

MICHAEL MARDER

phenomena-

critique-

logos

THE PROJECT OF CRITICAL
PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomena—Critique—*Logos*

Phenomena—Critique—*Logos*
The Project of Critical Phenomenology
Michael Marder

ROWMAN &
LITTLEFIELD
INTERNATIONAL

London • New York

Published by Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd.
16 Carlisle Street, London, W1D 3BT
www.rowmaninternational.com

Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd. is an affiliate of Rowman & Littlefield
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706, USA
With additional offices in Boulder, New York, Toronto (Canada), and Plymouth (UK)
www.rowman.com

Copyright © 2014 by Michael Marder

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: HB 978-1-78348-025-8
ISBN: PB 978-1-78348-026-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Marder, Michael, 1980–
Phenomena—critique—logos : the project of critical phenomenology / Michael Marder.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-78348-025-8 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-78348-026-5 (pbk. : alk. paper) —
ISBN 978-1-78348-027-2 (electronic)
I. Phenomenology. I. Title.
B829.5.M333 2014
142'.7—dc23
2013049228



™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | ix |
| Abbreviations of Book Titles by E. Husserl | xi |
| Introduction: In the Beginning Was a Critique of <i>Logos</i> . . . | 1 |
| Notes | 7 |
| 1 Critical Phenomenology: Back to Husserl Himself! | 9 |
| The Pulse of Phenomenology | 9 |
| Phenomena: A Critique of <i>Logos</i> | 17 |
| <i>Logos</i> : A Critique of Phenomena | 34 |
| Notes | 47 |
| 2 Ontological Critique: Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Ontico-Ontological Difference | 51 |
| <i>Plus d'Une . . . Phénoménologie</i> | 51 |
| Critique and the Absolute | 55 |
| Critical Difference: Truth and Experience | 62 |
| Notes | 68 |
| 3 Ethical Critique: Levinas and the Trembling of Phenomenology | 71 |
| Shaken Grounds: Critique as an Earthquake | 71 |
| Shaken Subjects: Critical Dislocations | 79 |
| Critique <i>for</i> the Other | 86 |
| Notes | 89 |
| 4 Political Critique: Arendt and the Crisis of Beginnings | 93 |
| Critical Phenomenology as Action, or Arendt with and against Husserl | 93 |
| Phenomenology's <i>Logos</i> as a Critique of Violence and the Question of Natality | 100 |
| Phenomenology's Phenomena as a Critique of Totalitarianism and the Problem of Revolution | 104 |
| Notes | 111 |
| 5 Critical Twilight: Derrida and the Postmetaphysical Critique of Phenomenology | 115 |
| Neither Critical nor Uncritical, or Critique Reduced—to <i>Différance</i> | 115 |
| Between Phenomenology and Grammatology | 121 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Logos: Both More and Less than a Voice</i> | 125 |
| Notes | 131 |
| Epilogue: An Affirmative Critique | 135 |
| Notes | 137 |
| Index | 139 |
| About the Author | 147 |

Acknowledgements

Over the past few years, I've had the privilege of discussing the ethical, political and ontological aspects of critical phenomenology with colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic. In Sweden, I benefited from comments following my presentation of "The Two Phenomenologies: Of Consciousness and of Spirit", the forerunner of chapter 2, which was a part of "Questioning Grounds: Contemporary Readings of German Idealism" at Södertörn University in June 2011. I am particularly grateful to Marcia Sá Cavalcante-Schuback for making this event possible and for her insightful feedback on my talk. In Spain, I had the opportunity to discuss key ideas from chapter 3 under the title "The Ethical Ungrounding of Phenomenology" at the fourth Organization of Phenomenological Organizations (OPO) World Conference, held in September 2011 in Segovia. I thank Alexandre Franco de Sá for his response to this text. In Portugal, I gave conference talks based on the second and third sections of chapter 1 at the first Lisbon International Conference of Philosophy and fourth International Congress for the Portuguese Association for Phenomenological Philosophy in the autumn of the same year. In March 2012, William Egginton kindly invited me to speak on the subject of critical phenomenology at Johns Hopkins University. I am likewise grateful to Aryeh Botwinick of Temple University for organising my lecture on the political phenomenology of Hannah Arendt, which contained, *in nuce*, the theses of chapter 4. The subsequent Q&A session provided me with helpful references to the finer points of Arendt's philosophy. Sarah Campbell, at Rowman & Littlefield International, has been incredibly supportive of this project. Finally, this book is dedicated to my wife, Patrícia Vieira, who has seen *Phenomena—Critique—Logos* through from the start, and whose philosophical disposition makes both love and wisdom possible.

An early version of the first part of chapter 1 was published under the title "The Pulse of Phenomenology" in *Parrhesia* 14 (2012): 16–22. "The Phenomenology of Ontico-Ontological Difference" (*Bulletin d'Analyse Phénoménologique* 8, no. 2 [2012]: 1–20) was the foundation for chapter 2 of this book. Parts of chapter 3 appeared under the title "The Ethical Ungrounding of Phenomenology: Levinas's Tremors", in *Being Shaken: Ontology and the Event*, edited by Santiago Zabala and Michael Marder (2014). A version of chapter 4 was published as "Nativity, Event, Revolu-

tion: The Political Phenomenology of Hannah Arendt'' in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 44, no. 3 (October 2013): 301–19. All these texts are reproduced with the permission of copyright holders.

Abbreviations of Book Titles by E. Husserl

- EU *Erfahrung und Urteil. Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik*, edited by L. Landgrebe (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1999).
- H I *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, edited by S. Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950).
- H II *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, edited by W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950).
- H III *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, edited by W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950).
- H IV *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, edited by W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952).
- H VI *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, edited by W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954).
- H XI *Analysen zur passive Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten 1918–1926*, edited by M. Fleischer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).
- H XVII *Formale und transzendentale Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*, edited by P. Janssen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).
- H XVIII *Logische Untersuchungen. Band I: Prolegomena zur reinen Logik* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).
- H XIX/1 *Logische Untersuchungen. Band II: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis. I. Teil* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984).
- H XXVII *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, edited by T. Nenon and H.-R. Sepp (Boston: Kluwer, 1989).

* Please note that throughout this book, Husserl's works published in *Husserliana* are cited as "H", followed by the volume, in Roman numerals, and page number.

Introduction

In the Beginning Was a Critique of Logos . . .

Today, in the early part of the twenty-first century, phenomenology is going through an exciting makeover. Long past are the decades of its isolation from the scientific milieu: transdisciplinary investigations at the intersection of phenomenological philosophy and cognitive science,¹ artificial intelligence research, life sciences or environmental theory² are thriving. Equally significant, and related to these instances of transdisciplinarity, is the shift of emphasis from the traditionally anthropocentric set of problems to the phenomenologies of nonhuman life forms, as well as of things or objects.³ It is now undeniably more difficult to sustain a humanist prejudice (for which Martin Heidegger, in his *Letter on Humanism*, famously chastised Jean-Paul Sartre) within a phenomenological research program than it was in the middle of the twentieth century. If the proof of an intellectual movement's vitality is that it opens new vistas for investigation, finds countless opportunities for the application of its method and does not shy away from a creative and rigorous self-reinvention, then phenomenology fully satisfies all three requirements, exhibiting the verve that other strands of contemporary philosophy will find enviable.

