Internalism and externalism in transcendental phenomenology

Check for updates

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

European Journal of Philosophy **WILEY**

Internalism and externalism in transcendental phenomenology

Christian Skirke

Afdeling Filosofie, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Correspondence
Christian Skirke, Afdeling Filosofie, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Oude Turfmarkt 141-147, 1012GC Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Email: c.skirke@uva.nl

Abstract

In this paper, I discuss an alternative conception of internalism and externalism for transcendental phenomenology. Recent debates of internalism and externalism in phenomenology start from familiar notions of internalism and externalism about content. This, I believe, is an unhappy match: internalism and externalism in common philosophical usage are perspectives on representational content; yet phenomenology deals with intentionality, which is not primarily representational. I argue that phenomenology is better served by understanding the distinction between internalism and externalism as a distinction about constitution. Drawing on Kant and Davidson for inspiration, I explore varieties of this alternative—transcendental—understanding of internalism and externalism in the classical phenomenological literature. I conclude with a suggestion on how this alternative conception of internalism and externalism could be put to use. As its founders noted, phenomenology occupies an uneasy place between idealism and realism because idealism and realism are metaphysical positions with distinctive ontological commitments; yet phenomenology purports to examine structures of subjectivity without committing to any specific ontology. To this day, the phenomenological literature is divided on whether this is a weakness or strength. Siding with the latter view, I suggest that transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism allow us to explain, and

potentially to challenge, ontological commitments such as those of transcendental idealism and eliminative materialism.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, phenomenology has been sitting uncomfortably in the traditional philosophical landscape. Its founders struggled with giving phenomenology the right place between realism and idealism. The difficulty they faced was that idealism and realism are metaphysical theories. Metaphysical theories are concerned with the nature of *everything* and thus offer dedicated views on *all there is*.[1] Phenomenology, by contrast, undertakes to examine the structures of subjectivity without adopting any position on *all there is*.[2]

Recent discussions run into similar problems when trying to characterize the phenomenological project in terms of internalism and externalism. The difficulty they face is that internalism and externalism in common philosophical usage are perspectives on *representational content*. Phenomenology, by contrast, discusses content in the context of generic intentionality, which cannot be assumed to be representational.

The aim of this paper is to outline a conception of internalism and externalism that reflects these difficulties and offers a perspective on their solution. I am going to start with a critical overview of recent debates on internalism and externalism in phenomenology. My critique is mainly concerned with the fact that these debates stay too close to what I have just called internalism and externalism in common philosophical usage, namely internalism and externalism about representational content. I argue that phenomenology can make better use of the distinction between internalism and externalism if the distinction between internalism and externalism is applied to questions of *constitution* rather than questions of *content*. Drawing on Kant and Davidson, I discuss what internalism and externalism about constitution broadly involve and then spell out what the shift from content to constitution signifies for transcendental phenomenology. I conclude with some reflections on the explanatory role that internalism and externalism about constitution can take with respect to ontological commitments. These reflections are meant to highlight in which ways this different understanding of internalism and externalism helps phenomenology to distinguish its project from conventional metaphysics and to take a critical stance towards views on *all there is*.

2 | INTERNALISM AND EXTERNALISM IN RECENT PHENOMENOLOGICAL DEBATES

Phenomenology investigates subjectivity. Its access to subjectivity is experience; and it interprets experience as spontaneous activity of the subject. This activity is intentional in character, which means that it can be directed at *anything whatever*, at generic phenomena rather than things, substances, natures, stages, slices, data, or facts. Transcendental phenomenology is primarily concerned with structures that are necessary or constitutive for the possibility of intentional experience. These structures enable subjects to encounter *anything whatever*. Ontological commitments, by contrast, fix *all there is* in place as things, substances, natures, stages, slices, data, or facts rather than generic phenomena. Such commitments restrict the range of intentional experience and thus limit our phenomenological access to subjectivity. Therefore, transcendental phenomenology has methodological reasons to suspend ontological commitments to *all there is* and focus directly on *anything whatever* instead.

Ontological neutrality is an important desideratum for phenomenology.[3] It has been associated, through Husserl's work, with the Pyrrhonian technique of *epochē*. Analogous to the Pyrrhonian suspension of judgment, the phenomenological *epochē* means that we leave the ontological status of the items we experience out of consideration. Husserl's idea was that the suspension of ontological commitments facilitates investigations into the constitution of intentional objects.[4] If we remove all constraints by reality, actuality, or possibility from whatever appears to a subject, we get access to the full constitutive scope of subjectivity.

This approach has been in question at least since Heidegger's *Being and Time*. There, Heidegger pioneered the oft-repeated accusation that Husserl's phenomenology retains tacit ontological commitments which are in conflict with its programmatic ambitions and methodological desiderata (Heidegger, 1962, p. 73, see Bell, 1990; Carman, 2003; Dreyfus, 1991). Several recent publications try to circumnavigate this conflict by casting phenomenological problems in terms of internalism and externalism (see McCulloch, 2003; Rowlands, 2003; Crowell, 2008, 2013; Zahavi, 2008, 2017). These terms are congenial to the phenomenological project as I have described it in the introduction. Although internalism and externalism are often embedded in ontologically committed views of one kind or another, internalism and externalism do not carry any particular ontological commitment of their own.

The ontological openness of internalism and externalism is evident from mainstream discussions of mental content or linguistic meaning. Internalism understands mental content in a *narrow* sense: all relevant features of our representations of the world are of the mind and independent of the world; externalism claims that mental content is *wide*: it is determined at least in part by the way the world is (Burge, 1988; Fodor, 1987). Analogously, semantic internalism locates all relevant meaning-giving features in the mind; semantic externalism places some of them in the world (Kripke, 1980; Putnam, 1975). In debating whether mental content is wide or narrow, or whether the meaning has its source within us or outside us, however, internalism and externalism are not tied to specific ideas on *all there is*.

One contentious issue between internalism and externalism is Cartesian individualism, the position that attributes all determination of meaning and experience to the solitary self (Burge, 1979). This issue also resonates throughout recent phenomenological debates, especially around Husserl's work. Some (for example Carman, 2003; Dreyfus, 1982, 1991; Rowlands, 2003; Smith & McIntyre, 1984) portray Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as a particularly stringent version of Cartesian individualism. On their interpretation, Husserl uses the *epochē* in order to dissociate experience and meaning from the world: all we need in order to get subjectivity into view flows from the spontaneous intentional charge of the subject, *nóēsis*, and its internal objective correlate, *nóēma* (Husserl, 1982, pp. 214–5, see Føllesdal, 1969).[5] This makes the stringent internalist interpretation of Husserl easy: we can understand intentional experiences and their contents without taking into account factors apart from consciousness.

Stringent internalism and its counterpart, methodological solipsism, seem palpable in Husserl's works, most famously in his remarks from §49 of *Ideas I* where he asserts that consciousness is absolute because "*nulla 're' indiget ad existendum*" ("it needs no further 'thing' to exist", Husserl, 1982, p. 110; compare Bernet, Kern, & Marbach, 1993, pp. 66–9). Those who take this angle on Husserl tend to interpret existential phenomenologists like Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty as externalists about content. On this view, existential phenomenology situates our way with things in the context of the world so that it is not exclusively by virtue of *Dasein*, being-for-itself, or embodied consciousness that things are ready-to-hand, in-themselves, or situated around us. They *also* show up in these ways because they inhere in the same phenomenological field as the subject (see for example Heidegger, 1962, pp. 114–22; Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 60–5). This gives the environment of the subject a decisive role with respect to the contents that the subject encounters.

Although internalism and externalism as such are indifferent to *all there is*, it is worth keeping in mind that, in common philosophical usage, internalism denies, and externalism affirms, that ordinary things from our material environment—paradigmatic extensions of our ideas or expressions—have a hand in determining mental or semantic content by causal force or metaphysical necessity (Putnam, 1975, pp. 230–2, 246). What makes a latchkey ready-to-hand, by contrast, differs from its causal role in unlocking one's front door: the latchkey is ready-to-hand because of its place in a network of meanings that make up one's domestic sphere. Therefore, in light of common philosophical usage, we have to qualify the statement that existential phenomenologists like Heidegger, Sartre, or Merleau-Ponty offer us an externalist perspective on content and thus treat content as wide content. This statement is true only if we do not require wide content to stand in a causal or metaphysical relation to ordinary transcendent things.[6] Instead, we should say that content in phenomenology is externalist when it is world-involving in some blanket sense.

There is broad agreement in the recent phenomenological literature that the externalism of existential phenomenology is preferable to Husserl's internalism because externalism delivers phenomenology from the spectre of Cartesian individualism (Dreyfus, 1991; Rowlands, 2003). According to some voices, however, Cartesian individualist interpretations overstate Husserl's unworldliness (Drummond, 1990; Sokolowski, 1984; Zahavi, 2008, 2017).

Sokolowski (1984) suggests that phenomenological inquiry simply performs a "gestalt shift" (p. 114) on ordinary things, leaving them as they are while reflecting on the modalities of our experience of them. For Drummond (1990), the *epochē* consists in "a series of attitudinal changes or changes of focus, all of which maintain their hold on the objectivity simply given in the natural attitude, although the index with which this objectivity is given is changed" (p. 54). And Zahavi (2004) contends that the point of the phenomenological reduction is "to explore and describe the transcendent spatio-temporal world, but now in a new and different manner" (p. 47).

