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### **Internalism, externalism, and transcendental idealism**

Although the terms “internalism” and “externalism” have their origin in analytical philosophy, the problems they address are classical philosophical problems. Within the philosophy of mind, the issues at stake concern the relation between mind and world. They bear on our conception of consciousness and intentionality as well as on our basic understanding of the nature of reality, but issues like these have, of course, been discussed in other philosophical traditions as well, not the least in phenomenology.

Is the kind of phenomenology we find exemplified in the works of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty internalist or externalist in orientation? In recent years, participants from both sides of the debate have occasionally turned to phenomenology in an attempt to buttress their own arguments. On the face of it, this is somewhat puzzling. How can one and the same theoretical framework be of service to both sides? Is it simply because phenomenology rather than being a monolithic tradition is in fact quite heterogeneous? Alternatively could it be because phenomenological accounts of the mind-world relation are in general characterized by containing features that point in both directions? If the latter should turn out to be true, would this then merely reflect the confusion of the phenomenologists, or might it suggest that phenomenologists tend to opt for a dual component theory that seeks to reconcile internalist and externalist intuitions? Or would it rather point to the fact that the very alternative between internalism and externalism – an alternative based on the division between inner and outer – is inapplicable when it comes to phenomenological conceptions of the mind-world relation?

#### *1. Different forms of externalism*

“Internalism” and “externalism” are umbrella terms. Consequently, it makes little sense to ask in general whether somebody is an internalist or an externalist, since the answer will depend on the specific kind of internalism or externalism one has in mind. In the present context, however, internalism will be understood as the view that a subject’s beliefs and experiences are wholly constituted by what goes on inside the mind of that subject, so that matters in the subject’s natural and cultural environment have no bearing on their content. Thus, according to this view, for their content mental states depend upon nothing external to the subject whose states they are, i.e., the mind is taken to have the referential powers it has quite independently of how the world is. This is not to deny that some of our mental states, for instance our perceptions, might be causally dependent upon external factors; the point is simply that it is the internal states – regardless of how they are being caused – which determine what we are conscious of.

Recently, Rowlands has distinguished what he takes to be the two main components of classical (Cartesian) internalism: *The possession claim* and *the location claim* (Rowlands 2003, 13).

1) *Possession claim*: The possession of any mental phenomenon by a subject does not depend on any feature that is external to the boundaries of the subject.

2) *Location claim*: Any mental phenomenon is spatially located inside the boundaries of the subject that has or undergoes it.<sup>1</sup>

Externalism questions these assumptions; in fact, it is enough to reject one of the two claims in order to count as an externalist. Following Rowlands, we could call the position that merely disputes the possession claim *reactionary externalism* and the position that rejects both claims *radical externalism* (Rowlands 2003, 137). This distinction can then easily be linked to another distinction, the one between *content externalism* and *vehicle externalism*. Content externalism is the view that mental content depends upon factors that are external to the subject possessing the content. In short, contextual factors have a bearing upon the content of our mental states. What we think about, what we refer to, depends upon what actually exists in the (physical, social and cultural) environment. Content externalism consequently disputes the possession claim, but it remains fully compatible with the location claim, since it doesn’t question the existence of ongoing internal

mental processes. To put it differently, to claim that mental states are externally individuated does not exclude the possibility that they might still be internally located. This is why, content externalism doesn't really establish the claim that occasionally has been used as a slogan for externalism, the claim that the "mind ain't in the head." By contrast, vehicle externalism is an externalism about the processes (be they perceptual experiences or cognitive processes) that have the content. If vehicle externalism is true, mental phenomena do not merely depend for their individuation upon what is going on in the environment; rather they are not internal processes in the first place. They do not exist inside the subject, but only in the relationship that an experiencing organism bears toward the external world. As Neisser once put it, "Perception and cognition are usually not just operations in the head, but transactions with the world" (Neisser 1976, 11).

According to Rowlands, vehicle externalism is not foreign to phenomenology. More specifically, Rowlands argues that whereas Sartre is a radical externalist since he rejects the possession as well as the location claim, Husserl was simply a traditional Cartesian internalist (Rowlands 2003, 55, 59, 74). Sartre's externalism follows directly from his interpretation of intentionality. To affirm the intentionality of consciousness is, according to Sartre, to deny the existence of any kind of mental content (including any kind of sense-data or qualia) (Sartre 1943, 26, 363). There is nothing in consciousness. It has no content. It is completely empty. This is why Sartre can argue that the being of intentional consciousness consists in its revelation of transcendent being (Sartre 1943, 28). Like latter-day representationalists, Sartre consequently takes phenomenal properties to be properties of worldly objects. For the very same reason, it makes no sense to say that they are located inside the head.

I have reservations about Rowlands' interpretation of the difference between Husserl and Sartre – not only would I question the claim that Husserl is a Cartesian internalist, I also don't think that Sartre is the kind of realist that Rowlands takes him to be – however, at one point, Rowlands makes the interesting claim that Husserl's internalist phenomenology can be transformed into Sartre's externalist phenomenology if the former is subjected to one decisive change only. The change in question concerns the status of appearances. Whereas Husserl, according to Rowlands, claims that appearances are immanent mental entities, Sartre argues that they are transcendent ones. For Sartre, in the having of experiences, appearances are something of which we are aware. They are objects of consciousness, and according to his understanding of intentionality they are therefore not found or contained in consciousness itself (Rowlands 2003, 72-74). I think Rowlands is right in pointing to the status of appearances as being quite decisive. Disregarding the question of whether it is really true to say that appearances are ordinarily objects of consciousness – in ordinary perception I am directed at appearing objects and not at the appearances of objects – one might, however, wonder whether a non-mentalistic interpretation of the phenomenal dimension is all that foreign to Husserl. Is it really Husserl's view that appearances are contained *in* the subject?<sup>2</sup> Is the phenomenon on Husserl's view some kind of private internal object or does this not rather reflect a psychological or perhaps even psychologistic misinterpretation of Husserl's position? As Husserl wrote in the early lecture course *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie* from 1906-7: "If consciousness ceases to be a human or some other empirical consciousness, then the word loses all psychological meaning, and ultimately one is led back to something absolute that is neither physical nor psychical being in a natural scientific sense. However, in the phenomenological perspective this is the case throughout the field of givenness. It is precisely the apparently so obvious thought, that everything given is either physical or psychical that must be abandoned" (Husserl 1984a, 242).