It is tempting to think that the current thriving of phenomenology is a part of what Edmund Husserl foresaw as its reemergence, a return to the world and to the sciences with the advantage of the transcendental foundation, upon which both this world and scientific method could be reconstructed. But with what luggage does phenomenology make its comeback if, from every corner, and especially in the context of its reception in the circles of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, one hears calls to "naturalise" it and the objects of its investigations? The bustling theoretical activity that proceeds in its name perhaps hides a trend that may endanger phenomenology's admirable adaptability and capacity for survival. Its broad appeal is a sort of *pharmakon*, a poisonous gift. The distension of its traditional boundaries in transdisciplinary experiments makes it easy to lose track of what cannot be taken away from phenomenology without, by the same careless stroke, destroying it altogether. I am referring neither to a concept—be it as central as "intentionality", which had actually originated in Scholastic philosophy and was adopted, before Husserl, by Franz Brentano—nor to a formal method of investigation, but to a

simple axiom that phenomenology shares with other vibrant philosophical schools of thought. Succinctly put, the axiom states that *all worthwhile research in phenomenology necessarily puts in question the meaning of phenomenology itself*. Whether explicitly or not, every great thinker in the phenomenological tradition has abided by this rule, which one should not confuse with an injunction for perpetual and paralyzing navel-gazing. But it is all the more necessary to keep to this axiom now that the barriers between phenomenology and cognitive sciences, for instance, are becoming increasingly porous, and a relapse into naturalism, which Husserl and his followers vehemently opposed, presents itself as a genuine possibility.⁴

The self-questioning of phenomenology does not stem from any discipline other than philosophy. While adhering to a certain method, it does not yield a final, objectively verifiable or universally applicable response, but rather shadows all phenomenological ventures from beginning to end. How seriously should we take this (at times frustrating) absence of a response? On the face of it, the answer to the perpetual question exists and is relatively simple: phenomenology is a mixture of “phenomena” and “*logos*”, much like philosophy itself is a composite of love and wisdom. Indeed, all phenomenologists have focused on both parts of the compound word, despite having furnished radically divergent interpretations of it, ranging from pure logic and a name for being to speech and voice in the case of *logos*, and from appearances and self-presentations to ghostly apparitions in the case of phenomena. Something essential is missing, however, from the exclusive focus on the two constituents of phenomenology: the critique of its meaning, if not of its being. The disquietude of critique is the third term, which slips in between *logos* and phenomena, makes their interrelation possible and immediately falls into obscurity, at least insofar as what is overtly named in “phenomenology” is concerned. In its various senses, critique is the name of the interaction between phenomena and *logos*, which cannot be frozen in preexisting conceptual moulds and definitions.

In response to this vanishing mediation, our task will be to sift through the semantic cloaks that critique, tinged by the forever provisional conclusions of phenomenological investigations, will don. We might even make surprising discoveries (for instance, that, at the hands of phenomenology, critique loses the juridical connotations of a tribunal and, at the risk of giving up on its capacity for decision-making, leaves whatever remains of the decision up to the things themselves—in a word, becomes wholly affirmative). But before embarking on a search for the specifically phenomenological senses of critique, note that the determination here is bilateral—that is to say, a critical impulse instigates, in its turn, phenomenological investigations. Since that other determination is frequently forgotten, critical phenomenology must proceed as the work of recollection, the labour of anamnesis, which promises to reconnect us

with the silent common background for the appearance of phenomena as much as of *logos*.

How does critical anamnesis work? Let us take a familiar theological example as a heuristic device. (We will not go too far afield with this example, as Husserl's ideas on *logos* must have been pervasively influenced by the New Testament, which he read daily.⁵) Although, according to John 1:1, "in the beginning was the Word [*Logos*]", we assert in the spirit of phenomenology that in the beginning was a *critique of logos*—its initial rift vis-à-vis itself, which, thanks to its noncoincidence with itself, made space for the entire world and, by extension, for the self-showing of phenomena. Creation would be God's difference from himself, and the created world—the comet's tail of this rift, which does not appear in the world it brings forth. Even if the Word's identity with God and its "being with" God, emphasised by the apostle, seems to keep the Word metaphysically safe and intact, the beginning is hopelessly fissured, as the subject separates from the predicate and God stands outside himself, *qua* the Word that is with him, in the closest of proximities, albeit still incapable of erasing the distance of nonidentity. In the beginning (*archē*), the self-critique of *logos* shatters the unity of the beginning and, in the ensuing anarchy, draws the primordial division, the first ontologically productive judgement of creation. The parting of the lips and the drawing of breath, before anything is said, are traces of the critical aperture that anticipates *logos* well in advance of its vocalisation.

The sense of critique as the first division, including a division in and a displacement of what presents itself as "the first", pervades the entire phenomenological tradition. For Husserl, it coincides not only with the nonthematic pre-predicative judgement (*Ur-teil*: in German, literally the originary division) but also with consciousness as intentionality, always already predifferentiated in keeping with the particular noematic senses it pursues. In Martin Heidegger's oeuvre, it engenders the elusive ontico-ontological difference, the distinction between being and beings, which is really nothing *in* being, as well as the temporal-ecstatic "standing outside itself" of Dasein, determinative of the existential conception of existence. The phenomenological ethics of Emmanuel Levinas is predicated on the absolute separation of the I from the other, who, in addressing me across this gap, recalls me to my responsibility and to myself. The politics of Hannah Arendt postulates the irreducibility of human plurality and a multiplicity of discontinuous beginnings as the possibility for action. Jacques Derrida's deconstruction names (without naming) the first division in and of the beginning: it "is" *différance*. These thinkers will serve as our guides through the intricacies of critical phenomenology, illuminating its epistemological, ontological, ethical, political and self-critical dimensions. While, following the indications I have provided here, a study of other phenomenologists, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir or Maurice Merleau-Ponty, would have been similarly helpful, the point

of *Phenomena—Critique*—Logos is not to put together an exhaustive disciplinary canon, but rather to explore the iterations of critique along the five dimensions mentioned above. Once set in motion, the apparatus of critical phenomenology will be capable of processing the texts and ideas of other thinkers in the tradition not included in this book.

What is the significance of the phenomenological fissures, divisions, splits, rifts and separations united under the heading of critique? And why is the charged word “critique” so suitable for gathering together the frequently suppressed figures of disunity?

In the phenomenological context, critique is triangulated with phenomena and with *logos* in a constellation I term “critical phenomenology”. But there are, regardless of all appearances to the contrary, more than three elements in this triangulation: besides driving a productive wedge between phenomena and *logos*, critique is responsible for their *difference from themselves*, resulting in a proliferation of oft-contradictory senses of the two terms, not to mention the shattering of the oneness of *logos* and the scattering of phenomena. Of course, the trend I am outlining here challenges some of the most famous avowals (in the writings of Husserl, Heidegger and others) of the unity, if not the tautological cobelonging, of phenomenology’s two poles. But it is equally clear that, absent the tension between and within the phenomena and *logos*, phenomenological investigations would not have attained the levels of intellectual rigor they have enjoyed throughout the twentieth and, now, the twenty-first centuries. Still, the question remains: Why should we explain this tension by means of such a charged concept as critique?

It goes without saying that critique is an obligatory entry in any dictionary of modern philosophy. Most intimately associated with the thinking of Immanuel Kant, this word carries unmistakable epistemological connotations. It is, therefore, strange, to say the least, to hear critique mentioned alongside such ancient Greek concepts as phenomenon and *logos*. But as we shall see in chapter 1, critique is no less Greek than the two obvious ingredients of phenomenology: derived from the verb *krinein*—meaning “to separate”, “to distinguish” or “to discern”—it precedes the uncritical separation of ontology from epistemology, just as the Platonic *khôra* anticipates the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible and opens the space, or the place, for both. The point is that, in contrast to its usage in modern philosophy, phenomenological critique is not entirely tethered to epistemology. To be sure, it is likely due to its epistemological connotations that this word has fallen into disrepute with the disciples of Husserl, who, unlike them, used it in a positive sense on numerous occasions, at times implying that a new kind of critique was responsible for the emergence of phenomenology as a whole.

The other advantage of honing the phenomenological sense of critique and the critical idea of phenomenology is that these explorations will be the stepping stones in the process of invalidating what has become an

uncritical, yet remarkably entrenched, commonplace assumption in Continental philosophy circles. It has to do with the latent animosity boiling in the seemingly unbridgeable gap separating two schools of thought: Kantian and post-Kantian critical tradition, on the one hand, and Husserlian and post-Husserlian phenomenology, on the other. With a few exceptions, including Tom Rockmore's recent *Kant and Phenomenology*,⁶ many specialists in nineteenth-century philosophy consider twentieth-century phenomenology to be a step back from the achievements of Kant, G. W. F. Hegel and Karl Marx, especially with regards to the possibility of putting reality in a historical perspective and producing a robust critique of this historical ontology. Phenomenological description is equated with a quasi-empiricist and positivist mode of thinking, an uncritical acquiescence to *what is*. Phenomenologists, for their part, view critical thought as an abstract and empty speculation, as ontology from an eagle's-eye view, lacking the careful attention with which phenomenology approaches the fine grains of human consciousness, existence and relation to the world.

