

RIGOROUS INTUITION:  
CONSCIOUSNESS, BEING, AND  
THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

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Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), in the early part of this century, developed a philosophy that he called transcendental phenomenology. This was a philosophy of a different sort—one grounded in experience. The experience was provided by a method of his own design that he called the phenomenological reduction. This philosophy was to have a profound influence on thinkers of such magnitude as Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel, and especially, Martin Heidegger. This purpose of Husserl's phenomenology was to experientially investigate the essence of any and all phenomena and to disclose the mysteries of consciousness and being. As a result of this method, both Husserl and Heidegger were spontaneously delivered into realms that are clearly transpersonal in nature (Hanna, 1993).

In spite of these transpersonal connections, the richness of their experience and observations is largely overlooked. Husserl and Heidegger are typically mentioned only in passing when mentioned at all in transpersonal writings (e.g., Wilber, 1983). Conversely, many of the transpersonal aspects of Husserl's and Heidegger's inquiry have also been overlooked or misunderstood by those within the phenomenological or existential tradition. Part of the problem is that both of these philosophers have the reputation of being especially difficult to read. Nevertheless, I suggest that the study of the principles of transpersonal psychology may serve to make some abstruse aspects of Husserl's and Heidegger's writings more accessible to phenomenologists and existentialists. It may also be that transpersonal psychology may benefit from a study of phenomenological methodology. In this exploration, the writings of Husserl and Heidegger will be examined in the transpersonal

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context of Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist mysticism. The nature of the phenomenological method as employed by Husserl and Heidegger will also be examined.

It is important to note that the mere mention of these two philosophers in a transpersonal or mystical context might serve to make some existentialist and phenomenologists more than a bit uncomfortable. After all, Husserl is clearly recognized as the founder of phenomenology and an influence of the first magnitude" (Collins, 1952, p, 27) on twentieth-century existentialism. As for Heidegger, he is considered a major phenomenologist and no one has been a more prominent figure in existentialism. His major work, *Being and Time*, is widely acknowledged as one of the most important and influential books of philosophy in this century. Many card-carrying phenomenologists would find a mystical or transpersonal tag on their discipline to be considerably distasteful.

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None of this is meant to imply in any way that existentialists or phenomenologists in general are inadvertent or closet mystics---not at all. The vast majority of existentialists and phenomenologists have not been concerned with transpersonal issues. Few phenomenologists have been interested in the transcendental aspect of phenomenology even though Husserl considered that facet to be the most important (Cairns, 1976; Spiegelberg, 1982). Nevertheless, there are some definite parallels between Eastern philosophy and phenomenology (Mohanty, 1972; Spiegelberg, 1982; Zaner, 1970). Similarly, Caputo (1978) and others have noted many parallels between Heidegger's work and various mystical writings.

There are important methodological and experiential parallels as well. Puligandla (1970; also see Sinari, 1965) pointed out similarities between Husserl's method and that of Patanjali, the chief exponent of Yoga. An especially relevant comparison was once made by Engen Fink, Husserl's chief assistant from 1930 to 1937 and his most trusted interpreter. Cairns (1976) reported Fink to have "advanced the idea that the various phases of Buddhist self-discipline were essentially phases of phenomenological reduction" (p.50).

What I intend to show in this article is that not only is there a bridge between phenomenology and transpersonalism, but that, in some ways, the rigorous practice and application of phenomenology is a transpersonal enterprise. Thus, the following discussion focuses necessarily on experiential and methodological aspects of the work of Husserl and Heidegger,

## EDMUND HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

No philosopher in the Western world investigated consciousness as thoroughly as Edmund Husserl. Husserl often stated that his transcendental phenomenology was not a mere theory and that it was based on direct intuitive knowing through the use of his phenomenological method. He believed that this method could bring philosophy to the status of a rigorous science. He generally referred to his method as the "phenomenological reduction." It consisted of several phases, an integral part of which he termed the epoche, which involved bracketing, suspending, or stepping out of the naive attitude in which we are so easily entrenched.

In the phenomenological reduction, the unbuilding or deconstruction of the conceptually constructed world was an intrinsic aspect of the approach. In this sense, Husserl could be seen as the original deconstructionist, long before the work of Derrida (Abel, 1987). The final phase of the method—the transcendental reduction—was the sphere of pure consciousness in which Husserl's transpersonal insights came to fruition.

