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Transcendental Philosophy, Psychology, and Anthropology:
Kant and Husserl on the “inner man” and the human being

Claudia Serban

Insofar as it values a pure, non-empirical dimension of knowledge whose origin is ultimately subjective, transcendental philosophy, when defined by such an idealist orientation, cannot avoid being confronted by the relationship between the transcendental I and empirical subjectivity, considered in its dual, psychological and anthropological dimension. If Kant and Husserl both elaborate a form of transcendental idealism, they assign a quite different function and consistency to internal (or inner) experience in relation to external (outer) experience. This chapter will examine their understanding of the nature and content of internal experience and their comprehension of what the “outer man¹,” or the human being as being-in-the-world, is in respect to transcendental subjectivity, in order to highlight the position of their transcendental philosophy towards psychology and anthropology. More precisely, our thesis is that the way the question of subjectivity and that of inner experience (or of the “inner man”) are dealt with not only differently connects psychology and anthropology to transcendental philosophy, but also, by revealing the gap between Husserl’s and Kant’s transcendental project, allows grasping the specific meaning of their idealism.

First of all, in order to contrast Husserl’s and Kant’s stance towards psychology, I shall examine Kant’s critique of the fourth Paralogism (the Paralogism of ideality) and his 1787 Refutation of idealism. While evaluating the consequences of Kant’s radically new manner of

¹ This Kantian language has in English unfortunate gendered implications of which the German term (*inner Mensch*) is happily deprived. Therefore, “man” should not be understood here as opposed to “woman”, but as a general denomination for the human being, male or female.

articulating internal and external experience, I will show that it is possible to reply to some of Husserl's objection to critical philosophy by questioning his own excessive trust in inner experience and his plea for a transcendental psychology. In effect, the way Kant conceives of the mutual dependency between internal and external experience allows measuring the distance that separates him from Cartesian (or Husserlian) idealism. It also counts among the reasons for which, deceiving Husserl's expectation to renew psychology on the ground of critical philosophy, Kant will elaborate (and eventually publish) a "pragmatic" anthropology for which the "inner man" is inseparable from "outer man". And Husserl's phenomenology itself, far from thoroughly manifesting an "anthropological prohibition," will eventually attempt to reconquer the field of anthropology without abandoning the transcendental phenomenological perspective. In the end, in spite of their radically divergent views on psychology, the anthropological continuation of transcendental philosophy has been regarded as a necessity by both Kant and Husserl.

I. The faith of psychology and the role of internal experience

From the *Logical Investigations* to the *Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl opposed to Kant some important objections: in his view, the author of the three *Critiques* remained imprisoned by numerous dogmatic (either rationalist or empiricist) presuppositions. Kant's decision to restrain the validity of the categories as pure concepts of our intellect both by limiting their application field to phenomena and by attributing them only to "finite reasonable beings" (that is, to us humans) is considered to be the effect of such presuppositions. But there is another critique, more discrete and yet as powerful, that Husserl addressed to Kant, for instance in his *Crisis of European Sciences*, § 57: that of establishing a "fatal separation (*verhängnisvolle Trennung*)" between transcendental philosophy and psychology. Husserl expresses his astonishment that critical philosophy "did [...] not work out a better psychology." (C, p. 201ⁱ) At the same time, he confesses his ambition of transforming psychology into a universal transcendental philosophy (C, p. 203ⁱⁱ), thus maintaining

the possibility of a pure, aprioric psychology. Moreover, he even envisages a “transcendental psychology,” related to transcendental philosophy like a sister, “in virtue of the alliance (*Verschwisterung*) of difference and identity [...] between the psychological I [...] and the transcendental I.” (C, p. 205ⁱⁱⁱ)

The founder of phenomenology is undoubtedly conscious of transgressing a Kantian prohibition when he aims to restore in this fashion the connection between transcendental philosophy and psychology. Yet, he considers that his project of an eidetic and ultimately transcendental psychology escapes this prohibition, which only concerns the dogmatic, rational psychology of old-time metaphysicians. The Introduction of his 1925 lecture on *Phenomenological Psychology* stresses this point:

In previous times admittedly, a priori psychology was much discussed, namely, in the Leibnizian-Wolffean school of the eighteenth century. Kant’s critique put an end to that. But this psychology was ontological-metaphysical. It was not a psychology which like this new one was purely intuitive and descriptive and yet at the same time a priori, which therefore, beginning with intuitive concrete instances ascended to intuitive necessities and universalities.^{iv}

Phenomenological psychology is thus considered to be immune to any Kant-inspired criticism. But is the possibility and legitimacy of such an apriorical or even transcendental psychology that obvious? That is, was Kant thoroughly mistaken and excessively overcautious when refraining to renew psychology on the ground of critical philosophy? Instead of following Husserl when he condemns the faith that Kant assigned to psychology (by limiting it to be only empirical, and unable to be pure or apriorical without relapsing into transcendental illusion), one could also wonder to what extent the author of the *Crisis* veritably took into consideration Kant’s critique of Cartesian idealism. In this respect, I would rather agree with Blumenberg when he writes the following:

In his *pathos* of a new beginning of philosophy directed against its decay into psychologism, Husserl disdained the historical results as being that which had made this decay possible. This concerns first of all his relation to Kant. Had he not done so, he could not have entrusted to self-experience all the

profit that phenomenology has to rely on. One has to admit that phenomenology would have paid a high price for being lectured by Kant.^v

It is indeed true and surprising that, while criticizing Kant's psychologisation of the faculties of the mind, Husserl paradoxically maintains the alliance between transcendental philosophy and psychology that Kant had proclaimed impossible.

a) Kant, the interior and the exterior

In order to clarify Kant's controversial relationship to psychology, I will now examine the deconstruction of the fourth Paralogism and the Refutation of idealism where, through the firm rejection of the supposed primacy of inner experience on outer experience, the specific profile of critical idealism is drawn.^{vi} To begin with, it might be useful to recall the fact that while rewriting the Paralogisms for the second edition of the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant makes a significant architectonic change in the structure of his work: the main condemnation of idealism, that the 1781 edition entrusted to the discussion of the fourth Paralogism, is now transferred from the Transcendental Dialectic to the Transcendental Analytic (to the Analytic of Principles, to be more precise), where it follows the exposition of the Postulate of actuality. This important modification suggests that Kant was far from being pleased with the manner in which he had initially solved the problem of idealism, and felt the need to propose, in 1787, a genuine and plain "Refutation of idealism."

