

REDUCING AND APRIORIZING. DEMATERIALIZATION AND IMMATERIALIZATION AS PHILOSOPHICAL STRATEGIES

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Abstract: Foucault found the starting point of modern European philosophy to be the construction of “man” as both an empirical fact and a transcendental operator. The aim is to show how this construction was made possible by an underlying strategical handling of the concept of matter. Some restrictions imposed on the materiality of knowledge-contents became key in explaining how actual men could gain access to transcendental knowledge. The paper focuses on Husserl and Kant as meaningful turning points of this transcendental discourse. However, the relevance of their dematerializing strategies will be shown to lay beyond their historic-cultural meaning, since they can also provide a way of dealing with knowledge experiences that can be critical even towards modernity’s characteristic anthropocentrism.

Keywords: Edmund Husserl; Immanuel Kant; transcendental knowledge; phenomenological reduction; a priori knowledge.

1. *Introduction*

«An empiric-transcendental doublet» (Foucault 1966: 330). This is Foucault’s definition of “man” as a device within the philosophical discourse of European modernity. A great deal of epistemological literature later tried to disentangle this pairing, either attempting to naturalize transcendental knowledge and bring it down to the sphere of the empirical (from Quine 1969 to Dennett 2017: 15-22, 364-370) or highlighting how nature, as the context of human knowledge, is in itself some sort of cognitive construction (from Berger e Luckmann 1966 to Latour 2007).

If Foucault is right in claiming that transcendental philosophy emerges from the establishment of this doublet and consists of an exercise in articulating its duplicity without merging its components (Foucault 1966: 331), then the currently widespread appeal of naturalized and historical epistemology (see, e.g., Pacho 2013) should mark the end of transcendental approaches to knowledge. And actually, this end has been declared several times and in several ways,

especially with regard to the last and most refined advocate of a transcendental approach in epistemology – that is, German phenomenology (Metzinger 1997: 385; Sparrow 2014).

My aim is to show that Foucault's doublet depends, as a philosophical device, on an underlying discursive strategy concerning the concept of matter. Kant pioneered this strategy by setting up the form-matter distinction in the structure of the object of knowledge. Restraining the logical role of matter within the object of knowledge meant delimiting the contingency of every knowledge-experience. It allowed some room for an objectual correlate (that is, the form of the object) to consciousness' transcendental operations, thereby building the empiric-transcendental doublet, both transcendental operator and factual being, as a correlate of the form-matter distinction in the object.

After tackling the form-matter distinction as the very first transcendental strategy about matter, being shared by both Kant and Husserl, I will proceed to discuss two progressively stronger strategies going in the same "dematerializing" direction: Husserl's phenomenological reduction and Kant's establishment of a formal a priori knowledge. I will then hint at some possible uses of these strategies outside the borders of classical transcendental philosophy.

2. Form-matter

Kant's assumption that all possible objects of thought share a form-matter structure implies a discursive strategy developed in order to achieve a philosophical aim (see Pollok 2017: 118). Kant's aim is to gain and establish a stable knowledge about the objects of experience. If knowledge-experiences indeed present an endless variety of contents (impressions, feelings, desires, concepts, inferences, theories and so on), these contents still need to be appraisable by a rational consciousness. In Kant's framework, the empirical consciousnesses of actual men are instances of this rational consciousness. Each empirical consciousness partakes of a rational aspect that is shared with other men. This is shown by the actual existence of shared and operating sciences (Kant 1911: 29).

The variety of knowledge contents constitutes the material aspects of the corresponding objects of knowledge. The structure of rational consciousness is, in its turn, the form of every possible object of knowledge. Hence, what makes the matter appraisable is its form: namely, its being subject to the conditions imposed by rational consciousness. A matter appraised through a form is an object of knowledge. This is the gist of the basic philosophical device of Kant's transcendental philosophy.

However, the form-matter distinction is also a piece of transcendental knowledge: it is indeed an a priori knowledge concerning possible experience (Kant 1911: 23) – «at least for us men», Kant adds in the second edition of the

Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1911: 49). How does Kant justify this transcendental assumption, given that it makes up the very framework of every transcendental investigation? He makes use of a modal distinction. In order to understand the importance of this distinction, let me first consider how the transcendental discourse actually sets itself up.

«But although all our knowledge commences with experience, yet it does not on that account all arise from experience» (Kant 1911: 27). This is the well-known discrepancy that opens up the space of transcendental philosophy. Kant swiftly acknowledges that the strength of his philosophical proposal depends on the availability of a space within the domain of knowledge that does not depend on experience.

