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KEY THINKERS

Philosophy of Mind: The Key Thinkers

EDITED BY
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CHAPTER THREE

Edmund Husserl and phenomenology

Dermot Moran

The Moravian-born mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) devoted his life to exhaustive phenomenological investigations – employing a method that he essentially invented – that offer some of the most sustained and radical discussions of central topics in the philosophy of mind that can be found in twentieth-century philosophy.[1] Yet, it is still the case that most analytic philosophers of mind (who see themselves as having invented that discipline in the mid-twentieth century (see Chapter 1)) proceed to discuss the very same topics with no inkling of Husserl's extraordinary and enduring contribution.[2] In this chapter, I want to outline some of Husserl's major contributions to the philosophy of mind. I should also add that Husserl's work on consciousness is now being carefully studied especially by those interested in the cognitive sciences.[3]

Phenomenology, understood as the careful description of experiences in the manner in which they are experienced by the subject, proposes to study, in Husserl's words, the whole of our 'life of consciousness' (*Bewusstseinsleben*, Hua XIV 46)[4]; that is to say, it includes not just explicit cognitive states and acts, such as judgements, but all the myriad acts and states of consciousness

such as sensory awareness, perception, memory, imagination, feeling, emotion, mood, free will, time-consciousness,[5] judgement, reasoning, symbolic thought, self-conscious awareness, as well as subconscious drives and desires, and I am by no means giving an exhaustive list here. Husserl also thought that psychology (due to its inherent naturalistic outlook) could not be the true science of subjectivity. The new science of subjectivity has to put aside all natural scientific and 'folk' concepts of the psychic and aims to confront genuine concrete experience. As Husserl writes:

> The first thing we must do, and first of all in immediate reflective self-experience, is to take the conscious life, completely without prejudice, just as what it quite immediately gives itself, as itself, to be.[6]

Husserl, moreover, not only analysed the structures of individual 'self-experience' (*Selbsterfahrung*), one's experience of one's own conscious states, but also offered groundbreaking discussions of the experience of others or of the other (*Fremderfahrung*) which following the psychology of his day (e.g. Theodor Lipps) he called 'empathy' (*Einfühlung*). He discussed the nature of the individual 'ego' (*das Ich*) as well as how egoic experiences are melded together into a single whole of a personal life. He also discussed, in *Ideas II*, for instance, the special level of relations between persons where they relate to one another as persons in 'the personalistic attitude' (*die personalistische Einstellung*).[7] Indeed, especially in his mature research, he was deeply interested in the manner in which humans relate to one another in what he called generally 'intersubjectivity' (*Intersubjektivität*), including the experience of belonging-together in a community and sharing a common world.

In his main publications, for example, *Logical Investigations*,[8] *Ideas I*[9] and *Cartesian Meditations*,[10] Husserl's approach is predominantly individualist or 'egological', describing conscious life primarily in the context of the individual self. This has led to Husserl being described as a Cartesian or as a 'methodological solipsist'. He was, on the other hand, always aware – and certainly from 1910/1911 this is a distinctive theme – that this egological approach *abstracts* from the fuller more concrete domain of intersubjective, communal, social consciousness. Indeed, Husserl was one of the first philosophers of mind to talk about specifically

'social acts', 'we-intentions' and collective intentionality generally.[11] A comprehensive phenomenology must aim to describe subjective and intersubjective life in its wholeness, including the large cultural and spiritual forms, leading to what Husserl calls a complete 'eidetics of the spirit' (*Ideas* II, Hua IV 314).

Husserl begins with his recognition of individual, subjective, personal consciousness, that is, consciousness in its full, living, concrete, dynamic richness, in what he called the 'Heraclitean flux' or 'stream of conscious life' (*Strom des Bewusstseinslebens*, Hua VII 251). Normally, we simply live, as Henri Bergson and William James would also have said, in the stream or flow of conscious 'experiences' (*Erlebnisse*) – a term he probably borrowed from Wilhelm Dilthey – that is, individual mental events or processes. Husserl himself recognized that the metaphor of a *stream* was in some respects quite misleading. These experiences form the seamless whole of our conscious, waking states and indeed we have to extend the concept of consciousness to include states of sleep, dreaming, hypnotic states, narcotic states, states of anaesthesia, meditative states and so on. To live, Husserl says, is to experience (*leben ist erleben*). Initially at least, Husserl's interest was primarily, but not exclusively, in what current philosophy now refers to as *occurrent* (rather than dispositional) acts of consciousness, their contents and their objective reference; that is, he primarily focused on conscious *episodes* as such. In his earlier years, he had nothing at all to say, at least in print, about 'the unconscious' and very little to say, at least in his earlier years, about our dispositional or emotional states, although he later, especially in his *Passive Synthesis* lectures[12] and in the *Crisis of European Sciences*, came to discuss the complex layerings of our 'pre-predicative' life, our drives, our being affected and being drawn towards certain things, our 'habits', 'convictions', our 'attitudes' and other 'sedimentations'. In his later years, Husserl was aware of what he called 'depth psychology' (*Tiefenpsychologie*) by which he meant the various forms of psychoanalysis being practiced at the time by Freud, Jung, Adler and others.