Husserl found consciousness to be the source of all ontology and the basis of any true epistemology. Husserl's (1936/1970) phenomenology involves "inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge" (p. 97). At the transcendental level of pure consciousness, he reported, such knowledge brings with it a sense of certainty. Knowledge, for Husserl, was not theoretical or intellectual, but intuitive. Intuition was the guiding principle of his method of inquiry.

It is not surprising, therefore, that his investigations of consciousness led him to the discovery of the "true self" (Husserl, 1929/1975, p. 10) which he called the "transcendental ego"—a term for the most part interchangeable with transcendental consciousness (Spiegelberg, 1982). This pure or transcendental ego is the ultimate ground of Husserl's method and a foundational aspect of his phenomenology. The transcendental ego is the essence of the human being. It encompasses both individuality and the community of all sentient beings. As I intend to show, this is by no means a novel entity but one that has been disclosed by mystical techniques for centuries.

Consistent with many transpersonal mystical themes, Husserl (1931/1977) distinguished between the transcendental ego and the psychological ego. He observed simply that "there is no psychological ego" and that "psychological self-experience boils down to the transcendental ego (Husserl, 1931/1977, p. 26). Thus the psychological or mundane ego lacks any ontological foundations whatsoever.

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There are further parallels between Husserl's and Eastern views of the ego. Husserl (1913/1931; 1913/1982) was quite at a loss to describe the transcendental ego and found himself having to resort to a negative description reminiscent of the Upanishadic description of the "Self" or *atman*. Husserl (1913/1982) reported that the transcendental ego is "completely empty of essence-components, has no explicable content, is undescribable in and for itself: it is pure Ego and nothing more" (p. 191). Husserl also said that the pure ego is so transcendent that "no reduction can get any grip on it" (Husserl, 1913/1931p. 214).

It seems that Husserl's transcendental ego is transcendent in much the same sense as the "witness consciousness" of Hindu Vedanta (Radhakrishnan, 1960) and the self or *purusha* of Yoga and Samkhya (see Aranya, 1983; Bahadur, 1978). Along these same lines, Husserl (1931/1977) held that the "Ego is not a piece of the world," and that "conversely, neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego ... " (p, 26).

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The transcendental ego, Husserl observed, gives form and meaning to the world itself, affecting not only our conception but our perception of the primordial world. Indeed, Husserl saw consciousness as the ultimate source of the world. This was a view not unlike that of the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism (see Murti, 1960; Willis, 1979).

Husserl observed the world to be made up of a kind of "mental 'material'" (Husserl, 1936/1970p. 112) or "mental form" to which is assigned meaning, objective quality, and existential status. In other words the subject/object dualism has its origins in the activity of this pure ego. But there was much more to the process of constitution and the pure ego. The constitution of the world was not a sole or individual project of the transcendental ego but a joint effort of tremendous magnitude. It involves the community of consciousness of transcendental egos that Husserl referred to as transcendental intersubjectivity.

### *Transcendental Intersubjectivity*

Once the transcendental ego is disclosed by the transcendental phenomenological reduction at the level of transcendental consciousness, the existence of other, fully interconnected, transcendental egos becomes evident. Husserl termed this "transcendental intersubjectivity." In his last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl (1936/1970) observed that "souls themselves are external to one another [only] in virtue of their embodiment" (p. 228). He had apparently experienced "a sole psychic framework, a total framework of all souls,

which are united not externally but internally . . . through the intentional interpenetration which is the communalization of their lives" (p. 155). On that same page Husserl said that through the phenomenological method, "it becomes evident that there is no separation of mutual externality at all for souls in their own essential nature." Husserl's view of intersubjectivity was a unique and penetrating transpersonal vision of both unity and separateness among beings.

It is probably a mistake to dogmatically insist that unity or "oneness with the universe" be a universal characteristic of any and all mystical literature. Theravada Buddhism takes no such position, and neither does Patanjali in his dualistic *YogaSutras* (see Feuerstein, 1980; 1989). Nagarjuna (Inada, 1970), the great Buddhist dialectician, taught us that any metaphysical predicate, such as "the oneness of the universe," is ultimately empty of truth.

In the final analysis, Husserl accomplishes a masterful dialectic of unity and separateness, identity and difference, that is based on intuitive, experiential knowing. His notion of "interpenetration" may be the key to understanding this dialectic. In Husserl's scheme, it would appear that each individual being's core boundaries are "interpenetrated," forming a kind of transpersonal confluence in which there is a simultaneous, dialectical unity and separation of individual beings.

