A Phenomenological Reading of Zhuzi

Jong-Hyun Yeo

Philosophy East and West, Volume 63, Number 2, April 2013, pp. 251-274 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: 10.1353/pew.2013.0013

For additional information about this article
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pew/summary/v063/63.2.yeo.html
A comparative study of any two things aims to understand one side in terms of the other, find the merits and demerits in each side, and ultimately produce a new thing through a critical synthesis of the two. This comparative study is possible if and only if the two being studied have both similarities and differences. The reason is as follows: if they are completely similar, there is no need for a comparison; if they are completely different, no significant comparison can be made. In a comparative study, accordingly, both differences without similarities and similarities without differences are meaningless. The similarities are the medium that make the meeting (communication) of the two possible and narrow or overcome their differences; the differences help us identify each side’s merits and demerits. These are the requisites for a critical synthesis of the two; in this way, they interact and can ultimately produce something new.

In the present study, I attempt a comparative study of Zhuzi (1130–1200), who achieved a synthesis of Neo-Confucian teachings, and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the originator of phenomenology. Are there any similarities and differences between their philosophies sufficient for such a study? The two belong to two very different cultural and philosophical traditions, which might lead one to think that there must be a vast and unbridgeable distance between them. Our problem, then, is twofold: (1) is there really a certain convergence or parallel between them in their philosophical thinking that is sufficient to bridge the distance and that reveals philosophical similarities, and (2) if such a convergence exists, what are the philosophical justifications for it?

I answer the first question in the affirmative. In Husserl’s case, we can start with a few words about the formation of his phenomenology, which had its origin in his investigations into logic, which in turn resulted from his criticism of psychologism. In his criticism he found that there is a correlation between mental acts (cognition, reasoning) and the laws of logic, and I offer this very correlation as the philosophical ground of Husserl’s thought. Likewise, I offer a correlation between *li* and *qi* as the philosophical ground of the thought of Zhuzi, without which his Neo-Confucian views could not have been formed. It tentatively follows from the preceding that the two philosophies are parallel because of the nature of these respective correlations.

In this short essay I cannot treat both the similarities and differences between the two philosophies, so I will confine my discussion to the similarities, leaving the
differences for a future study. The aim of the present effort, therefore, is not to attempt a critical synthesis in order to arrive at something new, but to show, through an exploration of the similarities, that Zhuzi’s philosophy may be, to some degree, phenomenological in Husserl’s sense, and thus this essay will be a phenomenological reading of Zhuzi.

Two tasks are required to attain this goal. The first task is to make the case: if one wants to claim that the two correlations above constitute the philosophical grounds on which similarities between Husserl and Zhuzi can be elucidated, one must show that they are parallel in their approach to the “way of Being.” In the second section of this essay, I will demonstrate the validity of this assumption by interpreting the relation in Zhuzi between li and qi in terms of the relation in Husserl between the laws of logic and mental acts. In the third section, considering the processes of formation of Husserl’s first transcendental phenomenology, I will interpret xin 心 (mind) and gewuzhizhi 格物致知 (investigation of things and arriving at knowledge) in Zhuzi’s philosophy in terms of phenomenological intentionality of mind and phenomenological reduction in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. By doing so, I will show that Zhuzi’s philosophy may be in a way phenomenological in Husserl’s sense. In the conclusion, I will clarify why Zhuzi’s philosophy should be understood not metaphysically but phenomenologically with respect to the realization of the ideal of his philosophy, pointing out that his philosophy is sometimes metaphysical and sometimes phenomenological.

A discussion of Husserl’s criticism of psychologism is crucial to an understanding of the fundamental concept forming his phenomenology, the correlation between the laws of logic (noemata) and mental acts (noeses). Furthermore, this will be of great help in attaining an understanding of the fundamental concept forming Zhuzi’s philosophy, the correlation between li and qi. In this regard, it is necessary for the accomplishment of the first task. Therefore, first, it is imperative to consider Husserl’s criticism of psychologism, which I do in the first section below. For Zhuzi, the concepts of li and qi usually have an ethical and practical meaning. However, they also have an epistemological, theoretical meaning. As a methodological strategy to achieve the aim of this essay, I will discuss Zhuzi’s concepts of li and qi mainly from epistemological and theoretical angles.

Husserl’s Criticism of Psychologism

Psychologists such as John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Edward Beneke, and Christoph von Sigwart, among others, characterize logic as a normative and practical discipline, a “technology” for correct thinking. If so, logic requires a foundation in theoretical science just as any branch of chemical technology does. In Husserl’s opinion, these psychologists are burdened by prejudices, the first of which is: “Prescriptions which regulate what is mental must obviously have a mental basis. It is accordingly self-evident that the normative principles of knowledge must be grounded in the psychology of knowledge.” And this prejudice resulted in the second: “the distinction between purely logical and methodological propositions (or between pure logic and
methodological logic] is pointless.” In sum, the fundamental position of these psychologists is that logic is a part of psychology or dependent on it, because the laws of logic are grounded in or occur and proceed from mental acts, and they reduce to the natural laws of mental activity, which must be the concern of psychology.

Anti-psychologists such as Johann Friedrich Herbart and Gustav Hartenstein were of the opinion that psychology deals with the laws of thinking as it is, that is, with the natural laws of thinking, which are contingent, whereas logic deals with the laws of thinking that are possible without recourse to psychology, using only the normative rules regarding understanding that are necessary. For the anti-psychologists, then, “logic aims not at a physic but at an ethics of thinking.”

Husserl’s criticism of psychologism focuses on the prejudices of psychologists. In order to refute their first prejudice, he clarifies the nature of the laws of logic. For Husserl, laws of logic themselves are not normative propositions at all in the sense of prescriptions. Nevertheless, he maintains that the laws of logic can obviously be transferred into normative propositions for normative purposes, but, for just that reason, they are not a norm, but a theory. He takes as an example the well-known principle of pure mathematics, \((a + b)(a - b) = a^2 - b^2\), which is similar to the law of pure logic. It means only that the product of the sum and the difference of any two numbers equals the difference of their squares, and it contains no normative and practical reference to our judging and the manner in which the operation should be carried out. We, of course, can transform the purely theoretical proposition into a normative and practical proposition: to arrive at the product of the sum and difference of two numbers, one should find the difference of their squares. This normative character of the mathematical proposition is only the concomitant character derived from its theoretical character. Thus, the laws of logic always adhere to their theoretical character in spite of their transformation into normative rules. Hereby, Husserl agrees with neither the psychologists nor the anti-psychologists, who claim that logic is normative.

In light of Husserl’s position on the nature of the laws of logic, we can say, first, that a decisive factor that led the anti-psychologists to commit the error of believing that “laws of logic are used normatively; mental natural laws are not so” is that they saw the opposite of a law of nature to be a normative law. However, “the opposite of a law of nature [Naturgesetz] . . . is not a normative law [Normalgesetz] or a prescription, but an ideal law [Idealgesetz], in the sense of one based purely on concepts, Ideas, purely conceived essences, and so not empirical.” Since they did not see this, they clung to the fallacy that psychology deals with natural laws and that logic deals with normative laws.

Second, we can say that the fallacy of the psychologists lies in the fact that they misunderstood the essence of the ideal and ignored the fundamental difference between the ideal laws of pure logic and the empirical laws of human psychology, “between the norms of pure logic and technical rules of a specifically human art of thought” and between objective pure logic and subjective methodological logic.

