An Introduction to Husserl's Marginal Remarks in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics

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Husserl's marginal remarks in Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik clearly do not reflect the same intense effort to penetrate Heidegger's thought that we find in his marginal notes in Sein und Zeit. Merely in terms of length, Husserl's comments in the published German text occupy only one-third the number of pages. Pages 1-5, 43-121, and 125-167 contain no reading marks at all-over half of the 236 pages of KPM. This suggests that Husserl either read these pages with no intention of returning to the text or skipped large parts of the middle of the text altogether. His remarks often express frustration or a resigned recognition of the now unbridgeable, irrevocable gap between himself and Heidegger.

"Randbemerkungen Husserls zu Heideggers Sein und Zeit and Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik" in Husserl Studies 11, 1-2 (1994), 3-63. This text contains only Husserl's remarks and not the Heideggerian reference texts included here. In it, the marginal remarks on SZ occupy pages 9-48, while the notes on KPM take up only pages 49-63. A French translation, Edmund Husserl, Notes sur Heidegger (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1993), is available which also contains the earlier drafts of the Britannica article and an interpretive essay by Denise Souche-Dagues, "La lecture husserlienne de Sein und Zeit," pp. 119-152.

Page references in this introduction will be to the original first edition text. Our translation of the marginal notes can serve as a guide for corresponding pages in the English translation by Richard Taft and in the 5th edition of the German text.

The "Einleitung" by Roland Breeur for the "Randbemerkungen" in Husserl Studies cited above, pp. 3-8, notes that we have no way of knowing whether Husserl ever read these other parts of the text. Breeur helpfully divides Husserl's remarks in SZ and KPM into three categories, the first of which is basically index words to tag the content of a passage for future reference. He notes that there are very few notes of this type in KPM but quite a few in SZ, showing that Husserl read SZ much more analytically than KPM.

¹The author of this introduction wishes to thank Sam ISsseling and Roland Breeur of the Husserl Archives for suggestions on how to reduce this introduction, which originally ran to four times its present length, to a size appropriate for its place in the volume. A few footnotes from the earlier draft will direct the reader to resources for further study.

Yet these remarks in the margins of KPM are still of considerable interest for several reasons: First, many of Husserl's notations respond substantively and at length to Heidegger's text and dispute his statements, articulating a clear counterposition to that of Heidegger on many points. This introduction, after the present paragraph, will devote itself to spelling out this counterposition. Second, Husserl's notations are important because of when they were written. Probably dating from Husserl's vacation at Tremezzo in September of 1929, they come from a time when Husserl has fully realized Heidegger's apostasy and is trying to arrive at a realistic assessment of his own position relation to Heidegger. To do this, he devotes himself to both Sein und Zeit and also Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik, which had appeared only a couple of months A third basis for the significance of Husserl's notations in KPM resides in the fact that Heidegger saw KPM as a continuation of the project of his masterwork, Sein und Zeit. Of course, Heidegger shortly thereafter abandoned any plans to finish sz and its project of a "fundamental ontology," 6 although he never abandoned his quest for "the meaning of Being." Prepared and published immediately on the heels of his famous "Davos Lectures" with Ernst Cassirer, KPM represents a certain closure in Heidegger's dialogue with NeoKantianism, and by extension with the NeoKantian tendencies in Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl's response to this view of Kant and continuation of SZ is of interest. Indeed, this brings us to a fourth reason Husserl's marginal remarks here are relevant:

For more exact details of the chronology, see the main introduction by Tom Sheehan.

Ironically, Heidegger states in the preface to the fourth edition (1973) that he undertook KPM precisely because he saw by 1929 that the Being-question as put forward in SZ was misunderstood. A little later in the same preface, he says that the Being-question was also misunderstood as it appeared in KPM, so he abandoned the project of using a reinterpretation of traditional metaphysics as a means profiling the question of Being.

