

IDEAS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO
PURE PHENOMENOLOGY

Edmund Husserl

TRANSLATED BY W. R. BOYCE GIBSON



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Author's Preface to the English Edition

MAY THE AUTHOR of this work, which first appeared in the year 1913, be permitted to contribute to the English Edition certain explanations that may prove of use to the reader, both before and as he reads?

Under the title "A Pure or Transcendental Phenomenology," the work here presented seeks to found a new science—though, indeed, the whole course of philosophical development since *Descartes* has been preparing the way for it—a science covering a new field of experience, exclusively its own, that of "Transcendental Subjectivity." Thus Transcendental Subjectivity does not signify the outcome of any speculative synthesis, but with its transcendental experiences, capacities, doings, is an absolutely independent realm of direct experience although for reasons of an essential kind it has so far remained inaccessible. Transcendental experience in its theoretical and, at first, descriptive bearing, becomes available only through a radical alteration of that same dispensation under which an experience of the natural world runs its course, a readjustment of viewpoint which, as the methods of approach to the sphere of transcendental phenomenology, is called "phenomenological reduction."

In the work before us transcendental phenomenology is not founded as the empirical science of the empirical facts of this field of experience. Whatever facts presents themselves serve only as examples similar in their most general aspect to the empirical illustrations used by mathematicians; much, in fact, as the actual intuitable dispositions of numbers on the abacus assist us, in their merely exemplary capacity, to grasp with insight, and in their pure generality the series 2, 3, 4 . . . as such, pure numbers as such, and the propositions of pure mathematics relative to these, the essential generalities of a mathematical kind. In this book, then, we treat of an a priori science ("eidetic," directed upon the universal in its original intuitability), which appropriates, through as pure possibility only, the empirical field of fact of transcendental subjectivity with its factual (*faktischen*) experiences, equating these with pure intuitable possibilities that can be modified at will, and sets out as its a priori the indissoluble essen-

tial structures of transcendental subjectivity, which persist in and through all imaginable modifications. Since the reduction to the transcendental and, with it, this further reduction to the Eidos is the method of approach to the field of work of the new science, it follows (and we stress the point in advance) that the proper starting-point for the systematic unravelling of this science lies in the chapters which treat of the reductions we have indicated. Only from this position can the reader, who follows with inner sympathy the indications proffered step by step, judge whether something characteristically new has really been worked out here—worked out, we say, and not constructed, drawn from real, general intuition of essential Being, and described accordingly.

Eidetic phenomenology is restricted in this book to the realm of pure eidetic "description," that is to the realm of essential structures of transcendental subjectivity immediately transparent to the mind. For this constitutes in itself already a systematically self-contained infinitude of essential characteristics. Thus no attempt is made to carry out systematically the transcendental knowledge that can be obtained through logical deduction. Here we have one difference (though not the only one) between the whole manner of this new *a priori* science and that of the mathematical disciplines. These are "deductive" sciences, and that means that in their scientifically theoretical mode of development mediate deductive knowledge plays an incomparably greater part than the immediate axiomatic knowledge upon which all the deductions are based. An infinitude of deductions rests on a very few axioms.

But in the transcendental sphere we have an infinitude of knowledge previous to all deduction, knowledge whose mediated connexions (those of intentional implication) have nothing to do with deduction, and being entirely intuitive prove refractory to every methodically devised scheme of constructive symbolism.

A note of warning may be uttered here against a misunderstanding that has frequently arisen. When, in an anticipatory vein, it is stated right from the start that, according to the author's views (to be established in those further portions of the whole work which are still to be published), all radically scientific philosophy rests on the basis of phenomenology, that in a further sense it is phenomenological philosophy right through, this does not mean to say that

philosophy itself is an *a priori* science throughout. The task which this book was planned to carry out, that of establishing a science of the eidetic essence of a transcendental subjectivity, is as far as it can be from carrying the conviction with it that philosophy itself is entirely a science *a priori*. A glance at the mathematical sciences, these great logical instruments for corresponding sciences of fact, would already lead use to anticipate the contrary. The science of fact in the strict sense, the genuinely rational science of nature, has first become possible through the independent elaboration of a "pure" mathematics of nature. The science of pure possibilities must everywhere precede the science of real facts, and give it the guidance of its concrete logic. So is it also in the case of transcendental philosophy, even though the dignity of the service rendered here by a system of the transcendental *a priori* is far more exalted.