In 1781, the critique of the fourth Paralogism discusses the claim that "the existence of all objects of outer sense is doubtful." But curiously, Kant is relatively clement towards the idealist position, as he admits that "one can rightly assert that only what is in ourselves can be immediately perceived." (CPR, A 367. Trans. 425) Indeed, the idealist against whom he is arguing is "not someone who denies the existence of external objects of sense, but rather someone who only does

not admit that it is cognized through immediate perception.” (CPR, A 368. Trans. 426) Otherwise said, this subtle idealism does not state the non-existence of the outer world, but only the fact that its experience or perception is inescapably mediate or indirect. Thus, idealism does not necessarily rhyme with acosmism, but can also take the shape of a potential and always imminent skepticism concerning outer experience and the outer world. The Paralogism of ideality asserts the indirect and inferential character of our experience of exteriority and concludes that the existence of anything exterior to us is uncertain. This being said, Kant’s resolution sounds as follows:

[...] external objects (bodies) are merely appearances, hence also nothing other than a species of my representations, whose objects are something only through these representations, but are nothing separated from them. Thus external things exist as well as my self, and indeed both exist on the immediate testimony of my self-consciousness, only with this difference: the representation of my Self, as the thinking subject, is related merely to inner sense, but the representations that designate extended beings are also related to outer sense. I am no more necessitated to draw inferences in respect of the reality of external objects than I am in regard to the reality of the objects of my inner sense (my thoughts), for in both cases they are nothing but representations, the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their actuality (*Wirklichkeit*).
(CPR, A 370-371. Trans. (modified), 427)

In order to deactivate the idealist claim of our mediate and always indirect access to exteriority, Kant insists here on the fact that the objects of our outer sense are mere appearances and eventually, mere representations. For this reason, external experience is not more indirect or more mediate than internal experience, insofar as in both cases we have to do with representations which are just as immediately present in me.

Thus, the 1781 resolution of the fourth Paralogism asserts that internal and external experience are equally immediate and certain. But this equivalency is defended by dissolving exterior objects within the immanent sphere of representation. Through the outer sense, I represent myself objects that are *outside* me, and yet their representation is *in* me. This argument, however,

seems to involve the failure of any attempt to leave the sphere of interiority: as long as the object of the external sense is only regarded as my representation, the reality of the outer world taken as existing outside me will always ineluctably escape me. The appearance, or phenomenon – the *Erscheinung* – fully merges here into the representation: “in our system, on the contrary, writes Kant in his polemics against idealism, these external things [...] are nothing but mere representations, i.e., representations in us, of whose actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) we are immediately conscious.” (CPR, A 371-372. Trans. (modified) 427) From this perspective, that which is immediately conscious is always a representation, be it internal or external. This is how the undoubted existence of the outer world is finally dissolved in the undisputed and immediate presence of its representation within me. The actuality that is proved in this manner is not that of the outer world or of the exterior object, but only that of the representation of exteriority which is in me; in more Cartesian terms, it is only the *formal reality* of the idea or the representation of the world that becomes indisputable. But what about its *objective reality*, that is, what about the existence of the object of this representation?

It is much significant that Kant will adopt this Cartesian vocabulary (which, as a matter of fact, is rather familiar to him) in the long footnote where, at the end of the 1787 Preface, he confesses that the Refutation of idealism is in fact the only veritable supplement^{vii} of the second edition of the *Critique*. Its purpose, as Kant reminds it, is to provide “a rigorous demonstration [...] of the objective reality of the external sense.” Undoubtedly, the 1781 resolution of the fourth Paralogism has mainly focused on the formal reality of my representation of exteriority, by asserting that “every outer perception therefore immediately proves something actual (*wirklich*) in space, or rather is itself the actuality (*das Wirkliche selbst*).” (CPR, A 375. Trans. (modified) 429) The actuality of exteriority was then mainly understood as the actuality of my representation of it: the 1781 resolution of the Paralogism of ideality evolved entirely within the sphere of representation.

In return, the 1787 Refutation of idealism, instead of pleasing itself with this first solution,

attempts to make a step forward. As the footnote of the second Preface quoted above indicates, the ground of the Refutation is not the field of appearances understood as representations, but that of the consciousness of existence, insofar as the goal is now to show that “the *empirical consciousness of my existence* [...] is only determinable through a relation to something that, while being bound up with my existence, is *outside me*.” (CPR, B XL, note. Trans. 121) Having this in mind, it is easier to understand why the Refutation is placed, in the second edition of the *Critique*, after the presentation of the Postulate of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*); and also why Kant insists to distinguish, in the same footnote of the 1787 Preface, “the representation of something persisting in existence” from “a persisting representation”: there should indeed be no confusion between that which concerns the objective reality of a representation and that which simply pertains to its formal reality. Only the consideration of the objective reality of representations allows reaching their (outer) correlate and stating something about its existence.^{viii} This is why the argument of the Refutation of idealism will so much emphasize the actuality of that which is exterior to me.

