



## Drummond, John and Höffe, Otfried (Eds.). *Husserl: German Perspectives*

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With the publication of the volume, *Husserl: German Perspectives*, John Drummond and Otfried Höffe have made available to the Anglophone community some of the most important Husserlian scholarship composed by German authors. Taken together, the introduction and selected essays clarify the evolution of Husserl's thinking, explore the interconnections between Husserl's ideas and the theories of his ancestors, contemporaries, and students, and present unflinching critical engagement with Husserl's writings. This rigorously translated volume certainly stands as an essential addition to the library of any English-speaking Husserl scholar and of those interested in the origins of continental philosophy.

The volume not only helps the reader to understand the complexities of Husserl's thought, but also paints a more comprehensive and complex picture of the reception of Husserl's philosophy in Germany. Drummond and Höffe have accomplished this task by including in the volume both the works of seminal Husserl scholars writing today and essays penned by Husserl's contemporaries, Ludwig Landgrebe and Jan Patočka. The latter texts, while dated from a scholarly point of view, are most welcome since the authors get to the heart of the issue in a way less burdened by the thick layers of secondary research that encumber much contemporary work in the area. Concerning the former texts—those composed by current scholars—one sees that German-language scholarship on Husserl appears confident that investigating Husserl's writings and teasing out the consequences of his thought is inherently interesting, even without being applied to findings from empirical research or brought into dialogue with other, more popular, philosophers. With this in mind, it can be said that the volume stands out as a defense of historical reflections on a seminal thinker. The essays manifest an appreciation of historical research and concretely demonstrate its value. At the

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same time, they do not simply repeat Husserl's work but execute piercing critical engagements with some of his more problematic conclusions.

In their introduction—which provides a general overview of the phenomenological method, an accessible timeline of the development of Husserl's philosophy, and further touches upon some of the difficulties in his thought—Drummond and Höffe outline their rationale for dividing the volume into three sections. The first section is dedicated to accounting for the nature and method of phenomenology. The majority of the essays contained therein begin with technical explorations of Husserl's descriptive psychology from the 1891 *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (Hua XII/2003) and/or his 1901 *Logical Investigations* (Hua XIX/1970). The essays addressing these texts are Rinofner-Kreidl's "The Problem of Psychologism and the Idea of Phenomenology", Landgrebe's "Husserl's Phenomenology and the Motives Leading to its Transformation", and Lohmar's "The Phenomenological Method of Eidetic Intuition and its Clarification as Eidetic Variation". These texts further point out critical problems with Husserl's conclusions in those early monographs before demonstrating how he revised his philosophy into a pure phenomenology and introduced the *epoche* and the reduction to resolve those difficulties. The sole exception to this focus of the first section is Patočka's work, "What is Phenomenology?", which largely picks up at the 1913 *Ideas I* (Hua III-1/1983) and examines the relationship between Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies.

The second section examines Husserl's struggle with the central theme or problem of phenomenology; namely, intentionality. The essays in this section primarily focus on Husserl's descriptions from the Fifth and Sixth Logical Investigations. Specifically, Mayer and Erhard's "The Significance of Objectifying Acts in Husserl's Fifth Meditation", Melle's "Objectifying and Non-Objectifying Acts", and Bernet's "Phenomenological Concepts of Untruth in Husserl and Heidegger" examine how Husserl developed and further evolved his division between objectifying and non-objectifying acts and his theory of categorial intentionality. Additionally, Schuhmann's "Intentionality and the Intentional Object in Early Husserl", and Held's, "Phenomenology of Time Following Husserl" respectively cover Husserl's earliest theories of intentionality and his account of temporality.

The third section investigates different topics concerning Husserl's late philosophy. Mertens' "Husserl's Phenomenology of the Monad" explores Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity; Ströker's "Husserl's Phenomenology" investigates the evolution of his philosophy with regards to the crisis of the European sciences, and Wolfgang Orth's "Philosophy of Culture and Cultural Anthropology as Transcendental Phenomenology" examines the possible connecting points between phenomenology and anthropology.