Conscious lived experiences are, as Descartes and Kant also recognized, primarily *temporal* events (they are not primarily spatial, but Husserl came more and more to see how the experience of spatiality comes to be constituted out of embodied experiences especially touch sensations).[13] Conscious experiences do not simply follow one another in a chain (as Hume sometimes suggests),

but augment, modify and distort one another, as well as weaving together into the whole that we experience as one's life. In his early work – including the massive two-volume *Logical Investigations* (1900–01), Husserl, following his mentor Franz Brentano (himself influenced by Hume) tried to focus exclusively on the individual experiences that make up the stream, but fairly quickly (and influenced by his reading of Kant and of Neo-Kantians such as Paul Natorp) Husserl recognized that one had to address the issue of the ego and of the 'ego-pol' (*Ichpol*) that runs through all experiences. Husserl recognizes that this 'stream' is experienced as belonging to an individual ego or 'I' (*Ich*), and appears as a seamless, streaming whole, which at the same time can be divided into a multiform yet unified, and constantly unifying, temporal flow of individual *Erlebnisse*.

In his early work in particular, Husserl speaks of psychic 'states' (*Zustände*) and of 'acts' (while explicitly excluding the meaning of 'activity'; see the Fifth Logical Investigation). The term 'act' was used extensively in German psychology and is to be found in Brentano, Wundt, Stumpf and others. Gradually, Husserl became dissatisfied with the existing psychological terminology for psychic or cognitive states, and, borrowing from Descartes (see Chapter 2), he began to employ the Latin term *cogitatio* (literally 'thought'; plural: *cogitationes*) as his general term for a psychic state, to be understood in the widest sense to include all identifiable parts of the flow, that is, individual states and contents of consciousness that are immediately apprehended.

To clarify what is meant by the phenomenological approach, it is important to recognize that Husserl was not attempting any form of *explanation* in the sense of a naturalistic, causal (or what he would term 'genetic') account of the composition of human lives as conscious cognitive beings. Husserl offers no explanatory account of *how* it is that our embodied minds are able to function. To put it crudely, the 'brain' as an organ is not experienced directly in a first-person way by the subject (science tells us we have brains) and so it falls outside the purview of phenomenology. Husserl wants to begin by describing what is involved in conscious experiences, their contents and objects. He speaks of seeking the 'fundamental composition' (*Grundverfassung*, Hua XIII 111) and 'fundamental forms' (*Grundgestalten*) of consciousness. He wants to identify

the essential structures and the a priori laws governing conscious acts, their objects and contents, their modes of givenness, their 'modes of validation' (*Geltungsmodi*), their confirmations and modifications, and so on. Phenomenology is an eidetic science.[14] Husserl is interested in the *essences* of diverse cognitive or epistemic attitudes (perceiving, remembering, imagining, judging, surmising and so on) that constitute the building blocks of our rational lives as knowers and doers (agents). He is also interested in the laws of transformation according to which one state or attitude turns into another or is modified by another (uncertainty becomes belief, perception turns to memory and so on) and also in the *internal*, that is necessary, *relations* between these cognitive attitudes themselves.

The fundamental key to unlock conscious experience is the understanding of intentionality.[15] Husserl's begins from the Brentanian insight that psychic states are essentially structured as intentional states. Intentionality is understood by Husserl generally as 'having something in mind' (*etwas 'im Sinne' zu haben*, *Ideas* I, Hua III/1 185). Every perception, memory, thought, feeling or emotion is about something, it is directed at some object. It is 'about' something. Husserl sees intentionality as 'the fundamental characteristic of all consciousness' (*Ideas* I §90). It is the 'name of the problem encompassed by the whole of phenomenology' (*Ideas* I, §146, p. 349; Hua III/1 303). As we have seen, Husserl prefers to use the Cartesian language of *cogitatio* and *cogitatum* (CM §14; *Crisis* §50). Every *cogitatio* intends a *cogitatum*. But, in his published work, *Ideas* I §§87–96, Husserl also introduces new terms borrowed from the Greek *noesis* and *noema* which he had been developing in his lectures from 1908. In his mature writings (see *Crisis* §48), he speaks of the 'noetic-noematic correlation' or the 'noetic-noematic structure [*Aufbau*]' (CM, Hua I 78).[16] The structural features of the intended object can be studied independent of its existence. I can be seeking the perfect partner (whom I may never find) but I can be quite sure of the specific traits of that person. Cultural products, art objects, religious artefacts and so on are all intentional objects. They are invested with meaning that comes to light depending on the noetic attitude adopted towards them. To study them as they present or disclose themselves is to study them noematically.

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Studying the intentional correlation between act and object is a way of gaining access to the essences of mental states. As Husserl writes in his *Passive Syntheses* lectures:

> But if one has learned to see phenomenologically and has learned to grasp the essence of intentional analysis . . . then one will initially make the quite astounding discovery that those types of lived experience are not a matter of arbitrary special features of an accidental life of consciousness, but rather that terms like "perception," "memory," "expectation," etc., express universal, essential structures, that is, strictly necessary structures of every conceivable stream of consciousness, thus, so to speak, formal structures of a life of consciousness as such whose profound study and exact conceptual circumscription, whose systematic graduated levels of foundation and genetic development, is the first great task of a transcendental phenomenology. It is precisely nothing less that the science of the essential shapes [*Gestalten*] of consciousness as such, as the science of maternal origins. (APS 365–6; Hua XI 233)

It is not, therefore, just a matter of the enumeration or 'uncovering' (*Enthüllung*) of the layers of our intentional life. Husserl also wants to examine their interlocking interconnection into the single, unified framework which enables not just the unity and identity of a single consciousness but also participation in the shared, universal rational life, our cognitive life (*Erkenntnisleben*).

