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THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

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The Phenomenological Movement was one of the dominant philosophical fashions on the continent of Europe from the early 1920s until the late 1970s. Hundreds of philosophy professors in Europe, Japan, and in the United States conceived of themselves as phenomenologists in at least some stage of their careers, and countless articles and books have been published under the phenomenological flag. Among the many causes that explain the popularity of phenomenology, three may be mentioned. First, whereas the scientific revolutions of the beginning of the twentieth century threatened the traditional position of philosophy as a separate and foundational discipline, seminal phenomenologists such as Husserl and Heidegger, at least in his early works, reasserted the foundational role of philosophy, claiming that they had discovered a philosophical method distinct from the methods of empirical science. Second, this method seemed to enable phenomenologists to widen the scope of philosophical research in unprecedented ways, thereby attracting those who felt suffocated by philosophy as a limited academic discipline. Finally, phenomenology allowed philosophers to discuss problems of life which became pressing during and after the world wars, in particular because of the way in which Heidegger had integrated the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard and the philosophy of life of Wilhelm Dilthey into his phenomenological masterpiece *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1927). The popularity of phenomenology cannot be understood without taking such cultural factors into account.

The very attractions of phenomenology also constituted its weakness. The term 'phenomenology' had been used, both outside and within philosophy, before phenomenologists picked it up. Natural scientists employed the word for classificatory and descriptive branches of science. Within philosophy, Lambert called his theory of illusions 'phenomenology' in 1764 and in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of the Spirit*, 1807), Hegel used the word for stages of human knowledge in a philosophical ascent, culminating in the philosophical insight that individual human minds are part of Absolute Spirit. Phenomenologists

claimed that they used the term 'phenomenology' with a different meaning; indeed, according to Husserl's philosophical teacher Franz Brentano, Hegel was a case of 'extreme degeneration of human thought'. They agreed that the label had a methodological meaning, but, unfortunately, this was virtually the only thing phenomenologists could agree upon. In particular, they never endorsed a common methodological doctrine and, when the movement progressed, methodological reflection became ever more sporadic and elusive. Since the phenomenological pretension to possess a special philosophical method was never substantiated, the movement was always liable to degenerate into a proliferation of subjective opinions without much epistemic value.

This degeneracy may be read off from the phenomenologists' own ruminations on method. In Husserl's writings – both the works published during his lifetime and the 40,000 pages of manuscript which Van Breda rescued from Nazi destruction and stored in the Husserl Archives in Leuven, Belgium – considerations of method play a large part. Husserl claimed that the phenomenological method is both intuitive and descriptive, and that it aims at conceptualising essences or 'essential structures' of phenomena. Description of essences would be possible in all fields thanks to an 'eidetic reduction' (*Wesensschau*) and, being cast in synthetic a priori propositions about sectors or 'regions' of reality, phenomenological descriptions would be more fundamental than the empirical disciplines studying these sectors. Apart from these 'regional ontologies' there allegedly was an even more fundamental philosophical discipline, transcendental phenomenology, which investigates a domain of phenomena that is hidden to our normal view and had to be made accessible by a series of 'transcendental reductions': the field of transcendental consciousness, its mental acts, and the intentional correlates of these acts that are constituted by transcendental consciousness.

Husserl's pupil Heidegger devoted only twelve pages to phenomenological method in *Sein und Zeit*, section 7, while the method seems to be abandoned altogether in most of his later works. Although Heidegger still pretended that the descriptions of human existence or *Dasein* in that book have essential generality, he also claimed that phenomenology is 'hermeneutics', an interpretation of phenomena that is inescapably historical. Heidegger did not attempt to explain how the Husserlian claim that phenomenology describes timeless essences or necessary structures can be reconciled with Dilthey's historical hermeneutics. Furthermore, whereas the phenomenology of *Sein und Zeit* is still a transcendental philosophy of some kind, Heidegger rejected Husserl's conception of transcendental consciousness as a last offspring of the Cartesian tradition. For Heidegger, the transcendental phenomena which phenomenology purports to describe are not mental acts of transcendental consciousness and their

intentional correlates. Heidegger characterises a phenomenon in general as 'that which shows itself', but, paradoxically, the phenomenological phenomenon *par excellence* does not show up. 'Manifestly, it is something that proximally and for the most part does not show itself at all: it is something that lies hidden . . . the Being of entities' (Heidegger 1927: 35 [1962: 59]). What Heidegger meant by 'the Being of entities' never became unambiguously clear: was it a Kantian transcendental structure, an essential ontological constitution of the kind sought by Husserl, or rather the level at which entities belong to Being in the sense of the God of Eckhart and the Scholastics?

At the very end of the historical period described in this volume, Maurice Merleau-Ponty published his main phenomenological book, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945, *Phenomenology of Perception*). In a foreword that became famous at the time, he summarised the contradictions in phenomenological methodology. Phenomenologists purported to describe essences and yet claimed that existence has priority over essence. On the one hand they wanted to suspend our belief in the existence of the world (Husserl's transcendental reduction) and on the other hand they held, with Heidegger, that the world is always already 'there'. However, instead of showing that these and other contradictions were merely apparent and in lieu of elaborating a methodological doctrine of his own, Merleau-Ponty concluded that phenomenology had to exist as a philosophical movement before it developed a determinate method: it could be practised and recognised as a certain 'style' of doing philosophy. If this style is purely descriptive and not explanatory, Merleau-Ponty says, this must be seen primarily as a refusal of the scientific view of the world (*désaveu de la science*). Indeed, according to Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, the human subject is not a product of multiple causal factors but rather a free creator of meaning, living in a meaningful world. This anti-naturalist thesis is yet another reason why the phenomenological movement became popular in a time of great scientific advancements. But, clearly, it is a philosophical thesis and not a methodology. The claim that phenomenology is characterised by a proper philosophical method had evaporated by 1945, although a great many minor figures echoed it long after.