The following outline of a selection of essays, focusing on those composed by contemporary authors, seeks to provide the reader with a more detailed understanding of the contents of the volume. From the first section, I explore both Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl's essay on psychologism and Dieter Lohmar's work on eidetic intuition. I then look at Melle's text concerning objectifying and non-objectifying acts as the exemplar of the second section. Finally, I investigate Mertens' controversial essay on intersubjectivity and monadology from the third section.

The volume opens with Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl's text, "The Problem of Psychologism and the Idea of a Phenomenological Science", which investigates Husserl's continual struggle to distance his own philosophy from psychologism. The essay is certainly the most technically dense of the selections, demonstrating that the editors do not seek to hide the purpose of the volume; namely, to release exacting Husserlian research for the Anglophone scholar. Rinofner-Kreidl's attention to detail and facility with making fine distinctions will reward the reader with one of the most rigorous accounts of Husserl's *Prolegomena* and the developments of his thought that arose from its aporias.

After situating the debate concerning psychologism (pp. 15–17), outlining the often-overlooked division between psychologism and the naturalistic fallacy (pp. 20–23), Rinofner-Kreidl turns to a discussion of the goals of the *Prolegomena*. She argues that the *Prolegomena* does not attack metaphysical skepticism, which attempts to "limit human knowledge considerably and on principle" (Hua XVIII, p. 120/1970, p. 137), but instead only logical skepticism, that is, theories, "whose theses plainly say, or analytically imply, that logical or noetic conditions for the possibility of any theory are false" (Hua XVIII, p. 120/1970, p. 136). By working from her thesis that the debate concerning psychologism hinges upon the standpoint one takes, Rinofner-Kreidl discloses that the *Prolegomena* is not able to accomplish its anti-skeptical task (pp. 25–26). This is because Husserl's arguments assume that one will accept the premise that pure logic is self-grounding. Even from an appeal to evidence, Husserl's 1900/01 solution to the psychologism controversy "would still be decided from the standpoint of pure logic" (p. 26).

Rinofner-Kreidl then demonstrates how Husserl, in his later philosophy, sought to correct the errors which led to this impasse with psychologism in his descriptive psychology. First, she discusses how the *epoche* and the reduction were formulated, in part, as an attempt to defeat psychologism (pp. 32–36). She notes that Husserl recognized that, "It is objectively impossible [...] to endorse the standpoint of logical and epistemological psychologism within the attitude of the *epoche*" (p. 34). Yet, even this approach also seems to beg the question, as "[t]he preceding refutation of logical psychologism is the condition of the viability of the phenomenological reduction" (p. 33). She then concludes by affirming that, in his *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (Hua XVII/1977) and *Experience and Judgment* (1939/1975) (pp. 36–41), Husserl was able to formulate a non-dogmatic answer to the problem of logical psychologism (but not a refutation of it), by recognizing that pure phenomenology, and not formal logic, is the fundamental science. In sum, by painting the development of Husserl's philosophy as an enduring and evolving battle with psychologism, Rinofner-Kreidl is able to disclose a novel and more nuanced picture of his thought than can be currently found in the Anglophone literature.

Dieter Lohmar's essay on Husserl's theory of eidetic categorial intuition, entitled "The Phenomenological Method of Eidetic Intuition and Its Clarification as Eidetic Variation", deals with some of the same issues as Rinofner-Kreidl's work. After providing a concise elucidation of the three-steps of categorial intuition (pp. 113–114), Lohmar discusses the idea that eidetic intuition is a form of categorial intuition (pp. 114–116). He subsequently rebuffs the objection that Husserl's descriptions of categorial intuition entail Platonism. He writes that the "relationship of 'participation'

[between the essence and its instantiation] is thus precisely the reverse of what Plato conceived. It is not reality or human thinking that can participate in ideas, but rather unreal ideality can and even must participate in reality” (p. 117). Lohmar then offers an extensive analysis of how Husserl revised his theory of eidetic intuition as occurring via eidetic variation in his writings after the *Investigations* by formulating the concept of “types” (pp. 118–121).