Truth be told, having imbibed Brentano's "distaste for German Idealism", as Dermot Moran once put it,⁷ Husserl was not at all receptive to the philosophy of Hegel, as I make plain in chapter 2. And yet Husserl's engagement with neo-Kantianism (as well as with Johann Gottlieb Fichte) and his ostensible acceptance of the Hegelian theses in works of the late period (e.g., *The Crisis*) complicate the caricaturised standoff between phenomenology and critical philosophy. The centrality of critique (or, more broadly and reminiscent of Hegel's philosophical parlance, of a certain concept of negativity) in both strands of thought is largely responsible for their rarely acknowledged proximity. This is because phenomenology is not just a set of positive—worse still, positivist—descriptions, themselves the outcomes of its critical drive. Nor is it sufficient to gauge the imperfect approximations of phenomenological reduction, destruction (*Abbau*) and deconstruction to the Kantian and post-Kantian critical apparatuses. More important than these is the way phenomenological critique exceeds the limits of strictly epistemological problems and affects the areas of ontology, ethics and politics no less than its Kantian or Hegelian counterparts. Curiously enough, it does so thanks to the inextinguishable self-critical impulse that, like a spark, jumped from Husserl's work to that of his followers.

One way to consider the history of phenomenological self-criticism is with respect to the idea of foundations. Husserl himself was obsessed with finding a solid grounding for the sciences in the not yet idealised structures of the lifeworld as well as in the hard-won certainties of transcendental phenomenology, the newly discovered field of pure consciousness and constitutive subjectivity. Heidegger's general response was that this foundation did not go either far or deep enough into the realm of fundamental ontology: Husserl failed to inquire into the *being* of pure consciousness—the true foundation of experience—and into human

beings' being-in-the-world, as opposed to the more or less abstract analyses of the lifeworld. Levinas considers ethics, and most notably the relation to the other, to be more foundational than Heidegger's fundamental ontology, not least because *what is* is addressed and offered to the other through speech. Arendt supplants the notion of foundation with discontinuous beginnings, concretely actualised in the double event of birth and action, and posits human plurality, which never fits the mould of transcendental unity, at the core of her political phenomenology. Derrida rejects both the original and the residual foundationalism of his predecessors, while undersigning phenomenology's irresistible tendency towards self-criticism, or autodeconstruction.

This book is divided into five chapters, each of them concentrating on one of the "critical phenomenologists" mentioned above. Chapter 1 offers an extended and in-depth discussion of critique as it emerges from Husserl's writings, spanning the period between *Logical Investigations* and *The Crisis*. I argue that the critiques of *logos* by phenomena and of phenomena by *logos* rhythmically alternate in Husserl's thought, dictating the "pulse of phenomenology". Next, I demonstrate how *logos* taken in four basic senses—as (1) the logical capacity (e.g., the ability to reason, the ability to form concepts), (2) the logical act (e.g., concept-formation, the mental act), (3) the logical means (e.g., words, speech, propositions, norms of reasoning) and (4) the logical products (e.g., concepts, thoughts)—is subjected to a variety of critiques from the standpoint of phenomena. The final section of the chapter is dedicated to the uniquely phenomenological *logos*, which enacts a critique of phenomena, where reduction plays the lead role. The project of transcendental phenomenology in its entirety turns out to be a positive outcome of this second movement of critique.

Chapter 2 explores the intersection of the ontological dimension of critical phenomenology and Hegelian dialectics. In a hermeneutical twist on what the French call *les trois Hs*, it focuses on Heidegger's reading of Hegel's phenomenology of spirit as a veiled critique of Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness. Ultimately, I contend, Heidegger will acknowledge the insufficiency of either phenomenology, concerned exclusively with being or with beings, and will hint at the possibility of a third kind of phenomenology unfolding between the two—the phenomenology of ontico-ontological difference. Phenomenology's ontological scope is thereby hemmed in on both sides by a critique of its purely ontic and onto-metaphysical orientations. Phenomenology, for Heidegger, is a critical nonmetaphysical ontology.

In chapter 3, I advance the claim that Levinas's ethics is a version of critical ethical phenomenology. His "thinking-of-the-other" will not compete with phenomenology for the dubious title of the true ground for existence. Rather, I demonstrate how such thinking makes tremble, destabilises and disturbs the dyad of substance and subject, which Hegel set in dialectical motion in his own phenomenology of spirit. Linking Levi-

nas's reflections on being and the literal ground (the earth) to his critique of substance, I argue that ethical critique is tantamount to an earthquake that shakes ontology from within its innermost depths. Similarly, ethical subjectivity is produced as a shaken I, obsessed with the other. From this obsession with (and fear for) the other, coupled with the tumult of the world shaken by injustice, a new sort of visceral critique for the sake of alterity is born.

Chapter 4 relies on Arendt's theses regarding natality and beginnings to outline how she not only provides a corrective to Husserlian philosophy but also develops a critical political phenomenology of her own. The key to Arendt's phenomenological variation is a double critique of violence and of totalitarianism: the former equates violence with the refusal of language, speech and discussion (or *logos*), while the latter charges totalitarianism with the destruction of publicness, difference and human plurality (or phenomena, both human and otherwise). Jointly, violence and totalitarianism will mark the external edges, or the absolute limits, of phenomenology. On Arendt's watch, phenomenology will assume the shape of a critical theory and practice of the political, before and beyond its so-called applications.

Chapter 5 asks whether Derrida's deconstruction may be understood as a phenomenological critique, in the particular sense developed in the rest of the book. Although it is ostensibly at odds with Husserl's phenomenology, the deconstruction of pure presence is consistent with the ontological, ethical and political facets of critique in question. Here, however, the very rigid and impermeable distinction between the critical and the uncritical breaks down, insofar as deconstructive critique aims at pure positivity and affirmation, prior to the awakening of the question. Interpreting *différance* as a critical discernment devoid of either judgement or decision, I formulate its relation to *logos*, divided between grammarology and phenomenology, as well as to phenomena, reconceived as appearing-disappearing phantasms. The chapter's conclusion sketches the affirmative, *différential*, phantasmatic critique that is of phenomenology even, and especially, when it is exercised *against* phenomenology.

To begin, then, I reiterate: In the beginning was a critique of *logos* . . .

NOTES

1. Cf., for example, Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Tim Bayne and Michelle Montague, eds., *Cognitive Phenomenology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Daniel Schmicking and Shaun Gallagher, eds., *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Dodrecht, Netherlands and New York: Springer, 2010).

2. Max Scheler and Hans Jonas were pioneers in the explorations of the links between phenomenology and the life sciences. For more recent studies, refer to Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge,

MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2007) or Ted Toadvine and Charles Brown, eds., *Eco-Phenomenology: Back to the Earth Itself* (Albany: State University of New York, 2003). For the phenomenology of plant life, see my own *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

3. Cf. Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Graham Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of the World* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 2005); Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); and my *The Event of the Thing: Derrida's Post-Deconstructive Realism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

4. For evidence of this dangerous trend, see Jean Petitot et al., eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

5. Dermot Moran, *Husserl: The Founder of Phenomenology* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 16.

6. Tom Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Rockmore, however, manages to overthrow these presuppositions only at the price of limiting his idea of phenomenology to its epistemological components.

7. Moran, *Husserl*, 17.

ONE

Critical Phenomenology

Back to Husserl Himself!

THE PULSE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

Over a century after Husserl's breakthrough work, *Logical Investigations*, it is still far from obvious what comes to pass under the name "phenomenology", what is implied in the quasi-dialectical conjunction of the many phenomena and the one *logos*, what secret commerce flows between them, how their combination becomes possible, where phenomena end and *logos* begins. Perhaps this indeterminacy, too, is an integral part of phenomenology that, like everything finite, must lose itself in order to maintain itself alive, sacrificing its future as a complete doctrine to an orientation, a trajectory, a tendency back to the things themselves. Should we, in line with modern philosophy, categorise this innermost tendency of phenomenological thought as "self-critical", we would need to refrain from taking for granted either the critical drive, pulsating at the heart of the thinking it animates, or the "self" of phenomenology, divided between phenomena and *logos*. Self-criticism entails much more than de-formalising the results drawn from philosophical investigations, however rigorous these might be; it means the disquietude of the self divided against itself, the undying unrest, if not the heat of *polemos*, felt in the infrastructure of phenomenology, in the place where *logos* encounters phenomena and phenomena show themselves to *logos* without establishing a final and monolithic identity. Although it largely revolves around the problem of givenness, phenomenology itself is not fully given; its path to givenness must be unremittingly withdrawn, criticised, won over and withdrawn again.

