

Natural thinking in science and everyday life is untroubled by the difficulties concerning the possibility of cognition. *Philosophical thinking* is circumscribed by one's position toward the problems concerning the possibility of cognition. The perplexities in which reflection about the possibility of a cognition that "gets at" the things themselves becomes entangled: How can we be sure that cognition accords with things as they exist in themselves, that it "gets at them"? What do things in themselves care about our ways of thinking and the logical rules governing them? These are laws of how we think; they are psychological laws — Biologism, psychological laws as laws of adaptation.

Absurdity: to begin with, when we think naturally about cognition and fit it and its achievements into the natural ways of thinking which pertains to the sciences we arrive at theories that are appealing at first. But they end in contradiction or absurdity — Inclination to open scepticism.

Even this attempt to look at these problems scientifically we can call "theory of knowledge." At any rate what emerges is the idea of a theory of knowledge as a science which solves the above-mentioned difficulties, gives us an ultimate, clear, therefore inherently consistent insight into the essence of cognition and the possibility of its achievements. The critique of cognition in this sense is the condition of the possibility of a metaphysics.

The *method* of the critique of cognition is the phenomenological method, phenomenology as the general doctrine of essences, within which the science of the essence of cognition finds its place.

What sort of method is this? How can a science of cognition be established if cognition in general, what cognizing means and can accomplish, is questioned? What method can here reach the goal?

<4> A. The First Step in the Phenomenological Orientation

1) Right away we become dubious whether such a science is at all possible. If it questions all cognition, every cognition chosen as a starting point is questioned. How then can it ever begin?

This, however, is only a specious difficulty. In "being called into question," cognition is neither *disavowed* nor regarded as in *every* sense doubtful. The question is about some accomplishments imputed to cognition, whereas in fact it is even an open question whether the difficulties pertain to all possible types of cognition. At any rate, if the theory of knowledge is to concern itself with the possibility of cognition it must have cognitions of the possibilities of cognition which, as such, are beyond question; indeed, cognitions in the fullest sense, cognitions about which absolutely no doubt of their having reached their objects is possible. If we are uncertain or unclear as to how it is possible for cognition to reach its object, and if we are inclined to doubt that such a thing is possible, we must, first of all, have before us indubitable examples of cognitions or possible cognitions which really reach, or would reach, their respective objects. At the outset we must not take anything as a cognition just because it seems to be one; otherwise we would have no possible, or what comes to the same thing, no sensible objective.

Here the *Cartesian method of doubt* provides a starting point. Without doubt there is *cogitatio*, there is, namely, the mental process during the [subject's] undergoing it and in a simple reflection upon it. The seeing, direct grasping and having of the *cogitatio* is already a cognition. The *cogitationes* are the first absolute data.

2) What follows naturally is our *first question in the theory of knowledge*: What distinguishes the certainty in these examples from the uncertainty in other instances of alleged cognition? Why is there in certain cases a tendency toward scepticism and toward asking the sceptical question: How can cognition reach a being, and why is there not this doubt and this difficulty in connection with the *cogitationes*?

<5> People answer at first — that is indeed the answer ready at hand — in terms of the pair of concepts or words *immanence* and *transcendence*. The "seeing" cognition of the *cogitatio* is immanent.

The cognition belonging to the objective sciences, the natural sciences and the sciences of culture (*Geisteswissenschaften*) and on closer inspection also the mathematical sciences, is transcendent. Involved in the objective sciences is the *doubtfulness of transcendence*, the question: How can cognition reach beyond itself? How can it reach a being that is not to be found within the confines of consciousness? There is not this difficulty with the "seeing" cognition of the *cogitatio*.¹

3) Next, one is inclined to interpret, as if this were obvious, immanence as genuine immanence (*reelle Immanenz*)² and even perhaps to interpret it psychologically, as *immanence in something real* (*reale Immanenz*): the object of cognition too, is within the cognitive process as a real actuality, or in the [stream of] ego-consciousness of which the mental process is a part. That the cognitive act can hit upon and find its object in the same [stream of] consciousness and within the same real here and now, that is what is taken for granted. The neophyte will say, at this point, that the immanent is in me, the transcendent outside of me.