Regarding Heidegger's relation to Husserl's phenomenology in the Marburg years, consult the following: Walter Biemel, "Heideggers Stellung zur Phänomenologie in der Marburger Zeit," in Husserl, Scheler, Heidegger in der Sicht neuer Quellen, ed. E. W. Orth (Freiburg: Alber, 1978), 141-223; Franco Volpi, "Heidegger in Marburg: Die Auseinandersetzung mit Husserl," Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger 34 (1984): 48-69; and Karl Schuhmann, "Zu Heideggers Spiegel-Gespräch über Husserl, Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung 32 (1978): 591-612. Also see Theodore Kisiel's The Genesis of Being and Time (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1993) and John van Buren's The Young Heidegger: Rumor of a Hidden King (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1994).

because of the importance of the philosopher Kant for both Husserl and Heidegger. Yet Kant had a very different significance for the two thinkers. For Heidegger in KPM, Kant's analysis of categorial intuition in the First Critique offered new possibilities for extending his ontological analysis of Being and Time.

For Husserl, on the other hand, Kant's First Critique is a treatise in epistemology, not of fundamental ontology or of metaphysics, as Heidegger argued. For Husserl it was Descartes rather than Kant who was the truly decisive thinker in modern philosophy; Kant had failed to fulfill even the promise of his own transcendental philosophy. This belated fulfillment was the aim of Husserl's own transcendental phenomenology. Fifth, we are able, because KPPM is an obvious example of Heidegger's method of Destruktion or "decontruction," to find in Husserl's remarks a reaction and comment on this interpretive strategy. Finally, because these remarks were never intended for publication but rather represent a dialogue of Husserl with himself, he is fully free to be frank. Thus, they give us an especially candid access to his thoughts and feelings at the time. 10

What do we learn from reading Husserl's marginal notations in KPM? We see, first of all, that Husserl is clearly no longer seeking a compromise or reconciliation with Heideggerian philosophy. The task at hand is that of

For a detailed tracing of Heidegger's changing relation to and interpretation of Kant, see Hansgeorg Hoppe, "Wandlungen in der Kant-Auffasung Heideggers," pp. 284-317 in *Durchblicke: Martin Heidegger zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. V. Klostermann. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1970. See also the important documents that were added to the *GA* publication of *KPM*: *GA* 3:249-311.

For Husserl's evolving relation to Kant, see Iso Kern's Husserl und Kant: Eine Untersuchung über Husserls Verhältnis zu Kant und zum Neukantianismus (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964), 471pp.

There is now, of course, an outstanding edition of the correspondence. See E. Husserl, <code>Briefwechsel</code>. 10 vols. Edited by Karl Schumann in coopertion with Elisabeth Schumann (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993-1994). For a number of sometimes frank and salty comments in Husserl's correspondence, see R. Breeur's "Einleitung' to the <code>Husserl Studies</code> publication in German of the marginalia in <code>SZ</code> and <code>KPM</code>: 11, 1-2 (1994): 5-6.

understanding Heidegger's position as an alternative to his own. We find Husserl liberally sprinkling question marks, exclamation points, and nota benes in the margins as he reads, but leaving large sections in the middle of the book with no marginal comments at all. Sometimes the remarks are sarcastic and bitter, as he points out inconsistencies in Heidegger's argument or finds Heidegger using terms he has elsewhere avoided; mostly, however, Husserl's notes articulate a single, consistent counterposition to that taken by Heidegger, basically the counterposition of his transcendental phenomenology. To that counterposition, articulated as a reaction to Heidegger's KPM, we now turn. That counterposition will emerge as a response to six of the issues discussed by Heidegger. By no means are these the only issues on which Husserl comments, but examining them will give us a clear sense of Husserl's counterposition.

The first issue may be posed as a question: What is the philosophical significance of Kant? Heidegger makes his view quite clear in the preface to KPM when he asserts: "This investigation is devoted to interpreting Kant's Critique of Pure Reason as laying the ground for metaphysics, and thus placing the problem of metaphysics before us as fundamental ontology" (emphasis added [hereafter: e.a.]). Otto Pöggeler rightly notes that Heidegger's approach in this volume represented a clear challenge to the whole NeoKantian interpretation of Kant as an epistemologist.

