

An Analysis of the Antinomic Structure of the Relation of Being in Husserl and Its Political Implication*

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Abstract

Antinomy basically as an inherent structural tension from within the reason between rational willing toward the unconditioned and rational thinking necessarily conditioned by the rule of understanding plays a negative role in and for Kant's system to critically compass reason in limiting itself within the possibility of real experience. In Husserl, under the banner of one all-encompassing reason, antinomy takes a modified form of an ontological incommensurability between two essentially separable regions of being, i.e., between the ideal and the real; such ontological antinomy now takes up the place of an *apriori* condition for the possibility of meaning for Husserl. Representing a peculiar hierarchical ontological relation through which a lawful power flows, Husserlian antinomy plays an essentially affirmative-political function. In this paper, I will analyze the constructive antinomic structure of phenomenological being relation in contrast to Kantian restrictive antinomy and discuss its political implication.

1. Introduction

Antinomy as a metaphysically specified concept was first introduced by Kant in order to describe the frustration between rational will guided by the laws of freedom, which ever tends to progress forward the unconditioned and rational capacity at the same time limited by the laws of understanding, which has to back off with a series of conditions.¹ A key point in Kantian antinomy is that antinomy is not something irrational; the antinomic pairs —the unconditioned and conditions— are both grounded precisely on the essence of reason as such. It is reason as such which brings about, calls for an antinomy. Kantian antinomy is thereof immediately hooked up with a limit-character of critical reason, to and for which reason can do nothing but trying not to transgress the mutual limiting of rational willing and rational knowing.

In sharp contrast, in Husserl, under the transcendental jurisdiction of one all-encompassing reason, 'I will' and 'I think' merge, not only theoretically but also

* The main idea of this work comes originally from the introductory part and the first chapter of my dissertation. With additional reflections and readings, necessary revisions and changes of the content and structure, it has been recreated into this form of an independent paper.

¹ A406-420/B432-448. For all references for Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, I follow the standard A/B pagination..

normatively. In this context, Kantian antinomy has become a challenge for Husserlian reason to resolve, as long as it perplexes reason and tends to crack its unity. In Husserl the role and position of antinomy is shifted from an irremovable epistemological problematic to a primordial ontological condition for the possibility of knowledge at all. It comes to represent a peculiarly phenomenological relation between the two most fundamentally and primordially differentiated types of being, namely, between the real and the ideal.

The antinomic relation of being now functions as the condition for the possibility of phenomenology as such, regulating the whole system of Husserl's phenomenological critique of reason. This paper will carry out a theoretical formulation of such Husserlian antinomy laid out on the metaphysical level already at the birth of phenomenology and consistently operative thereafter. Based on that, it will look into a definite political phase qualifying the antinomic structure of the phenomenological being.

2. On the Road to Overcoming Kantian Dichotomy

1) Idea for critique: Kant

For Kant, science is a system of rational knowledge which is guided by the idea of a systematic whole derived from the "universal interest" of reason called architectonic interest. (A832/B860) Scientificity for Kant, represented by systematic division, is first and foremost a natural facticity of reason; it comes from the fact of reason that reason itself is a system and the end of reason that it thereby always already drives toward a system.² Systematic unity of science signifies a rule-followed structural harmony amongst all its parts and justification of science should be justification of the operation of those prescriptive rules and principles for the making of objectivity. As a 'natural' manifestation of rationality as the systematic division under the architectonic plan, knowledge itself is thus always already dualistic for Kant ; it has two radically separated origins, namely, *sensibility and understanding*, about the reason for the separation of which human reason has no position to tell anything at all.(A15/B29) In this natural morphology of knowledge, the first Kantian task is to discern out the possibility for objects to be given through the former and the possibility for them to be thought through the latter; based upon those conditions, what is at final issue is to explain how intuition and thought are to be combined to yield to a unity which makes universal and necessary knowledge, namely, science, possible. Kant's transcendental logic is thus a logic of the justification of the architectonic system of all sciences, validated on the transcendental deduction, of which the conclusive message could be that, with the logic justified through such procedure in such fashion, no principles are to be incoherent in terms of their application to each field of science, delimiting the sphere of object and the scope of capacity, in order to maintain the metaphysical harmony and security of the structure. Such would be the main point of transcendental philosophy as the mere idea

² About the systematicity as an end and an interest of reason, see the "Prefaces" to First & Second Edition, (Kant(1965), 7-37) together with "The Transcendental Doctrine of Method," (A832-856/B860-884)

of science.(A13/B27)

In this overall Kantian context, the role of idea is quite “negative” precisely with regard to the goal of the ultimate justification of the *apriori* conditions for the possibility of scientific knowledge, which is no other than “critique” as such.(A11/B25) For Kant, the science of reason, basically as a system of philosophical knowledge about the principles of understanding obtained only through a mediated deductive procedure can in no way claim the same level of immediate apodictic certainty that mathematical knowledge claims; it can at best claim absolute necessity.³ Being absolutely necessary, but *not* necessarily absolutely certain, philosophical knowledge as such is not experiential in intuition. Theory reaches apodictic certainty never with philosophy thereof ; reason only speculates it. The tendency of reason to speculate absolute epistemological certainty with philosophy is to be the source of a dogmatic risk which could divert the course of rationality from the track of the critical motif not to extend beyond the certainty that it can claim; scientificity always in conjunction with criticality in Kant is something which is operative always on some agnostic limit naturally incurred on reason concerning the possibility to have apodictic truth in the domain of transcendental philosophy.