The minimal determination of phenomenology as a critique and, in particular, a self-critique, respects its sheer (nonformal) indeterminacy, its definition as a tendency of existence oriented towards the possible, not a fully actualised and perfected system of thought. More than a conceptual or epistemological label, critique is the promise of phenomenology's perpetual self-rejuvenation, for which it is ready to ransom all the prestige attached to a mature, tried-and-tested doctrine. There is—despite the persistent philosophical dream of a seamless integration of judgement and experience, signification and perception, language and things—a cut in the fabric of phenomenology in which phenomena are kept apart from *logos*, even as they are intrinsically articulated with it. The name of the cut, signalling this basic division, is, precisely, “critique” (derived, as the reader will recall, from the Greek *krinein*: to separate, to distinguish, to discern), which thwarts the closure of phenomenology in a self-validating circle of ratiocination and sends the first cracks through the façade built around a way of thinking that was never meant to achieve doctrinal stability. What if phenomenology organised itself around this rift, at the same time desiring to bridge it and feeling itself compelled to maintain it agape? What if, in other words, phenomenology were synonymous with critique?

Assuming that critique is not superadded onto but rather is endemic to phenomenology, which it literally cuts in half, it comes to mean something other than a theoretical attitude we can resort to or discard at will. Even when not explicitly invoked, critique is operative behind the scenes of every phenomenological procedure or meditation. It further follows that one way of interrelating phenomena and *logos* is entirely out of the question—namely, tautology. The case in point here is what, in the influential paragraph 7 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger defines as the “preliminary concept” (*Vorbegriff*) of phenomenology, which is, in fact, its ultimate conception (indeed, the after-conception) in which a normative, postcritical ideal has been already surreptitiously enunciated. The absolute unity of phenomena and *logos* announces itself in the interpretation of *apophainesthai ta phainomena*, or “letting that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself”.¹ A peaceful, idyllic, utopian, teleologically vouchsafed coexistence of a nondominating, radically passive reason and everything that appears to and through it, *apophainesthai ta phainomena* may easily slide into the dogmatic slumber of thinking, self-assured about the ontological method of accessing phenomena. The obsessive multiplication of identities and identifications, of phenomena with themselves and with *logos*, in the dead respite of tautology covers up and suffocates the most vibrant aspects of the concept of phenomenology: the double, redoubled and interminable critique of *logos* with recourse to phenomena and of phenomena—through a certain kind of *logos*. Such identities bring to naught the tension, if not the Heraclitean “strife”, that sets the cadence and controls the pulse of phe-

nomenology. The same catastrophic fate befalls philosophy when the untraversable distance between *philia* and *sophia* is lost, resulting in the sophisticated impression that one possesses and controls wisdom. At minimum, then, critique is a safety valve, meant to prevent phenomenology's deterioration into sophistry.

The "pulse" and the "heart": these are not idly rhetorical turns of phrase but watchwords for that which animates phenomenology by granting it a certain rhythm, making it vibrate outside its confines and temporalising it. The preface to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* exposes the "heart of rationality", surrounded by "a motley covering" of forms, "which the concept has first to penetrate before it can find the inward pulse and feel it still beating in the outward appearances".² In a recent excellent study, *Au Coeur de la Raison, la Phénoménologie*, Claude Romano has also used the trope of the heart in connection to phenomenology. "No longer seeking to oppose reason and sensibility, language and experience, all the while keeping them distinct", writes Romano in the epilogue to his book, "phenomenology is a quest for the reason of infra-rationality; it promises a reason 'sensible at heart' because it opens the heart of reason to sensibility".³

But is reason—*ratio*, one of the many, and already considerably impoverished at that, significations of *logos*—capacious enough to contain phenomenology, even where the latter has opened itself to the sensible? Doesn't Romano conflate, thanks to an erroneous but productive synecdoche, the heart with one of its chambers? Isn't phenomenology greater than reason itself, which, along with phenomena, sojourns in its broken heart? Don't these asymmetrical divisions, within *logos* as much as between *logos* and phenomena, enliven the thinking that endeavours to articulate them? Doesn't phenomenological *logos*, which in its classical sense has denoted a gathering or an assembling of the many (from the Greek *legein*), become viable solely on the condition that it reproduces, within itself, the fissuring and the scatter inherent to the world of phenomena? And, besides, what kind of a heart is it that, instead of being lodged in the hidden recesses of a body of thought, is beating right on the surface of phenomena that obscure nothing, least of all a hidden, more profound layer of "true being"? If phenomenology has a heart, it wears this heart on its sleeve, as it were, in the essential superficiality, towards which its disparate methodological vectors tend.

Whatever the surface we approach phenomenologically, the evidence bespeaking its deep fractures is glaring. (That is, perhaps, the only exception to the axiom of "no depth": the deep fracturing of surfaces.) Let us consider a well-known example. An immense separation between thinking, logic and the sciences, on the one hand, and the elemental structures and experiences of the lifeworld, on the other, is, for Husserl, the chief culprit in the crisis of Western *logos*. So entrenched is this *uncritical* divide that, within the realm of thinking, confusion reigns as to the status of that

which is thought. The analytical separation between noetic acts and their noematic targets is eclipsed by the naïve realist focus on the difference between reason and reality, which, presumably, exists “in itself”, as though this “in itself” has managed to elide the Midas touch of human intentionality. It is conceivable, however, that after tirelessly insisting on the need to overcome the divide between thinking and the lifeworld at any price, to the point of turning it into a “productive tautology”, and thereby responding to the crisis and the excessive separations eventuated by the crisis, phenomenologists have grown allergic to splits, fissures and caesurae of all sorts. Such is their *déformation professionnelle*. In dialectical terms, they have repressed the bad consciousness (equivalent to the critical stage, not to the sceptical attitude) of their discipline, instead of trying to work through it. Overwhelmed by the excessive plentitude of givenness, they have left unconsidered the positive potential of rupture and negativity, such that this blind spot has come to signal the crisis of phenomenology itself, largely unaware that only a divided, fissured *logos* is capable of faithfully shadowing the ineluctable scatter of phenomena.

Husserl’s own metaphysical extravagances, including his alleged adherence to the primacy of pure perceptual present and his foundationalism (which Derrida has extensively discussed since his earliest deconstructive forays), are, for their part, the toxic byproducts of an extreme and adverse reaction to crisis. It hardly needs mentioning that the Husserlian program for overcoming the impasse of contemporary intellectual practices hinges on a successful bridging of empty intentions and fulfilled intuitions, or—which amounts to the same thing—on reawakening a rationality which, divorced from the things themselves, has been spinning out of control in a spiral of self-generated abstractions. But are the effects of the crisis so totally detrimental? As an alternative to a negative knee-jerk response that covers over all onto-epistemological ruptures, the cutting of critique (and of judgement) still permits one to discern the distant rumblings of the crisis that similarly derives from the Greek verb *krinein*.

Another way of contending with the common predicament of the sciences and of phenomenology requires distilling their scissions down to the constitutive distance, at once critical and ontological, between *logos* and phenomena. To acknowledge this distance is not to reaffirm the quintessentially modern segregation of knowledge from reality but to locate a series of ruptures within the necessarily unfinished edifice of phenomenology, freeing up space for a plurality of interpretations and for representations that do not invariably culminate, nor are extinguished in, pure presence. Despite the overabundance of references to critique in Husserl’s writings, this task is still to be undertaken. We are, more specifically, to ask, in keeping with a certain spirit of phenomenology itself: What or who accomplishes the work of criticising and what or who is criticised here? And how?

In anticipation of the argument that will wind its way through this book, allow me to hint at the shape of a response: the critiques of *logos* by phenomena and of phenomena by *logos* jointly amount to the critique of phenomenology by itself, in the absence of its final self-identity and ultimate “truth”. Critique is the missing articulation of these two poles, the two that were meant to merge into one. Phenomenology becomes what it is (namely, a mode of thinking, interpreting and being in the process of becoming) largely as a result of this “negative” self-relation. Redoubled, critique singularly determines, without deciding upon, that which it has articulated. And it does so by means of a division, *la brisure*, or the hinge—so prominent in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*—now transplanted into the heart of phenomenology.

