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INTENTIONALITY VIA INTENSIONS

I. INTENTIONALITY VIA NOEMATA

THE philosophy of Husserl—to be explicit, phenomenology—is best understood as a particular kind of approach to the problem of intentionality. It was Brentano who brought to vogue the view that “acts” of consciousness—perceiving, believings, hopings, desirings, and so on—are intentional, i.e., directed toward objects. This view has been enshrined in the slogan, “Consciousness is consciousness of something.” Phenomenology is an attempt to provide a *theory* of intentionality, explaining the nature of this property of consciousness. Husserl’s explanation is characterized by its dependence on the postulation of a class of abstract entities called “noemata.” Roughly, Husserl’s theory of intentionality is that there is bound up with every act a certain “meaning,” or “noema,” in virtue of which the act is directed, or intentional. Our purpose will be to examine the nature of noemata and their role in the intentionality of acts. We shall argue that there is a remarkably strong connection between Husserl’s notion of noema, or act-meaning, and the more familiar concept of sense, or linguistic meaning. In fact, we argue, noemata are best understood as just the sort of intensional entities that have been both widely acclaimed and maligned among post-Fregean analytic philosophers.

Our discussion is an extension of Føllesdal’s recent and persuasive arguments that Husserl’s notion of noema is a generalization of the notion of linguistic meaning—in particular, the notion of *Sinn* as developed by Frege.¹ It is important to see the precise sense in which Husserl himself believed this to be true. Frege noted the role of meaning in linguistic reference, and Husserl saw in this the role of meaning in intentionality generally. According to Frege,

¹ Dagfinn Føllesdal, “Husserl’s Notion of Noema,” this JOURNAL, LXVI, 20 (Oct. 16, 1969): 680–687.

linguistic expressions denote their references by means of their Sinne, or meanings; according to Husserl, acts of consciousness are intentional—directed toward objects—by way of their noemata. Just as the introduction of Sinne as expressed by words provides the keystone of Frege's theory of reference, so the postulation of noemata as correlated with acts of consciousness is the keystone of Husserl's theory of intentionality. To each act, Husserl postulated, there belongs exactly one noema, and to each noema there belongs at most one object. An act is directed toward its object by way of its noema, in that the object of an act is the object prescribed by the act's noema (*ibid.*, 683): the object of an act is a (partial) function of the noema of the act. This, in an axiomatic nutshell, is Husserl's theory of intentionality. It is, strictly, a *generalization* of Frege's theory of reference. For Husserl recognized speech acts as a *species* of intentional acts and, even more interesting, linguistic reference as a species of intentionality. The directedness of *all* these acts, he believed, must be explained in terms of meanings.

The shortcomings of Brentano's account of intentionality are now a commonplace: there are acts whose objects do not seem to exist in any ordinary sense, and if one gives up the claim that these acts have objects, the claim that they are directed seems to depart with it—barring, of course, favoring the objects with something like "intentional inexistence," which is the keystone cop-out of Brentano's theory. It is difficulties such as these, difficulties which have their analogues in the theory of linguistic reference, that Husserl's notion of noema is designed to overcome. Thus Husserl maintains it is not the fact that acts have objects that accounts for their intentionality, but rather that there corresponds to each such act a noema. If the object to which the act seems to be directed does in fact exist, then it is in virtue of the act's noema that this object is intended in the act. But even if this object does not exist, the act may nonetheless be said to be directed (though not directed *to* any existing thing) by means of its noema.

A noema, then, is an entity in virtue of which an act is intentional. But in the absence of an explication of the nature and function of noemata, this statement is unhelpful. Without understanding what noemata are, we have small hope of comprehending the theory that Husserl propounds in terms of them.

The study of the noemata associated with acts of consciousness is thus the central task of phenomenology. Particular phenomenological analyses study the noemata of particular kinds of acts (for example, aesthetic experiences). These particular analyses are usually

characterized by those who undertake them as employing a special phenomenological *method* for doing philosophy (and possibly other things as well). The basic method of phenomenological analysis is the performance of what seems to be a particularly difficult feat of mental gymnastics called the “epoché,” or “transcendental-phenomenological reduction”;² and it is common to identify phenomenology itself with this method. It is, however, a serious mistake, at least pedagogically, to view phenomenology as a method *rather than* a particular philosophical theory. Husserl himself, in fact, lays out a very rich theory, purportedly through the use of this extraordinary method of inquiry. The pedagogic mistake consists in trying to tell someone how to carry out this method—how to perform the epoché—without carefully articulating the philosophical theory in terms of which it can be said what this method is. The epoché, in fact, is an heuristic device whose purpose is to acquaint us with noemata. But the method is neither comprehensible nor effective without an understanding of the nature and role of the entities we are to seek by means of its use.

Consequently, the performance of the epoché—the use of the phenomenological method—will play no role in our present efforts. Instead, we proceed to an articulation of Husserl’s theory of noemata and their role in intentionality. We shall, in other words, be doing *metaphenomenology* rather than phenomenology itself. When this is said and done, we shall see that this theory of noemata affords an account of epoché which avoids the mistakes one is likely to make if one proceeds to the method in ignorance of the theory.