This alternative interpretation can be backed up with passages from Husserl as well, even passages in close vicinity to those on which Cartesian individualist interpretations rely. Husserl writes:

> [T]hough we have excluded the whole world with all physical things, living beings, and humans, our-selves included [, s]trictly speaking, we have not lost anything but rather have gained the whole of absolute being which, rightly understood, contains within itself, "constitutes" within itself, all worldly transcendencies. (Husserl, 1982, p. 113)

In this passage, Husserl distinguishes between a strict—transcendental—and a loose—psychological—sense of the *epochē*. The loose interpretation suggests that the *epochē* brackets out the material or commonsense things from our ontology, thus giving rise to the impression that the world has been removed from further consideration. According to the strict interpretation, however, the experience remains world-involving in so far as the particular contents of intentional experience are retained as contents "of the world" (see Zahavi, 2008, p. 364). If we combine this interpretation with the reminder above—in the case of phenomenology, ordinary things do not determine content through causal force or metaphysical necessity—Husserl's transcendental phenomenology seems to leave some room for wide content. Even if purely immanent features of consciousness are *constitutive* for intentional experience and its objects (see Section 4 below), conditions for intentional experience need not *apply* in isolation.[7] For example, it is fundamental for Husserl's discussion of objectivity that consciousness can configure itself as one subject among others and thus constitute contents of its experience that can be objective because other subjects can perceive them in the same way (Husserl, 1999, p. 127). Although exclusively subjective as far as constitution is concerned, this con-figuration introduces extraneous factors in the individuation and determination of content, namely standpoints apart from the standpoint from which the content is originally experienced. The presence of these factors in objective experience underwrites the presence of wide content in Husserl—granted that wide content need not have causal or metaphysical connections with ordinary things. But this proviso does not just apply to Husserl; as we have seen above, it equally holds for existential phenomenology and its externalist perspective on content.[8] With this in mind, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology does not look different from Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty.

The main problem with this conclusion seems to me that externalist interpretations of phenomenology become too easy and overly general. Once we suspend causal force or metaphysical necessity from our considerations, once we call content wide just because it is world-involving in a blanket sense, contingent contents are "of the world" sim-ply on the grounds that arbitrary objects of experience, cognition, or sense-making enjoy relative independence from the subject of this or that particular intentional act. Indeed, under these conditions, any transcendental account is likely to yield wide content (see Rudd, 2003, pp. 49–53). Even firm proponents of the content externalist interpreta-tion of Husserl doubt in the end that the distinction between internalism and externalism can tell us anything new about transcendental phenomenology. Zahavi contends that this distinction does not reveal anything that could not be expressed more easily in the idiom of realism and idealism (Zahavi, 2008, pp. 371–2; Zahavi, 2017, pp. 119–20).[9] If we reconsider Husserl's content externalism in this more familiar language, we get the following picture: while con-tingent experiential contents as they stand are world-involving, their genesis and constitution is governed by tran-scendental subjectivity, just as transcendental idealism claims (Zahavi, 2017, p. 135). On this interpretation, Husserl looks like a sophisticated internal realist along the lines of McDowell or Putnam.[10]

We should not rush from content externalism to internal realism, however, as we would lose important nuances on our way. Zahavi (2017, pp. 117–8) suggests that phenomenological content externalism is based on the fact that

mind and world are *co-constituted*. However, we could also see with reference to Husserl's reflections on objectivity that world-involving content does not imply world-involving constitution. As the example of Husserlian objective experience suggests, the intentional subject can designate contents *as of the world* or *as for others* without any constitutive assistance from the world itself. In this configuration, the world is nothing more than a repository of *anything whatever* that contingently appears to the subject; only the subject to which *anything whatever* appears is necessary. As long as we take internalism or externalism about semantic or mental content as our model, the distinction between internalism and externalism does not help us capture phenomenologically important constellations of content and constitution. This blind spot calls for a revision of how we employ internalism and externalism in the context of transcendental phenomenology.

3 | TRANSCENDENTAL INTERNALISM AND TRANSCENDENTAL EXTERNALISM

The revised constellation that I want to explore in what follows locates internalism and externalism at the transcendental level. This is not the level of particular experiences and what they *contain* but the level of features that *constitute* intentional experiences and whatever these experiences are about. As transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism are unfamiliar terms, they need some introduction, which is the main purpose of this section. Moreover, their few occurrences in the literature have no immediate relation with phenomenology. I will establish the relevant connections in Sections 4 and 5 below.

According to Allison (2015), the prime example of transcendental internalism is Kant's position on constitution in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. His transcendental internalism is a sophisticated interpretation of internalism about epistemic justification. Epistemic internalism can be understood as content internalism with additional normative specifications. It looks at justification as a mental process that, drawing exclusively on the subject's own reasons and evidences, establishes what the correct object of cognition is (see Conee & Feldman, 2001). Allison makes clear that Kant is not an epistemic internalist of this kind. This is not because Kant endorses externalism about reasons and evidences but because reason and evidence are not the pertinent terms for him. The central normative topic in Kant's epistemology is that of "a priori conditions through which the cognizer grounds the objectivity of his judgments" (Allison, 2015, p. 148). That is, we identify the correct object of cognition against a background of everything *necessary* to make objective claims *possible*. Kant argues at length that the structure of our cognition and nothing else has to provide the normative backing for our knowledge claims (Kant, 1998, A15-6/B29-30). Therefore, his internalism is not an internalism of reasons and evidences; it is concerned with the *enabling* background that *constitutes* our knowledge claims from within the subject. This is why Allison speaks of Kant's *transcendental* internalism.

In essence, Kant's transcendental internalism amounts to the claim that nothing beyond the subject contributes anything necessary to the objectivity of our knowledge claims. Only the arbitrary material of our experiences that comes to us through our perceptions, our memory, or our introspection is independent from us. Kant acknowledges this peculiar independence when he asserts, for example, that getting concrete empirical judgments right is a matter of skill in deploying the categories at one's disposal and ultimately a matter of repeated exposure to the world (Kant, 1998, A133/B172). Therefore, while the overall objectivity of our knowledge claims is established by our cognitive structure alone, how we justify our knowledge claims, whether we succeed in justifying them, or whether we are reliable epistemic subjects, may depend on factors apart from our cognitive structure and thus may occur behind our backs. Internalism about the necessary conditions of possibility for objective knowledge claims—transcendental internalism—is thus compatible with the conventional externalist notion that our successive conceptual representations of the world have wide content.

Like transcendental internalism, transcendental externalism is an unfamiliar quantity. The literature cites Davidson's position on thought and content as the most prominent example of this position (Bridges, 2006; McCulloch, 2003). In

Three Varieties of Knowledge, the *locus classicus* for transcendental externalism, Davidson describes the enabling condition for thoughts with content as a three-way relation between self, others, and the world:

> It takes two points of view to give a location to the cause of a thought, and thus to define its content. We may think of it as a form of triangulation: each of two people is reacting differentially to sensory stimuli streaming in from a certain direction. Projecting the incoming lines outward, the common cause is at their intersection. If the two people now note each other's reactions (in the case of language, verbal reactions), each can correlate these observed reactions with his or her stimuli from the world. A common cause has been determined. The triangle which gives content to thought and speech is complete. But it takes two to triangulate. (Davidson, 2001, pp. 212-3)

It is important to see that Davidson's proposal on content in this passage differs from how wide content is ordinarily understood. Conventional externalism would think of triangulation as something that occurs between representational (propositional) contents and their causes. Although, on the surface, Davidson does give a causal account of the concrete interactions between self, others, and the world, triangulation itself is not located at the empirical or semantic level governed by causality or related metaphysical modalities (see Bridges, 2006, pp. 294–5, 310). As the following passage makes clear, triangulation serves as an enabling background for contentful thoughts and thus takes place on the transcendental level:

> *Until* a base line has been established by communication with someone else, *there is no point* in saying one's own thoughts or words have a propositional content. If this is so, then it is clear that knowledge of another mind *is essential to all thought and all knowledge*. Knowledge of another mind *is possible*, however, *only if* one has knowledge of the world, for *the triangulation which is essential to thought* requires that those in communication recognize that they occupy positions in a shared world. So knowledge of other minds and knowledge of the world *are mutually dependent; neither is possible without the other*. (Davidson, 2001, p. 213, my italics)

This passage discusses triangulation purely in modal terms, without any reference to causal connections: triangulation is indispensable ("essential", "until [X], there is no point in [Y]") for all thought ("neither [knowledge of the world, knowledge of another mind, one's own thoughts] is possible without the other"). Triangulation thus serves as a background condition that enables thought comprehensively. As it includes elements beyond the subject among those *necessary* for the *possibility* of contentful thoughts, namely others and the world, Davidson's position can be called a form of *transcendental* externalism.[11] Transcendental externalism claims that the *constitution* of experiences and their objects is inclusive or world-involving.

To facilitate the passage from Davidson to phenomenology, let us briefly consider McCulloch's (2003) externalist claim that "an adequate characterization of an agent's consciousness must advert to factors in the agent's environment" (p. 12). For McCulloch, this is a specifically phenomenological requirement:

> Phenomenology is to do with the subjective, and externalism *does* invoke the objective: but it does not follow, and it is not true, that the subjective excludes the objective: to know your mind, I need to apprehend your world (in your way). And (to repeat) none of this involves delving into your skull. (McCulloch, 2003, p. 12)

The central tenet of what McCulloch calls *phenomenological externalism* is that subjects have contentful experiences because they can enter one another's world and share contents with others by reciprocating each other's way of looking at the world. By reciprocating the modes in which others experience the world, experience in the subjective perspective becomes intermingled with something beyond the subjective perspective. Therefore, the very makeup of this perspective can be said to include sources beyond the subject.

McCulloch's phenomenological externalism is primarily concerned with content and meaning and thus competes directly with conventional semantic externalism. Still, certain aspects of his position may be given a transcendental interpretation; and these, not entirely incidentally, are the aspects of his position that resonate with Davidson's externalism.[12] As the quote above shows, McCulloch opposes the internalist view that the subjective excludes the objective; and he suggests that recognition of other thinking is necessary for awareness of one's own thoughts. If we give a modal slant to the notion that the subjective includes the objective, phenomenological externalism implies that individual consciousness is made possible by aspects of a shared world. To translate this transcendental version of McCulloch's mutual world-involvement into the language of transcendental phenomenology, subjects can experience their own thinking, and thus be conscious, only on the basis of intentionality other than their own and of a lived context they share with others.

