

# SCHOPENHAUER AND HUSSERL: CRITIQUING THE 20TH CENTURY PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION

This paper contrasts the concept of intentionality in the works of Arthur Schopenhauer and Edmund Husserl, in order to outline some of their similarities and dissimilarities, and then use Schopenhauerian concepts to critique the Husserlian position. The paper then provisionally points toward locating a space in contemporary philosophical discussions for the Schopenhauerian critique, especially relative to the existent critiques of Husserlian phenomenology offered by Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida.

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It is a sad truism that today we find some of philosophy's most interesting thoughts only on the dusty shelves of obscure second-hand bookstores. While not reaching such a low ebb yet, the works of Arthur Schopenhauer still struggle to be heard within the mainstream of contemporary philosophy. The significance of the great pessimist's far-ranging observations and critiques often are reduced to their effects on the nascent philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and little is said of Schopenhauer's ideas in their own right. But for admirers of Schopenhauer there is cause for hope because eyes which have for so long gazed at the bright stars of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are now turning in greater numbers to Schopenhauer himself and finding original and penetrating insights, regardless of any connection to Schopenhauer's more oft-read "progeny."

As Ted Humphrey points out in his essay "Schopenhauer and the Cartesian Tradition," Schopenhauer is not the deviant metaphysical and epistemological figure he often is cut out to be. Rather, "because Schopenhauer follows the tendency in Hobbes and Hume to attribute predominance to the will and passions over reason in human nature, he tends to offend the more Cartesian and Kantian tendencies of our present age."<sup>1</sup> Whereas Humphrey looks back at the modern tradition in order to place Schopenhauer more firmly therein, this paper will look forward from Schopenhauer's hermeneutic horizon toward the 20th century, in hopes of revealing his relevance for contemporary conversations. In particular it will investigate how Schopenhauer fits into the recent phenomenological tradition. Toward this end, we will contrast Schopenhauer's concept of intentionality with its parallel in the works of the "father" of 20th century phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. This will hopefully (a) show where Schopenhauer can help correct defects in Husserl's approach and (b) tentatively point to where Schopenhauer can provide a fresh alternative to the better known critiques of Husserl promulgated by Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, among others.

## I. Schopenhauer: Beyond the Limits of Knowledge

The title of Schopenhauer's major work, *The World as Will and Representation*,<sup>2</sup> provides a clear starting point for grasping his position. The world (reality or nature) is understood as essentially dualistic—it exists simultaneously as *will*, noumenon or thing-in-itself, and *representation*, phenomenon or empirical occurrence. By maintaining this schema, he seeks to avoid what he considers the earlier mistakes philosophers made, that of explaining one of these by reference to the other, or simply collapsing the two into a larger homogeneous unity.

This distinction between noumena and phenomena was powerfully established by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, and had a vast and lasting effect on Schopenhauer. He states: “Kant’s greatest merit is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, based on the proof that between things and us there always stands the *intellect*, and that on this account they cannot be known according to what they may be in themselves” (WWR I, 417-418). Our cognitive apparatus, that at first allows us even to have knowledge, immediately by its very structural nature bars the door to full comprehension of the totality of objects the intellect encounters. Whereas previous thinkers considered the laws of phenomena—time, space and causality—to be unconditioned and immutable, Kant “showed that those laws, and consequently the world itself, are conditioned by the subject’s manner of knowing” (WWR I, 420). Kant thus sets up his various aspects of reality: reason (*Vernunft*), the critical ability particular to humans whereby abstract thought is possible; understanding, the basic cognitive state in which sensations are interpreted and objects posited; and the things-in-themselves, noumena which cannot cause our thought representations, and are additionally unknowable and beyond the comprehension of both reason and understanding.

The revolution Kant effects by situating the subject as the foundational arbiter of reality and a priori truth is retained by Schopenhauer. But Kant’s definition of the three levels of reality are critiqued and revamped. Schopenhauer firstly accuses Kant of over-intellectualizing the understanding, and thus he draws a faster line between understanding and reason.<sup>3</sup> The former is merely the ability through time, space, and causality to receive and react to sensorial data. Any synthesis of this data into abstract knowledge falls under the purview of reason. As a result, animals have understanding but are devoid of concepts—they possess nothing to mediate reality with. The situation is different for humans: “between us and that world there are always our thoughts and ideas about it, and these often make us inaccessible to it, and it to us” (WWR II, 61).

