THE NEW PHENOMENOLOGY

TWO different attitudes are possible in regard to the world that surrounds an individual. The individual may, and generally does, take the world as "actually given" as something of which he himself is an active part. He lives in it, perceives its objects, hears its melodies, unveils its secrets. He acts, thinks, forms and unforms his beliefs; he creates new laws, and breaks the old ones; he loves and hates, votes and chooses. His science extends for him the field of his physical vision; his technique conquers for him new spheres, new worlds of action. In other words, the objects of the world appear to him in the capacity of service,—I mean service, not in the practical sense of utility, but in the sense of being a valid part of a valuable context. Everything is considered only insofar as it fits a context. Things, truths, theories are there for the individual to be believed or disbelieved; they exist or subsist for the sake of consequences, i. e., for the support of something else, as parts serving a system. They all have their dramatic careers within the general course of events, or general system of knowledge. They exist and subsist for the purpose of being listened to. That is what Husserl calls "natürliche Einstellung"—natural attitude—of the individual in regard to the world.

It is contrasted with the "phenomenological attitude" which is characterized by elimination of any service. We may still perceive things as real and existing but we shall
agree not to make any theoretical use of their existence, i. e., we shall not attempt to prove or disprove anything by the fact that they are real. It does not imply that we shall doubt their existence. We simply disregard the consequences of it, "take it into parenthesis," as Husserl says, "cut it off" from our judgment and remove its validity. We also may be conscious of truth, and precisely in the element of truth; but it shall not affect us by that side of its nature with which it performs functions in the system of knowledge,—it shall not be taken as a source of information. Considering any perception, judgment, or truth we shall not listen to what they actually claim and testify. We may watch the roles they play on the stage of knowledge; but we must do it as outsiders, not believing or disbelieving their testimony.¹

Any thesis that we might have accepted in the natural attitude we may also retain and analyze from the phenomenological standpoint; but we must do that under the assumption that our "natural" beliefs are disregarded. "We are not giving up our natural attitude, and alter nothing in our beliefs, which are allowed to remain in themselves what they are. . . . And yet our thesis in regard to nature receives a modification: we let it rest in its own content, but we put it, so to speak, out of action, take it into parenthesis, and shunt it off. It is still there as the parenthesis in the brackets, or as the eliminated parts outside of the system to which they belonged. . . . We make of it no use," ² i. e., it is of no service. "I eliminate all sciences which are related to the natural world," says Husserl further, "although I do not intend to object against them, I make absolutely no use of their validity. Not a single proposition that belongs to the natural context, and is perfectly evident to me, is now admitted as valid or invalid; not one

² Husserl, Ideen, p. 54.
is actually accepted; not one serves me as a foundation.

I may consider any proposition, but only after it is placed into parenthesis, i.e., only in the modified consciousness characterized by the elimination of judgment, that is, precisely, not in the manner it serves as a proposition within the science, not as a proposition that claims validity, which I may acknowledge or utilize."

The possibility of such a radical change of attitude is not confined to purely rational contents, such as truth, judgment, etc. The content of an artistic enjoyment or purely religious inspiration may similarly be approached from two different standpoints. We may be interested in theological dogmas, for instance, insofar as they support our religious beliefs and represent the system of faith actually needed among certain individuals to secure that type of life they believe to be the best; we may attack or defend their content; we may discuss their origin and explain their meaning. In other words we may take a stand within the net of faith. In this case our interest and attitude are those of a theologian, or student of religions. But we may, on the other hand, intentionally disregard the theological validity of dogmas, and take them merely as expressions of belief, as a peculiar attitude of consciousness to its objects which we call "faith." We pay no attention to their content, taking it into parenthesis, and study only the mode of its peculiar givenness. We take them as they actually give themselves in the element of faith, but we utterly disregard what they practically accomplish in the system of faith. In such case we proceed as phenomenologists. Thus phenomenology defines itself as a study of objects in their relation to consciousness in a state of supreme impartiality, when the face-value and systematic significance of the objects concerned does not come into consideration. This fundamental impartiality, or abstinence from the actual validity of objects, is something more than a mere "state of consciousness,"
or arbitrary invention of an idle mind. It implies a method, and proclaims a new intellectual policy in regard to the whole world, and even more. Any object whatsoever—it may be real or unreal, logical, alogical, or even illogical—may be phenomenologically approached, or purified, i.e., deprived of its natural or systematic connections. Such a theoretically “disconnected” object Husserl calls “Phenomenon,” and the methodical abstinence by which phenomena are thus obtained “phenomenological reduction.”

