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Husserl's Transcendental Idealism and Its Way Out of the Internalism-Externalism Debate

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Abstract

This paper argues that through the conceptual distinctions between 'immanence' and 'transcendence' in *The Idea of Phenomenology* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, a proper understanding of transcendental idealism and 'transcendence in immanence' can avoid any metaphysical commitments of internalism or externalism, and reconfigure the debate on internalism and externalism by providing an alternative option. There are two interpretations towards whether Husserl is an internalist. The first one is that Husserl is an internalist as he employs the reduction method in order to 'returns to the inner mind'. The second interpretation, which is most welcomed by Husserlians, refutes the internalistic interpretation of Husserl and argues that neither internalism nor externalism can faithfully understand Husserl's phenomenology because Husserl's phenomenology does not tie to any tradition metaphysical commitment. Although I share this view, but an important text, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* is neglected by the previous debates. In the text, it does not only reexamine the two levels of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, but also introduces one more level of 'immanence' and 'transcendence'. I shall argue that by the reconsideration of the three levels of immanence and transcendence, Husserl does not disconnect 'transcendence', so he cannot simply be employed into internalism, on the one hand; his phenomenology provides an alternative option rather than internalism or externalism.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Husserl, Internalism, Externalism, Immanence, Transcendence, Transcendental Idealism, Transcendence in immanence

The conceptual distinctions between 'internalism' and 'externalism' are applied to moral philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Recently,

Husserl's phenomenology has been employed into the debate on internalism and externalism. There are two interpretations. The first one is greatly influenced by Heideggerian interpretation of Husserl that Husserl is an internalist (Carman 2003; Keller 1999). The second interpretation, which is the most welcomed by Husserlians, refutes the internalistic interpretation of Husserl and argues that neither internalism nor externalism can faithfully understand Husserl's phenomenology because Husserl's phenomenology does not tie to any tradition metaphysical commitment, namely internalism and externalism (Zahavi 2004, 2008; Crowell 2008; O'Murchadha 2008). Husserlians within the second camp share three common beliefs that (1) the doctrine of 'noema' is not a representation, and Husserl does not commit to representationalism; (2) there is a tight link between Husserl's phenomenology and externalism, but they are not equivalent to each other; (3) Husserl's proper accounts of intentionality and reduction lead him to transcendental idealism which is an alternative option available than internalism or externalism. While I share these views, Husserl's distinctions of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' are drawn by the methodological steps of the phenomenological reduction. Most of them draw resources from *The Idea of Phenomenology* and *Transcendental Idealism* (Hua XXXVI). However, an important text, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* ("Aus den Vorlesungen, Grundprobleme der Phaenomenologie, Wintersemester 1910/11", in *Zur Phaenomenologie der Intersubjektivitaet*, Hua XIII), is neglected. In this text, it does not only reexamine the two levels of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, but also introduces one more level of 'immanence' and 'transcendence'. Through his explication, the very meaning of "transcendence in immanence" and transcendental idealism could then be defined. I shall argue that by the reconsideration of the three levels of immanence and transcendence, Husserl does not disconnect 'transcendence', so he cannot simply be employed into internalism.

The argument shall proceed in five sections. In section one, after a briefly presentation of how 'internalism' and

'externalism' are defined, I shall explain how the first interpretation employs Husserl's phenomenology into. In section two, I shall examine a particular task raised by Husserl in *The Idea of Phenomenology* according to which the traditional understanding of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' has to be critically examined. In section three, the importance of reduction method shall be introduced in order to make a proper account of intentionality. In section four, Husserl's account of the three levels of consciousness and intentionality shall be explicated. Through the explication of intentionality, in section five, the three distinctions of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' shall be drawn and the doctrine of 'transcendence in immanence' shall be explained. Finally, I shall argue Husserl's transcendental idealism does not only avoid any metaphysical commitments of internalism or externalism, but also reconfigure the debate on internalism and externalism by providing an alternative option.

1. The internalism / externalism debate and Husserl's phenomenology

Within the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language, Hilary Putnam's definition in "The Meaning of Meaning" is adopted by debaters. He argues that "meanings just ain't in the head" (Putnam 1975, 227). Putnam argues against the tradition concept of meaning, knowing the meaning of a word is determined in our mind. He gives a famous "Twin Earth" thought experiment. Oscar as an Earthian and Twin Oscar as his Twin Earthian counterpart have alike psychological states. Oscar and Twin Oscar both have the belief of what he calls 'water'. However, Oscar talks of water when he refers to H₂O; Twin Oscar talks of water when he refers to XYZ. Oscar knows nothing about XYZ while Twin Oscar knows nothing about H₂O. Therefore, Putnam believes that "the (same) psychological state of the individual speaker does not determine 'what he means'" (Putnam 1975, 270). And the thesis of meaning determining extension/ reference is largely derived from Frege.