Husserl is a holist. Intentional life is an interconnected *whole*, a coherent, integrated 'complex' or 'nexus' (*Zusammenhang*). Attitudes, beliefs, modifications, 'sedimentations' (beliefs that have settled down into convictions and habits) are bound together or synthesized into one harmonious life in a continuously existing world. Husserl wants to uncover the basic forms of our conscious life in terms of their essential features and necessary structural interconnections. He often speaks of the different layers or 'strata' involved in an act of consciousness. He also points out that (in perception) these strata do not just sit on top of one another but 'interpenetrate or intersaturate' (*sie durchdringen sich oder durchtränken sich*, DR, p. 62; Hua XVI 75).

Following the psychology of his day (which ultimately derived from Descartes), and especially his teachers Franz Brentano

(1838–1917) and Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), Husserl initially accepted the distinction between external or 'outer' perception (*aussere Wahrnhemung*) and 'inner' perception (*innere Wahrnehmung*). Broadly speaking, we perceive objects outside of us in outer perception but we perceive the flow of our own conscious sensations, thoughts and feelings, in inner perception. In his mature phenomenology, Husserl maintained that whatever is occurrent in consciousness can be recovered by a specific act of reflection involving a change of attitude or stance (*Einstellungänderung*). In such a shift, we can go from seeing the tree to seeing that our seeing of the tree involves temporally changing profiles with differing sensory contents. It is this freedom to change stance – essential to our freedom as rational beings – that allows for the possibility of phenomenology. Just as when watching a film, I can go from being absorbed in the plot to reflectively examining how the camera shots are set up, the use of tracking and so on, I can vary my conscious attention from my doings in the world to my own manner of attending. It is the systematic description of what is uncovered in the reflective attitude that yields phenomenological information about how our conscious states are experienced. This is most complex. For Husserl, for instance, external perceptions are always partial and internally indicate they are never complete, whereas he thought that the information received in inner perception was complete and reliable and in this case, *esse est percipi*. In later years, he realized this was not completely true. I may be sure of my own grief or anger but it also (just like an external object) appears in profiles and I may reflectively come to the conclusion that my experienced anger was in fact a feeling of being hurt or whatever.

In *Ideas* I (1913), Husserl came to clear awareness of the relation between the naïve certainty of perception and the overall belief-structure of what he came to describe as 'the natural attitude' (*die natürliche Einstellung*, *Ideas* I §27). One of the greatest discoveries of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology is that the ordinary, everyday world of experience, the world of things, plants, animals, people and places, the pre-theoretical, pre-scientific world, is not just simply *there*, in itself, but is the correlate of a very specific attitude, namely, the *natural attitude*. Husserl's early descriptive phenomenology was realist but he moved in a transcendental direction in his mature works when he introduced the idea of the methodological suspension of the thetic or existence-positing commitments of the natural, normal attitude to allow the shape of perception to

come fully into view, in an undistorted fashion, uncovering the role of the ego in this process. Phenomenology reveals the natural attitude, which is unaware of itself as an attitude, by adopting the transcendental attitude, an attitude which sees objectivity as produced by the achievements of cooperating subjects. Thus, for instance, a play is only constituted as a play if all participants (actors, directors, writers, audience, stagehands and so on) involve themselves in what they are doing with the belief that they are creating and staging a play, and, similarly, for all cultural products (religious rituals, artistic events, legal gatherings such as trials and juries, and so on). But Husserl went further to claim that nature itself (especially as understood in the modern scientific worldview) is itself the product of the natural attitude. Natural sciences function within the natural attitude and do not question it. But philosophy cannot live in this naïveté. This is essentially what *transcendental* as opposed to *eidetic* phenomenology is all about. According to the mature Husserl, the original, naïve acceptance of the world in the natural attitude must be treated as giving only the kind of evidence appropriate to it and be treated under the reduction as merely 'an acceptance phenomenon' (CM §7). Husserl believes we can abstain from the 'natural existence-positing' of the original perception (CM §15); we can actually abstain from commitment to 'every believing involved in or founded on sensuous experiencing' (CM §8, p. 19; Hua I 59). There raises, of course, the perennial problem of relating his eidetic account of perception with his unwavering commitment to transcendental idealism.

In this chapter, I shall steer clear of this knotty problem of transcendental idealism. But, one element is important: if we suspend the belief-moment of the perception are we not altering or modifying the original perception itself? Husserl answers this question affirmatively, but maintains we do not thereby misunderstand what is essential to perception as such. For this reason, I think we can largely ignore the role of the phenomenological-transcendental reduction in describing views relevant to his philosophy of mind.

Husserl's overall aim was to gain insight into the nature of cognition and especially into judgements and into the life of reason. As a committed, even radical, empiricist (he was an admirer of William James), Husserl begins his account of cognition with direct, immediate perceptual experience, which for him, as for Aristotle, Aquinas, and modern Empiricism, forms the basis of all consciousness.