4 | TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY AND TRANSCENDENTAL INTERNALISM

This, finally, brings us to the title topic of this paper: externalism and internalism in transcendental phenomenology. We have seen in Section 3 that internalism and externalism in the transcendental perspective differ on the question of how experience and its objects are constituted. Transcendental internalism argues that the subject is the _exclusive_ source of constitution for experience and its objects—their constitution does not involve the world or others. Transcendental externalism argues that sources besides the subject are _included_ in the constitution of experience and its objects—they are constituted in a way that involves the world or others. In transcendental phenomenology, constitution is concerned with enabling structures that are necessary for aboutness (Welton, 2003, p. 262). We can thus expect that transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism in the phenomenological context express different ideas about the background that makes intentional experiences and engagements with the world possible. In this section and the following one, I am going to look at some classical phenomenological positions and interpret them as instances of transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism.

Central passages from Husserl's middle period—roughly between the publication of _Ideas I_ in 1913 and the publication of _Cartesian Meditations_ in 1931—can be read as statements of transcendental internalism.[13] Let me emphasize that this interpretation is not in tension with what has been argued in Section 2 above, namely that Husserl's transcendental project is compatible with externalism about content. As we could see in our discussion of Kant's transcendental internalism, it is an accident brought about by the world that something happens to cross my visual field at a given point in time; but I alone constitute my visual field as a field of experience. With this in mind, let us turn to Husserl (1982) who suggests that to reflect on the intentional experience and its constitution, we "keep our regard fixed upon the sphere of consciousness and study what we find immanently within it" (p. 65). Once we execute the _epochē_, he adds, "the world of transcendent 'res' is entirely referred to consciousness" as its constitutive source (p. 110). Objects of experience thus owe their standing in experience—their object-like character—to the activity of the subject alone. In Husserl's (1999) own words, "[a]ny 'Objective' object, any object whatever (even an immanent one), points to a structure, _within the transcendental ego_, that is governed by a rule" (p. 53, my italics). This makes transcendental subjectivity the exhaustive and exclusive source of constitution: all _possibilities_ of experience and thus all _possibilities_ of having a world are anchored in transcendental subjectivity.

In his logic lectures, published in English as _Analyses Concerning Active and Passive Synthesis_, Husserl describes constitution as a complex, dynamic, layered synthesis. He writes:

> The great theme of transcendental philosophy is consciousness in general as a storied structure of constitutive accomplishments in whichever new objectivities, objectivities of ever new types, are constituted in ever new levels and layers, in whichever novel self-givings are developed, and belonging to

them, ever novel prepared ways of possible legitimation, of possible ideas of true being. (Husserl, 2001, p. 269)

These levels and layers do not proliferate at random but according to a priori principles:

It is necessary to make all of that intelligible through the phenomenological method, that is, in pure consciousness and in a systematic order. The leading thought is this: *Nothing can be grasped in a stream of consciousness, or rather, in its ego, without this consciousness having accomplished the corresponding intentional genesis*. (Husserl, 2001, p. 270)

Ultimately, the rule-governed and multi-layered architecture of constitution outlined above is the product of synthetic efforts purely on the part of the transcendental subject. These synthetic efforts give rise to a plurality of many-façeted experienceable items, in the following sense: consciousness constitutes intentional experience and its contents because it is able to bestow experiencability on *anything whatever*.

To conclude this section, I want to draw attention to two related details of Husserl's transcendental internalism: on the one hand, he takes constitution to be open-ended and plural; on the other hand, he takes constitution to rest on a unified ground.

For one, Husserl (2001) portrays constitution as an ongoing process of "ever novel self-givings" (p. 269) in which constituted structures can become constitutive for yet other structures. In *Cartesian Meditations*, he uses this feature of constitution to capture intersubjectivity as the product of a division within transcendental subjectivity:

Restricting ourselves to the ultimate transcendental ego and the universe of what is constituted in him, we can say that a division of his whole transcendental field of experience belongs to him immediately, namely the division into the sphere of his ownness [...] and the sphere of what is "other". (Husserl, 1999, p. 100)

The transcendental ego can be understood as a pre-personal field of experience. Its division into a plurality of viewpoints occurs spontaneously and thus as a synthetic accomplishment of the transcendental ego. What Husserl calls the "sphere of ownness" (p. 92), the first person, is necessary for the constitution of second and third persons; and the plurality of viewpoints that has been constituted at the same stroke is in turn constitutive for experiences that approach the world objectively (p. 89). In other words, the first, second, and the third person are jointly constituted by the transcendental ego. They, in turn, constitute a set of phenomena with specific properties that remain incomprehensible unless we take into account the specific enabling background of these phenomena, that is, their intersubjective constitution by the first, second, and third person.

Intersubjectivity under this description is an example for the way in which constituted structures serve as a platform for further constitution. This may be taken to suggest that, for Husserl, there is always an external admixture to constitution so that constitution is never a purely subjective accomplishment. However, this is only half the story. While constitution is open-ended in one direction, things look different in the other direction, which brings us to the second detail. Although Husserl is not concerned with classical foundationalist tropes such as a priori insight into substantive reality or Russellian acquaintance, he can be called a peculiar, transcendental, foundationalist.[14] For him, foundations are enabling grounds which grant unity to what they constitute. Their unifying role is brought out clearly in some notes to Husserl's lectures on time-consciousness where he describes temporal experience as follows: "The running-off phenomena elapse in the flow of the phenomena of the constituting consciousness, in a unity of consciousness in which the enduring object continuously appears" (Husserl, 1991, p. 377). It is only because transcendental time-consciousness constitutes "elapsing" as a unified mode of experience that the subject is in a position to experience the passing in time of a phenomenon rather than its sudden absence. Husserl takes this temporal characteristic to be fundamental for all intentional experience so that all experience reflects a "constituting phase" of

"primal consciousness" (p. 123). This is to say that consciousness has priority in the multistorey structure of Husserlian constitution in the sense that this structure finds its ultimate and exhaustive ground in something subjective which is reflected throughout all levels of constitution. At least in his middle period and in the passages considered here, Husserl holds transcendental internalist views that go hand in hand with his peculiar foundationalism: constitution has a hierarchical organization of enabling conditions based on subjectivity alone.

5 | TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY AND TRANSCENDENTAL EXTERNALISM

Although subjectivity is the central theme of phenomenology, phenomenology is not restricted to transcendental internalism. The works of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty offer an abundance of transcendental externalist motives.[15] As I want to outline in this section, Sartre proposes a *weak* version of transcendental externalism whereas Merleau-Ponty puts forward a *robust* externalist approach to constitution.

5.1 | Weak transcendental externalism

As is well-known, Sartre's phenomenological starting point is Husserl's basic notion of intentionality as conscious directedness. But Sartre takes consciousness and its contents to have mutually exclusive ontological characteristics, being-for-itself and being-in-itself. Therefore, Sartrean intentional contents (being-in-itself) are never immanent to consciousness (being-for-itself). Indeed, for Sartre, consciousness is ontologically "nothing" (Sartre, 2003, p. 46 *et passim*) so that intentional experiences have to be understood as transcending consciousness towards the world (see pp. 42, 321).

It is on this basis that Mark Rowlands (2003) has suggested a content externalist interpretation of Sartre's position: all the phenomena that make up the world occur *outside* consciousness (p. 72) whereas consciousness itself is "pure emptiness" (p. 65). For Rowlands, this means that the world takes ontological priority over consciousness in Sartre's phenomenology, in the sense that the subject depends logically and metaphysically on the world (p. 74). This dependency, Rowlands concludes, makes Sartre an externalist about content.

I now want to turn to some problems with Rowlands's externalist interpretation of Sartre. Rowlands argues that the world has priority over consciousness because the world is self-identical or ontologically *full* (being-in-itself) whereas consciousness lacks self-identity and is ontologically *empty* (being-for-itself). The imagery of full and empty is apt and has counterparts in *Being and Nothingness* (see Sartre, 2003, p. 98). However, Rowlands's conclusion that the world is absolute and consciousness relative (Rowlands, 2003, p. 73) is in conflict with Sartre's claim that consciousness is "the absolute" (Sartre, 2003, p. 12) and comes into existence in "the absolute event" (p. 106). Furthermore, Sartre insists that the world is phenomenal, that is, the world is something that appears (see Rowlands, 2003, p. 68) and therefore presupposes something to which it appears, namely intentional consciousness. This is clear from Sartre's discussion of absences or *négatités*:

> There is no doubt at all that these [*négatités*] are transcendent realities; [...] However these realities are of a very peculiar nature; they all indicate immediately an essential relation of human reality [the subject] to the world. They [*négatités*] derive their origin from an act, an expectation, or a project of the human being who is engaged in the world. (Sartre, 2003, p. 48)

According to this brief passage, everything transcendent depends for its appearance on "nothing" in Sartre's special sense—intentional consciousness—so that the asymmetry between "full" (being-in-itself) and "empty" (being-for-itself) is balanced out by an asymmetry between "active" being (being-for-itself) and "phenomenal" being (being-in-

itself). Whereas "full" is the dominant term of the first asymmetry, "active" governs the second asymmetry. So there is no obvious priority of world (being-in-itself) or consciousness (being-for-itself) for Sartre.

Things are complicated further by Sartre's insistence that neither consciousness nor world can serve as ontological grounds for each other (Sartre, 2003, p. 16). Instead, world (being-in-itself) and consciousness (being-for-itself) have a deeper ontological basis in an undifferentiated realm of generic being.[16] Generic being separates into nothing (being-for-itself) and everything else (being-in-itself) only accidentally, with the contingent emergence of consciousness (p. 106). As to their shared ontological ground, being-in-itself and being-for-itself are *equally contingent*. Necessity comes into their relation only in the sense that consciousness and world necessarily arise together, without any priority between each other (p. 105). As we have seen above, Rowlands concludes that Sartre is an externalist because consciousness depends on the world while the world does not depend on consciousness. The co-necessity of the phenomenal world and intentional consciousness, as stated by Sartre, contradicts Rowlands's conclusion.