Thus, abstract thought, the ability to leave behind the immediate particulars of that which is sensed, and to form general characteristics, becomes the basis of the more complex human representation, further fleshing out the representational half of the world as conceived by Schopenhauer. The faculty of reason allows us to perform representational functions that in many ways make the fulfillment of our will-based urges easier. But as these abstractions drift further and further away from the immediate perceptions of which they are comprised, they risk distortion and lack of clarity (as opposed to immediate, sensorially-based pictorial representation). So, while “words and speech... are the indispensable means to clear thinking,” language also “forces the infinitely shaded, mobile, and modifiable idea into certain rigid, permanent forms, and by fixing the idea it at the same time fetters it” (WWR II, 66). With his continual emphasis on perception as the ultimate foundation of representation, Schopenhauer,

without excessively lamenting the loss of the moment of perception, senses that abstract thought is a mixed blessing: it gives us the ‘means to our (will’s) ends’ but also ineluctably closes off paths of thinking via the tendency to hypostatize truth at the abstract level, willfully forgetting its humble origin in perception.

This is one reason why Schopenhauer continually decries the totalizing abstractions of the Fichtes or Hegels of his world. In place of their attempts to absolutize reality in abstract reason, he attempts to abide by his dictum “no subject without object and no object without subject” and hence to be true to his own experience as empirically situated. He asserts: “Strictly speaking, all thinking, in other words all combining of abstract concepts, has at best for its material *recollections* of what was previously perceived, and this indirectly, that is in so far as it constitutes the basis of all concepts” (WWR II, 73-74). Moreover, he realizes that from the standpoint of truth, concepts always are found lacking: “Actually all truth and all wisdom ultimately lie in *perception*; but unfortunately perception cannot be either retained or communicated” (WWR II, 74).

Grasping Schopenhauer’s distinction between understanding and reason conditions any formulation of his concept of intentionality (here, broadly construed as the meaning or import of an aim that guides action). His notion of intentionality stands apart from those who locate in reason the causal prime mover of intention—he sees reason as simply a faculty in humans additive to understanding that does not provide a different form of intentionality from that found in other forms of life. Instead, to foreshadow Schopenhauer’s innovation in this still Kantian schema, it is the will, the noumenon, that drives intentionality. He views reason’s subordinate role as merely a “souped-up” understanding, a better tool for the will to satisfy itself with. Understanding (read perceptual sensing) shows us how representation works without all the secondary abstraction. Indeed, “Reason can always only *know*; perception remains free from its influence, and belongs to the understanding alone” (WWR I, 25). Knowing and abstract representation remain secondary to perception and are thus removed from their misplaced role as the sole proper human *telos*.

The conceptual shift from knowing to willing presents a difficult step in Schopenhauer’s movement toward a dualistic centering of the subject. John Atwell notes the essentiality of the reconciliation of the objective and subjective standpoints:

Individuals view themselves objectively as nothing more than their deeds when they focus on their bodily actions as objects of perception (hence as objects belonging to the phenomenal, causally-determined world of nature); and they view themselves subjectively as the doers of their deeds when they focus on their acts of will as “immediately known” volitions of themselves as subject (hence as the nonphenomenal “counterparts” of their actions).<sup>4</sup>

When we represent something, perform an act of meaning-intention, we must avoid a one-sided approach that would solely emphasize the objective aspect—this leads to a dead end whereby human action becomes strings of mere phenomenal ‘facts’ devoid of any deeper sense of freedom or choice. The subjective aspect, independent of the principle of sufficient reason (and, therefore, of time, space, and causality), first manifests itself unconsciously as a selection between motives, then reveals itself as phenomenon to the intellect. The will selects a particular motive and acts on it, often in the process utilizing the understanding or reason. For Schopenhauer one knows what one wills *after* the fact of willing. Indeed, *intentions* are

often reason's 'rationalization' of the will's urge-driven acts. What abstract thought considers intentions are rather 'reflections' of one's will, that is itself the true self, providing a glimpse into one's subjective existence beyond one's mere objectivity.