Therefore, the transcendental idea of totality of all the conditions for any given objects to be conditioned, while being necessary as it is imposed by the nature of reason itself and as a guiding principle of architectonic system, could be yet itself something always illusive; insofar as the speculative reason cannot prove it with apodictic certainty, a certain metaphysical danger is always laden in the philosophical Idea, which always spares a room for a speculation. That is why idea plays its role in the “Dialectic” part in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, more or less as a latent source of the transcendental illusion in Kant, as the locus of antinomy, where analytic intellect and dialectic passion of the same reason dualistically clash, of necessity.

2) Critique for Idea : Husserl

With Husserl such story goes through a significant change. Starting out by directly taking over Kant’s questions as to ‘how an object is to be known and how *a priori* synthetic knowledge is possible’ along with Kant’s incipient motif to provide a secure path to science, Husserl yet discriminates himself from Kant in terms of the appropriation of the idea of science and the meaning of the very idea as such. For Husserl, Idea, firmly preserving Platonic sense of archetype and paradigm, serves the most reliable source for apodictic certainty. Not just necessity, but also certainty is to be guaranteed precisely on the ground of Idea. What is of essential importance with Idea is its entirely *de-empiricized* purity, which apparently consists of the very basic presupposition *of* and *for* phenomenology: There *is* an ideal spot, which can be called the meaning essence or core, in any theoretical semantic structure, the truth validity of which is, in principle, completely outside of empirical reality *in toto*.

³ A712-738/B740-766

Unlike Kant, with Husserl, that Idea is not to be given in any form of empirical reality ranks the Idea at the top in the hierarchy of truth criteria. The independence from every empirical condition is an uncompromisable merit rather than a reason for the call for caution, being the source of “timeless validity” of the claims of logic. Timelessness here represents validity that runs “beyond time” (Husserl 2001a, 85); the validity of ideal objects, of the law of gravitation and the law of contradiction, e.g., takes its ground from “their own semantic content” so that it holds “even if there were no mental processes at all,” even if “all gravitational masses were eliminated” (ibid, 97); logical truth is truth of such kind.

Hence, Idea is never a “mere” something for Husserl; it is always already the most actual being as such and necessarily refers to an object as such to be directly given. There are two moments of ideality in Husserl: ideality as an ideal object such as objects of geometry and mathematics or pure logical forms, and ideality as essential attribute of Idea. Both share the key conceptual element of ideality that its truth-function is derived from its own inner semantically self-justifiable rationality irrelevant to any circumstantial condition to which it is realistically bound.

Therefore, Kantian possibility of speculation inherently related to certain degree of necessary uncertainty is completely missing in Husserlian picture of the theory of knowledge from the outset. Idea *per se*, despite its necessary transcendental function over experience, stands as an impediment for theoretical certainty in Kant, because it is not an object of possible experience; it is a necessary vice implicit in the course of the justification of science, which leads reason to an insecure yearning for the apodictic certainty of transcendent truth. To the contrary, it is an original good explicit for Husserl, which guarantees inner apodictic security for scientific truth: idea is not a limiting turning-point but a referential beginning- and teleological end-point in Husserl; Idea is *experientiable* as a direct indication of self-evidence (ibid, 85), far from being merely regulatively operative in the background of the employment of the rules of understanding.

Likewise, the systematicity of science no longer refers to a thorough observance of the division rule of understanding followed by a structural *stasis* of tensional balance and organic coherence, but represents a unifying comportment of reason as such. The act character of reason is an embodied part of the idea of science as such (Husserl, 2001a, 18). In this context, *foundation*, one of the most fundamental concepts of phenomenology, is now the new name for scientificity. With Husserl, the ultimate validation of science is not to end at a non-contradicted structural delimitation of the boundaries of cognitive faculty, but a *hierarchical extension and expansion of the original justifying power* of reason on the theoretical horizon; scientificity finds its strongest momentum precisely in reason’s *validating* act as such as an affirmation of the direct presence and engagement of Idea as the ultimate evidence for objectivity.

