erwachsen, die für keine erdenklichen Fraglichkeiten mehr Raum überlassen” (Hua 1, §64, 180-1).

his article in *Encyclopedia Britannica* that sciences become self-validating and self-understanding only through transcendental phenomenology. (Hua 9, 250) According to Zahavi, by finding clear and certain scientific knowledge, *episteme*, instead of positive scientific *doxa*, i.e. knowledge based on naïve assumptions, Husserl aims at getting to a self-responsible life of clarity and transparency (Zahavi 1996, 2). This becomes possible through a radical final grounding of all science, which happens only in the phenomenological attitude, that is, by the means of the method of reduction.

3 REDUCTIONS IN TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

In the previous chapters I have discussed Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and the motivations for performing the reductions as well the distinction between the natural attitude and phenomenological attitude. The phenomenological attitude takes place simultaneously with the epoché, which Husserl characterises as both the condition and as the first step of the method of reduction (Husserl characterises the method differently in different works). In this chapter I will study closer the process of the bracketing natural assumptions, i.e. the phenomenological epoché, and will explicate the nature of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction. More precisely, I will examine the method of reduction by studying how the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction are performed. I will start the chapter examining the epoché, and will then proceed to clarify the nature of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. In the context of these methods, I will also investigate the relations between the ego and intersubjectivity and discuss also the so-called reduction to the sphere of ownness. In the second part of the chapter, I will examine the eidetic reduction.

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction are the two main aspects of Husserl's method of reduction.⁵³ However, both of these two aspects have evolved differently in Husserl's philosophy with different emphases in different contexts. As already mentioned, Husserl explicated the transcendental-phenomenological reduction for the first time in his lectures *The Idea of Phenomenology*; the eidetic reduction was formulated by him as early as in the *Logical Investigations*, where it is called "eidetic variation".

Based on Husserl's characterisation of the method of reduction in *Ideas 1, 2, and 3*, *Cartesian Meditations* and *The Crisis*, I investigate the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction as two separate reductions that are independent of one another. As two separate reductions they both can be performed without performing the other reduction first, i.e. by starting the investigation from a natural experience of the natural attitude. The two reductions can thus be accomplished separately, but both are

⁵³ However, K.-H. Lembeck, for example, interprets the phenomenological reduction as being an addition to the eidetic variation (Lembeck 2005, 36). The nature of the eidetic reduction as a reduction at all has also been questioned (see Lohmar 2002).

needed for phenomenology as rigorous science. The phenomenological-transcendental reduction opens up the field of pure experience and allows us to clarify how experience is structured and constituted; the eidetic reduction identifies the universal essences of different experiences and their object categories. It is therefore reasonable to use the term “reduction” as a coupling hypernym of them both. Indeed, they both are part of Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigations and take place only in the phenomenological attitude. Thus the two reductions are part of the same path of one transcendental-phenomenological investigation. Husserl summarises the general structure of transcendental-phenomenological investigation by saying that by the transcendental-phenomenological reduction we can uncover the constitution of experiences; by the eidetic reduction we can grasp the invariants of different types of experience. (Hua 4, §49, 174)⁵⁴

According to Heinämaa, the task of phenomenology is to ask questions about the things, events, and processes as they are experienced, instead of providing vague metaphysical-like formulations about real empirical things themselves. For example, instead of asking what death is, phenomenology asks how the experience of the event of death takes place, what it involves and what it requires to be possible. (Heinämaa 2003, 21) The method of reduction helps us to start the investigation without deciding the qualities and features of the investigated object beforehand. According to Juha Himanka, this means that Husserl's method of reduction is basically a tool for the right order of questioning. Therefore, according to him, reduction is not a thematic concept that would establish an area of objectivity but is a practice to be found and followed in the study of all objectivity. The method emphasises the question “How?” before that of “What?” in order to avoid projecting essential characteristics from the latter question to the first one, that is, in order not to decide what the object is before investigating its appearance to us. In other words, the method of reduction is a methodological tool for investigation that is free from prejudices and all kind of natural assumptions. Therefore, according to Himanka, also in the respect to this method itself, instead of asking what the method is, one should begin by asking how reductions are accomplished. (Himanka 2000, 125-7) This is why my examination of the method of reduction proceeds by studying the different steps and aspects of the reduction. In other words, I want to clarify the way in which reductions are accomplished.

⁵⁴ Husserl's projects do change under the development of his work, but the basic ideas of the reductions seem to be the same throughout their development.

The subject matter of transcendental-phenomenological investigation is given only by performing the phenomenological epoché, that is, by taking the phenomenological attitude. By setting all natural interests aside, natural experiences become phenomena, the transcendental pure experiences. That is, the epoché negates nothing from or adds nothing to a pure experience. Husserl calls the principle of adding or negating nothing in the experience the “principle of principles”. According to this principle, in the frames of reduction, nothing is projected onto the world or distracted from it. The principle is the central guideline for transcendental-phenomenological investigation. (Hua 3, §24)⁵⁵

In *The Crisis*, Husserl says that in order to do phenomenology, one must take the conscious life completely without prejudice, as it immediately gives itself (Hua 6, §71). In this, an experienced object becomes a phenomenon, a residuum of pure consciousness (Hua 3, §47). Since phenomena are the experienced objects purified from the existence-assumptions, they are not taken as true or untrue but simply as objects of experiences as they are had. Therefore, a phenomenologist does not evaluate a pure experience but merely investigates the experience as it is. For example, my experience of a tree in front of me is not true or untrue, but I just have the experience. Thus, a phenomenologist does not pose any claims about the existence of the tree. My experience is not something in the world, but it exists as long as I have it. Therefore it cannot be evaluated or used in theoretization but merely described and analysed as it is.

In order to understand the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction, I find Suzanne Cunningham's interpretation of Husserl's concepts “immanent real” and “immanent ideal” helpful. According to her, both reductions investigate immanent objects, but the transcendental-phenomenological reduction investigates the immanent “real” objects and the eidetic reduction investigates the immanent “ideal” objects (Cunningham 1976, 6).⁵⁶ In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl divides immanent objects into two kinds: The immanent ideal objects are pure atemporal and non-spatial ideas, and the immanent real objects are temporal acts in which the ideal objects are intended. The real immanent objects are particular experiences, and they exist only as long as they are had (Hua 19, §44, Hua 18, §22).⁵⁷

55 “Dass jede originär gebende Anschauung eine Rechtsquelle der Erkenntnis sei, dass alles, was sich uns in der Intuition originär, (sozusagen in seiner leibhaften Wirklichkeit) darbietet, einfach hinzunehmen sei, als was es sich gibt, aber auch nur in den Schranken, in denen es sich da gibt” (Hua 3, §24).

56 According to Cunningham, it is important to note that this distinction is not congruent with the traditionally made distinction between transcendent and immanent objects, and the distinction does not oppose “ideas to reality”. (Cunningham 1976, 6)

57 There has also been a discussion about different “ways” or “paths” (Husserl himself uses the term *Wege*) to reductions (depending on author, the ways are either to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction

The method of reduction does not relate only to transcendental phenomenology. Husserl also uses the term “reduction” for characterising other investigative tasks than the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction. For example, he speaks about the phenomenological-psychological reduction in *The Crisis*. These other variants of reduction are, as he says in his *Encyclopedia Britannica* article (Hua 9, 250-4), not part of transcendental phenomenology but other phenomenological investigations.⁵⁸ Because I limit my studies to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, I will not go into the reductions that are used outside transcendental phenomenology.

or to the eidetic reduction or to both). Since there are many mutually incoherent interpretations and theories about Husserl's ways, and Husserl himself does not give a clear presentation about them, I will not take a stand on this subject.

Husserl himself refers to this issue in his *Erste Philosophie* lectures, where he talks about the “first” and “second”, the “Cartesian” and the “critical” ways to the reduction, and later in *The Crisis*, where he mentions the “Cartesian”, “historical”, (in §38) and the “psychological” ways. As Rudolf Boehm says in the preface of the published *Erste Philosophie* lectures, the text at hand is in general very problematic and includes many contradictions, overlapping, and unclear brakes. Therefore one should not base the interpretation of Husserl's theory on these lectures (Hua 8, xi). However, the most discussion about the so-called ways is in these lectures. As for the ways presented in *The Crisis*, the other “way” through psychology that he presents is not part of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. The approaches in the different works of Husserl, especially in *Ideas* and *The Crisis*, are certainly unlike, and one could call the way in *Ideas* “Cartesian”, since Husserl does so himself, but then there remains the problematic of the “way” in the whole *The Crisis* itself, which is not quite clear. What is more, according to Boehm, if the different approaches can be called ways, then there are endless variety of them (so that demarcating just a certain number of them would possibly be very problematic), and Husserl himself is so unclear about the theme that there is no point in interpreting the “ways” as he presents them (Hua 8, xxxi). It is not even clear whether the ways should be taken only as metaphorical or as concrete argumentational paths, although you can see both in commentaries on Husserl's reduction. Because of all these problems, I will not take a stand of any kind on this issue, and I will remain the discussion to other platforms.

Kern calls the “way” in *The Crisis* “the way through ontology” (Kern 1977, 126), and Zahavi calls the same (or similar) thing “the ontological way” (Zahavi 2003, 47). As Kern writes, Husserl does not use this “way” throughout *The Crisis*, but varies between different options, and is not very clear about this “way” (Kern 1977, 137-8). Kern seems to take Husserl's ontology of lifeworld further than Husserl himself has meant it, and thus it is not quite unproblematic to claim that the “way” is there in *The Crisis*, even if one can interpret it as being there. Zahavi, in turn, carefully takes the number of the “ways to the reduction” to three, and calls them the “Cartesian”, “psychological”, and “ontological”, similarly with Kern, and the first would usually be said to be present in *Ideas 1*, and the last one in *The Crisis*. Since Husserl himself mentions other ways as well in *Erste Philosophie*, it is not fully justified to claim that there are (even usually or mostly) these three ways without admitting to being very interpretative. If one is, however, willing to remain as near as possible to Husserl's intentions, one should not project onto text anything that one cannot find there without adding something. What is more, in the fifty-second lecture Husserl calls the whole transcendental phenomenology a “transcendental way” (Hua 8, 168), which makes the whole thematic very unclear.

58 The psychology as Husserl talks about it (not as it is today in the twenty-first century), is partly similar to the transcendental phenomenology, and he applies the epoché and the transcendental reduction to a phenomenological field that he calls “pure psychology” (*reine Psychologie*), but he says quite clearly both in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article and in *The Crisis* that the phenomenological or “pure” psychology and the transcendental phenomenology are not the same thing, since their tasks are different (Hua 9, 250-4, Hua 6, §58, 207).

3.1 The Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction uncovers and analyses the sphere of transcendental experience, i.e. the sphere of phenomena (Hua 8, 163)⁵⁹. According to Husserl, experiences are layered in the sense of having many levels (*Stufen*). By de-synthesising experience, i.e. by “questioning back” or “going-backwards” (*Rückgang*) in transcendental experience, we can investigate the way in which experiences are constituted (Hua 4, §18c, 65). The transcendental-phenomenological reduction is thus a backwards-inquiring analysis of transcendental experience.

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction leads from the natural sphere to the transcendental foundation and to the origins of natural experience, that is, it uncovers the forms of givenness operative in experience. Most importantly, this reduction allows us to discover the correlation between consciousness and the world. The discovering takes place by performing the backwards-inquiring analysis, which pierces through the constituting levels of experience. The analysis displays how experience and knowledge, and the experienced and known “realities”, are constituted. According to Husserl, every object is constituted in a certain kind of intentional act or set of such acts. By performing the transcendental-phenomenological reduction we see how objects of experience are continuously constituted according to the essences of objectivity. Also, we see how a transcendent real object can be grasped in an act of knowledge, i.e. how objective experience and knowledge are possible. (Hua 5, §1, 3, §6, 15) By uncovering the correlation, the transcendental-phenomenological reduction uncovers the domain of the intentional life of subjectivity with its *noetic-noematic* structures (presenting the intentional acts and what is presented in experience) and its internal temporality (Mohanty 1997, 10).

Based on my reading of Husserl's works and relevant secondary sources, I interpret the transcendental-phenomenological reduction as including both the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis of experience. In some of his works, such as *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl presents the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis as two aspects of one transcendental-phenomenological reduction (Hua 1, §8, 61)⁶⁰. In other works, e.g. *The Crisis*, he distinguishes the phenomenological epoché from the backwards-

59 Even if the lectures are said to be problematic, I will use them as a source, but I will do it very critically, and I will not take into account anything that contradicts with what Husserl has written elsewhere.

60 “Die phänomenologische Fundamentalmethode der transzendentalen Epoché [...] heißt daher transzendental-phänomenologische Reduktion” (Hua 1, §8, 61). In the same place Husserl does, however, also call the reduction “transcendental reduction” (Hua 1, §9, 61).

inquiring analysis as two separate steps and calls only the latter “the transcendental reduction”. *The Crisis* thus presents the epoché as a necessary condition for the execution of the reduction which, in Husserl's own words, is “the second level of reflection” (*die zweite Reflexionsstufe*) (Hua 6, §41, 154, §50, 175)⁶¹. Here Husserl characterises the epoché as a “philosophical gate of entry” which is the very first step in phenomenological investigation (Hua 6, §71, 260). Because Husserl characterises the relation between these two operations in several different ways, I will treat the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis separately in my own exposition. I will first discuss the epoché and then the backwards-inquiring analysis. I will examine the epoché as the first step of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction in line with Husserl's presentation in *The Crisis*. Then I will discuss the backwards-inquiring investigation as a subsequent analysis of the constitution of transcendental experience.

3.1.1 The Phenomenological Epoché

The term “epoché” (ἐποχή) comes originally from the Greek sceptics and means refraining from taking any stand about the real existence of the world or its objects (Heinämaa 2016, 362). The phenomenological epoché as the suspension of natural assumptions is a necessary task in performing transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 6, §35, 140). Husserl distinguishes the phenomenological epoché from several other possible kinds of epochés. The most important non-phenomenological epoché in Husserl's philosophy is the psychological epoché that brackets assumptions about the material and causal reality of consciousness, assumptions that presuppose the world. In contrast, the phenomenological epoché brackets the assumptions about the existence of the world and questions its validity. (Fink 1934, 43)⁶² Epoché is an act of leaving certain categories of questions untouched, such as metaphysical questions. The phenomenological epoché holds for the whole transcendental-phenomenological investigation: it is the act that enables the phenomenological attitude. The point of the phenomenological epoché is to gain a phenomenological field of investigation by taking a phenomenological stand on transcendent objects. That is, to make natural experiences phenomena which contain no commitments to propositions about the world. The existence of what is transcendent to

61 “Die echte transzendente Epoché ermöglicht die transzendente Reduktion” (Hua 6, §41, 154).