Experience is simply what happens, the situation in which men happen to be: they first need to receive something, to be hit by the «raw matter (*rohen Stoff*)» (Kant 1911: 27) brought about by sensible impressions, in order to become active knowledge-agents. This precedence is psychological, or rather factual. While a priori knowledge precedes every actual experience in a logical sense, since no experience would be possible outside the formal conditions imposed by a rational consciousness, the occurrence of an experience, the strike of impressions on a living human psyche precedes a priori knowledge in a factual sense, since it sets it in motion. This initiating strike of impressions is not to be identified with a specific point in time. It perpetually triggers experience, whose form remains, in turn, perpetually receptive.

Any experience must indeed entail a received content. This entailing is not a causal interaction happening in a point of spacetime. Rather, it is a sort of transcendental activation of experience. Hence, matter splits in two: there is the material content of knowledge (i.e., knowledge-matter), which lies within the scope of transcendental reflection, and the transcendental matter, which grounds transcendental reflection by showing that every rational consciousness presents a transcendental receptivity (see Allison 2004: 72).

McDowell (1996) revived the general distinction between activity-rationality and receptivity-sensibility in the cartography of experience. He also highlighted, however, how this receptivity can be understood both in psychological terms – that is, as the openness of actual human minds to what happens in the world they live in – and in epistemological terms, in relation to the object of knowledge. He warned that the psychological description does not need to be mixed up with epistemological issues, which focus on receptivity and activity as constitutive aspects of any knowledge-object (McDowell 1996: 55).

Is it possible, however, not to mix them up at all? Are the two concepts of matter actually independent of one another? Not within Kant's framework. An account of human experience which uses this duality in an epistemological sense cannot do without an anchorage in human psychology. Kant himself notes that an experience without receptivity remains possible for nonhuman rationalities

(1911: 116), and yet he assumes that receptivity shapes every possible object of knowledge. Thus, his claim to the transcendental value of the activity-receptivity remains ambiguously tied to human experience (see Allison 1971).

This tie shows itself, with respect to matter, through the impossibility to define a strict rational distinction between the two aforementioned kinds of matter. Transcendental matter is indeed linked, within Kant's perspective, to multiplicity and variety (1911: 91). This is the same variety represented by the different material contents of our knowledge. If transcendental matter is what brings a multiplicity of contents under the unity of our consciousness, then knowledge-matter basically works as the repercussion of this transcendental receptivity within rational consciousness, since it represents the variable and multiple aspect to which this consciousness relates. This continuity between the two matters reveals itself in Kant's account of sensation both as objects of knowledge and as the fact that sets experience in motion. These impressions of sense cannot be defined by a transcendental condition other than the condition of their continuous intensive variability. This is pretty much all that perception can anticipate about its contents: they are inherently variable, non-stable, and thus they have many intensive magnitudes or degrees (Kant 1911: 151-158).

Receptivity is a structural aspect of every transcendental discourse, since it provides it with an anchorage to experience. This is the same factual experience from which transcendental philosophy departs from by opening the space of forms. Hence, Kant's discourse establishes itself not as the opening of a second, independent space within man, but rather as active subtraction of logical space to matter through the establishment of form: transcendental epistemology and empirical psychology contend for the same logical and phenomenological role, since they both aim at providing the conditions of knowledge experience.

Kant's transcendental project is in fact made possible by this double claim and it is in itself dual, since it consists in the effort of tying together these two levels. It makes use of both psychological and epistemological findings to define the conditions under which actual minds can think rational thoughts (as they, in fact, often do).

Another peculiarity of this project lies in its psychological interpretation of receptivity as an impression. Kant's transcendental psychology (see Kitcher 1990) acts as an implicit supplement of the form-matter distinction. Granted, the form-matter strategy alone cannot but bring profoundly asymmetrical results: within it, we can define matter only negatively, since every definition claiming to rationality must speak from the point of view of the rational consciousness – the same rational consciousness that can grasp matter only by seeing itself being hit by it. The transcendental philosopher requires something more: a way to positively define transcendental matter.