The understanding, or at any rate the sure grasp, of the distinction between *transcendental phenomenology* and "*descriptive*," or, as it is often called nowadays, "*phenomenological*" psychology, is a problem that as a rule brings great difficulties with it, which indeed are grounded in the very nature of the case. It has led to misunderstandings, to which even thinkers who subscribe to the phenomenological line of thought are subject. Some attempt to clarify the situation should prove useful.

The change of standpoint which in this work bears the name phenomenological reduction (transcendental-phenomenological we now say, to be more definite) is effected by me, as the actually philosophizing subject, from the natural standpoint as a basis, and I experience myself here in the first instance as "I" in the ordinary sense of the term, as this human person living among others in the world. As a psychologist, I take as my theme this I-type of being and life, in its general aspect, the human being as "psychical." Turning inwards in pure reflexion, following exclusively "inner experience and "empathy," to be more precise), and setting aside all the psychophysical questions which relate to man as a corporeal being, I obtain an original and pure descriptive knowledge of the psychical life as it is in itself, the most original information being obtained from myself, because here alone is perception the medium. If, as is often done, descriptions of all sorts, which attach themselves purely and truly to the data of intuition, are referred to as phenomenological,

there here grows up, on the pure basis of inner intuition, of the intuition of the soul's own essence, a phenomenological psychology. A right form of method (on this point we shall have something further to say) gives us in point of fact not only scanty, superficially classificatory descriptions, but a great self-supporting science; the latter, however, properly speaking, only when, as is possible also here, one first sets before oneself as goal a science which deals not with the factual data of this inner sphere of intuition, but with the essence, inquiring, that is, after the invariant, essentially characteristic structures of a soul, of a psychical life in general.

If we now perform this transcendental-phenomenological reduction, this transformation of the natural and psychologically inward standpoint whereby it is transcendentalized, the psychological subjectivity loses just that which makes it something real in the world that lies before us; it loses the meaning of the soul as belonging to a body that exists in an objective, spatio-temporal Nature. This transformation of meaning concerns myself, above all, the "I" of the psychological and subsequently transcendental inquirer for the time being. Posited as real (*wirklich*), I am now no longer a human Ego in the universal, existentially posited world, but exclusively a subject for which this world has being, and purely, indeed, as that which appears to me, is presented to me, and of which I am conscious in some way or other, so that the real being of the world thereby remains unconsidered, unquestioned, and its validity left out of account. Now if transcendental description passes no judgment whatsoever upon the world, and upon my human Ego as belonging to the world, and if, in this description, the transcendental Ego exists (*ist*) absolutely in and for itself prior to all cosmic being (which first wins in and through it existential validity), it is still at the same time evident that, at every conversion of meaning which concerns the phenomenological-psychological content of the soul as a whole, this very content by simply putting on another existential meaning (*Seinssinn*) becomes transcendental-phenomenological, just as conversely the latter, on reverting to the natural psychological standpoint, becomes once again psychological. Naturally this correspondence must still hold good if, prior to all interest in the development of psychological science, and of a "descriptive" or "phenomenological psychology" in particular, a transcendental phenomenology is set up under the leading of a philosophical idea, to that through phenomeno-

logical reduction the transcendental Ego is directly set up at the focus of reflexion, and made the theme of a transcendental description. We have thus a remarkable thoroughgoing parallelism between a (properly elaborated) phenomenological psychology and a transcendental phenomenology. To each eidetic or empirical determination on the one side there must correspond a parallel feature on the other. And yet this whole content as psychology, considered from the natural standpoint as a positive science, is therefore, and related to the world as spread before us, is entirely non-philosophical, whereas "the same" content from the transcendental standpoint, and therefore as transcendental phenomenology, is a philosophical science—indeed, on closer view, the basic philosophical science, preparing on descriptive lines the transcendental ground which remains henceforth the exclusive ground for all philosophical knowledge. Here in fact lie the chief difficulties in the way of an understanding, since it must be felt at first as a most unreasonable demand that such a "nuance" springing from a mere change of standpoint should possess such great, and indeed, for all genuine philosophy, such decisive significance. The wholly unique meaning of this "nuance" can be clearly appreciated only when he who philosophizes has reached a radical understanding with himself as to what he proposes to bring under the title "philosophy," and only in so far as he is constrained to look for something differing in principle from positive science: the theoretic control, that is, of something other than the world ostensibly given to us through experience. From such understanding with one's own self, carried out in a really radical and consistent way, there springs up of necessity a motivation which compels the philosophizing Ego to reflect back on that very subjectivity of his, which in all his experience and knowledge of the natural world, both real and possible, is in the last resort the Ego that experiences and knows, and is thus already presupposed in all the natural self-knowledge of the "human Ego who experiences, thinks, and acts naturally in the world." In other words: from this source springs the phenomenological transposition as an absolute requirement, if philosophy generally is to work out its distinctive purposes upon a basis of original experience, and so contrive to begin at all. It can make a beginning, and generally speaking develop all its further philosophical resources, only as a science working from the transcendental-philosophical standpoint. For this very reason the immediate