This is not to say, of course, that Sartre is not an externalist. But his externalism differs from the one Rowlands ascribes to him. Rather than an externalist about content, Sartre is an externalist about the way in which subjects get in a position to engage with the world. The contingent split in generic being from which being-for-itself and being-in-itself emerge does not just bring about consciousness and the world; it establishes what is necessary for the possibility of particular experiences and engagements. Sartre writes:

> It is not only that the for-itself as nihilated in-itself is itself given a foundation, but with it foundation appears for the first time.
>
> It follows that this in-itself, engulfed and nihilated in the absolute event which is the appearance of the foundation or upsurge of the for-itself, remains at the heart of the for-itself as its original contingency. (Sartre, 2003, p. 106)

In other words, world and consciousness are *equally contingent* with respect to their ground, generic being, but they are *equally necessary* together with respect to the things they enable, intentional experiences and engagements. And this entails that neither world nor consciousness alone can constitute these experiences and engagements. Precisely this configuration makes Sartre an externalist: on his account, what constitutes experience and engagement lies partially outside the subject. Sartre's externalism is a *transcendental* externalism because his externalism does not simply concern the place of content but the possibility of experience. It is a *weak* form of transcendental externalism because consciousness and world constitute experience *together* without being constitutive for each other.

5.2 | Robust transcendental externalism

In addition to the claim that world and consciousness constitute experience together, transcendental externalism can argue that world and consciousness are constitutive *for each other*. Merleau-Ponty's position on constitution is an example for this robust view. He argues that all intentional engagements with the world are situated and therefore peculiarly diffuse. This quality is especially prominent in optical illusions or picture puzzles (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 6, 19). According to Merleau-Ponty, however, diffuseness is a general feature of contextualized perception: "We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. Quality appears within this atmosphere. The sense that it contains is an equivocal sense, and more a question of an expressive value than a logical signification" (p. 7). At bottom, perceptual content occurs in an "ambiguous domain" (p. 65) which "*resists in principle* being directly and completely made explicit" (p. 61, my emphasis). For Merleau-Ponty, these peculiar experiential characteristics—ambiguity, implicitness, blurriness—are irreducible. However, they are not inexplicable. What explains them is how situated intentional experience is constituted.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) writes somewhat indirectly that "we have learned in individual perception not to conceive of our perspectival views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are gathered

together in the thing" (p. 369). We do not move through the world frame by frame, as it were, but have a continuous and fluid experience of the one thing at which we are directed through its present aspect. The one thing we experience has an ambiguous presence in its current aspect because it is never fully present in any current experience of it. At the level of basic experience, there is no way to anticipate precisely what the one thing at which we direct our attention will reveal to us next.

Merleau-Ponty's description also applies to the shared experience of an object. Particular perceptions which are distributed across several subjects can be said to come together in the same one thing through a confluence of particular perceptions from different subjective angles. On his view, eventually, confluence is constitutively prior to distinctness and separation. That is, for him, experiencing something together precedes the particular intentional experience of a singular, fully individuated, object on the part of a singular, fully individuated, subject. In _Phenomenology of Perception_, Merleau-Ponty (2012) famously remarks that "[t]ranscendental subjectivity is a _revealed_ subjectivity, meaning that it is revealed to itself and to others, and as such transcendental subjectivity is an intersubjectivity" (p. 378, original emphasis). Subjectivity in the fully individuated sense is fully present only from the intersubjective angle or from the angle of the world.[17] Therefore, intersubjective and objective moments are necessary to the situated intentionality of individual embodied subjects. Like Davidson decades later, Merleau-Ponty thus envisages a constitutive triangle with self, others, and the world at its corners:

> The phenomenological world is not pure being, but rather the sense that shines forth at the intersection of my experiences and at the intersection of my experiences with those of others through a sort of gearing into each other. The phenomenological world is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity [...]. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxxiv)

In other words, rapport with others is indispensable for meaningful experiences, and the world is indispensable for any overlap between my experiences and the experiences of others. Both, in turn, are basic for having intentional experiences at all. Embodied self, others, and the world jointly provide necessary conditions for the possibility of intentional experiences. As intentional experiences are enabled in part by conditions separate from the subject, Merleau-Ponty's position on constitution qualifies as a form of _transcendental externalism_.

Crucially, Merleau-Ponty's subject, others, and world are not simply jointly responsible for the possibility of embodied experience. As we have just seen, there cannot be embodied subjectivity unless there is a world; the world makes embodied subjectivity possible by providing it with a situation. Vice versa, the subject makes the world possible by allowing it to appear and to have a presence in lived experience. And, finally, subjectivity would remain meaningless were it not for its intersubjective dimension. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, embodied subject and world are not just _jointly_ constitutive for intentional experiences and their contents; they also constitute each other _reciprocally_: self, others, and world are necessary for the possibility of each other. Their interdependence at the transcendental level makes Merleau-Ponty's transcendental externalism _robust_. Whereas Sartre's simultaneous upsurge of consciousness and world depends on a generic ontological dimension prior to them, Merleau-Ponty's triangle of self, others, and world is ontologically self-sufficient because its constituent elements are indispensable to each other.

6 | TRANSCENDENTAL INTERNALISM, TRANSCENDENTAL EXTERNALISM, AND ONTOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

Let us pause for a brief interim summary. Transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism stand for different ways of framing how we engage with the world. In transcendental phenomenology, transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism provide different, mutually incompatible, answers to the question of how intentional engagements with the world are possible. _Transcendental internalism_ in phenomenology traces the possibility and unity of intentional experience to consciousness as its _exclusive_, only and ultimate, constitutive ground.

Transcendental externalism in phenomenology, by contrast, claims that consciousness is not the only constitutive ground. Externalist constitution is *inclusive* because it involves sources besides the subject: consciousness and world are jointly necessary for the possibility of intentional engagements. *Weak transcendental externalism* argues that consciousness and world jointly constitute intentional experiences. But consciousness and world are not reciprocally constitutive for each other; their constitution has a deeper, generic, source. *Robust transcendental externalism* adds to the joint necessity of consciousness and world that these different sources of constitution—Merleau-Ponty's self, others, and world—also constitute each other.

My overall ambition in this paper is to bring out some benefits of applying the distinction between transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism to the project of transcendental phenomenology. So far, I have argued that this distinction provides us with an effective and meaningful contrast between fundamental approaches in transcendental phenomenology: approaches that refer all constitution to subjectivity—exemplified by Husserl at some point—and approaches that require constitutive sources apart from subjectivity—exemplified by Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological work. What remains to be clarified is the wider relevance of this exercise. This is what I am going to do in the remainder of this paper.

In the introduction, I said that transcendental phenomenology can play a profound role in explaining the ontological commitments of common sense, philosophy, or science because transcendental phenomenology has no ontological commitments. I intended this statement as a general adumbration of the phenomenological *epochē*, apt to cover the phenomenology even of those after Husserl who reject his methodology—the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, the early Sartre, and to a lesser extent the Merleau-Ponty of *Phenomenology of Perception*.[18] If we look beyond the reductive, foundationalist, side of Husserlian phenomenology, Husserl's *epochē* captures the "suspended" perspective on the world in which all existential statements are neutralized, and with them all ontological commitments (Husserl, 1982, p. 258).[19] In light of this, what seems to me far more significant for transcendental phenomenology than the well-known methodological disagreements between its proponents is the fact that Husserl's phenomenological critics do not return to the classical ontological commitments of realism, nominalism, materialism, phenomenalism, idealism, supernaturalism, naturalism, and the like. On the contrary, they all formulate innovative and original ontologies which retain at least the spirit of Husserl's concern with *anything whatever*—anything that qualifies as an object of intentional engagements—in that they eschew ontological commitments to *all there is* and focus their ontological attention on subjectivity, *Dasein*, *être-pour-soi*, embodied consciousness, and so forth. Not only are these fundamental ontological concerns *not* ontologically committed in the classical sense just noted; they are *not* ontologically committed in the sense that the fundamental ontological concerns of transcendental phenomenology are not quantifiable and, by that token, are not ontological commitments.[20]

The phenomenological focus on *anything whatever* rather than *all there is* does not prejudge the ontological character of the item at which the subject is directed. This ontological openness allows phenomenology to tease out structures of aboutness regardless of their representational accuracy. The point of addressing the constitution of items of experience without ontological commitment is accordingly to identify conditions under which meaning can take a foothold in the world (see appendix II of Husserl, 1969, especially p. 316). In this respect, transcendental phenomenology differs from Kant's and Davidson's philosophies, our initial instances of transcendental internalism and externalism. Kant and Davidson—although centuries apart and irreconcilable on central issues such as the nature and application of concepts—combine transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism with further, albeit unusual, ontological commitments, Kant's transcendental idealism and Davidson's anomalous monism. These commitments reflect their ongoing metaphysical concerns with independent reality, however, qualified. Transcendental phenomenology, by contrast, instantiates transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism without further metaphysical subtext. Hence its ability, in principle, to investigate the full spectrum of saliences that the world has for those who engage with it.

Transcendental phenomenologists have further reasons for opting out of ontologically committed perspectives. For example, Husserl goes to considerable lengths to show how the structures that are generally responsible for our intentional experiences can explain the commonsense ontological commitments of what he calls the natural attitude (Husserl, 1982, p. 58). For Heidegger, the finite character of our lives can explain our distinctive quest for a

meaningful life in the midst of *all there is* around us (Heidegger, 1962, p. 98). For Sartre, our spontaneity can explain why our self-deceptive tendencies and our alienation from one another go hand in hand with psychologistic and naturalistic ontological commitments (Sartre, 2003, pp. 78–90, 172–93). For Merleau-Ponty, our embodiment can explain why empiricist and intellectualist approaches to *all there is* are only ever partially true (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 38–9). In sum, an important reason for which transcendental phenomenologists opt out of ontologically committed perspectives is that they want to explain common and uncommon ontological commitments.