62 Fink characterises the difference between the psychological epoché and phenomenological epoché as the first being “*Einschränkung*” (limitation) and the latter being “*Entschränkung*” (abstinence-limitation) of the world (Fink 1934, 43).

pure experience, regardless of one's belief in it in natural experience, is not taken into account (Hua 8, 39).⁶³

The core idea of the epoché is explicated in multiple terms by Husserl. In *Ideas 1*, he calls the epoché “bracketing” (*Einklammerung*) and “shutting up” (*Ausschaltung*) the assumptions about reality or validity (*Geltung*) of the surrounding world (Hua 3, §56). He also characterises the epoché by saying that it “sets out of action” (“*außer Aktion setzen*”), referring to the suspension of natural assumptions (Hua 3, §31, 55). In many commentaries the epoché is also characterised as “not taking the natural assumptions into account”, or “refraining” from those assumptions. Overgaard formulates the epoché as an act that simultaneously with the bracketing also “quotes an experience” (Overgaard 2015, 192). That is, when natural assumptions are bracketed, the natural experience becomes a phenomenon which Overgaard characterises as a “quoted” experience.

All believing, valuing, willing, etc. is in Husserl's philosophy called “executing a thesis”. Husserl thus argues that each such act involves a thesis about being; in other words, all acts posit being in some sense. Refraining from positing the existence of any transcendent objects means that the “general thesis”⁶⁴ about the reality of the world is left unthematized. The general thesis is modified into a “bracketed thesis”, and thereby the belief in the world becomes a “bracketed belief” (Hua 3, §31, 55). In other words, our general way of being sure about the world, of trusting its presence, and of believing in it is bracketed. This means that in the frames of the phenomenological attitude, nothing in the world is considered to be real or false (Hua 6, §41, 155, Hua 1, §8, 60). The validity of claims about the world is not touched upon in any other way. The claims and their validity are not evaluated in any way.⁶⁵

When performing the act of bracketing, natural experience becomes a phenomenon. In *Erste Philosophie* lectures Husserl characterises the result of the phenomenological epoché by setting an immanent experience itself into quotation marks (although without mentioning the word “quotation”): “After naïvely seeing a house, I can reflect on the 'I see

63 As Husserl writes in the *Idea of Phenomenology*: “The existence of all the transcendent things, independently of my belief in them, is of no use for me” (Hua 2, 39).

64 For Husserl, the natural attitude is characterized by a “general thesis” (*Generalthesis*), an act of universal positing which means that all conscious intentional acts involve a presupposed commitment of belief in the existence and reality of the objects of the experiences in question. The “general thesis” is thus a condition for experiencing the world as real which grounds the natural attitude. (Hua 3, §30, 62)

65 Husserl emphasises in *Ideas* that the intention of the phenomenology and epoché is “not to negate the world, as if I were a sophist, and not to doubt its existence, as if I were a sceptic” (Hua 3, §32). Thus in the phenomenological epoché one is not taking a metaphysical stand. Juntunen puts this nicely by saying that the epoché basically trivialises the distinction between the real and the possible worlds (Juntunen 1986, 92).

a house” (Hua 8, 157)⁶⁶. The experience of seeing a house is not used as a statement but is taken as an experience without reference to anything real outside the experience itself. That is, performing the epoché results in two “directions”: It brackets natural assumptions, and, at the same time, it opens up the field for transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 5, §13, 76).

Many commentators characterise the uncovering of phenomena by the metaphor of “setting an experience in quotation marks”. Overgaard, for example, explains that from the bracketing of natural assumptions, it follows that the remaining experience is “quoted” but not otherwise modified. An experience of seeing a house, for instance, becomes a “quoted” experience, the phenomenon “seeing a house”. The terms “quoting an experience” and “bracketing the assumptions” are not synonymous but refer to the same side of one act. Overgaard uses the metaphor of quotation for indicating that after performing the epoché, the experience becomes something that one does not evaluate as true or untrue but studies as a mere experience. (Overgaard 2015, 192) That is, when natural assumptions are bracketed, the remaining experience is treated as a neutral means of investigation. A natural experience becomes the phenomenon “natural experience”. The simultaneous bracketing of natural experiences and setting the experience in quotation marks can be demonstrated like this:

(natural assumptions about the house, the world, causality, etc.) ↔ “seeing a house,
believing in the world, causality, etc.”

The bracketing of natural assumptions inevitably results in uncovering phenomena. Regarding the example of seeing a house, the bracketing of all natural assumptions about the “house”, the person seeing the house, and the world results in a phenomenon of “seeing a house”.

Overgaard thus emphasises that, Husserl's principle of principles means that a natural experience is “fine just as it is”. Only the natural existential assumptions related to the investigated experience are suspended. Transcendental phenomenology aims at describing and analysing the experience as well as outlining its constitutive conditions and possibilities but has no intention of correcting or revising any of its aspects. (Overgaard 2015, 180) According to Overgaard, “this is exactly what we do when we offer

66 “Erst nachdem ich naiv den Haus gesehen habe, kann ich auf das “Ich sehe das Haus” reflektieren” (Hua 8, 157).

phenomenological descriptions under the epoché: We quote our experiences, without asserting (or denying) their implicit ‘claims’; Indeed, we make a conscious effort to avoid relying on any assumptions whatever about the nature or reality of the world” (Overgaard 2015, 192). The experience is still there for the I in the *cogito*⁶⁷ with all the experienced transcendence it includes, e.g. sciences, art, social and personal states, and institutions. One does just not posit the existence of those objects. They remain as they are experienced but one takes a reflective attitude towards the experience and the experienced objects. For example, to my experience of walking through the corridors of the Neue Pinakothek in Munich belong all my memories and assumptions about art history, myself, and the current context of visiting this city in this country called “Germany”. When bracketing all natural assumptions related to this experience, taking a stand on the quality of art in the museum or even assuming it to exist becomes impossible, and I investigate this above described experience itself instead.

According to Husserl, every natural experience can be made into a phenomenon. For example, after performing the phenomenological epoché on a perception (*Wahrnehmung*)⁶⁸, the perception is given as pure. In addition, the existence of the perceived empirical object becomes irrelevant in the sense that the reflecting ego does not take a stand on it. (Hua 4, 244) The pure experience is given as being the “this here-and-now” (*Dies-da*). That is, its givenness is something absolute and self-evident. The pure perception as a phenomenon is absolute as long as it lasts. This is because a phenomenon exists only as perceived, and one cannot talk about a perception as such as unsure or non-existent. (Hua 2, 31)

In *Ideas I* the epoché is performed on a particular experienced object and it is not separated from the subsequent backwards-inquiring analysis (cf. Hua 3, §69). The epoché is characterised as a reminder of the fact that all the spheres of being and knowledge that are bracketed must stay outside the transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 3, §61, 115). Later in *The Crisis*, Husserl emphasises that even if it is possible to perform the epoché on one particular experienced object, the change of attitudes from the natural to the phenomenological attitude must take place all at once. The epoché must be universal and hence bracket the natural assumptions about the whole world at once. Indeed, the phenomenological investigation is not only concerned with isolated experiences but with

67 With “cogito” Husserl means the immanent, intentional, actual or potential experience, where the subject intends towards the intended object, and where the perception and the perceived are a non-intermediated unity (Hua 3, 65)

68 The English translation “perception” refers usually to both the direct mere perception (*Wahrnehmung*) and the perceiving of a whole thing as one (*Anschauung*).

the whole universal horizon of the world. (Hua 6, §40, 153) That is, according to Husserl, in transcendental-phenomenological investigations, a phenomenologist should not assume the phenomenological attitude towards particular studied experiences only but should take the attitude on the whole world, which is the ultimate horizon of all experiences.

In *The Crisis*, Husserl characterises the epoché also as an attitude of not being interested in the lifeworld⁶⁹ in a practical or axiological (evaluative) way anymore. One is not “with-interested” (*mitinteressiert*) in everyday tasks or in the promotion of the positive sciences (Hua 6, §42, 156). In other words, the phenomenological attitude is purely theoretical but not theoretical in the habitual sense, i.e. not interested in building a theory of anything. Thus, in the phenomenological attitude one does not take part in everyday life or in any empirical or positive investigation as if one believed in the existence of the intended objects, practical, axiological, or positive-scientific. Husserl does not claim that by performing the epoché one would really lose interest in life or anything that belongs into it. Rather, the interest in objects is left to the natural attitude, and when turning to the phenomenological attitude, also the interest in these objects becomes a phenomenon to be investigated. For example, when interest is turned towards an experience of a library, all natural existential assumptions involved in the experience are bracketed, but the natural interests in the library are not changed or negated.

By bracketing all natural assumptions, all factual and positive knowledge is also put into brackets. Therefore, all claims about objective reality and predicative truths are bracketed as well (Hua 6, §44, 159). That is, one does not investigate being or ways of being but studies how, in what sense and in what order, both being and ways of being are taken as valid by the subject (Hua 6, §45, 160). This means that empirical and positive facts are looked upon as mere phenomena, not as premises, validities, or hypotheses (Hua 2, 6). Due to the focus on the sphere of phenomena, all ways of thinking and all scientific methods as they are developed in the natural attitude are taken as non-valid. Hence, all the logical and objective sciences, such as mathematics and geometry, are also put aside since their validity presupposes the validity of the world thesis (Hua 6, §49, 172).

69 In *The Crisis* Husserl presents the concept of lifeworld (or simply “world”) as the pre-given (always already given) and the most fundamental and ultimate horizon of meaning, where every experience has its sense. It is thus the necessary background of sense through which individual things get their meaningfulness, and as such it is constantly valid in advance and structures the experiential field (Hua 6, B. 17, 461). The lifeworld in *The Crisis* can also, in the opinion of some commentators, be seen as a novel “path” to transcendental phenomenology, and it also accommodates within itself also the genetic dimensions of meaning. The notion of lifeworld is also part of the acknowledgement that not all forms of experience can be understood on the basis of purely subjective experience.

As already mentioned, one characteristic feature of transcendental phenomenology is the role of the transcendental ego. Bracketing all natural assumptions means that one needs to bracket one's judgements about one's own being (and not being), such as the judgement of being a human person in the world. The subject of transcendental experience becomes a transcendental subject, i.e. a transcendental ego. (Hua 1, §11, 65) By performing the epoché, the subjectivity of experience ceases to be an empirical consciousness. The word "consciousness" loses its psychological sense, and one is left with an absolute that is neither psychical nor physical being in the natural-scientific sense. The transcendental consciousness and the transcendental ego form together the field of pure givenness. (Hua 24, 242) That is, also the existence of a real experiencing subject, central to of natural experience, is bracketed. Thereby only the subject of pure acts and purified passivities, i.e., the I-pole of experiencing, remains within the transcendental field.⁷⁰ That is, my experience becomes "my experience", and the existence of the self as a worldly being is not posited during the investigation.

After performing the epoché, the ego remains as the centre of all experiencing, and the perspective of investigation is ego-centred. According to Husserl, the pure I as the pure first-person perspective and ego-pole (*Ichpol*) cannot be bracketed because it is not a real part of an experience. Rather, it is a necessary constituent of experience. The ego is continuously evident for itself and is continuously constituted as the conscious identical I. (Hua 1, §31, 100) Paul Klee illustrates this argument quite well by describing how his I is a bunch of different roles, like that of a cruel hero, an arguing father, a nice uncle, etc., while he himself, in the phenomenological attitude, is plainly watching those roles without evaluating them as true or untrue (Klee 1965, 177). Klee's "himself" can be characterised as the egoic perspective and an identical pole of flowing experiences, directed at numerous objectivities. The ego cannot be bracketed, neither as the perspective nor as the pole, even if all empirical persons can. The I-perspective is thus necessary for all experience, whereas an empirical person can vary. An example of bracketing the truth or untruth of an empirical person is provided by Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. In this short story, the main character, the man named Gregor Samsa, wakes up and realises he has transformed into a gigantic insect-like creature. Phenomenologically, the reality or unreality of the experienced situation is irrelevant. The experience of being transformed into an insect can be treated as a phenomenon, that is, the experience can be studied in quotation marks. The existence of

⁷⁰ In *Ideas* and still partly in *Cartesian Meditations* the pure subjectivity is taken to be the pure consciousness, but as Husserl seems to realise the problem and the role of the lived body (*Leib*) of the subject, he does not speak of mere "consciousness" in his later texts anymore.

the pure ego cannot be bracketed, however, since the ego does not exist as an experienced object but is the necessary form of all experience. That is, an experience cannot be had by no-one.

After performing the epoché there remain no claims that would arise from the pre-scientific or scientific sphere of the natural attitude. All such non-evident information is put into the index of what Husserl calls “questionable” (*Index der Fraglichkeit*) (Hua 2, 32). When the objectivity of the world is bracketed, one distances from believing, doubting, or evaluating objects in the world and turns towards the transcendental experiences of those beliefs, doubts, and values. Any kind of “unseen part of consciousness” is also left out of the investigation. The interest is turned towards appearance and that which appears. The investigation happens in the sphere of intuitivity (*Anschaulichkeit*), in the mode of the pure experience. (Hua 6, §50, 173)

3.1.2 The Backwards-inquiring Analysis

By suspending the natural attitude with the epoché, it becomes possible to investigate the uncovered transcendental field with a particular backwards-asking analysis, that is, to study the constitutional layers (*Schichten*) of experience. This task is basically a methodological analysis that goes “backwards” from the transcendental experience (i.e. from the manifestations of objects) to the intentional origins and grounds of experiencing. The aim of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction is for Husserl not only to grasp the pure experience but to explicate the processes of sense formation, characteristic of knowledge, and of the experience of reality and objectivity that are intrinsic to the natural attitude (Hua 9, 254).⁷¹ According to Fink, the backwards-inquiring analysis is the primary task of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction because the analysis leads the subject through itself to its sphere of beliefs and to their validity-correlates (*Geltungskorrelat*) (Fink 1934, 50).

As mentioned above, in some of his works, Husserl introduces the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis as two parts or two aspects of one transcendental-phenomenological reduction, whereas in other works, he differentiates between the epoché

⁷¹ According to Zahavi, the theory of this correlation describes Husserl's whole later philosophical position, according to which subjectivity is a condition of possibility for reality (Zahavi 2003, 53). As Husserl says himself, revealing this correlation belongs to the project of revealing the transcendental preconditions for world-experience and is therefore an elementary part of the transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 1, §14, 71).

and the task of questioning-back as two different phases or stages of the inquiry, calling the former “the epoché” and the latter “the transcendental reduction”. Even when he speaks of the epoché and the backwards-inquiring analysis as parts of one transcendental-phenomenological reduction, he conceptually distinguishes between the mere phenomenological epoché and the analysis. In *Ideas I*, the “transcendental reduction” is occasionally called the “second reduction” (Hua 3, 4). Also in *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl characterises the backwards-inquiring analysis as a separate task that follows the epoché: “The second stage of the phenomenological investigation treats, then, the critique of transcendental experience and the transcendental knowledge in general” (Hua 1, §13, 68)⁷². For clarity, I will call the task that follows the epoché “the backwards-inquiring analysis”, but when I refer to the whole process that includes both the epoché and the analysis, I will use the term “transcendental-phenomenological reduction”.

