

A Contrastive Analysis of Descartes' Methodic Doubt and Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology

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Abstract

This work is expository, analytic, critical and evaluative in its methodology. Admittedly, both thinkers were dualists. But, where Descartes turned out to be a dualist in the stronger sense, Husserl had brought the Ego closer to the objects it perceives, constituting them through intentionality. More specifically, through the intertwining between the intentional act and the intentional object. The goal of Descartes' method was to arrive at an *inconcussum quid*, at something which cannot be subjected to doubt: his own existence as a thinking substance, in addition to the proof(s) of the existence of God. So, he methodically doubted all the things he had been certain about, in order to reaffirm their existence. Husserl's method, on the other hand, employs what is sometimes seen as a twofold approach: phenomenological *ἐποχή*, (epoche) or "suspension of belief," and phenomenological reduction. Husserl's main philosophical problem had nothing to do with being certain about reality. He understood our certitude about reality as a basic fact of our everyday experience, as something to be taken at face value. Therefore, he did not need to doubt whether reality is as it seems to be, or even exists at all. Although there are many ways to explain Husserl's main issue, but to take the epistemological route, the one he took in his first public communication on this topic, *The idea of phenomenology*, it pertains to the manner in which exterior objectivity, as something whose existence transcends the subject, can reach an immanent subject.

Keywords: Analysis, Contrastive, Methodic Doubt, Descartes, Husserl, Phenomenology.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The history of the debate about the possibility, nature and validity of knowledge is one of the very oldest, and one about which virtually every great philosopher has had something to say. "Is knowledge possible?" is a very broad question. Many books have been written for and against skepticism and the reputations of at least three of the greatest philosophers, Socrates, Descartes, and Hume, rest largely on their formulations of, and attempts to overcome, skepticism: *the view that certainty in knowledge is impossible*. One's epistemic claims can arise from a variety of conceptual frameworks. But, irrespective of the framework of discourse, the central issue here is whether or not knowledge can be acquired with certainty. In other words, are there sure foundations for knowledge, or is knowledge simply a collection of conjectures, which may be discarded if falsified? What is it that the skeptic and the non-skeptic are arguing about? Knowledge, of course. But what is knowledge? Justified true belief? So was it supposed by many, until

Gettier's article (1963) [¹] offered a contrary, but, ground-breaking perspective. Accordingly, since 1963 epistemologists have tried, again and again, to revise or repair or replace JTB in response to Gettier cases. The main aim has been to modify JTB so as to gain a 'Gettier-proof' definition of knowledge [²]. Defined narrowly, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. As the study of knowledge, epistemology is concerned with the following questions: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits? As the study of justified belief, epistemology aims to answer questions such as: How are we to understand the concept of justification? What makes justified beliefs justified? Is justification internal or external to one's own mind?

¹ Edmund L. Gettier, (1963) "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23: 121-3

² Mark Kaplan, (1985) "It's Not What You Know That Counts," *Journal of Philosophy* 82: 350-53

Understood more broadly, epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry.

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that addresses the philosophical problems surrounding the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is concerned with the definition of knowledge and related concepts, the sources and criteria of knowledge, the kinds of knowledge possible and the degree to which each is certain, and the exact relation between the one who knows and the object known. The idea of knowledge implies certainty. But the notion of belief implies what has to be evaluated after which it becomes knowledge. Thus, to claim to know something is to be certain about that thing. In a bid to defend the possibility of certainty, some eminent philosophers, namely Rene Descartes and Edmund Husserl, embarked on a phenomenological project as an attempt to undermine skepticism. This essay addresses the overly ambitious epistemological project of Descartes, as well as the overly ambitious phenomenological project of Husserl, both of whom the pretension to begin from a 'presuppositionless' position, the denial of human historicity, the illusion of self-distancing, absolute certainty or ultimacy, the discovery of the invariant core, in the content of human subjective conscious experience, the quest for incorrigibility, indubitability and infallibility in epistemic claims, can be ascribed.