Let me then return to the idea of a modal characterization of transcendental matter. Since modality judgments are grounded in the transcendental structures

of understanding (Kant 1911: 93), how could the form-matter distinction be modal and still establish the transcendental investigation? The peculiar modal status of transcendental receptivity is never completely clarified by Kant, and it becomes a strongly debated issue among contemporaries and followers like Reinhold and Maimon (see Banham 2005: 18; Abela 2012). The problem arises from the fact that we actually have factual access to the world that precedes transcendental reflection, since we are humans. At a closer look, Kant's doublet is actually *doubly* asymmetrical: we could look at it from two distinct points of view that both show an asymmetric relation between form and matter. We could look at the matter-form distinction from the point of view of form and see matter only negatively. But we could also look at it from the pre-transcendental point of view of matter – highlighting how, before transcendental reflection, experience is none other than a variety of material contents affecting a material, factual, psychological being. From this point of view, form becomes what psychological life is not – an abstraction, an order forced on the flourishing variety of psychological life. The knowledge that men *de facto* have about their empirical, psychological actualities and the fact that men are still men even when they undertake transcendental reflection: these facts already exceed a merely negative account of matter as the outside of rational consciousness, since they both imply also another point of view, according to which matter is essentially the only positive reality and form is just a fiction, a *flatus vocis*.

This double asymmetry shows how transcendental philosophy's man-doublet cannot be grasped from a neutral perspective. Transcendental philosophy cannot describe man as the conciliation of two functions (receiving contents and constituting objects) from an external, impartial space. This description actually consists of the formal side claiming its rights and its experience-space over the material one – and, vice versa, of the material, factual side either lending data to it (e.g., providing a base for the transcendental psychology of faculties, see Kitcher 1990: 6-11) or providing an insurmountable general ground to it. But what does form subtract space to, actually?

The modal characterization of transcendental matter can be understood as an answer to this question. Within the space of phenomena, under the conditions of rational consciousness, modality judgments express the relation between the «value of the copula [within the judgment] and thinking in general» (Kant 1911: 89): that is, the relation between the knowledge object (determined through the judgment, namely synthesized through the unifying function of the copula) and the thinking subject. From the inside of the transcendental reflection, this thinking subject is presupposed as a fixed background: thus, it becomes thinking *in general*, and the contingency of phenomena ends up depending exclusively on other factual causes (Kant 1911: 199-200).

But what about the case where there is *no* thinking subject? Since men as thinking subjects are themselves facts, the knowledge experience of an object also

depends on the contingent occurrence of an experience for a human empirical consciousness. This hypothesis violates the constraints of Kant's transcendental framework, since it supposes a transcendent use of transcendental structures: hence, this peculiar contingency is clearly not the one Kant ascribed to phenomena. At the same time, however, this external space is somewhat implied in Kant's claims about sense impressions as something that perpetually "activates" rational consciousness: from where the consciousness could ever receive matter, if not from *outside* it?

Transcendental matter is contingent only in this broad and radical sense. Its contingency is the contingency of experience itself. It is a placeholder for the receiving that could or could not occur – the receiving that opens up the space of experience, the space of transcendental reflection. The tie between transcendental philosophy and human psychology is in fact the tie with the *factuality* of human experience; while its peculiar relation, in Kant's framework, with *psychology* (and not, for instance, with anthropology or sociology) cannot be justified within the minimal borders of transcendental reflection. The requirement of a positive characterization of transcendental matter is indeed a structural aspect of the form-matter distinction as the minimal transcendental strategy. But its specific psychological characterization requires yet another methodological or strategical step forward.

To summarize: the form-matter distinction is not a neutral bipartition of the knowledge-object; rather, it is in itself an attempt at gaining a formal space within the materiality of experience. This means gaining a space for transcendental analysis. The nucleus of this endeavour has to do with the facticity of experience, not necessarily in a psychological sense. Kant's claim that knowledge cannot all consist of factual matters means the subtraction of some space to matter within human experience. This first subtraction is the very establishing of the mandoublet. The subtraction of more space to matter, the search for a stricter restraint about its role in the constitution of experience, is the first strategy of transcendental philosophy. And it can be thought as the general model of two subsequent strategies: dematerialization and immaterialization.

3. Dematerialization

Husserl's outline of the process of phenomenological reduction offers a good example of a dematerialization strategy. The opening pages of the first book of *Ideen* emphasize how transcendental phenomenology, while taking charge of the entire field of possible experience as the scope of its investigations, actually concerns itself with essences (Husserl 1976: 3-9). Phenomenology is an *eidetic* science because, unlike the natural science of psychology, it does not aim at explaining the fact that there is an experience; rather, it aims at describing the

essential texture and rhythm that make any experience what it is, insofar as it is a presentation for a living consciousness – something someone experiences.