One more often dwells on oneself as an object of knowledge, hence, Schopenhauer states that there can be "no knower without something different that is known" (WWR II, 202). Consciousness requires a dualism between known and knower and furthermore *self* consciousness contains such a dualism as well. This dualism, unlike others, does not remain in the realm of representation and meaning but reveals a different aspect of the self, apprehended immediately but not representationally—the will. We know the will as the root of our intentions, yet it maintains itself distinct from our role as knower. Hence, intentionality's roots insinuate themselves beneath the surface of representation and meaning.

Because Schopenhauer fundamentally subverts the traditional conception of the human as primarily knower, one easily may become confused regarding how he locates intentionality. Thus, we must try to be clear on which aspect of the world he is describing at any given time, and the manner in which representation and will supplement each other, as confusion may appear always just a step away. Again, let us pause, as Schopenhauer himself so often does in his texts, and reflect along with him. He reiterates: "We started neither from the object nor from the subject, but from the *representation*, which contains and presupposes them both; for the division into object and subject is the first, universal, and essential form of the representation" (WWR I, 25). Representation lies between the false ideologies of materialism and idealism, which both mistakenly privilege either the object or the subject over the relationship between them. Schopenhauer adamantly stresses that representation, including linguistic knowledge, requires the subject to support the world through the principle of sufficient reason *and* requires that there be objects that the subject applies this principle to, the first being its own body. In Schopenhauer's form of subjectivism one cannot doubt the existence of an external world because the subject could not recognize itself as such without such objects in counterpoint. This presents a fundamental improvement on the Cartesian model of intentionality because it obviates the need for proof of the subject's world. The entire epistemological problematic that revolves around "How do I know that I know... (that I know that I know, etc.)" gives way to the facticity of immediate perception and the enclitic abstractions of reason. Schopenhauer states:

The real foundation of all truths which in this sense are called metaphysical, that is, of abstract expressions of the necessary and universal forms of knowledge, can be found not in abstract principles, but only in the immediate consciousness of the forms of representation, manifesting itself through statements *a priori* that are apodictic and in fear of no refutation (WWR I, 67).

Representation deals with all that can be known, conversely all that could be known can be represented.<sup>5</sup> There exist facets of the world beyond representation, however, we should not bemoan our inability to represent them. He asserts that "all we complain of not knowing is not known by anyone, indeed is in itself not even knowable at all, in other words, is not capable of being represented in anyone's head."<sup>6</sup> The concept of apodicticity is thus subtly altered—we do not look for a timeless and universal set of criteria to judge our situated truths against. Rather, based on our *a priori* cognitive wiring, we take what we perceive in the here and now as the barometer of truth. As a result, Schopenhauer avoids the need to appeal to anything transcendental when simply describing the 'stuff' or 'what' of the world: "What is correctly

known by the *understanding* is *reality*; what is correctly known by the *faculty of reason* is *truth*, i.e., a judgement having a ground or reason (*Grund*)” (FR, 104). Illusion is merely false perception, error false conception—the possibility of an evil demon need not be feared. The understanding grasps causality a priori and empirically applies it. Reason takes this data and abstracts it for future application to phenomena.

It is most often in the realm of reason, thought removed from perception, that intentionality becomes a problem for humans. I state something, say “The cat is brown,” and want to not only be understood, but also be *certain* of the correctness of the statement’s representation. As intimated above, this need for certainty or apodicticity arises from what we might today call a “category mistake,” if in a metaphysical sense rather than a logical one. The individual issuing the statement wants to both (a) feel justified that the statement corresponds truly to reality and (b) know that this externally validated truth motivates her issuance of it, and appeals to reason to answer both needs. However, according to Schopenhauerian doctrine, (a) often stems from unnecessary fears, while the individual is mistaken that reason can help her resolve (b). Here, intentionality cannot be intuited without further recourse to elaboration of the noumenal will.