This argument goes even further insofar as it claims that, without outer correlates, or without an object exterior to me and yet given to me in space, the inner sense itself could not properly function: that which is given through this sense would then be evanescent and remain inconsistent. The Transcendental Aesthetic already noticed that internal experience seems to embrace external experience. The novel contribution of the second edition Analytic in respect to the relation between inner and outer sense is to show that internal experience, far from being self-sufficient, is always associated with external intuitions: “the reality of outer sense is necessarily bound up with that of inner sense, i.e., I am just as certainly conscious that there are things outside me to which my sensibility relates, as I am conscious that I myself exist determined in time.” (CPR, B XL, note. Trans. 122) And ultimately, going even further than this acknowledgment of the equal certainty and immediacy of the representations provided by the inner and the outer sense, the 1787 edition of the *Critique* subordinates internal experience to external experience. The mechanism of the Refutation of idealism consists indeed in proving that not only the two are equally certain but, in the end, the

presumed priority and superiority of internal experience needs to be reversed. For it is only then that the idealist who considers all exteriority as intrinsically doubtful are completely defeated.^{ix}

The crucial argument of the Refutation of idealism is the fact that only external objects can provide us with a representation of permanence and that “consequently, the determination of my existence in time is possible only by means of the existence of actual (*wirklich*) things that I perceive outside myself.” (CPR, B 275-276. Trans. 327) It is in this manner that Kant intends to “turn against it” the “the game that idealism plays,” according to which, as seen previously, “the only immediate experience is inner experience.” Kant can speak here of a reversal (*Umkehrung*) insofar as his goal is precisely to prove that only “outer experience is really immediate” and is the condition, “not [...] [of] the consciousness of our own existence, but [of] its determination in time, i.e., [of] inner experience.” (CPR, B 276-277. Trans. 327) Quite significantly, it is here that resurfaces the distinction between the consciousness “able to accompany all my representations” (CPR, B 131. Trans. 246) or the pure apperception that defines, for Kant, transcendental subjectivity, on the one hand, and internal experience, which adds an intuitive dimension to the subject of thought – which, therefore, is no longer transcendental, but empirical –, on the other hand.

The dependency upon external intuitions does not concern the “I think” as a mere logical function, but only the temporal experience and existence of the I, that presupposes a “change in outer relations” (CPR, B 277. Trans. 328): insofar as the inner sense cannot provide any representation of permanence, only the *matter* of external experience can possibly deliver anything that could correspond to the representation of a *substance*. Therefore, it is also the problematic status of the matter of internal experience, or its giving capacity, that is here at stake. In this respect, the second edition of the *Critique* will even claim that it is from “the existence of things outside us” that “we after all get the whole matter for our cognitions, even for our inner sense.” (CPR, B XXXIX. Trans. 121) Otherwise said, I cannot cognize myself as an existing subject in a purely immanent way.

b) The inconsistency of interiority: a critical objection to Husserlian idealism

Thus, strictly speaking, for Kant, there are no “immediate data of consciousness,” understood as genuine contents of internal intuition. The paradox of the inner sense is that it cannot really *give* anything; or rather, that which is given through it is not really *something* (or *someone*), for it is only a perpetual evanescent flow of representations. Consequently, for Kant, that which Husserl calls the “originarily giving (*originär gebende*)” (or “originary presentive”, *Ideas* I, 44^x) intuition is rather the external intuition. This view results mostly from the second edition of the *Critique*, for in 1781, Kant would still assert that “the thinking I is given to inner sense, likewise as substance in appearance.” (CPR, A 379. Trans. 431) But such a generous interpretation of the giving capacities of internal intuition will not prevail for long: quite the contrary, the 1787 edition insists on the extreme poverty of the inner sense and, by doing so, reveals the indigence of internal experience itself.

It is for this very reason that the Refutation of idealism has the ultimate significance of an even more radical refutation of the substantiality of the soul, suggesting, once again, to what extent the destiny of idealism and that of psychology are intimately connected. The lack of permanence in internal experience was already encountered within the 1781 resolution of the Paralogisms, when stating that “in that which we call the soul, everything is in continual flux.” (CPR, A 381. Trans. 432) In this respect, a proximity to Husserl’s approach of consciousness might be hastily deduced. Yet, it seems more accurate to think that the Kantian perspective could only lead to reject what will be Husserl’s solution to prove that the stream of consciousness is not a Heraclitean inconsistent flow. Kant refuses to give a specific consistency to the stream itself, to treat it like an autonomous reality, as the founder of phenomenology will in his 1905 *Inner Time-Consciousness Lectures*. Quite the contrary, Kant’s claim is that, in its very flowing, the temporal flux itself cannot be perceived, for time does not have the consistency of something permanent. Time is a mere form whose content constantly varies and which can never be grasped in itself: for this reason, self-intuition can never

become a genuine self-cognition.

Thus, the profound and irreducible divergence between Kant's critical idealism and Husserl's transcendental idealism is tightly dependent on their treatment of temporal inner experience. When Husserl states (in the *Ideen I*, § 46) that "immanent perception guarantees the existence of its object," (*Ideen I*, p. 100^{xi}) he does not transgress any Kantian prohibition yet. But when, maintaining that external perception is doubtful in principle, he also claims that "*the immanent being is [...], undoubtedly, an absolute being*, as far as nulla "re" indiget ad existendum," (*Ideen I*, p. 110^{xii}), he encounters the danger of relapsing, not only into the Paralogism of ideality, but also, to a certain extent, into that of substantiality. It is well known that the Latin expression chosen by the phenomenologist for characterizing the immanent being (that is, consciousness) is the one used by Descartes in the first part of the *Principles of Philosophy* (article 51) to define substance; Descartes even explains that, strictly speaking, this definition is only verified by God. Of course, in his *Ideen I*, Husserl has no intention to reactivate a metaphysics of substance; but still, in accordance with the orientation of his transcendental idealism, he indisputably emphasizes the absoluteness and the radical independence of the immanent being.