II. NOEMATA AS INTENSIONAL ENTITIES

Our fundamental thesis is that noemata are intensional entities which confer intentionality on acts of consciousness. Noemata are intensional² in exactly the sense that meanings of words are intensional. Husserl calls on noemata to explain the directedness of acts toward objects in the same way that Frege calls on meanings to ex-

² Husserl says ‘intentional’ where we here say ‘intensional’. Husserl uses ‘intentional’ in two senses: acts are intentional in the sense that they are directed, whereas noemata are intentional in the sense that they are abstract entities of the same kind as meanings. [Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen*, I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950), §§88–91.] We use ‘intensional’ in the latter sense, since the word has been widely used in that sense by analytic philosophers concerned with the theory of meaning. However, exactly what intensions, as abstract entities, are like is no less (nor more) a mystery with Husserl than with Frege, Church, *et al.* All that we presume to know of noemata is what Husserl tells us they *do* in his theory of intentionality—and, we shall claim, which linguistic expressions express them, i.e., take them as their meanings. Husserl’s knowledge of noemata allegedly comes through epoché; hence its importance as the methodology of phenomenology.

plain the reference of words to objects. But the significant point is not merely that intentionality is an analogical extension of reference. It is rather that referring to an object linguistically is but one of many ways of consciously intending that object. Not only may I talk about an object; I may also think about it, imagine it, remember it, desire it, or perceive it. All these ways of intending the object are acts of consciousness directed toward that object. Meanings play a role in acts of referring to the object. And they also play a role—the same role—in these other acts directed toward the object.

It is Husserl's insight that meaning plays a role in consciousness generally. (This insight, in fact, is the basis of a *phenomenological* theory of mind, properly articulated after the fashion of Husserl.) Meanings direct acts toward objects—whether these acts are linguistic acts, thinking acts, or perceptual acts. In some cases the same meaning directs both a linguistic act and a nonlinguistic act (e.g., a perception). But Husserl is typically concerned with act-meaning rather than word-meaning. Linguistic meaning becomes a special case of act-meaning, in that the meaning of a *linguistic* act is just a meaning linguistically *expressed*. Thus, even in the linguistic case meaning attaches primarily to *acts*, to linguistic acts, events of utterance, rather than to strings of symbols.³ So meaning, *Sinn* à la Frege, plays the same role in all acts, whether linguistic acts or nonlinguistic acts (like perception). In this way Husserl generalizes the notion of *Sinn* so that it is no longer exclusively (or even primarily) a linguistic notion. He says so explicitly:

Originally these words ['to mean' ('Bedeutung') and 'meaning' ('Bedeutung')] relate only to the sphere of speech, of "expression." But it is almost inevitable and at the same time an important step for knowledge to extend and suitably to modify the meaning of these words so that in a certain way they apply to . . . all acts, whether these involve expressive acts or not. . . . We use the word 'Sinn' . . . in its wider application.⁴

³ Quine would doubtless agree *could* he accommodate meanings, for he explicitly avers the same of truth and surely something similar of reference as well. Cf. W. V. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 13; *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 192f, 208f; and *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia, 1969), pp. 28–29. However, the invocation of intensional entities of any kind to explain consciousness (language use, in particular) can be seen as the foremost target of Quine's semantical demythologizing.

⁴ *Ideen*, I, §124, 304. Hereafter, unless otherwise noted, parenthetical paragraph and page references to Husserl will be to *Ideen*, I.

Of course Husserl's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* is entirely different from Frege's. In ordinary German usage either 'Sinn' or 'Bedeutung' can be used for 'meaning'. Husserl is drawing on this ordinary usage. And in fact

For Husserl a Sinn, or "noematic Sinn," is an intensional entity which can be utilized in many different *ways* of intending an object: linguistically in a speech act, perceptively in a perception, recollectively in memory, and so on. The object of an act is intended by means of a Sinn, but it is in each case intended in a specific "way." The particular way of intending an object in a given act Husserl calls the "thetic character" of an act.⁵ The thetic character of an act, as the way the object is intended, must be distinguished from the Sinn, as the means by which the object is intended. This distinction is reminiscent of Frege's distinction between the "content" of a judgment (a proposition: p) and the judgment itself (the assertion of the proposition, positing its truth: $\vdash p$).⁶ Observing the very same distinction, Husserl would call the content of a judgment its "Sinn" and the assertive character of the judging its "thetic character." The same meaning-content, or Sinn, can be present in acts of markedly different thetic character, linguistic or otherwise. It is the same entity, and hence of course the same sort of entity, an intensional entity, in any case. It is in virtue of this claim that Husserl can extend the notion of Sinn to acts of all thetic characters.

The noematic Sinn plays the role of directing an act to its object. Yet noemata are not to be identified with noematic Sinne, since Husserl sees for noemata a role in addition to the specific role played by noematic Sinne. A noema, Husserl assumes, is a complex intensional entity structured into different components, one of which is the noematic Sinn (§90). The noematic Sinn, because it prescribes the object of the act, is the most important component for Husserl's theory of intentionality. Yet acts differ not only with their objects but also with the "ways" their objects are intended. Hence, since noemata are to be meanings of *acts*, Husserl believes the thetic character of an act must be reflected in its noema, and so he postulates a corresponding component of the noema. Thus, in addition to the noematic Sinn, we find in the noema the noematic correlate of the thetic character as something "inseparable from . . . the Sinn of perception, from the Sinn of phantasy, from

he comments on Frege's unusual use of 'Bedeutung': cf. *Logische Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), I, 52-53; or J. N. Findlay's English translation, *Logical Investigations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), I, 292.

⁵ §§91, 117. In fact, the "way" an object is "given" in an act (its "Gegebenheitsweise") includes more than the specifically thetic character of the act, but that is a needless complication for our purposes.

⁶ Peter Geach and Max Black, trans., *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 1-2.

the Sinn of recollection" (§91, 227). So the complete noema—noematic Sinn plus noematic correlate of the thetic character—is a complex intensional entity. Husserl, in fact, denotes this "unity of Sinn and thetic character [more precisely, its noematic correlate] as *proposition* [Satz]." ⁷ Indeed, we shall shortly argue, the noema of an act is the meaning (proposition) expressed by an appropriately constructed sentence describing that act.

Husserl remarks that the concepts of "Sinn" and "Satz" which apply generally to acts and the noemata of acts are broader than the notions of "sense" and "proposition" which apply only to linguistic expressions and speech acts. But, he says, the concepts remain fundamentally the same.⁸ Since linguistic acts are a species of acts, noematic Sinne and Sätze include linguistic senses and propositions as a special subclass, as the noematic Sinne and Sätze of linguistic acts, the meanings brought to expression in speech and writing. And in fact the very same meanings may play in both linguistic and nonlinguistic acts.