How did Husserl suggest that we go about making structures of appearance accessible for phenomenological analysis? Was his suggestion that we should engage in some kind of introspective exercise? Was the basic idea that we should sever our intentional link with the world, and instead turn some spectral gaze inwards? As it turns out, Husserl categorically rejects the attempt to equate the notion of phenomenological intuition with a type of inner experience or introspection (Husserl 1987, 36); he even argues that it is preposterous and perverse to suggest that phenomenology is attempting to reconstitute the method of introspection (*innerer Beobachtung*) (Husserl 1971, 38). If we wish to examine the phenomenal difference between hearing a foghorn and seeing the full moon, we have to pay attention to how these worldly objects appear to us. Our phenomenological description must take its point of departure in the world we live in. By adopting the phenomenological attitude, and by engaging in phenomenological reflection, we pay attention to the givenness of public objects (trees, planets, paintings, symphonies, numbers, states of affairs, social relations, etc.). We do not, however, simply focus on the objects precisely as they are given; we also focus on the subjective side of consciousness, and we thereby become aware of our subjective accomplishments and of the intentionality that is at play in order for the objects to appear as they do. Husserlian phenomenology should consequently be appreciated as a philosophical analysis of the different types of givenness (perceptual, imaginative, recollective etc.), and in connection with this, as a reflective investigation of those structures of experience and understanding that permit different types of beings to

show themselves as what they are. When we investigate appearing objects, we also disclose ourselves as datives of manifestation, as those to whom objects appear. The topic of Husserl's analyses is consequently not a worldless subject, and his phenomenology does not ignore the world in favor of consciousness. On the contrary, it is interested in consciousness exactly because it is world-disclosing.

## 2. Husserl's anti-representationalism

Rowlands is not the only one to consider Husserl an archetypical internalist. A similar view has been defended by Dreyfus, who has claimed that Husserl took mind and world to be two totally independent realms (Dreyfus 1991, 74). According to Dreyfus, Husserl was committed to a form of *methodological solipsism* and defended the view that the subject is intentionally related to an object by means of some self-contained mental content. However, as Dreyfus then observes, such an attempt to bridge the gap between subject and object gives rise to more problems than it solves (Dreyfus 1991, 51). What is required is a rejection of the traditional view according to which our ability to relate to objects is mediated by "internal representations" (Dreyfus 1988, 95). This was the common insight of Husserl's successors and if we wish to adopt a satisfying theory of intentionality we should, according to Dreyfus, abandon Husserl's *transcendental phenomenology* in favor of Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's *existential phenomenology*.

I find this still widespread reading of Husserl mistaken. As I will show in the following, it is by no means obvious that Husserl's phenomenology should be classified as a straightforward form of internalism. One could demonstrate this in various ways. One possibility would be to discuss Husserl's theory of intentionality; another would be to focus on his account of intersubjectivity.<sup>3</sup> However, although I will briefly touch on both issues in the following, I will mainly be pursuing a somewhat different route. I wish to suggest that Husserl's commitment to a form of *transcendental idealism* – rather than condemning him to an archetypical form of internalism – is precisely what prevents his theory from being internalist.<sup>4</sup> Given this agenda, I will take my point of departure in the recently published volume XXXVI of *Husserliana*, which carries the title *Transzendentaler Idealismus: Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908-1921)*.

In text number 6, which stems from the lecture course *Ausgewählte phänomenologische Probleme* given by Husserl in the summer of 1915, one can find the clearest statement of Husserl's anti-representationalism that I have ever come across. Many of the same arguments are already to be found in Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, but the conciseness of the text from 1915 is exceptional.

Husserl starts out by observing that nothing might seem more natural than to say that the objects I am aware of are outside my consciousness. When my experiences – be they perceptions or other kinds of mental acts – present me with objects, one may question how this could possibly happen except by way of some representational mediation. The objects of which I am conscious are outside my consciousness, but inside my consciousness I find representations (pictures and signs) of these objects, and it is these internal objects that enable me to be conscious of the external ones. However, Husserl then continues, this theory is not only empirically false, it is completely nonsensical. It conceives of consciousness as a box containing representations that resemble external objects, but it forgets to ask how the subject is supposed to know that the representations are in fact representations of external objects. As Husserl then writes,

The ego is not a tiny man in a box that looks at the pictures and then occasionally leaves his box in order to compare the external objects with the internal ones etc. For such a picture observing ego, the picture would itself be something external; it would require its own matching internal picture, and so on *ad infinitum* (Husserl 2003, 106).

Husserl leaves us in no doubt regarding his contempt for such a homunculus model. As he then continues, a picture or a sign is not an object, which next to its other qualities, such as form, size and colour also has the picture quality or sign quality. Some have argued that a picture is something that resembles what it depicts, and that it is the resemblance which imbues the picture with its pictorial or representational quality. But mere resemblances will not do. A forest contains numerous trees that resemble each other, but that does not make one a picture or sign of the other. Furthermore, whereas resemblance is a reciprocal relation, representation is not. Rather, according to Husserl we should realize that a picture must be consciously apprehended as a picture in order to function as a representation of something else (Husserl 2003, 106-107). It only acquires its representational quality by means of a special cognitive apprehension. More specifically, we first *perceive* the object that is to function as a sign or picture, and only subsequently do we confer its representational quality upon it. This is why the representational theory of perception must be rejected. It presupposes that which it seeks to explain.

Perception does not confront us with pictures or images of objects – except, of course, in so far as we are perceiving paintings or photographs – but with the objects themselves. In fact, this is for Husserl the defining feature of perception: It presents us with the object itself in its bodily presence. When we say that something *appears* perceptually, this should consequently not be understood in the sense that the perceptually given is a picture or sign of something else (Husserl 2003, 107). Thus, it is clear that Husserl would dismiss the following view, which is currently defended by quite a number of neuroscientists:

When you and I look at an object outside ourselves, we form comparable images in our respective brains. We know this well because you and I can describe the object in very similar ways, down to fine details. But that does not mean that the image we see is the copy of whatever the object outside is like. Whatever it is like, in absolute terms, we do not know (Damasio 1999, 320).