1.1 Descartes' Methodic Doubt

Descartes as posited to us by Julian Marian is the decision figure in the transition from one era to another. His generation marks the passage from the medieval world to the mature modern spirit. He was called by Ortega "the first modern philosopher." Descartes was born in 1596 to a noble family in La Haye, to Touraine. At eight, he went to study at the Jesuit school in La fleche. He has a special interest in classical language and literatures and this he studied intensively. Afterwards, he started studying philosophy. He lived in a most rapidly challenging world, one marked by religious conflicts, and by intense controversy, between the advocates of Aristotle's views about the nature of the physical world, and those who supported the new theories of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo. It was the period when many philosophers were sported to inquire into the nature of newly emerged theories, methods and the validity of knowledge [³]. Descartes trained in Aristotelian philosophy, set out to study the world for him-self. After series of investigation, Descartes came to suspect all accepted views that claimed authority merely because they were ancient and honored. In 1628 when Descartes returned to Paris he discovered that most independently thoughtful of his contemporaries were similarly agitated by the conflict between the older

³ Keith Lehrer, (1965) "Knowledge, Truth and Evidence." *Analysis* 25: 168-171

ideas, which they felt they could no longer accept, and the new theories. Many of them turned to skepticism - a view that doubts whether any of our beliefs can be supported by adequate or sufficient evidence [4]. It was at this cloudy and skeptical period that Descartes philosophical audacity and acumen got developed. Descartes' philosophy was an attempt to reconstruct a better understanding in philosophy. This understanding would differentiate between what is certain and what is probable, and from what is probable to what are superstitions. This is in order to arrive at a certain knowledge that is clear and distinct, and acquire solutions to new problems. In his metaphysical argument, Descartes intended to solve practical problems through the application of the methodic doubt. This means that Descartes wants to replace the science of his time which was a mass of more or less justified beliefs by a justified science where every assertion would have its proof to be clear and certain. He asserts that his philosophical arguments are the fundamental part of science upon which other sciences depended [⁵]. Regarding his discourse on method, Descartes was impressed with the method of solving problems in mathematics due to the certainty of its demonstration and the evidence of its reasons. He tried to work out the method of solving the problems raised by the human mind.

In it, Descartes asserts that it is a set of certain and easy rules in the sense that anyone who wants to observe them exactly will not take false as true, without any waste of mental effort. But when he increases his knowledge, he will arrive at a true understanding of all those things which is not above his capacity. According to Descartes, this is possible since all the sciences are branches on the one tree of knowledge. Hence, he believes that if he is able to find a method of solving a problem, such method will apply to all sciences. He explained that mathematical method would be an acceptable model of the method [⁶]. Hence, he posited four rules of method which forms the basis of all scientific and philosophical research. Descartes avowed that if the methodological rules are accepted, we will arrive at the knowledge of truth. In the real sense, Descartes does not want to promote the conduct of reasoning, rather in the method he conducts himself as he puts it thus: "Those who went about giving precepts must esteem themselves more skillful than those to whom they advance them, and if they fall short in the smallest matter they must, of course, take blame for it" [7]. Based on this argument, Descartes did not see

⁴ Joseph I. Omoregbe, *Philosophy of Mind* (Lagos: Joja Edu. Research and Publisher Limited, 2001) p. 2

⁵ John O'Connor, "Descartes" in *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), p. 171.

⁶ Keith Lehrer, (1971) "Why Not Scepticism?" *The Philosophical Forum* 2: 283-285

⁷ Elizabeth S. Holdane & G.R.T. Ross, *The*

himself as higher than any other man, but wants to have a clear and distinct knowledge. This is because there is no other quality that makes a good mind since it is only through reason that men are differentiated from brutes which is present in all men.

1.1 Descartes' Criterion for Truth

Descartes wishes to construct philosophy that is beyond doubt and this he began with what he possesses: his own doubt, his profound uncertainty [8]. Descartes says not to accept a single 'truth' that is open to doubt, it must not be sufficient that he does not actually doubt that 'truth', there must not be a room even for the possibility of a doubt. Hence Descartes makes doubts the very method of his philosophy. It was this method that led to the 'cogito' [9]. To go beyond the certainty of his existence, Descartes considered generally what is needed in a proposition to be true. Since he discovered one which is such, he remarks that it is necessary to know in what sense this certainty consists. He asserts:

Following upon this, and reflecting on the fact that I doubted, and that consequently my existence was not quite perfect for I saw clearly that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt, I resolved to inquire whence I had learnt to think of anything more perfect than myself was; and I recognized very clearly that this conception must proceed from some nature which was really more perfect [6].