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a priori phenomenology (portrayed in this work in its actual functioning as that which directly prepares the transcendental basis) is the "first philosophy" in itself, the philosophy of the Beginning. Only when this motivation (which stands in need of a very minute and comprehensive analysis) has become a vital and compelling insight, does it become clear that the "change in the shading," which at first appears so strange, transforming as it does a pure psychology of the inner life into a self-styled transcendental phenomenology, determines the being and non-being of philosophy—of a philosophy which knows with thorough-going scientific assurance what its own distinctive meaning calls for as the basis and the method of its inquiry. In the light of such self-comprehension, we understand for the first time that deepest and truly radical meaning of "psychologism" (that is, of transcendental psychologism) as the error that perverts the pure meaning of philosophy, proposing as it does to found philosophy on psychology, on the positive science of the life of the soul. This perversion persists unmodified when, in sympathy with our own procedure, the pure psychology of the inner life is set up also as an a priori science; even then it remains a positive science, and can provide a basis for positive science only, never for philosophy.

In the course of many years of brooding over these matters, the author has followed up different lines of inquiry, all equally possible, in the attempt to exhibit in an absolutely transparent and compelling way the nature of such motivation as propels beyond the natural positive realism of life and science, and necessitates the transcendental transposition, the "phenomenological Reduction." They are the ways of reaching the starting-point of a serious philosophy, and as they must be thought out in conscious reflexion, they themselves belong properly to the Beginning, as is possible, indeed, only within the beginner as he reflects upon himself. For each of these ways the point of departure is, of course, the natural unsophisticated standpoint of positive reality (*Positivität*) which the world of experience has as the basis of its being, and is confessedly "taken for granted" (the nature of such Being never having been questioned). In the work here presented (§ 33 f.), the author selected that way of approach, which then appeared to him the most effective. It develops as a course of self-reflexion taking place in the region of the pure psychological intuition of the inner life, or, as we might also say, as a "phenomenological" reflexion in the ordinary psycho-

logical sense. It leads eventually to the point that I, who am here reflecting upon myself, become conscious that under a consistent and exclusive focusing of experience upon that which is purely inward, upon what is "phenomenologically" accessible to me, I possess in myself an essential individuality, self-contained, and holding well together in itself, to which all real and objectively possible experience and knowledge belongs, through whose agency the objective world is there for me with all its empirically confirmed facts, in and through which it has for me at any rate trustworthy (even if never scientifically authorized) essential validity. This also includes the more special apperceptions through which I take myself to be a man with body and soul, who lives in the world with other men, lives the life of the world, and so forth. Continuing this self-reflexion, I now also become aware that my own phenomenologically self-contained essence can be posited in an absolute sense, as I am the Ego who invests the being of the world which I so constantly speak about with existential validity, as an existence (*Sein*) which wins for me from my own life's pure essence meaning and substantiated validity. I myself as this individual essence, posited absolutely, as the open infinite field of pure phenomenological data and their inseparable unity, am the "transcendental Ego"; the absolute positing means that the world is no longer "given" to me in advance, its validity that of a simple existent, but that henceforth it is exclusively my Ego that is given (given from my new standpoint), given purely as that which has being in itself, in itself experiences a world, confirms the same, and so forth.

Within this view of things there grows up, provided the consequences are fearlessly followed up (and this is not everybody's business), a transcendental-phenomenological Idealism in opposition to every form of psychologistic Idealism. The account given in the chapter indicated suffers, as the author confesses, from lack of completeness. Although it is in all real essentials unassailable, it lacks what is certainly important to the foundation of this Idealism, the proper consideration of the problem of transcendental solipsism or of transcendental intersubjectivity, of the essential relationship of the objective world, that is valid for me, to others which are valid for and with me. The completing developments should have been furnished in a Second Volume which the author had hoped to be able to supply very soon after the first, as a sequel that had been planned at the same time with it.