Now the certainty-founding capacity of reason grounded upon the primordial certainty

of ideality belongs to the meaning core of the Idea of science in Husserl. Knowledge is possible thanks to the absolute *a priori* being of the ideal content such as the *a priori* “laws, grounds, principles” of logic, which retains “inwardly evident truths” standing absolutely valid, whether or not a rational noetic act is actually in play. That constitutes precisely the semantic essence of a theory. In other words, what is responsible for the validation of theoretical truth is the Idea of Theory as such; theory is something that internalizes the ideal truth components into its own meaning by the very meaning of its own.⁴ Thus with Husserl, unlike Kant, theory in which philosophy itself must be included is integrated into a unitary realm of an intuitive experience of ideal truth. The ideal essences of the laws and concepts responsible for a deduction are always already susceptible to an “*a priori* insight” as that which makes the very deductive linkage itself is possible.

3. Founding-Founded Relational Hierarchy as the Condition for the Validation of Truth

1) Validation of truth as an instituting of relation: **Categorical Intuition**[*Kategoriale Anschauungen*]

From the very beginning, Husserl lays out a meaning of truth particularly implying a definite *relationality*.⁵ Truth concerns the “*ideal relationship among the epistemic essences of the coinciding acts*,” obtained in the “unity of coincidence” called “self-evidence” on the one hand, and refers to the “*rightness*” of intention, on the other, that is, the “*rightness of the judgment in the logical sense of the proposition*,” which means a ‘right’ for an ideal speech to say: ‘the proposition is really what it says in the judgment.’ (Husserl 2001b, 264)

Such conceptualization of truth pins down the “ideal adequation of a *relational* act to the corresponding adequate percept of a state of affairs.” (ibid, 266) Here by adequation means Husserl a fulfillment of meaning intention with intuition; the experience of agreement between the meant and the given indicates self-evidence. The self-evident truth as an identification of the intended with the intuited is correlative to an act in and by way of which *certain definite epistemological relation is instituted* amongst the epistemic elements involved in the truth-claim. With Husserl, intuition, beyond the sense of an *act of perception* as a simple seeing, gains such peculiarly phenomenological sense of an act of confirming the being of Idea, which *inaugurates* certain power relation between the Idea and the meaning of the perceived.

Let us now delve into the structure of that relation. Husserl divides elements of logical judgments into what can be fulfilled adequately in perception and what cannot. Proper names expressible in logical variables, such as P, S, X, etc., can be fulfilled adequately in perception. The remaining parts of the expression, however, namely, the formal parts such as ‘a’, ‘the’, ‘all’, ‘many’, ‘is’, ‘not’, and so forth, cannot. The question now is: “Are there parts and forms of perception corresponding to all parts and forms of meaning?” (ibid, 272)

⁴ Husserl(2001a), 149-152

⁵ Husserl(2001b), 263-267

For example, in the thing white paper, that is, paper which *is* white, the 'is' and the concept of whiteness as such are never to be seen adequately with the perception of this paper *per se* present in front of me as a real object; the knowledge of white paper is obtained through a fulfillment of whiteness as such, as the object meant; in order to apprehend the perceived thing, the whiteness as such as an ideal object, as a color-idea, must be intuited together with the perception of this white paper here. But the seeing of whiteness requires an act of a completely different kind. It is seen only with a simultaneous enactment of the consciousness of the 'is' and thus always in the awareness of the whole state of affairs in the form of "being-white." This is an intuition which is *founded upon* the same percept and yet has a distinct *object* of its own such as 'being'; the perceived thing *per se* 'serves only as an elucidatory example', a 'documented case' of the universality of the ideal object.⁶

All those which cannot be wrapped up with individual particular percepts, those which cannot be made into specific variables as objective "stuff" to be perceived—calls Husserl "categorical forms." None of those categorical forms, none of the 'a', 'the', 'and', 'or', 'if', and the propositional elements of quantity, modality, number are in the object sensuously perceived, for they all lack being of reality with their meaning essences completely nonempirical.

Without changing the meaning and function of intuition, one should be able to say now about a non-sensuous perception; Husserl calls it "categorical intuition." Categorical intuition is an intuition having universal idealities as its objects of perception, i.e. non-sensory ideal concepts and forms such as aggregate, infinity, totalities, pluralities, numbers, state of affairs etc. They are just as objects as objects of sensible intuition insofar as they satisfy the conditions of intuitive objectivity, i.e. givenness and presence. Categorical intuition, a rather 'rebellious' notion against Kant's dualistic rationality, now becomes not only possible, but necessary with Husserl. While in Kant categories or concepts are *apriori conditions* for the knowledge of an object of possible experience but nowise themselves to be possibly experienced. In Husserl, however, category *itself is to be an object* to be directly given in intuition; it is possible to be experienced. Given that fulfillment means making present in person, categorical intuition makes universality *per se* present. Through the categorical intuition, ideal object, pure idea as such, is to be directly grasped in its full universality at one time.