Analytical philosophers typically complain that phenomenologists do not give arguments for the truth of what they are saying. From the phenomenologists' point of view this is not a defect but an advantage. Husserl's slogan *Zu den Sachen selbst* ('back to the things themselves') meant that philosophers had to stop arguing and constructing theories: the argumentative battle of theories had gone on too long without a winning party. Instead, they should gain access to a domain of properly philosophical phenomena (essences, transcendental consciousness) and restrict themselves to a meticulous description of these phenomena. But

this descriptivist creed, which phenomenologists shared with philosophers of language such as Wittgenstein, had at least two possible drawbacks.

First, it might be argued that the phenomena which the phenomenologist purported to describe do not exist. According to Wittgenstein, essences are illusory; they are 'shadows which grammar casts upon reality', whereas Husserl's idea that we might describe mental phenomena that are accessible only to the person to whom they belong has perhaps been refuted by Wittgenstein's private language argument. Similarly, Heidegger's thesis that there is a phenomenon of 'Being' that 'proximally and for the most part does not show itself at all' might be the product of a linguistic illusion: the illusion that the verb 'to be' is used as a referring expression. The second drawback is at least as serious as this first one. The descriptivist bias prevented phenomenologists from stating the philosophical problems they were implicitly dealing with, and from critically assessing the various possible solutions to these problems. Very often, their 'theory-neutral' descriptions turn out to be attempts at solving traditional philosophical problems that remain naïve and unreflected because they are not recognised for what they are.

In the following synopsis of the phenomenological movement we focus on its two most influential protagonists, Husserl and Heidegger, and on the two main phases of the movement, the German phase before the Second World War (1900–39) and the French phase, which started in the late 1920s with books such as *Phénoménologie et philosophie religieuse* (1925, *Phenomenology and religious philosophy*) by Jean Héring and *La Théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (1930, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*) by Emmanuel Levinas, and which culminated with Sartre's *L'être et le néant* (1943, *Being and Nothingness*) and *Phénoménologie de la perception* by Merleau-Ponty (1945). As far as possible, we try to reconstruct the philosophical problems and solutions underlying the descriptions that the phenomenologists tried to provide. The phenomenological movement has also been influential after the Second World War and in many disciplines apart from philosophy, such as psychology, the social sciences, law, and theology, but these influences cannot be discussed here.

1. THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF EDMUND HUSSERL (1859–1938)

Edmund Husserl, born into a Jewish bourgeois family in Prossnitz, Moravia, studied physics, astronomy, and philosophy at the University of Leipzig and moved to Berlin in order to specialise in mathematics under supervision of the well-known mathematicians Kronecker and Weierstrass. He wrote a doctorate on calculus in Vienna in 1882, where he met his philosophical teacher Franz

Brentano (1838–1917) and converted to Protestantism in 1886. One might say that the phenomenological movement began when Brentano convinced the young Husserl that philosophy could be practised as a 'rigorous science'.

Trained in scholastic philosophy and an expert on Aristotle, Brentano was an all-round philosopher who had been deeply influenced by British empiricism. Despising the speculative outbursts of German idealism and impressed by the successes of natural science, he tried to reconstruct philosophy as a scientific discipline by adopting the empirical methods of the sciences. Like Hume, Brentano identified philosophy with psychology. He held that explanation in psychology is premature unless it is preceded by a careful description of the phenomena to be explained: explanatory psychology had to be preceded by descriptive psychology. The first task of descriptive psychology was to distinguish mental from physical phenomena, all phenomena being either mental or physical. Like Descartes, Brentano assumed that our own mental phenomena are indubitable for us whereas the existence of physical objects may be doubted. According to Brentano the most important characteristic of mental phenomena is that they are 'intentional': they are directed at something or have an 'objective content', even though they need not be directed at an object which exists or is real or true (note that 'intentional' is a technical term and does not just mean 'intended', or, indeed, the technical logical term 'intensional'). For example, whenever we perceive, we perceive something; whenever we think, we think of something, and whenever we hate or love, we hate or love someone (Brentano 1874 [1924: 124–5]). According to Brentano, mental acts that represent objects or states of affairs other than themselves in this 'intentional' manner (*Vorstellungen*) are at the basis of all other mental phenomena.

This notion of intentionality, which Brentano found in scholastic writings, turned out to be a fruitful concept. It played a central role in the phenomenological movement and has been absorbed and further clarified by the analytical tradition. In order to understand Brentano's importance for a young mathematician such as Husserl, however, we have to mention a more Humean element in Brentano's philosophy. Following Hume, Brentano assumed that mathematics is about relations of ideas and can be developed a priori by symbolical methods. Yet in order to verify the axioms of a mathematical discipline such as the calculus, we have to clarify its fundamental concepts or ideas by tracing them back to the phenomena from which these ideas are 'abstracted'. According to Brentano and the young Husserl, the concepts of algebra and the calculus cannot be abstracted from physical phenomena, because these branches of mathematics may be applied to everything. Like Locke and Hume, they concluded that fundamental concepts of mathematics such as 'natural number' must have been

abstracted from mental phenomena, since all phenomena supposedly are either mental or physical. Hence descriptive psychology or 'phenomenology' must be the foundational discipline for mathematics, geometry excepted.

