

invariant features of our object. The reflection upon experience involves a double look, one that takes an individual object as it is and then revalues both it and our experience of it as a sample, an instance. For example, my experience of the pump is a fact, a single dated event that took place in a particular location. Yet our interest as philosophers is not in biography, even less in personal psychology. As we reflect, we take both the act and the object as illustrations or instances of a certain type of act-object interconnection, in this case perception. Those features that prove to hold for all perceptions of a certain type of object are said to compose its "essence." Thus we must say that phenomenology gives us a description not of the fact but of the essence of intentional experiences, i.e., a description of the facticity of particular act-object connections in terms of their essential possibility. The goal of the phenomenological reflection, then, is a thematization of the essence of intentionality. In Husserl's language the phenomenological reflection must undergo an *eidetic reduction*.

E. EIDETIC REDUCTION

In order to understand the way in which the phenomenological reflection is supplemented by an eidetic reduction, we must deal with Husserl's theory of essences in general. While all phenomenology involves both, they should not be considered identical for the simple reason that the empirical sciences employ, or at least rely upon, eidetic analysis, but as practiced they do not use phenomenological reflection. To be sure, there is a second-order phenomenological account of these sciences that requires both, but as positive disciplines they focus entirely upon the production of coherent theories about the essence of certain facts. Or, to touch upon one of the more difficult and underdeveloped sides of Husserl's theory, the phenomenological account of the empirical sciences proceeds by the use of what Husserl calls regional or material ontologies. These ontologies, all involving eidetic analysis, are then construed as fields of *cognition* under the phenomenological reflection of the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901). Eventually, once we move to the expansion of the notion of phenomenological reflection by that of the phenomenological *reduction* in *Ideas I* (1913), they are understood as fields of *constitution*. But as disciplines that initially stand on their own, the sciences employ eidetic analysis and are not phenomenological. It is only when we attempt to understand their domains not as fields of existing facts but as fields of our cognition of existing facts that a phenomenological reflection first comes into play.

One of the interesting outcomes of this contrast is that in principle we can have a phenomenological reflection that is not eidetic. The result would be a chronicle of individual experiences, a rather dull sequential autobiography or biography. More importantly, we can have an eidetic reduction that is not yet phenomenological, which would give us both empirical systems of classifica-

Welton, D. The Other Husserl, Indiana Uni Press, 2000

tion and empirical schemes of explanation, mostly causal, if we restrict our analysis to the working sciences of the day. Should we move to the level of material ontology we could provide a rational account of the particular domains in which each discipline labors. While such ontologies from within the natural attitude are not phenomenology, understanding their domains as fields of cognition calls forth phenomenological description.

To do justice to the difference between eidetic and phenomenological analysis, we must run with Husserl's notion of essences for several pages, discuss their different types, see what areas he did attempt to cover with them, and then return in a later section to the question of how this is related to his phenomenological account of the subject.

We have stressed the difference between facts, be they psychological or physical, and essences. But Husserl is convinced that essences are objects and not just general names of sets of things. Compared to objects belonging to the real world, however, "the essence (eidos) is an object of a different order."³³ But what can this mean? Is this a return to the metaphysical difficulties of Platonism?

The first point supporting the treatment of essences as objects is semantic. If we define "object" simply as what can function as the topic or "subject of a true (categorical, affirmative) sentence,"³⁴ then "object" (*Gegenstand*) is much broader in scope than "thing" (*Ding*) or even "fact" (*Tatsache, Sachverhalt*). Anything to which we can refer is an object, including essences. Husserl understands the way in which language controls this account:

Indeed, I have not invented this general concept of the object but only restored the one required by all purely logical sentences and, at the same time, pointed out that it is in principle indispensable. . . .³⁵

This point is followed by a second. In a given domain, the rules determining inclusion in and exclusion from a particular essence can be specified and can hold true regardless of the number of objects with which we are acquainted or even if there are no objects at all in its extension.³⁶ If essences cannot be reduced to names that stand for groupings of perceptions or things, then they must be "given" in a way different from real things or actual facts. In keeping with Husserl's theory of intentionality, they must themselves be objects manifested by a different kind of act. Husserl calls it *eidetic intuition*.

The essence (eidos) is a new kind of object. Just as the given of an individual intuition of [perceptual] experience is an individual object, so the given of eidetic intuition is a pure essence.

Here we are not presented with a mere external analogy but radical commonality. Eidetic seeing is precisely intuition, just as an eidetic object is precisely an object. The generalization of the correlative concepts "intuition" and "object," belonging, as they do, together, is not an arbitrary idea but convincingly required by the nature of the matter.³⁷

Descriptive Eidetics

You can understand now why the *Logical Investigations*, this work directed toward the psychic, could also be designated as descriptive psychology. In fact, the sole purpose which they intended and had to intend was the establishing of an inner viewing which discloses the lived experiences of thinking hidden from the thinker, and an essential description pertaining to these pure data of lived experience that moved within a pure inner viewing. But on the other hand, in order to characterize the novel peculiarity of method, the name *phenomenology* was chosen. In fact, a novel method of dealing with the psychic emerged here. . . . The task was new, the attempt to go back radically and consistently from the respective categories of objectivities and ask about the modes of consciousness determinately belonging to them. . . .

