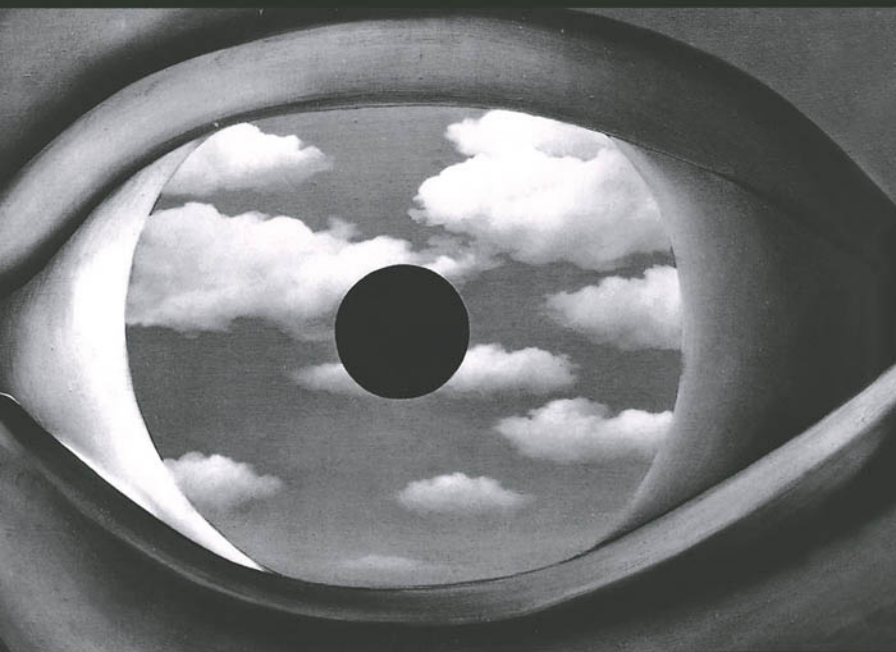


THE
PARADOX
OF
SUBJECTIVITY

The Self in the Transcendental Tradition



DAVID CARR

The Paradox
of Subjectivity

This page intentionally left blank

The Paradox of Subjectivity



THE SELF IN THE
TRANSCENDENTAL TRADITION

David Carr

New York Oxford
Oxford University Press

1999

Oxford University Press

Oxford New York

Athens Auckland Bangkok Bogotá Buenos Aires Calcutta
Cape Town Chennai Dar es Salaam Delhi Florence Hong Kong Istanbul
Karachi Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai
Nairobi Paris São Paulo Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto Warsaw

and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

Copyright © 1999 by David Carr

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carr, David, 1940–

The paradox of subjectivity : the self in the
transcendental tradition / David Carr.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-19-512690-4

1. Self (Philosophy) 2. Transcendentalism. 3. Kant, Immanuel,
1724–1804. 4. Husserl, Edmund, 1859–1938. I. Title.

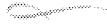
BD438.5.C35 1998

126—dc21 98-28135

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

For Stefanie



This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

In the earliest stages of this project I had the benefit of a released time grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The intermediate stages were greatly aided by the students in my graduate seminars at Emory University, where many of the ideas in this book were presented and discussed. In the final stages, Marc Lucht and Rudolf Makkreel read parts of the manuscript and provided helpful comments and suggestions. Thanks are also due to Edward Casey and Edward Dimendberg for their encouragement and support.

I am deeply indebted to my wife, Stefanie Graef Carr, for making it possible for me to complete this project, and for much more than that. I express my gratitude by dedicating this book to her.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

	Key to Abbreviations	xi
	Introduction: Reviving the Question of Subjectivity	3
ONE	Heidegger on Modern Philosophy and the Transcendental Subject	11
TWO	Kant: Subjectivity and Apperception	33
THREE	Husserl: Subjectivity and Intentionality	67
FOUR	The Self in the Transcendental Tradition	99
	Conclusion: The Paradox of Subjectivity	133
	Notes	141
	Index	147