The objections raised against this Idealism and its alleged Solipsism seriously impeded the reception of the work, as though its essential significance lay in any way in this sketch of its philosophical import: whereas this was no more than a means devised in the interest of the problem of a possible objective knowledge, for winning this necessary insight: that the very meaning of that problem refers us back to the Ego that is in and for itself; and that this Ego, as the presupposition of the knowledge of the world, cannot be and remain presupposed as having the existence of a world, and must therefore, in respect of the world's being, be brought to its pure state through phenomenological reduction, that is, through "Epoché." I might have been better advised if, without altering the essential connexions of the exposition, I had left open the final decision in favour of transcendental Idealism, and contented myself with making clear that trains of thought of crucial philosophical significance with a trend that is towards Idealism necessarily arise here, and must by all means be thought out; so that to this end one needs in any case to make sure of the ground of transcendental subjectivity.

I must not hesitate, however, to state quite explicitly that in regard to transcendental-phenomenological Idealism, I have nothing whatsoever to take back, that now as ever I hold every form of current philosophical realism to be in principle absurd, as no less every idealism to which in its own arguments that realism stands contrasted, and which in fact it refutes. Given a deeper understanding of my exposition, the solipsistic objection should never have been raised as an objection against phenomenological idealism, but only as an objection to the incompleteness of my exposition. Still, one should not overlook what is the radical essential in all philosophizing to which, in this book, a path will be opened. Over against the thinking, rich in presuppositions, which has as its premises the world, science, and sundry understandings bearing on method, and rooted in the scientific tradition as a whole, a radical form of the autonomy of knowledge is here active, in which form of datum given in advance, and all Being taken for granted, is set out as invalid, and there is a reversion to that which is already presupposed *implicite* in all presupposing and in all questioning and answering, and herewith of necessity exists already, immediate and persistent. This is the first to be freely and expressly posited, and with a self-evidence which precedes all conceivable instances of self-evidence, and is contained im-

plicitly in them all. Although it is only with the phenomenological reduction which would convert this radicalism into conscious work, that genuine work-performing philosophizing begins, the whole preparatory reflexion has already been carried through, and precisely in this spirit. It is phenomenological, though still unconsciously so. It follows, therefore, that it is a piece of pure self-reflexion revealing original self-evident facts; and, moreover, when it exhibits in these facts (though incompletely) the outlines of Idealism, it is as far as can be from being one of the usual balancings between Idealism and Realism, and cannot be affected by the arguments involved in any of their objections. Such essential connexions of a phenomenological kind, and such motivations in an "idealistic" direction as are in fact revealed, hold firm under all the improvements and completions that may eventually prove necessary, even as the reality of rivers and mountain ranges, which the first explorer has really seen and described, remains standing despite the improvements and additions to which his descriptions are subjected by later explorers. The first preliminary steps towards a fresh formulation of the transcendental problem (to subserve mere purposes of motivation) must then be taken in accord with its phenomenological content, and in accord with what from this point of departure forecasts with objective necessity the true meaning of an objective being that is subjectively knowable. Moreover, transcendental phenomenology is not a theory, devised merely as a reply to the historic problem of Idealism, it is a science founded in itself, and standing absolutely on its own basis: it is indeed the one science that stands absolutely on its own ground. Only in such wise, however, that when consistently carried forward, it leads, as is already apparent in the important concluding portions of the book, to the "constitutive" problems, which take in all the conceivable objects we could ever meet with in experience, briefly the whole real world spread out before us together with all its categories of the object, and likewise all "ideal" worlds, and makes these all intelligible as transcendental correlates. Whence it clearly follows that transcendental phenomenological Idealism is not a special philosophical thesis, a theory among others; that transcendental phenomenology, rather, as concrete science, is, in itself, even when no word is spoken concerning Idealism, universal Idealism worked out as a science. And it proves it through its own meaning as transcendental science in each of its special constitutive