Schopenhauer insists that causality is an a priori condition of knowledge of, and not an intentional effect of, a subject. Statements such as “I caused X to happen” mislead because they attribute to the intender a sense of control prior to the event that does not exist; we rationalize a causal relation solely after the fact. On the other hand, the individual who considers the human as knower conceives of reason as the source of motivation for intentions, and will as the tool to put plans into motion. When Schopenhauer reconfigures the human as a willer he reverses this hierarchy and views motivation not as coming from the will, but as an observation of the will, the noumenal within the human: “*motivation is causality seen from within*” (FR, 214). When one views oneself as a willer rather than a knower one understands that there can be no “knowledge of knowing” but only an experiential, a posteriori apprehension of an aspect of oneself beyond one’s power of representation.

This radical division within a unitary subject can be interpreted as a dramatic attempt at overcoming the logocentric centering of the human in reason endemic to modern thinking. Schopenhauer is very aware of the revolutionary aspect of his thought and the difficulty one faces in accepting the fact that the full range of human experience transcends rationality. Yet, he remains firm on this foundational division: “Now the identity of the subject of willing with that of knowing by virtue whereof (and indeed necessarily) the word ‘I’ includes and indicates both, is the knot of the world (*Weltknoten*), and hence inexplicable” (FR, 211). Further: “Fundamentally it is the will that is spoken of whenever ‘I’ occurs in a judgement. Therefore the will is the true and ultimate point of unity of consciousness, and the bond of all its functions and acts. It does not, however, itself belong to the intellect, but is only its root, origin, and controller” (WWR II, 140).

This “blind, irresistible urge” that Schopenhauer often refers to as the “will to live” cannot be reduced to objective knowledge of the phenomenal world on the order of the human as knower model. For our purposes here we should stress his point again:

The act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing,

though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the understanding (WWR I, 100).

In this way, Schopenhauer overcomes the often antagonistic subject/object split which haunts both the epistemological traditions of the rationalists and empiricists, revealing the necessity of both subject and object for empirical knowledge while concurrently grounding intentionality in both the empirical and noumenal realms. As a knower and a willer, one understands one's actions abstractly in representations and also as aspects of one's unique noumenon, one's will. The structure of human experience overcomes the threat of total external deception and the spectre of skepticism.

## II. Husserl: A Circumscribed Reality

Husserl's thought, like Schopenhauer's, is vastly indebted to Kant. Yet, unlike Schopenhauer, Husserl interprets Kant's "Copernican revolution" as resulting in a flawed dualism that blocked the straight path to pure and rigorous science. In his introduction to Husserl's *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, Quentin Lauer sums this up:

Though Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* could do nothing with it, the thing-in-itself was still "out there," making a completely rational science of all reality an impossibility. Husserl would find the entire essential content of reality in the phenomena themselves, thus rendering the contents of consciousness as known as are the a priori forms according to which they are known. There could be no need even to speak of things-in-themselves, since *what* things are is adequately revealed in consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

In outlining the basic premises of Husserl's notion of the contents of consciousness and intentionality we will witness the casting aside of the noumenal Kantian thing-in-itself and a narrowing of focus in the phenomenal realm. Indeed, the rigorous science he defends is called 'phenomenology' because it so delimits its area of concern and views nothing as beyond synthesization into some phenomenal content.

Husserl desires a science that would account for an autonomous, objective field of phenomena and also explain how the human subject's consciousness may intuit this field. He shows that the individual's conception of the world, herself and her place in the world is not a relativistic construct, devoid of a proper *telos* to guide it; the individual partakes of a truth that establishes reality beyond relativizing by a subject (or a group of subjects). The difficulty lies in justifying how such a bond between subject and phenomenal objects may be conceived and then communicated without loss of meaning.