Taylor Carman and Pierre Keller are the scholars who explicitly argue that Husserl is an internalist. They have two

basic arguments. First, the reduction is the methodological step to return to the sphere of internal psychological state. Husserl strongly emphasizes the necessity of reduction method. Carman claims that “in methodologically turning away from everything external to consciousness and focusing instead on what is internal to it” (Carman 2003, 80). In this interpretation, Husserl is an internalist in the sense that the reduction method is appealed to what is internal to consciousness, namely noemata which is construed as Fregean *Sinne* (Carman 2003, 68). Therefore, reduction is an evidence for the internalistic interpretation of Husserl. Second, Husserl shares the similar feature of most internalists committed to, namely representationalism. Keller asserts that “the narrow representational content that we are presented with in our individual private experiences is the ultimate basis for the philosophical investigation of the condition under which narrow and wide content are possible” (Keller 1999, 112). Keller does not explicitly explain what representational content is, but we can draw resources from Follesdal and Dreyfus who believe Husserl is a representationalist (Follesdal 1969; Dreyfus 1982).¹ They believe that noema is an abstract structure by which the mind can direct towards external objects. Noematic *Sinn* is a complex descriptive sense which is inherent in noema. Since the abstract character of noema and noematic *Sinn* is an ideal medium which can never be regarded as something ‘outer’, meaning does not have direct connection with the external world. Therefore, they conclude that the ultimate basis for the philosophical investigation, in Husserl’s phenomenology, is ‘the inner’. But does Husserl commit to representationalism? Is Husserl’s doctrine of ‘immanence’ alike to what they understand as ‘the inner’ or ‘internal to consciousness’?

2. The critique of traditional distinction between immanence and transcendence

Before examining Husserl’s distinction between ‘immanence’ and ‘transcendence’, we may have a look at Husserl’s critique towards traditional distinction between immanence and transcendence, so that we could understand the aim of the reduction method, a proper account of

intentionality and the distinctions between 'immanence' and 'transcendence'.

"If we take a closer look at what is so enigmatic about knowledge, and what causes our predicament in our first reflection on the possibility of knowledge, we find that it is transcendence" (Husserl 1999a, 27). When we reflect the possibility of knowledge, we find that "the enigma about knowledge is its transcendence" (Husserl 1999a, 33). The known objects are something other than 'I', but how can we cognize the known objects? It is a long-lasting but important philosophical question. Husserl in *The Idea of Phenomenology* claims that "indeed, our lack of clarity with regard to the sense or essence of knowledge requires a science of knowledge, a science that dedicates itself solely to getting clear on the essence of knowledge" (Husserl 1999a, 25). His aim is to require a science of knowledge with clarity. But why is it so important to require clarity? And how do we seek to clarity?

Facing the unsolid ground of epistemology, Husserl criticizes that "all of the basic errors in epistemology are connected to the above mentioned μεταβασιζ, on the one hand, the error of psychologism, and on the other, the error of anthropologism and biologism. This μεταβασιζ is exceedingly dangerous" (Husserl 1999a, 31). What does μεταβασιζ mean? Why is it so dangerous? "μεταβασιζ" means transition. Husserl introduces an argument that if knowledge which is not in the genuine sense given, then it is transcendent. If it is transcendent knowledge, then it has to be critically examined. All positive knowledge is knowledge that is not examined. Therefore, all positive knowledge is transcendent knowledge. Further, psychologism, anthropologism and biologism are positive knowledge. If epistemology is based upon these, then it would lead to errors, namely transitions ("μεταβασιζ").