domains. But we also need to make clearly explicit the fundamental and essential difference between transcendental-phenomenological Idealism and that form of Idealism which in popular realism is opposed to it as its incompatible opposite. And in the very first place let this be said: Our phenomenological idealism does not deny the positive existence of the real (*realen*) world and of Nature—in the first place as though it held it to be an illusion. Its sole task and service is to clarify the meaning of this world, the precise sense in which everyone accepts it, and with undeniable right, as really existing (*wirklich seiende*). That it exists—given as it is as a universe out there (*daseiendes*) in an experience that is continuous, and held persistently together through a thread of widespread unanimity—that is quite indubitable. It is quite another consideration, although in the light of the discussions in the text of this work one of great philosophical importance, that the continuance of experience in the future under such form of universal agreement is a mere (although reasonable) presumption, and that accordingly the non-existence of the world although, and whilst it is in point of fact the object of a unanimous experience, always remains thinkable. The result of the phenomenological clarification of the meaning of the manner of existence of the real world (and, eidetically, of a real world generally) is that only transcendental subjectivity has ontologically the meaning of Absolute Being, that it only is non-relative, that is relative only to itself; whereas the real world indeed exists, but in respect of essence is relative to transcendental subjectivity, and in such a way that it can have its meaning as existing (*seiende*) reality only as the intentional meaning-product of transcendental subjectivity. But that first attains its full meaning when the phenomenological disclosure of the transcendental Ego is so far advanced that the experience of fellow-subjects implicit in it has won its reduction to transcendental experience; in other words, when the self-interpretation carried out purely on the basis of transcendental experience had led to the knowledge of the real and whole meaning of the transcendental subjectivity, which, for the Ego reflecting at the time means this: "I, the transcendental, absolute I, as I am in my own life of transcendental consciousness; but besides myself, the fellow-subjects who in this life of mine reveal themselves as co-transcendental, within the transcendental society of 'Ourselves,' which simultaneously reveals itself." It is thus within the intersub-

jectivity, which in the phenomenological reduction has reached empirical givenness on a transcendental level, and is thus itself transcendental, that the real (*reale*) world is constituted as "objective," as being there for everyone.

The world has this meaning, whether we are aware of it or not. But how could we ever be aware of it prior to the phenomenological reduction which first brings the transcendental subjectivity as our absolute Being into the focus of experience? So long as it was only the psychological subjectivity that was recognized, and one sought to posit it as absolute, and to understand the world as its correlate, the result could only be an absurd Idealism, a psychological Idealism—the very type which the equally absurd realism has as its counterpart. Now by such as have won their way to the genuine transcendental subjectivity it can assuredly be seen that the great idealists of the eighteenth century, Berkeley and Hume on the one side, Leibniz on the other, had, properly speaking, already reached beyond psychological subjectivity in the sense it bears within the natural world. But since the contrast between psychological and transcendental subjectivity remained unexplained, and the all-dominant sensationalism of the school of Locke could not render intelligible the constituting of what is real as a performance giving to subjectivity meaning and true being, the unfruitful and unphilosophical conflict fought out on the field of nature remained in vogue for the times that followed, and there prevailed a perverse interpretation of the meaning which the great idealists had really intended, yet to be sure without making that meaning scientifically clear.

The new publications which the author began to issue in 1929 (the first since the *Ideen*) will contribute far-reaching advances, clarifications, and completions of what, for the rest, had already been begun in the *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–1901), and then in the *Ideen*, so that the claim to have set going the necessary beginnings of a philosophy, "which can present itself as a science," cannot well be regarded as self-deception. In any case, he who for decades instead of speculating concerning a New Atlantis has really wandered in the trackless wilds of a new continent and undertaken bits of virgin cultivation, will not allow himself to be diverted by the refusals of geographers who judge the reports in the light of their own experiences and habits of thought, and on the strength of this exempt themselves from all the trouble of making a journey into the land proclaimed to be new.

There is still one point that calls for a remark. In the eyes of those who set aside the phenomenological reduction as a philosophically irrelevant eccentricity (whereby, to be sure, they destroy the whole meaning of the work and of my phenomenology), and leave nothing remaining but an *a priori* psychology, it often happens that this residual psychology is identified as to its main import with Franz Brentano's psychology of intentionality. Great indeed as is the respect and gratitude with which the author remembers this gifted thinker as his teacher, and strongly convinced as he is that his conversion of the scholastic concept of intentionality into a descriptive root-concept of psychology constitutes a great discovery, apart from which phenomenology could not have come into being at all; none the less we must distinguish as essentially different the author's pure psychology implicitly contained in this transcendental phenomenology and the psychology of Brentano. This holds good also of his "psychognosis" limited to pure description in the region of inner experience. It is indeed "phenomenological" psychology if, as has often happened at the present time, we are to give the title "phenomenological" to every psychological inquiry conducted purely within the framework of "inner experience," and, grouping all such studies together, to speak further of a phenomenological psychology. For this latter discipline, quite apart from its name, takes us back, naturally, to John Locke and to his school, including John Stuart Mill. One can then say that David Hume's *Treatise* gives the first systematic sketch of a pure phenomenology, which, though under the name of psychology, attempts to supply a philosophical transcendental philosophy. Like his great predecessor, Berkeley, it is as a psychologist that he is regarded and has exercised his influence. Thus, excluding all transcendental questions, it is this whole "phenomenological" school which alone calls here for our consideration. Characteristic of it and of its psychology is the conception set forth in Locke's "white paper" simile of the pure soul as a complex or heap of temporally co-existing and successive data, which run their course under rules partly their own, partly psychophysical. It would thus be the function of descriptive psychology to distinguish and classify the main types of these "sense-data," data of the "inner sense," of inner experience, and likewise the elementary basic forms of the psychical complex; that of explanatory psychology to seek out the rules of genetic formations and transformations, much as