For Descartes, those things we see clearly and distinctly are all true. The phrase 'I think, therefore I am', is true based on the fact that it is clear and distinct to mind. In the same vein, mathematical propositions, he said, are true. This is because they are clear and distinct [10]. In *Cogito, ergo sum*, Descartes tries to maintain that what is apprehended is the T. The T is left when everything except thinking has been thought away. This T is the concrete existing one which is apprehended, and not a transcendental ego; though it is not the T of ordinary discourse. After discovering the indubitable truth, '*cogito, ergo sum*', Descartes also wants to know what it takes in a proposition for it to be true and certain. Thus, he said: *For, since I had just discovered one which I knew to be such, I thought that I ought also to know in what this certainty is consisted* [7]. This implies that through the examination of a

Philosophical Works of Descartes vol. 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 83.

⁸Andrew F. Uduigwomen. *A Concise Introduction to Philosophy and Logic* (Calabar: Prathel (Nig) enterprises, 2000) pp. 146-147.

⁹Desmond M. Clarke, (1984) "René Descartes: Principles of Philosophy," *Philosophical Books* 25 (1):17-18

¹⁰Iu D. Artamonova (1996) "The Mind as Interpreted by Aristotle and Descartes and Some Features of Modern European Logic," *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 34 (4):5-7

proposition which is seen as true and certain, one hopes to arrive at a general criterion of certainty. In this way, there is nothing in the proposition "I think, therefore I am," that assures one of truth until we see clearly and distinctly what is affirmed [11].

1.2. The Angelism of Descartes: The Quest for Epistemic Indubitability, Incorrigeability and Infallibility

In his attempt to arrive at a new foundation of knowledge, Descartes decided to demolish the philosophical edifice. This demolishing consists of removing by doubt all that he had ever known, which could be put to doubt. He sees this foundation as the first principle. This principle is self-evident and every other claim originates from it. This first principle, according to Descartes, is the first object of knowledge and should remain true after everything must have been doubted. He asserts that everything that can be doubted should be doubted and rejected. Thus, to see if there is anything remaining that is certain and cannot be doubted. In the process of his doubt, Descartes doubted his senses, experiences, reason, and even mathematics [12]. To do this effectively, he applied the skeptical attitude by not accepting that he knew anything. Though, he did not doubt just because he wanted to doubt like the skeptics, but he doubted in order to arrive at certainty. Thus, his doubt was a constructive doubt and not a skeptical doubt. It was from this end that Descartes realized he was thinking. He held that to doubt that one is thinking is impossible, since the act of doubting is a confirmation that one is thinking. Thus, to doubt is to think and to think is to exist [13]. It was from this point that it became evident to Descartes that the facts that he thinks shows he exists. Through this, he established his first principle, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," "I think, therefore I exist." For Descartes, this means that nothing was more certain even the most radical doubt needs a doubter. Therefore, thinking means the existence of the thinker. It was from this first principle of existing and that thinking that Descartes made his move to deduce the whole of his philosophical thoughts. He concluded that he could receive it without any problem as the first principle of philosophy for which he was seeking. He held that only the ideas which he can deduce clearly and distinctly from the existence are to be accepted into the body of knowledge.

¹¹Jonathan Schaffer, (2010) "The Internal Relatedness of All Things," *Mind* 119 (474):341-343.

¹²Emily R. Grosholz (1986) "A Case Study in the Application of Mathematics to Physics: Descartes' Principles of Philosophy, Part II," *PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, 116 – 118.

¹³Joseph Omoregbe, *Epistemology: A Systematic and Historical Study* (Lagos: Educational Research and Publishing Company Limited, 1998). p. 81.