III. THE EXPRESSIBILITY OF NOEMATA: SEMANTIC ASCENT

We have noted two of Husserl's claims which, taken together, provide insight into the phenomenological enterprise: (1) acts with different thetic characters may have the same noematic Sinn; and (2) linguistic acts are a species of intentional acts in general. Let us look at the first claim for a moment. Suppose I perceive an object, say the tree in Husserl's garden. This act has a noema, and that noema is structured into two parts: a thetic component, which correlates with the act's being perceptual in nature; and a Sinn component, which prescribes the object being perceived. Now suppose at a later time I remember that same tree exactly as I once perceived it. This recollective act also has a noema, which is also structured into two components. Its thetic component differs from that of the *perceptual* noema, for this noema correlates with an act of *memory*. But, Husserl says, its noematic Sinn, prescribing the same object from the same point of view, is identical with the Sinn of the perceptual noema (§91). This example illustrates what, for our purposes, is a most important general principle: two acts with different thetic characters have the same noematic Sinn, provided they are directed to the same object characterized according to the same aspects.⁹

⁷ §133, 324. Husserl makes it clear elsewhere that it is an intentional/intentional *correlate* to thetic character that enters the noema. Cf. §99.

⁸ *Loc. cit.*; cf. also §124, 304.

⁹ The qualification, "characterized according to the same aspects," will be explicated in sec. IV below.

This point increases in significance as soon as we combine it with the second. A linguistic act, even though it differs in thetic character, may nonetheless be directed by the same noematic Sinn that directs a nonlinguistic act. Such will be the case when the linguistic act and the nonlinguistic act are both directed to the same object characterized according to the same aspects. This is important, for linguistic acts have a characteristic that other acts do not have: they *express* their Sinne, in words, in publicly observable verbal behavior. In fact, for every nonlinguistic (e.g., perceptual) act, there is some appropriate linguistic act that will express through the use of language the noematic Sinn of that act. And this is precisely because the Sinn of the linguistic act and the Sinn of the perceptual act are the same. So, Husserl says:

Whatever is "meant as such," every meaning [Meinung] in the noematic Sinn (that is, as noematic nucleus) of any act whatsoever is expressible through "linguistic meanings" [durch "Bedeutungen"] (§124, 305).

But not only is every noematic Sinn expressible linguistically. Every noema as a whole, we maintain, is also in principle expressible linguistically.¹⁰ Husserl conceives noemata as propositions of a special sort. In fact, we shall argue, the noema of an act is the sense of an appropriate sentence describing the act. This noema is expressible, then, insofar as it can function as the noematic Sinn of a linguistic act, say an uttering of the appropriate act-sentence.

Let us again take an example. Suppose that Smith is standing in Husserl's garden and looking at a tree. His seeing the tree is an act which we might describe (in a simplified fashion) by using a sentence such as 'Smith sees the tree in the garden'. Now, the definite description 'the tree in the garden' plays a particularly important role here: it refers to, or denotes, the object of Smith's act, the object of which Smith is conscious. But not only does this expression have a reference that is identical with the object of Smith's act; it also has a meaning or sense (*à la Frege*). The sense of this definite description (appropriately expanded) is, we argue, the noematic Sinn of Smith's act of perception.

¹⁰ Cf. *Logical Investigations*, vi, ch. 1, esp. §§1-3. There are important qualifications to this claim, dealing for the most part with the richness and evidential "fullness" of sensory intuition. But to allow for these here would be a needless complication of our fundamental contention that noemata are intensions. It should be noted, however, that without further modification our present characterization of noemata is unable to account for evidential "fulfillment." Cf. *Logical Investigations*, vi.

But not just any expanded description of the object of Smith's act will serve to express the Sinn in the noema of the act. The Sinn expressed by the description will be identical with the noematic Sinn of Smith's perception if, and only if, it picks out the object of the act exactly in accordance with those aspects or respects which Smith perceives of the object—in short, the description must be synonymous with that description under which Smith perceives the object. This limitation on the descriptions that may be used is reflected in the referential opacity of the context 'Smith sees ____'. If the definite description is to express the Sinn in the noema of the act Smith is performing, then the description must yield a true sentence when placed in the context 'Smith sees ____'. In other words, the description must not only describe the object Smith sees, or seems to see; it must also describe this object "as" Smith sees it.¹¹ Thus the noematic Sinn is the sense of a definite description of the object of the act *as* experienced in the act. Shortly we shall attempt to lend detail to this account of the noematic Sinn by characterizing more precisely the definite descriptions that denote the object as experienced and express the noematic Sinn in the noema. We shall see that these descriptions must be such that they express two distinct components of the Sinn. One of these components correlates with the object that is experienced; the other prescribes the properties that object is experienced as having.

Whereas the Sinn in a noema is the sense of an appropriate definite description of an object as experienced in an act with this noema, the complete noema is roughly the sense of an appropriate sentence that describes the *act* as experienced, or undergone, by its subject. The complete noema includes both a Sinn and athetic component. In an act-sentence such as 'Smith sees the tree in the garden', the operator 'Smith sees' indicates thethetic character of the act. This operator also expresses a sense, or meaning. Although Husserl seems not to have explicitly instructed us to do so, we may take the sense of the expression 'Smith sees' to be the noematic correlate of thethetic character of the act. We then achieve a natural rendering of Husserl's claim that the complete noema is a Satz: the complete noema is an intensional entity very much like the proposition expressed by the sentence (appropriately expanded) 'Smith sees the tree in the garden'; it includes as noematic Sinn the sense of 'the tree in the garden' and asthetic component the sense of 'Smith sees'. Accordingly, although there will be qualifications,

¹¹ Cf. *Ideen*, I, §88, 221; §89, 222; §97, 244; §130, 319.

we shall assume that a noema is a proposition expressed by an act-sentence such as 'Smith sees the tree in the garden' or 'Smith hopes that the tree bears fruit'.¹²

That noemata can be expressed linguistically suggests a method for getting acquainted with noemata which is more in line with the thinking of analytic philosophers than are the more usual, but often obscure, procedures of epoché and transcendental reduction. We are all of us quite used to studying linguistic meanings. That noemata are linguistically expressible means that we can avoid the procedural barriers of epoché as the method for comprehending such things as, say, "perceptual noemata": we can get an indirect hold on noemata by a sort of semantic ascent, by concentrating instead upon those linguistic expressions which express the meanings (noemata) that Husserl urges us to study. This gives the analytic philosopher a sort of semantically short-circuited epoché, whereby he may (as he is wont to do anyway) study meanings rather than references.