in the case of natural science, and on similar lines of method. And quite naturally so, since the pure psychical being or the psychical life is regarded as a nature-resembling flow of events in a quasi-space of consciousness. On grounds of principle, we may say that it obviously makes no difference whether we let the psychic "data" be blown along in a collective whole "atomistically," though in accordance with empirical laws, like heaps of sand, or regard them as parts of wholes which by necessity, whether empirical or *a priori*, can alone operate as such parts, and principally perhaps within the whole of consciousness fettered as that is to a rigid form of wholeness. In other words, atomistic and Gestalt-psychology alike participate in that intrinsic meaning of psychological "naturalism," as defined in terms of what we have stated above, which, having regard to the expression "inner sense," may also be termed "sensationalism" (*Sensualismus*). Clearly Brentano's psychology of intentionality also remains fettered to this inherited naturalism, though in virtue of its having introduced into psychology as a main concept, descriptive in type and universal in scope, that of Intentionality, it has worked therein as a reforming factor.

The essentially new influence which in transcendently directed phenomenology becomes active for descriptive psychology, and is now completely changing the whole aspect of this psychology, its whole method, the setting of its concrete aims, is the insight that a concrete description of the sphere of consciousness as a self-contained sphere of intentionality (it is never otherwise concretely given), a concrete description, for instance, of perceptions or recollections, and so forth, also calls, of necessity, for a description of the object as such, referred to in intentional experiences, as such, we say, indicating thereby that they belong inseparably to the current experience itself as its objectively intended or "objective meaning." Furthermore, that one and the same intentional object as such, from the viewpoint of descriptive psychology, is an ideal indicator of a group of ways of being conscious that are proper to it, whose system of typical differences tallies essentially with the typical articulation of the intentional object. It does not suffice to say that every consciousness is a consciousness-of on the lines, perhaps, of Brentano's classification (to which I cannot subscribe) into "presentations," "judgments," "phenomena of love and of hate"; but one must question the different categories of objects in their pure objectivity as objects

of possible consciousness, and question back to the essential configurations of possible "manifolds" to be synthetically connected, through which an object of the relevant category can alone be known as the same, that is, as that which can be known through experiences of very differing description, differing and always differing still again, but always restricted to the descriptive types of such ways of consciousness as belong to it essentially and *a priori*. The reference to the fact that every object is either experienced or thought or sought after as an end, and so forth, is only a first step, and still tells us very little. The task of a phenomenological "constitution" of objects referred to at the close of this book, in a transcendental setting, it is true, finds its place here, only that now it is conceived as projected back upon the natural psychological standpoint.

Unfortunately, the necessary stressing of the difference between transcendental and psychological subjectivity, the repeated declaration that transcendental phenomenology is not in any sense psychology, not even phenomenological psychology has had this effect upon the majority of professional psychologists (who are wont to be very frugal, moreover, in all that concerns philosophy), that they failed to notice at all the radical psychological reform which was involved in the transcendental; they interpreted my utterances as an intimation that as psychologists they were not concerned in any way with phenomenology, or with any part of it. Even the few who noticed here that it was very relevant to psychology, and sought to make it accessible, have not grasped the whole meaning and scope of an intentional and constitutive phenomenology, and have not seen that here for the first time, in contrast with naturalistic psychology from an outer standpoint, a psychology comes to words and deeds, a psychology in which the life of the soul is made intelligible in its most intimate and originally intuitional essence, and that this original intuitional essence lies in a "constituting" of meaning-formations in modes of existential validity, which is perpetually new and incessantly organizing itself afresh—briefly, in the system of intentional actions, whereby existential (*seiende*) objects of the most varied grades right up to the level of an objective world are there for the Ego as occasion demands.