Thus phenomenology is primarily characterized, not by any particular choice of objects, but rather by the method of approach. The material of phenomenological inquiry is the same as in other sciences,—the world and its innumerable phenomena. But the method of approach is fundamentally different. Phenomenologist does not proceed metaphysically: he does not invent any super-world for his own intellectual amusement in order to obtain an object for his study that could not be studied by any other branch of science. He attempts to describe the same world which is familiar to everybody; but he does it in the attitude of phenomenological impartiality; he suspends the judgment in regard to any and all phenomena as far as they are parts of a larger system; he attempts to isolate any given object from the context in which it is actually engaged, and contemplates it in its own purified essence.

But—one may ask—why should the objects be isolated? Why should the judgment be suspended? In other words, what is the purpose of the phenomenological attitude? Since Hegel it became a truism that the context, i.e., systematic connections in which a given object is engaged, has a very effective influence upon the content or notion that we form about the object. This influence, as valuable as it is, may under circumstances be exceedingly harmful and misleading. Do not even the greatest thinkers often lose sight of their original issue in view of certain systematic
relations which make them answer questions they have never asked, and indefinitely postpone the solution of problems they have started with? Do not epistemologists, for instance, often forget the specific content of their epistemological problem under the influence of psychological theories (which in themselves are valuable and true)? Are not we, generally speaking, too prone under the pressure of systematic necessity to substitute one content for another? We often hear the physicist maintain that red color, for instance, does not in reality exist, and must be physically regarded as a certain frequency of ether vibrations. Some thinkers go even so far as to maintain complete reducibility of the phenomenon to physical causes; what we call “red”—they say—is nothing else but a peculiar form of energy discharged by the brain cells! And when the psychologists attempt to correct this materialistic conception, by pointing out that “redness” itself is real as a “sensation,” they commit a similar error; for they interchange certain theoretical content, called “sensation,” with the genuine phenomenon of “red” as such, which in itself is as strange to sensations as it is to vibrations.

Modern science and philosophy display a regular mania for similar reductions. We are trying to “reduce” nearly everything. Social life is “reduced” to either economic or psychological “factors”; life in general is reduced to “purely mechanical causes”; sound is reduced to vibrations, and vibrations to the principle of conservation of energy; phenomena are reduced to laws, and laws to principles. Repeated attempts are being made in philosophy to reduce the whole world to one substance, one God, or one fundamental principle, such as $I = I$. A thing or proposition is not considered sufficiently clear until it is reduced to something else. The nature of “explanation” consists in reduction.
Many of those reductions are valuable, indeed. But often they merely obscure the issue, and substitute the inventions and traditions of our mind for the actually given phenomena. "A definite shade of red"—says one of the leading phenomenologists of Husserl's school, Max Scheler—"may be determined in many different ways. For example, as the color that is enunciated by the word "red" (color itself being already a substitution, a reduction); as the color of this thing or this particular surface; as the color that "I see"; as the color of this particular number and length of vibrations. It appears here as an X of an equation. The phenomenological experience alone can give us the "red" itself, in which the totality of those determinations, and signs, and symbols find their ultimate fulfillment. It transforms the X into a fact of intuition." 3 This fact, i. e., the phenomenon of "red" as such, seems to have no place within any of these contexts; it can not be reduced to either psychological or physical elements—and in our days it was once more emphatically pronounced an "illusion." 4 Thus context kills the phenomenon. Our conception as to how "red" should exist, i. e., existential connections of "red," or—popularly expressed—our theories in regard to "red" as reality, remove the phenomenon itself from the field of our intellectual vision, and leave us in position of a man who in view of the trees does not see the forest. For this reason it is important to suspend our judgment in regard to any such "reductions," or—in other words—to reduce our judgment to pure fact. In this case our reduction is precisely the reverse of an explanation; it is the process of clearing up facts, i. e., finding the genuine—"phenomenological"—content of objects. Our objects are covered with "theories" to such an extent that to recover them is by no means an easy task. We are so accustomed to regard