Husserl takes to heart the Cartesian fear that there may be an error or deception in the subject's knowledge of the object. His method will strive to prove that this fear may be allayed by emphasizing that the ideal essence of the object lies not in the object itself but in the conscious representation of the object that the subject creates. In this sense, he remains within the Kantian approach by privileging the subjective role in conditioning knowledge. But his fear remains palpable enough that he demands a level of objectivity for these conscious representations that transcends the individual subject and enables us to get beyond the contingency of appearances. The aim is to grasp an idea untainted by mere moments of physical becoming, possible because these moments were already synthesized by, and

grounded in, transcendental consciousness. Coupling this with Husserl's desire for scientific rigor, we may see that his "science of Objective subjectivity"<sup>8</sup> forces him to break with Kant and to try to rationalize all experience, even that considered by Kant as noumenal, as an objective *process* of a subject. For Husserl, for any noumena to exist they must be structures within the transcendental ego, thus known. If we can know, represent, noumena, Kant was wrong in assuming the unknowability of the things-in-themselves. Husserl apparently decides that if noumena exist they must be intended transcendently, thus truly no longer noumena but phenomena. This reductively eliminates the question of the noumenal realm. Via representation, he reduces all phenomena (including the *possibility* of any noumena) to the product of a transcendental Ego:

The Objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me—this world, with all its Objects, I said, derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, *from me as the transcendental Ego*, the Ego who comes to the fore only with transcendental-phenomenological epoché (CM, 26).

He begins by investigating our accepted notions of meaning, the traditional means by which we conceive understanding. He finds that it is through language and representation that we create bodies of knowledge valid for oneself and others. Representation allows meaning to be able to be conceptualized, and a prerequisite for the communication of an idea is that the object in question be one and the same. It is essential, and we are seeking 'essences' here, that any object discussed be without ambiguity or confusion in the subjective meaning-intention. There must be an ideal entity for verification purposes, an entity true at all times and for all investigators.

Because intentionality exists for us in subjective signs, Husserl must account for any type of sign with the clarity and rigor good science demands. He finds that there exist two distinct types of signs: *indication* (*Anzeige*) and *expression* (*Ausdruck*). Indication is the less direct form of sign—a picture of an airplane on a highway sign stands for an airport, or a green light means that it is safe to proceed forward. Here, the indication stands in for another object and virtually communicates the existence of that other object in its stead by association. In expressions, direct meaning itself becomes actualized. That is, whether in spoken or written form the expression takes a direct path to its object without any mediation or secondary steps. The expression's meaning may be of a square or a cat; Husserl believes that the object expressed in an expression shares its essence with the expression—the expression functions phenomenally as the object's meaning. For Husserl the object is *idealized*, and then communicated through an expression. As a result, an expression may occur once, may be repeated (even infinitely), may even transcend a particular language-based configuration (i.e., be translatable), and in each case the expression represents the same idealized entity. Thus, a table to Aristotle expresses the same entity as to Heidegger or Rawls, no matter which particular word is utilized or whether it is stone, wood, brown, hard, etc. Note that this entity's many predicates are thematized into one idea and no one predicate is the object—the ideal entity is the sum of all possible predicates.

Husserl asserts that via the expression the meaning-intention approaches the transcendental idealization. Each new expression of an object, whether produced by the same subject or not, is unified transcendently by the ideal entity. As a result, the human act of intending expresses this idealization on the phenomenal plane, and is informed and generated

by the transcendental plane.<sup>9</sup> This results in a subjective transcendental in which intentionality transcends its subject-relative constructivity and becomes objective, thus becoming linked to the possibility of expression in general. The status of “objectivity” here depends more on the transcendental Ego’s structural laws than the qualities of an external object. One’s expression contains, moreover *is*, any meaning an object may possess. Hence, a synthesis of identity between subject and object results, rather than a more Cartesian correspondence theory.

We should note that in his schemata, Husserl appears to retain a distinction between what Kant and Schopenhauer consider understanding and reason. But a crucial difference is that his distinction comes *after* both have been considered as mental phenomena. He states that “there are essential, specific differences of intentional relation or intention”<sup>10</sup> thereby allowing for what he considers a fuller “content” in the idea or mental phenomena. Fuller intentions approximate true knowledge or reason while less full intentions are similar to the sensations of the understanding. Therefore, he puts forth: “That not all experiences are intentional is proved by sensations and sensational complexes” (LI, 556). The sole difference, then, between understanding and reason is a phenomenal one—the latter reveals a richer and more adequate intentional content than the former. Husserl believes his logocentric reductionism warrants a downgrading of experience to a secondary role in rational intention, reversing Schopenhauer’s conceptual hierarchy.