2.0: Exposition of Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology

Phenomenology is seen as the brainchild of Edmund Husserl, a German mathematician, turned philosopher. The founder of German philosopher Edmund Husserl, introduced the term in his book *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (Ideen zu einer Reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie: Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die Reine Phänomenologie, 1913). In this work, attempted to expand philosophy from his scientific background. Being influenced by his master, Brentano, a descriptive Psychologist, he tried to develop transcendental phenomenology, a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology, seeking to understand human experience. Transcendental phenomenology brings added dimensions to the study of human experiences through qualitative research. Grasping and using its philosophical tenets such as noema, noesis, noeses, noetic, and epoche in a meaningful way can be challenging, given their abstraction and complexity [14].

2.1: The Concept of Phenomenology

The term 'phenomenology' had been used in 1765 in philosophical writings. It was Kant who used it occasionally. But Hegel had a well-defined technical meaning of the word 'phenomenology'. In his phenomenology of mind, Hegel wanted to consider knowledge as it appears to consciousness. Hence, he defined phenomenology as: the science describing the development which natural phenomenal consciousness undergoes by way of science and philosophy toward the absolute knowledge of the absolute [15]. That is, the object whose investigation is the phenomenal knowing. It is from this point that the natural consciousness begins in order to arrive at the distinct knowledge. On the other hand, phenomenal knowing is also seen as the point where the individual mind began and ran through other stages with other individual minds to arrive at the mind who knows him-self in full. Therefore, Hegel's phenomenology is seen as a means that begins from the phenomenal knowing to an absolute knowledge of absolute mind [16]. Thus, Husserlian transcendental phenomenology, similar to the angelism of Descartes, is a radicalization of Descartes' opinion that all philosophical knowledge is found in absolute certainty. We may recall that philosophy is seen as the father of

all intellectually justified knowledge, that is why philosophy is not an issue of feeling, rather philosophy would want to attempt every problem and bring it to presuppositions that are evident as a rigorous science [17].

The Husserlian phenomenology wanted philosophy to be a rigorous science so as to arrive at the absolute knowledge of things. Phenomenology explains that, at the natural attitude, there is a distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical sciences. The natural attitude is a condition where man's perception and thinking are turned toward things, given to us as obvious, depending on our standpoints which appear in different ways. The perception offers us what to express in judgments both in singular and in universal. For Husserl, we must realize that philosophy cannot begin at once as the positive sciences do. This is because the natural sciences are proposed foundations of experience of the world. Hence, philosophy is a reduction to the absolute "presuppositionlessness." For Husserl, it is only phenomenological systems with their specific method of bracketing that can be considered certain, in relation to philosophical inquiries. In other words, phenomenology deals with the essence of things, and not with their concrete existence as individuals. The task of phenomenology is to intuit relationship and describe it. It is to explain how an object of knowledge is constituted in our knowing acts. In the aspect of pure self-givenness and absolute certainty, we must analyze and describe every mode of presentation and the correlate which become clear in them. According to Husserl, this system helps to arrive at the transcendental object. Phenomenology studies genuinely, in a scientific and radical way, the constitutions of the objects of consciousness and the world in which they appear, and the ego to which they show themselves [18].

2.2: The Eidetic Reduction

The eidetic reduction is the abstraction of essences. The essence abstracted through the eidetic reduction is the intelligible structure of the phenomena found in consciousness. This is to say that the basic goal of the eidetic reduction is to find the components of phenomena. According to Husserl, these basics help us to communicate and describe some phenomena with some accuracy, though this lessens the original phenomena in a certain way [19]. The eidetic reduction

¹⁴Pedro M. S. Alves (2022) "Revisiting Reinach and the Early Husserl For a Phenomenology of Communication," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 78 (3):771-773

¹⁵ Joseph J. Kocklemans, *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation* (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc. 1967), p. 17-20.

¹⁶ Joseph J. Kocklemans, *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation*, p. 25.

¹⁷Etelvina Pires Lopes Nunes, Andreas Gonçalves Lind & João Carlos Onofre Pinto, (2022) Forgotten Disciples of Husserl, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 78 (3):641-644.

¹⁸Renxiang Liu (2022) "Explaining It Away? On the Enigma of Time in Husserl's Phenomenology of Time-Consciousness," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 36 (2):277-279.