Husserl proposes two criticisms towards these errors. The first one is their misunderstanding of transcendence, namely as physical phenomenon. The second one is critic of their misunderstanding of relationship between transcendence and immanence. Firstly, from the perspective of psychologism, it seeks transcendent object as physical phenomenon. Husserl argues that "psychical phenomenon" is always quite

questionable, and frequently misleading. It is because it, on the one hand, misleads people to say that perceived, imagined, asserted or desired objects ‘enter consciousnesses’, or to say that such objects ‘are taken up into consciousness’. On the other hand, it misleads people to say ‘consciousness’ or ‘the ego’ enters into this or that sort of relation to them, or to say that intentional experiences ‘contain something as their object in themselves’ (Husserl 1977, 557). In these senses, it claims that with different mode of treatment, the same physical phenomenon can be divided as an ideal object in perception or the external real physical object perceived.² We are dealing with the relationship in which the object’s appearing consists (the concrete perceptual experience, in which the object itself seems present to us) and of the object which appears as such.³ Then how does the physical phenomenon can be cognized?

Secondly, from the perspective of anthropologism and biologism, Husserl criticizes that such expressions promote two misunderstandings of relationship between transcendence and immanence. The first misunderstanding claims that “we are dealing with a real (*realen*) event or a real (*reales*) relationship, taking place between ‘consciousness’ or ‘the ego’... and the thing of which there is consciousness” (Husserl 1977, 557) The second misunderstanding claims that “we are dealing with a relation between two things, both present in equally real fashion (*reell*) in consciousness, an act and in intentional object, or with a sort of box-within-box structure of mental contents” (Husserl 1977, 557) For the first misunderstanding, is it true to say that we are dealing with a real (*realen*) event or a real (*reales*) relationship? Is the relationship of cognitive contact between transcendence and immanence a real relationship? How is it possible? For the second misunderstanding, is it true to say that we are dealing with a relation between two things, both present in equally real fashion (*reell*) in consciousness? Would the second misunderstanding mix up the act of consciousness and the conscious object or object of givenness? If so, how can it draw a distinction between transcendence and immanence? How is it possible?

Back to the previous question, why is transition (μεταβασιζ) so dangerous? Husserl explains that “this μεταβασιζ

is exceedingly dangerous, partly because the proper sense of the problems never made clear and remains totally lost in it, and partly because... easily slip back into the temptations of the natural modes of thinking and judging as well as false and misleading formulation of the problem which grow on their basis" (Husserl 1999a, 31). The knowledge of errors in epistemology, "then, is just human knowledge, bound to the forms of the human intellect, incapable of making contact with the very nature of things, with the things themselves" (Husserl 1999a, 18). Therefore, Husserl suggests that this is true in that no knowledge can be counted as pre-given without examination at the beginning. He urged to perform epistemological reduction, "that is, all transcendence that comes into play here must be excluded... of epistemological nullity" (Husserl 1999a, 30).

3. The introduction of phenomenological reduction

In epistemological investigation, if objects as transcendence are not critically examined, it should not be utilized as pre-given. In Husserl's terminology, they are "epistemologically *null*" (Husserl 1999a, 34). Husserl asserts that the first and fundamental part of phenomenology in general is to attend sole the task of clarifying the essence of knowledge and known objectivity. In its task of clarifying the essence of knowledge and known objectivity, phenomenology designates a science. More importantly, it "designates the specifically philosophical attitude of thought, the specifically philosophical method" (Husserl 1999a, 19). The phenomenological attitude first requires "free from presupposition" (Husserl 1977, 263). How can it achieve the phenomenological attitude?

"Only through a reduction, which we shall call the phenomenological reduction, do I acquire an absolutely givenness that no longer offers anything transcendent" (Husserl 1999a, 34). It shows that Husserl aims at acquiring absolutely givenness through phenomenological reduction. "Through the epistemological reduction we exclude all transcendent presuppositions, because the possible validity and sense of transcendence is in question" (Husserl 1999a, 37). In this sense,

the phenomenological reduction can achieve the phenomenological attitude. Then how does the phenomenological reduction perform?

The phenomenological reduction is a way “to alter the natural attitude radically instead of remaining in this attitude” (Husserl 1999b, 57). One procedure is the attempt to doubt universally.⁴ This doubt “do not give up the positing we effected”, but the positing undergoes a modification. The positing remains what it is, but we “put it out of action”, we “exclude it”, we “parenthesize it” (Husserl 1999a, 59). It is changing of attitude from taking for granted to critically examination. Through phenomenological reduction, what can it remain? Through the reduction, “we shall go as far as is necessary to effect the insight at which we are aiming, namely the insight that consciousness has, in itself, a being of its own which in its own absolute essence, is not touched by the phenomenological exclusion. It therefore remains as the “phenomenological residuum”.⁵ Therefore, Husserl suggested that the phenomenological way is firstly to “keep our regard fixed upon the sphere of consciousness and study what we find immanently within it” (Husserl 1999b, 65). As the first interpretation mentioned above, Husserl is always interpreted as ‘internalism’ since through reduction, consciousness remains as the phenomenological residuum, and attains superior status comparing to the ‘outer world’.