The gap between Kant's and Husserl's idealism already becomes visible if we pay attention to the terms in which the Paralogism of the substantiality of the soul is refuted by the first edition of the *Critique*: "in that which we call the soul, everything is in continual flux, and it has nothing abiding, except perhaps (if one insists) the I [...]. Yet this I is no more an intuition than it is a concept of any object; rather, it is the mere form of consciousness." (CPR, A 381-382. Trans. 432) By stressing the fact that the formal (logical or transcendental) I is nothing that could be grasped in an intuition, the confusion between the unity of thought and the object of inner sense is diluted. Consequently, "the whole of rational psychology, as a science transcending all the powers of human reason, collapses," (CPR, A 382. Trans. 432) and so does the attempt to ground self-cognition on internal intuition. It is, in particular, the very project of a psychology pretending to be apriorical – that is, claiming to be something more than an empirical description of the soul – that becomes

illegitimate.

The irreversible bankruptcy of rational psychology is even more virulently stated by Kant in the 1787 version of the Paralogisms: since I do not cognize myself “by being conscious of myself as thinking,” therefore, “through the analysis of the consciousness of myself in thinking in general not the least is won in regard to the cognition of myself as object.” (CPR, B 406 and 409. Trans. 445 and 447) Given that all knowledge rests on intuition, the mirage of a sheer reflexive self-cognition, obtained solely through thinking, needs to be dissipated. Furthermore, that which is given through the inner sense – if there is anything given – has no consistency when isolated from the representation of external objects: that is, it grants no access (as Husserl questionably assumes) to a phenomenological sphere of the absolute distinguished from that of the world (or of outer objects) as merely relative and doubtful.

Therefore, it is somewhat ironical that Husserl accused Kant of psychologizing the transcendental while himself was restoring the view according to which internal intuition grants an access to an absolute. Quite the contrary, Kant’s concern, in his critique of the Paralogisms and in the Refutation of idealism, was to carefully separate the transcendental and the psychological. Furthermore, some places of the second edition of the *Critique*, like the following, even allow guessing what Kant would hypothetically reply to Husserl’s recourse to Descartes’ “nulla ‘re’ indiget ad existendum” for characterizing egological immanence:

Thus if that concept, by means of the term “substance,” is to indicate an object that can be given, and if it is to become a cognition, then it must be grounded on a persisting intuition as the indispensable condition of the objective reality of a concept, namely, that through which alone an object is given. But now we have in inner intuition nothing at all that persists, for the I is only the consciousness of my thinking; thus if we stay merely with thinking, we also lack the necessary condition for applying the concept of substance, i.e., of a subject subsisting for itself, to itself as a thinking being. (CPR, B 412-413. Trans. 448)

Kant denounces here the excessive empowerment of internal intuition and the confusion between

the consciousness that I have of myself while thinking and an intuitive self-cognition.^{xiii} For the concept of substance to apply to the data of the inner sense, internal intuition would have to be an *intuitus intellectualis*, or an intuitive self-consciousness in which I am genuinely given to myself. But this case of figure has to be rejected, for “in the consciousness of myself [...] nothing yet is thereby given to me for thinking” (CPR, B 429. Trans. 456): the purely intellectual or reflexive consciousness of my existence is irremediably void, without any specific content. In return, “inner empirical intuition is sensible, and makes available nothing but data of appearance” (CPR, B 430. Trans. 457) which are inconsistent and void when no outer intuition is associated to them.

This is how the specific relationship that Kant acknowledges between internal and external experience generates an infinite distance towards Cartesian (or Husserlian) idealism. If there is, as Husserl puts it, an “abyss of meaning (*Abgrund des Sinnes*)” (*Ideas* I, 111. Trans. modified^{xiv}) between immanent self-consciousness and the consciousness of exteriority, it is insofar as only external experience can provide an access to a stable and permanent being. In itself, interiority is evanescent and inconsistent, and for this reason, that which is interior to me always sends me back to something exterior.

In turn, if Husserl deplores Kant’s empiricist conception of internal perception, he also maintains, at the same time, the Cartesian privileges and rights of inner experience. By doing so, he neglects to fully consider the Kantian critique of Descartes and of rational psychology. Of course, the founder of phenomenology has every right to regret, in the *Crisis*, that “Kant never permitted himself to enter the vast depths of the Cartesian fundamental investigation,” (C, 99^{xv}) or that he did not contribute to the renewal of psychology; but it is crucial to understand that Kant’s reluctance and omission are entirely deliberate. For in his view, the “self-intuition of the mind (*Selbstanschauung des Gemüts*)” (CPR, B 69. Trans. 190) can never mean the self-givenness of the I as an absolute. Quite the contrary, Kant’s critical endeavor implies “keeping as close as possible to the transcendental and setting aside entirely what might here be psychological, i.e., empirical.” (CPR, A 801/B 829. Trans. 675) Husserl, instead, in spite of his early critique of psychologism,

does not put aside the project of a phenomenological psychology and pleads for a new perennial alliance between psychology and transcendental philosophy. And while, at the very end of the *Cartesian Meditations*, the founder of phenomenology can significantly relaunch Augustine's famous invitation to explore interiority: "*Noli foras ire, in te redi, in interiore hominis habitat veritas,*" (*De vera religione*, 39, 72; CM, 157^{xvi}) by following Kant, one would rather have to praise the richness and resources of exteriority, as the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* (§ 24) does: "The tendency to retire into oneself, together with the resulting illusions of inner sense, can only be corrected if we are led back into the external world and so into the order of things present to the outer senses."^{xvii} Let us now attempt to evaluate the full significance of the fact that, instead of a transcendental psychology, Kant will only elaborate (and eventually publish) a "pragmatic" anthropology.