2) The founding-founded, inseparably-separated relational dialectic

The name for the new epistemological relation working for the categorical intuition is a *founding-founded* relation which represents the phenomenological way in which the *I-think* reaches the objectivity of the world.⁷ The categorical intuition is a "founded

⁶ Husserl(2001b), §41

⁷ In Husserlian context, the *founding-founded relation* fundamentally characterizes the structure of part-whole relation. With the notion of foundation, Husserl translates part-whole relation into the relation of non-identical mutual dependency. For the phenomenological reestablishment of Part-Whole relationship, see particularly Husserl(2001b), Investigations III & IV.

act” on an actual perceptual intuition. Nonetheless, it is simultaneously capable of an a priori independent epistemological performance of direct and immediate apprehension of the ideal meaning of logical forms and concepts. In this regard, the founding-founded complexity involved in the categorical intuition represents a kind of dialectical relation between non-independence and independence, between separability and inseparability; ‘dialectical’ first and foremost in a quite primitive Platonic sense of ‘divisionary within and for a unifying synthesis’ , which embeds a concept of relational hierarchy in it, and also in a Hegelian sense that an affirmation of independence and separability essentially contains within itself a moment of self-negation, namely, dependence and inseparability. But a peculiar phenomenon of this phenomenological dialectic is that the two ‘opposites’ in no way conflict with each other: in this sense, it is farthest from both Hegelian and Kantian dialectic. What should be clearly seen is that, strictly divided, those opposites are always already monadically unified, i.e. indivisibly, non-contradictingly.

However, Husserlian monad does not unilaterally correspond to a Leibnizian ontological substance, either, even though sharing with it some essential attributes such as indivisibility and unity. One thus should be careful when saying that in Husserl reason is monadic, as opposed to Kant⁸; reason is fundamentally monadic with Husserl, not necessarily in regard to the simplicity of reason as substance, but rather in terms of its function of monadizing—unifying—Idea with experience. The famous Husserlian expression from the beginning, “One All-encompassing reason,” speaks precisely for such monadic tendency of cognitive motion, which in itself counteracts to the limited and divided Kantian intellect. What is monadic in the end is the relation as such. Idea and experience, theory and givenness are not to be contradicting in terms of the possibility of knowing as in Kant, but essentially inseparable, mutually dependent, in Husserl.

In sum, the objectivity of the categorial forms as such can never be separately perceived without intimation with a real founding intuition; yet they ‘exist’ as absolutely independent actualities at the same time in order to make the real *known*. The categorial intuition, i.e. the eidetic seeing, releases the categorial forms themselves independently and thereby grants the experience of the real a price of legitimate knowledge. In this way, a definite hierarchy in terms of the epistemic power is set up between a real particular case and an ideal universal prototype, between two generically differentiated perceptive acts.

4. Husserlian Antinomy as the Principle of Ontological Placement of Being

1) The ontological differentiation between the ideal and the real

The meaning and role of non-independence is never simply the same as dependence, never implies a low-positionality. Non-independence, namely, foundedness, phenomenologically understood, rather has an intent of a higher *ideal necessity*, which deserves a definitely ‘separate’ *place* with regard to its meaning value. Likewise, the

⁸ See Husserl(1980), §14 : “Inclusion of the Ontologies in Phenomenology.”

independence of the founding real percept does not mean a validatory self-sufficiency of self-evidence; rather the non-independence of the founded consciousness of the ideal object represents self-sufficiency in terms of its presentifiability.

In this qualitative-functionally intertwined relational complex between founding dependence and founded self-sufficiency lies a logical 'perplexity' where the hierarchy as a measure of epistemological potential operates in such a peculiar direction from the founded to the founding, so that what is prior logico-literally, namely, the founding element, comes to be what is dependent phenomenologico-dialectically; as a result, the founded element takes up the prior in terms of the validating power position. This 'oddity' is to go away only with an inversion of the relational order by the insertion of an ontological hierarchy.

We do not deny but in fact emphasize, that there *is a fundamental categorical split between ideal being and real being*; between being as Species and being as what is individual. The conceptual unity of predication likewise splits into two essentially different sub-species according as we affirm and deny properties of individuals, or affirm or deny general determination of Species. (Husserl 2001a, 150, emphases added)

The most rigorous split is now structurally *premade* strictly with regard to being in Husserl between *the real* and *the ideal*. The real and the ideal are the two most tenacious and most fundamental categories of phenomenological being surviving all modifications and extension throughout Husserl's phenomenology as a whole. The ontological differentiation of the ideal being from the real being is essential, not only as a metaphysical condition for the experience of truth, but for phenomenological thinking at all: "one must clearly grasp what the ideal is, both intrinsically and in relation to the real, how this idea stands to the real, how it can be immanent in it and so come to knowledge." (Husserl 2001a, 120) The ideal, for Husserl, both as the innate quality of Idea and itself as a form of object as such to be intuited, is most conspicuously characterized with its complete independence from the conditions that determine the totality of the real. Correlatively, the real represents something consisting of the totality of nature, which stands up 'against' the ideal in regard to its objective essences. The being of the real is to be determined exactly with reference and in essential relation to the way in which the ideal exists. By the same token, what the ideal is intrinsically, is revealed and affirmed with and through the determination of what the real is. They are going to be 'ontologico-categorically' differentiated from each other in the essentially constitutive relation.