The starting point of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction is the purified subjective⁷³ stream of consciousness as a unity, uncovered by the epoché. As an example of an uncovered transcendental experience, Husserl uses a pure perception. A pure perception is a synthesis, an interpretative apperception⁷⁴. (Hua 6, §55, 191) The objects perceived are studied as appearances of something. Husserl characterises these appearances as experienced “this there” (*dies da*). The so-called “this there” is an experienced index of the ways of how a thing appears as a synthesis for a subject. A perceptual thing is according to Husserl given as a unity in the unifying synthesis, even if it appears differently from different view points. In the synthesis of apperception, the perceived qualities of an object, e.g. colour, size, and movement, present the identity of the perceived thing. (Hua 6, §50, 174)

The analysis goes backwards from a transcendental experience through all layers of the constitution of spatial-temporal experience. According to Husserl, by this systematic approach we can grasp the correlation of the world and the transcendental subjectivity. (Hua 6, §55, 191) In the beginning of the analysis, the central question for Husserl is, *How* is an object, for example an emotion, presented? (Hua 6, §46, 161). By this question, the

72 “Die zweite Stufe phänomenologischer Forschung beträfe dann eben die Kritik der transzendentalen Erfahrung und daraufhin der transzendentalen Erkenntnis überhaupt.”

73 Husserl does usually refer to the experiencing part of the experience as “subject” since the transcendental experience is always experienced from a first-person perspective, and Husserl seems to simplify the structure of the experiencing subjectivity for clarity's sake, but he does often emphasise (in *The Crisis*, *Ideas 2*, etc.) that actually all the experiences of the I are in the end constituted intersubjectively.

74 “Apperzeption” is also sometimes translated as “intuition”, but I find “apperception” more clear when talking about Husserl's phenomenology, since “Anschauung” is also translated as “intuition”. Apperception refers to the entire phenomenal object as given in experience and is a unity of experiencing the whole object, not only what is immanently given.

investigation is directed at the givenness of objects as a synthesis of the poles in experience. The interest is on the synthesis between the manifold appearing of the being as the object-pole and on the pure perceiver, the pure I-pole. The manifold appearances are synthesized the thing-pole (*Gegenstandspol*) (not as empirical objects but as phenomena). The I-pole is the subjective centre of all activity (but not yet the same as an identical and personal subject). All modalities of being (such as being sure, doubt, etc.) are established through the I-pole. The correlation between the pure I and the experienced object is not studied as a particular moment of experience nor as someone's personal, real experience. Rather, it is studied as an example of correlation in general. The correlation as such does not exist in any certain place or time.⁷⁵ (Hua 6, §50, 173)

By performing backwards-inquiring analyses, the phenomenologist literally takes a reflective look backwards (Hua 1, §15, 72-3). Husserl explains this by discussing the example of perceiving a house: When perceiving in the natural attitude, one grasps the house as an object with qualities that are transcendent to pure experience. One may describe the object by saying “I see a house over there” or “That there, what we see, is a house”. That is, one posits the existence of the object considered as a house and at the same time posits the real world as the common horizon of all targeted objects. Husserl calls this the “natural reflection”, since this kind of reflection is naturally directed at the perceived object. In transcendental reflection, one's attention is on the intendedness (*Gerichtet-sein*) and on the perceiving itself, in this case on the perceptual intendedness directed at the house (and not at the house independently of all intending). One thus examines the transcendental “reduced” cogito and describes it. (Hua 1, §15, 72-3)

An individual thing can be presented in endless different ways from different sides and with different noetic senses, such as sight, touch, hearing, smell, and even tasting, etc. However, in all the different modes of experiencing, a thing is given always only partly. Every moment of sensing is different, and one can only perceive certain sides of the thing at one time. But, in intentional experience the partly experienced thing is taken as a unity,

⁷⁵ As Zahavi points out, it is also important to realise that the correlation for Husserl is not a traditional opposition of the subject and object (cf. Hua 6, §73, 265), but the being and consciousness are essentially interdependent and ultimately one in the absolute concretion that is the transcendental subjectivity. The “monad” that Husserl talks about, especially in the *Cartesian Mediations*, encompasses according to Zahavi not only the ego-pole in its streaming intentional life, but also the intended and constituted transcendent objects. Thus Husserl's notion of subjectivity is eventually expanded in a way that makes it surpass the traditional opposition and also the view that seeks to conceive their relation as that of a strict correlation. (Zahavi 1994, 79)

and different manifestations and different aspects of it are taken exactly as manifestations and aspects of one and the same. This means that the unifying synthesis of a thing is based only on one side of it at a time. Unities, such as the cell-phone, or a random person walking down the street, are always experienced through particular perceived sides.

In the continual change of perspective and profiles, the previous one is replaced by new ones, but the past ones remain in retention. According to Husserl, by seeing different profiles of a thing, the thing as a unity is synthetically put together (*zusammengenommen*). This means that one learns to “know” the thing as a unit. Each thing is given in sensation only partly, even if one would sense all its outer sides at one time (e.g. by touching it), but the thing is still understood as a whole. Husserl explains this by saying that one always “means” (*meinen*) more than one senses (Hua 6, §45, 160). Joonas Taipale formulates this insight by saying that one always intentionally “assumes” more than one directly grasps, and this holds both spatially and temporally (Taipale 2016, 61). In other words, as Steven Crowell puts it, the intentional implications that one does not grasp in one's current direct perception are still given, even if differently; they are implicated by the parts that are directly given in perception (Crowell 2008, 344). For example, when identifying my coffee cup on the table without seeing more than only one side of it at a time, I expect it to fit into my hand and to be uniformly round and white-coloured from all sides.

Disclosing the constitution of a sensed thing does not mean that the experienced object would be reduced to a particular intention. Quite the contrary. As Juntunen explicates, one and the same object can be a correlate of many different intentions (Juntunen 1986, 47). This means that when Husserl speaks about phenomena, he is not speaking about a reality (a real object) but about the manifestation of a reality. As explained above, the world and the real objects in it do not disappear anywhere in the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. Rather, the reduction discloses that together all the various meant or intended world-objects make up the complex object which is the world-phenomenon for the transcendental ego.

Analysing experience brings to the fore also the fact that an object is always experienced in a certain horizon, i.e. a contextual background of intentions and possibilities (Hua 6, §45, 160-1). According to Husserl, every experience is always had in a certain horizon which makes the experienced object meaningful. A horizon determines the way an object is experienced, but a horizon is always also vague and all-encompassing. Without a horizon, the experienced object would make no sense. Every experienced object is thus understood within a horizon that determines the possible variations and contexts of the

object. (Hua 6 §47)

By disclosing the synthesis of the constitution of experience, the universal structure of three constitutional poles come to the fore: *Ego*, *cogitatio*, and *cogitatum*. These are the I-pole (in its identity), the subjective mode of appearance, and the intended object-pole. Or, in other words, the egoic direction towards something, the appearance of something, and that object which is the unity in its appearance and towards which the I-pole's intention is directed. (Hua 6, §50, 174-5) In *Ideas 2*, Husserl calls this structure also simply “the I-Act-Object” structure (*Ich-Akt-Gegenstand*) (Hua 4, §25, 107). According to him, these two poles are the universal structure of intentionality (Hua 6, §50, 175). Even if the poles are poles in one and the same experience and therefore inseparable, in the investigation one can analytically distinguish them and study them distinctly. That is, one must proceed in the direction that is “opposite” to the formation of the experience and de-synthesise experience (Hua 4, §25, 107).

By uncovering the modes of givenness we can understand the universal structures and orders of sense constitution, i.e. how objects manifest themselves to us as meaningful. The intended object, the *cogitatum*, is perceived as a certain kind of object according to its sense (*Wahrnehmungssinn*). The noetic sense of experiencing tells what kind of object is at issue (if it is directly perceived, remembered, dreamt, imagined, etc.), how it is related to everything else, and to what it refers. (Hua 4, §15, 35, 45) Intentionality towards appearing objects is the intending of a subject, that is, the appearances are only appearances for someone. According to Husserl, together intentionalities constitute the sense of the experienced objects and the unitary validity the world. The modes of validity are fulfilled only by the I-subject (*Ichsubjekt*), and not by anyone else outside the I. (Hua 6, §48) That is, sense constitution can take place only to someone in a certain horizon and in certain mode of experience.

3.1.3 The Ego, Intersubjectivity, and the Reduction to the Sphere of Ownness

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction uncovers the intentional subject of experience as the subject-pole in the *ego-cogito-cogitatum* structure. This subject is the transcendental ego, the pure I. As already explained above, at the beginning of the previous chapter, the concept of transcendental ego plays a central role in Husserl's transcendental

phenomenology. Transcendental subjectivity exists only in a stream of experiences. The transcendental ego is the meaning-giving form in the constitution of experience, and therefore also necessary for all experiencing. For Husserl, the transcendental ego is the original form of subjectivity and everything is originally experienced only by the ego. The central position of the ego determines the whole transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 1, §9, 61). According to Fink, the whole method of reduction means basically that transcendental subjectivity is thematised and that the concepts that the concepts that specify it are defined (Fink 1934, 53). Thus, also the investigation of intersubjectivity and the experience of others has an egoic character. This means that Husserl takes the transcendental I to be the starting point also for all experiencing intersubjectivity and all experience of others.

In the following, I will examine what the transcendental-phenomenological reduction discloses about the ego and intersubjectivity. For this purpose, I will further discuss both the egoic nature of reduction and the so-called “reduction to the sphere of ownness”, developed in *Cartesian Meditations* and related sources. In the reduction to the sphere of ownness all references to other conscious subjects is bracketed. In it, Husserl explicates the strength of his ego-centred methodology farthest. But it is crucial to notice that he does not perform this reduction in order to investigate the ego but on the contrary performs it in order to investigate experience of objectivity, intersubjectivity, and other subjects. It is necessary to discuss the reduction to the sphere of ownness and connect it to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction because the former is not a fully separate step but a dependent one which can be performed only on the basis of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. That is, one first needs to uncover the transcendental sphere and the transcendental ego as its central pole, and only then it is possible to perform a reduction to the sphere of ownness for the clarification of the experience of others and everything that depends on it.

According to Husserl, the transcendental-phenomenological reduction discloses the absolute and apodictic transcendental ego as the function centre of all constitution. That is, the pure I is the necessary and original perspective of experience, the subject of constitutive acts and different forms of passivity. First, in the epoché, the ego is apodictively given, but only as a “mute concretion” and not yet explicated. (Hua 6, §55, 190) Then, in the questioning-back the transcendental ego is uncovered as the pure I (Fink 1934, 50). Here the transcendental ego is revealed as a central meaning-giving factor in experience, and the correlation between the objects and the ego is discovered as

intentionality (Hua 6, §49, 173). That is, according to Husserl, in the intentional experience the ego constitutes value-objects (*Wertobjekte*) that are analogous with perceived objects (Hua 4, §4, 9). The experienced objects are meaningful and evaluated (both practically and aesthetically), and the meanings and values are constituted by the transcendental ego. That is, things in the world are meaningful for us, but their meaning depends transcendently on the constitutive activities inherent in experience. For example, a piece of matter in space (metal and plastic) as such does not have the practical meaning “a computer”; it can only carry this meaning in so far as it is experienced as a means of computing and integrated practices of working etc.

For Husserl, the ego is the condition for the possibility of appearance and meaning and is thus the very dimension where reality can display and manifest itself (Zahavi 2003, 79). However, in transcendental-phenomenological investigation of manifestations, the pure ego is always grasped as an *irreality*. That is, the ego is not an empirical subject, a being in the world, but is a transcendental subject correlated with all worldly experience (Moran 2005, 209). In other words, the pure ego is a formal structural factor of all experience according to Husserl's theory of the constitution.

Since the ego is necessary for experience, it cannot be bracketed in the epoché. Despite this necessity, Husserl insists that all *theories about* the ego can and must be suspended in transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 3, §54, 132-33). Husserl's position is that in performing the epoché, all natural assumptions about what is characteristic of a human are excluded, and the subject remains as pure agency (ibid. §80, 160). That is, the experience of “me” as a human being in the world and that of others as my friends, relatives, strangers, etc., does not vanish, but this experience is investigated as a phenomenon. The remaining subjectivity is transcendental ego, the one who experiences the phenomenon.

The impossibility of bracketing the ego means that the transcendental ego is inseparable from its experiences. There is no perception without a perceiver and no pure perceiver outside perception. According to Husserl, the objects that are intended are there only as objects for a consciousness and the ego is what it is only in relation to intentional objectivity (Hua 1, §30, 99). In other words, the transcendental ego as the egoic perspective I-pole cannot be separated from the pure transcendental experience itself. The manifestations of objects are always manifestations for someone, and in the transcendental

experience, i.e. a phenomenon of that which is experienced, the experiencing subjectivity is the transcendental ego.

By analysing the ego, Husserl divides the uncovered transcendental ego in two, to the non-personal “I-pole” of experience and the personal “monad” that is the transcendently experienced “me”. The “I-pole” is the manner in which the ego is involved in each intentional act. That is, every intentional act has both a subject-pole which carries it out and an object which is the intended object-pole of an act. Cohen and Moran characterise Husserl's “I-pole” as a kind of empty form that makes every experience *mine* in a formal way, but Husserl does not intend the notion of the ego-pole to have content (Cohen and Moran 2012, 116; cf. Heinämaa 2003).

In turn, the “monad” is the personal experienced I. In contrast to the I-pole, the term “monad” designates the full experience of the self in all its concreteness, i.e. the self in its full concretion. A monad bears in itself the whole “me”, that is, everything that falls under the unified situation of “I think” (or “I intuit”). This level of the ego comes to the fore just by uncovering an intentional object and then turning towards the intentional subjectivity itself. (Hua 4, §18, 55, §29, 111, Hua 1, §33, 102-3; cf. Heinämaa 2003) According to Moran, the “monad” refers to concrete ego or the person as an individual, a living concrete unity, established over time as a life with its own temporal field and capacity for self-development. Thus, “monad” does not refer only to the person merely in his or her present states, but involves the ways in which she or he has evolved intentionally, including various sedimented layers of intentionality. (Moran 2005, 229-30) The term “monad” designates its being an experienced unity.

According to Husserl, the I-pole and the “monad” are simultaneous levels of the transcendental ego. The ego necessarily exists only in its streaming manifold of intentional experiences as “me” in its meaningful surroundings, and as an experiencing subject it must be the I-pole of experience.⁷⁶ There is according to Husserl no I-pole without a monad and vice versa. (Hua 1, §33, 102) The experienced “me”, this person, is constituted as a correlate of the habitualities and standpoints (*Stellungnahme*) in the I-pole.⁷⁷ Just as my environment is constantly intentionally given to me, I am also myself given to me as *I myself* (*ich selbst*). The intentional conscious experiences are according to Husserl always consciousness of something as *cogitatio* that bears its *cogitatum* in it. (Hua 1, §14, 72; cf.

76 “[N]ämlich das kann es nur sein in der strömenden Vielgestaltigkeit seines intentionalen Lebens” (Hua 1, §33, 102).