Husserl attempted to provide an account of phenomena without recourse to any level of reality that could be considered noumenal and inexplicable. Yet, he also saw the necessity of including transcendental experience in a complete explication of phenomenal reality. In this way he tried to be loyal to an experientially based rigorous science without lapsing into any possible relativism spawned by dependence on a particular spatio-temporal place or moment. Intentionality can be rationally apprehended with full completeness in such a manner that any urge or emotion reveals itself as transparent to the transcendental ego.

### **III. Schopenhauer and Husserl: Experiencing the Will Behind the Ego**

Schopenhauer and Husserl’s projects coincide in many ways. Both maintain a disdain for any philosophy that would depend on abstractions unconnected to experiential data. Both, in their own ways, see the necessity of supplementing what a Locke or Hume would consider empirical phenomena with elements that allow a fuller and more comprehensive notion of reality. Furthermore, Schopenhauer is not so far from the Husserlian approach in what is ultimately sought as the goal for philosophy:

The present philosophy, at any rate, by no means attempts to say *whence* or *for what purpose* the world exists, but merely *what* the world is. But here the *Why* is subordinated to the *What*, for it already belongs to the world, as it springs merely from the form of its phenomenon, the principle of sufficient reason, and only to this extent has its meaning and validity (WWR I, 82).

There exists a distinct emphasis for both parties on the “what,” the actual contents of the world we encounter. Both may be considered epistemological “agnostics” who reject any problematization of the external world—it appears to our consciousness, hence, it exists.

In this world, Husserl explicitly considers philosophy the primary science, and in his classification of the sciences, Schopenhauer also gives to philosophy the highest standing of 'the science which grounds all sciences,' stating:

Philosophy or metaphysics, as the doctrine of consciousness and its contents in general, or of the whole of experience as such, does not come into the list, because it does not straightway pursue the consideration required by the principle of sufficient reason, but has as its primary object the principle itself (WWR II, 128).

Their similar conceptions of what they, as philosophers, do points toward intersections where we may establish a fuller and more fruitful comparison. Furthermore, these similarities provide a springboard to an analysis that will reveal how a Schopenhauerian critique might resolve some tensions other critics have found in Husserl's phenomenological account.

Schopenhauer stands on record here as a proponent of the limiting of purely phenomenological approaches to understanding empirical human reality. Yet, while study of phenomena does give us a richer knowledge of the "what," we still crave knowledge of the "why." He states: "The mere ground of knowledge, on the other hand, always remains on the surface, can give us a rational knowledge *that* a thing is as it is, but no rational knowledge *why* it is so" (WWR I, 69). Here we cannot help but intuit a suprasensual level of our being, one beyond empirically based reason and science. Thus, speaking of *why*, for example,  $2+2=4$ , Schopenhauer notes that: "Every explanation of natural science must ultimately stop at such a *qualitas occulta*, and thus at something wholly obscure" (WWR I, 80). The ineffable will remains an aspect of ourselves and our world that no empirical science can explain or eliminate. Schopenhauer believes that the best science recognizes its limits and cedes further investigation to the proper field of inquiry, here, metaphysics. As a result, he views science as rightly limited to phenomena and incapable of capturing the whole of reality. Thus, he begins to diverge from the much-criticized scientistically totalizing aspect of the Husserlian approach.

Husserl's move to transcendental ideality created a critical backlash toward his phenomenological science. Heidegger accuses Husserl of maintaining a dehistoricizing metaphysics that obscures our being-in-the-world and care (*Sorge*) regarding our world. Derrida asserts that Husserl's presencing of the intention can never escape the absence that infiltrates it, resulting in a destabilizing of its purity and universality. How might Schopenhauer's noumenal will enter this fray and register a distinct complaint against the Husserlian project?