2) Antinomy as an Ontological Incommensurability

In this way, already at the most primitive stage of phenomenology, ideality fundamentally as a meaning property denotes a property of *being*: *Idea* is a being as that

which “remains in itself” and “retains its ideal being.” (Husserl 2001a, 86) It is something that is ‘there’ as a pure “ideal possibility” as “the being or holding” of universality, that is, as a “possibility in regard to the being of empirical cases.” (ibid) What that being of ideality specifically refers to is *being qua being*, not a being derived or constituted, i.e., being whose existential meaning ground comes from the being of itself, namely, being given in itself. It denotes being of the most evident actuality in the sense of self-sufficiency, i.e., that which “*appears as actual and self-given.*” (Husserl 2001a, 282, bolds added)

In contrast to the self-giveness of ideal being, the being of the real world is given in the form of the “general positing [*Setzung*]” (Husserl 1983, 57) in the attitude that characterizes the reflective style of positive natural sciences. The “natural attitude,” so names Husserl, asserts the true existence of the real world always in the mode of a thesis and thereby inheres, that is, essentially, a tendency to frame any ‘thingly’ experience within formal predication. For Husserl, such being of reality merely represents a *posited* givenness, which means nothing other than that it is “predicative-thematically formed.” If being and remaining in this natural attitude, experience present to my consciousness is always already thematic; it is already a product of thought. The totality of the real as the being of the positedly given is not existence as such subject to an “original immediate experience,” but rather existence as always already registered within a predicative form.

Likewise, there are two types of certainties which concern fundamentally different “kinds of being,”⁹ namely, the certainty of the being of the real and the certainty of the being of the irreal[*reell*]-ideal; the former certainty, i.e., the certainty of the existence of the world, indicates a thematically registered sense grasped as being certain, while the latter absolute evidence as that which justifies that very registration. Each different type concretely corresponds to the region of *physis* and the region of pure *noesis*, respectively. Such contrast of the two certainties and regions now refers to an *ontological barrier* set up between the real and the ideal-irreal; it represents an “abysmal distance” that is supposed to be passed through during the *epochē*. However, what has become more and more clear and significant is precisely *the distance* itself between *this* world immersed in the natural attitude and *that* world of pure consciousness taken off from that attitude.

With that installation of the barrier, however, the two domains are to be immediately and essentially *related* precisely in that disconnection, as that disconnection. All this happened on different levels. The former—disconnection—institutes an ontological relation and the latter—interconnection—announces an epistemological relation, as had been altogether clearly manifest already in the *Logical Investigations* with the notion

⁹ The differentiation of being into the being of the real and the being of the ideal makes Husserl launch the program of “regional ontology” which is interested in a discernment of ontological essences of different species of objects in terms of a strict distinction of the regions to which they must belong. Hence the clarification of distinct regions of being directly and essentially corresponds to a distinction of the “kinds of being,” the expression of which Ludwig Landgrebe used in his article “Regions of Beings and Regional Ontologies in Husserl’s Phenomenology” (Landgrebe (1981), 135).

of the categorial intuition. The monadic epistemological integration of the play of the ideal into the whole of the act of understanding is precisely conditioned upon such most strictly dualistic ontological disintegration of the essence of the ideal-irreal being from that of the real being. The categorial intuition itself was already a form of such act of setting up an ontological barricade between the two dwelling *places* to which the corresponding objects belong.

That bar signifies nothing else than an *ontological incommensurability* in the sense that it cannot be broken into by those conditions that determine the being of the real. Precisely upon such ontological incommensurability, the founded character of categorial objectivity can turn to be itself *founding*. Precisely in such ontological irreconcilability lies Husserlian ‘antidote’ to the Kantian antinomy that was phenomenologically criticized as having been originated from a metaphysical confusion about the regional essences of different “classes” of being.

3) Transcendence and Immanence

Transcendence and immanence designating two fundamentally different modes of givenness of objects in their relation to pure consciousness, are introduced precisely in this theorizing context of the mutually incommensurable ontological relation between the region of the real and the region of the irreal-ideal.¹⁰ Husserl describes a transcendent object as an object that presents itself to consciousness only in the mode of “adumbration.” (Husserl 1983, 87) It shows itself, whether actually in person, or in memory, or in phantasy or in imagination, in whatever modified forms of cognition, in a constantly flowing chain of consciousness of lived experiences, only as an ever-changing part or side or moment, that is, “of essential necessity.” (ibid) It never gives itself a whole including every component of its being all at once in one consciousness. This is the mode of givenness of the whole of physical being; the essential modal characteristic of this being, that is, the being of a physical thing, is “inadequacy” and “contingency,” for it could be given otherwise on the horizon of lived experience. For Husserl the contingency of physical being means, as it is, the contingency of the very posited *thesis* of the world’s spatiotemporal-causally bound existence. As said, the existence of the world is nothing but the contingent *sense* of that thesis: “*beyond that* it is nothing.” (Husserl 1983, 112, original italics) From that, the existential necessity of reality has gone.