In his investigation, Lohmar deals with some of the more pressing difficulties concerning how one should understand the procedure of eidetic intuition as eidetic variation. He presents a refreshingly honest assessment of Husserl’s theory, pointing out its flaws while also discussing the motivation behind Husserl’s somewhat misguided conclusions. Three examples in particular stand out. First, Lohmar reveals that Husserl’s requirement, from his 1925 *Phenomenological Psychology* (Hua IX/1962)—that the chosen varied examples must resemble the initial example—creates more problems than it solves (p. 124). At the same time, Lohmar claims, “this proposal still has its good aspects: Husserl at least attempts to solve the problem of limiting variation, and indeed in a manner that, while demanding similarity, is oriented toward the intuitively given” (p. 124). Second, Lohmar employs the examples of the concepts of chair and God to reveal a “fundamental limitation” of the eidetic intuition of concepts that have a cultural sense (p. 130). By performing eidetic variation himself, Lohmar shows that concepts with a cultural sense cannot be considered universal and general, such that they “cannot be made unambiguously intuitive in the procedure of eidetic variation” (p. 130). Finally, Lohmar attacks Husserl directly, asserting that Husserl’s claim that the transcendental reduction must be performed before eidetic variation is misguided (pp. 131–132). He writes, “[c]omplete freedom from the factual can and must already be attained in the individual steps of variation through the arbitrariness in the variants” (p. 131). Altogether, this essay, by a leading scholar of this complex topic, functions not only as a definitive guidebook for how one can perform eidetic intuition, but also as a sober warning against its misapplication.

The publication of Ullrich Melle’s “Objectifying and Non-Objectifying Acts” will certainly have a substantial impact on ongoing discussions, especially those concerning the phenomenology of emotions and volitions. Melle’s most pertinent conclusions are grounded in two of his insights. First, he sees that Husserl’s difficulty in determining whether emotional and volitional non-objectifying acts are analogous to perceptions or beliefs, is grounded in his more fundamental question of which part of an act is responsible for those experiences. Second, Husserl’s analysis of non-objectifying intentions is intrinsically connected to his descriptions of categorical acts, as he seeks to understand if or how the former can become categorized and meaning-giving.

Melle explains that, in the *Investigations* and *Ideas I*, Husserl concludes that an emotion or volition is akin to the part of the act which he calls the doxic “quality” or later the “position taking”. Despite this commonality, there are important differences between Husserl’s views in 1901 and 1913. In the former, Husserl believes that “the non-objectifying act makes no contribution to the constitution of the object,” such that, “[a]ll value- and practical-determinations would therefore be apprehended as mere reflective determinations” (p. 199). Accordingly, “these non-objectifying

acts—such is the conclusion of the sixth investigation—can only be expressed as the objects of an objectification reflexively aimed at them” (p. 199). In the latter, that is, in *Ideas*, Husserl concludes that the non-objectifying emotional or volitional position takings or theses do contribute to the constitution of the object, as they constitute noematic characteristics. These characteristics can be predicated of the object when, for example, the “doxic potentiality of this liking-thesis is transformed into an actual doxic positing” (p. 205).

In his *Lectures on Ethics and Value-Theory* (Hua XVIII/1975) and in other manuscripts composed around that time, in contrast, Husserl revises his conclusions from section 15 of the Fifth Investigation, to claim that an emotion or volition is akin to the part of the act that he terms the “matter”, or later, the “apprehension” (p. 197). Like other apprehensions, the emotional or volitional intentions constitute properties of the object, albeit non-essential properties. In line with this, Husserl can claim that emotional or volitional intentions can be validated in the same way as other cognitive intentions, such as perceptions. According to Melle, empty emotional acts can be fulfilled by intuitive emotional intentions (pp. 201–202). He writes: “Here too, according to Husserl, value-perception is analogous to external perception in that it is a continuous, unitary consciousness in which empty components of the feeling-apprehension suitably pass over into feeling-plentitudes” (p. 201).