Our next concern is to give a detailed account of the role that noemata, specifically noematic Sinne, play in the intentionality of acts. Because noemata and Sinne are linguistically expressible, we shall be able to proceed by discussing act-sentences and the meanings they express. Husserl's search for noemata and noematic Sinne as entities that will solve the problems of the intentionality of acts may here be seen as a continuation of Frege's quest for the elusive meaning entities needed to solve the problems of the opacity or intensionality of act-contexts (such as 'Smith believes that ____'). Thus phenomenology as conceived by Husserl and analytic philosophy in the Fregean tradition of philosophical semantics become two sides of a common coin.¹³

IV. INTENTIONALITY VIA THE NOEMATIC SINN IN A NOEMA

Husserl's theory of intentionality, as derived from Brentano, is traditionally glossed by saying that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. What is new with *Husserl's* theory of intentionality is his particular account of *how* consciousness comes to be intentional: the intentionality of an act consists in its involving a

¹² Note that Husserl takes so-called propositional attitudes (such as Smith's hope that . . .) to be directed to states of affairs or events. The noematic Sinn of such an act is itself a sentence-meaning. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, v, §§17, 28, 36.

¹³ Some of the implications of this claim have been explored in detail in our respective dissertations: *vide* Ronald McIntyre, "Husserl and Referentiality: The Role of the Noema as an Intensional Entity" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1970); and David W. Smith, "Intentionality, Noemata, and Individuation: The Role of Individuation in Husserl's Theory of Intentionality" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1970).

noema. But we can be more specific, as was Husserl: an act is directed, putatively to some object, in virtue of the Sinn component in its noema (§129).

To do justice to Husserl, we ought to embellish the traditional gloss of intentionality: a consciousness is a consciousness of some *particular* thing under some particular *description*, i.e., as having certain properties. (I see *this* object as a tree blooming in Husserl's garden.) This embellishment is reflected in the fact that a noematic Sinn is itself structured into two components. One of these components has to do with *which* object is given in the act, while the other prescribes which *properties* this object is given as having. By seeing in detail just what this distinction comes to we can make our earlier account of a Sinn more complete and, at the same time, see the role of Sinne in Husserl's theory of intentionality.

Our basic thesis about noematic Sinne is that, as Husserl explicitly maintains, they are expressible through words, linguistic expressions. But just which linguistic expression are we to take as expressing the noematic Sinn in the noema of a given act, for example, of seeing a tree? (Husserl takes perception as the paradigm of intentional acts.) Husserl says that the composition of a Sinn is "unfolded in a definitely limited description . . . of the 'meant objective just as it is meant'."¹⁴ The relevant description must describe only the "meant objective just as it is meant." But what is this? It is the object of the act just as it is given in the act.¹⁵ In the case of my perceiving a tree the linguistic expression will describe the tree exactly as it is seen by me in this one particular act of seeing and from this one particular point of view. Such an expression might begin, 'I see something which is brown on this side and has rough bark and has green leaves and . . .'. Each predicate that is used to describe the tree as I see it expresses a meaning (a linguistic meaning), and each of these predicate-meanings is a component of the noematic meaning or Sinn of the act involved. A complete description of the object as it is seen will thus serve to express fully what Husserl terms "the 'content' of the object-nucleus [i.e., the Sinn] of the noema in question" (§130, 320): this noematic "con-

¹⁴ §130, 319. Actually, the description Husserl there mentions is a so-called noematic description. A description of the object of an act exactly as given in the act we call a *phenomenological* description of the object (relative to the act). Husserl lays out an unusual convention on quotation marks such that, when this phenomenological description is enclosed between quotes, the result, called a *noematic description*, refers to the *noematic Sinn* rather than to the object of the act. Given that the phenomenological description *expresses* the Sinn, then, its quotation *denotes* its own meaning, which is the Sinn. *Vide* §89.

¹⁵ In fact, with the "meaning" quotes, it is the Sinn. (See last footnote.)

tent" just is the conjunction of the predicate-meanings. (Figure 1 below depicts the relationship between the linguistic description and the content of the noematic Sinn of the act whose object it describes.) This *content* is a major component (though not the only one) of the noematic Sinn: it is this component, expressed by predicates in the description under which the object is experienced, which prescribes the properties the object is experienced as having.