The bedrock mental act is perception and therefore any study of knowledge and consciousness must begin with perception, although it clearly does not stop there. Perception offers a paradigm of a kind of consciousness where intention finds fulfilment, where the activity of perceiving receives immediate and constant confirmation and collaboration, and hence is a paradigm of the evidence, the 'primordial form' (*Urmodus*) of intuitiveness (APS 110; Hua XI 68; see also *Crisis* §28, p. 105; Hua VI 107). In *Ideas* I §39, Husserl writes:

> I shall look for the ultimate source which feeds the general positing of the world effected by me in the natural attitude, the source which therefore makes it possible that I consciously find a factually existing world of physical things confronting me and that I ascribe to myself a body in that world. . . . Obviously this ultimate source is sensuous experience. For our purposes, however, it will be sufficient if we consider sensuous perception which plays the role among experiencing acts of what may be called, in a certain legitimate sense a primal experience from which all other experiencing acts derive a major part of their grounding force. (*Ideas* I §39, pp. 82–3; Hua III/1 70)

It is perceptual consciousness that gives us our first sense of objectivity, physicality and the experience of 'world':

> [Perception] is what originally makes us conscious of the realities existing for us and "the" world as actually existing. To cancel out all such perception, actual and possible, means, for our total life of consciousness, to cancel out the world as objective sense and as reality accepted by us; it means to remove from all thought about the world (in every signification of this word) the original basis of sense and legitimacy.[17]

Perception of transcendent objects gives us the *sense* of an abiding world, of a world that is our disposal in so far as we can revisit and re-perform earlier perceptions, and so have an abiding knowledge:

> The fact that a re-perception, a renewed perception of the same thing, is possible for transcendence characterizes the fundamental

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> trait of transcendent perception, alone through which an abiding world is there for us, a reality than can be pregiven for us and can be freely at our disposal. (APS §3, p. 47; Hua XI 10)

Perception is much more than visual perception, of course, and Husserl did spend a lot of time analysing the relation between sight and touch (he has much less to say about the senses of hearing, smell and taste). With regard to vision, Husserl gives extensive, detailed descriptions of just *what* we see and *how* we see it (involving the nature of the act of perception, the nature of the perceived object, the sense of perception, the role of temporal awareness in the structure of perceiving, the dynamic nature of perceptual content, the nature of the indeterminate accompanying horizons and so on).

While phenomenologists (e.g. Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Aron Gurwitsch) have always been advocates of Husserl's direct realist account of perception, recently, analytically trained philosophers have begun to recognize its importance.[18] Many aspects of Husserl's discussion of perception are of interest to contemporary philosophers, for instance, his commitment to direct realism; his rejection of representationalism, and any view that would substitute a sign or picture for the perceptual object itself (see *Ideas* I §43); his rejection of 'sensualism' and causal accounts of perception; his rejection of *conceptualism*, that is, the claim that every sensory element in perceptual consciousness involves exercise of a concept;[19] and his account of the specific essence of perception as distinct from judgement. In the *Logical Investigations*, for instance, there is a sustained critique of the representationalist accounts of perception found in Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Mill and others. In *Ideas* I, he criticizes the atomism and representationalism of the Gestalt psychologists, Koffka, Köhler and others). Husserl (and Merleau-Ponty follows him in this regard; see Chapter 4) is a virulent critic of empiricist accounts of the sense datum or 'idea'. We do not see patches of colour or hear noises, but see the multicoloured landscape and listen to the sounds of traffic, birds or refrigerators. Husserl also rejects phenomenalist accounts, whereby the object simply consists of a series of appearances or sense data. His appreciation of the nature of the stream of consciousness led him to reject all 'sensualist' accounts of it as a stream of contents 'without sense

in themselves'; rather consciousness always involves intending of objects, sense and constitution. As he would write in *Ideas* I:

> Consciousness is not the name for "psychic complexes," for "contents" fused together, for "bundles" or streams of "sensations" which, without sense in themselves, also cannot lend any "sense" to whatever mixture; it is rather through and through "consciousness," the source of all reason and unreason, all legitimacy and illegitimacy, all reality and fiction, all value and disvalue, all deed and misdeed. Consciousness is therefore toto caelo different from what sensualism alone will see, from what in fact is irrational stuff without sense—but which is accessible to rationalization. (*Ideas* I §86, pp. 207–8; Hua III/1 176)

Husserl repeats this critique of 'sensualism' and 'atomism' over and over (see CM, Hua I §16). It is just not true that we see our own sensations or that objects are bundles or collections of sense data. Phenomenology tells us otherwise. As Martin Heidegger puts it in *The Origin of the Work of Art* essay: 'much closer than any sensations are the things themselves' [the wind rustling in the chimney, and so on].[20]

Husserl also rejects various versions of the causal account of perception. For instance, T. H. Green maintained that 'the reference of a sensation to a sensible thing means its reference to a cause'.[21] But Husserl is clear that perceiving does not involve an awareness of causal connection, rather there is conscious sense of unmediated presence of the object. As Fred Dretske puts it, to hear the doorbell ringing is not to hear the button being depressed even if the button being depressed initiates the causal chain that results in us hearing the doorbell.[22] Dretske claims that the reason we hear the bell and not the button is that the bell is 'primarily represented' while the button is not:

> The reason we hear the bell, not the button, is because, although our auditory experience carries information about the properties of both the bell (that it is ringing) and the button (that it is depressed), the ringing (of the bell) is represented in a primary way while the depression (of the button) is not.[23]

However, I think Husserl's analysis is more to the point. We don't hear the *button* at all; we hear the *door bell ringing*. We only know that the button is being depressed because we assume a certain scientific and causal view already. We read causation into the perceptual scene as it were, we don't find it there.