In accordance with this Humean programme, Husserl set out to find the 'origins' of the concept of number in his *Habilitationsschrift* (Halle 1887), an enlarged version of which was published in 1891 as *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (*Philosophy of Arithmetic*). Like Frege, Husserl understood natural numbers as determinations of sets or 'collections'. Because in mathematics anything whatsoever may be considered as a member of a set – we can form a set consisting of God, an angel, a human being, and a movement – Husserl concluded that the 'collecting link' which makes entities into members of a specific set cannot be some physical or other given relation between the members: it must be a mental act of collecting. Hence an individual set consists of its members plus the mental act of collecting, and it is by abstracting from the members and by concentrating on such mental acts of collecting in a second, reflective mental act, that the concept of a set is formed.

Clearly, Husserl preferred enumeration as a set-forming operation to definitions of sets as the extensions of general concepts, but this is only one of the differences between his approach and Frege's in *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* of 1884. Husserl radically rejected Frege's view that we might provide the foundations of arithmetic by definitions of numbers in terms of sets and the notion of equinumerousness. His reason is derived from the traditional theory of definitions: one can define only what is logically complex. In the case of logically simple concepts such as set or number, the only thing one can do is to show the concrete phenomena from which these concepts are abstracted, and to elucidate the process of abstraction. Bertrand Russell still advocated a similar procedure in the first edition of his *Principles of Mathematics* of 1903. As he said in its preface: 'The discussion of indefinables . . . is the endeavour to see clearly, and to make others see clearly, the entities concerned, in order that the mind may have that kind of acquaintance with them which it has with redness or the taste of a pineapple.' According to Husserl, natural number words are general names for individual collections of objects. If these collections are small, they may be 'given' in psychological reflection or 'inner perception', that is, by reflecting upon the collecting act and, through it, upon the entities collected. However, if collections are larger, such an 'intuitive' conception of numbers is impossible. In the second part of *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, Husserl tried to justify the symbolical methods of arithmetic by showing that the system of symbolical concepts runs parallel with the intuitive concepts of numbers which we have only where numbers are small.

Frege wrote a devastating review of *Philosophie der Arithmetik* in 1894, arguing that numbers are objective entities in a third realm and not mental representations. Although Frege largely misunderstood Husserl because he overlooked the subtleties of Husserl's descriptive psychology, he touched a weak spot in Husserl's philosophy of arithmetic: how can one guarantee the objectivity of mathematical knowledge, if the collecting links that make items into members of a concrete set are mental acts of an individual mathematician, which are accessible only in the psychological reflection of that mathematician? In *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900/1, *Logical Investigations*), Husserl embarked upon his first major philosophical project: to rescue the objectivity of logic and mathematics without, however, abandoning the idea that the ultimate foundations of these formal disciplines are provided by descriptive psychology or phenomenology.

In the *Prolegomena* of this book, Husserl argued that empiricist or 'psychologistic' conceptions of logic, such as those of Mill or Sigwart, lead to scepticism, for if one interprets the laws of logic as empirical laws about mental acts, one actual violation of a logical law would refute it. Yet Husserl conceived of logic and mathematics as consisting of theories about a domain of objects. If this domain was neither that of physical nor that of mental phenomena, what could it be? Inspired by Herbart and Lotze, Husserl resorted to the solution of enlarging his ontology with a third domain, the domain of Platonic objects outside time and space. In the case of logic, these objects are propositions and their parts; in the case of formal ontologies, such as set theory or the theory of wholes and parts, the objects are formal types of entities. Because such objects exist outside of time and space and are not subjected to change, laws about them can be objective, necessarily true, and a priori. Yet the foundations of mathematics and logic had to be provided by descriptive psychology or phenomenology, and Husserl's first, fifth, and sixth investigation were exclusively concerned with this discipline. The reason was that Husserl conceived of the Platonic objects of logic and mathematics as types or 'ideal species' of tokens belonging to the mental realm. For instance, the proposition or 'ideal meaning' that Caesar crossed the Rubicon would be an ideal type, the tokens of which are all the mental acts of judging that Caesar crossed the Rubicon. In order to grasp the objective and ideal meaning of signs (types), one would have to reflect on these mental acts (tokens) and intuit their type or meaning-essence by 'eidetic abstraction' (*Wesensschau*). Therefore, the description and analysis of mental acts was the first step in providing the foundations of logic and mathematics.

This conception ran into difficulties when Husserl came to think more carefully about numbers and logical constants in his sixth logical investigation. For surely the concept of counting is different from the concept of number, and

this difference must be explained by supposing that the concrete basis for the eidetic abstraction of these concepts is a different one in each case. Similarly, the concept of conjoining is different from the concept of a conjunction, and the concept of implying is not identical with the concept of an implication. In sections 40 to 52, Husserl argued that the basis for abstracting concepts of numbers and logical constants such as 'and' or 'being' does not consist in mental acts but rather in the intentional objective correlates of mental acts, and he held that these correlates may be perceived in 'categorial intuition'. For instance, in verifying the proposition 'This paper is white' we would not only perceive the paper and its whiteness with our senses; we would also perceive by categorial intuition the *is*, which allegedly is a dependent formal part of an objective state of affairs. These notions of objective correlates of mental acts and of categorial intuition not only later encouraged Heidegger in believing that *Being* might be a phenomenon that we may perceive; they also exploded Husserl's initial conceptions of the mental, of phenomenology as descriptive psychology, and of epistemology.

Initially, Husserl shared Brentano's Cartesian conviction that only our own mental acts and our other mental phenomena may be indubitably present to us. Descriptive psychology was defined accordingly, as a reflective study of one's own mental life. Descriptive psychology or phenomenology had to be the foundation of all sciences, not only because it provides the basis of abstraction for mathematical, logical, and moral concepts, but also because the objects of physics are known to us only to the extent that they are represented by mental contents. But now Husserl had discovered that it was not mental acts but their intentional correlates that were the basis for the abstraction of the concepts of mathematics and of logical constants. Since he considered logic and mathematics as paradigm cases of intellectual certainty, Husserl concluded that the intentional correlates of mental acts are as indubitable as these acts themselves, and he re-defined phenomenology as a descriptive analysis of the 'intentional correlation' between mental acts and their objects. His mature conception of phenomenology, published in the first book of *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* of 1913 (*Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*) resulted from a series of reflections on the paradigm case of this intentional correlation, the case of sense perception. Traces of these reflections may be found already in the second volume of *Logische Untersuchungen* (1901).