7 | TRANSCENDENTAL INTERNALISM, TRANSCENDENTAL EXTERNALISM, AND TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Perhaps one more word of clarification is needed before we continue. My understanding of explanation follows Nozick (1981) who coined the term "philosophical explanation" for an open-textured, tentative, illumination of how the *explanandum* is possible. By contrast with its causal or deductive-nomological cognates, philosophical explanation seems to me sufficiently close in intention to the phenomenological account of experiential structures and their subject matter to warrant the attribution of explanatory aims to transcendental phenomenology.[21]

This final section is going to explore various constellations in which internalist and externalist accounts of constitution engage ontological commitments in an explanatory spirit. To keep things tractable, I want to sketch how transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism approach ontological commitments which some consider close to phenomenology: those of transcendental idealism. To simplify matters further, I will focus mainly on Kant's transcendental idealism, with a short foray into an ontologically committed position I call Husserlian transcendental idealism. For reasons of space, I cannot develop these accounts in much detail. The following remarks are thus to be understood in a programmatic spirit. I simply hope to be able to show the viability and utility of the envisaged approach. Some relevant objections to this approach will be addressed as they come along.

7.1 | Transcendental idealism and transcendental internalism: Some preliminaries

Kant's transcendental idealism is a dedicated metaphysical position with characteristic ontological commitments.[22] These commitments can be spelled out along the following lines: thought and its capacities for representation are finite, with the consequence that *all there is* exceeds our powers of representation; therefore, *all there is* divides into knowable stuff, namely Kantian empirical objects, and unknowable natures, namely Kantian things-in-themselves (Kant, 1998, Bxxvii).[23] If we want to explain the ontological commitments of Kant's transcendental idealism, we have to explain why *all there is* includes unknowable natures. We will see that their presence among *all there is* can be explained by the internalist constitution of *anything whatever*.

We can derive some cues for our treatment of transcendental idealism from Allison's discussion of Kant's transcendental internalism. On his view, Kant's internalism concerns the grounds of objectivity and entails transcendental idealism (Allison, 2015, pp. 451–2). This looks plausible at first: if enabling conditions for the objective validity of our empirical judgments, and thus for empirical knowledge, are exclusively of the mind, then genuine objects of knowledge must conform to finite subjective capacities for knowledge; conversely, mind-independent reality is unknowable insofar as it does not conform to these capacities. Therefore, transcendental internalism about the constitution of empirical knowledge and its objects *entails* the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism, namely the ontological distinction between an empirical reality of epistemically accessible objects and a metaphysical reality of unknowable natures.

Explanations can be formulated as entailment relations of sorts—if *A because B*, then *B explains A*—so that the order of *explanans* and *explanandum* is fixed by the entailment between them. Now take another look at Allison's order of explanation: if transcendental internalism entails transcendental idealism, as he claims, one's commitment to an ontological distinction between Kantian things-in-themselves and Kantian empirical objects would explain why

empirical knowledge and its objects are constituted by something subjective and finite. In Allison's configuration, the *explanandum* is the constitutive source and not, as we expected, the ontological commitment.

This does not look right, certainly not from a critical perspective such as Kant's. If we employ our ontological commitments in order to explain constitution, we leave our ontological commitments unexplained. However, controversies in metaphysics and epistemology tend to revolve around one's ontological commitments. Unexplained ontological commitments do not carry as much conviction in these controversies as explained ontological commitments. A critical project such as Kant's should therefore strive to explain its ontological commitments as clearly and fully as possible. The ontological commitments of Kant's transcendental idealism—*all there is* includes unknowable natures— are pretty obscure unless we add the explanation that all entities to which transcendental idealism is ontologically committed are constituted with a view to the limited capacities for representation mustered by finite thinkers like us. These limited capacities, we might say loosely, are ontologically reflected by the presence of epistemically inaccessible natures among *all there is*.

7.2 | Transcendental internalism on Kantian transcendental idealism

Explanations for the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism become readily available once we turn Allison's perspective on entailment on its feet. If we run the entailment from transcendental idealism to transcendental internalism, the presence of Kantian things-in-themselves among *all there is* can be explained as follows: their presence *entails* a specific internalist vision of constitution and its source, namely Kant's subject with limited capacities for representation. What makes the subject's limited capacities for representation *decisive* for the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism, is precisely that the items contained in the ontology of transcendental idealism have no other constitutive source than the finite subject. Let me stress that decisiveness implies necessity but not sufficiency. The mere presence of a finite subject does not generate the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism. But a satisfactory explanation of these commitments—*all there is* includes unknowable natures— without reference to the finite subject is impossible.

Some might baulk at the idea that Kant's finite subject constitutes unknowable natures. Most likely, this reaction stems from a well-rehearsed Aristotelian impulse: constitution connotes the make-up of things, constitutive source their original cause.[24] However, these connotations distract from our present concerns. Of course, we can explain some ontological commitments by referring them to a constitutive source with the power to produce things. But this type of explanation is only one among many and strikes a jarring note with Kant's transcendental idealism. It is uncontroversial in discussions of transcendental idealism that empirical objects are constituted the way they are because they are tailored to the limited capacities for representation of Kant's subject (Kant, 1998, Bxvi-xviii). Evidently, this does not mean that Kant's subject causes empirical objects to arise. It deploys a frame within which it can represent things fully and appropriately because it is *receptive* for objects that fall within this frame (A19/B33). Analogously, far from causing Kantian things-in-themselves, Kant's subject constitutes them in the sense that they negatively conform to its limited capacities for representation: these are items for which Kant's subject is *not receptive*. As Kant puts the point,

> the word "appearance" must already indicate a relation to something the immediate representation of which is, to be sure, sensible, but which in itself, without this constitution of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is grounded), must be something, i.e., an object independent of sensibility. (Kant, 1998, A252)

Transcendental idealism is ontologically committed to unknowable natures—that is, they must exist for transcendental idealism to be true—because transcendental idealism seeks to explain *all there is* exhaustively through the subject with finite capacities for representation. If unknowable natures were omitted from *all there is*, the subject's limited powers of representation would have no metaphysical relevance, with the dogmatic and sceptical consequences

highlighted in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B22-4). To avoid these consequences and to satisfy its critical ambitions, Kantian transcendental idealism has to include items in its ontology which lack a well-defined, positive, relation with their constitutive source but draw support *via negativa* from the subject's limited capacities for representation (B309).

7.3 | Transcendental internalism against Kantian transcendental idealism

In addition to explaining the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism, transcendental internalism also allows us to challenge them. In light of the explanation above, the ontological commitment to Kantian things-in-themselves is the outcome of an attempt to capture the comprehensive reality of *all there is* while restricting the constitution of objects to a subject with finite capacities for representation. The transcendental internalist challenge to this commitment exploits the fact that internalist constitution is not concerned with *all there is*—everything that exists—but with *anything whatever*—whatever makes sense.

From the transcendental internalist viewpoint, Kantian things-in-themselves belong to *anything whatever* on precisely the same terms as Kantian objects of knowledge. They are constituted by the conscious subject alone as items of which the subject can have full-fledged meaningful experiences, regardless of its capacities for representation, reliable or unreliable, infinite or finite. What distinguishes Kantian things-in-themselves from Kantian objects of knowledge lies further down the line, namely their treatment as representational contents. This treatment as such is not problematic, for the simple reason that it does not mandate an ontological commitment to unknowable natures.[25] Once such a commitment *is* in place, however, this commitment goes hand in hand with the understanding that our fundamental rapport with the world is representation rather than aboutness. The reason for this is obvious: aboutness cannot enforce the ontological commitment to unknowable natures among *all there is*—under aboutness, unknowable natures appear as meaningful experiential stuff and as nothing else; the ontological commitment has to be enforced in a different way, namely by a distinction between what is included and what is not included under the representations finite subjects can make of the world.

From the ontologically uncommitted perspective of transcendental internalism, the ontological commitment to unknowable natures of transcendental idealism points to a serious misunderstanding about our fundamental rapport with the world. Husserl's formulation of this critique is especially poignant: in *Cartesian Meditations*, he remarks that Kantian things-in-themselves either belong with all other phenomena or lie outside the realm of meaning altogether (Husserl, 1999, p. 84). If we make representation fundamental for how we relate to the world, we push aside the fact that things-in-themselves have to be salient for us—just like empirical reality—before it can be of significance for us that they exceed our representational capacities. Representation turns on access to *all there is*. As the subject with finite capacities for representation has limited access to *all there is*, a clear metaphysical demarcation is required between the accessible and the inaccessible parts of *all there is*. This costly and difficult demarcation becomes unnecessary once we turn to aboutness as the fundamental way in which we relate to the world. Transcendental internalism thus challenges transcendental idealism for giving us an overly restricted idea of why things in the world are salient for us.

7.4 | Transcendental externalism against Kantian transcendental idealism

It follows from what has been established in Sections 4, 5, and 6 that transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism give mutually incompatible accounts of constitution. For the present discussion, this means: as transcendental idealism entails transcendental internalism, transcendental idealism cannot entail transcendental externalism. Consequently, transcendental externalism cannot explain transcendental idealism. However, transcendental externalism can engage critically with the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism. As externalism cannot apply

its critical lever directly to idealist commitments, the externalist challenge has to take the form of a critique of internalist explanations for idealist ontological commitments.