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Within this interpenetration beings are internally understood by each other through what Husserl called transcendental empathy (see Husserl, 1929/1975; 1931/1977; also see Elliston, 1977). It appears that Husserl held that the transcendental ego is ultimately constituted within the intersubjective sphere (Cairns, 1976, p. 31) and that it is, simultaneously and paradoxically, the source of intersubjectivity itself (Husserl, 1936/1970). In fact, Husserl's conception of God can be found in this intersubjective context. He occasionally expressed a "private opinion" to his assistant, Eugen Fink, that God can be taken "to mean the community of *transcendental egos* which 'creates' a world" (Cairns, 1976, p. 14, italics preserved).

Husserl often waxed grandly about the potential of his phenomenology. An example of this is in the case of the final paragraphs of his *Cartesian Meditations*. He inferred that he had found "the path leading to a knowledge absolutely grounded in the highest sense" and that this is "necessarily the path of universal self-knowledge" (Husserl, 1931/1977, p. 156). With a kind of mystical reverberation, he noted that one must first "lose the world by epoche, in order to regain it by a universal self-examination" (p. 157). He then quoted both the Oracle of Delphi-"Know thyself!"-and the mystic Saint Augustine-"Truth dwells in the inner man"-with

the direct inference that such self-knowledge is a result of his phenomenological method.

Although Husserl seems never to have referred to himself in a mystical context, he was nevertheless enamored with two mystics. He greatly admired the teachings of the Buddha (Spiegelberg, 1982), and Cairns (1976) once heard him make a statement to the effect that "whole pages" of the writings of the German mystic Meister Eckhart (Fox, 1980) "could be taken over by him unchanged" (p. 91).

#### MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY

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Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) did not consider himself an existentialist but rather represented his work as what he called fundamental ontology. In spite of this, he is considered by many to be the most important of the existential philosophers. He was an assistant to and student of Husserl for many years. Just as Husserl's fascination was with consciousness, Heidegger's preoccupation was with Being. This kept him within and around transpersonal territory. He was far more actively interested in Eastern philosophies than Husserl. An especially relevant, often told story in this regard concerns Heidegger's reaction to having read one of D. T. Suzuki's books on Zen. In regard to *this* book, Barrett (1956) quoted Heidegger as saying, "If I understand this man correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings" (p. xi).

Chang-yuan (1975) pointed to many parallels between Heidegger's writings and those of the great Chinese mystic, Lao-Tzu. In fact, in his later years Heidegger was even working on a translation of the *Tao Te Ching* (Hsiao, 1987). Heidegger admitted to many persons that his own philosophy was closely related to Taoism and Zen (Poggeler, 1987). In addition, Caputo (1978) made an excellent case for the influence upon Heidegger of the venerable mystic, Meister Eckhart (also see Poggeler, 1987). Caputo made note of many other mystical elements in Heidegger's writings as well. He also clearly pointed out that Heidegger's interest in Being appeared to be experiential and not merely rationalistic or intellectual. From a transpersonal viewpoint, this experiential component in Heidegger's work makes the parallels with Eastern philosophy all the more remarkable.

There are many other similarly documented parallels between Heidegger's work and various mystical writings (see Parkes, 1987). A transpersonally inclined reader might well benefit from reading Heidegger's 1929 essay "What is Metaphysics?" (Heidegger, 1929/1975). His concept of the "Nothing" in this important essay stands in distinct parallel to the Mahayana Buddhist concept

of the void or emptiness or "*sunyata*" (Sinari, 1974). Through what he called "phenomenological seeing" and his intuitive mode of "thinking," Heidegger (1929/1975) traced all phenomena to pure Being and then to pure Nothing through a sustained meditation on the experience of dread or *angst*. "This projection into Nothing on the basis of hidden dread is the overcoming of what-is-in-totality: Transcendence" (Heidegger, 1929/1975 p. 254).

Another parallel with the Buddhist void or *sunyata* is in Heidegger's (1929/1975) suggestion that we "should equip ourselves and make ready for one thing only: to experience in Nothing the vastness of that which gives every being the warrant to be. That is Being itself" (p. 260). A crucial aspect of arriving at this state, Heidegger (1929/1975) said, is in "letting oneself go into Nothing, that is to say, freeing oneself from the idols we all have and to which we are wont to go cringing... " (p. 257). In a typically Buddhist perspective, Heidegger held that nothingness is revealed in the basis of our being, or *Da-sein*. Indeed, *Da-sein* is itself transcendent and "proceeds from Nothing," according to Heidegger (1929/1975), and "without the manifest character of Nothing there is no self-hood and no freedom" (p. 251). The parallels to Eastern notions here are too obvious to require further comment.