In *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl defended a sophisticated sense-datum theory of perception, which he presented, misleadingly, as a theory-free description of the perceptual phenomenon. Although Husserl endorsed the view that the perceptual act contains non-intentional sensations (*Empfindungen, hyletische*

Daten), he rejected phenomenalism à la Berkeley or Mach, which identifies the external world with series of sensations. According to Husserl, sensations are 'objectively interpreted' in the perceptual act and by this objectivating interpretation the intentional correlate of the perceptual act is 'constituted'. This correlate is not an image or a sign of external reality, as Locke thought; it is the external object itself. However, because the external object is constituted by consciousness, it remains dependent upon consciousness for its existence. In Kantian terms, one might be tempted to say that it is the phenomenal object and not the thing in itself. However, Husserl rejected the Kantian notion of a thing-in-itself for Humean reasons: as this notion cannot be abstracted from phenomena, it is a pseudo-concept. The only meaningful concept of a thing in itself, Husserl argued in the wake of some Neo-Kantians, is the concept of a complete series of 'adumbrations' of the phenomenal object.

The upshot of Husserl's argument was psychological idealism: the view that the external world is ontologically dependent upon human consciousness. But this view is absurd and it implies a paradox which Husserl later called 'the paradox of human subjectivity'. Since human bodies are parts of the external world, and because human minds depend causally upon human bodies, psychological idealism implies that the entire external world depends ontologically upon an insignificant and recent part of it: my body. In the first book of his *Ideas*, Husserl solved this paradox not by rethinking his theory of perception and its implications, but by postulating a temporally infinite transcendental consciousness upon which the world, including my mind and my body, depends ontologically. Each of us would be able to discover such a transcendental consciousness in him- or herself by a series of methodological operations, the transcendental reductions, and ultimately, all reality would depend upon a community of spiritual 'monads', which are substances in the Cartesian sense that they need nothing else in order to exist. Husserl called this Leibnizian view 'transcendental idealism', and he never gave it up.

We now see that Husserl's method of the transcendental reductions and of 'theory-free' description of the 'field' of transcendental consciousness and its intentional correlates was itself not free of theoretical presuppositions. On the contrary, it was based upon substantial assumptions, borrowed from the Cartesian and empiricist tradition in epistemology. According to Husserl, however, the method was presuppositionless and allowed him to develop a universal philosophy. Since mundane entities are transcendentally constituted by transcendental consciousness, we should be able to solve all ontological problems, that is, to articulate the ontological 'sense' of each type of existent, by a descriptive analysis of their intentional constitution. For instance, mathematical objects such as numbers or geometrical types 'exist' in a sense different from tables or other minds,

and one might elucidate these different senses of being by a transcendental analysis of how these entities are 'given to' or 'constituted by' consciousness. Such regional ontologies were the foundations of the respective scientific disciplines, and they were themselves founded by transcendental phenomenology.

Husserl soon realised that this new and fundamental 'science' of transcendental phenomenology could not be developed by one philosophical explorer alone. Hence he sought to engage pupils and colleagues as collaborators in a joint enterprise, who had to specialise in phenomenology of mathematics (Oskar Becker), of beauty (Moritz Geiger), of religion (Martin Heidegger), or in ethics and art (Roman Ingarden). But alas, none of Husserl's pupils could be convinced of the value of Husserl's new 'first philosophy'. Husserl therefore spent the remainder of his days in writing ever new introductions to transcendental phenomenology, which took different 'paths' to the promised land of transcendental consciousness: the Cartesian path of *Méditations cartésiennes* (1931, *Cartesian Meditations*), the path via a reflection on logic described in 'Formale und transcendentale Logik' (1929, 'Formal and Transcendental Logic'), or the path via the life world sketched in 'Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften' (1936, 'The Crisis of the European Sciences'). Although Husserl argued in this latter work that the theoretical entities of the physical sciences since Galileo are constituted on the basis of the 'life-world' (*Lebenswelt*), which is the meaningful world in which we humans live, he remained a transcendental idealist: the life-world itself is constituted by transcendental consciousness and ontologically dependent on it. For this reason, Husserl's notion of a *Lebenswelt* was different from the conceptions of the daily world of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, in spite of many superficial resemblances.

Once Husserl had reached his mature position of transcendental idealism, he started to make ever more extravagant claims on behalf of transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology was not only the 'first philosophy' that philosophers had sought since Antiquity. It could also overcome the crisis of the European sciences, that is, their loss of significance for human life, and it was the only remaining bulwark against scepticism and cultural relativism. Moreover, although Husserl treated the theme discreetly, phenomenology was a way to personal salvation. Each transcendental stream of consciousness is infinite in time, he argued, and the fact that we find a coherent series of sensations in our transcendental ego, which allows us to constitute an external world, points to a transcendent and benevolent God. Like Berkeley, Husserl used an idealist ontology as a springboard to faith, and his later philosophical style sometimes acquires a messianic ardour.

Perhaps events in Husserl's life prompted this religious stance: in 1916, his younger son Wolfgang was killed during a battle at Vaux, and in 1917 his elder son

Gerhart was seriously wounded. In the same year Husserl's friend and pupil Adolf Reinach was killed and his mother, with whom he had a close relationship, died. During the First World War, like many converted Jews, he was a loyal German patriot, but he was never affected by the kind of pro-war frenzy exemplified by Max Scheler, who extolled 'the genius of war'. After Germany's defeat in 1918, Husserl's works were increasingly inspired by a humane and rationalist ethos that he held to be the hidden motive of the development of philosophy from Plato to transcendental phenomenology.