It was, moreover, not without reason that the psychological reform made its first entry as the concealed implication of a transcendental reform. For only a compulsion grounded on the

philosophically transcendental problem, an urge towards extreme radicalism in the clearing up of the modes in which knowledge and object stand to each other in the conscious life itself, necessarily led to a universal and concrete phenomenology of consciousness, which received its primary orientation from the intentional object. In the transition to the psychology of the natural standpoint, it is then obvious that an intentional psychology has a quite different meaning from that of the traditions of the school of Locke or of that of Brentano. A. von Meinong also, although, in writings that appeared subsequently to my *Logical Studies*, his teaching comes here and there into touch with my own, is in no way to be regarded here as an exception: he remains bound to Brentano's leading conceptions, or to psychological sensationalism, as does the entire psychology of the modern tradition and the whole psychology of the present day.

The present work, however, as a philosophical treatise does not include psychological reform among its themes, although it should not be wholly lacking in indications bearing on a genuine intentional psychology. Even as philosophical, moreover, its task is limited. It does not claim to be anything more than an attempt that has been growing through decades of meditation exclusively directed to this one end: to discover a radical beginning of a philosophy which, to repeat the Kantian phrase, "will be able to present itself as science." The ideal of a philosopher, to think out sooner or later a logic, an ethic, a metaphysic, and so forth, which he can at all times justify to himself and others with an insight that is absolutely cogent—this ideal the author had early to abandon, and has not resumed it to this day. And for no reason other than the following, seeing that at any rate this insight was and remained for him indubitable, that a philosophy cannot start in a naïve straightforward fashion—not then as do the positive sciences which take their stand on the previously given ground of our experience of a world, presupposed as something that exists as a matter of course. That they do it causes them all to have problems in respect of their foundations, and paradoxes of their own, a condition which a subsequent and belated theory of knowledge first seeks to remedy. For this very reason the positive sciences are unphilosophical, they are not ultimate, absolute sciences. A philosophy with problematic foundations, with paradoxes which arise from the obscurity of the fundamental concepts, is no philosophy, it contradicts its very mean-

ing as philosophy. Philosophy can take root only in radical reflexion upon the meaning and possibility of its own scheme. Through such reflexion it must in the very first place and through its own activity take possession of the absolute ground of pure pre-conceptual experience, which is its own proper preserve; then, self-active again, it must create original concepts, adequately adjusted to this ground, and so generally utilize for its advance an absolutely transparent method. There can then be no unclear, problematic concepts, and no paradoxes. The entire absence of this procedure, the overlooking of the immense difficulties attaching to a correct beginning, or the covering up of the same through the haste to have done with them, had this for its consequence, that we had and have many and ever new philosophical "systems" or "directions," but not the one philosophy which as Idea underlies all the philosophies that can be imagined. Philosophy, as it moves towards its realization, is not a relatively incomplete science improving as it goes naturally forward. There lies embedded in its meaning as philosophy a radicalism in the matter of foundations, an absolute freedom from all presuppositions, a securing for itself an absolute basis: the totality of presuppositions that can be "taken for granted." But that too must itself be first clarified through corresponding reflexions, and the absolutely binding quality of its requirements laid bare. That these reflexions become more and more interwoven as thought advances, and lead eventually to a whole science, to a science of Beginnings, a "first" philosophy; that all philosophical disciplines, the very foundations of all sciences whatsoever, spring from its matrix—all this must needs have remained implicit since the radicalism was lacking without which philosophy generally could not be, could not even make a start. The true philosophical beginning must have been irretrievably lost in beginning with presuppositions of a positive kind. Lacking as did the traditional schemes of philosophy the enthusiasm of a first beginning, they also lacked what is first and most important: a specifically philosophical groundwork acquired through original self-activity, and therewith that firmness of basis, that genuineness of root, which alone makes real philosophy possible. The author's convictions on such lines have become increasingly self-evident as his work progressed. If he has been obliged, on practical grounds, to lower the ideal of the philosopher to that of a downright beginner, he has at least in his old age reached for himself the complete

certainty that he should thus call himself a beginner. He could almost hope, were Methuselah's span of days allotted him, to be still able to become a philosopher. He has always been able to follow up the problems that issue from the Beginning, and primarily from what is first for a descriptive phenomenology, the beginning of the beginning, and to develop it concretely in what to him have been instructive pieces of work. The far horizons of a phenomenological philosophy, the chief structural formations, to speak geographically, have disclosed themselves; the essential groups of problems and the methods of approach on essential lines have been made clear. The author sees the infinite open country of the true philosophy, the "promised land" on which he himself will never set foot. This confidence may wake a smile, but let each see for himself whether it has not some ground in the fragments laid before him as phenomenology in its beginnings. Gladly would he hope that those who come after will take up these first ventures, carry them steadily forward, yes, and improve also their great deficiencies, defects of incompleteness which cannot indeed be avoided in the beginnings of scientific work.