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I have now presented some of the more transpersonal aspects of Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology. However, what may be most interesting is how they arrived at their insights. It may well be that their most lasting and valuable contributions are in terms of methodology. As I have noted elsewhere (Hanna, 1993), it is probable that Heidegger and Husserl used much the same method even though they framed it differently.

While Husserl considered consciousness to be primordial, Heidegger assigned primordial status to Being. Philosophically, each position has various advantages. Dialectically and experientially, these are arbitrary metaphysical judgments. Shankara (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947), one of India's greatest philosophers and the chief exponent of Vedanta, considered consciousness and being to be equally primordial. From Shankara's perspective, Husserl and Heidegger were treading the same experiential territory. Differences may have been largely for the sake of philosophical expedience and the personality factors that play a role in formulating any philosophy (see Bartlett, 1986, 1989) or personality theory for that matter (see Atwood & Tomkins, 1976).

As the method they utilized seems to have considerable transpersonal potential, an in-depth examination of it in a transpersonal context is necessary. Unfortunately, this cannot be easily done. Part of the problem is that Husserl never finished his delineation of the phenomenological method. Thus, it is no simple task to adequately

describe it. Husserl considered the delineation of this method to be the most difficult task in all of philosophy (Spiegelberg, 1982). In view of such difficulties, a full description of the phenomenological method and its transcendental maneuvers would require a treatise of considerable length.

For now, it is important to mention that the method itself is directed toward a particular phenomenon. It involves a continuous, sustained, looking at, contemplating, and intuiting the phenomenon in question, whether it be an object, a relation, or consciousness itself. As each of these philosophers had their own unique style, it might be helpful to explore how each viewed their method and what they encountered in the process.

#### HUSSERL'S USE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Husserl was a student of the great nineteenth-century psychologist and philosopher, Franz Brentano. Brentano, a dedicated opponent of Wilhelm Wundt, was also a teacher to William James and Sigmund Freud. In fact, Freud was so inspired by him that he almost switched from medicine to the study of philosophy (Hergenhahn, 1986). In addition, Brentano was the mentor of Carl Stumpf, friend of William James and teacher to all four of the major figures of Gestalt Psychology-Kohler, Kaffka, Wertheimer, and Lewin.

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It was from within this general climate that Husserl adapted some of Brentano's ideas of consciousness to the discipline that eventually, in 1906, he formally called phenomenology. However, Husserl's explorations of consciousness far surpassed anything that Brentano conceived. His philosophy was even more radical than the radical empiricism of William James (1904/1977). Husserl's goal was to revolutionize philosophy by bringing it to the status of a rigorous science through the use of his phenomenological method. His approach was based on pure consciousness and its resulting intuitions. He believed that these could bring about a verifiable certainty of knowledge that had always eluded philosophy. Of his method, experimental psychologists Hermstein and Boring (1965) said that it was "the most primitive kind of observation of experience that is possible for man to achieve" (p. 611).

The motto of phenomenology was and remains, "to the things themselves." This is not merely an intellectual enterprise but an experiential return to primordial life and existence outside of various and sundry philosophical theories, notions, and judgments. His criticism of philosophy was that it is hopelessly entrenched in theories about reality and the self while utterly lacking any way to verify its myriad speculations. Husserl specifically devised the

phenomenological method to provide the philosopher with a way to see the world as it is in itself-and then to accurately describe what was seen. Of course, this goal of seeing the world as it is in actuality is a dominant theme in Eastern traditions. Spiegelberg (1982) suggested that a term that could be coined for this process might be "intemplation" as well as the more generally used direct intuition.

For Husserl, we live in a world of consciousness. He pointed to transcendental consciousness as the realm of "Absolute Being" (Husserl, 1913/1931, p. 14). Through the execution of his method, "the gaze of the philosopher . . . becomes fully free" (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 151; also see Edie, 1987) to investigate and gain insight into virtually anything-from the mundane to the sublime. Husserl was convinced that his method could be utilized to attain a level of inquiry that is free of presuppositions. Thus, philosophers could mutually arrive at a universal experiential ground and then compare notes on what they encountered there. This would open the door, he was convinced, to solving the problems that had haunted philosophy since its beginnings.