As opposed to the one-sided, adumbrative givenness of the transcendent object, an immanent object is given in an “absolute” mode, keeping all the connotations of the infinite, the total and the whole within its meaning, though with its own peculiar kind of inadequacy.¹¹ The immanent object is present *within* consciousness, not as a procedurally identified unity through adumbrative concatenations of consciousness outside of consciousness, but already as a unity as such of the simplicity of the absolute,

¹⁰ See Husserl 1983, §§.38-46, esp. §44

¹¹ Husserl 1983, 97

as the perceiving as such, the appearing as such, the adumbrating as such. The manner in which the appearing as such appears to consciousness, i.e., the appearance of appearance, the perception of perceiving, and so forth, is that it is “absolutely” present *with* and *within* the movement of lived experience, as the movement as such. The being of the Ego who perceives that consciousness in its immanence is an “absolute actuality” completely free from any changeability or alterability of a “presumptive actuality” of the world of physical things which is exposed to a constant dubitability in the sense that a non-being is always part of its being on the horizon of possibility as conceivability.¹² The pure consciousness as an immanent being is “indubitably absolute being in the sense that by essential necessity ‘*nulla re indiget ad existendum.*’” (ibid, 110)

consciousness considered in its “purity” must be held to be a ***self-contained complex of being***, a complex of ***absolute being*** into which nothing can penetrate and out of which nothing can slip, to which nothing is spatiotemporally external and which cannot be within any spatiotemporally complex, which cannot be affected by any physical thing and cannot exercise causation upon any physical thing.(Husserl 1983, 112, original italics, bolds added)

Now what the absolute means in Husserl’s phenomenology has been clear: it means nothing but self-containedness as itself-giveness and self-sufficiency, namely, immanence as such, precisely in counter-position to the posited givenness, namely, transcendence. With that, a definite *reversal of the meaning and function of being-relations* takes place.¹³ What had been traditionally considered as the first ground of confirmation, namely, the being of the real world, has become a “secondary” derivative sense in relation to the first absolute being of consciousness.

4) Relational antinomy as a logic of placement

For Husserl, transcendence and immanence represents an absolute structure of the modality of being, having nothing to do with the finitude of human rationality or inadequacy of human perception. It is an eidetic law of presentation of objects on which the thing in itself [*Gegenstand*] takes. Insofar as the objects are physical things, for instance, they cannot but be given transcendentally, *of eidetic necessity*, even to God.¹⁴ Not only immanence, but transcendence is also an *absolutely determined being character* of the being of *physis*. The first relation that the absoluteness determines is precisely the eidetic *separation* of the regions of objects; second, this essentially separate eideticity becomes an immediate basis for the determination of another relation, namely, *constitutional hierarchy*. Consciousness is absolute as “constituting being,” in the sense of the *absolutely first* source of the activation of all cognitive possibilities.

The meaning of the first here refers precisely to the *first placement*: the first is that

¹² ibid, §46.

¹³ ibid, §50.

¹⁴ ibid, §43.

“which must already be there so that something real can manifest itself,” as Heidegger points out.¹⁵ The absolute, namely, the immanent consciousness, exists as having all those characters in its *region*, so that such *region-characters* themselves can be delved out, described, clarified, that is, scientifically thematized. Precisely this *placedness* in an absolute region constitutes the ontic style of phenomenological consciousness; the pure consciousness is ontically styled always as *being placed*, as *being in the sphere of the absolute first*. Being is made “seen” only as *being placed* in a certain sphere, as being represented by that sphere.

What all this shows is that the structural essence of the phenomenological being is a peculiar kind of *relation*: immanent consciousness is ontico-ontologically absolute, precisely because of its *complete non-dependence* in terms of constitution and its *ultimate priority* in the constitutive order, but always and of necessity “compared to any and every reality.”¹⁶ Likewise, the totality of the given, the reality is *absolutely* ontologically dependent on the horizon structure of possibility and the work of intentionality of rational consciousness on that horizon; it is always *derivative*, but that status of being-derivative is *absolute*, also only and always *in relation to* the absolute being of the consciousness. In other words, the “inessentiality” of the being of the real shows itself as *absolute*. *Physis is absolutely relative* to consciousness, reality suffers from *absolute non-sufficiency* essentially needing the other primary being in order for the being-meaning of its own to be verified.