In 1916 Husserl had been appointed to a chair at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau. He gradually acquired an international reputation and lectured in London (1922), Amsterdam (1928), Paris (1929), Berlin (1932), Vienna, and Prague (1935). When he discovered in 1928 that Heidegger, who succeeded him at the Freiburg chair in that year, rejected phenomenology as Husserl understood it, his life took a tragic turn. He felt more and more isolated from his pupils. After the Nazis seized power in February 1933 and Heidegger had become an ardent supporter of this movement, Husserl retired into the intellectual bastion of his philosophy. Feeling too old for emigration, he died in Freiburg on 27 April 1938.

2. THE GERMAN PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

Having been *Privatdozent* in Halle from 1887 onwards, Husserl was appointed as an extraordinary professor at the University of Göttingen in 1901. There he started to attract students who, inspired by his *Logische Untersuchungen*, wanted to practise phenomenology for themselves, such as Adolf Reinach, Johannes Daubert, Moritz Geiger, Theodor Conrad, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Alexander Koyré, Roman Ingarden, Fritz Kaufmann, and Edith Stein. About 1907 a special circle was formed which met once a week for philosophical discussions and became a philosophical society in 1910, when Max Scheler also became a member. In 1913, Husserl started the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, in which the first volume of his *Ideas* appeared in 1913 and Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* in 1927. Apart from Husserl, the editorial committee consisted of Geiger, Alexander Pfänder, Reinach, and Scheler.

None of these pupils could follow the master on his way towards transcendental idealism. What attracted them in phenomenology was rather the method of eidetic reduction. Husserl had defended the existence of essences or 'ideal species' in his second *Logical Investigation*, because he held that one cannot avoid scepticism regarding logic, mathematics, and knowledge in general except by assuming that logic is about essences which exist beyond space and time, and which are the ideal types of meaning-bestowing mental acts. The laws of logic

and mathematics could be verified by intuition of essences, Husserl thought. Husserl's pupils were not primarily interested in mathematics, however, except Geiger and Becker. Taking for granted that there are essences which can be 'intuited', they set out to explore a great many phenomena by means of 'eidetic reduction' or *Wesensschau*, phenomena such as the will, human personality, and religious belief (Pfänder), civil law (Reinach), empathy and the psychological function of art (Geiger), the nation and one's homeland (Kurt Stavenhagen), time, space, colours, and sounds (Conrad-Martius), or values and value-blindness (Dietrich von Hildebrand). After 1933, Nazism scattered the phenomenological movement. Some members fled to the United States (Geiger, Hildebrand, Schutz), others became Nazis (Heidegger, Becker), whereas Edith Stein and Paul-Ludwig Landsberg opposed Nazism and were murdered in concentration camps. Apart from Pfänder and Reinach, and before Heidegger appeared on the scene, the most important phenomenological associate of Husserl was Max Scheler (1874–1928).

Scheler was certainly more than a phenomenologist: he was a dazzling star whose brilliant ideas and boundless energy impressed his contemporaries. Whereas Husserl claimed to be the founder of a new scientific philosophy, Scheler was preoccupied with the moral crisis he perceived in his epoch, in which the values of a calculating and egotistic bourgeois capitalism replaced those of Christianity. Being of Jewish descent but converted to Catholicism, he wanted to reconstruct Christian ethics after Nietzsche's attacks as an ethics free of the *ressentiment* which Nietzsche had discovered at the heart of Christian morality. Phenomenology was a means for doing so, and Scheler published a phenomenological study of sympathy, love, and hate in 1913, the second edition of which was called *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1923, *The Nature of Sympathy*). Scheler's ethics was not formal, like Kant's. It aimed at a phenomenology of 'material' values, as Scheler explained in *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (1913, 1916, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*). These values are neither individuals nor universals. Like Moore in *Principia Ethica*, Scheler held that they may be intuited or 'felt' in moral experience, being the 'pure whatness' of valuable goods or aims. Scheler made a complicated classification of values and seemed to have special liking for values such as nobility and holiness. Anticipating Maslow, he sketched a hierarchical ordering of values and discussed the different criteria for doing so.

Scheler's ethics was narrowly connected to his philosophical anthropology. He thought that the problem of the external world can be solved by pointing out that the world is what resists to our will, hence the reality of the external world is experienced in our pragmatic involvement in it. Science is part and parcel with this pragmatic involvement, Scheler claimed, echoing American

pragmatism, but the human individual is able to say 'no' to the involvement in the world. The possibility of such a spiritual act of negation is what characterises man in his essence, and relates him to the personal Deity. The crowning achievement of Scheler's philosophy was a phenomenology of the essence of religion, in which he described both the essential attributes of the Deity and the receptive acts in which the human being intuits the Divine. The essential attributes of the Divine are absoluteness, superiority, holiness, spirituality, and personality, whereas the individual experiences the Deity in an experience of his own nullity and of being God's creature. As Scheler apparently thought that Christian monotheism is closer to the essence of religion than polytheism, one might conclude that his subjective opinions were masquerading as specimens of phenomenological *Wesensschau*. Indeed, there are convincing arguments for the view that the idea of intuitable essences is an illusion. But this does not imply that all phenomenological writings are worthless. Many of them contain valuable insights and may be re-interpreted as essays in conceptual analysis.

3. MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889–1976)

Heidegger was Husserl's most promising pupil and after the end of the twentieth century Heidegger's popularity is greater than ever. Next to Plato, Aristotle, and Kant, Heidegger inspires the largest output of secondary literature concerned with an individual thinker; indeed many philosophers on the European continent and elsewhere regard him as the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century. No contemporary philosopher except Wittgenstein managed to change the philosophical agenda so drastically and to impress so deep a mark on posterity. However, reception of Heidegger's philosophy is complicated by several factors: his political engagement as a Nazi in 1933, the uncritical nature and size of the edition of his collected works (*Gesamtausgabe*), and Heidegger's language, which is often obscure and idiosyncratic.

Like Scheler, Heidegger held that there is a type of knowledge or thought (*Denken*) more profound than science, and although Heidegger emancipated himself gradually from his Catholic upbringing, his works retain a distinct religious flavour without being overtly religious. Born as a son of the sexton to the Catholic church in Messkirch, Baden, Heidegger was initially heading for a career as a priest. Disappointments with the church, studies of Luther, and a mixed marriage drove him away from Catholicism, and he became Husserl's assistant for the phenomenology of religion at the University of Freiburg in 1918. After an intermezzo in Marburg, he succeeded Husserl to the chair at Freiburg in 1928, where he lectured until the senate of the university forbade

him to teach in 1946 by way of denazification, partly because of a report written by his former friend Karl Jaspers. The ban lasted until 1950, when Heidegger resumed lecturing until retirement.

In *Sein und Zeit* (1927), the first major publication after his *Habilitation*, Heidegger wanted to raise anew 'the question of Being', which had inspired the philosophical investigations of Plato, Aristotle, and the Scholastics. However, only one third of the book was published, and in the published part Heidegger argued that the question of Being cannot be raised properly without a preparatory analysis of the human being that we are (*Dasein*). *Sein und Zeit* is a revolutionary book. According to Heidegger, the concepts with which traditional philosophers and scientists analysed the human mode of being are inadequate, because they were originally derived from other ontological domains, such as that of artefacts. The primary task of philosophy is to develop new ontological concepts which are more adequate for interpreting daily human life, the so-called *existentialia*. In a series of brilliant but often unclear analyses, Heidegger developed the themes that *Dasein* is essentially being-in-the-world, that the world in which *Dasein* lives is a meaningful world of tools, roads, farmland, and work, and that each *Dasein* projects freely its future life and is concerned with itself, others, and the world. *Dasein* faces a fundamental choice between attaining 'authenticity' (*Eigentlicheit*) by finding itself or losing itself in inauthenticity by doing what 'one' (*das Man*) normally does. The only way to become authentic, Heidegger said, is to face our own death in *Angst*, and to grasp the time of our life as a finite whole. The 'existential' analysis of *Sein und Zeit* drew its inspiration from St Paul, St Augustine, Luther, Kierkegaard, Aristotle, and Dilthey, and it inspired in its turn Karl Jaspers, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and many others, including theologians such as Tillich and Bultmann. It is the seminal book of the later existentialist movement, although Heidegger emphatically denied in 1946 that he had ever been an existentialist.

Apart from being the seminal text of existentialism, *Sein und Zeit* is both a treatise in transcendental philosophy and the starting point of the post-war hermeneutic movement. Radically transforming Husserl's transcendental doctrine, Heidegger argued that the ultimate source of meaning or being is not an eternal transcendental ego but rather a finite ecstatic time structure or 'clearing' (*Lichtung*) in human beings in-the-world (*Dasein*). The objects of natural science are constituted on the basis of an a priori framework, which, Heidegger claimed, is projected by *Dasein*. The real world *an sich* is the meaningful world of daily life, and not a meaningless multiplicity of particles and other theoretical entities of physics. Although Heidegger rejected transcendental idealism, the outcome of his transcendental turn was similar to that of Kant and Husserl: the world

of physics is thought to be secondary and superficial, whereas the meaningful world of daily life and morality is fundamental.

Like Carnap, Heidegger held that the traditional problem of the external world is a pseudo-problem. In opposition to Carnap, however, he thought that the problem is caused by the assumption that the scientific view of the world is fundamental: it would disappear as soon as one realises that *Dasein* exists primarily in the daily meaningful world. Yet one wonders whether Heidegger's transcendental philosophy is not a *solution* to the problem of the external world, and hence whether the various strands in *Sein und Zeit* are mutually compatible. The latter question also arises with regard to Heidegger's conviction that *Dasein* is fundamentally interpretative. Our human identity allegedly depends on how we understand ourselves, and because understanding is historically situated, human beings are historical. As the ontology of *Dasein* is an auto-interpretation of *Dasein*, this ontology is hermeneutic. But if our view of the world is the product of an interpretation, as Heidegger asserts, how can the meaningful world of daily life be a world *an sich*?

While *Sein und Zeit* was a phenomenological interpretation of human existence, Heidegger's later writings from the lecture course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1953; based on lectures delivered in 1935) onwards had a very different nature. Heidegger now developed a grandiose historical narrative, according to which Being had shown itself to man in the writings of pre-Socratics such as Anaximander or Parmenides, but had withdrawn since then in the history of Western metaphysics. Heidegger interpreted major philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Hegel, Schelling, and Nietzsche as thinkers who did not succeed in asking the question of Being in Heidegger's sense, even though Being sent hints to man in their writings. The task of the post-metaphysical philosopher was to 'think', that is, to prepare a future advent of Being by diagnosing the fundamental nature of our epoch, the epoch of technology, as a result of the history of metaphysics and as a 'fate' (*Geschick*) sent (*geschickt*) by Being. Heidegger's later thought resembles Hegel's philosophical history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) and it should not be seen primarily as a contribution to historical scholarship in philosophy. In contrast to Hegel, however, Heidegger interpreted his own epoch not as the culmination point of history, but as a deep fall or crisis, which his thought (*Denken*) purported to overcome, taking Hölderlin's poetry as a lead.