—Husserl (1925)¹

It is difficult. The most difficult matter of philosophy in general is the phenomenological reduction, to penetrate and to exercise it with understanding.

—Husserl to Ingarden (1931)²

A. INTERROGATIONS

If it is the disruptions in seeing and speaking that encourage the phenomenological turn, it is the attempt to capture what one finds in these disruptions that commits phenomenology to a descriptive method.

We must wait until the chapter after next to deal with Husserl's notion of the transcendental, but even his concept of phenomenological interrogation stands in striking contrast to Kant's. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*³ Kant attempts to discover the a priori conditions of our experience of reality through a procedure in which, first, the Newtonian formulation of the composition of objective nature is viewed as definitive but as yet philosophically unfounded; second, the conditions of its being are approached in terms of the conditions of its being known; and, finally, a single set of necessary, a priori categories and corresponding principles of pure understanding, without which phenomena would lack coherent structure, are inferred on the basis of the way objects are experienced or understood. These categories and principles are constitutive

or regulative of objective reality.⁴ The “deductive” structure of the derivation of the categories is hypothetical, as it proceeds by inferring from any given natural complex to its necessary conditions. Its method is constructivistic, relying upon the use of transcendental arguments, in contrast to anything like inductive generalizations or the rationalist versions of direct, intuitive insight. The outcome of Kant’s inquiry was to give us not only a clear set of principles that accounts for the constitution of phenomena, but also a philosophical critique of alternative theories that finally supports the Newtonian model as the best picture of the physical universe.

By the time of *Ideas I* (1913) Husserl came to believe that Kant was certainly correct in grounding the genuine meaning of the accomplishments that produce the positive sciences in a subjective, transcendental sphere.⁵ But the *Crisis* (1936) accuses Kant of subverting reality by replacing the way the world is normally experienced with a certain mathematized construction, a higher order “objectification,” thereby covering over the rich diversity and depth of its being. Rather than discovering the world that science necessarily has in play as the context of all its activity, Kant gets caught in the same mistake as the positive sciences by presupposing and then forgetting its presence.⁶ The objects of physics, Husserl contends, must be understood as the result of specific transformations applied to the way in which we normally experience things. Consequently, Kant’s inquiry into that subjectivity on the basis of which we have objective reality was bound to go amiss; it asks about the conditions of a construction based on the world, never reaching beyond that construction to the world itself, never entering the “vast depths of the Cartesian fundamental investigation,” and never penetrating to a clear understanding of “the subjectivity functioning as primal source.”⁷ In contrast to the Kantian manner of posing questions and his “mythically constructively inferring method,” Husserl turns

to a thoroughly intuitively disclosing method, intuitive in its point of departure and in everything it discloses—even though the concept of intuitiveness may have to undergo a considerable expansion in comparison to the Kantian one, and indeed even though intuition, here, may lose its usual sense altogether through a new attitude, taking on only the general sense of original self-exhibition, but precisely only within the new sphere of being.⁸

This motif, while not yet enhanced by the notion of the life-world, is already at work in the *Ideas I* of 1913, where Husserl attempts a rehabilitation of the world of “belief.” There he chooses not to denigrate the realm of everyday intentions and achievements but to dwell in it, unfold its structure, and then see its connection to higher orders of understanding. But this contrast between the world of unencumbered experience and the world as modeled

through acts of understanding necessitates a deeper clarification of the notion of description. Using the history of philosophy in general and, in particular, using Kant to introduce it is not sufficient precisely because that history is also a higher order constellation, spawned by the conflicts of the philosophers. Are there roots to description commensurate with the world it brings to disclosure?

A perceptual object is often distant, half hidden, in very poor lighting. Many times we cannot tell exactly what it is. It solicits our interest, arrests our gaze. By approaching closer, by walking around the object and optimizing our view, or perhaps by picking it up and holding it up to the light, the determinations of the object multiply and we become increasingly familiar with the object in its singular existence. As we manipulate the object we are only marginally aware of our actions, only tacitly acquainted with our own perceptual capabilities. The thematic focus of our acts is entirely upon the object and its properties. In fact, the clearer the object becomes, the sharper its contours, the better defined its features, the less likely we are to reflect upon its modes of givenness, with their attending difficulties, and upon our acts of perception as they overcome obstacles along the way, as we often do when things go awry. In uninterrupted experience there is a natural tendency toward a certain "objectivation" in which the connection between acts and appearances becomes not lost but "forgotten," literally over-looked. Indeed, the philosophical tendency toward objectivism, toward treating all regions of being as consisting of object-type entities bearing properties, finds its experiential roots in this forgetfulness. But either a heightened sense of curiosity or, more often, a breach in our usual involvement with things, shifts our attention to their as-structure and its tie to the for-structure. At first the reflection is just a way of enhancing our dealings with things, of clearing up a perceptual or practical muddle. But puzzlement can turn to wonder as we begin our journey.