On a closer view, however, *genuine immanence* (*reelle Immanenz*) differs from *immanence in the sense of self-givenness as constituted in evidence* (*Evidenz*). The genuinely immanent (*reell Immanente*) is taken as the indubitable just on account of the fact that it presents nothing else, "points" to nothing "outside" itself, for what is here intended is fully and adequately given in itself. Any self-givenness other than that of the genuinely immanent (*reell Immanente*) is not yet in view.

4) So for the moment no distinction is made. The first step toward clarity now is this: the genuinely immanent (*reell Immanentes*), or what would here mean the same, the adequately self-given, is beyond question. I may make use of it. That which is transcendent (not genuinely immanent) I may not use. Therefore,

¹ Tr. note: we have rendered Husserl's word *schauen* as "see," the point of the double quotes being that this use of "see" is broader than simply seeing with one's eyes.

² Tr. note: *reelle Immanenz* has no straightforward translation. The distinction Husserl has in mind is the immanence of universals (essences) vs. the (*reelle*) immanence of mental occurrences and their contents, e.g., *cogitationes*, their contents; also, psychological occurrences such as toothaches. Everything (*reell*) immanent is existentially mind-dependent. Essences, on the other hand, are neither mental occurrences nor contents. They are intentionally in-existent objects of cognitive acts, specifically of "seeings," but they are not ingredients of such acts. Their immanence is simply their *givenness* to "seeing."

I must accomplish a *phenomenological reduction*: I must exclude all that is *transcendently posited*.

Why? [Because] if I am in the dark as to how cognition can reach that which is transcendent, not given in itself but “intended <6> as being outside,” / no cognition or science of the transcendent can help to dispel the darkness. What I want is *clarity*. I want to understand *the possibility* of that reaching. But this, if we examine its sense, signifies: I want to come face to face with the essence of the possibility of that reaching. I want to make it given to me in an act of “seeing.” A “seeing” cannot be demonstrated. The blind man who wishes to see cannot be made to see by means of scientific proofs. Physical and physiological theories about colors give no “seeing” (*schauende*) clarity about the meaning of color as those with eyesight have it. If, therefore, the critique of cognition is a science, as it doubtless is in the light of these considerations, a science which is to clarify all species and forms of cognition, *it can make no use of any science of the natural sort*. It cannot tie itself to the conclusions that any natural science has reached about what is. For it they remain in question. As far as the critique of cognition is concerned, all the sciences are only *phenomena of science*. Every tie of that sort signifies a defective *μετάβασις* (foundation). This comes about only by way of a mistaken but often seductive *shifting between problems*: between explaining cognition as a fact of nature in psychological and scientific terms and elucidating cognition in terms of its essential capabilities to accomplish its task. Accordingly, if we are to avoid this confusion and remain constantly mindful of the meaning of the question concerning these capabilities, we need *phenomenological reduction*.

This means: everything transcendent (that which is not given to me immanently) is to be assigned the index zero, i.e., its existence, its validity is not to be assumed as such, except at most as *the phenomenon of a claim to validity*. I am to treat all sciences only as phenomena, hence not as systems of valid truths, not as premises, not even as hypotheses for me to reach truth with. This applies to the whole of psychology and the whole of natural science. Meanwhile, the proper *meaning of our principle* is in the constant challenge to stay with the objects as they are in question *here* in the critique of cognition and not to confuse the problems

here with quite different ones. The elucidation of the ways in which cognition is possible does not depend upon the ways of objective science. / To bring knowledge to evident self-givenness <7> and to seek to view the nature of its accomplishment does not mean to deduce, to make inductions, to calculate, etc. It is not the same as eliciting, with reasons, novel things from things already given or purportedly given.

B. The Second Level of the Phenomenological Orientation

We now need a *new stratum of considerations* in order to achieve a higher level of clarity about the nature of phenomenological research and its problems.