From the *Brief über den 'Humanismus'* (1947, *Letter on Humanism*) onwards, Heidegger claimed that his later thought was connected to *Sein und Zeit* by a *Kehre* (turn). What is the nature of this connection, which allegedly unifies Heidegger's oeuvre? Pupils such as Karl Löwith and Jürgen Habermas have

argued that the link between the book of 1927 and the publications that appeared after the Second World War is more or less contingent. The radical change in Heidegger's thought had to be explained by external factors, such as the advent of Nazism, and when Heidegger reintroduced the *existentialia* of *Sein und Zeit* into his later writings, they acquired meanings opposite to those in the earlier book. However, there is a more charitable interpretation of the *Kehre* and Heidegger's reinterpretation of the existentialia, which is based on his Lutheran conception of faith in *Sein und Zeit*. According to Luther and Heidegger, faith is a gift from God, and theology cannot be anything but an analysis of human existence as it is radically transformed by the grace of faith. In a lecture on 'Phenomenology and Theology' of 1927, Heidegger explained the relation between the fundamental ontology of *Dasein* in *Sein und Zeit* and theology as follows. *Sein und Zeit* had to be a purely secular ontology of *Dasein*, whereas theology, as an ontology of *Dasein* as transformed by faith, would have to re-interpret the *existentialia*.

Could it be that the ontological interpretation of *Dasein* in *Sein und Zeit* was written as a preparation of man for the grace of faith, and that Heidegger was convinced that he had received faith when he later re-interpreted the existentialia? This would explain the gloomy view of human existence-in-the-world which Heidegger sketched in the book of 1927: such a view might prepare man for the leap to faith. And it would also explain the overtly mystical nature of Heidegger's inaugural lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?* (*What is Metaphysics?*) of 1929. In any case, Heidegger's later faith was not Christian faith any more, for in 1933 Heidegger agreed with Nietzsche that the Christian God is dead. It remains an urgent task for historical scholarship to determine the precise meaning of Heidegger's later works and, indeed, of his oeuvre as a whole. Was Heidegger's later philosophy an attempt to rescue religion after the death of God? Or did Heidegger rather want to replace actively the Christian religion with a post-Christian and more German creed, in accord with the urges of many Nazis? These questions are rarely raised by modern Anglo-American Heidegger scholarship, which tends to play down the religious aspect of Heidegger's thought and to concentrate on its allegedly pragmatist or Wittgensteinian side. However this may be, Heidegger held the opinion that Being sends hints to mankind. The thinker or the poet pays heed to these hints, and the natural language for thought is German.

Heidegger has been a source of inspiration for, but also a rival of, contemporaries such as Helmuth Pleßner, Nicolai Hartmann, and Karl Jaspers. Unfortunately, there is no space to discuss their works here, which were important at the time, but none of them deeply influenced later thought nor clearly belong to phenomenology.

4. THE FRENCH PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

Whereas in Germany an existentialist such as Karl Jaspers was not considered to be a phenomenologist, because he held that the philosopher should elucidate the meaning of individual human life (*Existenzerhellung*) instead of intuiting essences, in France existentialism and phenomenology became nearly equivalent. The reason is that instead of Husserl's phenomenology Heidegger's analysis of human existence was a main source of inspiration. However, since Heidegger's phenomenology of *Sein und Zeit* was seen as a logical continuation of Husserl's works, French phenomenologists underestimated the revolutionary import of Heidegger's book. In 1927, Heidegger had rejected the tradition of Descartes, Hegel, and Husserl, but Jean-Paul Sartre formulated his phenomenological ontology of the human subject in Cartesian and Hegelian terms. Most French phenomenologists and existentialists were also influenced by Hegel, who became popular in France after the lectures on his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* by Jean Hyppolite and the Russian Marxist Alexandre Kojève at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*. As Kojève had argued that Hegel's phenomenology was not very different from Husserl's, French phenomenologists often did not bother to distinguish between these two conceptions. The existentialist analyses of human life were suitable for illustrations by literature, and major French existentialists such as Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), Jean Wahl (1888–1974), Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) wrote novels, poetry, or plays. Many of them were also engaged in left-wing politics, and Sartre argued that existentialism should replace dialectical materialism as a philosophical basis of Marxism.

Sartre had spent the winter semester of 1933–4 in Berlin, studying Husserl's works. His early phenomenological writings include two studies of the imagination, *L'imagination* (1936a) and *L'imaginaire* (1940), a study of emotion (*Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, 1939), and a criticism of Husserl in which Sartre argued that the human ego is a construct of consciousness instead of being an independent 'transcendental' substance ('La Transcendance de l'ego', 1936b). Indeed, in his phenomenological masterpiece *L'Etre et le néant* (*Being and Nothingness*, 1943), Sartre held that the human subject is nothing at all, a contingent 'gap' in the causal structure of being, that is, absolute freedom. Consciousness, whose being is being-for-itself (*pour soi*) is radically distinct from matter, whose being is being-in-itself (*en soi*), for consciousness is negation, the negation of being-in-itself. Because the human subject or consciousness is nothing, it has no essence and it has to choose its course in life and its values in total freedom. Our existence precedes our essence, that is, what we do with our lives. Sartre thought that freedom inspires *angoisse*, because it implies universal responsibility, and that

people therefore deny their freedom, pretending that they are determined by external factors, and holding that values are pre-existent instead of being the product of free choice.