The ideal is entirely different from the empirical. The former is not real in time and space, but the latter is real in them. Correspondingly, ideal laws are completely different from empirical laws. Empirical laws exist, if and only if their objects are
empirically real in time or space. For example, Newton’s law of gravitation exists as an empirical law, if and only if its objects are empirically real. However, the ideal and ideal laws still exist, even if their objects are not empirically real. The empirical and empirical laws belong in the empirical (temporal and spatial) world that consists of individuals and their relations under the conditions of time and space. These conditions change. Accordingly, the empirical and empirical laws also change and cannot escape relativity and contingency. However, the ideal and ideal laws belong in an ideal world that consists of genera and their relations, which are not under the conditions of time and space. Since they are not subject to changing conditions, they remain unchangeable and have universality and necessity. The ideal exists prior to the empirical world and makes our knowledge of it possible. In this respect, it is a priori. However, the empirical is a posteriori in that it is posterior to the ideal and is, in our knowledge of it, regulated by the ideal. I call these distinctions between the ideal (laws of logic) and the empirical (mental acts) distinctions in the way of Being between them.

The psychological or mental laws are the laws of human psychology, which is empirically real not in space but in time, while the laws of logic are not the laws of human psychology, but the laws of the ideal. These laws of logic exist independent of empirical reality because they do not belong in the empirical world. They are in themselves a truth and are regulated only by themselves. Therefore, they cannot be founded on the empirical or empirical laws. It follows from this that the logical laws of pure logic cannot be founded on the mental laws of psychology and cannot reduce to them. Thus, the psychologists who attempted to establish such foundations and reductions have turned out to be wrong.

Husserl refutes the psychologists’ second prejudice by clearly presenting the distinction between pure logic and methodological logic. A technology for correct thinking is literally a science of methods or techniques that produce effective logical thinking. In this sense, it is called methodological logic. It is certain that this logic should be founded on psychology and belongs to it, because we should know the laws or information of the psychology in which our thinking occurs, in order to be good at logical thinking. Husserl never denies methodological logic itself. He only offers the criticism that the psychologists ignore the difference between pure logic and methodological logic and attempt to found pure logic, which is beyond the realm of the empirical facts of thinking, through methodological logic, which is based on the psychology whose research realm is limited to the empirical facts of thinking. The two logics are totally different in their content, origin, and function. Pure logic concerns only the ideal, while methodological logic concerns only the real (empirical). The former has its origin in the immediate truth determined by insight; the latter has its origin in the real psychical facts. The former is the first and most essential element in the foundation of the latter, because the scientific methods of methodological logic involve the norms or rules telling us how we should act in the conduct of scientific research, which represents merely the normative transformation of the ideal theoretical laws whose sole grounds lie in pure logic. In this way, the ideal laws of logic acquire a methodological significance.
To sum up, Husserl recognizes that pure logic has a psychological origin, because pure laws of logic are present in and inseparable from mental acts, which must be the concern of psychology; nevertheless he never recognizes that pure logic is a part of psychology or dependent on it, because the laws of logic are entirely distinct from mental laws and so the former cannot reduce to the latter, in spite of the psychological origin of logic. Therefore, it does not follow from the psychological origin of logic that logic is a branch of psychology or is dependent on it.

In his criticism of psychologism, Husserl states that there is duplicity in purely logical contexts, which “stand for class-concepts of mental states such as belong in psychology, but, on the other hand, [which stand as well] for generic concepts covering ideal singulars, which belong in a sphere of pure law.” The former, as exemplifying the subjective-anthropological unity of knowledge, has relations with the empirical; the latter, as exemplifying the objective-ideal unity of the content of knowledge, relates to the ideal. The psychologists’ decisive mistake lies in the fact that they ignore the fundamental differences between the former and the latter and confuse the two.

The Relation between Logical Law and Mental act and the Relation between Li and Qi

The Distinction between Logical Law and Mental act: Li Qi Buxiangza (理氣不相雜)

The conclusion that Husserl draws from his criticism of psychologism is that logic should never be thought of as a branch of psychology or be dependent on it, despite its origin in psychology. The reason is that there is a duality in the (co)relation between laws of logic and mental acts; in other words, laws of logic are both distinct from and inseparable from mental acts. I will now show that in Zhuzi the relation between li and qi is also dual, as in Husserl. I will first show that in Zhuzi one of these relations between li and qi is, in the way of Being, parallel to one of the relations in Husserl; that is, the li and the qi in Zhuzi, like the laws of logic and the empirical laws in Husserl, are distinct from each other. Before doing this, however, let me first touch on a couple of things discussed in the previous section. (1) The distinction between laws of logic and mental acts, for Husserl, appears to be the distinction between the ideal and the empirical. (2) The proposition “the ideal (laws of logic) is distinct from the empirical (mental laws)” involves three significant distinctions between the two in the way of Being: first, the ideal is nonmaterial, supra-temporal, supra-spatial, a priori, unchangeable, universal, necessary, and not real in time and space, while the empirical is material, temporal, spatial, a posteriori, changeable, contingent, relative, and real in time and space; second, the ideal is prior to the empirical; and third, the ideal cannot reduce to the empirical.

Now, I will demonstrate that the li and qi in Zhuzi, like the laws of logic and mental acts in Husserl, are distinct from each other by showing that the three distinctions in the way of Being just mentioned are found not only in the relation of the ideal and the empirical in Husserl but also in the relation of li and qi in Zhuzi. I begin with Zhuzi’s interpretations of the distinction between the phrases “what is above
shapes” (xing er shang zhe 形而上者) and “what is within shapes” (xing er xia zhe 形而下者), in the Book of Changes (Zhuyi 周易). Thinking the “shapes” (xing 型) in “what is above shapes” and in “what is within shapes” to consist of matter, he first interprets “what is above shapes” as the Dao 道, in which no shape is inherent, or as the emptiness (xu 虛) into which no shape can penetrate, and then “what is within shapes” as the qi 器, which consists of matter and has shapes or forms. In this regard, he says: “‘what is above shapes’ is that which has no shapes or shadows, namely li 理, while ‘what is within shapes’ is that which has actualities and shapes, namely qi 器.” Qi 器 narrowly designates the instruments that are used in our daily life and broadly designates all the real or empirical things with forms or shapes. Further, for Zhuzi, “the Supreme Ultimate” (Taiji 太極) also belongs, with li and the Dao, to “what is above shapes,” and qi 氣 also belongs, with qi 器, to “what is within shapes.” Dao, li, and the “Supreme Ultimate” are all the same in meaning; both qi 氣 and qi 器 are also the same in meaning. Even if Dao, li, and the “Supreme Ultimate” are all the same in meaning, I think the li among them is representative of “what is above shapes” because it is so broad in its use that it can reveal the nature of “what is above shapes” in all spheres of the cosmos, including human affairs and natural things. Both qi 氣 and qi 器 are the same in meaning in that they both belong to “what is within shapes,” but they are also different from each other because qi 器 is materially shaped. In that case, qi 氣 is matter with energy that forms qi 器, and thus it is the material origin of qi 器. Qi 氣 itself is material but has no form or shape; qi 器 consists of matter (氣) and has a definite form or shape. Therefore qi 氣 is at least materially more original than qi 器, although both belong to “what is within shapes.” Since li is representative of “what is above shapes,” and qi 氣 is more original than qi 器, it is clear that the distinction in Zhuzi between “what is above shapes” and “what is within shapes” is focused on the distinction between li and qi 氣. Based on the preceding analyses, “what is above shapes” and “what is within shapes” in Zhuzi are respectively parallel to the ideal and the empirical in Husserl, and so the distinction in Zhuzi between “what is above shapes” and “what is within shapes” is parallel to the distinction in Husserl between the ideal and the empirical; and just as the laws of logic and the mental acts in Husserl respectively belong to the ideal and the empirical, the li and the qi (氣 and 器) in Zhuzi also belong, respectively, to “what is above shapes” and “what is within shapes.” Qi 氣 is scentless and has no form or shape. For that reason, it cannot be experienced in the way in which qi 器, each formed or shaped thing, is experienced. In this sense, it seems identical with li. Nevertheless, it can never be identical with and is entirely distinct from it, because it is not ideal but empirical, in that it is meeting and parting matter with energy, which is real in time and space. The distinction in Zhuzi between li and qi is presented in his statements: “Li, which is the Dao of ‘what is above shapes,’ is the source from which all things are produced, whereas qi 氣, which is the qi 器 of ‘what is within shapes,’ is material means whereby all things are produced,” and “li and qi are what [can be] called two different things.” He also points out that li is prior to qi by saying, “Qi cannot exist until li exists.”
Western-style laws of logic are rarely presented in Zhuzi, or in Oriental philosophy generally. However, if we wish to find anything parallel to the laws of logic in Zhuzi, they are probably the laws of \textit{li}\textsuperscript{21}—first, in the sense that \textit{li} in Zhuzi, like the laws of logic in Husserl, is ideal, nonmaterial, supra-temporal, supra-spatial, a priori, unchangeable, universal, and necessary, and second, in the sense that the laws of \textit{li} are the very correlate of \textit{qi} as mental acts that are not in space but in time. Zhuzi points out that “\textit{li} lacks volition or plan, and has no creative power, while \textit{qi} has the capacity to operate and condense,”\textsuperscript{22} and thus “all men’s mental capacity to speak, move, think, and act, is \textit{qi}.”\textsuperscript{23} Therefore, we can now say that the mental acts in Husserl, in which the laws of logic occur and proceed, are, for Zhuzi, expressed as the acts of \textit{qi}.\textsuperscript{24} With these, we can see that the laws of logic in Husserl may be parallel to the laws of \textit{li} in Zhuzi, and the empirical laws in Husserl, that is, the laws of mental acts, may be parallel to the laws of \textit{qi} (氣 and 器) in Zhuzi.\textsuperscript{25} From our discussion so far, we now come to the conclusion that in the course of his criticism of psychologism, one of the dual relations that Husserl found, between the laws of logic and mental acts, namely the relation “they are distinct from each other,” is for Zhuzi presented as a proposition that “\textit{li} is not mixed with \textit{qi}” (\textit{li qi buxiangza 理氣不相雜}), in which the following is implied: \textit{li} is both prior to and distinct from, and neither can be produced by nor reduced to, \textit{qi}. It was also proved from the preceding that, at least with respect to logical thinking, \textit{li} may be parallel to logical law, and \textit{qi} may be parallel to mind’s act, in which logical law appears. It may be now shown, accordingly, that \textit{li} and \textit{qi} in Zhuzi are also distinct from each other, just as the laws of logic and mental acts in Husserl are distinct.