Husserl is not an internalist, if internalism is understood as a theory claiming that our access to the world is mediated and conditioned by internal representations. Moreover, and even more importantly, Husserl explicitly argues that one of the implications of his anti-representationalism is that the fit between mind and world – between perception and reality – isn't merely external or coincidental. As he writes, it is not a mere happy coincidence that there is such a perfect match between the object itself and the way it appears to us in perception. It is not as if we have two independently variable dimensions that by happenstance fit each other, as if the manifold of appearances could be given in a regulated way and the object still fail to exist, or the object exist even in the absence of the possibility of such givenness (Husserl 2003, 30): "If consciousness were something completely separate or separable from being, this relation would be impossible. *Completely separate, only accidentally linked*, is independently variable. Thus, consciousness and being must somehow be connected" (Husserl 2003, 56). Or as he puts it slightly later in the book: "Thus, object, objective being, and consciousness belong *a priori* inseparably together ..." (Husserl 2003, 73).

How do they belong together? According to Husserl, mind and world are not distinct entities; rather they are bound constitutively together. This doesn't amount to any form of phenomenalism, metaphysical idealism, or panpsychism. If we look closer at reality, we won't find consciousness all over the place. If we analyse a physical object, it does not dissolve in consciousness, it dissolves in atoms and molecules. Thus, it is not as if statements about botanical or geological states of affairs are henceforth to be reinterpreted as statements about mental content. But any claim to the effect that "there is a real object", or "that there is a reality" refers back to certain epistemic connections, to certain conscious operations, and it is in reference to these that the being of objects and all objectual states of affairs acquire their meaning (Husserl 2003, 28-29). So what Husserl is getting at is that a proper account of intentionality – an account that rejects representationalism and endorses a form of direct perceptual realism – must lead to a rejection of metaphysical realism and to a realization of the interdependence of mind and world.

Let me anticipate an obvious objection. Husserl might be denying the existence of a mindless world, but he is (in)famous for not having ruled out the existence of a worldless mind. As Husserl writes in the notorious § 49 in *Ideen I*, "pure" consciousness can be considered an independent realm of being, and even though consciousness would be modified if the world of objects were annihilated; it would not be affected in its own existence (Husserl 1976, 104-105). This claim certainly doesn't seem particularly compatible with externalism. If we return to *Husserliana XXXVI*, we will find plenty of statements from the period 1913-15, where Husserl repeats what he said in *Ideen I* and claims that the existence of consciousness does not require an actually existing world (Husserl 2003, 78-79). Intentionality is an essential feature of consciousness, but it is not essential to intentionality that the intentional object really exists (Husserl 2003, 79). Whereas the existence of consciousness is absolute and necessary, the existence of the world is merely accidental and relative (Husserl 2003, 111). This is why consciousness, according to Husserl, must be considered the root (*Wurzel*) or source (*Quelle*) of every other form of being (Husserl 2003, 70).<sup>5</sup>

If one is faced with statements like these, and if one still wants to maintain that Husserl is not an internalist, I think one can opt for two different interpretational strategies.

1. The first possibility is to try to show that the standard interpretation of these statements is wrong and that they should be interpreted differently. Without here being able to do full justice to the complexity of the issue, let me briefly mention some of the possible alternative readings. To start with, one might point out that Husserl's imagined annihilation of the world has nothing to do with global scepticism. Husserl is not trying to drive a wedge in between the world as we experience it and the real world. He is not claiming that it makes sense to suppose that the phenomenologically given could remain the same while the world itself ceased to exist. Quite to the contrary, in fact, since he quite explicitly states that such a proposal is nonsensical (Husserl 2002, 402). Husserl's point is rather that our experiences might conceivably cease to be ordered in a harmonious and coherent fashion, further, he argues that we in such a case would no longer have any

reason to believe in the existence of an objective world. Thus, Husserl is certainly not arguing that every type of experience is compatible with the absence of the world or that every type of experience would remain the same even if the world didn't exist. All he is saying is that some form of consciousness might be possible even in the absence of an objective world. Furthermore, it could also be argued that the world that Husserl seeks to bracket in § 49 of *Ideen I* is the naively posited world and that the ultimate aim of this procedure is to discover the world as phenomenon, a world that is essentially correlated to consciousness and which consciousness is essentially related to (cf. Tugendhat 1970, 263). That this, in any case, eventually became Husserl's view is clear from some of his later reflections on phenomenological methodology. As Husserl points out in a talk that he gave in 1931, the turn from a naive exploration of the world to a reflective exploration of the field of consciousness does not entail a turning away from the world; rather, it is a turn that for the first time allows for a truly radical investigation and comprehension of the world (Husserl 1989, 178). This is why Husserl in *Krisis* can compare the performance of the phenomenological reflection with the transition from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional life (Husserl 1954, 120). In fact, as he points out in *Erste Philosophie II*, it is deeply mistaken to think that the being of the world is no longer a phenomenological theme, since the truth is that transcendental research includes "the world itself, with all its true being" (Husserl 1959, 432).

2. It has occasionally been claimed that far from seeking to question the existence of the world, the real purpose of Husserl's reflections is to reveal that there is more to consciousness than merely being a worldly object. Thus, Husserl's real aim is to emphasize the difference between conceiving of the subject as an object in the world and conceiving of the subject as a subject for the world, i.e., as the meaning-bestowing and world-disclosing subject of intentionality. Granted that this is correct, as I believe it is, one might concede that Husserl's Cartesian inspired thought-experiment remains unsatisfactory and ultimately quite misleading. This is so, first and foremost, because any talk of an imagined annihilation of the world is bound to give rise to all kinds of misunderstandings, one of which is the view that the task of phenomenology is to investigate the mind in isolation and separation from both world and intersubjectivity. Having conceded this, however, one could then proceed by pointing out that Husserl himself became quite dissatisfied with his so-called Cartesian way to phenomenology and that he elsewhere opted for a far more unequivocally anti-internalist approach. For a concrete example, one simply has to continue reading *Husserliana XXXVI*. In text number 7, which was *also* written around 1914-1915, Husserl argues – and this was a view he would later develop and articulate much more forcefully – that actual being, or the being of an actual reality, doesn't simply entail a relation to some formal cognizing subject, but that the constituting subject in question must necessarily be an embodied and embedded subject. To put it differently, already in this period, Husserl is claiming that the subject in order to constitute the world must necessarily be bodily embedded in the very world that it is seeking to constitute (Husserl 2003, 133). In addition, as he then continues, the constitution of an objective world also requires that the subject stands in an essential relation to an open plurality of other embodied and embedded subjects (Husserl 2003, 135).