Indeed, Heidegger goes so far as to assert bluntly in KPM (16)¹² that the First Critique "has nothing to do with a 'theory of knowledge', "and later he notes Kant's reference to the First Critique in a letter as a "metaphysics of metaphysics." This, he says, "should strike down every effort to search for a 'theory of knowledge' in the Critique of Pure Reason " (221).

Husserl's very first verbal remark in the book, on p. 10-"Seinsplan?" ["plan of Being?"]-takes note of the fact that Heidegger is already

Page references here are to the first edition of KPM. The corresponding pages in the English translation by Richard Taft or in the German 5th edition may be determined by referring to the comparative pages given in our translation of Husserl's marginal remarks.

See Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers, 4th rev. ed. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1994), especially pp. 80-87.

interpreting Kant's Critique as, interpretively transforming it into, a work of fundamental ontology. Two pages later Husserl asks in the margin: "What does Seinsverfassung [constitution of Being] mean?" (12). Husserl seems here to be objecting to a certain vaporousness in ontology as such, to the difficulty of determining phenomenologically things such as the "constitution of Being." For Husserl, Kant is doing epistemology, not fundamental ontology, and thus he protests against Heidegger's interpretation in the margin: "But one must glean Kant's meaning! There I read a quite different meaning!" (11). Husserl felt Kant was moving in the right direction to look for the transcendental conditions for the possibility of knowledge, but the presuppositions of his time prevented him from being able to establish an adequate foundation for scientific knowledge.

And behind the two radically contrasting interpretations of the philosophy of Kant we also find two quite different visions of philosophy itself. One sees philosophy as a quest for Being and the other seeing it as "strenge Wissenschaft"-rigorous science. With regard to the remaining five issues to be considered, we will try to show that and how each issue is rooted in the contrasting views Husserl and Heidegger took of philosophy and its mission.

The second issue has to do with Heidegger's discussion of the "finitude of human knowledge" as discussed in _5. Here Heidegger, originally a theology student, follows Kant in comparing the supposed mode of divine knowing as originary and creative, an intuition that is intuitus originarius, with human knowledge as the reception into knowledge of something whose nature one did not oneself create. This Kant calls intuitus derivativus. But Heidegger notes here also a moment of "finite transcendence," in that human knowing gains access to something other than itself, something of which it had no prior knowledge and did not create. This process, the "veritative synthesis," involves the synthesis of intuition and thought by which a thing "becomes manifest" as what it is. Heidegger finds in Kant's close analysis of this synthesis a more nuanced description of what he had in SZ connected with "the ontological comprehension of Being," the hermeneutical as, and his definition of phenomenology as "letting something appear from itself." Small wonder, then, that William Richardson, in his lengthy study, Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought, devotes a 55-page chapter to KPM, calling it "the most authoritative interpretation of Being and Time, " and referring to the last section of KPM "the

See his "Kant und die Idee der Transzendentale Philosophie (1924)," in Erste Philosophie I (1923-1924), Husserliana vol. 7: 230-287, especially 280-287.

best propaedeutic" to that work.

For Heidegger, Kant was doing ontology without specifically calling it that-indeed, "fundamental ontology." To recover this ontological dimension was his reason for returning to Kant, and this kind of interpretation is proper to the mission of philosophy itself.

Husserl, for his part, sprinkles the second page of section 5 with half a dozen marginal comments, putting a question mark next to Heidegger's reference to "a new concept of sensibility which is ontological rather than sensualistic" (24, e.a.). Alongside Heidegger's assertion that "knowledge is primarily intuition, i.e., [is] a representing that immediately represents the being itself" (24), Husserl asks, "Is this Kant?"-"the Ding-an-sich?" As for God, says Husserl in the margin, "God needs no explicative intuition, no step-by-step getting to know things . . . no fixation in language, etc.-but such a God is an absurdity" (26, e.a.). For Husserl, the contrast with an infinite creative intuition is not only unnecessary but also confusing and phenomenologically impossible. Alongside Heidegger's suggestion that the active dimension of finite understanding shows us the nature of absolute knowledge as originating intuition, Husserl writes: "Nonsense. Finitude is not absolute"(27). Husserl in this section uses the word "absurd" three times before he concludes, "This matter is and remains absurd" (31). For Husserl, when Heidegger speculates about the mode of God's knowing in contrast with human knowing, he is emphasizing just those dimensions of Kant that prevented Kant from making his transcendental philosophy into a rigorous science, which is what Husserl thought philosophy ought to be.