1) First, the Cartesian *cogitatio* already requires the phenomenological reduction. The psychological phenomenon in psychological apperception and objectification is not a truly absolute datum. The truly absolute datum is the *pure phenomenon*, that which is reduced. The mentally active ego, the object, man in time, the thing among things, etc., are not absolute data; hence man's mental activity as his activity is no absolute datum either. *We abandon finally the standpoint of psychology, even of descriptive psychology.* And so what is also *reduced* is the question which initially drove us: no longer how can I, this man, contact in my mental processes something existing in itself, perhaps out there, beyond me; but we now replace this hitherto ambiguous question, unstable and complex, because of its transcendent burden, with the *pure basic question*: How can the pure phenomenon of cognition reach something which is not immanent to it? How can the absolute self-givenness of cognition reach something not self-given and how is this reaching to be understood?

At the same time the concept of *genuine immanence (reellen Immanenz)* is reduced. It no longer signifies immanence in something *real (reale Immanenz)*, the immanence in human consciousness and in the *real (realen)* psychic phenomenon.

2) Once we have the "seen" phenomena, it seems that we already have a phenomenology, a science of these phenomena.

But as soon as we begin there, we notice a certain constriction. / <8> The field of absolute phenomena — taken one at a time — does not seem to be enough to fulfill our intentions. What good are

single "seeings" to us, no matter how securely they bring our *cogitationes* to self-givenness? At first it seems beyond question that on the basis of these "seeings" we can undertake logical operations, can compare, contrast, subsume under concepts, predicate, although, as appears later, -behind these operations stand new objectivities. But even if what here seems beyond question were taken for granted and considered no further, we could not understand how we could here arrive at universally valid findings of the sort we need.

But one thing seems to help us along: *eidetic abstraction*. It yields inspectable universals, species, essences, and so it seems to provide the redeeming idea: for do we not seek "seeing" clarity about the essence of cognition? Cognition belongs to the sphere of *cogitationes*. Accordingly, we must through "seeing" bring its universal objects into the consciousness of the universal. Thus it becomes possible to have a doctrine about the essence of cognition.

We take this step in agreement with a tenet of Descartes's concerning *clear and distinct perceptions*. The "existence" of the *cogitatio* is guaranteed by its absolute *self-givenness*, by its givenness in *pure evidence (Evidenz)*. Whenever we have pure evidence (*Evidenz*), the pure viewing and grasping of something objective directly and in itself, we have the same guarantees, the same certainties.

This step gave us a new objectivity as absolutely given, i.e., the *objectivity of essences*; and as to begin with the logical acts which find expression in assertions based upon what is intuited remain unnoticed, so now we get the field of *assertions about essences*, viz., of what is generally the case as given in pure "seeing." That is to say at first undifferentiated from the individually given universal objects.

3) Yet do we now have everything; do we have the fully delineated phenomenology and the clear self-evidence to put us in the position of having what we need for the critique of cognition? / And are we clear about the issues to be resolved?

No, the step we took leads us further. It makes clear to us in the first place that *genuine (reell) immanence* (and the same is true of transcendence) is but a special case of the *broader concept of immanence as such*. No longer is it a commonplace and taken on face value that *the absolutely given* and the *genuinely immanent*

are one and the same. For that which is universal is absolutely given but is not genuinely immanent. *The act of cognizing* the universal is something singular. At any given time, it is a moment in the stream of consciousness. *The universal itself*, which is given in evidence (*Evidenz*) within the stream of consciousness is nothing singular but just a universal, and in the genuine (*reellen*) sense it is transcendent.

Consequently, the idea of *phenomenological reduction* acquires a more immediate and more profound determination and a clearer meaning. It means not the exclusion of the genuinely transcendent (perhaps even in some psychologico-empirical sense), but the exclusion of the transcendent as such as something to be accepted as existent, i.e., everything that is not evident givenness in its true sense, that is not absolutely given to pure "seeing." But, of course, everything of what we said remains. Inductive or deductive scientific conclusions or facets, etc., from hypotheses, facts, axioms, remain excluded and are allowed only as "phenomena"; and the same with all reference to any "knowing" and "cognition": inquiry must concern itself always with *pure "seeing"* and, therefore, not with the genuinely immanent. It is inquiry within the sphere of pure evidence, inquiry into essences. We also said that its field is the *a priori within absolute self-givenness*.