Two main traits of perceiving that Husserl constantly stresses are that perception presents an object directly and immediately, and that the act of perceiving involves unquestioned *acceptance*. Or, as Husserl puts it, there are two characteristics of perception: one noetic, the other noematic. On the noetic side, the perceiving is straightforward and has the character of certainty; on the noematic or object side, the object perceived has the character of existing actuality (CM Hua I §15). In perception, the object is experienced as given in the manner of 'itself there' (*selbst da*). We have the immediate certainty of being in the perceptual presence of the perceived thing. Perception holds out, as it were, the promise of offering us the thing itself as it actually is, 'it itself' (*es selbst*). According to Husserl, it belongs to the very sense of a perceptual act to involve the self-appearance of the object (Hua XIX/2 589). The object is given 'itself' (*selbst*), 'there' (*da*), 'in the flesh', 'bodily' (*leibhaftig*), *in propria persona*, in the actual temporal present, in its own being and 'being so' (*Sosein*, Hua VII 251):

> . . . the object stands in perception as there in the flesh, it stands, to speak still more precisely, as actually present, as self-given there in the current now. (DR §4, p. 12; Hua XVI 14)

Perception is essentially simple' or 'straightforward' (*schlicht*, LU §46); for Husserl, this means there is no reasoning involved in perception:

> What this means is this: that the object is also an *immediately given object* in the sense that, as *this object perceived with this definite objective content*, it is not *constituted* in relational, connective, or otherwise articulated acts, acts founded on other acts which bring other acts to perception. (LU VI §46; vol. II, p. 282; Hua XIX/2 674).

We receive the object 'in one blow' (*in einem Schlage*), as he puts it. The fact that perception is straightforward means that it delivers the object at once, in the modes of actuality and certainty. But, of

course, it does not mean that we see only a single object. We can have simple straightforward perception of complex objects (a pile of books, a book on the table, etc.). In his classic work *Perception*, H. H. Price believes that Husserl gets it right when he refers to the experience of the presence of the object in actual perception as being a '*leibhaftig*' *in propria persona* experience.[24] In this sense, for Price, perception resembles an intuition in its holistic or 'totalistic' nature and lack of discursiveness.

A second crucial component of perception is that it involves 'perceptual belief' and 'perceptual certainty', as Husserl says in *Ideas* I (1913) §103. Husserl often comments on the fact that *Wahrnehmung* in German means literally taking-for-true. An important structural feature of perception, for Husserl, is that it is normally accompanied by a kind of certainty, a '*primal belief* or *protodoxa*' (*Ideas* I §104, p. 252; Hua III/1 216) that he describes as 'unmodalised' (*Ideas* I §104). Husserl often emphasizes this naïve certainty (something one finds also in G. E. Moore). Thus, Husserl writes: 'One speaks of a believing inherent in perceiving' (APS 66; Hua XI 28) and: 'Every normal perception is a consciousness of validity' (APS 71; Hua XI 33). This *Urdoxa* is a bedrock certainty not amenable to doubt: 'The primordial mode is certainty but in the form of the most straightforward certainty' (APS 76; Hua XI 37). A belief, for Husserl, can become modified into an uncertainty, a deeming likely or maybe into something questionable (*Ideas* I §103), but the 'unmodified' or 'unmodalized' form of certainty has a privileged role. As Thomas Reid had already recognized in his *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, in perception there is, as he puts it, 'a strong and irresistible conviction and belief of its [the perceived object] present existence'.[25]

A third claim for which Husserl is also well known is that, in perception, the object is given as it is in itself, while at the same time it is given in profiles. Although we see the object from one side, somehow the *whole* object is given (see also Chapters 4 and 13). External perception has the 'sense' (*Sinn*) whole object, even if only one side is 'properly' seen. As Husserl makes clear, even if it is the case that the perception is only of one side under one aspect, nevertheless, it is clear that *the whole* object is intended and 'meant' in the act of perceiving:

> Let us begin by noting that the aspect, the perspectival adumbration through which every spatial object invariably

> appears, only manifests the spatial object from one side. No matter how completely we may perceive a thing, it is never given in perception with the characteristics that qualify it and make it up as a sensible thing from all sides at once. (APS §1, p. 39; Hua XI 3)

As Gareth Evans has argued, to say that we see an object from one side is not to deny that we actually see the object itself. Husserl makes this clear in *Ideas* I §138. Despite the inadequacy of each one-sided perception, what 'properly' appears cannot be separated from the perception of the thing as a whole. The side that properly appears is really a non–self-sufficient part of the whole that is the 'sense' of the perception (*Ideas* I, p. 331; Hua III/1 286–7). In terms of his analysis of the essence of perception, Husserl maintains that what we think of as peculiarities particular to us are actually eidetic insights that belong to the Idea of a physical thing as such. A material thing unveils itself in endless spatial profiles. Even God can only grasp a physical thing in profiles (*Ideas* I §149, p. 362; Hua III/1 315). Similarly, a material thing also reveals itself in perception in a series of temporal moments. Not even God can alter this eidetic truth (DR, Hua XVI 65). Unrolling in spatial and temporal profiles pertains to the essence of a material thing (DR, Hua XVI 66). In part, this is why Husserl is convinced that what he is doing is not *psychology*.