From the transcendental internalist perspective, Kantian transcendental idealism is committed to unknowable natures among *all there is* because the sole and exclusive constitutive source of *all there is* is the finite subject. Unknowable natures are ontologically independent from the subject because the finite subject of transcendental idealism cannot represent them adequately. From the transcendental externalist perspective, this understanding of ontological independence is problematic because it burdens the independence of unknowable natures with heavy qualifications. Kantian things-in-themselves are independent under given constraints of representation, that is, their constitution is negative or indeterminate rather than positive or determinate—subjects grasp them as thought-things, *noumena*, for which they are not receptive. This qualification is even more striking if we look at unknowable natures on purely internalist terms, in terms of *anything whatever*. On these terms, their negative constitution simply counts as one mode of constitution among others: just like empirical objects, they are things of which subjects can have meaningful experiences. But all modes of constitution accounted for by transcendental idealism solely and exclusively depend on the subject. Hence, transcendental externalism concludes, transcendental idealism has no genuine claim to independent things.

Transcendental externalism, in turn, operates with an inclusive conception of constitution: the stuff of meaningful experience, *anything whatever*, is constituted in a way that involves more than the subject, namely others and the world, so that this stuff does not fully depend on the subject for its constitution. This has an important ontological consequence: the independence of things precedes ontological commitments with respect to *all there is*—it already pertains to *anything whatever*. Take the couch in your living room for a simple illustration. From a transcendental internalist angle, you have a meaningful experience of this couch because you perceive it *as something perceived* and thus as something constituted *exclusively* by you, the subject (see Husserl, 1982, pp. 128–9). From a transcendental externalist angle, by contrast, you have a meaningful experience of this couch because you perceive it against the setting of your living room in which both your couch and you, the perceiving subject, are placed. What makes the couch meaningful for you is the fact that the presence of this couch involves the world and others from the start, by virtue of its *inclusive* constitution (see Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 5). We can call the couch independent in a positive and determinate sense because its constitution is world-involving and thus exceeds the constitutive scope of the subject.

7.5 | Transcendental internalism on Husserlian transcendental idealism

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is not the only instance of transcendental idealism. By Husserl's own lights, his transcendental phenomenology can be understood a kind of transcendental idealism and thus a position with its own characteristic ontological commitments (1982, pp. 207–10; 1999, p. 86). Sokolowski (1977) gives an especially short and succinct encapsulation of Husserlian transcendental idealism[26]: "Phenomenalist philosophies neglect the transcendence of things, while Kantian philosophies claim the transcendence of things is not manifest to us; Husserl avoids both these extremes and allows philosophical questions about being to be raised again" (p. 179). Underlying this claim is the view that, "appearance is not something to be distinguished from the way [things] exist; part of their existence is to be presentable to consciousness" (*loc. cit.*). If appearance and being cannot come apart, there is no space among *all there is* for items that exist but have no rapport with subjects.

Contrary to what I have argued earlier on in this paper (see Section 4), transcendental idealist interpretations of Husserl do not take this idea in the direction of transcendental internalism. They interpret it as an expression of transcendental idealism without Kantian things-in-themselves. This may look odd, but should not detain us at this point. Right now, I merely want to outline an explanation of ontological commitments that Husserlian transcendental idealism *would* incur. For this purpose, it is important to see that Sokolowski's points chime with Husserl's rejection of Kantian things-in-themselves as "nonsensical" (Husserl, 1999, p. 84) while still aligning his phenomenology with

transcendental idealism (p. 86).[27] In recent work, Zahavi defends Husserlian transcendental idealism by combining Sokolowski's insights with Allais's innovative interpretation of Kant. Allais suggests that Kant's main ontological commitment is a commitment to *essentially manifest features*, "relational, mind-dependent qualities of things which can be present in perceptual experience, and which do not present us with qualities things have as they are in themselves, independent of their perceptually appearing to us" (Allais, 2015, p. 124; compare Zahavi, 2017, p. 108). Zahavi understands Husserl's transcendental phenomenology on the basis of Allais's interpretation as a kind of transcendental idealism with the following ontological commitment: *all there is* consists of items which are *essentially manifest*. They are *manifest* because they are the right thing to appear to subjects. They are *essentially* manifest because manifestness pertains to them by virtue of what they are. Husserl's principle of principles from *Ideas I* may be taken to suggest an ontological commitment to essentially manifest items: "everything that offers itself [*darbietet*] to us originally in 'intuition' [...] is simply to be accepted as that which it gives itself to be [*als was es sich gibt*]—but also only within the bounds in which it gives itself [*in denen es sich da gibt*]" (Husserl, 1982, p. 44, translation adapted).[28]

Analogous to our treatment of Kantian transcendental idealism, the ontological commitments of Husserlian transcendental idealism can be explained in transcendental internalist fashion. The most important difference between Kant and Husserl is the characteristic of the subject on which our new explanation is bound to draw. After all, we do not seek to explain the inclusion of unknowable natures in *all there is*; we seek to explain why *all there is* consists of essentially manifest items *and nothing else.* Essentially manifest items are not *per se* objects of knowledge but contents of intentional experience or engagement and thus the right thing to appear to subjects, their specific cognitive capacities aside.

While the move from cognition to intentional experience brings the relevant dimension of subjectivity into view, it does not solve another difficulty. That phenomena are essentially manifest could be taken to suggest that they are already constituted before the subject enters the scene. This suggestion is in conflict with the envisaged idealism. Recall, therefore, Allais's characterization of essentially manifest features: they are relational and mind-dependent. Essentially manifest features differ from, say, real perceptual properties in that essentially manifest features are ontologically incomplete without the subject (Allais, 2015, pp. 123–4). This qualification tells us that essentially manifest items may exist without attendant subjectivity and thus without corresponding ontological commitments. However, essentially manifest items enter *all there is* only if they are manifest *to* subjects. Subjects may thus be said to complement the manifestness of phenomena with their intentionality. They become *conscious of* them and thus activate them as members of *all there is*. What explains the Husserlian ontological commitment to essentially manifest items is the transcendental internalist claim that intentional consciousness can direct itself towards *anything whatever* without drawing on further sources beyond the subject.

7.6 | Transcendental internalism against Husserlian transcendental idealism

We can imagine the transcendental internalist to react with incomprehension to the idealist interpretation of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology: why have an ontological commitment to essential manifestness in the first place? Which problems does essential manifestness settle that cannot be settled by a direct appeal to intentionality? Zahavi offers some systematic reasons in response. On his view, what speaks against a purely internalist, ontologically uncommitted, understanding of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology are the *skeptical* threat of solipsism and the *naturalist* threat of eliminative materialism. He contends that solipsism can only be ruled out on an ontologically committed interpretation of phenomenology (Zahavi, 2017, pp. 51, 77); and he contends that phenomenological opposition against eliminativism about consciousness is only effective if we make transcendental phenomenology ontologically incompatible with eliminative materialism by specifying the ontological commitments of phenomenology (pp. 64, 101).

As to *eliminative materialism*, Zahavi's worry seems unfounded. Transcendental phenomenology is opposed to eliminativism, not because of incompatible ontological commitments, but because of divergent explanations for ontological commitments. To get this difference in view, let us start with Zahavi's disagreement between eliminativism and *ontologically committed* transcendental phenomenology: phenomenology includes consciousness among *all there is* whereas eliminativism excludes consciousness from *all there is*. In proffering these commitments, phenomenology and eliminativism appeal to divergent explanatory grounds—phenomenology appeals to intentionality or aboutness, eliminativism to physical nature. As there is no common ground between these two positions, we are set up for a steadfast disagreement that allows both sides to maintain that they are right (see van Inwagen, 2010). Their disagreement about which ontological commitment is the right one involves deep-seated intuitions about the make-up of subjectivity and world. The prospects for resolving this conflict are slim.

By contrast with this, eliminativism and *ontologically uncommitted* transcendental phenomenology disagree about constitutive backgrounds so that a stalemate between the two positions can be avoided. Here is how: given its own ontological commitments, eliminative materialism can explain ontological commitments that exclude consciousness from *all there is* but cannot explain ontological commitments that include consciousness among *all there is*. Eliminativists might think that they can forgo the latter without disadvantage. However, their contentment seems premature. Ontologically uncommitted transcendental phenomenology can explain *both* ontological commitments, those including consciousness as well as those excluding consciousness, on the basis of aboutness. The reason for this is, once again, that intentionality can be about *anything whatever* and thus can be configured in various ways with respect to *all there is,* including eliminativist ones. Intentionality can be configured so as not to constitute an ontological placeholder for itself and in this way can explain ontologies from which consciousness is absent.[29] But it can also be configured so as to constitute its ontological counterpart and thus explain ontologies in which consciousness is present.

On the whole, ontologically uncommitted transcendental phenomenology has a significantly larger explanatory scope than eliminative materialism. While this fact alone does not settle the conflict, it gives phenomenology two advantages. First, contrary to ontologically committed transcendental phenomenology, phenomenology on a purely transcendental internalist basis is in a position to address the ontological commitments of eliminativism by explaining these same commitments from a non-materialist vantage point—this additional line of communication breaks the deadlock in the original disagreement with eliminativism. Second, contrary to eliminative materialism, phenomenology on a purely transcendental internalist basis is in a position to explain ontological commitments opposed to those of eliminativism just as well as those aligned with it—this suggests dogmatic theoretical choices on the part of eliminativism.

Zahavi's other worry is *solipsism*. He is adamant that transcendental phenomenology runs the risk of isolating the subject from the world if it does not establish a positive constitutive connection between subject and world by committing ontologically to the essential manifestness of *all there is* (Zahavi, 2017, p. 66). No doubt, this commitment settles the issue with solipsism. However, as with other ontological strategies against the skeptic, the commitment to essential manifestness shows solipsism to be false only on the fragile condition that the skeptic shares the commitment in question (see Rudd, 2000, p. 260). In my view, uncommitted transcendental internalism offers an easier and more effective response to the charge of solipsism.