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For Husserl, human beings are perpetually held in thrall by what he called the natural attitude or the attitude of natural human existence. He also referred to this as the "psychomundane attitude" (Husserl, 1936/1970). Although this primarily referred to theories about the self and world, it also included any beliefs about the world posited as a result of socialization, education, or culture. These factors affect observation, he held, even when observation is believed to be neutral. When Husserl spoke of freeing the philosopher's gaze, he was speaking of liberating consciousness from the prejudices of the natural attitude and everyday "factual" world. Husserl (1936/ 1970) variously described his method as "a reduction to the absolutely ultimate grounds" (p. 154) of pure consciousness itself, within which unmitigated, unsullied, uncolored, pure intuitive apprehension can take place. In laying the world bare of conceptual deposits and the perceptual filtering of the natural attitude, the way is opened for the penetrating insights of phenomenological intuition.

Husserl defined this intuition as a kind of pure "seeing" unconnected with the activity of thinking. His method required that anything outside of this actual "seeing" be bracketed or suspended including: "references which go beyond the 'seeing' and are entangled with the seeing, along with the entities which are supposedly given and thought along with the 'seeing; and, finally, to bracket what is read into them through the accompanying reflections" (Husserl, 1907/1964, p, 50). It is important to recall that Husserl (1913/1931) often stated that "transcendental phenomenology is not a theory" (p. 13). He was interested primarily in the experiential insight which accompanies transcending the presuppo-

sitions and preconceptions of the natural attitude and seeing the world as it is in itself.

For Husserl, this intuition is of a mystical character. He specifically referred to it in a mystical context when he suggested that we "hark back to the speech of the mystics when they describe the intellectual seeing which is supposed not to be a discursive knowledge" (1907/1964, p. 50). Husserl (1907/1964) also said that "as little interpretation as possible, but as pure an intuition as possible" (p. 50) is necessary for the proper execution of the phenomenological method.

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Husserl's attempt to move beyond thought processes has many obvious parallels with the transpersonal methods of the Hindu *Upanishads* (Nikhilananda, 1963) and Zen Buddhism (Cleary, 1978). Zen teacher Huang Po once prescribed that one learn to "halt the concept forming activities" of the mind (Blofeld, 1958, p. 63) if any progress in Zen is to be achieved. Husserl (1936/1970) was in methodological agreement with this and recommended much practice in perfecting the phenomenological method of pure consciousness. In fact, he often referred to himself as a beginner in this, his own method.

The application of the phenomenological method allows the objective world to be "'understood back into' the absolute sphere of being" in which it ultimately exists (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 189). Husserl had found that the phenomenological method provided both absolute knowledge and knowledge of the absolute. All of this was based upon what Husserl called the "principle of all principles," specifically, that the intuition of pure consciousness is a reliable and authoritative source of knowledge (Husserl, 1913/1982). This is also an essential, foundational presupposition of yogic methodology. Puligandla (1970; also see Sinari, 1965) noted many parallels between Husserl's method and the three-stage method of *samyama-concentration*, contemplation, and realization-in Patanjali's Yoga.

Another aspect of Husserl's method requires that the phenomenologist become detached or disengaged (Husserl, 1931/1977; Zaner, 1970). Husserl described this as being a "disinterested spectator" of phenomena. Of course, there are parallels here with several mystical approaches. Vipassana meditation in Theravada Buddhism also requires that one be capable of attending to virtually any mental process, even the attending itself. The nearly universal mystical theme of nonattachment is present here as well. Non-attachment is an essential aspect of the practice of both Yoga (see Aranya, 1983; Jha, 1933) and Zen (Price & Mou-Lam, 1969). Remarkably, the traditions of Yoga, Vipassana, and transcendental phenomenology all share the same primary assumption as that

stated by Husserl (1907/1964): *"Every intellectual process and indeed every mental process whatever, while being enacted, can be made the object of a pure 'seeing' and understanding"* (p. 24, italics preserved).

It should be mentioned once more that Husserl never perfected his method and that he was still attempting to determine its final form when he died. However, he held that his method was so central to his philosophy that if one does not understand the reduction, then one does not understand transcendental phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1982). He also believed that it was impossible to describe the transcendental reduction to a person who has not performed it (Spiegelberg, 1982). Spiegelberg (1982) speculated that several steps of the transcendental reduction were never fully described by Husserl in his published writings.