Let me briefly consider how phenomenological practice actually takes place. There is a subtractive or negative phase, in which the wannabe phenomenologist discards everything that is not immanent to this structured flourishing of essential textures and experience-qualities. Then, there is a descriptive and transcendental phase, in which any essential experience-content is brought back to the consciousness it presents something to, in a way that makes this content a correlate to an articulated complex of rationality-establishing consciousness acts. These are the acts through which phenomenology's idea of rational consciousness expresses itself – no more bound to a rigid psychology, but still making up the ideal endoskeleton that sustains the flourishing of experience textures.

A proper phenomenological reduction requires both phases. Or, better said: the sceptical *epoché* already inclines the wannabe phenomenologist to receptiveness and description (see, e.g., Moustakas 1994). Zahavi (2017: 55) observed that phenomenological reduction does not aim to be a shelter against the variety of experience sense-contents; rather, it proactively aims at an openness and a clarity within which experience can present itself without interferences. As Moran (2018) underlines, the negative interpretation of *epoché* as a sort of retreat from the ontological fullness of experience deeply influenced the way in which Heideggerian and Merleau-Pontyan contexts received phenomenology. But Husserl's strategy actually consists in transferring this richness from an ontological to a phenomenological level, in order to be able to provide a rational transcendental ground to it.

Phenomenological-transcendental reduction is then to be intended as the last, most refined strategy of classical transcendental philosophy (see, e.g., Derrida 2000). This transcendental ambition is mirrored by the first words of *Ideen II*, in which factual nature is stated to be both the sphere of what essentially transcends phenomenological presentation and the scope, as an eidetic essential idea, of phenomenological investigations (Husserl 1952: 1). Hence, everything that concerns the form-matter strategy as the minimal transcendental strategy also concerns Husserl's phenomenology. To what extent, then, does this factual nature identify with transcendental matter?

Husserl explicitly recognizes that there are two kinds of transcendent contingency implied in any transcendental reflection: the relatively transcendent contingency of matters of fact (*Tatsachen*), namely the contingency of experience-objects that can be progressively brought back to the domain of transcendental justification; and the absolute contingency of the fact of experience (*Faktum*), namely the fact that an experience occurs and that an experience-world happens to exist (see Summa 2014: 80-82).

What does it mean that the transcendence of the *Faktum* is “absolute”? It cannot be absolute in a proper sense, since the *Faktum* entertains a transcendental

relation with experience (see Summa 2014: 33). It is, however, an inexhaustible transcendence: one could say that it is relative to any possible relation, so long as any eidetic route in Husserl's transcendental cartography can only be necessary in an *ex hypothesi* way. This hypothesis is indeed the transcendental *Faktum*. In short, the *Faktum* plays a role that is analogous to that of Kant's transcendental matter within Husserl's framework – the role of facticity, this time stripped of its psychological clothes, and more clearly characterized in a transcendental (and emptier) sense.

Once disengaged from Kant's transcendental psychologism concerning sense-impressions, the *epoché* within phenomenological-transcendental reduction can deal with facticity as a complex of aspects arranged around a defining radical contingency. It can abstract from some properties of facticity while attempting to bring some other aspects within the space of transcendental justification. It can try to positively describe a formal structure for aspects of facticity such as its radically flowing temporality (see Depraz 2000), thus partially subtracting space to facticity as negative receptivity, as the mere being subject to the fact that experience happens. Phenomenological-transcendental reduction is in fact explicitly described, in *Formale und Transzendente Logik*, as the endeavour of bringing the variety and vagueness of any stream of experience to the eidetic formal exactness of the transcendental field (Husserl 1974: 73-74).

The subsequent phenomenological description is, in fact, an effort in clarification, in subtracting space to vagueness. The vagueness of experience contents is essentially linked with its materiality, since it ultimately arises from the radical, internal variety of what our *epoché* opens up to. This is why, as Husserl himself recognizes, phenomenological structures can never reach the pure formality of mathematical ones: they have to allow for a certain vagueness (1976: 156-158). This vagueness makes so that reduction remains only a partial immaterialization, or rather a *dematerialization*. It can provide some space for a formal description of experience-contents, granting some descriptive richness. But it leaves the question about the possibility of a completely non-material transcendental knowledge open. This is the problem posed by a priori knowledge as an example of attempted immaterialization.

4. Immaterialization

The ambition to gain some a priori knowledge is deeply rooted in the classical project of transcendental philosophy. According to Kant, transcendental knowledge is a type of a priori knowledge, specifically concerning knowledge-experiences (Kant 1911: 43). Admittedly, Kant's and Husserl's transcendental endeavours imply two substantially different conceptions of a priori knowledge. It is possible, however, to read Husserl's position concerning the a priori as a response to Kant's, as Kern (1964) and more recently Mohanty (2011: 443) do. It

is then possible to frame Husserl's material and objectual a priori as a more flexible response to Kant's formal and subjective one.