II. From psychology to anthropology: towards the "outer man"

a) Kant, the inner and the outer man

As seen above, according to the first *Critique*, when the surreptitious identification of the unity of thought with the object of inner intuition (that is, myself as given in time) is overcome, "the whole of rational psychology, as a science transcending all the powers of human reason, collapses." (CPR, A 382. Trans. 432) The Preface to the *First Metaphysical Principles of the Science of Nature*, published between the 1781 and the 1787 edition, is equally severe towards empirical psychology, stating that it "can never become anything more than an historical doctrine of nature, and, as such, a natural doctrine of inner sense which is as systematic as possible, that is, a natural description of the soul, but never a science of the soul, nor even, indeed, an experimental psychological doctrine," given that "mathematics is not applicable to the phenomena of inner sense and their laws."^{xviii} This firm rejection of any form of scientific psychology (apriorical or empirical), combined with the new

way of understanding the relationship between internal and external experience, is reflected in Kant's alternative proposal of a pragmatic (or postcritical) anthropology^{xix} which brings together the "inner" and the "outer man."

But what is, then, the relation between critical philosophy and pragmatic anthropology? In the Introduction he wrote for his French translation, Foucault advanced the hypothesis of an "anthropologico-critical repetition,^{xx}" suggesting that the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* is in fact, and in spite of appearances, deeply connected to the critical project. I will follow here this line of interpretation by stating that the relationship between the inner and the outer sense that resulted from the Refutation of idealism determines the one that Kant's *Anthropology* establishes between the "inner man" and the "outer man." Indeed, the stake of the 1798 *Anthropology* consists precisely in revealing the conditioning of the "inner man" by the "outer man," and this also accounts for Kant's strong reticence towards a rehabilitation of psychology within transcendental philosophy. Shifting from psychology to anthropology means relying on an inner experience (or a self-experience) which is always conditioned by outer experience (by the experience of the world, and of humans as beings-in-the-world).

In effect, far from proposing a description of interiority, the "Anthropological Didactic" places the inner man and the outer man on the same level and categorically refuses any privilege to internal self-experience. Furthermore, on more than one occasion, Kant expresses his reticence towards the presumed richness of introspection or superiority of inner experience: such is the case, for instance, with § 4, in which he deals with self-observation (*Selbstbeobachtung*) and confesses that "the real purpose of this section concerns the warning mentioned above, namely not to concern oneself in the least with spying and, as it were, the affected composition of an inner history of the involuntary course of one's thoughts and feelings." And a bit further on, he explains as follows: "For the situation with these inner experiences is not as it is with external experiences or objects in space, where the objects appear next to each other and *permanently* fixed. Inner sense sees the relations or its determinations only in time, hence in flux, where the stability of observation

necessary for experience does not occur.^{xxi}” It is the very argument of the “Refutation of Idealism” that Kant recalls here: inner experience cannot provide us with the representation of permanence, and therefore is profoundly dependent upon outer experience.

But then, why does the *Anthropology* inaugurate the approach of the human with the description of the “I” – as according to § 1, the dignity of the human being is rooted in the fact of having “the I in its representation?” Let us not forget, though, that this egological starting point is immediately amended by considering the potential deviations implied within this very capacity of saying “I,” namely, the different forms of egoism exposed in § 2 (logical, aesthetic, and moral). And even if, according to the “Remark” of § 7,^{xxii} the egological problematic as such “does not really belong to anthropology,” questioning the status and the value of the “I” is an efficient means for delimiting the domain of anthropology with respect to both psychology and to that which, within transcendental philosophy, pertains to logic. Thus, while recalling the fundamental division of apperception into pure and empirical (in order similarly to divide self-consciousness into intuiting and reflecting consciousness), Kant draws a clear line of demarcation: “In psychology we investigate ourselves according to our ideas of inner sense; in logic, according to what intellectual consciousness suggests.^{xxiii}” The error and the intrinsic insufficiency of psychology does indeed come as well from its failure to maintain a distinction between the pure apperception and the inner sense. If Kant insists upon the necessity of separating them with such vehemence, he does so in order to delimit transcendental philosophy (and transcendental logic, in particular) from the psychological approach (that Husserl will later denounce under the name of psychologism) that fails to distinguish the inner sense as “psychological (applied) consciousness” from “pure, logical consciousness.^{xxiv}” Nevertheless, this demarcation will not suffice to dissipate the difficulties of self-knowledge. As an important passage of Kant’s *Anthropology* (§ 7) puts it,

knowledge of the human being through inner experience, because to a large extent one also judges others according to it, is more important than correct judgment of others, but nevertheless at the same time perhaps more difficult. For he who investigates his interior easily *carries* many things into self-consciousness instead of merely observing.^{xxv}

In other words, even when restrained in its pretensions and carefully distinguished from pure apperception, the inner sense remains unable to fulfill the promise of self-knowledge. This is the ultimate reason why the consideration of the “inner man” has to be complemented by that of the “outer man,” in order to refrain from the propensity “to accept the play of ideas of inner sense as experiential cognition, although it is only a fiction.”^{xxvi} Nonetheless, pragmatic anthropology will not discredit that which is given through inner experience, but will approach it with a new attitude: while from the point of view of (rational) psychology, “the mind, which is represented as a mere faculty of feeling and thinking, is regarded as a special substance dwelling in the human being,” the anthropological approach “abstract[s] from the question of whether the human being has a soul or not (as a special incorporeal substance).”^{xxvii} The *Gemüt*, or human mind, that the *Anthropology* deals with, just like the *Gemüt* of transcendental philosophy, does not belong to the domain of psychology, whether rational or empirical, for it is neither identical to the soul nor confined in interiority. This accounts for the meaningfulness of Kant’s intention, expressed within the first *Critique*, to transform empirical psychology into a “complete anthropology” (CPR, A 849/B 877. Trans., 700), insofar as the anthropological approach refuses to objectify the data of internal experience and remains equally distant from the metaphysical, rational psychology and from empirical psychology.