The recovery of subjectivity requires not just an extension of our interests into "subjective phenomena," for they too can be objectivated, but also a total redirection of our normal or basic thematic focus combined with great care not to prejudice the outcome. In particular we should not assume that what we uncover can be captured only by an objectivating mode of analysis such as pervades both the sciences and the inherited categories of philosophical discourse. In fact, Husserl himself struggled with this throughout his long career. In principle Husserl's break with objectivism takes place once he has the transcendental reduction in hand. In practice, however, he succeeds in overcoming only the objectivism of the natural sciences, his dismantling of philosophical categories being only partial and coming only gradually. In contrast to objectivism this is a type of reflection that, in breaking with our preoccupation with objects, finds traces of our pre-reflective, tacit awareness of subjectivity and

World as Horizon

Does not the 'infinity' of the world mean rather an 'openness' instead of a transfinite infinity (as if the world were fixed and self-existing, an all-encompassing thing, or a closed collection of things . . .). What can be meant by this?

—Husserl (ca. 1917)¹

The world as it is for us becomes understandable as a structure of meaning [*Sinngebilde*] formed out of elementary intentionalities. The being of these intentionalities themselves is nothing but one meaning-formation [*Sinnbildung*] operating together with another, "constituting" new meaning [*Sinn*] through synthesis.

—Husserl (1934-1936)²

LET US REGATHER those strands of our analysis in Part I that now allow us to confront the question of the world. I hope to find terms that do not overwhelm but facilitate a proper investigation of its structure.

What objects are is either internally linked to their actual and possible appearance to us as conscious, cognizing subjects, or it is not. Phenomenology wagers that it is. If not, it argues, what things are is in principle unknowable.

Thus phenomenology takes its starting point in our everyday experience of things, what Husserl calls appearances. Appearances, however, are complex. An object of experience is always present through multiple *modes of givenness*, each of which forms a *profile* of the object. The interplay of object and profile transpires according to the *sense (Sinn)* of the whole both determining and being determined by the sense of the profiles. Without senses the object would lack its experiential *qualities*. But senses exist not in the object or its profiles but in the *relationship* between them and the one to whom they appear.

Profiles are also *perspectives*, which means that an object is always present as spatially and temporally *situated*. Initially, we can say that neither the spatial *place* of the object nor its temporal *presence* exist in the object or its situation qua field

files. Rather, they exist in the relationship between them and the one to whom they appear.

The internal connection between profiles and objects is a clue to the nature of the conscious events in or through which they are experienced. Since these events are always directed to the object *through* its modes of givenness, they are *acts* that have an *ecstatic* structure; since sense is constitutive of that transcendence, they have intentionality. This means that they are not directed to themselves as events or achievements. Inasmuch as these acts are "objectively" directed, the fact that the interplay of profiles and object is "subjectively relational" is "forgotten."

The experience of profiles and objects in a given situation transpires in such a way that the coming profile is already anticipated and prefigured in our relationship to the profile in focus. Profiles, by virtue of their sense, point to or *indicate* other profiles in such a way that we find things situated in a field of possible appearances, i.e., in a determinate *horizon*. The horizon is not itself an appearance but is always "pregiven," i.e., it mediates the relationship between what is given and the anticipations that it solicits. The horizon is a *complex of senses*, themselves connected by what we can call differential implications, that structures the indications in play with any given profile. *Indication* is the horizon at play in the relationship between profiles and then between profile and object. *Differential implication* is the horizon at play within itself. Bringing these two strands together, we can describe the horizon as a *nexus of indications* (*Verweisungszusammenhang*).

Horizons are also tied to yet other horizons by differential implication. The nexus of these interconnected horizons is what constitutes the *world*. In Husserl's terminology the world is the horizon of all horizons.

In that horizons are constitutive of not just acts that experience objects but also of actions and activities that appropriate those things for practical and theoretical ends, the world can be understood as the *life-world*. Because the world does not appear but forms a *background* of significance concealed by the profiles and things that do appear, it too is "forgotten."

The *natural attitude* consists of a double forgetting of a double relativity: on the one hand, forgetting that objects are manifest *as* something only *for* conscious acts and that things are usable *as* something only *for* hands at work; on the other hand, forgetting the world *in* which this internal connection between the *as*- and the *for*-structure is rooted. In this third part we will begin by unraveling some of the complexities surrounding what is, in my estimation, the most difficult yet productive of phenomenology's theories, that of the world. Pioneer that he was, Husserl struggled to place the notion on its proper footing. In this chapter I will trace both the critical thrust that the notion affords his mature theory and the tensions in the concept that his last work, the *Crisis*, seeks to resolve. This will allow us to look in chapter 14 at some of