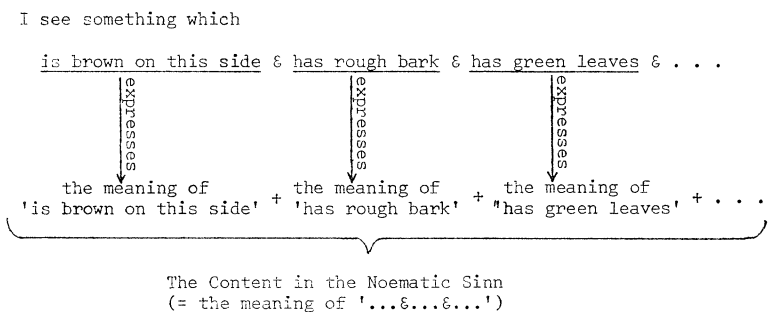


FIGURE 1

Husserl's prescription for how we can express a noematic Sinn, viz., through phenomenological description, should not alienate analytic philosophers. Those who argue for the existence of sense data often begin with the prescription that we try to describe what it is that we "directly" see in a given perception. We are thus supposed to be trapped into giving descriptions like "a patch of blue," "a square shape," etc., after which the sense-datist triumphantly informs us that those were sense data we just described. What Husserl is suggesting we do is *somewhat* like that: we are to describe the object of our act just as we see it. Now, as we have emphasized, the phenomenologist—unlike the sense-datist—will be interested in the meanings rather than the references of the terms in the resulting description. But in addition to this difference, there are two features of the expressions that result from a phenomenological description of objects of perception which render the phenomenological theory of the intentionality of perception incompatible with sense-datum theories.¹⁶ (1) A phenomenological description of an object as seen is much richer than those descriptions which sense-

¹⁶ Since Husserl's theory of perception is not our primary interest here, we shall of course be unconcerned with his difficult notion of the "hyletic" phase of perception. We use sense-datum descriptions merely as a foil against which to view phenomenological descriptions. In fact, what we have to say about the structure of perceptual noemata can be generalized to the noemata of other (nonperceptual) acts as well.

datists give. And (2) the qualities so described are always, for phenomenologists, attributed to some (putative) object; they are not rendered sense data and then themselves taken as the objects of perception. The first point indicates the complexity of the content of the noematic Sinn; and the second, we shall see, can be used to distinguish the second component in the Sinn. Elaborating these points of difference between phenomenological and sense-datum descriptions can yield us a more detailed account of noematic Sinne.

The content in a noematic Sinn, we have seen, consists of the meanings of predicates describing the object exactly as it is given. The predicate-meanings that make up this content are expressible by descriptions which are far more complete than those descriptions sense-datists are wont to give. Not only do I see a tree as having color, shape, etc.; I also see it as having rough bark, as being a tree, and even as something with a back side! In short, I see the tree as a physical object, with all that that involves.

Part of what is involved in my seeing a tree as a physical object is that I have certain expectations about what I will see if, for example, I walk around it. These expectations are also, in some sense, part of my perceiving the tree, and the description of what I see must include corresponding predicates. For example, I expect the tree to have a back side which is presently hidden from view. If I walk around the tree and find no such side or if other expectations involved in the original perception are not fulfilled, the noema is replaced by a new noema associated with a different group of expectations. I would no longer say that I see a tree but rather that perhaps I was having an hallucination or seeing a garden ornament.

The noematic content thus includes meaning correlates of these expectations, the meanings of predicates ascribing properties expected of the object. Some of these properties which I expect of the object in seeing it are relatively "indeterminate," i.e., nonspecific. For example, I expect the tree I see to have a color on its back side, but there may be no particular shade of color I expect its back side to be. Even these relatively nonspecific properties, however, must be included in the description of what I see and must have their correlates in the noematic Sinn of the act.

We can now see more precisely what sorts of predicates may contribute their meanings to the content of the noematic Sinn of an act of perception. There are predicates corresponding to what the sense-datist would term "directly" given qualities of the object: its color, shape, size, etc., as experienced from a particular point of

view. In addition to these, there must be predicates correlated with more and less “determinate” expectations involved in the perceiving. The predicates that express the content of the noematic Sinn of the act of perception, then, may be something like those which occur in the act-description, ‘I see something which is brown on this side and has a back side and has some color on its back side and . . .’. Such a description, of course, obliterates the distinction the sense-datist seeks between what we directly see and what we see only indirectly.¹⁷ But that is true to the phenomenological facts: seeing is seeing as.

The second way in which a phenomenological description of an object of perception differs from a sense-datum description serves to indicate the second component of the Sinn in a noema. The properties described are always, for the phenomenologist, seen as properties *of* an object. When I see a brown tree, it is not (contra sense-datists) the brown that I see but the tree that is brown. Now, of course, I may direct my attention to the brown of the tree; but in that case it is no longer the tree that is the object of my act but the color of the tree. And if I am asked to give a phenomenological description of what I see in *that* case, I will not describe a tree, but rather I will describe the color. Hence, the predicates in a phenomenological description of an object as experienced (indeed, in any kind of act) are taken to be predicates *of* something. And, accordingly, not only does there occur in a noematic Sinn, for each *predicate* in the phenomenological description of the object given through this Sinn, a meaning component expressed by the predicate, but there must also occur in the Sinn a meaning component that renders the properties so described to be properties *of* something. This component of a noematic Sinn Husserl calls the “*determinable X*” in the Sinn.

Thus Husserl argues for the X component in a noematic Sinn by claiming that the predicate-meanings in the Sinn-content must be “predicate[-meaning]s *of* something,”¹⁸ call it an X. The complete noematic Sinn correlates to an object together with *and bearing* certain properties, an “object in the way of its determinations [i.e., properties]”; but the X in the Sinn correlates to this object “sim-

¹⁷ However, for Husserl another similarly motivated distinction enters with the possibility of evidential “fulfillment” in sensory intuition. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, VI.

¹⁸ Cf. §131. On Frege’s lines, a predicate-meaning is an “unsaturated” entity. This line of argument, which Husserl may well have drawn from Frege, is simply the quasi-analogy that the parts of the meaning of an expression correspond to and are expressed by syntactic parts of the expression.

pliciter," "in abstraction from" its properties (§131). Whatever the exact nature of the X in a Sinn, its role is clear: it is an intensional entity that has to do with *which* object this Sinn is related to, and with whether this Sinn is related to numerically the same object as is another Sinn. Thus the X's in noemata play an important role in *individuating* the objects we experience.