Throughout his essay, Melle provides convincing arguments to the effect that both of Husserl’s phenomenological accounts of emotions and volitions, as akin to either qualities *or* matters, collapse. He writes: “Apprehending emotive and volitional acts as theses analogous to existence-theses [...] is; however, just as inadequate as the theory concerning value-perception as the analogue of external perception” (p. 205). Melle is particularly critical of Husserl’s view that emotions could be conceived of as analogous to perceptions. He writes: “The different analyses and descriptions that Husserl undertook in research manuscripts concerning value-apperception are in no way unified and they are full of problems” (p. 202). Melle’s piercing criticisms not only shake up historical interpretations of Husserl’s theory, but also introduce new difficulties for those philosophers who conduct a phenomenology of emotions or volitions from a Husserlian perspective.

Finally, I briefly discuss Karl Mertens’ “Husserl’s Phenomenology of the Monad” from the third section of the volume. Mertens’ text, which is primarily an analysis of Husserl’s Fifth Cartesian Meditation (HUA I/1973), contrasts Husserl and Leibniz’s monadology. Mertens begins by revealing how Leibniz and Husserl approach their monadology from opposing angles (pp. 266–272). Whereas Leibniz struggles to distinguish the *many* monads from each other and from the world, Husserl’s methodology forces him to highlight how a monad can “overcome the limitations of merely individual experiences and makes intelligible the *one* world” (p. 272, emphasis original). After an extended discussion of how the two philosophers solve their respective problems, Mertens comes to the bold conclusion that, because of Husserl’s abstraction to the sphere of ownness and his descriptions concerning pairing, one must decide that “a genuine reciprocity within the limits of Husserl’s theory cannot be established. Therefore, the classic objection to Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity is to be accepted” (p. 274). In line with this, he asserts that Husserl’s “transcendental subject turns out in fact

to be a monadological subject. Like Leibniz's monad, it lacks a window through which it can gain access to the sense-constituting achievements of another subject. There is no way out of this monadic world" (p. 274).

While many scholars would certainly contest this reading, Mertens' text is valuable in many respects and I admittedly do have sympathies for his interpretation. Mertens does provide some convincing textual evidence for his observations. Moreover, in the footnotes, he appropriately tempers his more controversial assertions. In one case he writes: "Taking into account the research manuscripts in Hua XII–XV leads, in most of the newer works, to a weakening, if not a revision, of the classical critiques of Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity" (p. 284, n. 36).

Regardless, in the body of the text Mertens claims that a proper account of intersubjectivity cannot be found in Husserl but instead can be developed by working from the insights of Merleau-Ponty. He writes that, by drawing from Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, "it can be shown how, in a reciprocal horizon-formation, intersubjective unities of sense and a common world constitute themselves" (p. 275). In sum, Mertens' text, while controversial, stands as an important contribution to the scholarship on Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity and certainly presents accurate insights regarding how one must approach the topic of intersubjectivity from a phenomenological perspective.

Before concluding, I must note that the translations by Hayden Kee, Patrick Eldridge, and Robin Litscher Wilkins are of exceptional quality. They are often able to perform the difficult balancing act, which all translators are familiar with, between accuracy and readability. At times they—correctly, in my view—side for the former and, in doing so, are able to maintain the power of the nuanced insights of these scholars. Their inclusions of the original German, where ambiguity could arise, are appropriate and never intrusive. While it is naturally always better to go directly to the original text, Kee, Eldridge, and Wilkins have made themselves as invisible as possible, thereby allowing the meaning of the German essays to clearly shine through their translations.

Drummond and Höffe, with the publication of *Husserl: German Perspectives*, have released essays which will (or should) be just as important for Anglophone scholarship as they have been for the German. The volume represents a commitment to historical research and highlights the importance of rigorous translation. It is my hope that the publication of this volume reopens interest in the publishing of chapters and articles which do not have to communicate to a wider audience but can be secure in the fact that Husserl's insights are worthwhile to engage with in and of themselves. Further, I hope that the volume encourages the reader to attend to these and other German-language essays on Husserl, which often do present alternative and penetrating investigations of his theories and exhibit a different manner of executing phenomenological research. In sum, when taken together, the volume expertly lays out the problems, methods, and evolution of the thought of the Master and founder of phenomenology, such that it stands as indispensable reading for Anglophone Husserl scholars and for any philosopher who would seek to conduct phenomenological investigations in a rigorous manner.

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