b) Husserl and the hesitating project of a transcendental anthropology

Was Husserl more willing to approve Kant’s turn to anthropology as he was to follow him in his condemnation of psychology? As recalled above, the phenomenologist considered that the author of the *Critiques* not only failed to reform psychology in accordance with transcendental philosophy, but also maintained a significant residue of former, precritical psychology within transcendental philosophy itself, by submitting it to the anthropological restriction expressed by the

clause “for us humans.” Indeed, this clause unavoidably weakens the status of the *a priori* (of the universal, non-empirical features of our knowledge and experience), by entailing what Husserl denounces as its illegitimate anthropologization. For the author of the *Logical Investigations*, such an anthropologization is unfounded and misleading, insofar as the true *a priori* does not pertain to the form that the cognizing subject prescribes to the object, but is grounded in the essential features of the object itself. Thus, the *a priori* is valid for any kind of subjectivity, be it human or not, finite or not: this is the meaning of the clause “also for God” (*Ideas I*, 362^{xxviii}) that Husserl substitutes for the Kantian clause “for finite rational beings like us” or “for us humans.” It is only on this condition that the *a priori* can be regarded as truly necessary, in the sense of a necessity that does not depend upon any facticity. Accordingly, the phenomenologist firmly rejects the hypothesis of an intellect with logical laws other than our own, for such an hypothesis would inevitably lead to assigning a mere anthropological validity to the form of our knowledge. In a 1908 research manuscript that bears the title “Against Kant’s Anthropological Theory” (where the target, though, is not the pragmatic anthropology subsequently developed by the author of the *Critiques*, but the anthropological restriction that weighs upon his transcendental philosophy), Husserl denounces the fact that Kant “confounds the necessity and generality of the human fact with the necessity and generality pertaining to the content of the evidence and which is the opposite of any fact;” more precisely, “he confounds the general constraint derived from the human specificity (from a fact) [...] with the necessity apprehended in the evidence of ‘it cannot be otherwise’.^{xxix}” In short, Husserl holds the critical enterprise responsible for a genuine “shift to relativism and anthropologism (*Wendung zum Relativismus und Anthropologismus*).^{xxx}”

Furthermore, Husserl deplores the ambiguous status of the Kantian faculties, which he considers to be merely psychological powers whose transcendental genesis remains unclear, and this constitutes in his view an irrefutable proof of Kant’s affiliation with a subtle form of psychologism.^{xxxi} While limiting the necessity of that which pertains to the subjective faculties – to their structures and accomplishments –, Kant presumably amalgamated, in his transcendental

considerations, “the factual and the apriorical,” and in doing so, he guiltily disregarded the true nature of the “phenomenological *a priori*.^{xxxii}” The ultimate reason for this confusion is promptly revealed by Husserl in plain terms: “Because he understands inner perception in this empiricist, psychological sense, [...] Kant gets involved in his mythical concept-formation.” (C, 115^{xxxiii}) Significantly, it is the all-too-narrow scope that the author of the *Critiques* assigns to internal experience that is supposed to maintain him imprisoned by the psychology of his time and condemns him to endorse its shortcomings.

One might consider, however, that when criticizing Kant’s transcendental philosophy for its anthropological concessions, Husserl only rejects a certain kind of recourse to anthropology: namely, the one that dissolves the apriorical into the empirical and, in doing so, fully naturalizes subjectivity by identifying it to the concrete human being. Yet, the 1930 *Nachwort* to the *Ideas...I* dismissed just as firmly the “transcendental anthropologism^{xxxiv}” that leads to attribute a transcendental or apriorical significance to the forms of human knowledge, considering it to be a harmful avatar of psychologism. Such a transcendental anthropologism, which Husserl reckoned himself to have found in Kant, was held to be a fallacy even more serious than any concession to the empirical, insofar as it threatened the objective and universal grounding of knowledge in general. It is precisely here that ultimately originates, for Husserl, the necessity of a “fundamental decision between anthropologism and transcendentalism” expressed by his 1931 conference on “Phenomenology and Anthropology.”

Nevertheless, if the aim of this famous conference is to distinguish and separate carefully the two disciplines that its title brings together, Husserl’s research manuscripts from the 1930s will rather explore and elaborate what the conference already designated as their “intrinsic affinity^{xxxv}.” For, as a manuscript from 1936 eloquently puts it, “transcendental philosophy is necessarily related to me and thus to a humanity, to my humanity.^{xxxvi}” There is indeed, in spite of what the critique to Kant assumed, a necessity of the “human fact,” understood as the irreducible facticity of any transcendental subjectivity or activity. As another 1933 research manuscript states while considering

the functioning of transcendental subjective life: “It all eventually depends on my facticity [*Faktizität*].^{xxxvii}” For this reason, in the end, Husserl does no longer hesitate to admit a certain priority or even a primacy of the anthropological fact with respect to the transcendental ego.

The project of a genuinely phenomenological anthropology will progressively emerge insofar as, in spite of any previous reluctance, the task remains to “understand, on ultimate transcendental grounds, why [...] anthropology [...] is in fact not just a positive science along with the natural sciences, but rather has an intrinsic affinity with philosophy, with transcendental philosophy.^{xxxviii}” Therefore, in contrast with transcendental anthropologism, which is the plain negation of the epistemological ambitions of phenomenology, not only a transcendental psychology, but also a phenomenological anthropology can and must be envisioned. Such a legitimate phenomenological anthropology could even deserve to be called “transcendental” insofar as it would aim to mutually reshape the transcendental and the anthropological dimension of (inter)subjectivity. And by doing this, it would also importantly provide us with an anthropological continuation of transcendental phenomenology, just as the 1798 *Anthropology* did for Kant’s *Critique*.