77 “Offenbar ist für diese jeweilige Charakter bleibenden Seins und So-seins ein Korrelat der im Ichpol selbst sich konstituierenden Habitualität seiner Stellungnahme” (Hua 1, §14, 72)

Heinämaa 2003)⁷⁸ But, unlike other entities in the world, I am necessarily given to me in constant evidence of experience. I myself am not constituted as my surroundings, but as “me” in what is called “self-constitution” (*Selbstkontitution*). The structure of the constitution is, however, the same. (Hua 1, §33, 102)⁷⁹

Even if Husserl often speaks of the ego only as an “I”, the concept of transcendental ego does not mean an isolated solipsistic subject. Husserl emphasises subjectivity as a crucial factor in the constitution of experience, but according to him, experience and most of its objects are constituted intersubjectively. More precisely, according to Husserl, subjectivity itself is what it is, i.e. a constitutively functioning I, only in intersubjectivity. (Hua 6, §55, 175; cf. Heinämaa 2012) The world in which all experiencing takes place is not constituted by an individual ego alone, but the constitution of *the world* takes place intersubjectively in what Husserl calls a “monad community” (*Monadengemeinschaft*), a community of “me” and “you” (as another “me”) etc. The others do not remain separate individuals for the I, but the others and I constitute an inclusive community of egos, i.e. a monad community that together constitutes the one and the same world (simply, the world as understood in everyday life).⁸⁰ (Hua 1, §49, 137) In other words, the stream of experiences is not solipsistically closed but includes references to other monadic egos. As Bernet, Kern, and Marbach put it, since Husserl's concept of monad is defined by the original (i.e. direct) self-giveness, an individual monad alone can be neither something independent, nor something concrete. Instead, a monad is only a matter of a “relative concretion” in relation to others. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 157)

In *The Crisis* Husserl characterises an intersubjective synthesis (an “I-you” or “I-we” synthesis) as a temporal⁸¹ and simultaneous constitution of personal horizons of I-poles in

78 “Bewußtseinserlebnisse nennt man auch intentionale, wobei aber das Wort Intentionalität dann nichts anderes als diese allgemeine Grundeigenschaft des Bewußtseins, Bewußtsein von etwas zu sein, als *cogito* sein *cogitatum* in sich zu trängen, bedeutet” (Hua 1, §14, 72)

79 Cf. *Ideas 2*, where Husserl characterises the first layer of experience as subjective and passive, as not one's subjective actions, but the given sensations of surroundings as mere things. Husserl calls this the “subjective having” (“*subjektive Habe*”) of the I, by which he means the sensational stream of the I only (Hua 4, §54, 214).

80 “... daß die für mich *Anderen* nicht vereinzelt bleiben, daß sie vielmehr [...] eine mich selbst einschließende Ich-Gemeinschaft als eine solche miteinander und füreinander seiender Ich konstituiert, letztlich eine *Monadengemeinschaft*, und zwar als solche, die [...] eine und selbe Welt konstituiert.”

81 The factor that makes the objective world and the others in it possible for me is according to Husserl the historical sense constitution (*Sinnsgeschichte*) that is experienced as being universal for a human perceiver (a human being and the intersubjectivity is essentially temporal, and more precisely: historical) The experience is according to Husserl always also temporal and historical, and the history of sense refers to the different “layers” (*Stiftung*) of the experience. The experience is constituted by layers that form the experience, and thus the synthesis of a thing is always historical, and through backwards asking

which every I remains an I. An intersubjective synthesis is a universal form of sociality as “a space of all I-subjects”. This kind of a synthesis creates the intentional common world (lifeworld, *Lebenswelt*) and the manifold manifestations of it through which all I-subjects direct at the common world as common. (Hua 6, §50, 176)⁸² Husserl speaks of intersubjectivity as a “synthesis” because intersubjectivity is not the original layer of experience but is only a community of originally experiencing egos. The common lived world as lifeworld functions as an index for intersubjective experience. The common world is constituted as for *us* in “living together” (*Miteinanderleben*). (Hua 6, §47, 164) As Husserl says in *Cartesian Meditations*, “in the transcendental experience I experience the world with others, not as only my own private creation but rather as foreign and intersubjective, being there for everyone (*Jedermann*) and accessible for all”.⁸³ The others are experienced not merely as worldly objects but also as “subjects for this world” (*Subjekte für diese Welt*). (Hua 1, §43, 123)

The analysis of the transcendental ego ultimately leads to a disclosure of its apodictic, intersubjective structure (Hua 15, 192). The transcendental-phenomenological reduction reveals the meaning-giving function of the transcendental subjectivity that is fundamentally penetrated by intersubjective social and historical structure. Thus, according to Husserl, meaning itself has a historical intersubjective character. In other words, the meaning of the transcendental experience is itself also already determined by the intersubjective context and always already determines our understanding of all objects (Hua 15, 637). However, intersubjectivity is not the original layer of experience, but

reflection one is able to go back to the *Urstiftung*, the original sensing of something. (Hua 1, §38, 112-13) The accumulation of sense is called sedimentation (*Sedimentierung*), which refers to the temporal development of sense and meaning as layered (Hua 6, Bl. 26-28, 502-13) The historicity is an essential feature of the experiencing subject since the experience is a temporal stream, and thus it is not possible to construe a completely identical experience in space and time, unlike how it is possible to construe two identical things in different times (Hua 4, §33, 137).

82 “Eine neue Blickrichtung, in der zweiten Reflexionsstufe, führt auf den Ichpol und das seiner Identität Eigene. [...] Nun kompliziert sich alles, sobald wir bedenken, daß Subjektivität nur in der Intersubjektivität ist, was sie ist: konstitutiv fungierendes Ich. Das bedeutet für den Gesichtspunkt „Ich“ die neuen Themen der spezifisch Ich und anderes Ich (jedes rein als Ich) angehenden Synthesis, der Ich-Du-Synthesis und ebenso, aber komplizierter, der Wir-Synthesis. In gewisser Weise ist das wieder eine Zeitigung, nämlich die der Simultaneität der Ichpole oder, was gleichkommt, der Konstitution der personalen (rein ichlichen) Horizontes, in dem jedes Ich sich weiß. Es ist die universale Sozialität [...] als „Raum“ aller Ichsubjekte. Aber natürlich betrifft die Synthesis der Intersubjektivität alles mit: die intersubjektive identische Lebenswelt für alle dient als intentionaler „Index“ für die Erscheinungsmannigfaltigkeiten, die, in intersubjektiver Synthesis verbunden, es sind, durch die hindurch alle Ichsubjekte (und nicht etwa jedes bloß durch seine ihm individuell eigenen Mannigfaltigkeiten) auf die gemeinsame Welt und ihre Dinge ausgerichtet sind, als Feld aller im allgemeinen Wir verbundenen Aktivitäten usw”. (Hua 6, §50, 175-6)

83 “[I]m rahmen meines transzendental reduzierten reinen Bewußtseinsleben erfahre ich die Welt mitsamt den Anderen und dem Erfahrungssinn gemäß nicht als mein sozusagen privates synthetisches Gebilde, sondern als mir fremde, als intersubjektive, für Jedermann daseiende, in ihren Objekten Jedermann zugängliche Welt” (Hua 1, §43, 123).

meaning is originally experienced only by the ego.

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction shows that experience is neither constituted by the ego alone nor merely intersubjectively. Husserl claims that deeper reflection on the ego shows that the pure I and the other pure I operate in one and the same unreal transcendental sphere, which can be given either directly or indirectly (Hua 4, §23. 102). Thus, according to Husserl, others belong to the transcendental sphere as transcendently experienced others. The other consciousness is not given to me directly because only my own consciousness can be directly given to me, i.e. the transcendental I is for itself a continual evidence (Hua 1, §31, 100). Experiencing acts are however not only in relation to the pure I but also to another pure I and to the intersubjective constitutive community in which the monadic egos are in constant relation and in experiential exchange with each other (ibid. §28, 111).

Despite the crucial role of intersubjectivity in the constitution of the world, the method of reduction is still egoic and uncovers the ego as the primary meaning-giving subject of experience. Therefore, the ego is the necessary starting point of the performance of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, and at the core of all meaning-constitution, even when investigating intersubjectivity and intersubjective issues. This is explicated especially in *Cartesian Meditations*, *Ideas 2*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article, and *Experience and Judgement* where Husserl presents an abstractive “egological” reduction in which even the existence of others is bracketed. For Husserl, consciousness is always particularised as the consciousness of an I. Therefore, the process of investigating the primary sphere (*Originarsphär*) of meaning-constitution must begin with the rigorous transcendental self-examination which Husserl calls “transcendental solipsism”⁸⁴ (Hua 1, §13).

In *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl performs an abstractive egological reduction called “the reduction to the sphere of ownness” (*Eigenheitssphäre*) in order to study the constitution of intersubjectivity, our experience of others, and the constitution of the world. For Husserl, the transcendental experience of others is a central phenomenological problem to be explicated and clarified by proper methods. Like in transcendental-phenomenological investigations of the experience of material objects and the world, also in transcendental-

⁸⁴ Here one must bear in mind that the transcendental solipsism which is at work here is only a methodological task in Husserl's reduction, as distinguished from the metaphysical solipsism (Hua 9, 245-6).

phenomenological investigations of others must the existence of the studied objects be bracketed.⁸⁵

This special thematic epoché suspends all the constitutive acts of other intentional subjects in order to grasp the primordial sphere of the ego. The transcendental ego cannot be bracketed, and so it can serve as a starting point for the investigation. In contrast, everything that is in Husserl's words “questionable”, that is, not evident, is suspended. Like all transcendent objects, the other consciousnesses are not directly experiencable by me, and therefore their existence falls into the category of “questionable”. According to Husserl, when speaking of the transcendental experience of other subjects and universal historical sense which makes the objective world possible for me, one should remain content with a questionable sense (*Sinn*) of foreign subjects.⁸⁶ (Hua 1, §44, 124-5)

The transcendental ego experiences its own lived experiences in a unique original manner, whereas the existence of others and their lived experiences are not experienced with such originality. According to Husserl, the consciousness of the other is originally given to me in a bodily manner (*leibhaftig*) in front of me, but this bodily manner of givenness does not involve the other directly as an other consciousness itself. Namely, if the other's own self were accessible to me in a direct manner, i.e. if the lived experiences of the other ego were evident to my pure I, then the other would merely be a moment of my own consciousness, and the other and I would be one and the same.⁸⁷ (Hua 1, §50, 139)

According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the sphere of ownness is the sphere of the most primordial (*ursprünglichst*), i.e. the most immediate, self-givenness imaginable, the sphere of best originality (*Originalität*) conceivable. For Husserl, the problem of experiencing other consciousnesses means discerning in which explicit and implicit intentional syntheses and motivations the other comes to be manifested within my transcendently apprehended consciousness and certified as existing. Therefore, Bernet, Kern, and Marbach say that for Husserl, the constitution of the other can be understood by departing from this sphere. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 156-7)

In order to analyse the constitution of the other intentional subject, it is according to

85 “Object” refers to that which is experienced; others are not taken as objects in the sense of the objectification of conscious beings.

86 “Ist nun die transzendente Konstitution und damit der transzendente Sinn von Fremdsubjekten in Frage und in weiterer Konsequenz in Frage eine universale Sinngeschichte, [...], so kann der fragliche Sinn von Fremdsubjekten noch nicht der von objektiven, von weltlich seienden Anderen sein.”

87 This is linked then to further subjects about experiencing and understanding another, the subjects of empathy (*Empfindung*) and pairing (*Paarung*). However, as Fink emphasises, the analysis of the otherness in the *Cartesian Meditations* is only developing the transcendental reduction, not itself yet the thematic interpretation of empathy (Fink 1934, 52).

Husserl not enough to bracket only the natural assumptions about the transcendent reality of others, as if by just not taking into account the existence of other real individuals. This is because the whole range of the idea of the natural world and its being accessible for everyone would still remain and these imply the existence of others. Therefore, in the reduction to the sphere of ownness, the ego is not treated as a correlate phenomenon of a human-I, in the middle of the universal world phenomenon. It means that the ego is reduced to a monad that is the unity in itself, excluding all reference to other intentional consciousness. (Hua 1, §44, 125)

According to Husserl, all entities involving foreignness are given within the transcendental phenomenon of the world, and thus the other intentional subjects could not be bracketed without modifying the experience of the world (Hua 1, §44, 126-7).⁸⁸ Therefore, the reduction to the sphere of ownness can be performed only in an abstract manner. Suspending the reference to other intentional subjects leads inevitably also to suspension of the natural sense of the I, because all references to the sense of “we” and natural worldliness are set aside. However, in my primordial sphere, I am still an identical I-pole of my manifold pure experiences. Thereby remain a reduced kind of “world”, a primordial reduced nature, and the psycho-physical embodied and personal I. Since the primordial sphere includes only my own experience of the world, the world is not experienced as “the world for all”. (Hua 1, §44, 129) Bracketing the assumptions about the existence of other consciousnesses means bracketing all conscious modes of referring to others, culture predicates, and objectivity.

According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the sphere of ownness gains for Husserl the sense of a stratum of experience *prior* to our experience of the other, that is, a stratum of experience belonging to the I, which according to them is supposed to underlie and found the higher stratum, which is our experience of the other. Without the concept of the sphere of ownness, they claim, it would have been impossible for Husserl to define this sphere by its inseparability of the I, since the concept of the transcendental original sphere is inseparable from the others as intentional correlates of the empathies belonging to the original experience. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 158)

According to Husserl, by the exclusion of references to other consciousnesses, it comes to the fore that a foreign ego is constituted as “mirroring” (*spiegeln*) my monadic

88 “[I]ch kann offenbar nicht das Fremde als Erfahrung haben, also nicht den Sinn objektive Welt als Erfahrungssinn haben, ohne jene Schichte in wirklicher Erfahrung zu haben.” (Hua 1, §44, 127)

ego, that is, as an “alter ego”. But, the other is not seen as an other *I myself*, but as an *analogon* (Hua 1, §44, 125). Husserl thus argues that one's own ego and lived bodiliness can be experienced immediately, whereas the “alter ego” can only be experienced mediately in an analogous manner (Hua 1, §44, 128-9). In *Ideas 2* Husserl also concludes that, since the solipsistic reduction can only be abstractive, then performing the solipsistic reduction does show that the world and others exist independently of the ego. Therefore, Husserl claims, objectivity is constituted only intersubjectively. (Hua 4, §18e-f, 78-80) That is, transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the reduction to the sphere of ownness uncover the ego as the original constituent of experience and the intersubjective I-community as the constituent of the experienced common objective world.

3.2 The Eidetic Reduction

In addition to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, the other main aspect of the method of reduction in transcendental phenomenology is the eidetic reduction. Like the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, the eidetic reduction also takes place in the phenomenological attitude. By the means of this reduction we can investigate the eidetic necessities (i.e. invariants) of experiences. The distinctive task in the eidetic reduction is the process called “eidetic variation”. According to Husserl, this reduction is one of the two main methods in the transcendental-phenomenological investigation (Hua 1, §34, 106, §64, 180). It is this reduction which allows transcendental phenomenology to become an eidetic science, i.e. the eidetic science of consciousness.⁸⁹ In the following, I will discuss the eidetic reduction as an aspect of the method of reduction.

According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the eidetic reduction is Husserl's answer to the problem, Is it possible for pure phenomenology to be a science? According to them, no scientific study can be solipsistic since all scientific study must be intersubjectively verifiable. Thus, in order to be scientific, phenomenology must be objectively valid research of the phenomenologically reduced consciousness. In contrast, in pure reflection, that is, in the sphere disclosed by the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, “we find ourselves in a stream of never-returning phenomena, in an eternal Heraclitean flux.” (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 77-8) Thus, as Bernet, Kern, and Marbach emphasise, phenomena may be given evidently in transcendental experience, but the mere disclosure

89 There are also other interpretations, for example, Zahavi sets the eidetic reduction to be chronologically primary and gives no order for the reductions in general (Zahavi 2003). See also the article of Lohmar's *Die phänomenologische Methode der Wesensschau und ihre Präzisierung als eidetische Variation* where he presents arguments pro and contra (Lohmar 2005, 88-91).

of experience is not science.