Perception for Husserl is the bedrock of consciousness. All other forms of conscious experience are in one way or another *founded* on perceptual, sensory consciousness. Husserl contrasts the 'self-givenness' (*Selbstgegebenheit*) of perception with a very large class of conscious forms that he characterizes as 'representational' (*vergegenwärtig*) in one way or another. Representation, or more accurately 'presentification', 'presentiation' or 'calling to mind' (*Vergegenwärtigung*), includes memory, fantasy, wishing and symbolic thinking – all forms that do not have the sense of the immediate presence of the object. When one remembers, imagines or fantasizes about an object, there is not the same sense of the immediate, actual, bodily and temporal presence of the object. Indeed, in memory and in expectation, the object is experienced as not presently there, but there is some kind of reference to its being, it is still being posited (as future or past) in a specific way. Unlike imagination, memory posits the real 'having-been' of something. Imagination entails no such positing of the real existence of its object in any temporal

mode. Memory is not 'picture-consciousness' (*Bildbewusstsein*). It is a *thetic* or positing act, but the object is presented as 'being-past', 'having been' (Hua XIII 164) and as 'having-been-perceived-by-me' (Hua VII 252) and having been originally experienced *in a mode other than memory*. In other words, in an act of remembering, the experience remembered is presented as one originally experienced by me, but now with a *temporal distance* separating it from my current experience. This temporal distantiation is characteristic of memory:

> Recollection is not simply the being-conscious once again of the object; rather, just as the perception of a temporal object carries with it its temporal horizon, so too the recollection repeats the consciousness of this horizon. (ZB, p. 113; Hua X 108)

The object experienced in a fantasy (which includes reverie, daydream, act of deliberate imagining, fictional creation, etc.) is not necessarily past, present or future, but is presented 'as-if' (DR §4), and is not an actual perception. This is a structural feature of fantasy itself: it has the character of 'depicting'. In fantasy, there is no positing of the object. Moreover, the object of the fantasy is not located precisely as it would be in a perception. It 'hovers' or floats before the fantasist; it is not continuous with the objects or the space around it. Secondly, there is no temporal distance or gap experienced as there is in the case of memory. The fantasized image is apprehended in the present tense although that present is not itself experienced as perceptual present tense. On the other hand, the fantasized image can reappear and be recovered in memory.

Picture consciousness or 'depicting consciousness' (*Bildbewusstsein*) is another *sui generis* form of representative consciousness for which Husserl offers a very complex and challenging analysis – that received a recent reformulation on the concept of 'seeing-in' as developed by Richard Wollheim (1923–2003).[26] According to Husserl, a photograph or a postcard of a bridge is a complex object with multiple modes of givenness. There is a perceived physical object (postcard) and also a represented picture (bridge). There is involved a blend of perceiving and imaging. The postcard is a genuine object that can be seen, touched, tasted, etc. But it is also a 'picture-thing' (*Bildding*, Hua XXIII 489) hosting an image – the bridge – that floats somewhat free of the physical object. We can see past the brush-strokes to the face presented in the painting. This is a

seeing-in. It is different from fantasy. The image in fantasy needs no physical substrate and belongs within consciousness itself and does not survive the act of fantasizing, whereas a depicted object based on a physical object does survive.

Another important form of 'representation' or 'presentiation' (*Vergegenwärtigung*) is our experience of other's conscious experiences. Husserl, following the psychological tradition of his day, calls this 'empathy' (*Einfühlung*).[27] Husserl's phenomenology has often been caricatured as solipsistic, either metaphysically or methodologically. He is seen as the last proponent of an essentially Cartesian 'philosophy of consciousness' that prioritizes phenomena as given to the individual ego as well as privileging the ego's self-presence to itself as the highest form of being understood as presence. But Husserl did devote considerable attention to the discussion of *empathy*, to *intersubjectivity* and to the experience of what is 'other', 'foreign' or 'strange' (*das Fremde*, *das Andere*), what he calls generally 'other-experience' (*Fremderfahrung*). He contrasts this 'originary' (*originär*) or 'primordial' manner of self-givenness in self-experience with 'other experience', which he regards as 'non-originary' (*nicht originär*). In the sense that I can never do more than *reproduce* the first-person life of the other which he or she experiences in a first-person, originary way, I cannot directly experience the other's first-person experiences. We can of course share experiences. Two siblings can *share* the grief of the death of their father; but both have individual griefs, and the analysis of the intentional structure of their griefs may differ even if they have the same intentional object, intensity and so on. Moreover, each is conscious not just of his or her grief but also of the other's grief as a distinct object. A sister can sympathize with a brother's grief but still find it cloying, and so on.