It was considerations like these that later led Husserl to write that the possibility of a transcendental elucidation of subjectivity and world is lost if one follows the Kantian tradition in interpreting transcendental subjectivity as an isolated ego and thereby ignores the problem of transcendental intersubjectivity (Husserl 1993, 120). Thus, it is no coincidence that Husserl at times described his own project as a *sociological* transcendental philosophy (Husserl 1962, 539) and even wrote that the development of phenomenology necessarily implies the step from an "egological" ... phenomenology into a transcendental sociological phenomenology having reference to a manifest multiplicity of conscious subjects communicating with one another" (Husserl 1981, 68). Ultimately, and this is something that only recently has been properly appreciated, Husserl's later phenomenology can be seen as an explicit defence of what might be called an intersubjective transformation of transcendental philosophy (cf. Zahavi 1996a, 1996b).

In *Erste Philosophie II*, Husserl writes that transcendental subjectivity in its full universality is exactly *inter*-subjectivity (Husserl 1959, 480); in a research manuscript from 1927, which has been published in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität I*, Husserl writes that the absolute reveals itself as the intersubjective relation between subjects (Husserl 1973a, 480); he also claims that the subject can only be world-experiencing insofar as it is a member of a community (Husserl 1950, 166); that the ego is only what it is as a *socius*, that is, as a member of a sociality (Husserl 1973b, 193); and that a radical *self*-reflection necessarily leads to the discovery of absolute intersubjectivity (Husserl 1954, 275, 472). As he eventually put it in a famous quote from *Krisis*, that Merleau-Ponty was later to discuss in detail: "subjectivity is what it is – an ego functioning constitutively – only within intersubjectivity" (Husserl 1954, 175)

All of these statements fit rather uneasily with the idea that the mind should be some kind of self-sufficient constitutive principle. Husserl's formulations and terminology are not always transparently clear, but I think the central idea that eventually crystallized, is something like the following: Husserl consistently claims

that reality can only appear thanks to subjectivity. But eventually he came to the realization that the subject does not remain untouched by its constitutive performance, but is, on the contrary, drawn into it, just as constitution is not simply a relation involving a singular subject and the world, but rather something that must be considered an intersubjective process. The problem he then faced was to clarify the exact interrelation between self, world and intersubjectivity. This is made most explicit in his last writings, where the three are increasingly intertwined (cf. Husserl 1959, 505, 1973b, 373, 1973a, 480).

Needless to say, the two interpretational strategies I have just outlined are complementary rather than exclusive. One does not have to choose between the two, rather one can argue for a more favourable reading of *Ideen I*, while at the same time conceding that there are resources in Husserl's later work that far surpass what can be found in *Ideen I*.

In previous writings, I have pursued both routes *in extenso*,<sup>6</sup> so I will not repeat myself here. Rather, let me simply return to and restate the core of the objection: Given that Husserl makes no secret of his idealism, the attempt to deny his internalist inclinations are downright ludicrous. As we shall see in a moment, however, it is far from obvious that (transcendental) idealism should be committed to internalism.

### 3. Externalism and transcendental idealism

Transcendental idealism can be seen as an attempt to overcome global scepticism. It entails a rejection of the strong realist claim that reality as it is for us and as it is in itself are distinguishable – a claim presupposed by global scepticism. But is transcendental idealism a type of response that eliminates the sceptical problem by opting for an unprecedented strong version of internalism, a version that emphasizes the self-sufficiency of the mind to such an extent that it basically eliminates the world from the picture, or does transcendental idealism rather bring us beyond internalism altogether?

In his book, *Expressing the World*, Anthony Rudd has recently introduced a quite felicitous distinction between *realist externalism* and *Kantian externalism* (Rudd 2003, 44). Both forms of externalism take intentionality seriously. Both deny the self-contained nature of the mind and argue that it is tied to the world. But Kantian externalism then adds a twist by arguing that the reverse also holds true. In his refutation of idealism, Kant argued that I can only be aware of myself when I am aware of the world around me. But the world to which the mind is bound is the phenomenal world, which is equally bound to the mind. This move allowed Kant to reject the scepticism that sought to drive a wedge between mind and world, but since Kant – at least according to a standard interpretation – went on to distinguish the phenomenal world and the noumenal reality of the things in themselves, he might be said to have simply relocated the sceptical problem (Rudd 2003, 5). A more radical move was effectuated by the phenomenologists, who rejected the notion of *das Ding an Sich* as unintelligible and nonsensical (cf. Husserl 1950, 38-39). In their view, mind and world are not distinct entities; rather they are bound constitutively together. To put it differently, phenomenologists would typically argue that the relation between mind and world is an internal relation, a relation constitutive of its relata, and not an external one of causality (cf. Rudd 2003, 53, 60). We might call this form of externalism *phenomenological externalism*.

What I basically wish to propose is that there is a tight link between phenomenological externalism and transcendental idealism. To put it differently, I wish to suggest that a useful way to interpret transcendental idealism is by defining it negatively as an anti-representationalist criticism of metaphysical realism. This might at first sight appear as a rather deflationary definition, but – as we have already seen – it captures some of Husserl's main motives for advocating a form of transcendental idealism. It is also a definition that happens to make transcendental idealism much less marginal than one might initially have expected. In fact, given this definition it can even be said to have had quite a following in 20. century philosophy. Not only will Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger count as transcendental idealists, but so will a number of prominent figures in analytical philosophy, who all argue that the only justification obtainable and the only justification required is one that is internal to the world of experience and to its intersubjective practices.

As for Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, I think it is relatively uncontroversial that both of these thinkers are no less opposed to representationalism and metaphysical realism than Husserl. Both of them stress the co-dependency of mind and world. As Heidegger writes in the lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* from 1927:

World exists – that is, it is – only if Dasein exists, only if there is Dasein. Only if world is there, if Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, is there understanding of being, and only if this understanding exists are intraworldly beings unveiled as extant and handy. World-

understanding as Dasein-understanding is self-understanding. Self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1989, 422).