Husserl explains that the scientific character of phenomenology is guaranteed by the fact that the main objective of phenomenology is not in the description of flowing experiences but in the explication of the eidetic structures of experience (Hua 3, §69-75). As he states it in *The Crisis*:

An individual philosopher can by himself and within the epoché get a hold on nothing of this incomprehensibly streaming life, and by no means could he repeat the same content and become so certain of its being-this and being-thus that he would be capable of describing and documenting it in clear assertions (even if only for his own person). But, the whole concrete facticity of the universal transcendental subjectivity is intelligible in another manner, namely, through the true eidetic method which has one great task: To investigate the essences of transcendental performances, according to the types of all individual and intersubjective performances, as well as the whole essential form of the transcendentially performing subjectivity. This fact is understandable only as essence, and it is in no way analogous to the objectivity documented by an inductive empirical investigation. (Hua 6, §52, 181-2)⁹⁰

Husserl thus claims that it is possible to achieve scientific results in transcendental phenomenology since this philosophy is focused on the exploration of essences by the means of the eidetic reduction. For him, mathematics, and especially geometry, served as an example of eidetic sciences for which the actuality and non-actuality of objects is completely irrelevant. For example, in geometry, the actual existence of triangles is of no importance to the conclusions that are drawn. In a similar manner, according to Husserl, one can gain essential insight into the nature of sensuous experience, as well as of other forms of experiencing, by varying experiences in free fantasy. (Hua 3, §4, 16) That is, the objects of eidetic inquiries must be neutralised with respect to the question of their actuality and non-actuality. This is necessary for the aim of making universally valid statements about the structures of experiences (ibid., §151, 372). Bernet's, Kern's, and Marbach's interpretation of Husserl's eidetic reduction brings it very closely to Husserl's

90 "Selbst der einzelne Philosoph in der Epoché kann bei sich selbst nichts von diesem unfaßbar strömenden Leben so festhalten, mit stets gleichem Gehalt wiederholen und seiner Diesheit und seines Soseins (sei es auch nur für seine Person) sozusagen dokumentieren könnte. Aber die volle konkrete Faktizität der universalen transzendentalen Subjektivität ist gleichwohl in einem anderen guten Sinne wissenschaftlich faßbar, eben dadurch, daß wirklich in eidetischer Methode die große Aufgabe gestellt werden kann und muß: die Wesensform der transzendentalen Leistungen in aller Typik von Einzelleistungen und intersubjektiven Leistungen zu erforschen, also die gesamte Wesensform der transzendental leistenden Subjektivität, in allen ihren sozialen Gestalten. Das Faktum ist hier als das seines Wesens und nur durch sein Wesen bestimmbar und in keiner Weise in analogem Sinne wie in der Objektivität durch eine induktive Empirie empirisch zu dokumentieren."

conception of pure a priori cognition. This reduction is thus modelled on the mathematical style of thinking as understood by Husserl. Mathematically modelled a priori thinking requires liberation from all factuality and that one treats facts and actualities as arbitrary examples. Being free from every positing of real being and being bound to no presupposed actuality enables the investigator to grasp pure eidetic universalities. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 78-9)

According to Husserl, pure essence is grasped only when transcendence is bracketed. This requires that the eidetic reduction must take place within the phenomenological attitude. But, in contrast to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, the eidetic reduction treats all actualities as mere possibilities among other possibilities. In other words, the factual actuality of particular cases is considered irrelevant to the eidetic universal. (Hua 9, 74) Like in the transcendental-phenomenological reduction, also in the eidetic reduction the object of investigation is experience itself and everything that it includes. But, instead of being interested in the constitution of particular experiences or their objects, the eidetic reduction investigates essential structures of experiences and their correlates, such as perception, memory, thing, living being, basic concept – that is, essences according to which meanings of reality are constituted. (Hua 5, §7, 29, §18a, 40)

Thus understood, the eidetic reduction consists of an a priori analysis of experiences by the means of free variation of experiences (and their objects) in imagination. This implies that the eidetic reduction is “a slow, hard-won procedure of evident insight acquired by reflection” (Moran 2000, 136).⁹¹ Like geometrical investigations, phenomenology, as an eidetic inquiry, takes place a priori and uses particulars as exemplary cases. Thus, the eidetic reduction takes place in the sphere of apodictic evidence; it does not rely on anything else than transcendently purified and eidetically varied evident experiences. Namely, for Husserl, the same essential invariants characteristic of a type of experience hold for every thinkable intentional experience of that type. Therefore, one can vary the type a priori based on one single case, i.e. one pure experience, without any empirical survey. According to Husserl, every eidetic particularisation and singularisation of an eidetically universal state of affairs is always an

91 Husserl also justifies the use of the a priori conclusion by saying that the free imagination gives more data and does so in a more varied way than any particular group of experiences could (Hua 3, §70, 130-2). This justification relates to Husserl's idea in the *Ideas 1* according to which the eidetic variation is a non-exhaustive (*nicht-erschöpfenden*) systematic analysis of essence (cf. Hua 3, §34), which means that one could vary the possibilities endlessly without ever completing the investigation. I find, though, that already in *Ideas 3* this idea of exhaustiveness has changed, and the varied object is not a thing in the experience, but the general categories of experiencing objects of different natures.

eidetic necessity (Hua 3, §6, 19-20).

Husserl calls the variation of an intentional experience “essential insight” (*Wesensschau*). The term means establishing the horizon within which the object can change without losing its identity as a thing of that type. In that way one is able to disclose the invariant structures that make up the essence of that object. (EU, §87) One grasps the absolute generality of essence (*Wesensallgemeinheit*) and the invariants of particular cases of experience, such as particular perceptions, of which every factual experience is merely an example of a pure possibility (Hua 1, §34, 105). When we perform an eidetic reduction on an experience of a particular intuition of redness, for example, we snip away all further significance of redness and grasp in “pure seeing” the universal meaning of the concept of redness (Hua 2, 56-7).

This reduction takes place in the sphere of pure possibilities. According to Husserl, by freely imagining possible experiences in different modes, we can turn (*umwandeln*)⁹² from individual experiences to the imaginative perception of essence (*Wesensanschauung*). Husserl characterises this imagination of different possibilities by saying that it uses “as if experiences” (*als ob*). The “as if” experience has parallel modes of “as if” perception, retention, etc. (e.g. as if I were seeing a coffee cup, as if I were remembering it, etc.). It is possible to perform eidetic variation based on any experience.

In the eidetic reduction, the correlation of factual experience, that is, the real world as experienced, becomes a special case of all possible worlds that in turn are correlates of the variation of the essences (an individual being of every kind is “accidental”). The possibilities of fulfilment are drawn according to their types of essence (*Wesenstypus*). This means that every actual experience refers to possible experiences which in turn refer to other possible experiences, according to their essential rules that are bound a priori to their types. (Hua 3, §47, 88-90) According to Moran, Husserl thus claims that the universal is seen in the individual, and the route from the individual to the universal is installed in the conscious act itself. The essence of an experienced object, such as redness, for example, is in a certain sense already instantiated in our sensuous intuition of an individual patch of red. (Moran 2000, 134) Thus, according to Moran, my experience of an object often contains, as part of that experience, my sense that the object actually is beyond or outside

92 The term “Umwandlung” (Eng. turning) points out that the imaginative perception of essence is not fully absolute and independent, but is practically always bound to an individual perception, even if it is not necessary to perceive a real object (Hua 3, 16).

the experience, and has aspects other than the ones I am apprehending at the moment. The notion of grasping an essence is to grasp something which Husserl calls “transcendence in immanence”. (Moran 2000, 133)

According to Zahavi, the eidetic reduction can be compared to conceptual analysis where one attempts to imagine the object as being different from how it currently is. Sooner or later this imaginative variation will lead to certain properties that cannot be varied, that is, changed and transgressed without making the object cease to be the kind of object it is. According to Zahavi, variation consequently allows us to distinguish between the accidental properties of experiences, i.e. the properties that could have been different, and its essential properties, i.e. the invariant structures that make the experience what it is. (Zahavi 2003, 38) The “variation” does not mean that one should really imagine individual experiences that are instances of every possible variation within them, but one should find the essential conditions and possibilities of certain kinds of experiences. Eidetic reduction finds the intuition of essence, which means that it investigates the conditions of all meaningful experiencing (Hua 4, §19, 90-1).

One starts the eidetic reduction by varying the qualities of a particular transcendental experience. For example, with an experience of “perceiving a table”, one freely varies the perceived object and the perceptual circumstances (e.g. from visual to auditory perception), so that the perception as perception of something remains. One could vary for example the colour, form, the kind of perception, etc. One varies particularities of a particular experience by at the same time relating to all variations equally as pure possibilities. One's perception is set into the realm of the “*as if*” and thereby one mediates the pure possibilities which bind the current experience to all other essentially similar experiences. (Hua 1, §34, 104) The universal sense of experience tells the kind of intentional experience and an experienced object (if the object is directly perceived, remembered, dreamt, imagined, etc.), as well as the object's relation to everything else in experience. The senses of an act of experience and of an experienced object contain everything that can be excepted or grasped about the experience or about the object. For example, an experience of a table already includes all the possibilities of being a table or of the circumstances of perceiving a table. (Hua 4, §15, 35, 45) Thus, Husserl claims that to know the essence of an experience or an experienced object means to understand how they are constituted as a type of experience or as a thing (*Dingaufbau*) in experience (Hua 4, §16, 52).

In *Ideas 3*, Husserl gives a more specific example of varying an experience of a material thing, that is, a visual perception of a piece of gold: The reduction starts with a

real experience. By performing the epoché, the experience becomes the phenomenon “seeing a piece of gold”. First the phenomenon is a plain experience of the thing given originally only from one side with a certain sense. When performing the eidetic reduction, one abstracts from the existential state of the actual experience, so that the experience is freed from any factors related to actuality. The experience of the thing is varied in the way that all the particular features of the experience and the experienced object are changed one-by-one. One can vary the shape, colour, and quantity of the piece of gold, etc., into all kinds of even extreme variants, without losing its being the same thing. Also the circumstances of the perception can be varied without losing the core the perception as a perception of a piece of gold. (Hua 5, §7, 29-30)

The essences that Husserl is looking for are not Platonic ideas of particular things but characteristic features in experience, i.e. essences of intentional experiences.⁹³ Since Husserl studies the essential structures of experience, and since experiences are intentional, his inquiry involves eidetic inquiries of both objects (noema) and acts (noesis) of experiences. For example, the characteristic feature of an experienced thing is that the givenness of a material thing is horizontal and proceeds necessarily by adumbrations, not by spontaneous motivated movements (Hua 4, §60, 260). According to Husserl, the idea of one particular kind of an object is different from the idea of a thing category, such as the category of material things, the category of living things, or the category of value-things. A general category describes the basic type of experience, whereas a group of particular kinds of things, e.g. cats or tables, includes only those certain kinds of objects. (Hua 5, §7, 33) Husserl is not after the ideas of certain kinds of things, such as an idea of table, but after more general categories of objects and acts as experienced. For example, the category of direct perception includes all kinds of direct visual and auditory perceptions. After the variation, for example the variation of the visual perception, one can move to recognising to the pure act of sight.

Husserl calls the universal essence, an abstract thinkable possibility freed from every factuality, “*eidōs*”⁹⁴. *Eidos* is constituted in the ideation of essence and engages all ideal

93 However, according to Moran, it is arguable that Husserl never developed a full critical understanding of the notion of essence and that his constant emphasis on seeing essence led to phenomenology being misunderstood as a kind of Platonism, or as promoting a kind of mystical intuition (Moran 2000, 134-5).

94 In *Ideas I* Husserl also calls the world-phenomenon “*eidōs*”, which means that it is not just as any one kind of a sphere of being (e.g. a sphere of mathematics), but it is given in the pure experience, in the pure consciousness (Bewusstsein, understood in a wide sense, grasping all the experience) with their pure correlates of the consciousness, and on the other side in their pure I, which are all given in the natural world. (Hua 3, §33, 58) The experience in question is also not just any psychological experience, but a

possibilities and necessary features of an act or of an object. An *eidōs* of an intentional act includes the conditions and possibilities determined by that *eidōs*, that is, the possibilities of different particular presentations of the act. Therefore, real perceptions or other experiences may be actualised in a different manner, but the *eidōs* itself does not change. (Hua 5, §6, 15, §18a, 39) For example, there can be many different sorts of imagination, but they all have something essential in common with imagination. Every basic form of an act is characterised by its own essential and basic qualities of the act (Hua 5, §7, 15-16). The *eidōs* is given (and positable) in all kinds of experiences. An *eidōs* can be grasped originally in intuitions (*Anschauungen*)⁹⁵ as well as directly experienced and the imagined etc. Namely, the knowledge of essences (*Wesenserkenntnis*) is independent of all matter of facts. (Hua 3, §4, 12)

An *eidōs* is always universal and thus independent of all factualities. Because of the independent nature of *eidōs*, it is also primary in respect to linguistic concepts. Linguistic concepts are rather built by adapting to an *eidōs*. (Hua 1, §34, 105) That is, an *eidōs* exists independently of putting the idea into words, but the linguistic concepts do not exist without an idea to which they refer. *Eidōs* is thus primary to all actual realities and concepts of actual realities. In other words, essences grasped in the constitution and their linguistic concepts are not one and the same. Rather, a linguistic concept of a category is always construed, whereas the essence of that category, i.e. its conditions and possibilities, is always already there before the linguistic conceptualisation. For example, an experience of a thing is always already of a certain kind and similar to the same kind of experiences, even without the linguistic concept of “a thing”.

In the eidetic reduction, the transcendental ego also varies itself, as a particular eidetic variation of a transcendental ego. Within this variation, the ego turns into an “eidōs ego”, into a mere example of an ego with all its possibilities and necessities. (Hua 1, §34, 106) The eidetic reduction uncovers the universal *eidōs* of the transcendental ego by grasping all pure variations of its possibilities. By this variation it is possible to find the universal a priori essences without which the transcendental I or any I would not be thinkable. (Hua 1, §34, 106)

By abstaining from every judgement concerning real actuality and concerning ideal possibilities and their related laws instead, the eidetic reduction has moved away from

pure experience according to its essence, i.e. what is necessarily found a priori in the experience (ibid. §36, 64).

95 Also translated sometimes as “intuition”, as in Hintikka's article “Husserl: The Phenomenological Dimension”.

particular transcendental experiences towards scientific positive results. According to Husserl, on the basis of the *eidōs*, it is possible to set forth laws of necessities which determine the invariants that must belong to an experience if it is to be an experience of a certain kind (EU, §352f). By stripping off all empirical content, it is possible to gain essential knowledge of the invariant structures of all experiencing, such as knowing, perceiving, imagining, and so on, in a purely a priori character. With imaginative variation one is able to formulate a priori claims about the structures of experience and can present essential conditions and possibilities of the experienced reality (Hua 1, §12, 66). According to Husserl, by the means of eidetic variation, one comes to see the “frames” (possibilities) of an experience and its objects. In other words, according to Husserl there is only a certain set of possibilities for certain things in experience, which are determined by the essence of the particular experience. (Hua 5, §7, 30-3) By varying the possibilities of experiences one comes to see the universal possibilities of experience. That is, one performs an a priori investigation on the possibilities of experiencing the world in order to see the necessary conditions without which the world is unthinkable. (Hua 9, 251)

4 THE METHOD OF REDUCTION AND SOLIPSISM CRITIQUE

As I have shown, by the means of reduction we can analyse transcendental experience or essences of experienced objects and experiencing. To roughly sum up, by performing the transcendental-phenomenological reduction we analyse transcendental experience as the correlation between subject and world. By performing the eidetic reduction we investigate essences of experiencing and experienced objects in transcendental experience. For Husserl, the aim in performing these reductions is to provide clarity about sense-formation and the constitution of experience and thus to reveal the universal structures of experiencing.