\textbf{Inseparability of Logical Law and Mental Act: Li Qi Buxiangli 理氣不相離}

It is now time to show that the other of the dual relations between \textit{li} and \textit{qi} in Zhuzi may be, in the way of Being, parallel to that of Husserl, namely that the \textit{li} and \textit{qi} in Zhuzi, like the laws of logic and mental acts in Husserl, are indivisible from each other. Zhuzi argues that \textit{li} is indivisible from \textit{qi}: “\textit{Li} is never separate from \textit{qi};”\textsuperscript{26} “wherever this \textit{qi} exists, the \textit{li} must be found within it”;\textsuperscript{27} “it would seem that \textit{qi} depends on \textit{li} for its operation. Thus, when there is a condensation of such \textit{qi}, the \textit{li} is also present within it”;\textsuperscript{28} and “\textit{li} can have a place on which to depend, only after \textit{qi} has already been.”\textsuperscript{29} From these statements by Zhuzi, it can be shown that just as the laws of logic in Husserl are inseparable from mental acts, the \textit{li} in Zhuzi is also inseparable from \textit{qi} (\textit{li qi buxiangli 理氣不相離}).

Furthermore, Zhuzi asserts this dual relation between \textit{li} and \textit{qi}, namely that \textit{li} and \textit{qi} are at the same time distinct and inseparable, by saying: “\textit{li} is never separable from \textit{qi}. However, \textit{li} belongs to ‘what is above shapes,’ while \textit{qi} belongs to ‘what is within shapes.’ Hence, if we speak from the standpoint of ‘what is above shapes’ and ‘what is within shapes,’ how can there not be priority and posteriority between them.”\textsuperscript{30} “In fact, one cannot say which of \textit{li} and \textit{qi} is prior to the other. However, confronted by the question of their origin, one must say that \textit{li} is prior to \textit{qi}.”\textsuperscript{31} The distinction between the two indicates the \textit{logical} relation between them; their inseparability points to the \textit{actual} relation between them. In other words, from a \textit{logical}
standpoint, \( li \) is prior to and is not combined with \( qi \); from an actual standpoint, \( li \) is inseparable from \( qi \) and there cannot be priority or posteriority between the two.

From the preceding statements of Zhuzi, it is also clear that in terms of the way of Being there is a parallel to Husserl in the dual relation between \( li \) and \( qi \), and just as the laws of logic and the mental acts in Husserl are distinct and at the same time inseparable, so it is with \( li \) and \( qi \) in Zhuzi. Finally, the laws of logic (the ideal) are to the mental laws (the empirical) in Husserl as the \( li \) (what is above shapes) is to the \( qi \) (what is within shapes) in Zhuzi.

Husserl knew through his criticism of psychologism that logical thinking consists of the dual relation between laws of logic and mental acts, and thus he could maintain that a law of logic can exist only as the object (correlate) of a mental act, even if the laws of logic do not reduce to the laws of mental acts. However, the psychologists, confusing the laws of logic with the mental acts of the psychology in which they occur, held to their incorrect view because they were dazzled by the fact that logical thinking consists of such a dual relation. Thus, they attempted to found pure logic in methodological logic.

I have pointed out that Husserl never denied methodological logic itself as a technique for correct thinking, which the psychologists advocated, even if he criticized them. In regard to Zhuzi, we can say that pure logic may be parallel to one of the “sciences” of \( li \), and methodological logic to one of the “sciences” of \( qi \). In Zhuzi, the psychology in which logical thinking occurs and proceeds consists of \( qi \). One must therefore control the \( qi \) well in order to be good at logical thinking. In this case, one needs methods to control the \( qi \). We can call the science of the methods for controlling \( qi \) with respect to logical thinking “methodological logic” in Husserl’s sense. From Zhuzi’s point of view, this methodological logic can be called “logic based on \( qi \).” It is natural that this logic needs the psychology of \( qi \). Moreover, it needs other sciences of \( qi \), for example the medicine of the \( qi \) of the brain or the sitology of the \( qi \) of food, because the medical inquiries into the \( qi \) of the brain can find the \( qi \) in the brain that stimulates one to be good at logical thinking, and the sitological inquiries into the \( qi \) of food can also find such \( qi \) in food.

Husserl puts the dual relation between the laws of logic (objects) or the ideal and mental acts or the empirical into the correlation between the two, and, with the introduction of the concept of intentionality into his phenomenology, puts ideal or logical objects into intentional objects, and mental acts into intentional acts. I think that the same can be said of Zhuzi, and in the next section I will show interpreting Zhuzi’s mind consisted of \( li \) and \( qi \) in terms of the processes of the formation of Husserl’s phenomenology.

\textit{Husserl’s Phenomenological Mind and Phenomenological Reduction, and Zhuzi’s Mind and Gewuzhizhi Based on Li and Qi}
psychologists had overlooked. In making this discovery, he held to both objectivism and subjectivism. However, this objectivism is not the old objectivism in traditional Western philosophy, which does not have the same grounding and is opposed to subjectivism, but is rather an objectivism whose grounding is in a new subjectivism. Likewise, the subjectivism to which he held is not the old subjectivism in traditional Western philosophy, namely transcendental psychologism, which is the opposite of objectivism, but a new subjectivism that provides the old objectivism with a grounding in transcendental phenomenological researches. Thus, the new subjectivism (transcendental subjectivism) that he attempted to found was not antagonistic to objectivism. Therefore, for Husserl, subjectivism is at the same time objectivism.33

This causes two questions to arise: (1) What is the basis on which Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology is possible? And (2) how was it formed? The answer to the first question is based in intentionality, which is the condition of possibility of the correlation between the laws of logic and mental acts that Husserl found in the course of making his criticism of psychologism. With regard to intentionality, mental acts, or the mind’s acts, are intentional acts or noeses, and the laws of logic are intentional objects or noemata.