A third issue on which Husserl takes sharp issue with Heidegger has to do with what Heidegger calls "the ontological synthesis"-including a "knowledge of the Being of beings" prior to all understanding and acting in the world (34, e.a.). The "ontological synthesis" is what bridges the gap between the prior understanding of Being and the being of the thing known. Indeed, for Heidegger, it is the vehicle of "finite transcendence." Alongside Heidegger's sentence, "We are inquiring into the essential possibility of the ontological synthesis (38, e.a.)," Husserl attempts to reframe the discussion in more phenomenological terms as "the invariant structural form of the pre-given world." Again, the issue is whether Kant is doing ontology or epistemology. Says Husserl: "One need not begin with traditional ontology; one can pose the question as Hume did before Kant. One does not need the problem of finitude either" (38, e.a.) When

⁽The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), p. 106.

Heidegger goes on to assert that the finite human Dasein "needs" the ontological synthesis "in order to exist as Dasein," Husserl underlines these words and asks: "But is this the right way to pose the question philosophically? Isn't here an entity already presupposed whereby the presupposed Being already presupposes subjectivity? Is not man himself already pre-given, etc.? . . . This is already Heidegger." As Husserl sees it, one does not need to posit infinite knowledge in order to describe the finite processes of human knowledge; human existence does not require some kind of "ontological synthesis" to enable it to take place; one "does not need" ontology, period. What Heidegger is doing is ontologizing Kant the epistemologist. And when Heidegger starts to describe what Dasein needs "in order to exist as Dasein," Husserl suspects that a good deal of anthropologizing is going on in KPPM and also in SZ.

A fourth major issue between Husserl and Heidegger in the margins of KPM is the nature of the transcendental self. How is such a self to be conceived? According to Heidegger in Being and Time, both Descartes and Kant wrongly thought of the famous "I am" in terms of a static metaphysics of presence, while Heidegger wanted to see Dasein as a factical, temporally existing entity. As Heidegger saw it, Husserl in his 1907 lectures on internal time consciousness had already taken a step beyond Kant in making time a definitive factor in consciousness. And now here in the Kantbook, Heidegger goes further to credit Kant with showing that the shaping power of the imagination is temporal; indeed, says Heidegger, imagination "must first of all shape time itself. Only when we realize this do we have a full concept of time" (167). For Heidegger, time and human finitude, are keys to a more adequate fundamental ontology, and it is important to make them also the essential core of the self. For Husserl, the transcendental ego functions as the philosophically necessary anchor of his phenomenology. In order to be transcendental, Husserl's transcendental ego would need in a certain sense to transcend at least ontic time. Interestingly, at this point Husserl instead of differing with Heidegger on the temporality of the ego seems to be trying hard to understand what Heidegger is saying. Husserl in the margin refers to "the immanent life of the ego" and asks: "Is the ego the immanent time in which objective time temporalizes itself?" (184), as if he were trying here principally to grasp Heidegger's concept. Later, for instance, he writes in the margin, as if paraphrasing: "The immanent life of the ego as, rather, originally temporalizing" (187). It would seem here he is merely restating what he understands to be Heidegger's point, for he concedes, "an immanent temporal horizon [of the ego] is necessary" (186). What Husserl may be saying is: Time is of course an essential component of the transcendental ego; what baffles me is all this talk about what time is "primordially"! What is the "primordial essence" of time? Why is it so

important here? Heidegger's answer to this question comes in the next section, where he states, "Primordial time makes possible the transcendental power of the imagination (188). But here Husserl underlines "makes possible" and asks: "What does this 'makes possible' mean?" For Husserl, Heidegger is not describing the experience of time phenomenologically, or even accounting for it philosophically; rather, he is doing metaphysics and bringing Kant along with him. Yes of course there is an immanent temporal horizon for transcendental subjectivity, says Husserl, but how does that make the transcendental ego into "time itself"? Not only is Heidegger's language strange here, he also seems to be making philosophical assumptions or claims about the metaphysical nature of Dasein, which raises the issue of the nature of man, and more pointedly for Husserl of philosophical anthropology as a basis for philosophy. Maybe Heidegger here is really doing philosophical anthropology, again not doing what philosophy today ought to be doing.