Husserl, in performing his epochés, is reducing things to their eidetic form—ideas, hence reason, are the ultimate goal and center of human life, not the mechanistic workings of the brain or world as emphasized by naturalist schools of thought. Schopenhauer also wants to avoid totalizing naturalisms, but he remains too aware that any reduction to ideas alone reveals simply the flip side of the same extremist coin. The Husserlian Idea, due to its transcendental-abstract nature, strives to leave behind what Husserl considers the uncertainty of perception. For Schopenhauer, this directly takes the wrong path for "the highest, i.e., the most general, concepts are the emptiest and poorest, and ultimately are mere husks" (FR, 147). Furthermore, where Husserl emphasizes the relation between intender and intended, that is, the act of intending, Schopenhauer wants to show this as inadequate because this relation is already implied in all representation. Indeed, intentionality can only provide an account of phenomena as it occurs but this can never explain *why* these acts of intending occur, what the *urges* for them is. For Schopenhauer, any explanation that would skirt this issue

or need, or dismiss it out of hand as does Husserl, verges on the unscientific, or more importantly, the non-experiential, by asking more of science than it can give. Husserl's project may reveal new ways in exploring phenomena but it cannot account for the full experiential spectrum of human life. Any project that places primacy on the eternal, and never to be completed, project to synthesize all intentions transcendently may or may not succeed in that goal—but it has already failed in the sense that by marginalizing experiences that overflow phenomenal borders as soon as they are established, it limits the scope of what can be achieved.

Schopenhauer's conception of the ego, especially as it reveals the separated unity of the will and intellect, brings this failure out more clearly. He posits that: "This *knowing* and conscious *ego* is related to the will, which is the basis of its phenomenal appearance, as the image in the focus of the concave mirror is to that mirror itself; and, like that image, it has only a conditioned, in fact, properly speaking, a merely apparent reality"<sup>11</sup> (WWR II, 278). Steven Neeley takes this metaphor one step further asserting that "the ego represents the single slate of glass which has both a reflective (phenomenal) and a non-reflective (noumenal) plane."<sup>12</sup> Not only does Schopenhauer condition the ego with the noumenal will, he also establishes the ego relative to a unique empirical body: "the *intellect* is physically conditioned, the function of a material organ, and therefore dependent on it" (WWR II, 270). Hence, Schopenhauer stands by his experiential criteria for knowledge—as the part of us that *knows*, the ego must be ruled by the principle of sufficient reason and cannot hope to gain greater certainty via any transcendental reduction than that found in unsullied perception. First, we must accept that as embodied knowers we cannot have greater certainty than that provided by experiential data because knowledge simply *is* that data, albeit possibly reconfigured by abstract reasoning. Second, any move to a dehistoricized or disembodied transcendental plane blatantly attempts to hide from the full range of embodied experiences we have, tries to ignore our aspect as willers.<sup>13</sup>

That is, it *dehumanizes* the subject by sapping the will out of it. The will is an integral half of the human world and, although Schopenhauer is in many ways eager to overcome or deny it, it cannot be done away with by reducing one's scope to phenomena and then reducing phenomena to their eidetic or transcendental content. The ego's unity as intender is merely the will representing itself to itself (imperfectly) as knowledge—at best it can provide only an incomplete account of reality. Representations are all but useless in one's struggle with the will because, as we have seen, the intellect often remains subordinate to the will and 'out of the loop' in one's decisions, only coming around to rationalize them later. Meaning remains founded in an ego for Schopenhauer, just as that ego remains founded in the will. According to Schopenhauerian doctrine the Husserlian project of explicating reality must fail ever more decisively the closer it comes to reaching its criteria of success and disregarding the noumenal aspect of the world.

Schopenhauer thus provides an alternative critique of Husserl to those of Heidegger and Derrida, because he remains avowedly metaphysical in scope and intent, while not sacrificing a strong mooring in the empirical world. This metaphysical aspect of his project is what should interest us in our critical investigations of the 20th century phenomenological tradition. It presents a neglected way in which we may allow our rational projects to progress without fear of technological tyranny because it explicitly denies from science any reach into the essence of

what makes each of us unique, that is, our intuition of our will. Furthermore, it scoffs at rationality's pretensions to any unified presence or eternal objectivity, yet, never recoils in distaste from the human "need for metaphysics."