#### HEIDEGGER'S USE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Heidegger studied the phenomenological method under Husserl and was equally passionate about the return "to the things themselves." In fact, he learned the phenomenological method so well that Husserl once stated, "Phenomenology: that is I and Heidegger and no one else" (quoted in Gadamer, 1986, p. 143). Heidegger (1963/1972) related that at some point he had to choose between consciousness and Being as the fundamental principle of phenomenology. He chose Being, which was, nevertheless, "illuminated by the phenomenological attitude" (p. 79). This path allowed a philosophical egress from the subject-object dilemma that had plagued Husserl's early philosophy.

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Heidegger (1963/1972) referred to the phenomenological method as "phenomenological 'seeing'" (p. 78). This seeing was accompanied by what Heidegger (1927/1962; 1965) termed "letting-be" or *gelassenheit* (e.g., 1927/1962; 1965) or "releasement" (1959/1966). Caputo, (1978) has noted the parallels of letting-be with the practice of nonattachment in Meister Eckhart and Zen. The concept is also similar to Husserl's (1929/1975; 1931/1977) concept of the ego as a "disinterested spectator." Letting-be is also central to Heidegger's (1965) notion of freedom. In his insightful essay, "On the Essence of Truth," Heidegger observed that "Freedom reveals itself as the letting-be of what-is" (p. 305). The experiential application of this concept readily demonstrates the wisdom of Heidegger's insight.

Heidegger (1964/1972), like Husserl, had little interest or respect for theory or metaphysical system building. He dismissed theory as "a cybernetic function" that is "denied any ontological meaning" (p. 58). Heidegger (1929/1975) believed theory to be a form of

what he called ordinary or "calculative thought." For Heidegger (1927/1962), the purpose of phenomenology was to allow what was hidden in phenomena to disclose itself. His criticism of theory was its utter lack of facility in truly disclosing what is hidden. Because of this, Heidegger (1964/1972) sought the end of conventional philosophy-and even more than did Husserl.

Although he mostly took issue with Husserl's bracketing step of the phenomenological method (Spiegelberg, 1982; Stapleton, 1983), Heidegger seems to have at least partially utilized it as a part of his own phenomenological seeing. "Everything that might interpose itself between the thing and us in apprehending and talking about it must be set aside. Only then do we yield ourselves to the undisguised presence of the thing" (Heidegger, 1935/1971, p. 25). Of course, bracketing is not an essential aspect of a mystical technique, as it often occurs quite spontaneously through the process of intense contemplation.

Heidegger saw phenomenology as the path to *aletheia*-*"the unconcealedness of what-is present"* (Heidegger, 1963/1972, p. 79). This was also the path to certainty for Heidegger (1927/1962) and the path to the disclosing of a reality behind or beyond appearances similar to Vedanta (see Radhakrishnan, 1960). Heidegger said that *aletheia* could be accessed through a new mode of thinking unrelated to the mundane "calculative" or manipulative mode. This referred to an intuitive, contemplative, dialectical thinking which lies "outside of the distinction of rational and irrational" (Heidegger, 1964/1972, p. 72; also see Stambaugh, 1986).

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Heidegger's method of accessing the transpersonal also consisted of the previously mentioned meditation on dread, or *angst*. As a term and as a concept, *angst* has been misused to the point of being unrecognizable. "By 'dread' or *angst* we do not mean 'anxiety,'" Heidegger (1929/1975) stated, "which is common enough and akin to nervousness" (p. 248). Dread or *angst* is an "uncanny feeling" that rises at an ontological level. It gives a sense that "there is nothing to hold on to" (p. 249).

It is because of this that dread ultimately reveals the Nothing. After all, from a transcendent viewpoint, there is nothing indeed in all the world of phenomena that can be safely and securely clung to as an object of attachment. This in itself is a cause of deep dissatisfaction. Loy's (1992) excellent description of the "deep sense of *lack*" (p. 152, italics preserved) peculiar to human experience is quite similar to Heidegger's description of ontological dread. In both Buddhism and Heidegger the prescription for such a condition seems to be a deliberate transcendental return to Nothing or *sunyata*.