¹⁹Jonathan Mitchell (2022) "The Mind's Presence to Itself: In Search of Non-Intentional Awareness,"

gives us the patterns of meaning of a particular phenomenon. It does not claim to clarify linguistically the boundaries or how to make use of a concept in different way; rather, it tries to offer the imitation of a meaningless phenomenon [20]. Furthermore, the eidetic reduction wants to know if the piece of text can bring experience into view or evoke something special about the human experience. The eidetic reduction is not a contraction of the world into a system of fully resolved concepts, but it makes the world appear as if it follows every related construction in its ambiguity, irreducibility, contingency, mystery, and ultimate indeterminacy [21]. According to Husserl, this reduction is that attitude which considers the world of objects. In considering this, it ignores the individual experience so as to deal exclusively upon the essences. That is, the world of individual realities, both in nature and in consciousness, is subjected to eidetic reduction [22].

2.3: The Phenomenological Reduction

The phenomenological reduction is a particular form of investigation in phenomenology. The phenomenological reduction is concerned about disengaging the 'non-worldly' character of essences and to make clear the constitutive acts where the essence originates. Specifically, through the phenomenological reduction the transcendental structures of the essences are being revealed. As noted by Husserl, the phenomenological reduction is not the same as the eidetic theory of the phenomena of the world; rather, the phenomenological reduction is the one that has undergone the transcendental reductions. He maintained that the universals in the stream of consciousness are removed from particular data [23].

2.4: The Pure Ego

Inasmuch as the concrete ego is interwoven with the natural world, it is very explicit that it is reduced. That is why the 'I' must abstain from all issues concerning the self as existing. It is clear that there is a T who abstains, and who is the T even of the reduction. This T is the pure ego, according to Husserl. And the *epoche* is the universal method by which T, the phenomenological subject, is grasped as a pure ego

Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 104 (3):659-661.

²⁰ Emilio Vicuña (2022) "Normality as Background Causality," *Husserl Studies* 38 (2):197-200.

²¹ Heath Williams & Thomas Byrne (2022) Husserl's Theory of Scientific Explanation: A Bolzanian Inspired Unificationist Account, *Husserl Studies* 38 (2):171-173.

²² Jules Bednarski, "The Eidetic Reduction" in *Philosophy Today* vol. 6 edited by Robert F. Lechner (Ohio: Society of the Precious Blood of Jesus. 1962). p. 17.

²³ Andrij Wachtel (2022) "Is Husserl's Anti-naturalism Up to Date? A Critical Review of the Contemporary Attempts to Mathematize Phenomenology," *Husserl Studies* 38 (2):129-131.

[24]. For Edmund Husserl, pure consciousness, for which everything that exists is an object, is the ground for the foundation and constitution of all meaning. According to the *Ideas*, conscious life is the life of an ego which is a "pure I and nothing more." This expression is decisive: here is largely at stake what makes Husserlian transcendental phenomenology different from a number of other philosophical trends, whether phenomenological or not (Neokantianism, Sartrean or Heideggerian phenomenology); it describes a specific moment in Husserl's working out of his own point of view by distinguishing a central stage of his philosophy from previous and subsequent ones.

2.5: Husserl's Concept of Intentionality

The intentionality of consciousness can be seen as a relation which certain act bear to an object. A conscious act confronts us with objects. When this object is experienced, the subject is aware of the object [25]. In removing the idea that an object exists, the reduction explains the object as intended, as phenomena and as my consciousness. Husserl asserts that one's consciousness cannot be thought when what it is conscious of is taken away. The imaginary difference operated in consciousness affirms that its actual being is to be consciousness of something. Therefore, as consciousness is intentionality, it is then, possible to affect the reduction without losing what is reduced. That means, to reduce is to transform every data into phenomena and reveal the essential characteristics of the T, the source of significant and the constitutive power. Husserl proposed that there are different kinds of intentional acts, such as imagination, representations, experiences of other people, sensory and categorical intuitions, and so on. He differentiated the actual T which is explicit consciousness of the object from the non-actual T where consciousness is implicit. In this way, the actual experience is encircled by a field of inactive experiences and the flux of experience cannot be constituted by pure actuality. In other words, all experience is intentional and intentionality should not be confused with attention [26].