3 Max Scheler, Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Weltethik, p. 45.
4 Cf. Hermann Cohen, Logik der reinen Erkenntnis.
“red,” for instance, as a sensation or vibration that any statement in regard to its “independent” value meets a violent opposition on our part. We would rather declare it an illusion than consent to regard it as an independent entity. The important fact is, however, that being even an illusion it cannot cease to be “red.” We cannot get rid of its “essence” even by pronouncing it illusory.

But—it may be objected—granted that “red” has a certain phenomenological essence that lies outside of any physical or psychological context, what is that we gain by taking it into consideration? What can we study about “red” as such, independent of physical or psychic connections in which it appears as real? I must admit, indeed, that there is not much to study about it except the method and idea of the phenomenological attitude (from which the neorealist position, for instance, follows as a mere corollary,—a result which apart of any other consequences must be considered as worth something!). The phenomenological “independence” of the secondary qualities makes the radical change of the attitude clear and comprehensive. And phenomenologists constantly refer to colors and tones for the sake of illustration. But the value of phenomenological attitude is scarcely indicated, by no mean exhausted by pointing out the phenomenological independence of secondary qualities. The method of phenomenological reduction brings more definite and constructive results, if applied to other phenomena such as “knowledge,” “imagination,” “value,” “beauty,” etc. The phenomena of “truth” and “meaning,” for example, need even in our days a great deal of phenomenological purification. They are too often mistaken for psychological realities. Do not some prominent thinkers of today regard “truth” as a result of our mental
organization, perhaps, even a by-product of our biological structure? Is not it rather modern to maintain that there are no eternal truths, and that all truth is made to satisfy our biological or social needs, to meet certain difficulties? In direct opposition to these modern misinterpretations of "truth" as a kind of mental reality, fact, or function of mind, Husserl works out his phenomenological conception of truth, as a phenomenon *sui generis* which, in its essence, is entirely independent of psychic connections. In his "Logical Studies" he proceeds to demonstrate that truth cannot be considered as reality. It has no existence. A proposition does not start being true when we first learn it, and it does not cease to be true after we completely forget all about it, or after even the whole human race entirely disappears from earth. Here again, as in the case of "red," by disregarding the existential connections of "truth," i.e., our theories in regard to the mode of its existence, we obtain the pure phenomenon of truth in the form in which it is actually given in the act of knowledge or evidence. For in the act of knowledge truth is originally not intended as a mental reality; this latter is superimposed upon it by theoretical considerations of an entirely heterogeneous nature. Truth does not appear as a mental reality to the knowing individual, but merely to the theoretical epistemologist. When we say that $2 + 2 = 4$, we originally do not have in mind any combination of mental processes but merely that of numbers. That numbers may be real as mental states does not change anything in our mathematical intention; if some one will definitely prove that they are *not* mental states, it will have no effect upon the mathematical science. The important feature of this

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8 *Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. 1, pp. 100, 117, 131, 184, etc.
argument consists in clearing up our own intellectual intentions. Husserl does not say that the above expression $2 + 2 = 4$ subsists, like a Platonic idea, somewhere outside of our mental processes; but he maintains that when we add two and two we do not intend to add two ideas; what we have in mind is not a psychological, but purely arithmetical relation. And only in this sense the truth expressing this relation is different from psychological reality. Thus phenomenological attitude helps us to grasp truth as a phenomenon *sui generis*—a task that opens a new field in which there is still much to be accomplished.