Allowing phenomena to disclose themselves and *logos* to voice itself, the two critiques dictate, in their succession, alternations and modifications, the rhythm of phenomenology, the expansion and contraction of its heart’s chambers. Critique of *logos* with recourse to phenomena represents the stage of expansion, whereby vacuous constructs of formal logic are confronted with their normative presuppositions and ontological foundations, while abstract reason emerges out of purely conceptual constraints to the light of the lifeworld.⁴ In its amplifying capacity, it acquires a meaning diametrically opposed to that of the Kantian restriction of reason within the limits proper to reason alone. The phenomenological critique of logic and, more broadly, of sedimented rationality belonging to the philosophical tradition (and detached from what it reasons about) is positive and creative to the extent that it destroys empty schematisms through a call to go “back to the things themselves”, which is simultaneously a recall of *logos* to itself, in the broadest range of its meanings, and to the phenomena that exhibit themselves before “the originally presentive consciousness of something” (H III, 42).⁵ To wit, the temporal modality of this operation is the past, retrievable through a certain genealogical, if not genetic, going-back to everything Western rationality has discarded or rendered unconscious, which did not prevent it from relying on the repressed material for the production of meaning. The expansion of *logos* as a consequence of its having undergone a critique by phenomena is nothing other than the becoming-ontological of *logos* rescued from the jailhouse of pure reason. Much of Heidegger’s appropriation of phenomenology presupposes the initial thrust of this critical ontologisation, already palpable in the thought of Husserl as well.

The second critique (of phenomena by *logos*) follows on the heels of reason’s amplification and attains the exact opposite effect—that of contraction, evident in the reduction of the positings of the natural attitude. The rise of eidetic phenomenology is, in the last instance, indebted to this critical narrowing down, which should not be mistaken for reduction *tout court* and which permits the field of pure consciousness to take shape in the restriction of admissible “evidence” and “self-evidence” to

whatever is immanent to this consciousness. More recognisably Kantian, in that it connotes a series of delimitations and circumscriptions of a transcendental domain (first of pure consciousness, then of the eidetic realm as a whole), the critique of phenomena by *logos* is, also like its Kantian counterpart, productive, positive, enabling and creative.⁶ This is not to say that it engenders new phenomena; rather, it discloses the transcendental sphere in which the meanings of phenomena are constituted in accord with their modes of givenness. Ontologically robust, it brings to light, by delimiting them, eidetic regions of being, or what in *Ideas I* Husserl calls “material ontologies”, as well as the very idea of the eidetic. But its temporal orientation is futural, in that it both predelineates the field of transcendental consciousness and anticipates the predication of human knowledge on the freshly minted eidetic foundation, itself subject to critique and endless modification.

It is not sufficient to pass through a brief series comprising two moments only once, in the hopes of discovering the living pulse of phenomenology.⁷ A rhythm entails the repetition of different elements in a regularised succession, and the same applies to the rhythmic alternation of phenomenological critiques. Critique of *logos* by phenomena is an infinite task of a nontotalising expansion of reason, which comes to fruition not in its decisive accomplishment but in becoming our requisite *habitus* of thinking. Its orientation to the history and the prehistory of reason is, as a result of this habituation, projected into the future and entrusted with guarding against the excesses of abstraction and formalism, idealism and realism, psychologism and anthropologism.

The critique of phenomena by phenomenological *logos* is equally regular and rhythmic. Having precipitated the entire field of eidetic phenomenology, it puts us in a position to study the phenomenological constitution of materiality, animal nature and the spiritual world. This study, however, remains possible thanks to a persistent appraisal and delimitation of givenness, whether accepting exclusively what it finds in the immanence of consciousness or thematising the modes of appearing of what appears before it. The future-oriented missions of grounding the sciences and of reconstructing reality on the transcendental and eidetic bases must reach back to the past of givenness, which they are unable to surpass. In this manner, the heartbeat of phenomenology draws together the past and the future modalities of critique within and between each of its two moments. Phenomenology, we might say, reading Husserl after Heidegger, is the thrown projection of philosophy. It boasts a unique (ecstatic) temporality proper to *Dasein* and it *exists*, in the existential sense of the term. Now, what gives it time is critique, itself the spacing out of its heartbeats.

A rhythm introduces an interval between the elements it interrelates, such that time is suspended within time and, for a fraction of a second, it is utterly uncertain whether the series of sounds would recommence at

all. (In music, modern minimalism accentuates this uncertainty, building its compositions around the interval, from which sound is absent, and thematising, more than anything else, the silence of the in-between.) Any given beat could be the heart's last; analogously, the critical impulse may be adjourned, either for a brief moment or indefinitely, between its systolic and diastolic movements. Nothing prevents phenomenological vigilance from relapsing into dogmatism, thus putting an abrupt end to the sequence of critical beats. The possibility of this suspension is, itself, a negative modification of the punctuated, internally interrupted rhythm, organised around a minimal spacing, a period, however imperceptible, between the phases of reason's expansion and contraction, between the critique of *logos* by phenomena and of phenomena by *logos*. As soon as phenomenologists put their faith in the security of eidetic foundations, or as soon as they fall back onto psychologism, they disrupt the most basic of philosophical rhythms.⁸ Phenomenological works continue to be written, but phenomenology as a living way of thinking ceases to exist.

Judging by an entry Husserl made in his diary on September 25, 1906, critique animated not only his philosophy (and, above all, his self-conception as a philosopher) but also his life. "Among the tasks that have been assigned to me", he notes, "I would name, in the first place, the general task that I must resolve for myself if I am to have the strength to call myself a philosopher. I mean the task of the critique of reason, the critique of logical and practical reason, [as well as] of axiological reason in general. As long as I would not make clear . . . such a critique of reason . . . I could not really live".⁹ In order to resolve the critical task by himself, the philosopher would have to cast critique in phenomenological terms and, more importantly, to conceive of phenomenology, in the decisive period between the composition of *Logical Investigations* and the formulations of *Ideas*—the period to which the diary entry belongs—in terms of a critical and self-critical endeavour. The phenomenological notion of critique and the critical idea of phenomenology would then be the methodological corollaries to the rhythm broadly outlined above and, at the same time, be the metacritical reflections on Husserl's own brand of the critical project. But to what extent is he able to attain the level of independence he is dreaming of in the diary, when he vehemently insists on the necessity of the "critique of reason", which resounds for us with a distinctly Kantian ring, intensified by the familiar division of the subject matter into the logical (pure), the practical and the axiological (judgement) components?

Irrespective of formal similarities between the two, phenomenological criticism diverges from its Kantian counterpart in at least two respects. In contrast to Kant's critiques, it has been (1) demoted from its modern epistemological pedestal and received, instead, a set of ontological determinations and (2) harmonised with the phenomenological understanding of reason, as much as of consciousness, not as faculties but as the active

tendencies of intentionality that implies self-transcendence towards its object. As a consequence, critique acquires a significantly broader scope here than it does in Kantian philosophy, thanks not only to its ontological reach but also to the proliferation of *logoi* and types of consciousness that are as numerous as that of which they are conscious. The “general task” proves to be infinite; the closer one is to realising it, the further away one finds oneself from its completion, provided that one is mindful of the inexhaustible variety within the ever-recommencing rhythmic movement of a critically inflected phenomenology.

We hear echoes of this idea in Husserl’s theoretical works, notably in the injunction to engage in a “constant critique”, in *einer beständigen Kritik*, which would give us the tools necessary to resolve the critical task for ourselves without solving it once and for all and without neglecting the historical becoming of philosophy. To resolve this task for ourselves is neither to isolate our thought from the tradition that has preceded it nor to claim for ourselves the discovery of an unprecedented method. “In a constant critique”, Husserl states in *The Crisis*, “which always regards the total historical complex as a personal one, we are attempting ultimately to discern the historical task which we can acknowledge as the only one which is personally our own” (H VI, 72). Like many other formulations in his late work, this statement is surprisingly dialectical: it posits a critically mediated speculative identity between the personal and the historical, that which is strictly “our own” and the “total . . . complex” of thought. A permanent critique of tradition is, in its most developed state, a self-critique, whose positive—paradoxical, because unaccomplishable—outcome is the ultimate discernment of our own (critical) task, of the kind anticipated in the diary. It is, in Husserl’s words, a “responsible critique”, *verantwortliche Kritik*, “a peculiar sort of critique which has its ground in . . . historical, personal projects, partial fulfilments, and exchanges of criticism rather than in what is taken for granted by the present philosopher”. One that plays a redemptive role of restoring the hope for a future fulfilment to the interrupted projects of the past, insofar as they enter into a conversation with one another and with the present. One that, akin to Nietzsche’s monumental historiography, gathers the historical peaks of critical thought into a chain transcending time within temporal immanence.