In order to answer the second question, it is necessary to take a look at Logical Investigations II, with the subtitle “Studies of Phenomenology and the Theory of Knowledge.” This book, in which Husserl proposes an alternative to psychologism with respect to pure logic, can be characterized as a descriptive investigation into the essential structure of intentional acts or “lived experiences” (Erlebnisse), in which all kinds of ideal objects of pure logic and mathematics appear. In this sense, it touches upon “descriptive psychology.” In Phänomenologische Psychologie, recalling the descriptive psychology of Logical Investigations II as “a theory of logical-mathematical knowledge,” he strongly argues that it should be consistently expanded and deepened.34 His first transcendental phenomenology, which was elaborated in Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Erstes Buch35 (hereafter, Ideen I) of 1913, is the result of his discussions of that expansion and depth.

Now, I will first consider the process of the formation of Husserl’s first transcendental phenomenology by elucidating the meanings of the “expansion” and “deepening” of the descriptive psychology of Logical Investigations II, and then interpret Zhuzi’s mind and gewuzhizhi, based on his concepts of li and qi, in terms of Husserl’s phenomenological mind and phenomenological reduction considered above, and in doing so I will show that Zhuzi’s philosophy is to some degree phenomenological in Husserl’s sense.

“Expansion” means that descriptive or intuitive inquiries into a priori ideal objects should reach out from formal sciences like pure logic and mathematics to all the regional sciences. This expansion was first tried in Ideen I, in which appeared the world of essences (Wesens), being opposite to the world of fact (Tatsache). The world of Tatsachen consists of individuals restricted by the empirical laws, whereas the world of essences consists of universals being regulated by the ideal laws. In Zhuzi’s
terms, the former is may also be parallel to the world of qi (氣 and 器) and the latter to the world of li.

In Husserl, “essence” designates what is to be found in the “own Being” of an individuum (individual) as “the What of the individuum” (Ideen I, p. 13). This essence as “the What of an individuum (an empirical object)” is that which lets the individuum be as such. It is not a posteriori, subjective, relative, and contingent, but a priori, objective, universal, and necessary. The li in Zhuzi is regarded as “the What of a qi 器” that lets the qi 器 be as such. Thus, he states: “Because li of every kind exist, all kinds of physical things can also exist.”36 And li, like essence in Husserl, is both distinct from and inseparable from qi (氣 and 器), paralleling the Tatsache in Husserl. For both Zhuzi and Husserl, every empirical real object (qi 器) also consists of both essence (li) and matter (qi). In this case, the essence (li) is the a priori constituent; the matter (qi) is the a posteriori constituent of the empirical real objects (qi 器). Zhuzi and Husserl aimed to know not the contingent relative matter (qi), but the universal necessary essence (li) concerning facts (qi 器). In doing so, they both opened up the road to objectivism.

How, then, can we know the essence in Husserl and the li in Zhuzi? The answer is that our mind is the very place where they are. In Husserl, it is clear that the mind is the place where essences are given, and in Zhuzi the li of every kind is completed within the mind.37 For Zhuzi and Husserl, the mind belongs in qi and the material. However, how can the a priori unmaterial ideal essence (li) be known by the material real mind (the mind as qi)? Husserl found the answer in the mind’s essential character, called intentionality, which he regarded as the principal theme of phenomenology. According to him, our mind is always the mind (consciousness) of something, and the “something” is the mind’s object that appears only in its act. In this case, the mind or mind’s act and its object form an inseparable correlation. The inseparable correlation between the two is made by intentionality. Accordingly, the correlation is also called intentional correlation.

However, the intentional correlation between the mind and its object should not be understood as the objective (external) or causal relation of mind to object, in which the mind has any object as its intentional object within itself only as long as the object exists at a certain place outside the mind; as soon as it disappears there, the mind loses it and comes to be empty. But it should be understood as the self-relation of mind to object, in which the mind all by itself has relation with any object, regardless of the object’s existence outside the mind. In this concept of Husserl’s intentionality, it is implied that the intentional act of mind and its intentional object are both one and two. That is to say, the intentional act and the intentional object are one in that they are inseparable from each other, but they are two in that they are distinct from each other.

Of course, Zhuzi never used the term “intentionality.” Nevertheless, we can find in Zhuzi a concept of intentionality similar to Husserl, especially in the statement “Mind and li are one. The reason why the two are one is not that li is in front of someone’s eyes outside his mind, but that li is just within the mind.”38 And we also already saw that mind (mind as the act of qi) and li in Zhuzi are separate from each other, and
so they are not one but two. Accordingly, for Zhuzi the mind also forms an intentional correlation. In this case, the li is the correlate of mind as the act of qi, and thus it may be parallel to the intentional object, called “noema” in Husserl, and the intentional act that he calls “noesis” is, in Zhuzi’s terms, the act of qi.

On account of its intentionality, the range of the mind in Husserl is not limited to its (intentional) act, which is real in time, but expands from it to the a priori supra-temporal ideal (intentional) object. It is clear that the same can be said of Zhuzi, judging from the statement “What can perceive is the intellectual faculty of qi, and what is perceived is the li of the mind.”39 What Zhuzi means by this is that for him as well, the range of the mind is not limited to the act of qi that is real in time, but expands from it to the a priori supra-temporal ideal li. The reason why the range of mind in Zhuzi expands so is, of course, that his mind has the intentional character, namely the intentional correlation between li and qi.

**Husserl’s Phenomenological Reduction and Zhuzi’s Gewuzhizhi**

Since the theme of Husserl’s phenomenology is the intentionality just mentioned, his phenomenological method is none other than the method of the study of intentionality. However, this intentionality is closed in the “natural attitude,” because there the relation between the mind and object seems to be the objective relation rather than the self-relation. Thus, intentionality is closed rather than disclosed by the method of empirical psychology in the natural attitude. A new and entirely different method is therefore needed for the study of intentionality. Husserl presented phenomenological reduction as this new method, which deals with the mind or mental phenomena. In fact, “in order to characterize the new peculiarity of the method, the name phenomenology was chosen.”40

Intentionality is not the outer character but the inner character of the mind. Therefore, as mentioned above, it cannot help being closed in the natural (outer) attitude. It can be disclosed for the first time in the phenomenological attitude, which plumbs the depths of the mind.

The “deepening” of the descriptive psychology discussed in *Logical Investigations II* means first to move from the surface and into the depths of the mind and then to elucidate that the “essence” seen by “Ideation” is not transcendent (external) but immanent in mind, in other words, that it is the very intentional object of the mind. What is elucidated is, for Husserl, the phenomenological constitution. Accordingly, the “deepening” is fully achieved in the phenomenological constitution. Thus, his transcendental phenomenology is the science of consciousness (mind) constituting objects in general, especially the world.41

Of course, the “deepening” is inseparable from and begins with the “expansion” discussed above. And what makes the “expansion” and the “deepening” possible is the very phenomenological reduction. In Husserl, this divides into eidetic seeing (*Wesenserschauung*, or Ideation) or eidetic reduction and transcendental reduction.