Nonetheless, if it is not unwarranted to attribute to Husserl the project of a phenomenological anthropology, does this give us the right to speak of a “transcendental anthropology?”^{xxxix} This expression, already a *hapax* in the Kantian context^{xl}, designates, in Husserl, a group of research manuscripts (E III)^{xli}, but is not easy to find as such in his writings themselves.^{xlii} To give it both consistency and legitimacy, one must think anew the connection between the anthropological and the transcendental dimension of subjective and intersubjective life.^{xliii} But then, a sharp paradox might rapidly emerge, like in this 1933 research manuscript where Husserl states that the phenomenological “I” is “the same as an I and as a human person,” and “yet I am not the same” insofar as “the egological human life within the world is [...] my transcendental configuration.^{xliv}” But this does not automatically mean that the anthropological dimension of subjectivity is an epiphenomenon of transcendental life: quite the contrary, transcendental meaning-

giving activity is always rooted in human life, even if it transfigures it in return.

Increasingly emphasizing this point, Husserl's late research shows that transcendental phenomenology can neither ignore nor exclude that which pertains to the anthropological concreteness of the I as a human being. Eventually, "the human I and the transcendental I must coincide (*sich decken*),^{xlv}" and thus, a renewed, phenomenological gaze upon both subjectivity and humanity can be obtained. Several texts from the 1930s, among which the *Crisis* (§ 54), describe the relationship between transcendental subjectivity and the human person as a necessary "self-objectification" (*Selbstobjektivation* or *Selbstobjektivierung*): "each human being 'bears within himself a transcendental I' [...] insofar as he is the self-objectification, as exhibited through phenomenological self-reflection, of the corresponding transcendental 'I'." (C, 186^{xlvi}) There is, so to speak, an identity without coincidence between the transcendental and the anthropological dimension of subjectivity, and this is valid not only at an individual level, but also at the intersubjective level of community. Following this train of thought, as Husserl points out, the history of humanity "becomes the history of the total transcendental subjectivity;" what is more, "the articulation (*Gliederung*) of humanity in families, lineages, nations [...] becomes the articulation of transcendental subjectivity."^{xlvii} And given that human history comprises "the growth of the born ones [...], the disappearing of the dying ones" – in short, the "generative cohesion (*generative Zusammenhang*)" of humanity in its specific historicity –, this generative dimension itself "has a transcendental meaning."^{xlviii} This invitation to pursue and elaborate such a transcendental understanding of the anthropological structures of our lives is perhaps one of the most challenging research horizons opened by the late Husserl.

Thus, not only Husserl's phenomenology has not submitted itself to an "anthropological prohibition," as Blumenberg famously suspected, but it can also hardly be accused of an "anthropological indifference."^{xlix} Rather, Husserl's steadfast intention is to reconquer the anthropological ground of subjective and intersubjective life without abandoning the transcendental phenomenological perspective. By doing so, he brings together transcendental philosophy and

anthropology in a much more direct, and perhaps even much more radical manner than Kant did.

At the end of this inquiry, the gap between Kant's and Husserl's idealism can be depicted in several ways. It has been shown, firstly, that the specific relationship that Kant acknowledges between internal and external experience considerably separates him from any Cartesian-style idealism, like that of Husserl. For, in accordance with the orientation of his transcendental phenomenology, Husserl emphasizes the absoluteness and the radical independence of the subjective immanent being. An apriorical or even transcendental psychology is then possible and legitimate, in spite of Kant's thorough effort to condemn any attempt to elaborate a scientific psychology, be it pure or empirical. Maintaining this reticence towards the psychological approach of the human, Kant's *Anthropology* reveals the conditioning of the "inner man" (and of inner experience) by the "outer man" (by the experience of the world, and of humans as beings-in-the-world). Likewise, Husserl's late thought will progressively admit the necessity of an anthropological continuation of transcendental philosophy, with the ambitious purpose of revealing the transcendental hidden meaning of all the manifestations of human life.

ⁱ See also Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. VI. Ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954, from now on quoted as Hua VI), 205.

ⁱⁱ Hua VI, 207.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hua VI, 209. Translation modified.

^{iv} Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. IX. Ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 39; *Phenomenological Psychology*. Trans. John Scanlon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 28.

^v Hans Blumenberg, *Beschreibung des Menschen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006), 162. It is well known that the heritage of Brentano played an important role both in Husserl's lack of sympathy for Kant and in his generous vision of internal experience.

^{vi} A more developed version of this analysis is to be found in my paper "Internal and External Experience. From Husserl to Kant," *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* VIII, no. 2 (2016), 396-418.

^{vii} See CPR, B XXXIX. Trans. 121. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood are manifestly sensitive to this declaration when they write, in the Introduction to their translation: "The argument that while time is the form of all sense, the representation of space is itself the necessary condition for the representation of determinate order in time, which continues Kant's rebuttal of the charge of Berkeleian idealism, is the chief theme of all of the revisions in the *Analytic of Principles*." (CPR, 71)

^{viii} This emphasis on the fact that the Refutation of idealism intends to prove something else than the mere existence of an undoubted representation of exteriority is already present in the *Prolegomena*, § 49 (*Pro*, AK. IV, 336. Trans. (modified) 88).

^{ix} See CPR, B 291. Trans. 335.

^x Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. First Book: *Allgemeine Einführung in die Phänomenologie. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. III/1. Ed. Karl Schuhmann (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976, from now on quoted as Hua III/1), 51.