The responsibility critical philosophers shoulder is enormous, for they take it upon themselves to do justice to the past, to the thought of their predecessors, who will have lived on through the self-critique of the present and whose partially fulfilled projects will have gained a stake in the critical community of the future. To exercise this responsibility, Husserl explains, “is to make vital again [*wieder lebendig zu machen*] . . . the sedimented conceptual system. . . . It is to carry forward, through his own [the philosopher of the present’s] self-reflection, the self-reflection of his forebears and thus . . . to reawaken [*wieder aufwecken*] the chain of think-

ers . . . and transform it into a living present [*in eine lebendige Gegenwart*].¹⁰ Ethical, responsible critique at its most effective underlies the ontological and the epistemic varieties and is tantamount to a revival of the philosophers of the past when a living critic, who freely exercises active self-critique, turns herself into a mouthpiece for their partially fulfilled projects—an event that will have corrected, retrospectively, the historical injustice of death. Undoing the difference between a thinker’s biological life and the life of thought—a difference that disconcerted Husserl towards the end of his own life¹¹—*verantwortliche Kritik* thus stands, along with the notions of desedimentation, reactivation and transcendental *epochē*, for a phenomenological equivalent to resurrection.

We are now in a position to assess what Husserl means by the dramatic assertion, replete with Socratic overtones, that, while the critical task remains unfulfilled, he “could not really live”. In light of the arguments presented in *The Crisis* and in juxtaposition with his intimation that, until he resolves this task for himself, he cannot in good conscience call himself a philosopher, it appears that life in this instance has nothing to do with biological living or with the life of consciousness in the “natural attitude”. It points, instead, to the kind of transcendental vitality that is born of phenomenological reduction and that gives the philosopher licence to join the critical community of thought, to live *as if* there were no difference between the personal project and the historical totality of thought. In critical terms, this life is already an afterlife, a tapestry of past and present philosophical activities, in which the awakening of dead (sedimented) systems of thought is woven into the very fabric of living self-criticism. Of course, not just any kind of critique will be adequate for the ethical problem at hand. Being a philosopher, resolving the critical task for oneself and living: these interchangeable goals are, for Husserl, synonymous with phenomenology. The vivacity of phenomenology and the life of the phenomenologist as phenomenologist are, hereafter, inconceivable without the practice of critique and its insistently self-critical formulation.

PHENOMENA: A CRITIQUE OF LOGOS

The notorious plurivocity of *logos* has not escaped Husserl’s attention. At the outset of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he offers his readers a brief etymological and semantic overview of this Greek word.¹² That the book begins with a paragraph titled “Departure from the Meanings of the Word *Logos*: Speaking, Thinking, What Is Thought”¹³ is itself significant, since it lays the groundwork for the critique of logic by broadening and thickening its semantic scope (the stage of amplification) as the backdrop against which the restricted sense of the term will be submitted to further scrutiny. Among the meanings Husserl isolates are word (*Wort*) and speech (*Rede*), “what is spoken about” (*wovon die Rede ist*), propositional

thought (*Satzgedanke*), mental or spiritual meaning (*geistige Sinn*) and the mental or spiritual act (*geistige Akt*) of predicating or asserting (H XVII, 22). When it comes to what Husserl calls the “pregnant meaning” of the word, the noteworthy connotations include the norm of reasoning (*Vernunftnorm*), reason as an ability (*Vernunft . . . als Vermögen*), reason (*Vernunft*) as such, the ability to form legitimate concepts (*das Vermögen, rechtmässige Begriffe zu bilden*), the activity of concept-formation (*Begriffsbildung*), the correct concept itself (*richtige Begriff selbst*), thinking as judging (*urteilende Denke*), judgements as thoughts (*Urteile als Gedanken*) and thinking in the broadest sense (*Denken im weitesten Sinne*) (H XVII, 22–23).

From this overview, it becomes obvious that the *logos* of phenomenology is not one, but rather many, and that, consequently, its critique will unfold as the critique of *logoi*. At times, the critical impetus will emanate from the semantic divisions within this term that, in the face of the logician’s desire to harness it for the purposes of getting at the truth, does not coincide with itself. For example, the difference between a mere word and that which is spoken about—the so-called stated “affair complex” (*Sachverhalt*)—will occasion a critique of empty intentionality from the “teleological” perspective of fulfilled intuitions. Frictions internal to the meaning of *logos* ignite the movement of phenomenological thought. But even in these explosive instances, the measure for the self-critique of *logos* remains tagged to the phenomena it aims to express, or, more precisely, to the degrees of proximity between *logos* and the things themselves. The greater the divergence between the two, the more powerful the critical drive, situated between the extremes of the crisis of meaning (where separation has become absolute) and the ideal case of the *logos of* (that is to say, barely distinguishable from) phenomena.

Put more generally, Husserl seems to suggest a categorisation of the meanings of *logos* into (1) logical capacity (e.g., the ability to reason, the ability to form concepts), (2) logical act (e.g., concept-formation, the mental act), (3) logical means (e.g., words, speech, propositions, norms of reasoning) and (4) logical products (e.g., concepts, thoughts). A further, specifically phenomenological, way of classifying the senses of the term will draw the dividing line between the first two and the last two categories corresponding to the founding and the founded strata of *logos*, respectively. In its purely formalist and procedural zeal, the discipline of logic operates almost exclusively at the level of founded abstractions, norms, concepts and propositions, to the detriment of the latent capacities of *logos* and their actualisation in the psychic acts of speaking and thinking—not to mention perceiving and desiring, along with myriad others—that put this capacity to work. The role of phenomenological critique is to awaken the hitherto unexplored or forgotten possibilities of *logos*, as well as its active, creative use, so as to let it get in touch again with what it wishes to express. Or, in other words, to come back to sense

anchored in the senses and to recover the rootedness of meaning in what matters for living.

No means or products of human thought should remain untouched by the critique of *logos*, including the meaning Husserl has glossed over—that is, science—or “the study of . . .”¹⁴ What obviously justifies the consideration of phenomenology as criticism is precisely the dogmatism of the sciences that fall under the knife of reduction in *Ideas I* and that “require ‘criticism’ [*welcher der ‘Kritik’ bedürfen*]—and, indeed, a criticism which they themselves are essentially incapable of effecting” (H III, 133). Modern sciences are in need of criticism, regardless of the fact that the idea of science or scientificity stays immune to critical assessment (and this may ultimately prove to be a failure of self-critique); phenomenology, in the continuation of this passage, deserves the appellation “critical science”, “the science having the unique function [*einzigartige Funktion*] of effecting the criticism of all others and, at the same time, of itself” (H III, 133). *Logos* interpreted as science is immediately divided against itself, split into the dogmatic and the critical, even as this last aspect undergoes a further inner division into the outwardly critical and *self-critical* tendencies.

Why does phenomenology gain the right to criticise all the other sciences? Husserl supplies his readers with a mix of Aristotelian and Kantian arguments regarding its all-encompassing eidetic universality, its status as *prima philosophia* and its transcendental perspective that reunites under the phenomenological roof all questions of possibility. However, the unstated point is that the *logos* of phenomenology alone deigns to speak in the name of phenomena, not by virtue of having found a previously unknown pathway towards them, valid for all eternity, but by permanently (critically and self-critically) dislocating itself and correcting its course so as to track the phenomena better, to adjust itself to them, even at the price of a self-undermining. Hence, it is able “to offer the means for carrying out every possible critique of reason” (H III, 136), befitting every possible definition of *logos*, as much as every possible critique of *phenomenological* reason on ontological, ethical, political and other grounds.

How does phenomenology criticise scientific *logos* on behalf of phenomena? It shows, in the first place, that the sciences built on the cornerstone of formal logic are twice removed from the phenomenological base of this very logic and from the lifeworld that motivates all acts of meaning-bestowal. Aside from the celebrated return to the lifeworld—which, for us, should be indicative not so much of a positive act of refounding knowledge on secure foundations as of the constant disquietude of critique¹⁵—aside from this return, the retrieval of nonformal and nonformalisable infrastructure of logic undercuts the claims to independence, made at the level of its procedural, symbolic, mathematised superstructure. The emphasis on capacities and acts of thinking (reason as an abil-

ity—more narrowly, the ability to form concepts) as opposed to the pre-occupation with the means and products of thought is, at the same time, the focus on the thinker in her existential being, irreducible to descriptions tinged with psychologism. When Husserl observes that “all reflection undertaken for ‘existential’ reasons is naturally *critical*” (H VI, 60), he implies both that self-reflection necessarily leads to self-critique and that thinking and judging existentially upset the routines of formal thought, shaking the latter to the core.