This page intentionally left blank

Key to Abbreviations

Works by Edmund Husserl

- CM = *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960)
- CR = *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970)
- ID₁ = *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. First Book, tr. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983)
- ID₂ = *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Second Book, tr. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1989)
- LI = *Logical Investigations*, tr. J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970)

Works by Martin Heidegger

- EP = "Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens," in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), pp. 61ff.
- FD = *Die Frage nach dem Ding* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1962)
- FT = "Die Frage nach der Technik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), pp. 13ff.
- GP = *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975)
- K = *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1951)
- N = *Nietzsche*. Zweiter Band (Pfullingen: Neske, 1989)
- PG = *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979)
- SZ = *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957)
- UK = "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks," in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1957), pp. 7ff.
- UM = "Überwindung der Metaphysik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, pp. 71ff.
- WM = *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1955)
- Z = "Seminar in Zähringen 1973," in *Vier Seminare* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), pp. 110ff.
- ZW = "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," in *Holzwege*, pp. 69ff.

The Paradox
of Subjectivity

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

Reviving the Question of Subjectivity

My title is taken from Edmund Husserl's last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*. Paragraph 53 of that posthumous and fragmentary text bears the heading: "The paradox of human subjectivity: being a subject for the world and at the same time being an object in the world"(CR 178). This phrase expresses perfectly the topic to which the following study is devoted.

Debates about the self and the nature of subjectivity have been at the center of modern Western philosophy since Descartes. Recent "Continental" philosophy, whose major figures are still primarily Europeans but which by now includes many English-speakers as well, has brought about a decisive turn in these debates. In an effort to get beyond the preoccupations of modernity altogether and inaugurate a "post-modern" philosophical age, these philosophers have mounted a forceful attack on the concept of the subject or, more broadly, on what is characterized as the "metaphysics of the subject." Though this attack is usually associated with French post-structuralism, and thus with names like Foucault and Derrida, it is also joined by contemporary critical theorists descended from the Frankfurt School of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse. While the best known of these, Jürgen Haber-

mas, disagrees with dominant French views on rationality, humanism, and even modernity itself, he joins the French philosophers in their opposition to what he calls the philosophy of the subject.¹ For Habermas, too, this term seems to function as a synonym for the modern philosophical tradition as a whole. Philosophers who readily condemn broad generalizations as examples of “totalizing” reason, and who exhort us to pay attention to the particular and the local, do not shrink from summing up the whole history of modern philosophy, from Descartes to Sartre, as variations on a single theme: the metaphysics of the subject.

One irony in this development is that Continental philosophy thus joins hands in an important respect with the heirs of positivism in the analytic tradition. Subjectivity has always been an embarrassment to those who would reduce the world to what can be understood by the natural science of the day. From Ryle’s philosophical behaviorism of the 1940s to the efforts of today’s neurologically oriented materialists, philosophers in this tradition have labored mightily to eliminate subjectivity because it will not conveniently fit into the seamless materialist ontology that they accept in advance and without argument.

A glance at the current literature on this important topic, in both the Continental and the analytic traditions, suggests that subjectivity will not go away. But the attack has had an enormous benefit. On both sides, it has forced those who are not convinced by it to clarify the reasons why they are not convinced. The materialist-reductionist attack has elicited from philosophers like John Searle and Thomas Nagel, who believe subjectivity must be taken seriously, valuable new accounts of what consciousness is.² On the Continental side, where the attack has taken a more historical form, it has forced a reassessment of the modern philosophical tradition, which is the focus of the anti-subjectivist arguments.³

This is where this study fits in. I object to the broad strokes with which the modern philosophical tradition is reduced to a single theme and even a single metaphysical doctrine. I return to major figures in that tradition in order to show that crucial differences have been glossed over and ignored. I offer a rereading of the modern tradition, very different from that advanced by the standard attack on the so-called metaphysics of the subject, in order to find there an approach to subjectivity that has somehow been lost in the shuffle. Let me now explain in more detail why I think this is important and how I shall go about it.

The metaphysics of the subject is characterized by its detractors as unfolding inevitably and uniformly from Descartes’ *cogito* and culmi-