Thus the field is now characterized. It is a field of absolute cognitions, within which the ego and the world and God and the mathematical manifolds and whatever else may be a scientifically objective matter are held in abeyance, cognitions which are, therefore, also not dependent on these matters, which are valid in their own right, whether we are sceptics with regard to the others or not. All that remains as it is. The root of the matter, however, is *to grasp the meaning of the absolutely given, the absolute clarity of the given*, which | excludes every meaningful doubt, in a <10> word, *to grasp the absolutely "seeing" evidence which gets hold of itself*. To a certain extent in the discovery of all this lies the historical significance of the Cartesian method of doubt. But for Descartes to discover and to abandon were the same. We do nothing but clearly formulate and develop consistently what was always implicit in this age-old project. We part company in this connection with psychologistic interpretations of evidence in terms of feelings.

C. The Third Level of the Phenomenological Orientation

Once more we need a new level of considerations, to give us greater clarity about the meaning of phenomenology and to develop further its problems.

How far does self-givenness reach? Is it contained in the givenness of the *cogitatio* and in the ideations which grasp it in its generality? Our phenomenological sphere, the sphere of absolute clarity, of immanence in the true sense, reaches no farther than self-givenness reaches.

We are once again led somewhat deeper, and in depths lie the obscurities and in the obscurities lie the problems.

Everything seemed at first simple and hardly requiring hard work. The prejudice about immanence as genuine immanence, as if the latter were what mattered, one may cast off, and yet one remains at first wedded to genuine immanence, at least in a certain sense. It seems, at first, that in "seeing" essences we have only to grasp in its generality the genuinely immanent in the *cogitationes* and to establish the connections rooted in essences. This, too, seems an easy matter. We reflect; we look back at our own acts; we appraise their genuine contents, as they are, only under phenomenological reduction. This appears to be the sole difficulty. And now, of course, there is nothing further than to lift that which is "seen" into consciousness of universality.

The matter, however, becomes less cozy when we take a closer <11> look at the data. First, the *cogitationes*, which / we regard as simple data and in no way mysterious, hide all sorts of transcendencies.

If we look closer and notice how in the mental process, say of [perceiving] a sound, even after phenomenological reduction, *appearance and that which appears stand in contrast*, and this *in the midst of pure givenness*, hence in the midst of true immanence, then we are taken aback. Perhaps the sound lasts. We have there the patently given unity of the sound and its duration with its temporal phases, the present and the past. On the other hand, when we reflect, the phenomenon of enduring sound, itself a temporal phenomenon, has its own now-phase and past phases. And if one picks out a now-phase of the phenomenon there is not

only the objective now of the sound itself, but the now of the sound is but a point in the duration of a sound.

Detailed analyses will be given in the course of our special tasks. The above suggestion is enough to call attention to a new point: that the phenomenon of sound perception, even as evident and reduced, demands within the immanent a distinction between *appearance* and *that which appears*. We thus have two absolute data, the givenness of the appearing and the givenness of the object; and the object within this immanence is not immanent in the sense of genuine immanence; it is not a concrete part (*Stück*) of the appearance, i.e., the past phases of the enduring sound are now still objective and yet they are not genuinely contained in the present moment of the appearance. Therefore, we also find in the case of the phenomenon of perception what we found in the case of consciousness of universals, namely, that it is a consciousness which constitutes something self-given which is not contained within what is occurring [in the world] and is not at all found as *cogitatio*.

At the lowest level of reflection, the naive level, at first it seems as if evidence were a matter of simple "seeing," a mental inspection without a character of its own, always one and the same and in itself undifferentiated: the "seeing" just "sees" the things (*Sachen*), / the things are simply there and in the truly <12> evident "seeing" they are there in consciousness, and "seeing" is simply to "see" them. Or, to use our previous simile: a direct grasping or taking or pointing to something that simply is and is there. All difference is thus in the things that exist in themselves and have their differences through themselves.