With uncompromising zeal, Sartre combated this 'bad faith' in his philosophical and political opponents, especially Catholics. He held that the Christian concept of God is an inner contradiction, because it is the concept of a being-for-itself that is also in-itself. Furthermore, Sartre thought that human love is impossible, for human subjects cannot really communicate. As soon as they try to reach each other's being-for-itself, this being will appear as something whose being is being-in-itself, a being-for-the-other. In a psychological adaptation of Hegel's dialectics of master and slave, Sartre argued that whenever we look at each other, we reify the other person and thereby deny his or her freedom. Since we do not want to be reified by someone else, the others are 'hell' for me and the death of the others is my final victory over them. There is an intimate relation between Sartre's existentialist philosophy of freedom and his political commitment. Indeed, the only thing necessitated by freedom is commitment (*engagement*), and Sartre argued, unconvincingly, that the individual choice of a particular commitment such as communism implies the view that everyone should have made this same choice. Hence individual choices imply universal responsibility for everyone, the very responsibility people of bad faith try to escape from.

After 1945, Sartre became the best-known intellectual in France. He started the periodical *Les Temps modernes*, which would dominate French literary and leftist political culture until the 1960s. He also wrote at length about Marxism and other topics; but these writings fall outside the scope of this volume. Sartre's fame at this time is best illustrated by an anecdote according to which a minister proposed to De Gaulle that he imprison him because he was inciting young people to protest during the Algerian war. Allegedly, De Gaulle replied: 'One does not incarcerate Voltaire.' But whereas De Gaulle did not want to imprison Sartre, his existentialism was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church in the Encyclical 'Humani generis'.

Next to Sartre, the greatest French phenomenologist has been Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61). Like Sartre, he was educated at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. They became friends and edited *Les Temps Modernes* together until Merleau-Ponty published an undisguised critique of Sartre's philosophy – the chapter on 'Sartre's Ultra-bolshevism' in his book *Aventures de la dialectique* (1955, *Adventures of Dialectics*). Simone de Beauvoir replied in *Les Temps Modernes* by a paper called 'Merleau-Ponty et le Pseudo-Sartrisme', after which Merleau-Ponty's name disappeared from the list of editors. In contrast to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty pursued an academic career. Having been professor of

child psychology and education at the Sorbonne, he was appointed to a chair at the Collège de France in 1952. In his first book, *La structure du comportement* (1942, *The Structure of Behaviour*), he argued that neither perception nor behaviour can be understood in terms of linear causality à la Watson and Pavlov. From Wolfgang Köhler and others he borrowed the notion of *Gestalt*, and held that both behaviour and perception have to be seen as *Gestalten*. However, the notion of *Gestalt* had not been defined adequately by *Gestalt* psychology, because it never overcame traditional philosophical dilemmas such as physicalism versus mentalism. For this reason, a new foundational study of perception was needed, in which the intentional correlation between the perceiving organism and the perceived world was described from within, as it is experienced by the perceiving subject.

This conclusion of *La structure du comportement* contained the philosophical programme for Merleau-Ponty's next book, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945). Whereas Sartre's existentialism was closer to conceptual speculation in the manner of Hegel than to Husserl's careful phenomenological descriptions, Merleau-Ponty started from Husserl's later analysis of the life world (*Lebenswelt*) and from Heidegger's analysis of human existence as being-in-the-world. In *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Merleau-Ponty tried to describe the perceived world and our bodily commitment in it as it is really experienced and not as it is analysed by psycho-physics and other sciences. The phenomenological field, the object of this description, allegedly is the basic stratum of all knowledge, which is overlooked by the scientific view of the world. Merleau-Ponty rejected Sartre's Cartesian conception of the subject, according to which consciousness and the material world are opposites that exclude each other, because in reality our body is the vehicle of our being-in-the-world. Perception is not a passive reception of sensations or sense-data which are interpreted by consciousness, but an active bodily exploration of the human environment. Likewise, human behaviour is not a series of meaningless physical movements of the body, caused by mental processes in the brain, but an intrinsically meaningful dynamic structure, which is inseparable from the meaningful world in which the human being is situated. Indeed, the world is full of 'meaning' (*sens*), a word which Merleau-Ponty uses for everything that refers to something else. The phenomenon of language is but one meaningful phenomenon among others, and when we hear or read a language which we know, the perception of meaning is indistinguishable from the perception of the physical aspect of the words.

With a literary talent rare among philosophers, Merleau-Ponty provided descriptions of phenomena such as our own body, the experience of space and bodily movement, the sexual nature of the human body, language, and gestures. The phenomenon of bodily exploration of the world is correlative with

the phenomenon of the world-as-perceived, as Merleau-Ponty showed, taking space, perceived things, and our experience of other persons as examples. His phenomenological descriptions were meant to refute traditional philosophical dichotomies such as intellectualism versus sensationalism and realism versus idealism. In the third part of the book, Merleau-Ponty sketched a philosophy of the human subject, of time, freedom, and history, which stresses the many-sided nature of these phenomena and resists any attempt at an absolute and final knowledge. If the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty was a refusal of the scientific view of the world (*désaveu de la science*), as he wrote in the preface, this does not mean that Merleau-Ponty neglected the sciences. On the contrary, his descriptions were interlarded with results of the sciences of man, which functioned as pointers to concrete phenomena. What he meant is that the phenomenological description of the intentional correlation between the perceiving subject and the world-as-perceived is more fundamental than the sciences: it is the transcendental discipline upon which the sciences are ultimately founded. Moreover, the world-as-perceived is the fundamental phenomenon, which is overlooked by the scientific view of the world.

In 1945, both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were at the beginning of their intellectual career. Other French phenomenologists and existentialists, such as Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), Paul Ricoeur (1913–), or Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95) wrote their main works well after the Second World War. Indeed, it was only after the war that existentialism became a popular movement, which inspired many generations of students and intellectuals, drawing its inspiration from the dilemmas that citizens of countries involved in war had to face.