4. The three concepts of consciousness and the doctrine of intentionality

In order to avoid the internalistic interpretation, a proper account of consciousness and intentionality is necessary. Through phenomenological reduction, Husserl, in *Logical Investigations*, uncovers that there are three concepts of consciousness.⁶ The first one is consciousness as the entire, real (*reelle*) phenomenological being of the empirical ego, as the interweaving of psychic experiences in the unified stream of consciousness (Husserl 1977, 537). The second is consciousness as the inner awareness of one’s own psychic experience.⁷ This third is consciousness as a comprehensive designation for ‘mental acts’, or ‘intentional experiences’, of all sorts.⁸ For the

first concept of consciousness, in flux from one moment to the next, and interconnected and interpenetrating in manifold ways, experience composes the real unity-of-consciousness of the individual mind. This concept of consciousness can be seen in a purely phenomenological manner, which cuts out all relation to empirically real existence. Take an example, when I see a red rose, the sense-aspect of color forms a real constituent of my concrete seeing. It is as much an 'experienced' or 'conscious' content, as is the character of perceiving, or as the full perceptual appearing of the colored object. In this sense, "as belonging in a conscious connection, the appearing of things is experienced by us, as belonging in the phenomenal world, things appear before us. The appearing of the things does not itself appear to us, we live through it" (Husserl 1977, 538). We can draw a distinction: the relation of the phenomenal object (conscious content) and the phenomenal subject (empirical person, a thing) is different from the relation of a conscious content in the sense of an experience and consciousness in the sense of a unity of such conscious contents. The former relation concerns with the relation of two appearing things. The latter relation concerns with the relation of a single experience to a complex of experiences.⁹

For the second concept of consciousness, it is expressed by talk of 'inner consciousness.' Husserl asserts that 'inner perception' is "to accompany actually present experiences and to relate to them as its object" (Husserl 1977, 542). The 'self-evidence' usually attributed to inner perception shows it to be adequate perception. It is because this adequate perception ascribes nothing to its object that is not intuitively presented but intuitively presents and posits its objects just as they are in fact experienced in and with their perception. In this sense, the intentional perception corresponds with complete perfection, achieves adequacy. It is therefore itself a real (*reell*) factor in our perceiving of it. Therefore, we can draw a distinction: inner perception as the perception of one's own experiences and inner perceptions adequate or evident perception.

The second concept of consciousness refers to inner consciousness or inner perception. It is about the perception of one's own experience and adequate or evident perception. To

bear a point in mind, Husserl's inner perception is different from Brentano's as he strongly emphasizes. It is because in Husserl's interpretation, Brentano's inner perception reproduces what is 'in' the mind (inexistence), but Husserl's inner perception is a reflection upon the pre-reflective experiences. Inner perception does not reproduce, on the one hand; it does not bring something 'in' our mind out. Instead, inner perception is conscious of pre-reflective experience, so it is 'the perception of one's own experience'. The first concept of consciousness refers to the real unity-of-consciousness of the individual mind composed by experience and content. It is about the relation of two appearing things and the relation of a single experience to a complex of experiences. The second concerns with single experience but the first concerns with the relation of a single experience to a complex of experiences. On the one hand, Husserl, therefore, described that "undeniably the second concept of consciousness is the more 'primitive': it has an 'intrinsic priority'" (Husserl 1977, 543). On the other hand, the second concept and the first concept show that the unity of the concrete phenomenological whole coexists. These 'unities of coexistence' pass continuously from one into next, composing a unity of change, of the stream of consciousness. "This accordingly forms the phenomenological content of the ego, of the empirical ego in the sense of the physis subject. Phenomenological reduction yields the really self-enclosed, temporally growing unity of the stream of experience. The notion of experience has widened out from what is inwardly perceived, and that is in this sense conscious, to the notion of the 'phenomenological ego', by which the empirical ego is intentionally constituted" (Husserl 1977, 545). Up to this moment, we understand the first and second concepts articulate to the phenomenological ego, but how can we draw such concepts? Precisely, what is the condition of possibility for us to draw the first and second concepts of consciousness?