- xi Hua III/1, 96.
- xii Hua III/1, 104.
- xiii See also CPR, B 421-422: “The unity of consciousness, which lies at the ground of the categories, is taken here for an intuition of the subject as an object, and the category of substance is then applied to it. But this unity is nothing but a unity of thought, through which no object is given, and consequently, to which the category of substance, which always implies that an intuition is given, cannot be applied.”
- xiv Hua III/1, 105.
- xv Hua VI, 102.
- xvi *Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. I: *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*. Ed. Stephan Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), 51. Dorion Cairns translates in a footnote: “Do not wish to go out; go back into yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man.”
- xvii Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten; Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht. Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII. Ed. the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1907, from now on quoted as AK. VII), 162; Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Trans. Robert Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 164 (translation modified). See also the English translation by Mary J. Gregor: Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 40.
- xviii Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Trans. Michael Friedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7 (AK. IV, 471).
- xix The sharp separation between pragmatic anthropology and psychology is also stressed by Kant in a Reflection from the 1780s: “Pragmatic anthropology should not be psychology” (“Reflection on Anthropology” no. 1502a, in Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie. Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. XV. Ed. the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, Berlin: G. Reimer, 1913 – from now on quoted as AK. XV –, 801. On this point, see Holly L. Wilson, *Kant’s Pragmatic Anthropology. Its Origin, Meaning, and Critical Significance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 20-33; Robert Louden, *Kant’s Impure Ethics. From Rational Beings to Human Beings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 63-66.
- xx Michel Foucault, “Introduction à l’*Anthropologie*”, in Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie du point de vue pragmatique* (Paris: Vrin, 2008), 11-79, 52; Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology*. Trans. Robert Nigro and Kate Briggs (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008), 83.
- xxi Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten; Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht. Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII. Ed. the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1907, from now on quoted as AK. VII), 133 and 134; Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Trans. Robert Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22 and 22-23.
- xxii AK. VII, 142; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 33.
- xxiii AK. VII, 134; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 23.
- xxiv AK. VII, 142; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 33.
- xxv AK. VII, 143; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 34.
- xxvi AK. VII, 161; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 54.
- xxvii AK. VII, 161; *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 53.
- xxviii Hua III/1, 351: “*nicht bloss für uns Menschen, sondern auch für Gott*”.
- xxix Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923-1924)*, Part I: *Kritische Ideengeschichte. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. VII. Ed. Rudolf Boehm (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956, from now on quoted as Hua VII), 358-359.
- xxx Hua VII, 354.
- xxxi According to the *Crisis of European Sciences*, the “faculties,” “functions,” or transcendental-subjective “formations” of the *Critique* are only “mythical constructions” that reveal the “obscurities of the Kantian philosophy.” (C, 114; Hua VI, 116)
- xxxii Hua VII, 390.
- xxxiii Hua VI, 117.
- xxxiv Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Third Book: *Die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente der Wissenschaften. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. V. Ed. Marly Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 39.
- xxxv Edmund Husserl, “Phänomenologie und Anthropologie”, in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937). Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. XXVII. Ed. Thomas Nenon and Hans Rainer Sepp (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, from now on quoted as Hua XXVII), 181; Edmund Husserl, “Phenomenology and Anthropology”, in *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*. Trans. Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 500.
- xxxvi Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband: Texte aus dem Nachlass (1934-1937). Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. XXIX. Ed. Reinhold N. Smid (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 332. This quote comes from a research manuscript whose title is “The Anthropological World.”

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Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929-1935. Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. XV. Ed. Iso Kern (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, from now on quoted as Hua XV), 518-519.

xxxviii

Hua XXVII, 181; “Phenomenology and Anthropology”, 500. In this quote, it is first and foremost the proximity between psychology and transcendental philosophy that Husserl intends to emphasize. Nevertheless, the contemporary research manuscripts display a specific interest in the idea of a phenomenological anthropology: see, for instance, Hua XV, texts no. 29 and 30.

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A longer treatment of this issue is to be found in my “Kant, Husserl, and the Aim of a Transcendental Anthropology”, in *Husserl, Kant, and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Ed. Iulian Apostolescu and Claudia Serban, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020.

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In the famous “Reflection on Anthropology” no. 903, stemming from 1776-78 (AK. XV, 394-395). Among the attempts to make sense of this unique mention of an *anthropologia transcendentalis*, see Claudia M. Schmidt, “Kant’s Transcendental, Empirical, Pragmatic, and Moral Anthropology.” In: *Kant-Studien* 98, no. 2 (2007), 156-182.

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Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie: Analysen des Unbewusstseins und der Instinkte, Metaphysik, späte Ethik: Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908-1937)*. *Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. XLII. Ed. Rochus Sowa and Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London: Springer, 2014), 531.

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Whereas a 1929 text belonging to the C-Manuscripts refers plainly to a “transcendental sociology” and defines it with reference to “the community of human beings and its world” (Edmund Husserl, *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929–1934)*. *Die C-Manuskripte. Husserliana Materialien*, vol. VIII. Ed. Dieter Lohmar. Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London: Springer, 2006, 165). Nonetheless, in other texts from 1930, Husserl speaks of a “transcendental person” and even of a “transcendental humanity (*transzendentes Menschentum*)” (Edmund Husserl, *Zur phänomenologischen Reduktion. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1926-1935)*. *Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana*, vol. XXXIV. Ed. Sebastian Luft. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, 201 and 153).

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See, for instance, the recent attempt of Bence Péter Marosán, “Transzendente Anthropologie. Sinnbildung, Persönliches Ich und Selbstidentität bei Edmund Husserl und ihre Rezeption in László Tengelyis Phänomenologischer Metaphysik”, *Horizon. Studies in Phenomenology* 5, n° 1 (2016), 150-170.

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Hua XV, 540-541.

xlvi

Hua XV, 542.

xlvi

Hua VI, 190. See also Hua XV, 388; Hua XV, 549-550.

xlvi

Hua XV, 391. This quote and the following comes from a 1931 research manuscript.

xlvi

Hua XV, 391.

xlix

Hans Blumenberg, *Beschreibung des Menschen*, 814.