The possibility of a material a priori follows indeed from Husserl's dematerializing take on the contents of experience, since their flourishing variety can be described as a dynamic interaction of relatively vague eidetic fields, allowing a certain unpredictability concerning possible individual occurrences. This elasticity implies a restriction of the experiential scope corresponding to any piece of material a priori knowledge: a material a priori relation is valid only in relation to a corresponding eidetic objectual field, towards which it has a constitutive value. Coherently, Husserl's restriction of formality to analyticity (see Farber 1943: 294-295) makes so that any epistemologically relevant eidetic relation must be relative to a material region, even after the corresponding dematerialization.

The key to understand Kant's conception of a priori knowledge as a result of an immaterialization strategy lies perhaps in this kind of relativity. The long century that separates Kant from Husserl is, among other things, the birth-century of experimental psychology and non-Euclidean geometry (see, e.g., Hansen 2000). Both scientific experiences had a deep, signifying impact on the neo-Kantian debates that were the background of Husserl's philosophical education. These experiences showed how Kant's transcendental aesthetic did not define the whole of possible sense-experience, since non-Euclidean geometries imply the possibility of a different intuition of space; and, analogously, they showed how Kant's transcendental logic did not grasp the entirety of the logical experience of reality, since the degree of sensations-intensities through which reality presents itself could not only be anticipated in their variability, but also measured through exact mathematical correlations (see Martinelli 1999: 5-83).

Husserl's philosophical project began, as is well-known, as an attempt at de-psychologizing logical knowledge. By then, however, it was clear that a process of psychologization was already seminally present in Kant's theoretical premises, since they revealed themselves to be deeply linked with the specificity of the human cognitive situation.

This psychologization follows from the implicit immaterialization strategy he uses in order to integrate psychological data within a transcendental framework, given the impossibility to do so through transcendental arguments. We have seen that, within Kant's framework, it is impossible to completely disconnect the two senses of matter, since the experienceable variety of knowledge-matters is tied to the absolute multiplicity attributed to transcendental matter. We have also seen that this kind of tie cannot be justified in a minimal transcendental sense – that is, within the terms of the simple form-matter distinction.

Kant's strategy concerning psychological matter tries to implicitly bridge this gap. While Husserl tries to deal with matters of experience by lightening their materiality, Kant tries to deem some factual properties (psychological properties,

in his case) as transcendently formal ones. He attempts at discarding the materiality of psychological properties while preserving their testimony about experience. This process of immaterialization leads to a conception of a priori knowledge as a form of knowledge that is neither relative to specific experience fields nor dependent from psychological factors with regard to its occurrence.

Following the idea that the matter-form distinction is both a content and a building block of transcendental philosophy, we can understand how the question about the nature of a priori knowledge is actually the question about the *possibility* of a priori knowledge, and thus about the autonomy of transcendental philosophy from transcendental psychology (in the wake of Strawson 1976: 15-44; and Greenberg 2001).

Kant attempts to achieve this autonomy through an immaterialization of psychology. The feature that he highlights, while introducing the position of a priori knowledge within the framework of transcendental philosophy, is self-sufficiency: the sphere of a priori knowledge is the sphere of the knowledge that reason can obtain all by itself (Kant 1911: 9). He surreptitiously transfers some general a posteriori psychological data in this space of autarchy. In any case, this operation could never be completely justified within the sphere of a priori knowledge.

This does not mean that these psychological data cannot amount to a constitutive role with regard to certain experiences, and this is indeed a route investigated by a certain empirical Kantianism (see Damböck 2017: 1-50). It is the claim to a structural, non-hypothetical tie between human psychology and the transcendental constitution of knowledge that does not receive a satisfying justification, and thus needs to be supported by this strategy.

The question that guides Kant's transcendental project – *quid est homo* – requires the empirical concept of human experience to be critically analysed and then put together through transcendental synthetic functions. This rebuilding process remains open, at least within the borders of Kant's transcendental projects, since its arguments are not autonomous from psychology and no rational justification about this dependence is given either. While dematerialization remains a local and partial strategy, immaterialization risks losing the transcendental philosopher's grip on experience, since he is forced to deplete material experience-contents somewhat arbitrarily.