One can find similar statements in Merleau-Ponty. As he writes in *Phénoménologie de la perception*,

The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects. The subject is a being-in-the-world and the world remains 'subjective' since its texture and articulations are traced out by the subject's movement of transcendence (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 491-492 [1962, 430]).

Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty would all deny that a view from nowhere is attainable, just as they would deny that it is possible to look at our experiences from sideways on to see whether they match with reality. This is so, not because such views are incredibly hard to reach, but because the very idea of such views is nonsensical. They would also reject the suggestion that consciousness is merely one object among others in the world, on a par with – though possibly more complex than – volcanoes, waterfalls, ice crystals, gold nuggets, rhododendrons and black holes, since they would consider consciousness to be a necessary (though not necessarily sufficient) condition of possibility for any object to appear as an object in the way it does and with the meaning it has.<sup>7</sup> Finally, they would reject any two-world theory. They would reject the suggestion that phenomenology investigates the world as it is for us, the world of appearance, whereas science and metaphysics (aspire to) investigate the world as it is in itself, the real world. In their view, phenomenology is not merely a theory about the structure of consciousness, nor is it merely a theory about how we understand and perceive the world. It is not even a theory about how the world appears to us, *if*, that is, such a theory is supposed to be complemented by a further investigation (left to science and metaphysics) of what the world itself is like. As Fink, Husserl's last assistant, pointed out back in 1939, only a fundamental misunderstanding of the aim of phenomenology would lead to the mistaken but often repeated claim that Husserl's phenomenology is not interested in reality or the question of being, but only in subjective meaning-formations in intentional consciousness (Fink 1939, 257)

Phenomenology is engaged in a reflective exploration of the structures and conditions of worldly significance and appearance. Such an enterprise differs from any direct metaphysical investigation of the real world. What needs to be stressed is that the significance and appearance being investigated is the significance and appearance of the real world, not of some otherworldly realm. Phenomenology has insisted upon this, and has consequently taken a clear stand on the relationship between phenomena and reality, and on the question of what it means for an object to be given as really existing. For phenomenology, the world that appears to us – be it in perception, in our daily concerns or in our scientific analyses – is the only real world. One of the things that pre-scientific experience and scientific exploration have in common is that both are concerned with the world of appearance. The latter simply enlarges it. To claim that there in addition to this world exists a world-behind-the-scene, which transcends every appearance, and every experiential and theoretical evidence, and to identify this world with true reality is, according to the phenomenologists, an empty and countersensical proposition (cf. Zahavi 2003b).

Phenomenology endorses a this-worldly conception of objectivity and reality and seeks to overcome the scepticism that argues that the way the world appears to us is compatible with the world really being completely different (Husserl 1950, 32, 117, Heidegger 1986, 229). But to reformulate the question, does this deliberate blurring of the distinction between ontology and epistemology commit phenomenology to some kind of untenable idealism? It is suggestive that phenomenologists share the criticism of metaphysical realism with leading figures in analytical philosophy, e.g., Wittgenstein, Davidson, Dummett, Putnam, McDowell and Rorty.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. McDowell and Putnam

Let me in the following take a brief look at McDowell and Putnam. Not only are both prominent defenders of an externalist view on the mind. In recent writings, they have also been quite explicit in their rejection of representationalism and metaphysical realism and have even expressed the occasional sympathy for certain forms of idealism.

In earlier works, for instance the article “Anti-realism and the epistemology of understanding”, McDowell characterized transcendental philosophy as an attempt to adopt the “cosmic exile’s perspective” (McDowell 1981). In his *Woodbridge Lectures*, however, McDowell takes exception to this characterization. He argues that it is a mistake to suppose that transcendental reflection has to be done from a standpoint that is external to the processes whose objective purport is to be vindicated (McDowell 1998, 445). McDowell consequently rejects the attempt to adopt a sideways-on perspective on the relation between the conceptual and the real, but as he then points out, such a view from the outside is not essential to the very idea of transcendental philosophy (McDowell 1998, 446, 490).

McDowell has been concerned with avoiding both of the following two extremes: He wishes to avoid falling victim to the *Myth of the Given* by rejecting the idea that our beliefs can be epistemically justified by unconceptualized sensory input. But he also wishes to stay clear of the type of coherentism where thinking lacks experiential grounding and operates independently of all rational constraint from sense experience, since this would reduce thinking to “a frictionless spinning in a void” (McDowell 1994, 11).

McDowell’s own alternative is deceptively simple. We should not remain captivated by the idea that there is something inside and something outside the conceptual sphere, since it has no “outer boundary”. Sense experience can rationally constrain our thinking because it already possesses conceptual content. Sense experience belongs to the domain of receptivity rather than spontaneity, but the fact that it is passive and natural doesn’t entail that it is non-conceptual.

What is of particular interest in this context is not so much the merits and difficulties of McDowell’s specific proposal, but rather its obvious affinity with a form of transcendental idealism. In his *Woodbridge Lectures*, McDowell points out that Sellars originally invoked Hegel as someone whose idealism was a result of his failure to acknowledge the need for external constraints on thought. McDowell concedes that we need to incorporate an appeal to receptivity if we wish to avoid the “idealistic” fraud of letting reality be nothing but a projection of our own conceptual activity (McDowell 1998, 466, 470). But as he then continues, “Hegelian Reason does not need to be constrained from outside, precisely because it includes as a moment within itself the receptivity that Kant attributes to sensibility” (McDowell 1998, 466). Indeed just like McDowell himself, Hegel was precisely a thinker who argued that the conceptual is operative in receptivity and who denied that perceptual reality is outside the conceptual sphere.

McDowell is quite explicit in affirming his sympathy for post-Kantian (transcendental) idealism (McDowell 2002, 271), and it is obvious that he sees no conflict between doing so and at the same time endorsing an externalist view on the mind. As McDowell argues, the direct perceptual realism that he recommends on transcendental grounds is one that lets experience be an openness to how things are, i.e., one that denies that we as cognizing beings are somehow cut off from the world as it exists “it itself” (McDowell 2002, 291). Thus, McDowell might be seen as someone whose intention is to domesticate the rhetoric of absolute idealism so that it stands revealed as a kind of direct realism aimed at protecting a commonsense respect for the independence of the ordinary world (McDowell 1994, 44, cf. Friedman 2002, 33).