The radical division he maintains between representation and will places him closer to the more atomistic systems of the phenomenological lineage of Buber, Marcel, Sartre and Levinas with their emphasis on the radical and metaphysical alterity between the I and the Other.<sup>14</sup> Yet, his blend of atomism and holism remains unique in that while establishing the will as the "inner, true, and indestructible nature" (WWR II, 201) of human beings, he does not divinize the will by means of worship or uncritical acceptance (and thus incur Heideggerian accusations of propagandizing yet another onto-theology). Nor does Schopenhauer sacrifice certainty when it comes to questions of empirical truth (such as Habermas and many others believe Derrida does in his decentering critique of intentionality). The Schopenhauerian approach satisfies contemporary standards of experiential and cognitive epistemology while not shying away from the metaphysical underpinnings that support human knowledge.

It appears that Husserl was aware of Schopenhauer's concepts and held them in some favorable light.<sup>15</sup> Did he feel the Schopenhauerian approach to lack the requisite rigor for scientific apodicticity? Perhaps. In light of a Schopenhauerian critique, it seems, ironically enough, that as one of the most subjectivist thinkers in all of Western philosophy, Husserl was unable or unwilling to look within and accept the unknowable impulse that manifested itself in every idea he ever sought to effect a reduction with. By denying the separated unity of noumena and phenomena in the world Husserl cut himself off at the start from the justification he so passionately sought for the mysterious reality around and within us.

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<sup>1</sup> Ted Humphrey, "Schopenhauer and the Cartesian Tradition," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol XIX, No. 2 (April 1981), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Volumes I and II, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969). Hereafter cited in the text as WWR I and WWR II.

<sup>3</sup> Causality, for Schopenhauer, is "the sole form and function of the understanding, certainly not the complicated clockwork of the twelve Kantian categories," Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1974), p. 111. Hereafter cited in the text as FR.

<sup>4</sup> John E. Atwell, "Doers and Their Deeds: Schopenhauer on Human Agency," *Schopenhauer: New Essays in Honor of His 200th Birthday*, ed. Eric von der Luft (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), p. 12. Atwell's essay pays attention to the issues of action and freedom and responsibility, while this essay focuses more on acts of linguistic meaning-intention.

<sup>5</sup> One of Schopenhauer's innovations is that the noumenal will also may be represented to *oneself* based on both its a priori status and one's a posteriori experience of the will in oneself. But it is only *thought* and not *known*.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. II, trans. E.F.J. Payne (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 96.

<sup>7</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), p. 21.

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<sup>8</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 30. Hereafter cited in the text as CM.

<sup>9</sup> Husserl is here utilizing the idea in the Kantian sense, wherein ideas regulatively guide our intentions and help unify the various perspectives (*Abschattung*) into a single object.

<sup>10</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Volumes I and II, trans. J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 554. Hereafter cited in the text as LI.

<sup>11</sup> Schopenhauer's use of a mirror metaphor appears to leave him open to the same criticisms leveled against analytic correspondence theories by Richard Rorty, primarily in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. I hope I have shown that Schopenhauer's "no subject without object" dictum among other features of his more common sense epistemology place him, along with Wittgenstein and Heidegger, outside the objectivity-seeking "neo-Kantian consensus," despite his acceptance of metaphysics.

<sup>12</sup> G. Steven Neeley, "A Re-Examination of Schopenhauer's Analysis of Bodily Agency: The Ego as Microcosm," *Idealistic Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (January 1992), p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> Schopenhauer echoes both Derrida and Heidegger: he 'starts from the text,' here by 'reading' our experiences-in-the-world.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that Levinas in particular considers his project metaphysical and recognizes the nonrepresentational character of metaphysics: "The metaphysical relation can not be properly speaking a representation, for the other would therein dissolve into the same..." Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 38. The other Levinas speaks of is the absolute Other that opposes one's being, but it may not be so far off to propose that for Schopenhauer the will, owing to its radical unknowability, operates similarly to the Other in Levinas's system insofar as the will opposes the intellect's desire toward totalization.

<sup>15</sup> Husserl mentions Schopenhauer by name, and with an understanding that one assumes comes only from reading the text, in his *Logical Investigations*, pp. 87, 861.