Heidegger’s pithy remark that “science does not think” may be interpreted along similar lines: it does not think because it does not, critically and existentially, reflect upon its own capacities and abilities, considered unlimited—or does so only very rarely (for example, when new and old paradigms clash). Science does not think because it *knows*. The difficulty resides not in abstractly reflecting in a critical vein, but rather in doing so without regard for the positive finality of knowing and without any special effort, as “naturally” as one breathes, in the place where thought merges with life. Unlike phenomenology, those sciences that overlook existential factors can only spawn a forced critique, too weak to participate in the construction of “second” nature. Succinctly put, the phenomena that grant phenomenology critical authority to pass judgement on scientific *logos* are, above all, the existentially interpreted phenomena of existence itself.

The same critical scenario will be replayed in *The Crisis* as in the other works of Husserl, where he discreetly takes up the different connotations and semantic inflections of the word *logos*. In addition to confronting its founded conceptions with the founding semantic layers nourished by the world of experience, Husserl will stage a still more intense critical encounter of phenomena with decadent *logos*, sparking off the development of phenomenology. Everything he has to say about the lifeworld in *The Crisis* falls under the rubric of such an encounter, meant to supplant the false, unexamined ontological premises of formal logic and of the sciences based on the formal-logical method with the pregivenness of the world. (Along these lines, the title of the first division in part 3 of the book is “The Way into Phenomenological Transcendental Philosophy by Inquiring Back from the Pregiven Life-World [*in der Rückfrage von der Vorgegebenen Lebenswelt*]” [H VI, 105].) His critique of science requires a retreat from actual scientific conclusions; an effort to unlearn everything that has, thus far, been taken for granted; a backward-looking, if not nostalgic, embrace of that which has been given *before* the givenness of *logos*. This embrace, to be sure, is temporary, because the evidence of the lifeworld will not be spared critical examination by phenomenological reason, bent on rebuilding everything already given to intuition on eidetic foundations. Having said that, the retrieval of phenomenal pregivenness jolts modern, Newtonian or Galilean sciences by reminding them of what they cannot comprehend—namely, the state of the world prior to its

wholesale translation into numbers and numeric codes. To a significant extent, the prefix “vor-”, or “pre-”, concentrates in itself the critique of scientific *logos* from the standpoint of phenomena and, therefore, merits further analysis and interpretation.¹⁶

Within the calculus of phenomenology, the pregivenness of the life-world is superior to the impoverished view of reality generated by the sciences and inferior to the self-givenness of transcendental consciousness. The critical function of pregivenness is evident in *Experience and Judgment*, where it is expressed in terms of the “retrogression [*Rückgang*] to the world of experience” as “a retrogression to the ‘life-world,’ i.e., the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination” (EU 38). Taking the form of a *Rückfrage* (literally, “asking back”), the critique of the sciences invariably proceeds in the name of life, be it the lifeworld as the ground of cognition or the sense-giving life of consciousness. But, akin to *logos* itself, life admits of multiple gradations, and it is important to discern accurately among them in the course of elaborating on critical phenomenology. The retrogression to the lifeworld in *The Crisis* and *Experience and Judgment* is more radical, since it is supposed to underlie “all cognitive performance”, which is to say, *logos* as reasoning in the broadest sense. It enacts a return to the phenomena of life that have not yet been symbolically elaborated and recaptures “the original experience of the life-world, an experience still unacquainted with any of these idealizations” (EU 43–44), such as the largely unconscious and unthematized experience of breathing, of having firm support (not yet formally known as “ground”) underneath one’s feet and so forth. The pregiven is, on this reading, the not yet idealized and, therefore, not yet seized or taken in any way. It refers to what is irreducible even to the ideality of the word, itself an element in the apparatus of *logos*.

At the same time, critical regression may terminate not in the phenomena of life but in what may be termed “the *logos* of life”, involving a modicum of idealisation, as in the case of the “sense-giving life of consciousness” invoked in *Passive and Active Syntheses*. The mental act of meaning-making is shared by a *certain* life and a *certain logos* that converge in a joint opposition to scientific rationality. In the space of this convergence in which the *logos* of life germinates, the pregiven signifies (1) an active capacity for idealisation, (2) the actual idealisations (e.g., speech) indispensable for living in a human community and (3) what remains of these idealisations in psychic life (the pregivenness of the past in passive synthesis).¹⁷ So, while the object of critique—the physicomathematical idealisation of experience—stays constant, the means of carrying it out and the levels of criticism vary. On the one hand, Husserl proposes a complete “dismantling” (*Abbau*) of idealisations, especially those of the worst kind, in an external critique of *logos* by the phenomena of life that augur a “breakthrough to the concealed foundation of their

[these idealisations'] sense in the most original experience" (EU 46). On the other hand, he opts for a targeted attack on the particularly problematic, because sedimented and heedless to actual experience, idealisations, while at the same time taking as his point of departure experience already articulated as the *logos* of life itself.

The ambiguity of Husserl's approach is palpable in his vacillation between these two alternatives not only in different works but also on the pages of the introduction to *Experience and Judgment*. There, the objective of pointing out the stratum of the most original experience is all but abandoned due to the historicity of this experience that, in its purported originality, is itself a product of past sedimentations.¹⁸ "This retrogression to the original life-world", Husserl writes, "is not one which simply takes for granted the world of our experience as it is given to us but rather traces the historicity [*Geschichtlichkeit*] already deposited in it to its source" (EU 44). The phenomena that galvanise the critique of *logos* are far from neutral; they are the crowning achievements of past potentialities and unquestionably accepted presuppositions on the part of that which is criticised. But if the historical mediation of givenness problematises the ideal of the purely and immediately given, if historical interpretation ineluctably colours our view of the world, then fragments of past idealities are trapped in actual experience, which unwittingly depends on the conclusions of scientific and other formal modes of thought that have preceded it. This is not to say that the critical retrogression to the life-world is untenable or ineffective, but simply to suggest that, in order to live up to its role, it must be self-reflective and self-critical. The "pre-" of pregiveness does not extend to the appearing of phenomena before or outside history, as though such pregiveness were the ground of phenomenological ground, an atemporal foundation for founding experiences. The critique of scientific *logos* by the phenomena of life calls for a metacritique of these same phenomena, carrying a whole host of hardly recognisable traces of past *logoi*. The historicity of (and in) Husserlian "original experience" presages the deconstruction of pure origins that are inconsistent with phenomenology—in the first instance, with that formulated by Husserl himself.¹⁹

With recourse to the classical vernacular, phenomenological critique inverts the order of relation between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, such that the former no longer falls within the category of deficient knowledge and the latter is no longer associated with unquestionable validity. As a matter of fact, Husserl endorses a *doxic* critique of *epistēmē* when he concludes that "what is actually first is the 'merely subjective-relative' intuition [*Das wirklich Erste ist die 'bloß subjektiv-relative' Anschauung*] of prescientific life-world. For us, to be sure, this 'merely' [*das 'bloß'*] has, as an old inheritance, the disdainful colouring of the *doxa*. In pre-scientific life itself, of course, it has nothing of this" (H VI, 127).²⁰ The crux of this programmatic inversion, which rebels against the "old inheritance" of science, is the

word “merely”, or *bloß*. The mereness of *doxic* intuitions evinces the fact that such intuitions have been exposed as what they are and that the work of desedimentation has already commenced, at the very least by putting into question the objectivist bias of *epistēmē*. Phenomenology invites us to make a difficult transition from the traditional critique of mereness to a critique *by* mereness, departing from experience in the prescientific lifeworld.²¹ It urges us, furthermore, to reinvent “mereness” as a touchstone of philosophical positivity—something that would be unthinkable for a Hegelian dialectician who sees in it the emptiest of abstractions masquerading in the concreteness of the here-and-now. Positively interpreted, the mereness of *doxa* is closer than the sophisticated explanatory mechanisms of *epistēmē* to the mereness of phenomena themselves, just as they present themselves in the course of everyday life. Together with its “subjective-relative” viewpoint, dismissed by scientific objectivism, it approximates the constitution of all meaningful reality, even if this is a constitution still bereft of the transcendental subject. The reappraisal of *doxic* mereness, of intuition prior to its scientific mutilation, adds a critical supplement to *bloß* which participates in the dismantling of theoretical impositions on the world of phenomena.