This view is also shared by Putnam. According to a traditional take on perception, our mind cannot on its own reach all the way to the objects themselves, and the typical claim has therefore been that we need to introduce some kind of interface between the mind and the world if we are to understand and explain intentionality, i.e., the claim has been that our cognitive access to the world is mediated by mental representations. Putnam takes this classical conception, which gained prominence with the British Empiricists, to be fundamentally flawed (Putnam 1999, 20, 23). In his view, we can and do in fact experience the external world, and Putnam insists that we need to develop a theory of perception that recovers, as he puts it, the natural realism of common man (Putnam 1999, 24): “Winning through to natural realism is seeing the *needlessness* and the *unintelligibility* of a picture that imposes an interface between ourselves and the world” (Putnam 1999, 41). We should stop conceiving of perceptual experience as some kind of internal movie screen that confronts us with mental representations. Instead, perceptual experience should be understood in transactional terms, as (in successful cases) an acquaintance with the genuine properties of external objects (Putnam 1999, 169). We are “*zunächst und zumeist*” directed at real existing objects, and this directedness is not mediated by any intra-mental objects. The so-called qualitative character of experience, the taste of a lemon, the smell of coffee, the coldness of an ice cube are not at all qualities belonging to some spurious mental objects, but qualities of the presented objects. Rather than saying that we experience *representations*, we should as Putnam puts it, say that our experiences are *presentational*, and that they *present* the world as having certain features (Putnam 1999, 156).

How does this relate to the issue of metaphysical realism? One way to define the latter is by saying that it first distinguishes how things are for us from how they are *simpliciter* and then insists that the investigation of the latter is the truly important one. Another way of defining it is by saying that it is guided by



a certain conception of knowledge. Knowledge is taken to consist in a faithful mirroring of a mind-independent reality. It is taken to be of a reality which exists independently of that knowledge, and indeed independently of any thought and experience (Williams 2005, 48). If we want to know true reality, we should aim at describing the way the world is, not just independently of its being believed to be that way, but independently of all the ways in which it happens to present itself to us human beings. An *absolute conception* would be a dehumanized conception, a conception from which all traces of ourselves had been removed. Nothing would remain that would indicate whose conception it is, how those who form or possess that conception experience the world, and when or where they find themselves in it. It would be as impersonal, impartial, and objective a picture of the world as we could possibly achieve (Stroud 2000, 30). How are we supposed to reach this conception? Metaphysical realism assumes that everyday experience combines subjective and objective features and that we can reach an objective picture of what the world is really like by stripping away the subjective. It consequently argues that there is a clear distinction to be drawn between the properties things have “in themselves” and the properties which are “projected by us”. Whereas the world of appearance, the world as it is for us in daily life, combines subjective and objective features, science captures the objective world, the world as it is in itself. But to think that science can provide us with an *absolute* description of reality, that is, a description from a view from nowhere; to think that science is the only road to metaphysical truth, and that science simply mirrors the way in which Nature classifies itself, is – according to Putnam – illusory. It is an illusion to think that the notions of “object” or “reality” or “world” have any sense outside of and independently of our conceptual schemes (Putnam 1992, 120). Putnam is not denying that there are “external facts”; he even thinks that we can say what they are; but as he writes, “what we cannot say – because it makes no sense – is what the facts are *independent of all conceptual choices*” (Putnam 1987, 33). We cannot hold all our current beliefs about the world up against the world and somehow measure the degree of correspondence between the two. It is, in other words, nonsensical to suggest that we should try to peel our perceptions and beliefs off the world, as it were, in order to compare them in some direct way with what they are about (Stroud 2000, 27). This is not to say that our conceptual schemes create the world, but as Putnam writes, they don’t just mirror it either (Putnam 1978, 1). Ultimately, what we call “reality” is so deeply suffused with mind- and language-dependent structures that it is altogether impossible to make a neat distinction between those parts of our beliefs that reflect the world “in itself” and those parts of our beliefs that simply express “our conceptual contribution.” The very idea that our cognition should be nothing but a re-presentation of something mind-independent consequently has to be abandoned (Putnam 1990, 28, 1981, 54, 1987, 77).

Putnam conceives of his own alternative – which he originally dubbed “internal realism,” but which he in recent years has called by various names such as “natural realism,” “pragmatic realism” or “commonsense realism” – as an attempt to find a third way beyond classical realism and subjective idealism, and between “reactionary metaphysics and irresponsible relativism” (Putnam 1999, 5). Putnam consequently sees no conflict between his rejection of metaphysical realism and his endorsement of a kind of empirical realism. Despite their attempt to monopolize the term realism, metaphysical (scientific) realists have frequently made the idealist move of making a certain restricted theoretical outlook the measure of what counts as real. As a result, the existence of such everyday objects as tables, chairs, nations, economic crises, and wars have been denied with the argument that none of these entities figure in the account of reality provided by natural science (Putnam 1987, 3-4). Although metaphysical realism was once heralded as a strong antidote against idealism and scepticism, we are consequently confronted with one of those cases where the medicine has turned out to be part of the sickness it was supposed to cure and in the end just as deadly.

On the face of it, there is, of course, an obvious difference between 1) claiming that whereas we in everyday experience only encounter the world of appearance, science gives us access to the world as it really is in itself – as Sellars puts it, “in the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not” (Sellars 1963, 173) – and 2) claiming that the world as it is in itself will forever remain hidden and inaccessible to us. However, the slope from scientism to scepticism can be quite slippery. It is hard to maintain that science is free from perspectives, but if reality is defined in strict non-perspectival terms, as that which supposedly presents itself from a view from nowhere, science will per definition be unable to provide us with an access to the world as it is in itself.

When Putnam insists that the metaphysical realists do not take realism sufficiently seriously, and when he argues that it is the philosophers traditionally accused of idealism, namely the Kantians, the Pragmatists, and the Phenomenologists, who actually respect and honor our natural realism (Putnam 1987, 12), he is, unwittingly, following in the footsteps of Husserl. As Husserl declared in a famous letter to Émile Baudin in 1934: “No ordinary ‘realist’ has ever been so realistic and so concrete as I, the phenomenological ‘idealist’” (Husserl 1994, 16).