Husserl explores different ways in which the empathic understanding of the other can be achieved. One way is through the analogical pairing between my lived body and that of the other. In a handshake – each feels the other intending to make the contact. Of course, this is possible in many different ways – I can feel the reluctance of the other, the forced familiarity, the limp lifeless hand contact and so on, but in these cases my body is responding to the living bodily intentionality of the other. Another way Husserl explores empathy is through various modalizations of my self-experience. Husserl believes that the 'I' is primarily experienced in the present tense, in its immediate self-presence, and that, through a peculiar kind of

synthesis, it identifies itself with the ego that intrinsically belongs to past experiences. I consciously take myself to be the same person as the child I am now remembering that I once was. This occurs through a kind of 'modalization' or 'variation' of myself that is governed by a priori essential laws that it is the business of phenomenology to identify. This *self-identification* over time gives Husserl a clue to how the other person is also constituted within my experience. Just as I identify with my earlier self in a memory, so also I can identify with the other in various forms of social experience. Husserl always sees empathy as the bridge to the other: 'Empathy creates the first true transcendence (thus transcendence in a unique sense)' (Hua XIV 8). In fact, the solipsistic way of approaching oneself is a one-sided abstraction for Husserl. The self is *never* experienced without the other. Self and other are always 'interwoven' and have an intimate 'belonging-together' (*Ineinandersein*). As Husserl makes clear in the *Crisis*, the presence of other persons is a necessary condition of the experience of objectivity. The first other experienced is the other living body (*Leib*). The recognition of the body *as lived body* is the first step towards objectivation (Hua XIV 110).

Husserl's phenomenology has much to say about the experience of the self and the manner in which time-consciousness is constituted. But he also recognizes that the truly human life is lived out at the level of the person. As we saw above, Husserl maintains that persons only come into view *as* persons from a particular standpoint which he calls the 'personalistic attitude' (*die personalistische Einstellung*). This is not to deny that persons are real entities of a unique kind; it is just that they are disclosed only when we view them from a certain dimension. The specifically personalistic attitude is

> . . . the attitude we are always in when we live with one another, talk to one another, shake hands with another in greeting, or are related to another in love and aversion, in disposition and action, in discourse and discussion. (*Ideas* II §49, p.192; Hua IV 183)

Husserl contrasts the personalistic attitude with the 'naturalistic attitude' (which is a specifically scientific attitude as developed in modernity and a subdomain of the more universal natural attitude). Husserl thinks that, while it may be necessary to view the human body as a physical body in order to highlight certain kinds of property (e.g. the body as a physical object in causal interconnection

with other physical objects), it is a gross distortion to the human being if it is treated solely in a purely naturalistic manner:

> He who sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, as it were, through the eyes of, natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences. (*Ideas* II §51, p. 201; Hua IV 191)

The *person* is primarily an individual with an identity through changing states (infancy, childhood, maturity), who exercises freedom and is capable of rational actions and responsibilities. The person is oriented to values. Persons in the Kantian tradition are understood as irreducible ends in themselves, deserving of being treated with dignity and respect. The mature Husserl was undoubtedly influenced by the Kantian (and Neo-Kantian) conceptions of the self as person understood as an autonomous (giving the law to itself), rational agent. At the centre of the person, for Husserl, is a *drive* for reason, but it is a drive sitting upon many other affective and embodied elements (see Chapter 13). In 'its full concretion' (Hua XIV 26), it is a *self* with convictions, values, an outlook, a history, a style and so on. As Husserl writes in *Cartesian Meditations*: 'The ego constitutes itself *for itself* in, so to speak, the unity of a history' (CM, p. 75; Hua I 109). Furthermore, I come to understand myself as person precisely through apprehending others as persons within the wider enabling context of the personal world of 'co-humanity' (*Mitmenschheit*). We actually live in personal relations with one another, in community with others whom we understand as 'companions, not as opposed subjects but as counter subjects who live "with" one another' (*Ideas* II §51, p. 204; Hua IV 194). As he writes in 1925:

> I direct my interest purely toward the personal, that means, purely toward how persons behave as persons and behave toward one another, how they define themselves and others, how they form friendships, marriages, unions, etc. . . . If I do this, nature as nature is never my theme in all that, neither the physical nor the psychophysical.[28]

I am in the personalistic attitude in thinking about my relations to my families, to parents and children, in my experience as servant and

master, in 'I-thou' (*Ich-Du*) relations (an expression Husserl uses – possibly inherited from Hermann Cohen), and so on. Moreover, social life is constituted by specifically social, communicative acts. Husserl has a great deal to say about 'social acts' and about 'we-subjectivity' (*Wir-Subjektivität*) and 'I-we' relations (e.g. Hua XIV 166). In fact, for Husserl, the personal arises out of the social rather than the other way around (Hua XIV 175). There are also communal selves, 'personalities of a higher order' (XIV 192). We belong in an open-ended, many-layered 'communicative sociality' (*Kommunicationsgemeinschaft*, Hua XIV 194), a term Husserl uses long before it was taken up by Habermas. 'Communication creates unity' (XIV 199); one consciousness 'coincides' with another consciousness to form a unity of understanding, of purpose, of shared interests, common 'in-group' jokes or whatever. This communal consciousness extends into the past. For instance, in the community of philosophers, I can argue with Plato, agree or disagree with his views, admire Aristotle as a person, and so on.

The objective world experienced as such through some kind of a priori harmony between myself and other subjectivities in their perception of it. It is co-presence of other subjects perceiving the same object from different sides and in different profiles that allows me to think of the world as common, shared, 'there for all' (*für Jedermann da*) and so on. Without the mediation of foreign subjectivities, the 'transcendent' object of my experience would remain merely 'transcendent for me', with the possibility that it remained something merely intended as opposed to absolutely transcendent (i.e. apprehended with 'being in itself').