Consequently, being qua relation is meant always as *being placed* in Husserl: by being placed in absoluteness, being as truth is to be discerned, precisely in relation to, vis-à-vis non-being, namely, a mere sense of being.¹⁷ Moreover, by and with being placed in the absolute region, the absolute creates a place *for* the other—the non-absolute—, by saying in simultaneity that the unmixed exterior of purity is the place *for* the sake of giving a meaning to the Out; it endows the meaning of relativity to that other place, as also absolute. According to the antinomic relational formula of transcendence and immanence, the immanent and the transcendent, the ideal-irreal and the real, have to co-exist in such hierarchic administration of power: it is a legal *code* of what kind of communication is possible between the two modes of being, and how they can speak to each other in that possibility.

5. The Moment of the Political in the Phenomenological Antinomy

Despite that the self-understanding of a motivational end of phenomenology is that phenomenology should aim to clarify and thematize the ultimately “disinterested

¹⁵ Heidegger(1985), 105

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Apparently, this sense of place finds its origin in Aristotle; in Aristotle, to be actualized is to be given a place in the order of beings. It also transparently revives in the Heideggerian motto that “language is a dwelling of being.” In Kant, too, the impossibility of talking about the pure transcendental subject as such is rendered to the problem of ‘How to designate a proper place for thought.’ Determination of being as a legal designation of a place is shaped with Husserl somewhat in the most ‘finished,’ most dramatic, and perhaps most ‘formidable’ fashion in this tradition of Western metaphysics.

[*uninteressierten/unbeteiligten*]” essence of *thēoria*,¹⁸ Husserl’s phenomenology, from the very beginning launched itself as a clearly *interest-laden* project. In other words, the incipient motif that initiates the official move of phenomenology with the investigation into logic and has persisted from then on, is something that can be understood from the point of view of a strong interest. One most impending and long-lasting Husserlian phenomenological interest is a kind of *geopolitical* interest in a *re-mapping* of the rules of epistemology; a re-drawing of the constitutional diagram of truth in the form of a re-shaping of the whole field system of science in the philosophical matrix is a consistent political interest that mobilizes Husserl’s phenomenology as a whole.

By the political, in relation to the structure of the phenomenological being, we mean, first of all and above all, that which is concerned with *placement* in certain power-relation. We define as the political the structural character in which the relation between the placed beings is identified in a hierarchical *power-relation*, without the investment of which the placement itself does not occur, and which itself is an effect of the regional-ontological demarcation. The key intent of that placement is, once again, *relation*. Giving places, designating places, shifting places, in the form of a bordering— all mean precisely a setup and an administration of certain definite political relation between those *differentiae* undergoing the placement. The specific object on which the placement is acted is *being* in Husserl’s case and the political of which we are catching sight indicates the character of an ontological relation between the regions determined according to the phenomenological rule of differentiation. On the other hand, the political is brought about with the phenomenological gesture to claim a legal *right* to decide the rule of the production and the management of the “legitimacy of the highest and ultimately necessary indubitability which leaves remaining no unasked and unsettled questions.” (Husserl 1974, 23)

Now in the antinomic relational hierarchy between the two regions and kinds of being, the political specified in the meaning above works in such a way that the ideal, corresponding to the subjective-transcendental, metaphysically takes ‘care’ of the totality of the real; with the ‘care’, the ideal *provides* the absolute self-evident ground for any formal signification and in return, the totality of the natural-real acquires a legitimate meaning of its being. This care represents no other than the free transcendental play of subjective intentionality. With that relational-foundational structure of the intentional care, reason is neither a mere Cartesian natural light nor a Kantian legislator in Husserl, but an exclusively administrative and implementing *political* power as such which governs all epistemological relations in order to obtain ultimate security for the possibility of knowing. That power bespeaks itself precisely through the ontological antinomy between the real and the ideal.

Ultimately, the overall structure of the antinomy places the ideal-normative in a dialectically oppositional relation to the real-factual. Within the relational structure, the

¹⁸ In Husserl, a philosopher, a phenomenologist eventually, is described as a “disinterested—nonparticipant—spectator” putting every worldly-thingly state of affairs to a universal question in a totally pure theoretical attitude, which means nothing but “doing a critique.” See Husserl (1970), 239 & “The Vienna Lecture” in *ibid*, 285.

two antinomic modes of being constantly reaching each other by the founding-founded, transcendent-immanent needs. Yet, the manner of interdependency is precisely such that the transcendental-ideal relentlessly exercises its positional power from without onto the natural-real, to delimit the possibility for the latter to *be* as a justified being; within the unity, the discriminate position of the ideal being itself is decided up as an absolutely exclusive reference point to decide both the urgency of *telos* and the ultimacy of *logos*. In this manner, a kind of geopolitical structure is set into the antinomy of the phenomenological being, in which a specific epistemological-cultural power relation is formulated and set out to function, instituting a set of new ontological meaning-value.