2.6. Husserl's Concept of the Life-World

According to Husserl, the source of experience is the 'life-world' — *Lebenswelt*. This is the environment in which one lives his daily life. It is the basis of all experience, reality, and meaning. When this concrete environment is forgotten, then we move to idealism. Scientific knowledge should be rooted in the life-world. If neglected, it falls into the crisis of authenticity and ideality. The life-world makes one to

²⁴ Jean-Francois Lvotard, *Phenomenology* transl. by Brain Beakley (Albany: State University Press, 1986) p. 74.

²⁵ Cf. Joseph Kocklemans, *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation*, pp. 118-119.

²⁶ Cf. Jean-Francois Lvotard, p. 55.

be conscious of and impose the imperative of life-in-the-world in realism and existential relevance. Man's contact with external objects is constitutive of objectivity. According to Husserl, the subject is confronted with things, issues, and events. It grows with experience. In his *Logical Investigation*, the life-world theory of Husserl speaks mainly on what is meant by 'truth'. Truth can only be defined as lived experience of truth, that is, evidence. Evidence is the original mode of intentionality.

2.7: Similarities and Dissimilarities between Descartes' Methodic Doubt and Husserl's Phenomenology

The main point of convergence for both philosophers is the construction of the theory of knowledge which will serve as a firm foundation in philosophy. This means that, for both philosophers, knowledge is attained through the ego, even if they explained this idea in different ways. In his theory of knowledge, Descartes tries to establish a foundation of knowledge in which there will be no doubt in the *cogito*. He laid a foundation whereby all those things he had previously perceived as true were rejected so as to form a new foundation which nothing would be doubted. Descartes sought to separate the 'clear and distinct' idea from the mental state which is mingled with it [27]. In the same vein, Husserl tried to reaffirm the essence of the Cartesian position in his 'pure phenomenology' which is a description of the method of phenomenological reduction [28]. He also held that the immediate knowledge that one has of its conscious mental states is the sure foundation to understand their nature, inasmuch as one can isolate what is internal to the mental state, and separate it from those that are extraneous. He added that the intentionality of the mental makes 'meaning' or 'reference' essentially to all mental act [29]. In the area of experience, Descartes stated that experience revolves round the self-ego. Both philosophers, in their explanations, accepted that the source of all knowledge is the ego. More so, there are other influences of Husserl, but Descartes' influence on Husserl was decisive because Husserl also began where Descartes did begin, that is the thinking self. Just as Descartes attempted to achieve an absolutely certain foundation for knowledge through his systematic doubt, Husserl posited the distinctive mood of phenomenology by accepting one part of Descartes' starting-point [30].

²⁷ Iris Laner (2020) "Practical Aesthetic Knowledge: Goodman and Husserl on the Possibilities of Learning by Aesthetic Practices," *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics* 52 (2):164.

²⁸ Nicola Spano (2022) "Book Review: The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Agency," *Husserl Studies* 38 (2):221-224.

²⁹ Roger Scruton, *Phenomenology and Existentialism* (New York: Routledge, 1984), p. 257.

³⁰ Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing

By implication, there is some uniformity in the background followed by both philosophers in order to arrive at absolute knowledge.