5. Creative uses of matter

Meillassoux (2006: 39-68) describes the arc of modern philosophy as a progressive weakening of the traditional claim to a rational investigation of the absolute grounds of being. This reading of modernity can be easily overlaid on Foucault's narrative about philosophy's retreat within the borders of human finitude. Foucault and Meillassoux substantially agree that classical

transcendental philosophy is doomed to an asymmetrical reading of the form-matter distinction, thus allowing the rise of irrationalist, fideistic positions concerning the facticity that transcendental discourse remains longing for.

Having sketched the two strategies of classical transcendental philosophy concerning matter, however, we found that this movement is first and foremost a fugue from *facticity*, and only accidentally a retreat into *human* finitude. Kant's choice of psychology as the main reference of his immaterialization strategy is not an obligatory one. The reasons that motivate this strategy are not arbitrary, since they follow from the premise that transcendental philosophy can only consist of a conflict between form and matter. But, even if historically paired with certain cultural processes, the retreat from material facticity within transcendental philosophy does not necessarily identify with the building of modern man. This disconnection grants some opportunities for *future* transcendental philosophy by showing that its strategies can work even after the alleged end of modernity.

Kant's transcendental psychology is not necessarily organic to transcendental philosophy, since we could in principle immaterialize *every* knowledge-matter: we could indeed assume that sociological, cultural or neurocognitive principles, rather than psychological principles, are transcendental conditions of a possible rationality. And while each of these choices can appear as a forceful absolutization, the corresponding transcendental theory would actually become illegitimately absolute only by claiming that the possible rationality it investigates is the *only one possible*, or rather an absolute rationality. Given that Kant's immaterialization is surreptitious, the transcendental discourse it establishes takes for granted that the psychological expression is the only possible one for what lies "outside" the transcendental correlation. However, while the need for an anchorage to facticity is prescribed by the very premises of transcendental philosophy, nothing requires that this facticity be defined in psychological terms. They could also be, e.g., anthropological or cultural – as is the case within Cassirer's Neo-Kantianism (see Luft 2015: 281-283). One could gain a priori knowledge about one possible conditioned rationality without committing to any claim to absoluteness, and just assuming the immaterialization of certain factual conditions as a hypothesis. Schutz (1943) pioneered a phenomenological-transcendental approach to Max Weber's investigation of sociological rationality, for instance; and nothing forbids, at least in principle, to attempt a transcendental approach to what Gigerenzer & Todd (1999) call heuristics – that is, to the study of the psychosociologically-conditioned epistemology of everyday life.

This conditioned, regional version of immaterialization looks similar to some recent uses of dematerialization in the phenomenological debate. Some good examples of dematerialization are provided by phenomenological psychology. Zahavi (2014: 208-240) employs transcendental reduction on many different levels of abstraction in order to describe the eidetic structure of relatively specific experiences such as shame. Even some pages of Husserl's *Ideen II* provide,

beyond their systematic architecture, insightful descriptions of experiences, such as the encounter with another animated being (Husserl 1952: 162-172).

The central difference between these local phenomenological analyses and a conditioned immaterialization lies in their aim. While dematerialization works best in a descriptive sense, immaterialization helps build possible models of rationality, or rather of rational justification: while certain kinds of epistemic behaviour would appear irrational (i.e., unjustified) to a “monist” rationalism, they could appear relatively rational within the context of heuristics or everyday psychology – that is, within a pluralistic rationalism.

6. Conclusion

This paper sketched two of the discursive strategies that make up the consistency of transcendental philosophy. It showed that, within transcendental philosophy, the nature of matter is that of facticity, and that being material means being conditioned by facticity – not only in the central modal sense, but also on a semantic level (e.g., through material incompatibilities such as that between certain colours, see Smart 1959). It also provided an argument against the idea that transcendental philosophy is an obsolete approach to the problems of experience. Highlighting the methodological constraints and the discursive strategies that innervate transcendental phenomenology helped reframe human psychology within the transcendental discourse. This reframing showed that, while psychology is an option for the transcendental philosopher’s search of an empirical base upon which to establish a form-matter distinction, it is not the only option: other forms of transcendental rationality (that is, other ways to identify transcendental forms, to provide them with a content) could be explored – in principle, even non-anthropocentric ones.

Many issues that have been mentioned – such as the relation between material a priori knowledge and conditioned formal a priori knowledge, or as the relation between “regional” rationalities and “universal” rationality – require, however, further research. Such a research could perhaps lead to rediscover the actuality of transcendental philosophy with regard to many issues of the contemporary philosophical debate.

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