Solipsism claims that *nothing* is outside the ego because *everything* is inside the ego. *Nothing* (here: the absence of *something*) and *everything* (or *all there is*) are quantified expressions which fix ontological commitments. This makes solipsism an ontologically committed position. Transcendental internalism has no ontological commitments. Therefore, transcendental internalism as such cannot be solipsistic.

In the last instance, the internalist's incomprehension about Husserlian transcendental idealism is warranted: neither eliminative materialism nor solipsism are issues that are satisfactorily settled by an ontologically committed transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental internalism, by contrast, can expose the dogmatic aspects of eliminative materialism and show that the charge of solipsism against the internalist constitution is unfounded.

8 | CONCLUSION

Transcendental internalism and transcendental externalism describe two mutually incompatible ways of understanding the constitution of meaningful experiences and their objects. These two terms allow us to parse approaches in transcendental phenomenology into those with an exclusive account of meaningful experience, constituted by the subject alone, and those with an inclusive account of meaningful experience, co-constituted by the subject along with factors beyond the subject. Furthermore, transcendental internalism and externalism offer us powerful tools of interpretation and critique with respect to ontologically committed positions. They—themselves ontologically uncommitted—allow us to give philosophical explanations for all kinds of ontological commitments. In addition, they offer ways to question these commitments, for example by showing that they are inexplicable in light of cogent presuppositions.

I have tried to offer a glimpse of this critical approach by applying it to the metaphysics of transcendental idealism. But this approach can be expected to apply across a much wider spectrum of ontological commitments. What precisely transcendental internalism and externalism can tell us about this spectrum needs to be spelled out with care and in detail. Perhaps, however, it is not too bold to anticipate that some important ontological ambitions from this spectrum will turn out to be more problematic than they appear at first.

ORCID

Christian Skirke https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0209-8147

ENDNOTES

[1] Throughout this paper, I use the phrase *all there is* as a placeholder for all kinds of ontological commitments. The phrase alludes to Quine's (1980) quantifier account of ontological commitment and has some resonance with the metaphysical interest in *everything*. I assume for the sake of simplicity that the quantifier account covers all relevant ontological commitments.

[2] Of course, phenomenology is by and large an ontological project. But its project is that of an ontology of the subject. The ontology of the subject is concerned with intentional structures, Being-in-the-world, or situated and embodied subjectivity and not, or not primarily, with *all there is*. Therefore, the language of ontological commitment seems generally misplaced in phenomenology. Counterexamples exist, however: Scheler's material value-ethics and Husserl's *First Philosophy* lectures do take a position on *all there is*. These intricacies warrant a separate discussion of ontological commitment in phenomenology, which I have to defer to another occasion.

[3] Despite its importance, the desideratum of ontological neutrality is disputed, especially in the literature on Husserl (for neutrality: Carr, 1999, Crowell, 2002; against neutrality: Zahavi, 2017). While it is uncontroversial that Husserl propagates ontological neutrality in *Logical Investigations*, his stance is more ambiguous after the transcendental turn of *Ideas*. I simply want to stress that ontological neutrality is methodologically desirable for transcendental phenomenology, too, because neutrality with respect to *all there is* gives us the fullest ontology of the subject. Some systematic concerns with ontological neutrality will be taken up in Section 7 below.

[4] On the whole, existential phenomenology disagrees with Husserl's specific technique (see Wrathall, 2009). However, the special ontologies of the subject in existential phenomenology—of *Dasein*, being-for-itself, or embodied subjectivity—are ontologically uncommitted throughout (see Tugendhat, 1970, pp. 263–4). More on this in Section 6 of this paper.

[5] References to the "inner" life of the subject—"internal", "inherent", "immanent"—are simply meant to express that something is inseparable from, or specific to, the structure of subjectivity. Even if expressed by "internal" or "inner", inseparability and specificity are *not* primarily spatial. For a different view see Zahavi, 2017, p. 118.

[6] To put this point in less concessive terms, it is only if content is understood in light of ontological commitments that it becomes natural to say that content represents *something* to which it is related causally or metaphysically. Without ontological commitments, content is simply present to the subject: wide content is, and narrow content is not, "of the world" because the presence of wide content cannot be explained without the world whereas the presence of narrow content can be explained without the world.

[7] According to Alweiss's (2009) detailed study of Husserlian content, Husserl is not a Cartesian individualist because, in his phenomenology from *Logical Investigations* onwards, intentional objects play an explanatory role with respect to intentional content (p. 60). However, as intentional objects have this role regardless of their ontological status, Husserl is not a conventional externalist either, despite striking similarities between his account and Putnam's or Kripke's position. Rather, Alweiss concludes, intentional experience is phenomenologically "anchored in the world" (p. 69) because particular intentional objects appear only within horizons of meaning and, on account of these horizons, are "historically, linguistically or culturally mediated" (*loc. cit*.) rather than causally or metaphysically determined.

[8] This proviso works in two directions: first, as stated, Husserl's phenomenology admits of wide content if we extend the charity to Husserl that we exercise when we give externalist interpretations of existential phenomenology; second, this proviso allows us to neglect traits that Husserl's own account of content shares with conventional theories of reference—the transcendence of objects vis-à-vis content—and focus on aspects of his phenomenology that challenge the framework of internalism and externalism in common philosophical usage.

[9] See Zahavi's analogy between Husserl's externalism and Kant's Refutation of Idealism (Zahavi, 2008, p. 364; Zahavi, 2017, p. 117). Kant argues that we can experience temporal processes only through their contrast with something permanent in experience. Hence our actual introspective experience of consciousness as a temporal sequence of contingent contents simultaneously requires a stable external reality. Kant's Refutation can be understood as an argument against Cartesian individualism and for content externalism because all contentful experiences involve something apart from consciousness (see Rudd, 2003, p. 50). However, even if we accept Kant's contrast argument about temporal experience, Husserlian phenomenologists do not have to leave the sphere of consciousness to capture its sequential character. Time-consciousness is made up from different temporal layers which may be said to flow at different speeds. Therefore, the temporal character of consciousness can be experienced between its different temporal layers without reference to the external world (see Sacks, 2006, p. 123).

[10] For an internal realist reconstruction of Husserl see Drummond, 1990, pp. 235–52. Incidentally, Putnam cites Husserl's work on intersubjectivity and life-world—alongside the works of James, Wittgenstein, and Austin—as an important inspiration for his internal realism (Putnam, 1987, p. 17).

[11] Davidson's transcendental externalism can be separated from his anomalous monism. Anomalous monism is a dedicated view about *all there is* and by that token has a characteristic set of ontological commitments. Transcendental externalism, by contrast, is a set of necessary conditions for the possibility of contentful thoughts. This set of conditions stands apart from ontological commitments.

[12] McCulloch addresses Davidson's triangulation only indirectly, in the context of his critique of Davidsonian radical interpretation (McCulloch, 2003, pp. 94–108). His reservations against Davidson's overall project notwithstanding, he endorses the Davidson of "a kind of behavior-embracing mentalism, on which semantic reality is located in the public, phenomenological domain" (McCulloch, 2003, p. 108).

[13] My treatment of Husserl's position on constitution is not meant to be exhaustive. All that matters for my purposes here is that Husserl held transcendental internalist views during an important phase of his work. His discussions of alter egos and embodied others in *Ideas II* and *The Crisis of the European Sciences* suggest that he considered externalist constitution as well. For an interpretation that capitalizes on Husserl's externalism see Zahavi, 2017, pp. 120–36.

[14] In attributing a qualified, transcendental, foundationalism to Husserl, I follow Drummond who, under the somewhat confusing title of non-foundational realism, identifies Husserl's approach as a non-Kantian variety of transcendental foundationalism (Drummond, 1990, p. 243). Although opposed to Cartesian individualist interpretations of Husserl, Drummond maintains unequivocally that Husserlian grounds are subjective: "Within transcendental subjectivity, consciousness has a priority over its intentional correlates, for its structures are the necessary conditions for the presence of Objects in and to the transcendental subject" (p. 242).

[15] Sartre and Merleau-Ponty oppose the formal, cognitivist, or intellectualist concerns associated with Kant's and Husserl's respective transcendental approaches (see Carman, 1999). As commentators have noted, however, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty approach intentionality as an enabling background for experiences and engagements with the world. In light of this, their perspective on subjectivity can be called transcendental (see Gardner, 2009, 2015; Romdenh-Romluc, 2010; Taylor, 1979).

[16] In his lucid defense of Sartre's ontology, John Yolton writes: "The logical priority of being over nothingness [...] does not mean that the *en-soi* is all there is: it means only that nothingness has a dependent existence, that in fact, it is meaningless

to speak of *le néant* without speaking of *l'être*." (Yolton, 1951, p. 555). The converse is also true: one cannot speak of *l'être*, which Yolton uses as a stand-in for Sartre's in-itself, without *le néant*. In light of this interdependence, Yolton's "all there is" may be said to underlie both, being and nothingness, as generic being. See also Yolton's correspondence with Albert Shalom on the topic of Sartre's ontology (Yolton & Shalom, 1967).

[17] This remark is often cited as an example for Merleau-Ponty's closeness to Husserl's late work (Toadvine, 2002, p. 239; Zahavi, 2002, p. 24). This exegetical point is well-grounded; and I also agree with what it is usually taken to imply for one's assessment of Husserl's work: his late writings, and also a significant amount of material from his middle period that did not see publication during his lifetime, anticipate, even embody, the transcendental externalism I attribute to Merleau-Ponty. See Endnote 13 for my justification for placing Husserl in the different rubric of transcendental internalism nonetheless.

[18] See Merleau-Ponty's discussion and qualified endorsement of a version of Husserl's *epochē*: "Because we are through and through related to the world, the only way for us to catch sight of ourselves is by suspending this movement, by refusing to be complicit with it (or as Husserl often says, to see it *ohne mitzumachen* [without taking part]), or again, to put it out of play" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxvii). Phenomenological reflection according to Merleau-Ponty "steps back in order to see transcendences spring forth and it loosens the intentional threads that connect us to the world in order to make them appear" (*loc. cit.*).