In the introduction I brought up two kinds of solipsism critique presented of the method of reduction. Those are the external critique presented by Dreyfus and the internal critique presented by Husserl scholars. In the following I will first discuss the critique presented and developed by Dreyfus in the book *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science* and I will answer the question whether Dreyfus's criticism against the method of reduction is justified. Second, I will discuss internal critique of the method presented in the discussion about the egoic nature of transcendental-phenomenological investigation. My discussion of the latter criticism is based on the works *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology* by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, and Zahavi's *Husserl's Phenomenology*.

4.1 The Solipsism Critique Presented by Hubert L. Dreyfus

As I brought up in the introduction, Dreyfus interprets the transcendental sphere as a sphere of mental representations and accordingly claims that Husserl's method leads to a so-called "methodological solipsism". He thus claims that Husserl's investigation is stuck in the sphere of subjective representations without being able to investigate objective reality. If this were true, it would lead transcendental-phenomenological investigation to epistemological solipsism, i.e. to the situation where it is not possible to have rigorous knowledge about anything else than one's own mental activity. If Dreyfus's claims were justified, I claim it would follow that Husserl would fail in his phenomenological project of understanding the experience of knowledge and objectivity.

The central and determining feature in Dreyfus's reading of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is his identifying Husserl's concept of *phenomenon* with a concept of

mental representation. Thus, he interprets also the whole transcendental sphere as a sphere of mental representations. Accordingly, he reads Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as a representational theory of mind which is, in his words, “thoroughly modern mentalist” (Dreyfus 1982, 15). This means that for Dreyfus, Husserl claims that all reference is made possible only by mental activity. Thus, for Dreyfus, transcendental phenomenology investigates the mental life of an individual.

Dreyfus's reading of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is characterised as *Fregean*, in line with Føllesdal and his other students, the so-called West Coast interpretation (see footnote 99).⁹⁶ As Zahavi summarises the interpretation, according to this reading, all reference is determined by the sense, that is, the reference is effectuated *via* the sense, i.e. via a representation which is seen as a mediator between a subject and that which is perceived. This kind of reading takes Husserl's theory of constitution not as an object-theory concerning objects' manifestations themselves but as a mediator-theory concerning the mediator between a subject and an object. That is, for Dreyfus (as for the West Coast interpretation), the intentionality of consciousness is conceived in analogy with the reference of linguistic expressions. (Zahavi 2003, 58-9) This means that the perceptions are assumed to have references in the same way as e.g. words. For example, my perception of a tree is according to this reading analogous to a word “tree”, in the sense that the perception of a tree is a representative signifier of a tree in a similar way as the word “tree” is.

Since Dreyfus interprets phenomena as representations and the transcendental sphere as a sphere of mental representations, he interprets the phenomenological epoché as a step that takes the investigation to a solipsistic sphere of subjective mental content. Dreyfus claims that, after performing the phenomenological epoché, Husserl is no longer interested in reality but is only concerned with exclusive analysis of meaning and mental representations. (Dreyfus 1982,15) Thus, according to Dreyfus's interpretation, the phenomenological attitude excludes everything but one's own particular experience in the sense that nothing else can be investigated in terms of transcendental phenomenology. In

96 The so-called California school or West Coast interpretation includes such authors as Føllesdal, Dreyfus, Miller, Smith, and McIntyre. Their interpretation is based on the idea that noema must be sharply distinguished from both act and object. It is according to them an ideal meaning or sense which mediates the intentional relation between act and object. The noema is not taken to be that toward which consciousness is directed, but that by means of which it is directed. Against the West Coast interpretation the so-called East Coast interpretation, i. a. Sokolowski, Drummond, Hart, and Cobb-Stevens, argue that intentionality is a fundamental feature of conscious experience. They therefore deny what seems to follow from the mediator theory favored by the West Coast interpretation. (Zahavi 2003, 58-9)

other words, the method of reduction is according to Dreyfus's reading a method of introspection.

Dreyfus thus claims that by bracketing the concerns of naturalism and the implicit denial of the relevance of causal components of reference, the method of reduction inevitably becomes “ultimately solipsist” (Dreyfus 1982, 16-17). According to Dreyfus, it follows that methodological solipsism hinders understanding the constitution of experience, since intelligent behaviour presupposes a background of social and cultural context. Indeed, according to him, epoché means leaving out historical and cultural contexts. But, as he claims, historical and cultural contexts are necessarily in the background of all meaningful intelligent behaviour. (ibid., 20) In other words, according to Dreyfus, bracketing the truth value of natural assumptions closes the investigation in a subjective sphere of phenomenal representations without grasping reality. Therefore, Dreyfus interprets Husserl's theory as accounting only for how objects are intended, not how they are given.

The central problem in Dreyfus's interpretation of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is that he confuses the concepts of representation and phenomenon in the sense that he identifies them. But, based on my discussion in previous chapters we can see that phenomena, manifestations of objects, i.e. objects-as-experienced, are not *representations* of objects, but *presentations* of objects (I use the terms “presentation” and “manifestation” synonymously). That is, an experience in “quotation marks” is not a representative signifier of that which is experienced but simply a manifestation of the object that is experienced. In turn, mental representations are some kind of subjective mental ideas about objects. For example, when working on my computer, I do not see, feel, and hear a representation of a computer, but I perceive a real object, the computer, with my senses.

Objects present themselves to us, which means that objects are experienced by perceiving them in some way, either directly or indirectly. I do not perceive my surroundings as representations, but rather I see, hear, feel, and otherwise sense that which is included in my experience. In the case of indirect presentations of objects such as memories, imagination, dreams, and expectations where the remembered, imagined, or dreamt object is not experienced directly as a real object, the phenomena are not representations either. As Edith Stein has formulated it based on Husserl's work, phenomena as indirect presentations are direct presentations of an indirect object, but not

representations in the sense of being mental representations (Stein 2012, 6)⁹⁷. In other words, I experience the world directly, not through representations as mediators between me and the world. For example, in hearing a car coming behind me, the sound of the car is not a representation of the car, but its direct manifestation. When hearing the car, I do not hear a representation, but I hear the sound that the car produces, and thus I experience the car directly as a presentation, not as a mental representation.⁹⁸

The method of reduction does not mean reducing the investigation to the immanent part of reality or to the mere *cogitatio* (the subjective perception). Rather, in performing a reduction we restrict the investigation to the sphere of pure self-givenness, i.e. to the sphere of apodictic evidence. This means that we can grasp experienced objects as “getting-it-itself-into-sight” (*Es-selbst-geistig-zu-Gesicht-bekommen*), i.e. as they are given in experience (Hua 1, §5, 52). Bracketing all natural assumptions means that nothing is lost from experience or added to it. Therefore, the constituted object cannot be reduced to that which constitutes it or to where it is constituted (e.g. the mind or brain).

It follows that, unlike Dreyfus claims, the phenomenological epoché does not take the transcendental-phenomenological investigation to a sphere of mere mental representations. Namely, as I have shown above, the phenomenological epoché is the act of bracketing all natural assumptions, but by performing the epoché one does not negate or add anything to the experience. That is, transcendental investigation simply does not posit existence of anything else than transcendental experience. A transcendental experience is a presentation of objects, the experience put in quotation marks. In other words, a natural experience of an object becomes a quoted “experience of an object”. Thus, transcendental experience is not different from the natural experience, except that no claims based on natural assumptions are posited. Therefore, the epoché does not take the investigation to

97 Indirect presentation is a concept that relates to Husserl's theory of time consciousness. Here I will not go into this theory. I only want to stress that what is called “representation” does not necessarily relate to this theory. In the English translation of Edith Stein's account of Husserl's theory of time consciousness, Waltraut Stein does translate “Vergegenwärtigung” as “representation”, but it would be a misunderstanding to identify “Vergegenwärtigung” with that which is usually meant by “representation”.

98 Of course, the *cogitata* can also be illusions, but then the *cogitatum* is not a manifestation of a real object but of an illusion. Husserl admits that we cannot always know whether we experience something as it really is or whether we misinterpret something. E.g. Husserl speaks about the possibility of misinterpreting a big doll as a person. But, distinguishing the real object and an illusory object is not the task of transcendental phenomenology, since the method of reduction investigates the way these different objects, either illusory objects or real objects, are experienced, i.e. how they manifest themselves to us. This is why I am not interested in treating the East Coast – West Coast discussion about the concept of noema. Namely, one of their central misunderstanding concerns illusion and reality, but I claim that the question is actually irrelevant to understanding what phenomena and noema are.

some kind of new sphere, but merely turns towards the transcendental sphere that already is there in all experience. If phenomena would be representations, it would follow that all our experiences would be representations and we could never reach the world as it is. The “quoted experience”, i.e. the phenomenon of what is experienced, is not a representation, but a manifestation. That is, there is no mediating mental “picture” in between me and what I experience.

The second problem in Dreyfus's interpretation of the method of reduction is that he confuses the means and the object of interest in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This second problem relates to the first one. Namely, because Dreyfus interprets the transcendental sphere as a sphere of mental representations, he assumes that the method of reduction must be some kind of advanced introspection (Zahavi 2003, 54). Therefore, he takes the ultimate object of interest in transcendental phenomenology to be the experience of particular individuals. Thus, Dreyfus assumes that Husserl's ultimate object of interest is not an individual experience or some kind of representational mediator between a person and an object.

As I have shown above, Husserl is not primarily interested in particular experiences but in the universal constitution of experience, that is, the universal way of how objects manifest themselves to us. As Zahavi puts it, transcendental phenomenology is interested in the conditions of possibility for appearance as such (Zahavi 2003, 54). Since appearances are always appearances for someone, then, in order to investigate how the world and objects originally manifest themselves to us, we need to investigate the objects in transcendental experience. Thus, the ultimate objects of interest in transcendental phenomenology are not intrinsic features or structures of consciousness itself (ibid., 61). Rather, transcendental phenomenology integrates and includes everything that is at first bracketed for methodological reasons. This means that particular transcendental experiences are used only in an exemplary manner or as points of departure. By turning the gaze towards experience itself, the object of investigation does not become a particular experience and the mental activity of a subject.

Since phenomena are not in one's mind and the transcendental sphere is not a sphere of one's mental activity, the method of reduction is not a method for studying primarily my own particular experience (basically I could study only my own particular transcendental experience by the means of reduction, but this would not serve the goals of phenomenology). The ways of manifestation can vary between to subjects with different means of experiencing. For example, flowers can manifest themselves in a different

manner to a dog than to a human being, and even one and the same flower is experienced differently from different angles when there is only one perceiver. However, this particular fact is irrelevant to the transcendental-phenomenological investigation since it is the universal structure of experiencing that Husserl is after, not particular experiences of flowers. Particular experiences do still function as examples or points of departure for the investigation. The investigation is thus also not about empirical objects in the world, but empirical objects are necessary for the manifestations of them. Therefore the method of reduction is not indifferent to the world, but the world itself is not the object of interest when performing reductions.

Examining the transcendental sphere is not introspection but the study of the universal modes of how objects of experience manifest themselves to us. Therefore, suspending the claims about existence of that which is transcendent to pure experience does not end up in methodological or epistemological solipsism. If “methodological solipsism” means being stuck in mental representations, there is no such solipsism in the case of Husserl's method of reduction. Accordingly, the transcendental-phenomenological investigation does not lead to epistemological solipsism, i.e. to a situation where it is not possible to be sure about anything else than one's own experiences. Rather, when done properly, the investigation leads to a conclusion that reveals universal modes of experiencing the world as objective. Dreyfus's arguments against Husserl's method of reduction seem to be arguments against the modern mentalist theory. His argument may be right, but it does not touch transcendental phenomenology.

Relating to Dreyfus's claim about the suspension of the interests of the natural sciences, he is right in saying that the claims of the positive sciences are bracketed. It is true that the research field of transcendental phenomenology is not the field of empirical objects that are investigated in the positive sciences, and thus Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is not interested in the world in the same way as e.g. the natural sciences. Thus, transcendental phenomenology is also not interested in proving or disproving the existence of empirical entities or even of empirical persons. However, this fact does not mean that the sphere of transcendental-phenomenological investigation is solipsistic. Indeed, Husserl does aim at an objective science which would lead to conclusions common for all and independent of the viewer. As he says in *The Crisis*, the task here is not to ground or merely explain, but to understand. The task of his phenomenology is not to

secure objectivity, but to understand it. (Hua 6, §55, 192-3) In other words, in the case of investigating the experience of the world and of others, the point is not to show in Descartes's way that others and the world do exist but to understand how we experience each other and the world as common and objective.⁹⁹

4.2 Internal Critique About the Egoic Nature of the Method of Reduction

In contrast to the rather harsh, but also superficial, external critique presented against the method of reduction, there are internal critiques concerning the first-person perspective of the method and Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation of intersubjectivity. For this type of critique, the egoic nature of reduction or Husserl's use of reduction to a solipsistic sphere for methodological purposes are not a problems in themselves. Rather, the problem lies in a seeming contradiction between the egoic nature of the method and Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation of intersubjectivity and our experience of others.¹⁰⁰ I will first discuss the criticism concerning

99 In *The Crisis* Husserl gives an example of erring about meeting another conscious being: Supposing that one sees another person standing there but realises after getting closer that the assumed person is only a big doll (Hua 6, §47, 165). As Husserl writes in *Ideas 2*, the real question is not if one is alone in the world, but rather, how the relation between different persons constitutes the world and things in it as objectively real (Hua 4, §18f, 80). Here Husserl also brings up the fact that the living body that one always has and that does determine aspects in pure experience does prove the whole question about the existence of the world senseless, since my own body is part of the material world as well, and since it does affect how things are experienced, one necessarily is thoroughly embedded in the world (Hua 4, §18f, 80-1). Since the reduction does not set one into metaphysical solipsism, and Husserl himself emphasises it in many different contexts, the issue is actually already completed, and I find a further discussion of it quite unfruitful. Also, Husserl does in *Ideas 2* give quite an extraordinary argumentative proof of the possibility of experiencing the other. According to him the subject as we know it is always spatial-temporal according to its experience, which means that it is essentially embodied (even if he in *Ideas 1* performs the reduction to the mere consciousness) and has its body with itself all the time. Husserl varies the idea of an intersubjective subjectivity and realises that the subject cannot be without mind (*Seele*), but if it is to be intersubjective, that is, objective and thus possible to be perceived by anyone under the same circumstances, it needs to be embodied in order to be visible. Therefore a human being is always an embodied living being, and the body through which a person is in the world functions as a "material organ" of the mind. (Hua 4, §21, 94-6)

Continuing the discussion, Taipale explains the experience of others with an analogy of melody: The experience of another is temporal and historical in the same way as a melody is. When relating to another, one already knows the other to be another living person and takes the other with all the temporal transcendence that belongs to her otherness, that is, personal history, meeting with oneself, reacting (not just acting) to one's actions and reactions, and one's own expectations. In the same way as with a melody, when one does not just listen to the sounds and figures out that it is a melody while already knowing what is in question, when meeting another person, one already knows what it is about. One also realises the other to be really another person or not by the retention and protention in the situation, that is, by experiencing the whole of the situation, not just particular immanent moments. (Taipale 2016, 61)

100 In turn, according to Merleau-Ponty, Husserl does not contradict himself in the transcendental-phenomenological investigations of intersubjectivity and the experience of the other, but the alter ego itself is a paradox. If the other is truly for himself alone, beyond his being for me, and if we are for each other, we must necessarily have some appearance for each other. We must have an outer appearance, and there must be, besides the perspective of the For Oneself also a perspective of For Others. The paradox lies in the idea that I must be the exterior that I present to others, and the body of the other must be the other himself. (M-P 1981, xii-xiii)

the relation between the ego and intersubjectivity as well as the possibility of accounting for intersubjectivity by the means of reduction. I will rely on Zahavi's analysis of the discussion. Second, I will discuss the criticism about the obscurity concerning the reduction to the sphere of ownness in *Cartesian Meditations*. This criticism is presented by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach in the work *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*.