Early in *Ideen*, I, and in *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*,¹⁹ Husserl speaks of "substrata" as objects which bear varying properties. The X in a noematic Sinn is clearly an intensional entity correlated to a "substratum." But what sort of doctrine is Husserl committed to regarding substrata? It is tempting to identify substrata with "bare particulars." Then an X would correlate to a bare particular, whereas a complete Sinn would correlate to the particular clothed with specific properties. In the interests of charity, however, we might make do without attributing Husserl a strong doctrine of substrata. The exact relation between an X in a Sinn and the predicate-meanings in the Sinn is not set by Husserl. It corresponds to an object's "bearing" properties, whatever that comes to. The important problem that enters with it, however, is that of individuation: what properties of an object count, and how much do they count, to individuate it, to make it whichever object it is rather than another? In particular, is there a function that assigns to a set of properties exactly one object (and, correlatively, to the set of predicate-meanings in a Sinn exactly one X)?

Is this entity, the X in a Sinn, expressible? And if so, by what form of linguistic expression? We might try taking the X to be the sense of the variable in a definite description ('the object *x* such that . . . *x* . . .') and the complete Sinn to be the sense of the definite description. But this seems not to have been Husserl's move, and so we must modify somewhat our claim that a noematic Sinn is the sense of a definite description. Given Husserl's account of the X, a more likely candidate for expressing an X would be a logically proper name (if such there is), or perhaps a demonstrative, or indexical, term, e.g., 'this';²⁰ for such terms probably denote without appealing to the specific predicate-meanings in the given Sinn, and this seems to be how an X is supposed to function. Though no clear answer can be drawn from Husserl, he seems inclined most

¹⁹ Edited by Martin Heidegger (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966), Appendix III. N.B., Appendix III is not included in James S. Churchill's English translation, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-consciousness* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1964).

²⁰ Cf. *Ideen*, I, §124, where Husserl chooses the schema of 'This is white' to bring to expression the noematic Sinn of a perception.

often to fall back upon the quantifier 'something' as the form of expression that can function in an act-description to express an X (cf. §§121, 131). Thus, to express the noema of an act we might best choose a sentence whose form is that of the act-description, 'Smith sees something which is . . .'.²¹ Then by Figure 2 we might illustrate

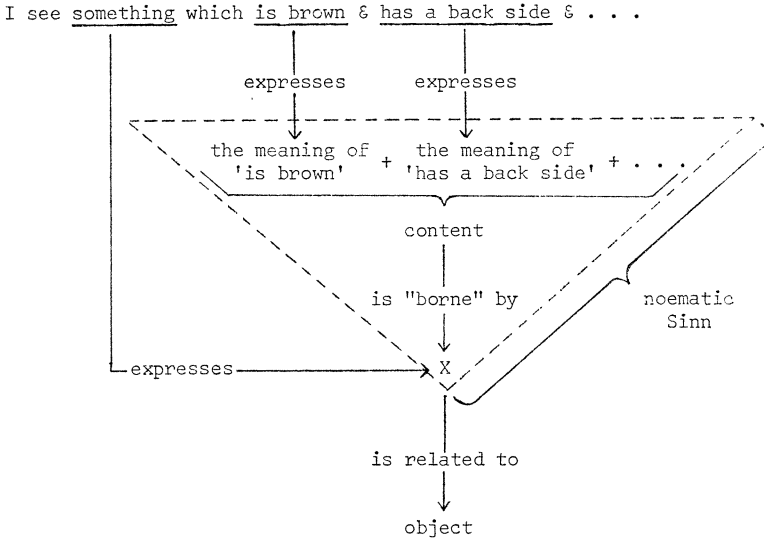


FIGURE 2

how such a sentence serves to express the noema, or in particular the noematic Sinn, whereby a given act is directed to its object.

This abstract meaning entity, the noematic Sinn in a noema, does two things, through its two components. Through its predicate-meanings (collectively, its content), a Sinn prescribes what it is that one experiences about an object given in an act through this Sinn, what properties the object is given as having. And through its X—though probably together with some of its predicate-mean-

²¹ If we render this in the propositional form 'Smith sees *that* . . .', we must ask whether we want the *de dicto* construction 'Smith sees that something is . . .' or the *de re* construction 'There is something of which Smith sees that it is . ..'. The *de re* construction, but not the *de dicto*, says that Smith's perception is directed to a *particular* object. There remains the problem of whether quantification into such an act-context imputes existence to the object. Husserl must allow that it does not. And Hintikka's semantics for such contexts and quantifying into them allows that it does not [cf. Jaakko Hintikka, "On the Logic of Perception," *Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969), p. 161]. These problems are discussed in McIntyre's dissertation "Husserl and Referentiality," pp. 141-147, 164-170.

ings—the Sinn serves to pick out *which* object is given, to *individuate* it.

The role of the X's in noematic Sinne is most clearly evident—and most practically important—in the *co-directedness* of acts, the directedness of different acts to numerically the same object. Consider what happens as I walk around the tree I am seeing. As I do so, my original perception is replaced with new ones in which the tree is presented to me in different ways with somewhat different properties. I now see, for example, that there is really not brown but gray on its back side, that there is a bit of moss clinging to it which I could not previously see, and so on. In short, what I see to be true of the tree changes as I move around it. Now, it is the content, the predicate-meanings, in the noema that account for what I see of the tree. Hence, as I walk around the tree, my original noema is replaced by a sequence of new noemata, each with slightly different noematic content corresponding to the different perceptions I have. Even though this is so, there is nonetheless something that is common to every act I perform as I perceive the tree from different perspectives: every such act is an act of perceiving that *same tree*; they are all acts directed to the same object. It is the determinable X in the noema, we have said, that has most to do with *which* object it is that I am seeing.²² The different noemata that characterize these acts all have the same determinable X: it is in virtue of this common meaning element, this X, that all of them can be said to be perceptions of the same tree.²³ This is Husserl's point when he says:

We associate with *one* object various ways of consciousness, acts, or act-noemata. . . . "It," the object, is consciously grasped as identical and yet in a noematically different way: in this manner the characteristic nucleus [Sinn] is changeable and the "object," the pure subject of the predicates, remains exactly identical. . . . Here several act-noemata have *different nuclei* [Sinne], yet nevertheless they are such that . . . the "something," the determinable [X] which is in each of the nuclei [Sinne] is consciously grasped as identical (321).