Phenomenologically speaking every object is totally different from the state of consciousness in which it appears as given. We often say that certain things exist merely in our imagination. In reality, however, we can never find any of those imaginary objects within the real psychological content of imagination as such. Suppose I imagine the god Jupiter. By virtue of my imagination Jupiter is endowed with various mythological qualities, such as omnipotence, physical force, certain face, beard, etc., which by no means can be attributed to my imagination. He was a married man,—a situation that none of my ideas can be possibly imagined to endure. One may analyze, says Husserl, his idea of Jupiter down to the smallest detail which his own introspection or modern psychological methods will allow to get hold of, he will never be able to find Jupiter himself within the constituents of his idea. For the ideas are real occurrences, and Jupiter is not a real occurrence: he does not exist anywhere. The same argument applies to any idea, any proposition, belief, or perception, in brief, to any act of consciousness whatsoever, provided that it "has something in mind," or "intends" something. The object of intention is phenomenologically different from the act of intention; different, not as an independent

reality, but merely as a different center of possible predication. Propositions which are valid in regard to an object are generally invalid in regard to the act, with the exception of those cases when the object is another psychological act.

The critical dogma of "Identity" is thus abandoned. In the light of the theory of intention objectivity regains its scholastic "independence." It was a veritable resurrection from the dead. Kant buried the objects in the depths of consciousness. Husserl again extracted them from the grave, gave them a new life, and restored them to all the honors and titles of ens intentionale. But the hundred years they have spent in the grave left a profound change in their nature that no restoration could possibly erase. The very heart of objectivity was left infected with transcendental problems and ineradicable craving for a priori. Mediaeval essences reappeared on the philosophical horizon, and again assumed the leading role in the life and organization of thinking. But they changed the modus of their existence, and became more "epistemologized" and more restricted to their own "intentions." In brief, the objects regained their independence, with the essential limitation however that they should be taken as the intention actually gives them. If they are so taken, they are bound to appear in their phenomenological essence, i. e., apart of their factual existence, and strictly a priori. For to carry out the "phenomenological reduction," i. e., to isolate an object from its existential or systematic connections, is equivalent to considering it as it is originally given, without the distorting influences of "theory." Thus considered every object is bound to reveal what it is in itself, "red as

10 The immediate source of Husserl's intentionalistic inspirations lies, not in the scholars of the Middle Ages, but in Brentano's Psychology. Says Brentano: "Jedes psychische Phänomen wird dadurch charakterisiert, was von den Scholastikern die intentionale Inexistenz des Gegenstandes genannt wurde, und was we jetzt das Gerichtetsein auf das Object nennen würden." Psychologie, 8, 115.
such,” “truth as such,” etc. And that means to reveal its
*ens intentionale*. Thus Meinong’s *Gegenstandstheorie* appears as a mere corollary of the phenomenological principle.

The methodological importance of *ens intentionale* may be shown by the following illustration borrowed from phenomenological aesthetics. Since Aristotle it became a popular view that artistic enjoyment consists of the feeling of relief which is caused by a work of art—a relief from the burdens and sorrows of life, from the passions and worries of action. That is what Aristotle called “*καθαρσία*,” or artistic purification. To see the essence of artistic enjoyment in such purification is, from the phenomenological standpoint, altogether wrong. For such purification, even if it does exist, is merely a consequence of artistic experience, a by-product which is in itself desirable, but does not constitute the phenomenon of artistic enjoyment as such. For the latter is an act of enjoying the work of art, and not the relief from passions. To substitute one for another is again a result of our mania for reductions. Going to a theatre I perhaps enjoy the relaxation from my daily work; I am also glad to have an opportunity of forgetting my troubles. But this kind of enjoyment is not that which I derive from watching the drama played on the stage: I should be able to enjoy Shakespeare even if I had nothing to forget. My relaxation and recreation are certainly enjoyable, but it is enjoyment of relaxation, not of art. Thus clearing up our actual “intentions” we avoid confusion which may, otherwise, prove fatal, not merely to our aesthetical theories, but to our artistic tastes and practices as well.\(^{11}\)

Together with Schelling, and furthermore with Plato, Husserl believes that the only means of reaching *ens intentionale* lies in pure intuition.\(^{12}\) He is inclined to