Zahavi summarises the discussion about the egoic nature of the method of reduction and Husserl's investigation of intersubjectivity as follows: According to one popular reading of Husserl's positions about the transcendental ego and intersubjectivity, Husserl has changed his mind about the priority of the ego and the priority of intersubjectivity between writing *Cartesian Meditations* and *The Crisis*. The interpretation is that he had decided to change his emphasis from the ego to intersubjectivity. According to another popular reading that Zahavi refers to, Husserl never abandoned the egoic point of departure, which is why his treatment of intersubjectivity remained superficial. (Zahavi 2003, 122)

Zahavi answers to these two popular readings by claiming that neither of them is correct and that the criticism of the superficial presentation of intersubjectivity is also unjustified. This is because, according to Zahavi, Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity is not a break with the philosophy of subjectivity, since subjectivity and intersubjectivity are not mutually exclusive notions. Indeed, Husserl treats the fundamental significance of intersubjectivity in his manuscripts side by side with remarks concerning the importance of the transcendental ego (Zahavi 2003, 122). According to Zahavi, the reflections in Husserl's manuscripts prove that, in his investigations, Husserl has neither abandoned the idea about the primordially of the ego nor seen the intersubjectivity as another alternative to subjectivity.

The confusion about intersubjectivity and subjectivity may be caused by forgetting that these forms in transcendental phenomenology are compatible as *irrealities*, not as realities. Namely, the intersubjectivity and subjectivity that Husserl talks about are not real empirical "us" or real empirical "me" but transcendental forms, i.e., transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity. As Husserl says in *The Crisis*, after performing the epoché, the experience of "me" as a person and the experience of others as e.g. other people are regarded as phenomena, not as real me or real others. As phenomena, a transcendental subject constitutes its horizon of transcendental others as co-subjects

(*Mitsubjekte*). Transcendental subjects as co-subjects constitute intersubjectively the common objective world as *the* world for all. (Hua 6, §54a, b) In other words, Husserl says that there is no world horizon without the constitutive transcendental intersubjectivity and there is no intersubjectivity without the constitutive transcendental subjectivity. Therefore, according to Zahavi, intersubjectivity and subjectivity are not exclusive alternatives in Husserl's theory of constitution.

What may also seem subject-centred or confusing the roles of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in Husserl's theory of constitution, is Husserl's methodology when investigating transcendental intersubjectivity and transcendental communalization (*Vergemeinschaftung*). The point of departure in the investigation is namely the pure ego. (Hua 6, §54b, 189)¹⁰¹ But, even if the pure ego is characterised as “the pure I” or “the I-pole”, the pure ego is not the same as a transcendental subject but has several “inflections” or significations, such as “you”, “we”, “personal and identical I” etc. This means that Husserl's methodology does not ground intersubjectivity on subjectivity or does not confuse these two.

According to Husserl, in the transcendental communalization, “the world for all” as the world for every subject is constituted by the functioning system of I-poles (*ibid.*)¹⁰². There is simultaneity (but not identity) of an I-pole and the universal sociality as the communion of all I-subjects. As I have brought up above, the I-pole is for Husserl the manner in which the ego is involved in each intentional act. An I-pole is thus one of the constitutional poles in experience and not a personal “I”. The non-personal core of subjectivity, the I-pole, is the constitutive form for both all subjectivity and all intersubjectivity. The different significations of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are based on this core. Therefore, for Husserl, neither transcendental subjectivity nor transcendental intersubjectivity is clearly primary to the other. Rather, transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity are interdependent forms. Also, there are no sharp separations between the subjectivity and intersubjectivity, even if these two are clearly distinguished.

For Husserl, much of the constitution of experiences takes place between the communicative multiplicity of consciousnesses. That is, all concrete (not abstract) modes of consciousness have a reference of intersubjectivity in them. According to Husserl,

101 “Methodisch kann nur vom ego aus und der Systematik seiner transzendentalen Funktionen und Leistungen die transzendente Intersubjektivität und ihre transzendente Vergemeinschaftung ausgewiesen werden [...]” (Hua 6, §54b, 189).

102 “[...] in der von dem fungierenden System der Ichpole aus die 'Welt für alle' und für jedes Subjekt als Welt für alle sich konstituiert” (Hua 6, §54b, 189).

individual minds (*Seele*)¹⁰³ constitute intentional unities in the reciprocal implication of the streams of individual subjects (Hua 6, §71, 260). Therefore, a subject as an expressive agent depends on the constitution of others. As Husserl says, “subjectivity is what it is only in intersubjectivity: a constitutively functioning I” (Hua 6, §50, 175)¹⁰⁴. According to Heinämaa, this means that, for Husserl, transcendental intersubjectivity is not an expansion or extension of constituting subjectivity or an imposition of the accomplishments of one self to other selves. Rather, the constituting subject is intentionally tied to other subjects and together these subjects establish the sense of the world in communicative interaction. (Heinämaa 2013, 84) Thus, the seeming inconsistency of giving a fundamental role in constitution both to the ego and to intersubjectivity is only apparent.

According to Zahavi, far from being competing alternatives, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are in fact complementary and mutually interdependent. The phenomenological attitude brings the subjectivity and intersubjectivity together into one field of investigation, i.e. to the transcendental experience. The “I am” (i.e. “I act”, “I sense”, etc.) is the intentional ground for the ego and this ground is the same for every ego, for every “I”. Every other experiencing consciousness is an ego like I myself. As Zahavi puts it, “Husserl's accentuation of the fundamental importance of the ego must [...] be seen as an accentuation of the fact that intersubjectivity, my relation to the other, presupposes my own subjectivity as one of the relata”. (Zahavi 2003, 123) This means that instead of excluding intersubjectivity and intersubjective matters, the method of reduction enables the investigation of intersubjectivity precisely as the relation between egos. In addition, according to Luft, reduction uncovers the transcendental consciousness which designates a universal sphere of experiencing the world on the part of a community of subjects standing in a meaningful tradition. Therefore, according to him, the transcendental subjectivity *is* intersubjectivity connected in a general nexus. The transcendental sphere is according to Luft the sphere of intentional acts in which the world as a horizon of historically developed meaning constitutes itself. (Luft 2012, 250)

The compatibility of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in transcendental phenomenology does not change the fact that Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological

103 Husserl does usually speak of *Seele* when talking about the mental part of the subjectivity, but he also does distinguish what he calls “Seele” and “Geist” (cf. Hus 4, §48, 172). What I call “mind” in this thesis is mostly Husserl's “Seele”, since he uses “Geist” (which could also be translated as “mind”) mostly for distinguishing different sciences and does not speak of it in the context of transcendental experience.

104 “[S]ubjektivität nur in der Intersubjektivität ist, was sie ist: konstitutiv fungierendes Ich” (Hua 6, §50, 175).

investigation is egoic.¹⁰⁵ But, the egoic nature of the method of reduction does not hinder the transcendental-phenomenological investigation of intersubjectivity. However, even if subjectivity and intersubjectivity are complementary and mutually interdependent, the relation between these two remains unequal and asymmetrical. Namely, an ego can never experience the other ego's consciousness from the first-person perspective. One's own intentional consciousness is always necessarily evident to the ego whereas the other's intentional consciousness is experienced only indirectly.

Husserl demonstrates the asymmetry between the I and the other e.g. by the means of the abstractive reduction to the sphere of ownness that I have examined above. In this abstractive reduction, all references to other consciousnesses are bracketed, and what is left is an abstract sphere of “only me”. Bernet, Kern, and Marbach have presented criticism of this method by pointing out obscurity of the character of the sphere of ownness. In their interpretation, they distinguish two separate kinds of the sphere of ownness (Husserl himself does not distinguish these two). These are the solipsistically reduced independent subjective sphere and the subject's non-independent sphere that Bernet et al. call “primordial”. The “primordial” sphere is according to Bernet et al. not an independent sphere of experience but a dependent moment pervading all experiences of the ego. Since this sphere is not an independent sphere of experience but a moment of the transcendental sphere, it is in no way solipsistic and embraces the ego's immanent experience of the other. In contrast, the solipsistic sphere is according to Bernet et al. an independent substratum of all experience, that is, the solipsistic sphere is a foundation for a so-called higher stratum to which the experiences of others belong.¹⁰⁶ (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 156-8) The problematic lies in the obscurity concerning the relation and position of these two kinds of sphere of ownness and hence also the ego's experience of others in the sphere of ownness. The question is whether the sphere of ownness is an independent sphere of the ego or not, and what the nature of the sphere of ownness means for studying the ego and intersubjectivity in transcendental phenomenology.

¹⁰⁵ Husserl says in *Ideas I* that his phenomenology is egological, but this fact does not necessarily (or at all) influence the psychological or metaphysical-epistemological claims about oneself and others (Hua 3, §65, 122).

¹⁰⁶ Husserl became aware of this obscurity only after having already published *Cartesian Meditations*. In a text written shortly after, *Concerning the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*, he writes that the solipsistically reduced sphere should not be confused with the primordial sphere, as the solipsistic reduction should not be with the primordial reduction. The latter is the reduction from that part of the world which holds by the measure of my experience to that part of the world which I experience and always can experience originally. I am thereby reduced to my primordial I as a stratum of my concrete I, and to this sphere belong all my empathising, immanent experiences, but not, however, others who are experienced in that sphere. According to Husserl, the case is also similar with all determinations of intersubjective culture. (Hua 14, 51)

In order to get to the core of the critique that Bernet, Kern, and Marbach present, I will summarise their interpretation of Husserl's account of the sphere of ownness. They point out that, in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl does first in §43 say that the experience of others as empathy (*Einfühlung*)¹⁰⁷ belongs to the sphere of ownness. Here the sphere of ownness is the “primordial” sphere. Then, in the next paragraph, Husserl claims that, in order to gain the sphere of ownness it is necessary to artificially suspend the constitutional achievements of the experience of the other as the intentional correlates of our experience of the other. Along with the constitutional achievements one must also bracket all modes of consciousness referring to the other (Hua 1, §44, 101). According to Bernet et al., in §44 the sphere of ownness means the solipsistic sphere which for Husserl gains the sense of a stratum of experience independently to our experience of the other. That is, a stratum of experience belonging to the I which is supposed to underlie and found a higher stratum, our experience of the other. In other words, Bernet et al. claim that Husserl's solipsistic reduction leads to the sphere of ownness as a dependent moment pervading all experiences of the ego. But, this method also leads to the solipsistic sphere that is an independent foundation, a “substratum” of experience, which brings to givenness only bare “nature” under the exclusion of all spiritual or cultural predicates. (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1993, 157-8)

According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the solipsistic sphere is the dominant starting point in Husserl's analysis of our experience of others in *Cartesian Meditations*. However, Husserl stresses that the sphere of ownness is not a concrete but an abstractive sphere, since after bracketing all references to other consciousnesses there remains no complete transcendental experience that could be investigated as such (Hua 1, §43, 98-99). Thus, Bernet et al. point out a solipsistic-abstract starting point in Husserl's investigation of the relation between the ego and the others. But, as I have pointed out, the reduction to the sphere of ownness is according to Husserl only an abstraction from the transcendental sphere that already includes the experience of others. Thus, the reduction to the sphere of ownness is rather an additional investigation of experiencing others and intersubjectivity based on the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. That is, the sphere of ownness is

107 In *Ideas 2* Husserl clarifies some points of his ideas about empathy that he also introduces in *Cartesian Meditations* in §43, and says that it is not any kind of “introjection” or projection, but appresentation (*Appräsentation*), “with-dasein” (*Mitdasein*), where the other's conscious actions and experiences are perceived as given as presented in her living body, and the other is thus understood to be analogous to oneself as being a living embodied creature (as having her “here” that which is my “there”, feeling something, but not the same as I do, etc.) (Hua 4, §46, 167, §52, 198).

not a proper starting point of the investigation but an abstract starting point for additional analysis of the experience of other consciousnesses.

Bernet, Kern, and Marbach leave the discussion about the sphere of ownness open. They point to Husserl's struggle with the question, How is our experience of the other possible if it consists in a non-primordial co-presentation which can never be converted into a presentation? Husserl did struggle with the questions of intersubjectivity and the experience of the other until the end of his career. Therefore, Husserl's presentation of the transcendental-phenomenological investigation of intersubjective constitution and the experience of others is not fully clear and can even seem confusing and contradictory. But, even if Husserl himself was never fully satisfied with his investigation, his investigations show that it is possible and reasonable to investigate intersubjectivity and our experience of others by the means of reduction. In addition, I claim that problems concerning the reduction to the sphere of ownness do not concern the whole method since the reduction to the sphere of ownness differs from the transcendental-phenomenological and eidetic reductions in being abstractive. In turn, the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction do not abstract or negate anything in experience itself.

5 CONCLUSION

I have discussed Husserl's method of reduction in the light of his mature and later publications in transcendental phenomenology. My method in this investigation has been interpretative, but not reconstructive. I have aimed at explicating what Husserl himself means by the term "reduction". That is, I have not intended to reformulate the method or to develop it. Based on Husserl's works and the commentaries on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, I find that reduction is a certain kind of method used especially in transcendental phenomenology and that there can be many different reductions. Here I have concentrated on the two central reductions in transcendental phenomenology. These are the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction.

Before investigating the two reductions, I first studied Husserl's transcendental phenomenology in general. My study of transcendental phenomenology included the examination of Husserl's motivations and reasons for performing transcendental-phenomenological investigation. I also examined the phenomenological attitude in contrast to the natural attitude of the positive sciences and everyday life. After studying transcendental phenomenology and the two attitudes, I studied the method of reduction by describing how the two reductions are accomplished: First, I examined the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the reduction to the sphere of ownness which can be accomplished only when one has accomplished transcendental-phenomenological reduction. Second, I examined the eidetic reduction.