Husserl's phenomenology is an extraordinarily rich resource for philosophy of mind. Analytic philosophy of mind – especially as stimulated by philosophers such as Tom Nagel[29] and Wilfrid Sellars, who themselves were influenced by Husserl – has reawakened issues such as the nature of the first-person perspective, individual and collective intentionality, the question as to whether emotions have objects, the nature of empathy, the understanding of free will, the nature of imagination, seeing-in and the entire constitution of the social and cultural world (e.g. in the work of John Searle[30]). It would indeed be a pity if analytic philosophers continued to 'reinvent the wheel' without going back to gain some knowledge of the enormous contribution of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological investigations.

Notes

1 For a study of Husserl's life and works, see Dermot Moran, *Edmund Husserl. Founder of Phenomenology* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). For Husserl's early mathematical studies, see *Edmund Husserl, Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics*, trans. Dallas Willard, Husserl Collected Works V (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994).

2 On Husserl's philosophy of mind, see David Woodruff Smith and Ronald McIntyre, *Husserl and Intentionality. A Study of Mind, Meaning and Language* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982); Richard Cobb-Stevens, *Husserl and Analytic Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990); and Hubert L. Dreyfus, (ed.), *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).

3 See for instance, Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science* (London: Routledge, 2008).

4 The complete works of Husserl have now been edited in the Husserliana series, Dordrecht: Springer (originally Nijhoff and then Kluwer) 1950–. The full list of titles can be found on the Springer website at http://www.springer.com/series/6062. In this chapter, I shall cite works, where possible, by giving the title, section number and page number of the English translation and then the Husserliana [= Hua] volume, in Roman numbers and page number of the German edition.

5 See Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* [1928], trans. J. B. Brough, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990.

6 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970). Hereafter '*Crisis*'. The reference here is *Crisis* §68, p. 233; Hua VI 236.

7 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, Husserl Collected Works III (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989). This work is usually referred to as '*Ideas II*'. It was edited for publication by Edith Stein and eventually published posthumously.

8 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay, ed. with a New Introduction by Dermot Moran and New Preface by Michael Dummett, 2 Vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). This work was originally published in German in 2 volumes in 1900

and 1901. Hereafter 'LU' followed by the section, volume and page number of the English translation and the Husserliana volume and page number.

9 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas. A General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931; reprinted with a new Preface by Dermot Moran, London: Routledge Classics 2012). This work originally was published in German in 1913 and is usually referred to as '*Ideas I*'. See also E. Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, trans. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983). Hereafter the pagination will be given for the Kersten translation.

10 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1967). Hereafter 'CM'.

11 Thomas Szanto, *Bewusstsein, Intentionalität und mentale Repräsentation. Husserl und die analytische Philosophie des Geistes* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

12 Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock, Husserl Collected Works Volume IX (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001). Hereafter 'APS'.

13 Edmund Husserl, *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*, trans. R. Rojcewicz, Husserl Collected Works VII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997). Hereafter 'DR'.

14 For a fuller discussion of phenomenology, see Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

15 John J. Drummond, *Husserlian Intentionality and Non-Foundational Realism. Noema and Object* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990). See also Dermot Moran 'Heidegger's Critique of Husserl's and Brentano's Accounts of Intentionality', *Inquiry* 43 (March 2000), 39–65; and idem, 'Husserl's Critique of Brentano in the *Logical Investigations*,'*Manuscrito*, Special Husserl Issue, 23 (2000), 163–205.

16 Noesis and noema are referred to briefly in Husserl's *Amsterdam Lectures* (Hua IX 327) and in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article (Hua IX 283).

17 Edmund Husserl, 'Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy', trans. Ted E. Klein and William E. Pohl, *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 5 (Fall 1974), 9–56, see p. 26; Hua VII 251.

18 See, *inter alia*, A. D. Smith in his *The Problem of Perception* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), who uses Husserl to critique Sellarsian accounts, and Kevin Mulligan's article 'Perception', in Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also Kevin Mulligan, 'Perception, Particulars, and Predicates,' in Denis Fisette, (ed.), *Consciousness and Intentionality. Models and Modalities of Attribution*, The Western Ontario Series in Philosophy of Science (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 163–94. Mulligan links Husserl to Fred Dretske's account of perception in *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983) – see Chapter 11).

19 A. D. Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 94.

20 M. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 1st edition, p. 156.

21 A. D. Smith, *Problem of Perception*, op. cit., p. 68.

22 F. Dretske, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information*, op. cit., p. 162.

23 Ibid.

24 See H. H. Price, *Perception* (London: Methuen, 1932, Revised ed. 1950; reprinted Westwood, CT: Greenwood, 1981), p. 152.

25 See Thomas Reid, *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, ed. Baruch Brody (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), Book 2 Ch. 5, pp. 111–12.

26 Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects: An Introduction to Aesthetics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

27 On Husserl's concept of empathy, see Dermot Moran, 'The Problem of Empathy: Lipps, Scheler, Husserl and Stein,' in *Amor Amicitiae: On the Love that is Friendship. Essays in Medieval Thought and Beyond in Honor of the Rev Professor James McEvoy*, ed. Thomas A. Kelly and Phillip W. Rosemann (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), pp. 269–312. See also Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein, Collected Works of Edith Stein, Vol. 3 (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1989).

28 Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenological Psychology. Lectures, Summer Semester 1925*, trans. John Scanlon (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), p. 168; Hua IX 220.

29 Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

30 John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).