But, whether or not they actually achieved their goal, remains an open question. In his theory, Descartes tried to elicit an absolutely certain basis for any future philosophical and scientific inquiry. He said that the passivity of the senses and sense knowledge is also extended to its object, namely matter, in a way as passive and contrasted as active. The issue between activity and passivity is found in the notion of reason; in the sense that what is active is *formal* and what is passive is *material*. It is from this premises that Descartes felt that self-consciousness is the ultimate system in which philosophical inquiry, that is, universal doubt is justified and further pursued. Without any doubt, Descartes explained the indubitable certainty 'myself as *res cogitans* and was sure that he had been able to posit the apodictic existence absolutely [³¹]. The phenomenology of Husserl was to be established as a secret longing for all Western- European thought in order to receive a historical foundation for its necessity, a problem crisis in the issue of absolute beginning. This made Husserl to abandon the attempt to establish philosophy upon a *fundamentum absolutum et inoconcusam* in the spirit of Descartes [³²]. From this perspective, one would notice the point of divergence between Husserl and Descartes. According to Husserl, the goal of life's absolute philosophical self-vindication and self-justification is guided by the experience of evidence regarding the things itself. What is known does not possess essential determination which are not inclusive of the perfect evidence and which, by virtue of their being known, brings with them initial vagueness and doubt. This evidence, Husserl said, is adequate evidence. The characteristics of the adequate evidence can be found through doubt and negation. It is also an insight into the impossibility of not-being and not-being- so. Thus, it is seen as apodictic evidence. This means that for Husserl, the Cartesian maxim of indubitability is seen as a principle of necessary justification [³³]. Obviously, Husserl has shifted from the Cartesian way of establishing a foundation behind since he views the Cartesian 'apodictic' evidence of 'I

Company, 1989), p. 488.

³¹ Víctor Aranda (2022) "Completeness: From Husserl to Carnap," *Logica Universalis* 16 (1):57-60

³² Jing Chang (2020) "Imaginative Empathy in Literature: On the Theory of Presentification in Husserl and its Application in Literary Reading," *Labyrinth: An International Journal for Philosophy, Value Theory and Sociocultural Hermeneutics* 22 (1):40-55.

³³ Ivo Nikolov (2016), The Conference "Phenomenologies: The Legacies of Edmund Husserl" as a Founding Event of the Bulgarian Phenomenological Association. *Labyrinth: An International Journal for Philosophy, Value Theory and Sociocultural Hermeneutics* 18 (1):148

am' and all its content as an absolute experience. Another similar result was Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas and their force was guaranteed but the existence of God, this way is not open to Husserl because it gives information about the origin of the innate ideas through metaphysical argumentation and not by returning to absolute experiences. Such experiences in this way must be capable of being shown as constitutive achievement belonging to the transcendental subject if it claims that truth has a foundation.

2.8: CONCLUSION

Descartes' method does not employ any kind of "reduction." Instead, Descartes sets out to doubt that the things we have always been certain about really are what they appear to be, which, very often, gets radicalized in a doubt regarding their existence [34]. The things he takes into account, - starting from those that are most easy to doubt and going on to those that are less easy, if not almost impossible to doubt, are: (1.) things that I experience through my senses; (2.) my own body, insofar as it is something that I can experience through my senses, albeit of a special kind; (3.) the ideal objects of the positive sciences, both the ones that are one way or the other grounded in experience (bodily nature in anatomy, movement in physics...) and the ones that do not seem to be such, at least not directly (numbers in arithmetic, figures in geometry, etc.). Conversely, Rather than negating the existence of external objects, Husserl begins by suspending the belief in their existence, that is to say, by abstaining himself from either negating or affirming it [35]. What this achieves is a leveling of the object and the subject, wherein the object becomes nothing more than a correlate of a subjective act of consciousness. Conversely, this shows that existence is, fundamentally a matter of belief that is subjective, even if this can only be fully asserted once the suspension of belief is coupled with a phenomenological reduction. Moving on to the phenomenological reduction, then, Husserl shows that objects, as correlates of subjective acts of consciousness, acquire the meaning they have - including the meaning of "existent," through these very same acts of consciousness [36]. These acts belong to an original, transcendental consciousness which is sometimes - but this is one of the more controversial points in his teachings - considered as having a different, absolute existence. To conclude with his own

words, unlike Descartes, Husserl's aim is "not to secure objectivity, but to understand it" [37]. In this discussion, it is obvious that Descartes tried to find a clear and distinct brand of knowledge which is indubitable. Also, Husserl, the father of phenomenology, wanted to lay a foundation which is absolute, following after Descartes. In both philosophers' works, there is an attempt to give a new foundation to philosophy [38]. Both of them wanted clear, certain knowledge. But, while Descartes adopted the instrumentality of "methodic doubt," Husserl used the "phenomenological *epoche*." The truth is that both have made giant strides, but whether certainty consists in whatever they have proposed is a question that requires further and more demanding discourse.

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