After studying the method of reduction, I investigated a form of critique according to which the method of reduction does not provide a method for meeting Husserl's goal of gaining clarity about the constitution of objectivity and knowledge. According to the critique, Husserl's method leads to solipsism or to obscurity concerning intersubjectivity. Hence, according to the critique, transcendental-phenomenological investigation cannot provide any objective accounts or results. As I have shown, for Husserl objectivity is closely related to intersubjectivity, and if his investigation method would lead to solipsism or to problems concerning intersubjectivity, the investigation would not be objective. In the following I will present concluding remarks about the topics that I have discussed above.

In general, Husserl's phenomenology aims at providing an apodictic and rigorous science which would provide a ground for all other sciences. Phenomenology differs from

the positive sciences by not being a science of empirical facts but a science of sense formation. Therefore, Husserl's phenomenology is not concerned with metaphysical questions such as, for example, questions of metaphysical realism or idealism. Husserl's mature phenomenology, that is, transcendental phenomenology, differs from his former phenomenological investigations such as descriptive phenomenology. Transcendental-phenomenological investigation is interested only in what is immanently given, since the starting points of the investigation must be free from prejudices and assumptions that are not self-evident. Therefore Husserl takes pure experience, i.e. transcendental experience, to be the starting point of transcendental phenomenology. Thus, the investigation starts from examining the experiencing itself and objects-as-experienced. In other words, transcendental phenomenology is not concerned with what is transcendent to pure experience. Transcendental phenomenology also does not use any laws of conclusion, because also all such laws are transcendent to pure experience. Hence, all laws of logic and all natural assumptions are bracketed in transcendental-phenomenological investigation.

The essential difference between transcendental phenomenology and the positive sciences is their direction of interest. The objects of the positive sciences are empirical entities or laws that are transcendent to pure experience. In turn, the objects of transcendental phenomenology are transcendental experience and that which can be deduced from transcendental experience. The positive sciences as well as everyday life relate to objects in a natural way which Husserl calls the "natural attitude". The natural attitude includes natural assumptions and presuppositions that are necessary for treating objects in a positive and goal-oriented way. In contrast, phenomenology takes place in what Husserl calls the "phenomenological attitude". In this latter attitude the interest is turned away from goals and worldly objects and is turned towards the experience itself.

The switch from the natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude takes place when one performs the phenomenological epoché. I have explicated the epoché by showing that it is an act of "bracketing" all natural assumptions, that is, of setting all natural assumptions aside without negating them. Thus, the natural assumptions are simply not taken into account and one makes no judgements about those assumptions. The act of bracketing the natural assumptions results in putting the remaining experience in "quotation marks". When the act of bracketing is performed, the experience becomes as if quoted, that is, it becomes a *phenomenon*. This means that objects are studied as they are experienced, not as empirical worldly objects. The reality of the experienced objects is not taken into account. For example, my experience of hearing someone walking in the next

room becomes a phenomenon of hearing someone walking in the next room. The question whether there really is someone walking or not is not relevant to the investigation. The metaphors of “bracketing” and “putting into quotation marks” do not signify one and the same thing, but rather they refer to the act (bracketing) and the outcome (experience in quotation marks) of the epoché. As Fink says in *Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik*, turning the interest towards the experience itself takes place at the moment when the natural assumptions are bracketed (1934, 35). When one sets all natural assumptions aside, one necessarily turns one's gaze towards the transcendental experience.

Epoché is the first step of a transcendental-phenomenological investigation. It is thus the condition for performing any further phenomenological analysis. In other words, performing the epoché is necessary for both the further transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction. Both of these reductions take place in the phenomenological attitude in which one makes no judgements about the transcendent qualities of experienced objects.

Despite the fact that epoché is an essential step both in the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and in the eidetic reduction, these two reductions can be performed separately from each other. Especially in *The Crisis*, however, Husserl claims that it is the eidetic reduction that provides positive scientific conclusions in transcendental phenomenology. This means that according to Husserl, transcendental-phenomenological reduction does not yet give any positive scientific results. In order to come to positive scientific conclusions, one should also perform eidetic reduction in the frames of the same phenomenological investigation (not as one reduction, but as separate reductions on the same path).

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction is the backwards-inquiring analysis that reveals the poles of experience and the *ego-cogito-cogitatum* structure. The *ego*, i.e. the subject-pole, is the transcendental ego. The eidetic reduction studies a priori the essences of the act of experience and experienced objects. The study is done by imaginatively varying the qualities of an object of investigation. The eidetic reduction investigates atemporal essences, and therefore this reduction does not take the actuality or non-actuality of its objects into account. The eidetic reduction differs from the transcendental-phenomenological reduction also in the sense that it refers beyond

immanence to what Husserl calls “transcendence in immanence”. By this term Husserl means the implicit reference in every concept that points outside a particular pure experience. This means that the eidetic reduction studies the essences of concepts and that these essences, *eidé*, refer beyond particular experienced objects in pure experience. In other words, the “transcendence in immanence” is a necessary reference to other objects that have the same *eidós*.

In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl also accomplishes the reduction to the sphere of ownness in order to study subjectivity and intersubjectivity. This reduction is an abstractive act of bracketing all modes of intentional experience that refer to other consciousnesses. In contrast to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction or to the eidetic reduction, the reduction to the sphere of ownness is abstractive. Indeed, the sphere of ownness is not a sphere of concrete experience but an abstraction from transcendental experience. This abstractive reduction presupposes the transcendental-phenomenological reduction but is not included in the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. The reduction to the sphere of ownness is thus not an independent reduction because it cannot be performed by starting from the natural attitude. Rather, in order to perform this reduction, one already needs to be in the phenomenological attitude.

When performing a reduction, the role of the ego is central. The transcendental ego is the intending subject and the meaning-giving form¹⁰⁸ of experience. In other words, the method of reduction is egoic. In the transcendental-phenomenological reduction the transcendental ego is the ego of transcendental experience. It is a personal ego but not an empirical real I. Instead of being a real I, the transcendental ego is an irreality, something that is not an entity in the world. In other words, as Husserl says in *Cartesian Meditations*, the transcendental subject is not a factual subject (Hua 1, §§30-33). Husserl presents different dimensions of the transcendental ego: The I-pole as the mere subject-pole, and the monad as the personal “I” which includes the whole transcendental stream of experiences. Both the I-pole and the monad are still not entities of any kind. Rather, we merely define the transcendental ego negatively. In the eidetic reduction, there is no particular transcendental ego but the ego becomes the *eidós* ego, that is, an ego that is only one possible ego among all other possible egos. Thus, also the actuality of the ego is suspended in the eidetic reduction.

Despite the egoic nature of the reductions, transcendental phenomenology is able to

¹⁰⁸ I use the term “form” because we cannot say anything positive about the transcendental ego. It is thus not an entity of any kind, but also not a feature or object. The only sufficient term for characterising it is thus “form”.

investigate intersubjectivity and topics that include reference to other consciousnesses. Both the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction serve the investigations of other subjects. The former serves studying the experience of others as a transcendental experience, i.e. as a quoted “my experience of other persons”. That is, with the transcendental-phenomenological reduction one can investigate how other conscious beings manifest themselves to the ego and how the experience of others is constituted. The eidetic reduction serves the study of other subjects by varying the qualities of the experience of other consciousnesses, i.e. by looking for the essence of experiencing the other and for the essence of the other consciousness as experienced. Both the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and the eidetic reduction involve references to others also indirectly. The transcendental-phenomenological reduction does not negate anything in the world but takes the experience as it is, hence including all its references to other consciousnesses as experienced. The eidetic reduction takes place in the sphere of concepts, and thus the objects of this reduction, the essences, refer to the cultural-historical background in the sense that the concepts are understood as certain concepts in a certain cultural-historical context (the essences can be universal but some concepts can be studied only in the context of certain cultures and languages).

After examining the method of reduction, I discussed solipsism critique that is presented against the method. Almost all commentators agree that the problem in Husserl's phenomenology is not metaphysical solipsism. Therefore the solipsism critique presented against the method concentrates on discussing the so-called “methodological solipsism” and problems with accounting for intersubjectivity in transcendental phenomenology. I discussed the solipsism critique based on two kinds of critique: First, I studied rather harsh critique presented and developed by Dreyfus. Second, I studied internal critique and solutions presented by Husserl scholars. Whereas for Dreyfus solipsism is an inevitable and problematic outcome of Husserl's method, for the latter solipsism is merely a reflective tool that does not necessarily lead to solipsistic outcomes. For the latter, the problem regarding solipsism in the method of reduction is rather the problem of how intersubjectivity can be investigated by the means of solipsistic reduction.

Dreyfus's reading of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is characterised as *Fregean*. Thus, according to Dreyfus, the method of reduction ends up in methodological solipsism, which means that, according to him, reduction is merely a means for studying

subjective mental representations. According to his interpretation of the method of reduction, bracketing all natural assumptions means that the transcendental-phenomenological investigation is taken to the sphere of mental representations. In other words, he says that the method of reduction is suitable only for disclosing abstract mental structures. If Dreyfus's critique were justified, it would follow that the method of reduction would lead to epistemological solipsism where we could not gain objective knowledge about anything else than our own subjective experiences and could use the method only for personal introspection.

I showed that there are several problems in Dreyfus's criticism. First, he interprets the transcendental sphere as a sphere of representations. But, based on my investigation of the method of reduction, I claim that the transcendental sphere is not a sphere of representations but a sphere of manifestations, i.e. one of direct or indirect presentations. These manifestations, *phenomena*, are not the same as representations, and thus they are also not some kind of mediators of mind as if they were something real. The transcendental sphere is thus not a sphere of mental realities but one of *irrealities*. Hence, the objects in the transcendental sphere are not any kind of entities that could be found in the world, and especially not in one's mind.¹⁰⁹ In short, phenomena are presentations, not *representations*. That is, Husserl's theory of constitution is literally not representationalist but phenomenological, and these two are not synonymous.

Second, Dreyfus confuses the means and the object of interest in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Unlike Dreyfus assumes, Husserl's ultimate object of interest is not an individual experience or some kind of representational mediator between a person and an object. Rather, I claim that the object of interest in transcendental phenomenology is the universal way of givenness of objects (i.e. objects-as-experienced). As Zahavi puts it, transcendental phenomenology is interested in the conditions of possibility for appearance as such (Zahavi 2003, 54). Since appearances are always appearances for someone, then, in order to investigate how the world and objects originally manifest themselves to us, we need to investigate the objects in transcendental experience. Thus, the ultimate objects of interest in transcendental phenomenology are not intrinsic features or structures of consciousness itself (ibid., 61). Rather, transcendental phenomenology integrates and includes everything that is at first bracketed for methodological reasons. This means that particular transcendental experiences are used

¹⁰⁹ This also means that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is not as such applicable to cognitive science in the way Dreyfus assumes it to be.

only in an exemplary manner or as points of departure.

Transcendental-phenomenological investigation is not any kind of introspection or internalist philosophy but an investigation of the universal modes of how objects manifest themselves to us. If that which Dreyfus calls “methodological solipsism” means being stuck in mental representations, Husserl's method of reduction does not end up in such solipsism. Accordingly, the method does not lead to epistemological solipsism. Rather, when done properly, transcendental-phenomenological investigation leads to disclosing universal modes of experiencing the world. That is, the method of reduction does not hinder objective investigation.

In addition to solipsism critique presented by Dreyfus, I studied internal criticism presented by authors rather sympathetic to Husserl's work. In my examination of the criticism, I referred to works by Zahavi and Bernet, Kern, and Marbach. According to them the internal criticism concerns the obscurity about how intersubjectivity can be investigated by the means of reduction. The criticism discusses the egoic nature of the method as well as problems in investigating intersubjectivity, especially by the means of reduction to the sphere of ownness.

Regarding the relation between transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity, Husserl gives a more original role to subjectivity in the constitution of experience. In Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, subjectivity is always more original than intersubjectivity. The latter is according to him a communion of individual constitutive subjects. Even if Husserl in *The Crisis* emphasises the importance of intersubjectivity in the constitution of experiences in the lifeworld, according to him the ego does not necessarily need others in order to mark off the distinction between the I and not-I. However, according to Husserl, intersubjectivity has an important role in constituting experience. This may seem contradictory, but as I have shown, the seeming inconsistency of giving a fundamental role in constitution both to the ego and to intersubjectivity is only apparent. Indeed, transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity in transcendental phenomenology are not mutually exclusive. Rather, transcendental intersubjectivity is a relation between transcendental egos. This means that intersubjectivity can be uncovered only through an explication of the ego's experience and the ego has an intersubjective structure. As Zahavi puts this, “Husserl's accentuation of the fundamental importance of the ego must [...] be seen as an accentuation of the fact that

intersubjectivity, my relation to the Other, presupposes my own subjectivity as one of the relata” (Zahavi 2003, 123). In other words, Husserl's method of reduction does not exclude intersubjectivity, and Husserl does not contradict himself when claiming that intersubjectivity also has a constitutive role in experience.

In addition to the criticism concerning the relation between transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity in Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological investigation, I discussed critical considerations presented by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach. Their critique concerns the obscurity of the reduction to the sphere of ownness in *Cartesian Meditations*. They distinguish two unseparated and simultaneous spheres in Husserl's reduction to the sphere of ownness: the solipsistically reduced sphere, and the primordial sphere. The latter is not an independent sphere, but a dependent moment pervading all experiences of the ego. According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the primordial sphere is not in any sense solipsistic. In contrast, the solipsistic sphere is according to them an independent foundation of experience. According to Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, the solipsistic sphere is the dominant starting point in Husserl's analysis of our experience of others. They leave the discussion open by pointing to Husserl's struggle with the question, How our experience of the other is possible if it consists in a non-primordial co-presentation which can never be converted into a presentation?

In the reduction to the sphere of ownness, all references to others are bracketed, but the transcendental ego is also not investigated as such since the sphere of ownness is an abstraction. The sphere of ownness is not a concrete sphere that could be investigated as a transcendental sphere. Thus, the criticism presented by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach aims at pointing out a solipsistic-abstract starting point for investigating my relation to others. However, it is not self-evident that the sphere of ownness can be called a starting point of Husserl's investigation, since this abstract sphere is only an abstraction from the transcendental sphere which is prior to the reduction to the sphere of ownness. Moreover, the transcendental sphere includes all our experiences of others and our understanding of others as intentional conscious beings. In addition, like the method of reduction in general, also the abstract reduction to the sphere of ownness includes and integrates what is at first bracketed. As Husserl points out, the whole point is to study the experience of others. My conclusion with regard to this internal critique is that the criticism by Bernet, Kern, and Marbach does not concern solipsism in the method of reduction, but rather obscurity in Husserl's presentation of how intersubjectivity can be studied in transcendental phenomenology. I find this criticism justified, since Husserl does not give a clear and

unambiguous answer to the questions about the constitution of our experience of others.

I conclude by saying that the method of reduction does not end up in methodological or epistemological solipsism and the method does not exclude intersubjectivity or one's experience of others. Husserl has not always presented his ideas in a very clear manner, which seemingly has led to misunderstandings regarding transcendental phenomenology and the method of reduction. The obscurity in Husserl's presentation of his ideas can be criticized. But, criticising Husserl's manner of writing does not mean criticising his ideas themselves. Therefore, I dare to claim that Husserl's goal of gaining clarity about the way our experiences of knowledge, objectivity, and objects in general are constituted does not fail by ending up in inevitable solipsism. However, it is known that Husserl struggled with the questions of intersubjectivity and experiencing the other until the end of his career.

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