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Phenomenology of death: subjectivity and nature in Husserl's genetic phenomenology

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Conclusions to part 2

After having examined four fundamental notions related to subjectivity, we have come to the conclusion that constituting consciousness cannot be accounted for in either/or terms. We are at once subjects and objects in the world because those two terms cannot exist separately. Even though this was always true regarding our objective self, Husserl thoroughly defended the idea of a subject that is independent of her body and the world, whether in the form of a primal I or a phenomenological onlooker. These two notions are presupposed but not intuited, and they are postulated as a way of proving the primacy of consciousness over nature. While the former can only arise together with the temporal ego, and thus its foundational character is called upon revision; the latter is a methodological construct that ultimately depends on the practical engagement of the person performing the epoché in the life-world. Neither can stand independently, and so neither can be used as a reason to postulate the immortality of consciousness.

When we inquire into the genesis of experience, what we find is an insurmountable factum, namely the existence of the ego and its involvement in the world. This factum would only endanger the integrity of the phenomenological method if we consider, as Husserl seems to do, that the supposed tension between consciousness and nature must be settled in one direction or the other. Rather than this, we have come to rediscover the fundamental character of the correlation.