## 5. Conclusion

Let me return to the question I started out with. Where should one place phenomenology on the internalism-externalism scale? There has been a widespread tendency to argue that whereas Husserl's transcendental methodology commits him to internalism, the existential phenomenologies of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty are committed to a form of externalism since they fully endorse the view that the mind is essentially determined by its intentional relationship to the world (cf. McClamrock 1995, Keller 1999).

As I have tried to show, this interpretation is too simplistic. It ignores plenty of evidence suggesting that Husserlian phenomenology has strong affinities with a certain kind of externalism. At the same time, however, one might also adopt the opposite strategy and question the attempt to depict, say, Heidegger as a traditional externalist. Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world is frequently taken to epitomize the embedded and world-involving character of the mind. But Heidegger occasionally expresses views that sound remarkably internalist. Lafont, for instance, has recently argued that Heidegger's claim that there can be no access to entities without a prior understanding of *their being*, expresses his commitment to the internalist view that meaning determines reference (Lafont 2005, 523-525). In the early lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1919/20), Heidegger does indeed speak repeatedly of the self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*) of (experiential) life (cf. Heidegger 1993, 261), and in *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* from 1925, Heidegger denies that a perception only becomes intentional if its object somehow enters into a relation with it, as if it would lose its intentionality if the object didn't exist. As a perception, it is, as Heidegger writes, *intrinsically intentional* regardless of whether the perceived is in reality on hand or not (Heidegger 1979, 40). A couple of years later, Heidegger basically repeats this characterization, and adds that it is a decisive error to interpret intentionality as a relation between a psychical subject and a physical object. The truth of the matter is that the subject is intentionally structured within itself. Intentionality does not first arise through the actual presence of objects but lies in the perceiving itself, whether veridical or illusory (Heidegger 1989, 83-85). As I understand Heidegger, the underlying assumption behind these statements is 1) that even misperceptions, illusions and hallucinations remain world-involving intentional acts, and 2) that the world-involvement in question, rather than being added from without, is something intrinsic to the acts themselves.

If externalism denies that intentionality is determined by meaning and conditioned by subjectivity, but rather holds that it is reducible to some kind of causal co-variation, none of the phenomenologists would count as externalists. But this is not the only way to define externalism. Just like internalism, externalism can hold that meaning determines reference as long as the meaning in question is externally embedded or world-involving. McDowell has explicitly argued that an externalist account of meaning should be complemented by an externalist account of the mind. Putnam is famous for having argued that meanings "just ain't in the *head*" (Putnam 1975, 227) but as McDowell adds, neither is the mind (McDowell 1992, 36). The moment both mind and meaning are taken to be environmentally embedded, there is nothing mysterious in ascribing an intrinsic referentiality or world-directedness to the mind: "The need to construct a theoretical 'hook' to link thinking to the world does not arise, because if it is thinking that we have in view at all – say being struck by the thought that one hears the sound of water dripping – then what we have in view is *already* hooked on to the world; it is already in view as possessing referential directedness at reality" (McDowell 1992, 45). One can find a comparable view in McCulloch, who has argued that we need to reject the dualism between a self-contained mind and a mindless world. The subjective is not *inside* the mind and the objective is not *outside* of it. Echoing McDowell, McCulloch writes that meanings ain't in the head, they are in the mind, but the mind just ain't in the head (McCulloch 2003, 11-12). In his view, there is no tension between phenomenology and externalism as long as both are understood properly (McCulloch 2003, 12).

I think there is some truth to this. Phenomenology (and that includes Husserlian phenomenology) should be sympathetic to the kind of externalism that is espoused by McDowell and McCulloch, and it is clear that they all have common enemies. Not only do they reject the kind of internalism known as *Cartesian materialism*, i.e., the view that the mind can be identified with the brain, and that the brain is a self-contained organ that can be understood in isolation from the world, but they would also oppose the kind of externalism that seeks to reduce intentionality and reference to brute causal mechanisms.

But what should one then conclude? Should one conclude that phenomenology attempts to combine features from both internalism and externalism? Or is the basic question rather whether the very choice between internalism and externalism is at all appropriate when it comes to characterizing the phenomenological conception of the mind-world relation?

A natural way to present the choice between internalism and externalism is by asking the following question: is intentionality determined by factors *internal* to the mind or by factors *external* to the mind? However, this apparently so straightforward way of presenting the available options is on closer inspection quite inadequate, for whereas internalism typically postulates a gap between mind and world, externalism argues precisely that the world is *not* external to the mind. But the moment externalism is seen as arguing that mind and world are inseparable, it could also quite easily be defined as a position that takes intentionality to be determined by factors *internal* to this whole. However, thus defined externalism is difficult to distinguish from the kind of internalism that insists that intentionality is determined by factors internal to the mind, but which conceives of the mind in sufficiently broad terms. On one reading, Husserl's transcendental idealism might exactly be said to constitute such an attempt to undermine any commonsensical divide between mind and world. As he writes in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität III*: "Transcendental subjectivity encompasses the totality of the subjective, and this ultimately comprises the world itself as subjectively constituted" (Husserl 1973b, 288), and as he states in the volume *Transzendentaler Idealismus* "The transcendental ego has no exterior; the very suggestion is quite nonsensical" (Husserl 2003, 179).

As Husserl already pointed out in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, the entire facile divide between inside and outside has its origin in a naive commonsensical metaphysics and is phenomenologically suspect and inappropriate when it comes to understanding the nature of intentionality (Husserl 1984b, 673, 708). The same criticism can also be found in Heidegger, who denies that the relation between Dasein and world can be grasped with the help of the concepts "inner" and "outer". As he writes in *Sein und Zeit*:

In directing itself toward...and in grasping something, Dasein does not first go outside of the inner sphere in which it is initially encapsulated, but, rather, in its primary kind of being, it is always already "outside" together with some being encountered in the world already discovered. Nor is any inner sphere abandoned when Dasein dwells together with a being to be known and determines its character. Rather, even in this "being outside" together with its object, Dasein is "inside" correctly understood; that is, it itself exists as the being-in-the-world which knows. Again, the perception of what is known does not take place as a return with one's booty to the "cabinet" of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it. Rather, in perceiving, preserving, and retaining, the Dasein that knows *remains outside as Dasein* (Heidegger 1986, 62).