On the other hand, the phenomenological regional ontological antinomy as a logic of placement is attuned to the concept of politics of Rancièrian type, more or less. According to Rancière, politics arises with an ontological consciousness of the place; it is the logic of discordance over the proper boundary of the place due for the faction which feels itself deserved for that place.¹⁹ The Rancièrian place here indicates fundamentally a political place where the possibility of speech is reified²⁰; being means exactly being placed in order to speak. Such Rancièrian conception of placement is particularly conditioned by the possibility of a constant change of the boundary of the “space where parties, or lack of parts have been defined.”²¹

The claiming of such place is a correlate to the “questioning” of the existing order of relationship.²² It *does* delegitimize the existing order of beings and thereby reconfigures the relational structure, offering a new rule for the distribution of legitimacy. In this sense, Rancièrian concept of placement consumes the major geopolitical interest discovered in Husserl. But Husserlian placement has nothing to do with the “coming to existence of a place into phenomena” but has everything to do with a “going beyond the phenomena” to uncover the “concealed” place primordially reserved. In Husserl, it is not the case that a place for politics comes into existence, but that the political manifests itself with an ontological consciousness of the ideal place in eternal existence always already. In case of Husserl, the political is structurally internalized within the phenomenological transcendental and the relational antinomy of being.

In this radical internality emerges a self-consciousness of the ideal part about its originarily exceptional placedness vis-à-vis the manner in which the real is placed. The original subjective consciousness of always already being placed, having to be placed, in such manner and mode, corresponds precisely to the consciousness of self-power as that which is “being always already there” *incommensurably* from and for the sake of the other forms of being.²³ That the ideal power is absolutely validated by being placed at the ideal region preserving its full purity represents a phenomenological *justice of*

¹⁹ Rancière (1999)

²⁰ Ibid., Chapter 2.

²¹ Ibid, 30.

²² Ibid, 36.

²³ See especially Husserl (1970), Parts I-II and “The Vienna Lecture” in Ibid, 269-299. In addition, the notion of self-evidence in such sense is widely discussed in “The Origin of Geometry” in Ibid, 353-378.

immanence as that which is demanded from the idea of science and theory as such.²⁴

The origin of all these political phenomena is precisely the ontological structural antinomy between the ideal and the real. In Husserlian framework, politics is present directly in the metaphysical flow of the legitimacy-founding power from the ideal to the real; the absolute antinomic ontological boundary serves the niche where any meaningful speech is allowed to begin and the essential theoretical substratum on which phenomenological talk is possible at all.

6. Conclusion: A Positive Antinomy

It is Adorno who picked up the name antinomy first as a systemic fault of Husserl's phenomenology.²⁵ Sharp and brilliant as it is, his analysis is mainly focused on the *Logical Investigations* particularly on the antinomic mechanism of the categorical intuition in which the immediate wholeness of the pure presence of the universal Idea is 'hypostatized' into a particular perceptual event of *tode-ti* which is always already mediated by what is not itself.²⁶

But Husserlian antinomy, as I have translated it into an ontologico-teleological antinomy, rules over in fact the entire phase of Husserl's phenomenology. For Husserl, the term "antinomy" can serve an index referring to the unique and most problematic Husserlian dialectic of inclusion and exclusion with which a specific epistemological power relation is positively formulated in such a way to establish a meaning hierarchy between theoreticity and normativity, between totality and infinity, between phenomena and essence, between part and whole, between meaning and origin, between subjectivity and objectivity, between crisis and critique, between antiquity and modernity, and at last between Europe and all the non-European Rest. All those relations, phenomenologically captured as enigmatic, are in an inclusively-excluded, exclusively-including relational symbiosis throughout Husserl precisely and entirely grounded on the antinomy between the ideal and the real. It reveals us in the end a peculiar manner in which Husserl's phenomenology places the universal-ideal in the hierarchical power relation to the particular-real within the structure of the totality of all-encompassedness. As such, the Husserlian ontological-structural antinomy as a logic of placement performs a politics on the level of being.

Such phenomenological antinomy no longer yields a Kantian situation that the rational dialectical striving for the ideal conflicts with the rational critical understanding of the real. Instead, the antinomic presence of the ideal itself is to be the essential condition for the possibility of knowing at all; understanding can complete its mission rather than being limited precisely thanks to the uncompromising ontological irreconcilability between the two modes and regions of being. The ontological oppositional relation to the otherness is inherent to the very being structure of the phenomenological reason.

The Husserlian antinomy is fundamentally positive-teleological rather than

²⁴ See Introduction of Husserl(1978),

²⁵ Adorno (1982)

²⁶ Ibid, 119-120 & 203-204

negative-dialectical in Kantian function. The antinomy in Husserl is something that must preemptively exist *for the sake of* the unity of rationality, rather than being a consequential confrontation with it; it is precisely the incompatible state of the ideal being thanks to, and on the ground of which the route for the justification of the power of reason opens. In this sense, Husserlian antinomy does not appeal to the negative critical function as self-restriction and self-discipline of reason as in Kant, but stands for an absolute positivity which makes reason constantly affirm and reaffirm its infinite metaphysico-political power to construct meaning and decide legitimacy.

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