One of the most unusual aspects of phenomenology is the personal benefits that Husserl claimed as a consequence of the proper execution of his method. Husserl (1936/1970) said that the practice of the transcendental phenomenological reduction brings about "a complete personal transformation" comparable to a "religious conversion" (p. 137). He went on to say that this transformation is the "greatest existential conversion that is expected of mankind" (p. 137). Similarly, in *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl (1931/1977) said that the practice of phenomenology "enriches" one's psychic life and opens up "a possible self-experience that can be perfected, and perhaps enriched, without limit" (p. 29).

The transformation of which Husserl spoke was quite likely due to the transpersonal depths that he plumbed through the transcendental reduction. What other consequence could there be for someone who spent decades inquiring, through rigorous intuition, into the nature of consciousness? Husserl's reports of personality change echo reports by mystics of similar transformations at the core level of the personality. By comparison, however, Heidegger did not speak of any such personal transformations or benefits, although such benefits were certainly inferred in his writings on authenticity (see Heidegger, 1927/1962).

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Another benefit of performing the phenomenological method is that it seems to bring about deautomatization to some degree. Aside from reducing the psychological ego to the pure ego, Husserl (1931/1977) also noted that the passivity or automaticity of perceptions and mental operations can be penetrated by phenomenological intuition even to the point of early infancy. He suggested that such automatic processes can become knowable and traced as a history. In this regard, Husserl's method bears similarities to various mindfulness practices. Langer (1989) and others have noted that mindfulness effectively dismantles automaticity. Likewise, Heidegger's descriptions of entering into the Nothing and his explorations of Being can also be seen as deautomatization (Hanna, 1993).

Husserl's method may also have involved a "reduction" in Deikman's (1980) often cited sense of the deautomatization that occurs in transcendent mystical experience. Deikman spoke of a disintegration of the "psychological structures that organize, limit, select, and interpret perceptual stimuli" (p. 247). Not only did Husserl's transcendental reduction reduce the psychological ego to the transcendental ego, but it also reduced the transcendental ego to transcendental intersubjectivity and pure consciousness, as the realm of "Absolute Being." It is extremely rare for a philosopher to mention personal benefits that accompany the execution of a philosophical

method but not at all unusual in mystical literature. Both Husserl and Heidegger were clearly a different breed of philosopher.

#### CONCLUSION

In making its way into psychology and psychiatry, the meaning of phenomenology has become altered almost beyond recognition (Jennings, 1986; McCall, 1983). Jennings (1986) has cautioned against the common use of the term phenomenological as interchangeable with subjective, and therefore as being unreliable or arbitrary. Although phenomenology remains a viable tradition in philosophy, few phenomenologists have been willing to continue Husserl's task of transcendental inquiry, and the method itself has been put to more mundane uses, mostly in terms of the description of phenomena. Likewise, few existential philosophers ever reached the depths that Heidegger achieved in his phenomenological explorations.

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mystical  
experience*

As a result, the obvious transpersonal aspects of phenomenology and fundamental ontology have been largely overlooked or seen as a puzzling curiosity. This is understandable. Phenomenology is a field which is difficult enough to understand. Adding the element of mysticism certainly would not seem to make it any easier. In spite of all this confusion, however, there appears to be little doubt that Husserl's phenomenological method provided a pathway to transpersonal mystical experience for both himself and for Heidegger. That their philosophies differed is of no particular consequence. The transcendent absolute which each of them accessed is so beyond thought that it is capable of supporting a wide range of often contradictory philosophical conceptions. When taken together, their philosophies form a dialectical whole that allows a greater window into the territory they tread.

It may be that both phenomenology and transpersonalism may each benefit from a study of the other. Husserl's method could provide transpersonal psychology with an avenue of research methodology capable of supporting and describing transcendental explorations. The dimension of rigor and descriptive accuracy intrinsic to phenomenology might serve to enhance transpersonal research. Conversely, those interested in Husserl and Heidegger might come to better appreciate their work in the context of transpersonal Asian sources. If so, a more complete understanding of phenomenology in general might result from a study of transpersonal methods and experience.

In any case, it seems evident that the phenomenological method affords entry into the transpersonal domain. Husserl's statement to this effect sums this up quite handily. "Every new piece of tran-

scendental knowledge is transformed, by essential necessity, into an enrichment of the content of the human soul" (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 264). The point here is that, because of such statements and because of similar statements made by Heidegger, both should be acknowledged and welcomed as contributors to the time-honored transpersonal tradition.

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