Eidetic reduction is the method of turning the object of study from the world of facts, consisting of individuals, in order to see (erfassen) their essences, to the world
of essences beyond the world of facts. However, the eidetic reduction does not disregard *individuelle Aufschauung* (seeing of something individual), but rather uses it as an exemplar for the “seeing of essence,” because essence is, as we have already seen, the “What” of an individual to be found in it. We can see from this that “Seeing of essence” necessarily begins with *individuelle Aufschauung* and that the two are inseparable from each other; that is to say, there is no “Seeing of essence” without *individuelle Aufschauung*.

As is well known, *gewuzhizhi* is one of Zhuzi’s philosophical methods. It is a method for attaining knowledge not of the *qi* forming each individual thing (each *qi*器) materially, but of the a priori *li* forming it ideally/logically. Accordingly, it is the method of “arriving” (zhì致) at the “knowledge” (zhì知) of its a priori *li* through the “investigation” (ge格) into each individual “thing” (*wu*物). In this case, *wu* has a dual meaning. Sometimes it means such individual things as *qi*器 or human affairs, and sometimes it means the mind itself. Therefore, for Zhuzi, *gewuzhizhi* is also understood sometimes as the method that knows the *li* of individual things and sometimes as the method that knows the mind with respect to the knowledge of the *li* that is the mind’s correlate. By the way, for Husserl, eidetic reduction is the method that enables one to know the essences of individual things, whereas transcendental reduction is the method for knowing the mind in relation to the knowledge (constitution) of the essence or world that is the mind’s correlate. In this view, I think that Zhuzi’s *gewuzhizhi* may parallel both Husserl’s eidetic reduction and his transcendental reduction, and for that reason it can have a dual methodological meaning, the eidetic and the transcendental.

*Gewuzhizhi* in its eidetic meaning, like the eidetic reduction in Husserl, is the method of turning the object of study from the world of “each individual thing” (*qi*器), in order to see or arrive at its *li*, to the world of the *li* itself. In other words, it literally means that one digs into each individual thing and extracts its *li* completely from it (*liang wu qiong li*即物窮理). In this case, digging into each individual thing is possible through the intuition of it. Thus the eidetic *gewuzhizhi*, like the eidetic reduction in Husserl, is possible on the basis of the *individuelle Aufschauung* that returns to the act of the *qi* of mind. For both Zhuzi and Husserl, the reason why the *individuelle Aufschauung* is possible is that the form (the *li* in Zhuzi and the essence in Husserl) of the individual thing that is the object of the *individuelle Aufschauung* is a priori immanent as mind’s intentional object.

In regard to Husserl’s transcendental reduction, both Zhuzi’s eidetic *gewuzhizhi* and Husserl’s eidetic reduction are the first step in the investigation of intentionality, because they are methods for knowing the a priori constituent (*li*, essence) of the intentional mind, the intentional object. However, they are only the necessary condition, not the sufficient condition of the investigation of intentionality, because they cannot yet explicate the correlation between the mind’s intentional act and its object (*li*, essence). Therefore, viewed in light of these two reductions, both Zhuzi’s *li* and Husserl’s essence still seem to transcend the mind’s limits and are to be regarded, respectively, as non-intentional objects.
In order to disclose intentionality as the possible condition of the correlation between the mind’s intentional act and its object, it is necessary to turn the object of study from such objects as *li* and essence to the mind itself in which the object is given or appears. The process of turning is Husserl’s transcendental reduction. This reduction is a method that arrives at the transcendental mind as the subject for the world, that is to say, the mind constituting the world, in which all kinds of objects belong. Its final aim, accordingly, is to consider the constitution of the world by the transcendental subject, in other words, to consider the processes through which the world obtains its Being-meaning from the transcendental subject or mind.

It is well known that transcendental reduction cannot accomplish its aim until it completely excludes or brackets and radically alters the natural attitude, whose basic character is the general positing (*die Generalthesis*) (*Ideen I*, pp. 60–61). Transcendental reduction makes it possible to turn from the natural attitude, in which “I” am an empirical psychological ego within the world as a temporal and spatial reality and depend on the world for my Being as such, to the transcendental attitude, in which the world as a temporal and spatial reality is as an intentional phenomenon within “me” as a transcendental phenomenological ego and depends on “me” for its Being as such. This is how transcendental reduction completely discloses the intentionality that is closed in the natural attitude. We can now say that, viewed according to the natural psychological attitude, the mind is only a fragment within the world and thus is much smaller than the world, but viewed according to the transcendental phenomenological attitude, the mind is the transcendental subject for the world and thus is much bigger than the world. Through transcendental reduction, by which we can arrive at the transcendental mind, two points are elucidated: first, the “deepening” mentioned above can be completed for the first time, and second, the a priori form of the individual things, their essence, turns out to be the a priori constituent of intentionality. Of course, the mind itself as the transcendental subject for the world is not full of something, but is empty in the sense of possibility, like a mirror. Nevertheless, all objects constituted by it are completed within it. The transcendental mind is the source from which the world and all objects within it have their meaning (*Sinn*) of Being, and it is also the source of evidence, like a mirror, that knows objects just as they are, in their adequacy and without any adumbration.

I think that the mind in Zhuzi may also have transcendental features analogous to Husserl. I can find evidence for this in what Zhuzi says about *gewuzhizhi*, the method by which the mind is studied:

The words “arriving at knowledge (*zhizhi*) lies in the investigations of things (*gewu*)” means that we should radically dig into things and completely know [dig out] their *li* from them. This is possible because, on the one hand, the human mind is too intelligent to have all kinds of knowledge and, on the other hand, there is nothing without its *li* in the world. Accordingly, the reason why our knowledge is incomplete is that we did not fully know the *li* of all kinds of things…. Therefore, if one exerts oneself for a long time to know it and one day suddenly attains the stage where one can by oneself completely realize everything, then one will exhaustively comprehend everything about all the multitude of
things, external or internal, fine or coarse, and at the same time, the big act of the mind [by which all kinds of knowledge are completed] will also be exhaustively disclosed to him. This is called “the investigation into things” (gewu) and also called the “completion of knowledge” (zhizhi).43

We can assume from this quotation that gewuzhizhi is the method that completes knowledge by investigating the mind whose acts consist of qi, in relation to the li that is the correlate of the qi, and the knowledge completed by it ends up being the knowledge of the mind. This gewuzhizhi is different from the eidetic gewuzhizhi. As already discussed, the latter is the method of turning the object of study from each individual thing to its li; however, the former is the method of turning it from its li to the mind within which every kind of li is completed. Therefore, the former may be parallel to Husserl’s transcendental reduction, and so it can be called transcendental gewuzhizhi. Accordingly, transcendental gewuzhizhi, like Husserl’s transcendental reduction, can be regarded as a method of reducing or altering the natural attitude to the transcendental attitude in order to arrive at a subject for the world, the transcendental subject. We can find the reason in the “big act” of the mind in the quotations above. Obtained as the result of the gewuzhizhi, the “big act” of the mind can be interpreted as the act constituting not only everything about all the multitude of things, but also a big thing, for example the world to which all the multitude of things belong.

For Zhuzi, as for Husserl, the mind has a dual sense. That is to say, for Zhuzi, on the one hand, the mind can be a fragment within the world, an empirical psychological mind, but on the other hand, it can be the transcendental subject, which has the world as its own correlate or intentional object, and is by itself and has nothing else than itself to depend upon, but upon which all the things other than itself depend for their meaning of Being. The transcendental character of the mind is identified by the following statements: “People mostly say nature (xing (性) (li) with the intent to say mind, but, in my view, people should first say mind before nature…. If people first say nature before mind, then another mind comes to be.”44 “Only mind has no object opposed to itself.”45

Another mind mentioned in this quotation, I think, may be is the mind that has the li of every kind without itself and is opposed to the li, while the mind that should first be said before nature must be the mind that has the li of every kind as its correlate, the mind whose essence is intentionality. With the words “mind has the li of every kind as its correlate,” we can understand that the li of every kind is completed within the mind and no opposition is between the mind and li. From this and from Zhuzi’s words “only mind has no object opposed to itself,” we can also read that the mind also has the world as its correlate and that it is the very subject for the world, a transcendental subject as in Husserl, in which all kinds of philosophical oppositions and dichotomies are dissolved.