In summary, then, by appeal to the role of noemata and their components in the intentionality of acts we can see how Husserl

²² But the content is also crucial here. The predicate-meanings may change so radically that they cannot be related to the X of the original noema. The original noema then "explodes" and is replaced by a new noema with a new X, correlated with a new and different object. Cf. §138, 339.

²³ Cf. §131, 322. Much of Smith's dissertation, "Intentionality, Noemata, and Individuation," is concerned with ferreting out the intricacies of this problem, showing how a Sinn with its X individuates its object. The dissertation appeals to a notion of individuation developed in a theory of possible worlds and trans-world identity that underlies a semantics for modalities like Hintikka's.

attempts to solve various problems surrounding intentionality. In virtue of its noema, an act is directed. But this means two things. First, the act is directed to a *particular* object. This function is achieved largely through the *determinable* X in the Sinn of the noema: the X concerns *which* object is given in the act—it correlates to this particular object “in abstraction from” its properties. Second, the act is directed to this object *under a description*. This description expresses the *content* in the Sinn, which accordingly prescribes which properties the object is experienced as having.²⁴ Other aspects and problems of intentionality are accounted for by the correlation of noemata with acts. An act is directed simply because it has a noema: its intentionality consists in its subject’s in some sense entertaining this noema and thereby experiencing (and individuating) a putative object.²⁵ Thus it may be directed even if its object does not exist—even if there does not happen to exist an object with the “identity” prescribed by the act’s noematic Sinn or with the properties prescribed by the content in the Sinn. And, further, the distinction between the X and the content in a Sinn accounts for how different acts can be directed to numerically the same object given with different properties.

V. THE EPOCHÉ

In the beginning we spoke of a recurring pedagogic mistake in the exposition of phenomenology, namely, the characterization of phenomenology as a method *rather than* a theory. This is an unfortunate mistake because, without due cognizance of the details of Husserl’s theory of intentionality, one is likely to appreciate *neither* the theory *nor* the method that are phenomenology. Husserl purports to *use* the method in order to *develop* (discover?) his theory of intentionality. But the resulting theory is indispensable to a proper appreciation of the method of epoché, of what one does in performing an epoché (if not how to do it). Since we now have behind us the fundamentals of Husserl’s theory of intentionality via noemata, we can give a proper account of epoché.

Phenomenology, we said, is primarily just the study of noemata. This study proceeds by means of the epoché, or transcendental-phenomenological reduction. It is common to say—and with ample justification from Husserl—that to perform the epoché with re-

²⁴ This accounts for the opacity of act-contexts such as “Smith hopes that _____.” A predicate occurring in such a context expresses a meaning which occurs in the content of the noematic Sinn belonging to the act described. Such a predicate can be replaced *salva veritate* only by a predicate which expresses the same meaning.

²⁵ This is not to say the subject performs an act directed to this noema. That would be another act, in the phenomenological attitude.

spect to a given act is to assume a special attitude toward the object given in the act, namely, to ponder the object *as* given but all the while to *abstain from positing the existence* of this object, to refrain from pronouncing judgment one way or the other on its existence. This characterization of epoché is a sort of heuristic suggestion for how to carry out an epoché, but it does little to tell what an epoché yields. By carrying out an epoché on an act, one comes to attend to the "experienced object *as such*." The problem is to understand what *this* amounts to, and it is at this point that we need an appreciation of Husserl's analysis of intentionality, in particular the notion of noema. For, by 'the experienced object *as such*' Husserl denotes the noema (or more precisely the noematic Sinn; cf. §89) of the reduced, or epochéd, act; and this noema (and its Sinn) is a very different entity from the object it serves to pick out.²⁶ Yet, without an appreciation of Husserl's theory of noemata as intensional entities which confer intentionality on acts, one might mistake the epoché to yield, not the *noema* or *noematic Sinn*, but the *object* of the act somehow *stripped* of its existence-status, the object under a description with existence claims deleted.

The epoché is not a special way of considering the object of an act, but rather a transformation or transition from any given act to a second act of considering the noema of the first act.²⁷ A noema, through its Sinn, relates to an object. But insofar as a phenomenologist, by means of epoché, attends to noemata rather than to their objects, he is not concerned with the *de facto* existence or non-existence of their objects. Hence, contra Brentano, the theory of intentionality which emerges from Husserl's phenomenology is not a theory of the objects of acts; it is a theory of the noemata of acts. And the epoché is Husserl's method for getting acquainted with noemata, the meanings of acts.

Earlier we gave an account of what noemata are and how to meet them, taking advantage of the thesis that noemata are fundamen-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, esp. 222: "The *tree plain and simple*, the thing in nature, is as different as it can be from this *perceived tree as such*, which as perceptual Sinn belongs inseparably to the perception."

²⁷ §§88–89. However, we indulge in a simplification. We have characterized here the "transcendental" reduction. The epoché proper involves in addition an "eidetic" reduction, so that phenomenology studies "essential," or universal, features of noemata [and noeses and hyletic data (cf. §97)]: cf. §75. This kind of analysis of epoché in terms of noemata originates in the secondary literature with Føllesdal and of course, we hold, in the "primordial" literature of phenomenology with Husserl. [Husserl finally states this account of epoché explicitly and succinctly in his article, "Phenomenology," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (14th ed., 1929); reprinted in Roderick M. Chisholm, *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (New York: Free Press, 1960). See esp. p. 121 in Chisholm.]

tally like linguistic meanings and therefore expressible. A noema, we counseled, is (approximately) the sense of an appropriate description of an act as experienced; carry out such a description, garner its *sense*, and you have this noema. In fact, we can now see, this account was just an alternative explication of what the epoché does and how to carry it out, albeit an alternative dressed to be presentable to the elusive society of analytic philosophy. What's more, this is in fact the way Husserl himself proceeds.²⁸ And that is significant, for it shows that Husserl himself never in practice (even though he seems sometimes to have conceived it so) appealed to epoché as a sort of direct inspection of noemata by means of a sixth sense. Even so, our presentation of epoché would be attended only by those we could lure from the angling path up the flight from intention. For the fundamental question remains whether *any* meanings/intensions can be held legitimate.