But when all is said, this work of mine can help no one who has already fixed his philosophy and his philosophical method, who has thus never learnt to know the despair of one who has the misfortune to be in love with philosophy, and who at the very outset of his studies, placed amid the chaos of philosophies, with his choice to make, realizes that he has really no choice at all, since no one of these has taken care to free itself from presuppositions, and none has sprung from the radical attitude of autonomous self-responsibility which the meaning of a philosophy demands. He who believes that he can appeal to the "fruitful βάθος" (*bathos*—depth)—of experience in the current sense of that term, or to the "assured results" of the exact sciences, or to experimental or physiological psychology, or to a constantly improved logic and mathematics, and so forth, and therein find premises for his philosophy, cannot have much susceptibility for the contents of this book. He is unable to bring to his reading an intensive interest, nor can he hold that the time and effort have been well spent which the sympathetic understanding of such a way of beginning demands. Only he who is himself striving to reach a beginning will herein behave otherwise, since he must say to himself: *tua res agitur.*

Those who are interested in the author's continued work and progress since 1913 may be referred to the recently published writing entitled "Formale und transzendente Logik, Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft" (in the *Jahrbuch f. Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Bd. X, 1929). Also to his *Cartesianischen Meditationen*, an extended elaboration of the four lectures which he had the pleasure of giving first in the spring of 1922 at the University of London, and in this last year in an essentially maturer form at the Sorbonne in Paris. They furnish once again, though merely in outline an Introduction to phenomenological philosophy, but contain an essential supplement in the detailed treatment of the fundamental problem of transcendental intersubjectivity, wherewith the solipsistic objection completely collapses. They will presumably appear simultaneously with this English edition of the *Ideen* in a French rendering in the *Bulletin de la Société de Philosophie*. In the same year a German edition should be appearing, published by Niemeyer of Halle a.d.S., containing as additional matter a second Introduction, in which the clarification of the idea of a personal (on the lines of a mental science) and natural anthropology and psychology, and lastly of a pure intuitionist psychology, is undertaken as an initial problem. At a later stage only is it shown how, starting from this discussion, which, like all that has preceded, remains on natural ground, the Copernican reversal to the transcendental standpoint finds its motive. At the same time a series of publications is being started in my *Jahrbuch*: the concrete phenomenological studies which I have drafted as the years went by, to clear up my own mind, and for the safeguarding of the structure of phenomenology.

In conclusion, let me thank my own honoured friend, Professor W. R. Boyce Gibson, for the disinterested labour involved in this translation. It fills me with some hope when so thorough and so earnest a thinker takes so great an interest in my efforts to furnish philosophy with a scientific beginning as to take upon himself the translating of this extensive work, the language of which is so difficult, even for Germans.

Translator's Preface

THE *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, of which this is a translation, first appeared as the leading Article of the first issue of the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung*¹ in 1913, and has been twice reprinted, in 1922 and in 1928. It furnishes the groundwork and starting-point of the phenomenological movement now so active in Germany, and is the "classic" of that reform movement in philosophy which, in the words of the Author's stirring article in *Logos* (Bd. I), 1910, conceives philosophy as a "rigorous science," and aims at a radical reconstruction of its basis and method. Since the year 1900, which saw the first edition of Husserl's *Logical Studies*, the Author has been known as a profound and penetrating logical thinker, but in these same *Studies*, more particularly in the Second Edition (1913-1921), we have not only logic, but the transition from logic to phenomenology, and the growing conviction that a radical or "transcendental" logic is possible only on a phenomenological basis. The present work supplies that basis in a form at once general and fundamental, special problems, such as those of Intersubjectivity, the Pure Ego, and the relation of phenomenology to Metaphysics being reserved for later treatment. It is, as expressly stated on the front page of the third impression of the *Ideen* (Halle, Max Niemeyer, 1928), the "First Book," and, as such, bears the title *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, or *General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*—the title adopted for this English version.

The translation from the German covers the Author's Preface, the Text of the *Ideen*, and the Index. It has had its difficulties, and the sincerest effort has been made to straighten these out, and present a faithful rendering—in somewhat modified style, maybe—of the terse and compact original. I have had important help towards the elucidating of the meaning of the text from Professor Husserl himself, for whose generous kindness to me during my stay in Freiburg in 1928 I cannot be

¹ Edited by E. Husserl. Freiburg-i-B. Published by Max Niemeyer, Halle, a.d.S.