The fact that for Zhuzi, as for Husserl, the mind has a dual sense is clear from the following: man has only a mind that is both the “mind of the body” (renxin 人心) and the “mind of Dao” (daoxin 道心, pure mind).46 In order to understand the two minds,
it is necessary to remember that in Zhuzi the mind consists of qi. In this case, daoxin consists of the pure qi; renxin consists of the impure qi that conceals daoxin. At least with respect to the mind, pure qi is the act of daoxin, which knows the li of each individual thing and can carry it into practice or realize it in the actual or outside world of the natural attitude; and the impure qi is the act of renxin, which lets one fall into the world of the natural attitude or the world of the eyes and ears. Since renxin consists of impure qi, it is subject to such sensory organs as the eyes and ears and is absorbed in the objects of the sensory organs, objects in the outside world of the natural attitude. However, since the daoxin consists of the pure qi, it completes every outside thing’s li within itself as its correlate and is not subject to physically sensed objects in the outside world, but rather places them under its own control and acts as their subject. Accordingly, daoxin can transcend the world of the natural attitude into which renxin falls and thus be the subject for the world. In this regard, at least formally, renxin may be parallel to the empirical psychological subject mentioned by Husserl, and daoxin to his transcendental subject. The method of reducing renxin to daoxin is for Zhuzi the transcendental gewuzhizhi mentioned above. This gewuzhizhi is characterized by the alteration of the “corporeal matter of qi” (qizhi 氣質), which changes the impure qi into pure qi. In this respect, it is different from Husserl’s transcendental reduction of parenthesizing the world of the natural attitude. Nevertheless, the two are the same in the sense that they purify the mind and attempt to return to a pure mind or consciousness.

Conclusion: Why Should Zhuzi’s Philosophy Be Read Phenomenologically?

This discussion will conclude with a clarification of the reason why Zhuzi’s philosophy should be understood phenomenologically. First, a brief summary of the discussion so far. I have shown that Zhuzi’s philosophy may be, to some degree, phenomenological in Husserl’s sense. This was achieved by interpreting Zhuzi phenomenologically in terms of Husserl and finding and exploring similarities between the two. The fundamental similarity, from which all the other similarities between them can be understood, is the parallel between Husserl’s correlation between mental acts (the empirical) and laws of logic (the ideal), and Zhuzi’s correlation between li and qi.

The parallel between the two correlations is as follows. Li is both distinct and inseparable from qi, just as the laws of logic are both distinct and inseparable from mental laws. The correlation in Husserl is, finally, the intentional correlation constituting his phenomenological mind’s intentionality: the correlation between mind’s intentional act and its intentional object. This intentionality and its research method, phenomenological reduction, are the trademarks of Husserl’s phenomenology. I have found the reason why Zhuzi’s philosophy may be, to some degree, phenomenological in Husserl’s sense, in that the mind, according to Zhuzi, and the method of its study, gewuzhizhi, have, respectively, the character of Husserl’s phenomenological intentionality and phenomenological reduction. In this context, I have also shown that the mind in terms of natural attitude (the empirical psychological mind) is to
transcendental mind in Husserl as “the mind of body” is to “the mind of Dao” in Zhuzi. Furthermore, Zhuzi’s gewuzhizhi also has two aspects, “eidetic and transcendental gewuzhizhi,” just as Husserl’s phenomenological reduction has two aspects, “eidetic and transcendental reduction”: eidetic gewuzhizhi is to transcendental gewuzhizhi as eidetic reduction is to transcendental reduction. Phenomenological reduction and gewuzhizhi, respectively, reduce or alter the mind in terms of natural attitude and “the mind of body” to transcendental mind and “the mind of Dao.” In this case, eidetic reduction and eidetic gewuzhizhi are, respectively, the method used to know the a priori universal necessary essence (in Husserl) and li (in Zhuzi) of each thing, while transcendental reduction and transcendental gewuzhizhi are, respectively, the method used to know the essence and li with respect to the a posteriori subjective relative mind’s intentional act (in Husserl) and qi’s act (in Zhuzi).

Accordingly, essence and li are, respectively, identified as the intentional object of mind’s intentional act (qi’s act), an a priori constituent (correlate) of intentionality, through transcendental reduction and transcendental gewuzhizhi.

Finally, it is because of these similarities between Husserl and Zhuzi that Zhuzi’s philosophy may be, to some degree, phenomenological in Husserl’s sense. There are, of course, phenomenological differences between the two—for example the difference between the zhizhi implicated in Zhuzi’s gewuzhizhi and the phenomenological constitution implicated in Husserl’s phenomenological reduction; the difference in character of the main concepts in their philosophy; and the difference in the fundamental motives and aims by which they each came to study philosophy, et cetera. However, Zhuzi’s philosophy has not only a phenomenological side but also a non-phenomenological metaphysical side. Accordingly, his philosophy is not consistently phenomenological in Husserl’s sense; that is, his philosophy has two opposing aspects.

One can directly see these two aspects in two contradictory statements made by Zhuzi: (1) “only taiji [li] is the sole one and has no object opposed to itself,” and (2) “only mind has no object opposed to itself.” The li in the first statement (I have already considered the latter statement) is understood to be transcendent (external) to mind; therefore, the relation between mind and li in the first statement is not a phenomenological, intentional, immanent correlation, in which mind is both distinct and inseparable from li, but is a metaphysical, unintentional, transcendent relation, in which li is transcendent (external) to and separate from mind. From the standpoint of the first statement, therefore, mind in Zhuzi is hard to define as phenomenological intentional mind; however, from the standpoint of the second statement, it includes the li of all kinds within itself as its own a priori intentional object (correlate) and thus has no object opposed to itself. Accordingly, the mind in the second statement is understood as a phenomenological, intentional mind, which is one of many things in the world, and at the same time is the transcendental subject for the world; however, from the standpoint of the first statement, mind in Zhuzi, although it is “the mind of Dao,” is only one of many things in the world and can never be the transcendental subject for the world. In this case, accordingly, it is hard for Zhuzi’s “mind of Dao” to overcome his “mind of body” parallel to Husserl’s “mind of the natural attitude.”
The first statement by Zhuzi mentioned above implies that the subject of understanding the world is a metaphysical taiji (li); the second statement implies that its subject is a phenomenological intentional mind. Accordingly, the subject of understanding the world in Zhuzi’s philosophy sometimes is the metaphysical li and sometimes the phenomenological intentional mind; thus, his philosophy is now both metaphysical and phenomenological, and the li is as well. So far, the phenomenological features of Zhuzi’s philosophy have been concealed; instead, it is the metaphysical features of his philosophy that have mainly been the focus. In the present essay, however, I break from the customary metaphysical reading of Zhuzi and have consistently interpreted him phenomenologically in terms of Husserl, fixing my mind on his second statement.

It should be noted that the purpose of Zhuzi’s philosophy is to realize a moral ideal; this ideal is an a priori objective ideal because it is based on the a priori objective li. Furthermore, one can know mind’s intentional object because it is immanent in one’s mind; however, one has difficulty in knowing a metaphysical object because it is external or transcendent to one’s mind; nevertheless, if one tries to know it, one can succumb to skepticism. Incidentally, if Zhuzi’s a priori objective li is understood phenomenologically, it is immanent in mind as its intentional correlate (object); however, if it is understood metaphysically, it is transcendent or external to mind.