Here, the third concept of consciousness has to be introduced. It is defined in terms of 'acts' or 'intentional experiences.' In such intentional experience, "things seized in their phenomenological purity, furnish concrete bases for abstracting the fundamental notions. There are acts 'trained

upon' the character of acts in which something appears, or there are acts trained upon the empirical ego and its relation to the object. "The phenomenological kernel of the empirical ego here consists of acts which bring objects to its notice, acts in which the ego directs itself to the appropriate object" (Husserl 1977, 550). To be specific, intentional relation, understood in purely descriptive fashion as an inward peculiarity of certain experiences, is the essential feature of 'physical phenomenon' or 'acts'. In this sense, Husserl accepted Brentano's definition of intentional relation as "phenomenon intentionally containing objects in themselves a circumscription of essence" (Husserl 1977, 555). But there are differences between them.

Firstly, Brentano believes that intentional experiences direct themselves to the presented objects. The direction is in an intentional sense. It seems there are two things present in intentional experience. Unlike Brentano's doctrine of intentionality, Husserl clarifies that "there are not two things present in experience, we do not experience the object and beside it the intentional experience directed upon it... only one thing is present, the intentional experience" (Husserl 1977, 558).

Secondly, as mentioned previously, the perceived physical object is not 'in' consciousness like Brentano's claim. Husserl gives an example of having an idea of God Jupiter, the idea of God Jupiter is a particular sort of experience, but not "part of the descriptive or real make-up (*deskriptiven reellen Bestand*)" (Husserl 1977, 559). The idea of God is neither 'inside' consciousness nor 'outside' consciousness as it does not exist at all. It is an 'intentional' object rather than something 'immanent' or 'internal'.

Through drawing distinction between Brentano and Husserl, we will find that the essential descriptive character of the intentional experience is intentionality. Intentionality, in previous description, means "conscious of", "refer to" or "aim at". If intentional experience is present, then through its own essence, the intentional 'relation' to an object is achieved, and an object is 'intentionally present'; these two phrases mean precisely the same. In this sense, objects is not 'internal', but "are only intentional, only an object of consciousness, something presented (*Vorstellungen*) in the manner peculiar to

consciousness, something apparent <as apparent> (Husserl 1999b, 113).

5. The doctrine of intentionality and the conceptual distinction between immanence and transcendence

In the analysis of the structure of experience, “the qualifying adjective ‘intentional’ names the essence common to the class of experience” (Husserl 1977, 562). It shows that our structure of experience is always intentional. Through the doctrine of intentionality, we understand that “an experience may be present in consciousness together with its intention, although its object does not exist at all, and is perhaps incapable of existence. The object is ‘meant’, i.e. to ‘mean’ it is an experience, but it is then merely entertained in thought, and is nothing in reality” (Husserl 1977, 558). Take having an idea of God as an example, if I have an idea of Christian God, this Christian is my presented object, he is ‘immanently present’ in my act or experience. It means I have a certain presentative experience, the presentation of the Christian God is realized in my consciousness. Husserl explains what ‘immanent’ is:

“The ‘immanent’, ‘mental object’ is not therefore part of the descriptive or real make-up (*deskriptiven reellen Bestand*) of the experience, it is in truth not really immanent or mental. These so-called immanent contents are therefore merely intended or intentional, while truly immanent contents, which belong to the real make-up (*reellen Bestand*) of the intentional experiences, are not intentional: they constitute the act, provide necessary *points d’appui* which render possible an intention, but are not themselves intended, not the objects presented in the act.” (Husserl 1977, 559)

Here we can draw the first conceptual distinction between transcendence and immanence. This distinction can be found in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Husserl claims that the sense of transcendence is that “the object of knowledge itself is not present in the act of knowledge... It belongs to the essence of the intentional relation (being just the relation between consciousness and the object of consciousness) that consciousness, i.e., the respective *cogitatio*, is consciousness

about something that what it is not” (Husserl 2006, 64). This conceptual distinction articulates to the real make-up (*reellen Bestand*) of the intentional experiences. Immanent is relative to intentional. The ‘immanence’ refers to that real make-up (*reellen Bestand*) of the intentional experience. In this sense, the ‘transcendence’ refers to that the intentional object, which is not really (*reell*) immanent. Therefore, Husserl, in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, explicitly describes that:

“It (transcendence) can refer to the fact that the known object is not really (*reell*) contained in the act of knowing. In this case, ‘given in the genuine sense’ or ‘immanently given’ would be understood in terms of real (*reelle*) containment: the act of knowing, the cogitation, has real (*reelle*) moments that really (*reell*) constitute it...Here ‘immanent’ means ‘really (*reell*) immanent to the experience of knowing’.” (Husserl 1999a, 27)

The first conceptual distinction between transcendence and immanence are drawn. It refers to the condition of possibility of experience of knowing, namely intentional experience.