And now how different the "seeing" of things shows itself to be on closer analysis. Even if we retain under the heading of attention the notion of an undifferentiated and in itself no further describable "seeing," it is, nevertheless, apparent that it really makes no sense at all to talk about things which are "simply there" and just need to be "seen." On the contrary, this "simply being there" consists of certain mental processes of specific and changing structure, such as perception, imagination, memory, predication, etc., and in them the things are not contained as in a hull or vessel. Instead, the things come to be *constituted* in these mental processes, although in reality they are

not at all to be found in them. For "things to be given" is for them to be *exhibited* (represented) as so and so in such phenomena. And this is not to say that the things once more exist in themselves and "send their representatives into consciousness." This sort of thing cannot occur to us within the sphere of phenomenological reduction. Instead, the things are and are given in appearance and in virtue of the appearance itself; though they are, or are taken as, individually separable from the appearance, they are essentially inseparable from it insofar as the single appearance (the consciousness of the given) is not in question.

Thus this marvelous correlation between the *phenomenon of cognition* and the *object of cognition* reveals itself everywhere. Now let us notice that the task of phenomenology, or rather the area of its tasks and inquiries, is no such trivial things as merely looking, merely opening one's eyes. Already in the first and simplest cases, in the lowest forms of cognition, the greatest difficulties confront pure analysis and the inspection of essences. It is easy to talk of correlation in general but it is very difficult to clarify the way in which an object of cognition *constitutes* itself <13> in cognition. / And the task is just this: within the framework of pure evidence (*Evidenz*) or self-givenness to *trace all forms of givenness and all correlations* and to conduct an elucidatory analysis. Of course, to do this we need to take account not only of single acts but also of their complexities, of the consistency or inconsistency of their connections and of the intentions (*Teleologien*) apparent in them. These connections are not conglomerations but distinctively connected and as it were congruent unities, and unities of cognition, which, as unities of cognition have also their unitary objective correlates. Thus they belong themselves to the *cognitive acts*, their types are cognitive types, their native forms are forms of thought and forms of intuition (the word not here to be taken in its Kantian sense).

It now remains to trace step by step the data in all their modifications, those that are, properly speaking, data and those that are not, the simple and the compounded ones, those that so to say are constituted at once and those that essentially are built up stepwise, those that are absolutely valid and those that in the process of cognition acquire givenness and validity in an unlimited progression.

We finally arrive in this way at an understanding of how the transcendent real object can be met (can be known in its nature) in the cognitive act as that which one primarily means by it, and how the sense of this meaning is filled out step by step in a developing cognitive context (if only it has the proper forms which belong to the constitution of the object of experience). We then understand how the object of experience is progressively constituted, and how this manner of being constituted is prescribed. We understand that such a stepwise constitution is required by the very essence of the experienced object.

Along this path one approaches the methodological forms which determine all the sciences and are constitutive of all scientifically given objects, and so also the elucidation of the theory of science and with it implicitly the elucidation of all the sciences; however, only implicitly, i.e., it is only once this enormous work of elucidation has been accomplished that the critique of cognition will be fit to become / a critique of the <14> specialized sciences and thereby to evaluate them metaphysically.

These then are the problems of givenness, the problems of the *constitution of objects of all sorts within cognition*. The phenomenology of cognition is the science of cognitive phenomena in two senses. On the one hand it has to do with cognitions as appearances, presentations, acts of consciousness in which this or that object is presented, is an object of consciousness, passively or actively. On the other hand, the phenomenology of cognition has to do with these objects as presenting themselves in this manner. The word "phenomenon" is ambiguous in virtue of the essential correlation between *appearance and that which appears*. *Φαινόμενον* (phenomenon) in its proper sense means that which appears, and yet it is by preference used for the appearing itself, for the subjective phenomenon (if one may use this expression which is apt to be misunderstood in the vulgar psychological sense).

In reflection, the *cogitatio*, the appearing itself, becomes an object, and this encourages the rise of ambiguity. Finally, we need not repeat once more that in speaking about investigating the objects and modes of cognition, we always mean investigation into essences, which, in the sphere of the absolutely given, exhibits in a general way the ultimate meaning, the possibility, the

essence of the objectivity of cognition and of the cognition of objects.

It goes without saying that the *general phenomenology of reason* has to solve also the parallel problems of the correlation between *valuing* and the *things valued*, etc. If the word "phenomenology" were used so broadly as to cover the analysis of everything self-given, the incoherent data would become coherent: analyzing sense-given entities according to their various kinds, etc. — the common element is then in the methodology of the analysis of essences within the sphere of immediate evidence.