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\(^{12}\) Husserl, *Ideen*, p. 113.
regard intuition as the only solution of epistemological problem.\textsuperscript{13} "Phenomenological intuition" is experience in the sense that we arrive at it through the immediate contact with its data, and not by means of reasoning or speculation. Reasoning does not produce its content. Since the content is admittedly different from the process by which we are aware of it, no reasoning will help us to create it. It has to be given to us, and unless it is given we cannot be aware of it. In respect to awareness an abstract concept, such as number five, is in the same position as any sense quality: the relation of consciousness to its object is in both cases fundamentally the same; number five has to be "present" to consciousness in precisely the same sense in which "red" is present. Thus intellect is itself intuition. That does not mean, however, that phenomenology is an inductive science. In order to know that "two straight lines can cut each other in one point only," or that "in the pyramid of colors orange occupies a place between red and yellow," we do not have to refer to a number of similar cases. Both propositions, although they are statements of fact, are not derived by induction as they are not generalizations from individual cases. One single look at the pyramid of colors is sufficient to convince anyone that the said relation between "orange," "red," and "yellow" is valid for all cases, that it must be valid. We see, in other words, that it is an essential relation that cannot be changed, and cannot be even imagined to be formed in any other way. An appeal to other cases is of no assistance; for the evidence is complete on the basis of one single case.\textsuperscript{14} In this sense the relation is both "given" and "a priori." Phenomenologists call a priori all those meanings and propositions which are based on evidence furnished by intuition. To reach a statement that would be in this sense a priori it is necessary to surrender all

\textsuperscript{13} Ib., p. 204-205.

\textsuperscript{14} M. Geiger, \textit{Beiträge zur Phänomenologie des ästhetischen Genusses}, p. 571.
beliefs and theories, to abstain from any kind of "Setzung," such as "real" or "unreal," "true" or "illusory," and to give oneself up to the content as intended. A content which is independent of the contrast of "truth" and "illusion," etc., which is, in other words, equally necessary in the world of truth as well as in that of a fairy tale, is properly called by the phenomenologists "essence." Thus the essence of life must be given even if we are under illusion that a certain object is alive; the essence of "law" must be present in the constitution of the United States as well as in that of a Lilliput kingdom. Essence in this sense is neither a universal nor individual term. The essence "red," for instance, is contained in the general concept of red, as well as in every concretely perceived shade of red color.  

Moreover, essences in the above sense are not necessarily rational. There are perhaps innumerable forms of intention or modes of awareness (Bewusstseinweisen) which all have their objective counterparts. Faith, doubt, imagination, inquiry, enjoyment, wish, etc., are names referring to different modes of awareness, each having its own specific nature, or general essence, which transmits itself to its objects. An object of faith has its own peculiar flavor that makes it "essentially" different from any object of reason; in spite of the fact that both may coincide in certain points they are fundamentally different precisely insofar as one belongs to the realm of faith, the other to that of intellect and reason. The will-consciousness similarly results in a peculiar kind of objective structure which we generally call "values," and which have their own relations and connections which are distinctly different from those of "truth" or "reality."  

It is futile to rationalize those relations, for they are non-intellectual. They can be adequately grasped only through "feeling," and in the

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15 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 43.

midst of the difficulties and entanglements of real action. A value is neither "thing," nor "truth," and its relation to other values is neither physical nor logical. Our contact with values, therefore is of a different order. Blaise Pascal called it "logique du coeur." M. Scheler calls it Ethos. It is one of the alogical forms of objectivity.

In this sense there are as many types of objectivity as there are types of consciousness. Each kind of "intention" is, so to speak, supplied with its own material, which forms a peculiar world or ontological "district" in itself, with its characteristic district-essence and district-categories.17 The world of faith has a specific type of objectivity that is different from that of emotion; the world of things is, again, essentially different from that of "goods," or "values." Each type implies, according to Husserl, a twofold relation: 1. It is necessarily related to the reality of psychic events, to my ego, or in other words, to those "parts and elements" which can be actually found within the act itself, as belonging to the object of inner sense. This subjective, although not necessarily psychological, aspect of consciousness Husserl calls "noesis." In this term the subjective element (the mode of consciousness qua consciousness) receives its formal recognition in the system of phenomenological philosophy. 2. On the other hand, each particular mode or type of consciousness, such as faith, imagination, reflection, etc., is an actus intentionalis that points out to something beyond. The objective character of that something changes in accordance with the essential character of noesis. To characterize a given content as an object is utterly insufficient; we have to add the specific "how" of its givenness (das Wie seiner Gegebenheitsweise). In other words, each type of consciousness by virtue of its own intention is intuitively projected into the sphere of objects among which it then appears as an objective