The second type refers to the adequacy of knowledge. The distinction results when we regard it as a classification of individual objects. Husserl asserts that according to this, “individual objects break down into those which could be given intuitively in absolute self-presence and those which can only appear as self-present” (Husserl 2006, 65). In the footnote, Husserl explains that the former could have existed only as having been perceived and they can be potentially recalled; the latter could have existed before all perception. How could these be understood? The very distinction between them is the change of attitude. Those which can only appear as self-presence but not absolute self-presence remain in the natural attitude. Husserl regards them as transcendent. In a contrary, “every phenomenological consciousness is related to immanence; the immanent is the field of phenomenology” (Husserl 2006, 65). Through reduction method, this meaning of ‘immanence’ could then be drawn as phenomenological reduction as a methodological step ‘creates’ the field of phenomenology, namely the second sense of ‘immanence’. If we understand the second sense of transcendence refers to objects which can only appear as self-presence and the second of

‘immanence’ refers to object which can be given intuitively in absolute self-presence, then we may ask what the essential features of this sense of ‘immanence’ is? What is the meaning of ‘absolute self-presence’?

In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl explains that,

“But there is another sense of transcendence, whose counterpart is an entirely different kind of ‘immanence’, namely absolute and clear givenness, self-givenness in the absolute sense. This givenness, which excludes any meaningful doubt, consists of an immediate act of seeing and apprehending the meant objectivity itself as it is. It constitutes the precise concept of evidence, understood as immediate evidence. All knowledge that is not evident, that refers to or posits what is objective, but does not see it for itself, is transcendent in this second sense. In such knowledge we go beyond what is given in the genuine sense, beyond what can be directly seen and apprehended.” (Husserl 1999a, 28)

Precisely, ‘immanence’ refers to that is absolute and clear givenness, self-givenness in the pure phenomenological sense. This givenness, which excludes any meaningful doubt, consists of an immediate act of seeing and apprehending the meant objectivity itself as it is. “Absolute givenness” refers to “seeing, grasping what is self-given, insofar as it is an actual seeing that presents an actual self-givenness and not a givenness that refers to something not given—that is something ultimate. This is absolute self-givenness (*absolute Selbstverständlichkeit*)” (Husserl 1999a, 38). It is relative to inadequate and unclear givenness, not self-givenness. “Transcendence” refers to inadequate and unclear givenness, not self-givenness in pure phenomenological sense. On the first case, this conceptual distinction articulates to reflective thinking and the second concept of consciousness as the inner awareness of one’s own psychic experience. When we reflect on our inner awareness of one’s own previous perceptual experience, it is adequate givenness if we can consist of an immediate act of seeing and apprehending the meant objectivity itself as it is. It is inadequate givenness if we cannot consist of an immediate act of seeing and apprehending the meant objectivity itself as it is

or the meant objectivity itself is posited rather than self-giveness.

Apart from the two distinctions mentioned above, there is the third ways of understanding 'immanence' and transcendence which cannot be found in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, but *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* only. 'Immanence' refers to which is present in the flesh to consciousness, and transcendence refers to which is meant without such self-presence. Husserl explains what he means,

"On the side of immanence is only that which is seen (and, at the most, one could also say that the seeable of this kind is so united with the actual seen that a change in the reflective stance could lead from the one to the other), whereas on the side of transcendence would everything else, foremost everything non-present, albeit as an object of consciousness." (Husserl 2006, 64)

During this lecture in 1910-1911, Husserl delivered the time-consciousness lecture already. In the lecture, he uncovers the importance of retention. "As reflection [reduction] makes clear, the vitally present seeing is one with the vitally present seen." (Husserl 2006, 64) These two constitute the unity of the present. However, even if retention reproduces something which had been seen, this remembered or reproduced memories is meant without its self-presence but is meant as a presence of absence. Therefore, it would be transcendent to the present remembering consciousness. In this sense, Husserl is true to say that "phenomenology does not want to disconnect transcendence in every sense" (Husserl 2006, 65).