From the preceding, we can now see why Zhuzi’s philosophy should be read phenomenologically rather than metaphysically: the realization of his philosophical ideal is advantageous if it is based on the phenomenological intentional mind and is read phenomenologically; however, it is disadvantageous if it is based on the metaphysical li and is read metaphysically.

If Zhuzi’s philosophy is based on the metaphysical li, it results in a metaphysical objectivism, which is opposed to subjectivism because the li is external to and opposed to mind; if it is based on the phenomenological intentional mind, it results in a phenomenological subjectivism (transcendental subjectivism), which is at the same time objectivism (because the mind is both distinct and inseparable from li), which has already been mentioned here. The a priori objective moral idea of Zhuzi’s philosophy, finally, can be advantageously realized not in a metaphysical objectivism, but in a transcendental subjectivism, on which all the similarities explored here between Husserl and Zhuzi finally converge. The success or failure of the realization of the ideal of Zhuzi’s and Husserl’s philosophies (philosophy as a rigorous science in Husserl) finally depends on whether transcendental subjectivism, a form of philosophy that completely overcomes the natural attitude, is successfully established. This phenomenological subjectivism is based on mind’s intentionality. To state this in more detail, the subjectivity implied in the phenomenological subjectivism results from a subjective moment of intentionality, the intentional act; the objectivity implied in it results from the a priori objective moment of intentionality, the intentional object. Accordingly, in both Zhuzi and Husserl, phenomenological transcendental subjectivism can be obtained through a radical investigation of the intentional mind by the eidetic and transcendental reduction (in Husserl) and gewuzhizhi (in Zhuzi). However, there are both merits and demerits in such an investigation, which I hope
to deal with in future research. A critical synthesis of the two philosophies is possible if the respective demerits are overcome by the merits. I am left with a preliminary approach to synthesis as the task of future research.

By avoiding a customary metaphysical reading of Zhuzi so far and interpreting him in terms of Husserl’s phenomenology, I have found several phenomenological features in his philosophy as summarized above, most of which are only latent and not known until now, and by finding them I can say that Zhuzi’s philosophy is not merely an antiquated metaphysical relic from a past feudal age. Not only is it valid today, but it can also contribute to the philosophical thought of our time.

Although not dealt with above, in Zhuzi the difference between the pure science of $li$ and the science of $qi$ may be parallel to the difference in Husserl between the pure science of essence and methodological science. The main interests of Husserl and Zhuzi lie respectively in the pure science of essence and the pure science of $li$ rather than methodological science and the science of $qi$. Zhuzi’s pure science of $li$ and Husserl’s pure science of essence are respectively related to the pure minds—“the mind of Dao” and transcendental mind—through gewuzhizhi and phenomenological reduction; the science of $qi$ in Zhuzi and methodological science in Husserl are respectively related to “the mind of body” and the mind of the natural attitude. The science of $qi$ and methodological science are about methods or technologies to attain one’s pragmatic aims in life or the material desires of “the mind of body” and the mind of the natural attitude. At any rate, the science of $qi$ and methodological science cannot move from “the mind of body” and the mind of the natural attitude to “the mind of Dao” and transcendental mind. In this sense, the method or technique of the science of $qi$ and methodological science is different from the method of gewuzhizhi and phenomenological reduction, which alter “the mind of body” and the mind of the natural attitude, respectively, to “the mind of Dao” and transcendental mind. Both Zhuzi’s pure science of $li$ and Husserl’s pure science of essence are related neither to the attainment of the pragmatic aims of human life nor to the attainment of the material desires of “the mind of body” and the mind of the natural attitude.

Notes

I am deeply grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments which strengthened this essay.

1 – Psychologism, the object of Husserl’s criticism, is divided into two kinds: logical psychologism and transcendental psychologism. This essay will be limited to the considerations of logical psychologism, which he criticized in Logische Intersuchungen I (1900). Logical psychologism, as will be argued below, asserts that logic has its origin in empirical psychology, and the latter can be found in the former. The term “transcendental psychologism” in Husserl is first mentioned in Formale und Transzendentale Logik (1929), and after that continues to be evaluated in Nachwort zu meinen Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie
und phänomenologischen Philosophie (1930), Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge (1931), and his last work, Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentele Phänomenologie (1976). Transcendental psychologism asserts that philosophy also has its origin in empirical psychology and that the latter can be found in the former. Husserl’s earlier static phenomenology was based on his criticism of logical psychologism, whereas his later genetic phenomenology, with the introduction of the concept of life-world, attempted to criticize and overcome the transcendental psychologism into which all modern subjectivist philosophies, and even his earlier static phenomenology, had fallen.


3 – Ibid., p. 177.

4 – Hereafter, unless stated otherwise, “psychology” refers to empirical psychology.

5 – See *Logical Investigations I*, p. 92.

6 – Ibid., p. 94.

7 – Ibid.

8 – Ibid., p. 169.

9 – Ibid., p. 175.

10 – Ibid., p. 171. In Husserl norms fall into two classes: “One class of norms regulates all proof and all apodictic connection a priori; it is purely ideal, and only relates to our human knowledge by way of a self-evident application. The other class is empirical, and relates essentially to the specifically human side of the science. It consists of what might be called mere auxiliary devices or substitutes for proofs. It has its roots in our general human condition, in the main, in our mental constitution, since this is more important for logical technology, but also in part in our physical constitution” (ibid., p. 174). Norms here, of course, mean the former class.

11 – Husserl’s criticisms can be more clearly seen in the case of mathematical calculations by a computer. The computer can calculate if and only if software, in which ideal laws are implicated, and hardware, which are under the governance of empirical physical mechanical laws, interrelate. The latter is parallel to human mental acts, whereas the former is parallel to ideal mathematical laws. In spite of their interrelation, software is independent of hardware and the former cannot reduce to the latter. If the psychologistic positions were true, software would be entirely dependent on hardware and the former must reduce to the latter. However, this is not the case. We can now see through the computer analogy that human mental acts are not completely different from nonhuman (objective) ideal laws, and it follows from this that the psychologistic positions above must be wrong.
12 – *Logical Investigations I*, p. 182.

13 – “形是這形質，以上便為道，以下便為器，這個分別得最親切，故明道云，「惟此語載得上下最分明」又曰，形而上底虛，渾是道理，形而下低實，便是器” (*Zhuzi yulei*, p. 2571. The *Zhuzi yulei*, *Daxue houzhewen*, and *Daxue zhangju*, cited here and below, are included in the *Zhuzi quanshu* [Shanghai Guji Chubanshe; Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002]).


16 – “*Qi* 氣 is the *qi* 器 of ‘what is within shapes’” (氣也者，形而下之器也) (*Zhuxi ji*, p. 2947).

17 – Hereafter, unless stated otherwise, *qi* 氣 means “matter with energy.”

18 – “理也者，形而上之道也，生物之本也；氣也者，形而下之器也，生物之具也” (*Zhuxi ji*, p. 2948).

19 – “所謂理與氣，決是二物” (ibid., p. 2243).

20 – “有此理後 方有此氣” (ibid., p. 2958).

21 – For Zhuzi, *li* implicates more than merely the logical law or essence in the Western sense, but I do not discuss that here; my concern with regard to *li* here is limited to the aim of this article.


23 – “凡人支能言語動作，思慮營為，皆氣也” (ibid., p. 194).

24 – For Zhuzi, *qi* also means more than just the mental act in Husserl’s sense, but I do not discuss that either; my discussion here with respect to *qi* is limited to the aim of this article.

25 – We can here say that the laws of *qi* in Zhuzi, like the empirical laws in Husserl, cannot exist without the empirical objects parallel to *qi* 器 that are real in time and space.


27 – “但有此氣，則理更在氣中” (ibid., p. 116).

28 – “疑此氣是依傍這理行。及此氣之聚，則理豈在焉” (ibid.).