A fifth issue that arises with regard to Heidegger's interpretation in KPM is that of interpretive violence. Heidegger asserts: "Every interpretation, if it wants to wring from what the words say what they want to say, must use violence. Such violence, however cannot simply be a roving arbitrariness. The power of an idea that sheds advance light must drive and lead the explication" (193-194, e.a.). Husserl underlines the words "every interpretation must must violence" and puts three exclamation points and three question marks-his maximum. Husserl is astonished, we can assume, at Heidegger's provocative statement, and even Heidegger hastens to qualify it in the next sentence. In the margin Husserl writes, "I differentiate between what they wanted to say and what they untimately aimed at and wanted to say as they were said" (193). Interestingly, Husserl himself had elsewhere earlier argued that Kant was constrained by the thought-forms of his time, so he could not carry through the founding of a truly rigorous transcendental philosophy.

 13 This claim would seem toparallel Heidegger's deconstruction in suggesting this was what Kant really wanted to say.

But the larger issue at stake here is Heidegger's whole project of Destruktion, of uncovering what has been repressed and forgotten in Western philosophy since Plato. In other words, we again have to do with a quite different vision of philosophy and its mission. For Heidegger, philosophizing

See his comments on Kant in Erste Philosophie I, cited above.

meant seeking out of the "primordial roots" of Western thought, "restoring" to thought what had been "forgotten" or only preserved in a Latinized distortion, as in the case of Aristotle's ousia becoming substantia. As Heidegger later put it, philosophy is really "a thoughtful conversation between thinkers," obviously an endeavor more hermeneutical and dialogical than rigorously scientific and verifiable. Philosophy for Husserl, on the other hand, was supposed to involve rigorous logical and scientific reflection, purifying one's thinking of unreflected presuppositions and establishing a philosophical foundation for further work, in order to achieve "results" that would be universally acceptable scientificially. Such a vision of philosophy makes quite clear Husserl's continuity with the Enlightenment faith in reason as able to overcome religious dogma and other baseless inherited assumptions.

Among the many remaining issues disputed by Husserl in the margins of KPM, probably the most important is philosophical anthropology, an issue that looms large in the last part of KPM: This will serve as the sixth and final issue on which Husserl and Heidegger take contrasting positions. As a matter of fact, over half of Husserl's marginal comments in KPM occur in its last forty pages, whose three subsections are clearly related to the issue of the status of a philosophical anthropology: (1) "the question of whether in this retrieve of Kant metaphysics could be grounded in man," (2) the significance of "the finitude of man in relation to the metaphysics of Dasein," and (3) "the metaphysics of Dasein as fundamental ontology."

At the beginning of this part, Heidegger takes note of the fact that Kant says that his famous questions, "What can I know? What ought I do? and What may I hope?" are all summed up in his fourth question: "What is man? " For Heidegger this point raises the issue of whether a philosophical anthropology could serve as the foundation of metaphysics, or metaphysics serve as the foundation of anthropology. Heidegger does observe that anthropology seems to be "a fundamental tendency of man's contemporary position with respect to himself and the totality of beings"(199), but this does not mean he is happy about it. What man needs is to work out philosophically, says Heidegger, is "man's place in the cosmos," a topic on which his friend, the late Max Scheler, to whom KPM is dedicated, had contributed a well-known book. In Husserl's view, the goal of philosophy is

These are found in the table of contents as well as the beginning pages of Part 4.