On the one hand, reduction is a methodological step that draws the three distinctions between 'immanence' and transcendence. On the other hand, the reduction method guarantees a proper understanding of 'immanence' and transcendence. 'Immanence' as the field of phenomenology does not disconnect transcendence, but constitutes transcendence in a proper way. As Jan Patočka in *An Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology* well explicated, "the task of phenomenology is not to eliminate all objectivity but to ground objectivity itself in immanence... here the third stage begins, from absolute immanence to the discovery of

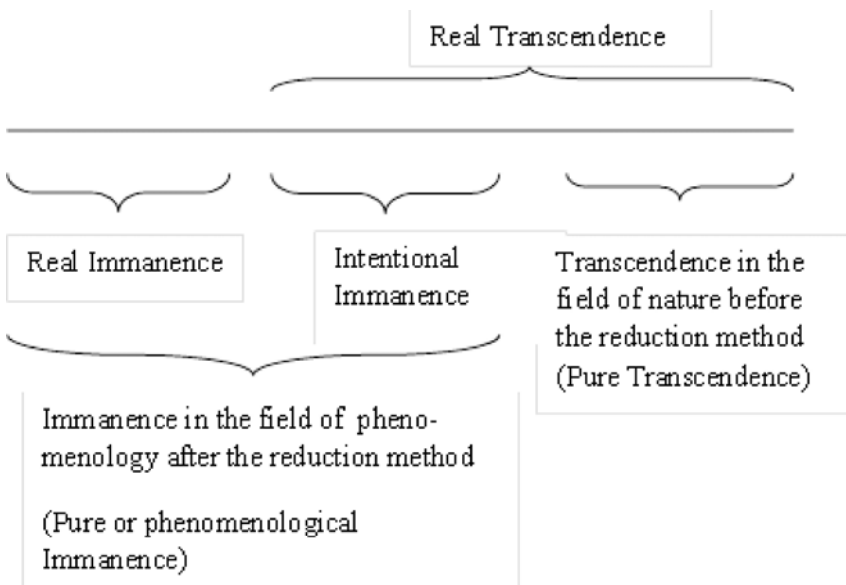
transcendence in immanence” (Patočka 1996, 92-3). It means that phenomenology as special method and special thought of attitude, through the methodological steps, demonstrates how transcendence is correlated to immanence.

To summarize the distinction, the first distinction is a classification of intentionality. The ‘immanence’ refers to that real make-up (*reellen Bestand*) of the intentional experience. The ‘transcendence’ refers to that the intentional object, which is not really (*reell*) immanent. Objects as transcendence are only intentional, only an intentional object of intentional experience. The second distinction is a classification of individual objects. The ‘immanence’ refers to those which can be given intuitively in absolute and clear self-givenness in the pure phenomenological sense. The ‘transcendence’ refers to those which can only appear as self-present in natural attitude. The third distinction is a classification of presentation. ‘Immanence’ refers to which is present in the flesh to consciousness. The ‘transcendence’ refers to which is meant without such self-presence. These can be derived as following:

Before phenomenological reduction	
Transcendence (3): objects which is meant without such self-presence	
Transcendence (2): objects which can only appear as self-present in natural attitude	
After phenomenological reduction	
Immanence (3): objects which is present in the flesh to consciousness	
Immanence (2): which can be given intuitively in absolute self-givenness	
Immanence (1): Real make-up (essential structure) of consciousness	Transcendence (1): Intentional objects

More important, we could find two important points in Husserl’s phenomenology. First, the distinction is guided by the reduction method. Second, phenomenology does not disconnect transcendence in every sense. For example, I hear a tone A in pre-reflective state which is in the natural attitude. The tone is transcendent object in the second sense. Through the reduction, the tone A is reflected and is brought to immanence through the

disengagement of natural attitude. The tone A is now 'in' the field of phenomenology. But it is still transcendent in the first sense as it is not the essential structure of consciousness but the object pole of an intentional experience. More important, through the reduction method, the past tone A which is thematically reflected and reproduced as a presence of the absence, as it were. It is the third sense of transcendence as it is meant without presence as presence. The relationship can be derived the following schema which is suggested by Rudolf Boehm (1965) with modification:



The schema shows that 'pure' or 'phenomenological' immanence does not exclude all real transcendence. Instead, it connects intentional immanence with is a real transcendence. That's the very meaning of 'transcendence in immanence'. Therefore, Husserl could not simply be employed into internalism as Husserl's doctrine of immanence is not an enclosed box-like-mind.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through the explications of three levels of the distinction between immanence and transcendence, we will find that Husserl's phenomenology does not commit to any metaphysical presupposition of internalism and externalism. On the one hand, Husserl's doctrine of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' does not equivalent to 'internalism' and 'externalism'. Immanence does not mean the 'inner' or internal mind or object 'in' the self-contained box-like-mind which disconnects to the 'external' world. Instead, through the reduction, transcendent object is reflected and is constituted. Paul Ricoeur, in *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology*, well formulates that "as it appears to a consciousness, one can say that the object transcends that consciousness and likewise that the object is in that consciousness; but it is there specifically by virtue of being intentional and not by virtue of being a really inherent part of consciousness" (Ricoeur 1967, 8). On the other hand, Husserl does not share the same features of representationalism. As his criticisms of Brentano in *Logical Investigations*, there are not two things present in experience, but only one thing is present, the intentional experience. Through the reduction method, what is given intuitively is not representation 'in' our mind, but is direct to the experience as it were. It is clear that transcendental phenomenology firstly signifies a special method and attitude of thought. And "the reduction less and less signifies a 'return to the ego' and more and more 'return from logic to antepredicative', to the primordial evidence of the world" (Ricoeur 1967, 12). Therefore, Husserl's phenomenology could hardly be identified as internalist, but provides an alternative option towards the debate.

NOTES

¹ In this paper, I am not going to criticize the interpretation. Please refer to Drummond, 1990.

² "Real" and "Reel" are two different concepts. "Real" is relative to "ideal". Real object refers to physical object, namely trees and tables. Ideal object

refers to concept, namely number and theories. “*Reel*” is relative to “*intentional*”. Consciousness contains *reell* content and intentional content. The *reell* content of consciousness refers to “the act of consciousness”. The intentional content of consciousness refers to “conscious object” and the way of givenness.

³ It is because the difference between a conscious content in perception and the external object perceived in it (perception), is a mere difference in mode of treatment between, the same appearance being at one time dealt with in a subjective connection (in connection with appearances which relate to an ego), and at other time in an objective connection (in connection with the things themselves) (Husserl 1977, 538).

⁴ Husserl emphasizes that there is difference between Cartesian universal doubt and his phenomenological reduction. “We start from here, but at the time emphasize that the attempt to doubt universally shall serve us only as a methodic expedient for picking out certain points which, as included in its essence, can be brought to light and made evident by means of it” (Husserl 1999b, 58). Husserl emphasized the difference between Cartesian universal doubt and his phenomenological reduction because Cartesian universal doubt is a method of negating positing or something doubtful. But universal doubt as a procedure of the phenomenological reduction effects a certain annulment of positing. The annulment in question is not a transmutation of positing into counter positing, of position into negation (Husserl 1999b, 58).

⁵ “The phenomenological reduction will deserve its name only by means of this insight; the fully conscious effecting of that reduction will prove itself to be the operation necessary to make ‘pure’ consciousness, and subsequently the whole phenomenological region, accessible to us” (Husserl 1999b, 65-6). It shows that the phenomenological residuum is pure consciousness. But bear a point in mind, pure consciousness is not a box-like-mind, but the whole phenomenological region or the field of phenomenology.

⁶ Rudolf Bernet and Theodorus de Boer argue that the term of *epoché* and reduction first appeared in 1907, but Husserl performed reduction method since *Logical Investigations* (See Husserl 1985, XX; de Boer 1995, 362-3).

⁷ By the first and second concepts of consciousness, “not only is it evident that I am: self-evidence also attaches countless judgments of the form I perceive this or that, where I not merely think, but am also self-evidently assured, that what I perceive is given as I think of it, that I apprehend the thing itself, and for what it is” (Husserl 1977, 544).

⁸ In phenomenological sense, “there are acts ‘trained upon’ the character of acts in which something appears, or there are acts trained upon the empirical ego and its relation to the object.” (Husserl 1977, 550). It means that “the empirical ego consists of acts which bring objects to its notice, acts in which the ego directs itself to the appropriate object” (Husserl 1977, 550).

⁹ See Husserl 1977, 538-9. To have a better understanding of the single-complex or part-whole logic in Husserl, please refer to Solowoski 1977.

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