31 – “此本無先後之可言。然必欲推所從來，則須說先有是理” (ibid.).

32 – Just as the sciences for Husserl are divided into the sciences of essences, or a priori formal or essential (eidetic) sciences, and the matter-of-fact or empirical
sciences, we can estimate that, even if Zhuizi did not speak of a systematic classification of the sciences, from the standpoint of the application of his concepts of \textit{li} and \textit{qi}, for him the sciences could also be divided into the sciences of \textit{li} and \textit{qi} (理 and 氣). The sciences of \textit{li} may be parallel to the sciences of essences in Husserl, and the sciences of \textit{qi} may be parallel to the empirical sciences in Husserl. Likewise, just as the sciences of essences in Husserl are divided into the universal sciences of essences in general, one of which is pure logic, and the regional sciences of essences of various regions, the sciences of \textit{li} in Zhuizi can be also divided in a similar manner. This is possible because all things in the universe, whether natural or man-made, have their own \textit{li}. I do not explore the topic of a systematic classification of the sciences based on Zhuizi’s view of \textit{li} and \textit{qi} because it is beyond the scope of the present article. This topic requires a profound investigation into the relationship between the laws of logic and \textit{li}. Zhuizi never used such terms as “science of \textit{li}” and “science of \textit{qi}.” However, if we explore the world of Zhuizi’s \textit{li} and the world of his \textit{qi}, with respect to the research realms of the modern sciences, the terms are applicable to his philosophy.


34 – Ibid., pp. 27, 42.


36 – “惟其理有許多, 故物亦有許多” (Zhuizi yulei, p. 3142).

37 – “A mind completes the \textit{li} of every kind within itself; the mind includes the \textit{li} of every kind within itself; the \textit{li} of every kind is completed within the mind” (一心具萬理 心包萬理 萬理具干一心) (ibid., p. 306).

38 – “心與理一, 不是理在前面為一物. 理便在心之中” (ibid., p. 219).

39 – “能覺者, 氣之靈也; 所覺者, 心之理也” (ibid.).


41 – This phenomenological constitution does not mean that the mind produces objects from nothing, but that the mind exposes the objects that are already given, just as they are.

42 – \textit{Daxue zhangju}, p. 17.
A theoretical mind has theoretical concrete contents that are not practical. In Zhuzi, accordingly, it is hard to regard the mind in the narrow sense as a theoretical mind, in that it has no theoretical contents; however, it can be regarded as a theoretical mind in the sense that it constitutes the capability of pure thinking, even if it includes no theoretical content. I think that Zhuzi’s mind in the broad sense includes not only a theoretical mind but also a practical mind, because it has a good amount of concrete contents, including norms or practices. What I mean by the mind in both the narrow and broad sense is that the mind in Zhuzi is divided into a theoretical mind and a practical mind. Then, in Zhuzi, what is the mind in the broad sense that has both a theoretical and a practical meaning—“the mind of body” (renxin 人心) or “the mind of Dao” (daoxin 道心)? I think that it is “the mind of Dao.” In order to know the reason, one needs to notice that norms or practices in Zhuzi are on the basis of li. “The mind of body” naturally has a lot of concrete contents including norms or practices, but these refer to theories and practices based on the sensory body (氣, and qi 器) and not theories and practices based on li, because “the mind of body” utterly forgets li, and in this sense it contains in itself no li.

However, “the mind of Dao” is based on li and has relations with it. Zhuzi does not place philosophical significance on “the mind of body,” which perceives only sensory things and cannot perceive their li; instead, he places it on “the mind of Dao,” which perceives the li of both sensory and non-sensory things. Of course, for Zhuzi, “the mind of body” becomes “the mind of Dao” through gewuzhizhi; in this sense, “the mind of body” is the starting point or object of gewuzhizhi. Most people say that “the mind of Dao” in Zhuzi has a practical side, not a theoretical side. But that is wrong. “The mind of Dao” has both a theoretical side and a practical side, and thus it is divided into theoretical mind and practical mind. Hence, mind in the broad sense in Zhuzi refers to both sides of “the mind of Dao,” whereas mind in the narrow sense refers only to the theoretical side. Finally, theoretical and practical mind in Zhuzi mean, respectively, the theoretical and practical sides of “the mind of Dao.” The theoretical mind is the mind that perceives li of things, “as the reason why things are so” (suoyiran 所以然); the practical mind is the mind that perceives li of things, “as the reason why things should be so” (suodangran 所當然). For example, when Zhuzi said: “this bamboo chair has its li within it,” the very mind that perceives the li of the bamboo chair is the theoretical mind.
Likewise, mind in Husserl also has narrow and broad senses. In the narrow sense, the mind means a theoretical reason in which no norm or practice is included. In the broad sense, the mind engages in “a new concrete ... reason” (Husserl, Ideen I, p. 355) in which practical and theoretical acts and their contents are all included, and thus “no division between theoretical act, practical act, and aesthetic act of reason is permitted” (Husserl, Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentalen Phänomenologie: Eine einleitung in di Phänomenologische Philosophie, hrsg. v. W. Biemel [Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976], p. 275). Of course, for Husserl, the mind in the broad, concrete sense is the mind elucidated or obtained by his phenomenological reduction. It is not the mind of the natural attitude before phenomenological reduction. Zhuzi’s mind, mentioned in the passage quoted above, which is studied through the approach of gewuzhizhi, is mind in the broad sense, parallel to Husserl’s concrete reason, in which norms or practices are included.

The division of mind into the theoretical and the practical is logically possible, but the two are really inseparable from each other, and thus there is no practical mind without theoretical mind, and the inverse is also true. The difference between Zhuzi and Husserl is that, for Zhuzi, the practical side of mind (the mind of Dao) was consistently treated more importantly than the theoretical side, while for Husserl, in his early years, the theoretical side of mind was treated more importantly than its practical side; but in his later years, the latter was considered important in addition to the former with respect to the meaning of human life. The expansion of mind in Husserl from the theoretical side (or mind) to the practical side is based on the normative practical transformation of theoretical propositions or laws, which I considered in Husserl’s criticism of psychologism. It seems to me that the basis of such a transformation in Zhuzi that is parallel to that of Husserl may be the duality of li, li as suoyiran and as suodangran, for the latter should be understood as the normative practical transformation of the former. I cannot say with any confidence, however, whether Zhuzi understood the duality of his li from the standpoint of such a transformation, or whether he understood each as belonging to an independent dimension.

44 – “人多説性方説心，看來當先説心.... 若先説性，却似別有一個心” (Zhuzi yulei, pp. 226–227).
45 – “惟心無對” (ibid., p. 218).
46 – “只是這一個心，知覺從耳目之欲上去，便是人心，知覺從義理上去，便是道心” (ibid., p. 2663).
47 – In Zhuzi, mind’s intentional acts consist of the acts of qi. Therefore, for him, the acts of qi may mean mind’s intentional acts.
48 – “但太極只是箇一而無對者” (Zhuzi yulei, p. 3348).
49 – Nearly three hundred years after Zhuzi died, Wang Yangming (1472–1592) criticized Zhuzi by stating that he separated mind from li (Chuanxilu, item 33,
Accordingly, his criticism of Zhuzi is valid if and only if the metaphysical li in Zhuzi is the subject of understanding the world; however, the criticism is not at all valid if the phenomenological intentional mind in Zhuzi is the subject of understanding the world. Gewuzhizhi in Yangming is the method by which he understands all things and the li of all kinds as belonging to (immanent in) mind. That is different from Husserl’s phenomenological reduction, however. The character of Yangming’s mind is also hard to understand as phenomenological intentionality in Husserl’s sense. But the scope of this paper is not sufficient to address these issues.

Of course the gewuzhizhi and “phenomenological reduction” here should be understood not in the positive sense, but in the transcendental sense.