not a matter of working out a "worldview," and he here explicitly classes Heidegger with Scheler and Dilthey as following "the anthropological line of thought" (199). When Heidegger asks, "If anthropology in a certain sense gathers into itself all the central questions of philosophy, why do these allow us to follow them back to the question of what man is?(203), Husserl underlines this sentence and writes in the margin, "It is just this that is not correct"! Heidegger himself very shortly thereafter concedes that the "indeterminate character" of philosophical anthropology makes it unsuited for "fundamental questioning." Essentially, Heidegger and Husserl both reject an anthropological basis for philosophy. But still Heidegger takes Dasein and the Seinsverständnis [comprehension of Being] of Dasein as the foundation for his inquiry into the meaning of Being. Thus when Heidegger asserts that "the understanding of Being" is something "which we all as human beings already and constantly understand" (216), it provokes a lengthy reply from Husserl: "We already experience the world, we already make claims about the world, . . . we experience ourselves as humans in the world. . . . But we get bogged down in difficulties through subjective reflection" (e.a.). Husserl certainly agrees that there is a pregiven world and we need to describe that world, but the method for doing this is phenomenology, not "subjective reflection." Later on the same page he writes, "It is not by pursuing the possibility of the concept of Being, but rather pursuing the possibility of doing away with the bewilderments in which the world as 'world for us' has entangled us and also every entity whatever as entity for us" (216). And in the margin of the next page he writes, pungently: "The obscurity of the meaning of the Seiendem [the being or existent thing] is really the unclarity about how the essence of the being or thing is to be held free of the incongruities which stem from subjective reflection." So while Heidegger offers fundamental ontology as his alternative to anthropology, Husserl finds in Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's preconceptual comprehension of Being only an anthropology disguised as ontology. For Husserl, Heidegger's analysis of preconceptual understanding of Being is not the product of true phenomenological investigation and description, and it creates rather than eliminates obscurity. Heidegger asserts, "We understand Being, but as yet we lack the concept," Husserl exclaims, "We lack it? When would we need it?" For Husserl, it was an irrelevant, unnecessary quest. The quest Heidegger so ardently pursued for the meaning Being, a quest that dominated his philosophical life, leading him later into the philosophy of Nietzsche, into reflection on the "origin" of the work of art, into explicating the poetry of Hölderlin and down "forest paths"

without end, Husserl would say-had he lived to see it-was a dead end, only a way of getting bogged down in subjective reflection instead of making a solid and positive contribution to philosophy.

In conclusion, we have here in Heidegger's position and Husserl's counterposition two quite different visions of philosophy and its mission, and also of man-two very different sensibilities and sets of loyalties. One vision seems to have affinities with metaphysical speculation and theology, Heidegger's earliest study, while the other seems to long for the sureness of mathematical certainty, Husserl's earliest field of investigation. Heidegger saw himself as overhauling the whole Western tradition of metaphysics, while Husserl felt that what philosophy was called upon to do at the moment was to analyze "the crisis of the European sciences." Philosophy as he saw it should have a facilitating and not merely critical relationship to science. True, both thinkers saw themselves as making a "new beginning," but the two beginnings were quite different. Heidegger's "neue Anfang" was another term for the Kehre [turn], truly the end of all connection to Husserlian thought. This "new beginning" led him to turn away even from the fundamental ontology of Being and Time and eventually to "forest paths"; Husserl's "new beginning" was phenomenology, which he referred to as a "breakthrough" in the Britannica article, an invention and method that offered new access to "the things themselves" but never left behind the larger community of careful, scientific thinking.

Husserl poignantly remarks in a marginal note in KPM that he could not see why subjectivity, especially a purified transcendental subjectivity, was an unacceptable basis for phenomenology-and by extension for philosophical investigation. To the very end, Husserl felt that Heidegger had never understood what he meant by transcendental subjectivity and the importance of going back to the transcendental ego. For Heidegger, Dasein was not just another name for human subjectivity but a way of avoiding the concept of subjectivity itself. As the later essays, like the "The Age of the World Picture"(1938) and the "Letter on Humanism" (1946) make quite explicit, Heidegger could not make subjectivity, even a "transcendental" subjectivity, the anchor of his reflection. Husserl's marginal notes vividly show us his deep disappointment, even outrage, at Heidegger's desertion, but they never abandon the horizon of subjectivity, the vision of philosophy as rigorous science, and the quest for a reliable grounding for knowledge. His remarks in the margins of KPM all testify to this vision of philosophy, a vision Husserl more and more realized that Heidegger did not share and really had never shared.