essence. Those projections Husserl calls "noemata." Thus perception has its noema, that is, perceptum as such; every question has its noema, that is, its meaning as a question, precisely as it is intended by the inquiring mind; in judging about something we place ourselves in contact with that peculiar world of neutral entities which are generally called logical contents, or "truths" (thus neutral entity appears as a specific case of noemata). Generally speaking, "to the manifold data of real noetic content everywhere corresponds a manifold of data in a noematic content." Husserl insists that these data should be described precisely in terms of that "mode" or type of awareness in which they are originally given. The noemata that correspond to our wishes or actions are fundamentally, "essentially" different from those which constitute the world of thought or sensation; they have their own specific character that cannot be under any circumstances reduced to intellectual elements. That settles the question of ethical intellectualism as well as sensualism. A value can not be logically demonstrated; for its "essence" is alogical. Kant's categorical imperative is an intellectual delusion—a mirage of will in the deserts of formal reasoning. But to think of value in terms of psychological analysis, as an anticipation of pleasure, is equally impossible. The stronger is our wish the more we forget about its psychological constituents, and lose ourselves completely in "plans" and "schemes," in "ends" and "means." That, partially perhaps, accounts for the fact that the greatest geniuses of will in history were inclined to regard themselves as tools of either divine power (Cromwell and his circle), or fate (Napoleon, Wallenstein); they were lacking the consciousness of their ego as the immediate source of their will power. The only possible way of arriving at positive and constructive ethics

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18 Husserl, Ideen, p. 179-199.
19 Ib., p. 182-183.
20 Ib., p. 197.
lies, therefore, in recognizing the original content of ethical values—an independent order or logic of heart.  

Noeses and noemata together constitute the realm of absolute consciousness. They are absolute "facts" that no scepticism can possibly eliminate, a realm of absolute Being that "nulla re ad existendum indiget." Whatever is, or may ever be known, is based on such facts. In this sense neo-phenomenology is restoration of empiricism. "The facts and facts alone, and not the constructions of an arbitrary "reason," form the foundation of phenomenology." But its facts are different from those which form the basis of natural science. We find here, in the mathematical sense of the word, a generalization of the concept of fact. A phenomenologist would never attempt to reduce an "essence" to "facts"; for, from his standpoint, the essence itself is a fact. And, on the contrary, what is commonly called fact (in scientific sense) is merely a special case of essence. Neo-phenomenology is neo-empiricism. It is a continuation of Hegel's daring experiment to bring essence and fact in one. Husserl and Hegel, however different they are in the outlook and outcome of their doctrines, both agree in the effort of making philosophy a continuous stream of experience. Nothing is excluded from experience. Truth and falsehood, real and unreal, essence and fact, individual and universal—all are equally justified as "contents" or "stages" of experience in the purified consciousness of phenomenological impartiality. The phenomenologist, like the pragmatist, can never be bothered with any religious or moral doubts; for he is above (perhaps below?) all problems. The actuality of a problem never interests him. His interests are immense; but it is an immensity of surface. He acknowledges everything, but it is the acknowledgement of a formal receipt. This phenomeno-

21 M. Scheler, Der Formalismus in der Ethik, p. 59.
22 Husserl, Ideen, p. 91-92.
23 M. Scheler, Der Formalismus in der Ethik, p. 46.
logical universality of interests, this cold-blooded cosmic anatomy deprived of amor intellectualis in Spinoza's sense and united with the fundamental impartiality of judgment, is the common feature of Husserl's and Hegel's philosophies. Both are partisans of impartiality.

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