[19] In Pyrrhonism, the *epochē*, or suspension of judgment, is a non-committal attitude conducive to *ataraxía*, serenity or detachment. This moral dimension of the *epochē* is not especially relevant for Husserl.

[20] This claim needs further elaboration which I can only anticipate here. On the one hand, what speaks in favor of my claim is that subjectivity, *Dasein*, *être-pour-soi*, or embodied consciousness are uncountable mass nouns. On the other hand, a major topic in transcendental phenomenology which seems to contradict my claim is intersubjectivity since it seems to presuppose two or more persons. However, practically all phenomenologists between Husserl and Zahavi—with the exception of Heidegger—have treated intersubjectivity as the problem of self and other, that is, of a plurality of subjects with significant asymmetries between one another. I can only suggest for now that these asymmetries undercut quantification.

[21] Husserl (2001, p. 631) himself uses the term "explanatory" in the context of genetic phenomenology—the phenomenology of background necessities rather than constitutive achievements. What spoils the analogy with Nozick is Husserl's contrast between genetic—explanatory—phenomenology and descriptive—non-explanatory—phenomenology (p. 628). For more detail on the genetic and explanatory aspects of Husserl's phenomenology, see Welton, 2003, pp. 261, 278.

[22] Kant scholarship between Strawson (1966) and Allison (2004) widely disagrees on how far Kant's dedication to metaphysics went. At least this much is uncontroversial: the possibility of metaphysics is an explicit and central concern of his *Critique of Pure Reason*; and Kant (1998, B20-8) offers novel ways to engage in a metaphysical project. On the view presented here, any metaphysical project is bound up with ontological commitments. This is the relevant concern for the current section even if the ultimate interest of Kant's project may lie elsewhere.

[23] I want to leave open whether Kantian things-in-themselves have to be understood as full-fledged entities or the deeper metaphysical substance of knowable empirical objects. Although very broad, this way of stating the ontological commitments of transcendental idealism does not include the minority view that all Kant commits to are mere appearances in empirical reality (for example Bird, 2006).

[24] See for example Lowe, 1983, p. 47 and Baker, 1997, p. 600.

[25] From a phenomenological standpoint, representation is a complex intentional act which has a basic presentation as its content. In phenomenological terminology, complex acts presentify original content (Husserl, 1999, pp. 33–4). But presentification does not entail ontological commitments.

[26] Sokolowski's text is a review of the English translation of Ingarden's study *On the Motives Which Led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*. He defends Husserl's idealism against Ingarden's critique.

[27] It is important to recognize that Husserl's own endorsement of transcendental idealism is rather qualified. The full sentence I refer to reads: "Carried out with this systematic concreteness, phenomenology is *eo ipso* 'transcendental idealism', though in a fundamentally and essentially new sense" (Husserl, 1999, p. 86).

[28] Heidegger (1962) alludes to a commitment of this kind when he glosses the central theme of phenomenology as a concern with "showing-itself-in-itself" (p. 54) or with what "shows itself just as it is in itself" (p. 261).

[29] On the uncommitted understanding of phenomenology that I pursue in this paper, phenomenology is concerned purely with *anything whatever*. Therefore, strictly speaking, consciousness is not present among *all there is* for phenomenology either. The clearest formulation of this view can be found in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* where consciousness (being-for-itself) is ontologically nil.

REFERENCES

Allais, L. (2015). *Manifest reality: Kant's idealism and his realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Allison, H. E. (2004). *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Allison, H. E. (2015). *Kant's transcendental deduction: An analytical-historical commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alweiss, L. (2009). Between internalism and externalism: Husserl's account of intentionality. *Inquiry*, *52*, 53–78.

Baker, L. R. (1997). Why constitution is not identity. *Journal of Philosophy*, *94*, 599–621.

Bell, D. (1990). *Husserl*. London: Routledge.

Bernet, R., Kern, I., & Marbach, E. (1993). *An introduction to Husserlian phenomenology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Bird, G. (2006). *The revolutionary Kant*. LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

Bridges, J. (2006). Davidson's transcendental externalism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *73*, 290–315.

Burge, T. (1979). Individualism and the mental. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, *4*, 73–122.

Burge, T. (1988). Individualism and self-knowledge. *Journal of Philosophy*, *85*, 649–663.

Carman, T. (1999). The body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. *Philosophical Topics*, *27*, 205–226.

Carman, T. (2003). *Heidegger's analytic: Interpretation, discourse, and authenticity in Being and Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carr, D. (1999). *The paradox of subjectivity: The self in the transcendental tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Conee, E., & Feldman, R. (2001). Internalism defended. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *38*, 1–18.

Crowell, S. (2002). Is there a phenomenological research program? *Synthese*, *131*, 419–444.

Crowell, S. (2008). Phenomenological immanence, normativity, and semantic externalism. *Synthese*, *160*, 335–354.

Crowell, S. (2013). *Normativity and phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davidson, D. (2001). Three varieties of knowledge. In *Subjective, intersubjective, objective* (pp. 205–220). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1982). Husserl's perceptual noema. In H. L. Dreyfus & H. Hall (Eds.), *Husserl, intentionality, and cognitive science* (pp. 96–123). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1991). *Being-in-the-world: A commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Drummond, J. (1990). *Husserlian intentionality and non-foundational realism: Noema and object*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Fodor, J. (1987). *Psychosemantics: The problem of meaning in the philosophy of mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Føllesdal, D. (1969). Husserl's notion of noema. *Journal of Philosophy*, *66*, 680–687.

Gardner, S. (2009). *Sartre's Being and Nothingness*. London: Continuum.

Gardner, S. (2015). Merleau-Ponty's transcendental theory of perception. In S. Gardner & M. Grist (Eds.), *The transcendental turn* (pp. 294–323). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. Trans. Macquarrie, J., & Robinson, E. New York: Harper & Row.

Husserl, E. (1969). *Formal and transcendental logic*. Trans. Cairns, D. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. (1982). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy, first book*. Trans. Kersten, F. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. (1991). *On the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893–1917)*. Trans. Brough, J. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Husserl, E. (1999). *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology*. Trans. Cairns, D. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Husserl, E. (2001). *Analyses concerning passive and active synthesis: Lectures on transcendental logic*. Trans. Steinbock, A. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of pure reason*. Trans. Guyer, P. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kripke, S. (1980). *Naming and necessity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lowe, E. J. (1983). Instantiation, identity and constitution. *Philosophical Studies*, *44*, 45–59.

McCulloch, G. (2003). *The life of the mind: An essay on phenomenological externalism*. London: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of perception*. Trans. Landes, D. London: Routledge.

Nozick, R. (1981). *Philosophical explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Putnam, H. (1975). The meaning of "meaning". Philosophical papers, 2: *Mind, language and reality* (pp. 215-71). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, H. (1987). *The many faces of realism*. Chicago & La Salle, IL: Open Court.

Quine, W. V. O. (1980). On what there is. *From a logical point of view* (pp. 1-19). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Romdenh-Romluc, K. (2010). *Merleau-Ponty and phenomenology of perception*. London: Routledge.

Rowlands, M. (2003). *Externalism: Putting mind and world Back together again*. Durham: Acumen.

Rudd, A. (2000). Scepticism: Epistemic and ontological. *Metaphilosophy*, *31*, 251–261.

Rudd, A. (2003). *Expressing the world: Skepticism, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger*. Chicago & LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

Sacks, M. (2006). Kant's first analogy and the refutation of idealism. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *106*, 115–132.

Sartre, J.-P. (2003). *Being and nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology*. Trans. Barnes, H. London: Routledge.

Smith, D. W., & McIntyre, R. (1984). *Husserl and intentionality: A study of mind, meaning, and language*. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Sokolowski, R. (1977). Review: Roman Ingarden, on the motives which led Husserl to transcendental idealism. *Journal of Philosophy*, *74*, 176–180.

Sokolowski, R. (1984). Intentional analysis and the noema. *Dialectica*, *38*, 113–129.

Strawson, P. F. (1966). *The bounds of sense: An essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Methuen.

Taylor, C. (1979). The validity of transcendental arguments. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *79*, 151–165.

Toadvine, T. (2002). Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl: A chronological overview. In L. Embree & T. Toadvine (Eds.), *Merleau-Ponty's reading of Husserl* (pp. 227–282). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Tugendhat, E. (1970). *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

van Inwagen, P. (2010). We're right, they're wrong. In R. Feldman & T. A. Warfield (Eds.), *Disagreement* (pp. 10–28). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Welton, D. (2003). The Systematicity of Husserl's transcendental philosophy: From static to genetic method. In D. Welton (Ed.), *The new Husserl: A critical reader* (pp. 255–288). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Wrathall, M. (2009). Existential phenomenology. In H. L. Dreyfus & M. Wrathall (Eds.), *A companion to phenomenology and existentialism* (pp. 31–47). Oxford: Blackwell.

Yolton, J. (1951). The metaphysic of *en-soi* and *pour-soi*. *Journal of Philosophy*, *48*, 548–556.

Yolton, J., & Shalom, A. (1967). Sartre's ontology. *Dialogue*, *6*, 383–398.

Zahavi, D. (2002). Merleau-Ponty on Husserl: A reappraisal. In L. Embree & T. Toadvine (Eds.), *Merleau-Ponty's reading of Husserl* (pp. 3–29). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Zahavi, D. (2004). Husserl's noema and the Internalism-externalism debate. *Inquiry*, *47*, 42–66.

Zahavi, D. (2008). Internalism, externalism, and transcendental idealism. *Synthese*, *160*, 355–374.

Zahavi, D. (2017). *Husserl's legacy: Phenomenology, metaphysics, and transcendental philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.