The notions of internalism and externalism remain bound to the inner-outer division, but as the following, final, quote from Merleau-Ponty illustrates, this is a division that phenomenology plays havoc with: "Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself" (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 467 [1962, 407]).

Considering the way in which phenomenologists conceive of intentionality, of the mind-world relationship, I think it is questionable whether it really makes much sense to classify their views as being committed to either internalism or externalism. Avoiding the two terms obviously won't solve all the problems, but might at least permit us to avoid letting our investigation be guided by misleading metaphors. The mind is neither a container nor a special place. Hence it makes little sense to say that the world must be either inside or outside of the mind. Ultimately, we should appreciate that the phenomenological investigations of the structures and conditions of possibility for phenomena are antecedent to any divide between psychical interiority and physical exteriority, since they are investigations of the dimension in which any object – be it external or internal – manifests itself (cf. Heidegger 1986, 419, Waldenfels 2000, 217). Rather than committing the mistake of interpreting the phenomena mentalistically, as being part of the mental inventory, we should see the phenomenological focus on the phenomena as an attempt to question the very subject-object split, as an attempt to stress the co-emergence of mind and world.

Far from entailing a commitment to a methodological or metaphysical solipsism, Husserl's transcendental idealism is committed to the view that the world is necessarily correlated to an intersubjective community of embodied subjects. His transcendental idealism doesn't deny the existence of mind-independent objects in the uncontroversial sense of empirical realism, but only in the controversial sense of metaphysical realism. The fact that transcendental idealism has more affinities with (a certain form of) externalism than with internalism should be less of a surprise the moment it is realized how little in common it has with any garden variety of idealism. In fact, it has so little in common that the term transcendental *idealism* might be ill-chosen. Perhaps it would be better to simply replace it with the phrase "transcendental reflection" or "transcendental thinking." This is especially so, given that Husserl's transcendental idealism has occasionally been seen precisely as an attempt to think beyond the traditional categories of realism and idealism (cf. Gadamer 1972, 178).<sup>9</sup> I think this is basically correct, but since I have been using the volume *Transzendentaler Idealismus* as a reference, I have decided – in this paper – to simply stick to the notion.

Needless to say, there are a lot of issues here – idealism, realism, scepticism, the relation between metaphysics and transcendental philosophy – that call for further clarification and investigation. I certainly don't take myself to have proven the truth of transcendental idealism. But I hope to have succeeded in my more modest aims, which was to suggest 1) that it would be a mistake to dismiss offhandedly the analyses of the mind-world relation offered by a transcendental idealist like Husserl with the argument that they remain committed to an outdated form of internalism, and 2) that some of the issues that have been discussed within the apparently quite obsolete framework of transcendental idealism are in fact of greater relevance for the current attempts to understand intentionality than is usually acknowledged. A case in point would be that these discussions might make us realize that there are other options available than the choice between internalism and externalism.<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Standard definitions of internalism and externalism are frequently somewhat biased. Externalists have a tendency to define internalism as the radical view that the content of experience is wholly fixed by internal features of experience, whereas externalism is taken to be the moderate view that the content is also partly determined or influenced by external factors. Not surprisingly, internalists often depict externalism in the exact opposite way, i.e., as consisting in the view that the content is wholly determined by external relations to the social and natural environment, whereas internalism simply stresses that features internal to experience also play a role.

<sup>2</sup> Husserl's frequent use of the terms "immanence" and "transcendence" might seem to suggest this. It should be noted though, that both terms are meant to capture a certain phenomenological difference in the mode of givenness pertaining to consciousness and worldly entities respectively (Husserl 1976, 88). To put it even more simply, according to Husserl, experiences are not given in the same manner as chairs and symphonies, nor are we aware of our own experiences in the same way we are aware of worldly objects. Thus, the distinction between immanence and transcendence is one internal to the phenomenological realm and is not – contrary to a widespread misunderstanding – meant to demarcate what belongs to phenomenology from what does not. To complicate matters, Husserl operates with various distinct notions of transcendence and immanence (among the latter, for instance between "intentional immanence" and "real [reell] immanence"), but it would lead too far astray to discuss these various notions in detail. For a classical exposé, see Boehm 1968, 141-185, but see also the contribution by Crowell in the present issue.

<sup>3</sup> For the former, cf. Zahavi 2004 and the contribution by Smith in the present issue. For the latter cf. Zahavi 1996a, 1996b.

<sup>4</sup> By contrast, I think it is more of an open question whether Husserl's theory of intentionality in *Logische Untersuchungen*, i.e. prior to his "transcendental turn", is internalist, but this is not a question I can pursue further in this context (cf. however Zahavi 2002a).

<sup>5</sup> As Husserl is at pains to point out, however, to speak of consciousness as absolute doesn't entail that every other type of being is merely apparent, unreal or fictitious. The latter claim would be completely false. Nature is real in the true and full sense of the word, and it would be quite misguided to measure this kind of being with a yardstick that belongs elsewhere in order to somehow discredit its status (Husserl 2003, 70-71).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. for instance Zahavi 2003a

<sup>7</sup> A proper understanding of the phenomenological analyses of consciousness must recognize their transcendental philosophical character. Some still find this claim controversial when it concerns the work of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. For a defense of such a reading, which emphasizes the commonality between the three phenomenologists, see Zahavi 2002b and 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson has occasionally been taken as a staunch realist, but in his *Dewey Lectures* he regretted that he had advertised his own position as a brand of realism (Davidson 1990, 304). As he then went on to say, realism – understood as the position that truth is "radically non-epistemic" and that all our best researched and established beliefs and theories may be false – is a view he considered incomprehensible (Davidson 1990, 308-309). As he would later write in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*: "A community of minds is the basis of knowledge; it provides the measure of all things. It makes no sense to question the adequacy of this measure, or to seek a more ultimate standard" (Davidson 2001, 218).

<sup>9</sup> For a classical argument to the effect that transcendental idealism must be appreciated as a meta-philosophical outlook rather than as a straightforward metaphysical doctrine, cf. Allison 1983, 25.

<sup>10</sup> This study has been funded by the Danish National Research Foundation.

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