VI. HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Failure to appreciate the way Husserl's theory of intentionality works through noemata precludes proper appreciation of the epoché. And this failure leads to others, not the least of which is a common misinterpretation of Husserl's so-called "transcendental idealism."

Every object, according to Husserl, is thoroughly mirrored in the intensional realm by a network of noemata all related to this same object but variously presenting it with the myriad of properties and relations it has (or, for that matter, may have). This mirroring is the cash value of Husserl's transcendental idealism. Every physical object, for example, is potentially the common object of an infinite number of possible acts directed toward it. The noemata of these acts are all related to this, the same, object in virtue of the determinable X's in their noematic Sinne. Through the predicate-meanings in their Sinne, various of the acts present the object from different sides or perspectives, showing those properties of the object that appear to sight or touch from different sides. Still other acts, through their Sinne, give forth quite different information about the object, for example, expectations expressible by counterfactual conditionals ('if this object were on the surface of the moon, it would weigh but half a pound'). And further acts' noemata present this same object as the object of other acts performed by other egos.

²⁸ This, given Husserl's (qualified) claim that noemata are expressible. Assume this and see Husserl's account of how to construct a "noematic description," which denotes a noema in a way so as to specify its parts. Cf. §§88, 89, and 130, but esp. §89.

Thus, Husserl calls an object a "pole of identity"²⁹—meaning that various acts can be directed to this one object, so that the objects of these acts are identical (with this object). Indeed, there are enough possible acts directed to any object that in principle everything about this object could be brought to consciousness, even though we should never be able actually to perform all these acts. In this way any object is mirrored by a network of co-related noemata or noematic Sinne.

But for this very reason, many interpreters of Husserl are wont to *identify* an object with its corresponding network of noematic Sinne, thus banishing objects entirely and leaving a tidy ontology of egos and noemata only. This ontology would indeed be an idealism, but probably not a transcendental idealism. In fact, the species of Husserl scholar so represented is just the George Berkeley of Husserliana: "Esse est noesii."

One pays a high price for such an interpretation of Husserl's transcendental idealism, the price of falsifying Husserl: it flies in the face of the very fundamentals of Husserl's theory of intentionality. For, according to Husserl, noemata and their objects are quite different and (therefore) distinct entities: noemata and their components are intensional entities (Husserl says 'intentional'); objects in general are not, and physical objects in particular are not. Husserl is both clear and adamant on this point (cf. §89). And in fact the misinterpretation is probably truer to the godfather of Husserl's transcendental idealism, Immanuel Kant.

Yet there is a reason for this idealistic misinterpretation of Husserl.³⁰ It is the misguided account of epoché we described. If epoché is characterized simply as abstaining from positing the existence of the object of a given act, resulting in attending to "the experienced object *as such*," there results a singularly un insightful account of this noema, or noematic Sinn, i.e., this experienced object as such. For, without the understanding that noemata (and their Sinne) are intensional entities, and all that that entails, the retreat from the object's existence is misconceived. The result, emphasizing abstinence from positing existence without apodictic evidence, is a sort of misplaced Cartesian skepticism. And the point of phenomenology becomes lost in the doubt. Not that Husserl does not

²⁹ Cf. *Cartesian Meditations*, Dorion Cairns, trans. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), §§19, 31.

³⁰ Other than some of Husserl's own overzealous words describing epoché in the way we chided. That way is not wrong; it is just misleading without the discussions Husserl also gives of noemata as intentional/intensional entities. However, Husserl does sometimes seem unclear as to his own intensions.

spend an inordinate number of words on Cartesianism. (Noemata are allegedly known with apodictic certainty, whereas physical objects and many others are not.) But the point of phenomenology is simply to study noemata, not objects. Other objects have long been publicly claimed in other eminent domains.

Phenomenology is indeed a retreat from objects to noemata. But that is not to spurn objects. It is merely to embrace their meaning(s).

To see phenomenology as a theory of intentionality via intentions is, in the final analysis, just to make sense of phenomenology. And that is just to give Frege the credit for lending Sense to Husserl.

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BOOK REVIEWS

In Defense of Anarchism. ROBERT PAUL WOLFF. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. ix, 86 p. \$4.50.

Acting on the premise that the best defense is a good offense, the author of this short book has offered not an exposition of and argument for the classical anarchist position but rather an attack on the reasons that political theorists have advanced in defense of the authority and legitimacy of the state. He seeks to demonstrate that the "fundamental problem of political philosophy . . . roughly speaking, how the moral autonomy of the individual can be made compatible with the legitimate authority of the state" (vii) has only one theoretical solution (unanimous direct democracy) which has no practical application to contemporary mass industrial society. All other forms of the state are illegitimate and therefore "anarchism is the only political doctrine consistent with the virtue of autonomy" (18).

After defining the state as a group of persons having supreme authority within a given territory or over a given population, Wolff begins his exposition of the key concepts—authority, obedience, and moral autonomy. A state has authority in the normative sense if and only if it has the right to demand obedience on the part of its citizens and they have a corresponding obligation to obey. Obedience is defined as doing that one is commanded to do *because* one is so commanded. Wolff then states that

. . . the fundamental task of political philosophy is to provide a deduction of the concept of the state. We must demonstrate by an a priori