Roughly twenty years earlier, at the inception of transcendental phenomenology in *Ideas I*, Husserl had already confirmed his preference for a prephilosophical “dogma” over a critique based on unexamined epistemological biases. If forced to choose between the two, he intimates, a thinker should opt for the “*sciences of the dogmatic attitude* [Wissenscharakter der dogmatischen Einstellung] turned toward things [and] unconcerned with epistemological or sceptical problems . . . [the sciences that] start out from the originary givenness of their things” (H III, 54). The justification for this preference is provided immediately: “In the *present situation*, and as long as there is indeed lacking a highly developed cognitive critique which succeeds in perfect rigor and clarity, it is at least *right to close the boundaries* [die Grenzen] *of dogmatic research to ‘critical’ modes of inquiry* [‘kritizistischen’ Fragestellungen]. In other words, at the moment it appears right to us to take care that epistemological (and, as a rule, skeptical) prejudices . . . are not obstacles to the course of the dogmatic investigator’s inquiries” (H III, 54–55). To translate this into our terms, the sciences of the dogmatic attitude are likely to foster the critique of *logos* by phenomena. But unless phenomenological reason—“highly developed cognitive critique”—has matured, the obverse critique of phenomena by *logos* will stall. After carrying out the work of phenomenological reduction, it will be finally feasible to plot a comeback to the world of phenomena, critical tools in hand, and to sketch the outlines of the transcendental-eidetic constitution of that world. It is then that quotation marks, meant to evoke a dogmatic attitude which is even more dangerous than that of naïve sciences, will be lifted from the word “criticism”. For the time being, Husserl advises us to let things in their “originary

givenness" delimit *logos* through the very dogmatic research that seeks them and to refrain from redrawing the boundaries—*die Grenzen*, an essentially Kantian term—within which epistemological and sceptical problems are posed.

When, in 1913, Husserl writes in the foreword to the second edition of *Prolegomena* that "even where they [the investigations] proceed critically, they do not lose themselves in the discussions of standpoint [*wo sie kritisch verfahren, nicht in Standpunktserörterungen verlieren*], but rather leave the last word to the things themselves" (H XVIII, 9), far from repudiating the critical drive, he entrusts it to phenomena that precipitate a critique of *logos*. Admittedly, phenomena retain "the last word"—itself a species of *logos*—from which, at the same time, all groundbreaking criticism commences. This bestowal of critical authority upon the things themselves imbues phenomenological critique with ontological overtones²² and only subsequently turns it, in a veritable revolutionary move, into a critique of epistemology, a branch of philosophy that asserted its independence in early modernity and, in any case, quite late in the history of Western thought. The hubris of modern logic that, through its formalism, ventured to emancipate itself from *what is* represented a point of no return in this declaration of independence. It substantially contributed to the crisis of the sciences that grew confident in their ability to explain reality with the help of ready-made, externally imposed, theoretical forms. Conversely, a phenomenological critique of this truncated *logos*, restricted to little more than formal logic, forges a pact with the ontologically grounded ancient philosophy against the surfeits of modern epistemologies. At the bottom of Husserl's critical project, then, is an intellectual adventure Heidegger claims to have pioneered: the rediscovery of Plato and Aristotle *after Kant*.

The impoverishment of *logos* is most conspicuous in its transcription into the categories of formal logic, rooted in a strange "norm of reasoning" (*Vernunftnorm*) or in a system of such norms, that tends to hide the scaffolding of its own normativity and to erase its origination from what is given to intuition. As such, logic distances itself from the world of phenomena, on which it nonetheless depends and which it wishes to fit on its Procrustean bed in order to live up to formal ideals. But, *nota bene*: Husserl does not insist on the jaded opposition of "facts" and "norms" in an effort to rid logic of its normative basis;²³ what he envisions, instead, is the norm becoming critically aware of both its normativity and its extranormative provenance, and, as much as possible, returning in the course of its self-enunciation to the things themselves. Differently stated, if logic is to assemble all valid norms of reasoning, it must keep sending *logos* back to the things themselves, from which the nonformal *Vernunftnorm* would receive its validation and justification. In this sense, the critique of *logos* by phenomena necessitates not only a substantiation of logic (its deidealisation, the filling out of its empty forms with intuitions)

but also a self-critique of the norms of thinking on the verge of deforming, if not denormalising, themselves according to what is, in each case, given to thought.

The centrepiece in the phenomenological critique of logic is the validity of logical concept-formation—*logos* as *Begriffsbildung*—assessed with regard to neither the concepts' inner coherence nor their strict adherence to an already stipulated method, but with an eye to the crudely preconceptual unities of phenomena they formalise. Hence, Husserl: "Logical concepts as valid thought-unities [*als geltende Denkeinheiten*], must have their origin in intuition: they must arise out of an ideational intuition founded on certain experiences, and must admit of indefinite reconfirmation, and of recognition of their self-identity, on the reperformance of such abstraction" (H XIX/1, 10). The critically valid unity of a logical concept is none other than the idealised unity of an experience that gave rise to it through its indefinite repetition, whose general pattern, in a distinctly Humean fashion, amounts to an abstraction.²⁴ The "external" element that outlines, circumscribes or critically delimits the unity of thought, clothed in a logical concept, is an intuition drawn from phenomenal experience. Formal logic presents us with forms of experience that are no longer recognisable as such, because emptied of the content they once contained.²⁵ Nonetheless, the validity of intuitions continues to nourish surreptitiously that of logical concepts, whose "indefinite reconfirmation" demands a similarly indefinite reexperiencing of the intuitions whence they derive. More precisely, phenomenology substitutes for *validity* an ongoing critical *validation* of logical concepts that, rather than being reduced to static forms of thought, ought to be grasped as dynamic formations, a permanent work-in-progress. To achieve this, validation would entail "the reperformance of . . . abstraction" and, therefore, a revisiting, time and again, of concrete intuitions prior to their idealisation. That is what a return to the things themselves entails. Phenomena guiding *logos* in its concept-formation outline the critical-ontological normativity, which Husserl imputes to phenomenological logic, at least before the latter has received its transcendental grounding and mutated into eidetic phenomenology.

A genealogy of the *practice* of abstraction is crucial to Husserl's reactivation of logic's prelogical foundations. Our return to the things themselves is an affirmation of our commitment to *praxis*, an intensification of our involvement with *pragmata* after a long period of theoreticist disengagement that has culminated in the crisis of the sciences. When *logos* is subject to a critique by phenomena, it is forced to work with the given as it is given, to run on the treadmill of repeated idealisations and deidealisations so as to maintain a semblance of self-identity, struggling to bridge the distance separating it from itself in the course of an interminable regress to the world of phenomena. Reactivation connotes this reinstitution of action, the becoming-active of reason still steeped in the passiv-

ity of givenness, to which it remains tethered and from which its activity is replenished. Even pure theoretical reason is, on this view, practical.

Concept-formation and the repeated performance of abstraction are active in the colloquial sense of “act”; they operationalise reason as a capacity or *dunamis*, *Vernunft als Vermögen*. In doing so, they put it to work, marking the passage from the potentialities of thinking to its active use, from preconceptual intuitions to valid thought-unities, measured against the experiences in which thought is steeped. And they are also acts in the more restricted phenomenological sense of the term—that is, acts of consciousness or intentions. “All logical differences, and differences in categorial form, are constituted in logical acts in the sense of intentions” (XIX/1, 398). The constitution of any given logical meaning through a corresponding intentionality—the consciousness of noncontradiction, identity and so on—undergirds the efforts at reactivating the capacity to reason. *Logos* grasped as a “mental act”, *geistige Akt*, precedes and makes possible *logos* conceived as “mental meaning”, *geistige Sinn*. But here we are already encroaching upon the subjective foundations of logic, the transcendental phenomenological ontology of reason (paragraph 101 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, H XVII, 273–74) and the critique of phenomena from the standpoint of *logos*.

One of the corollaries to the phenomenological recovery of *logos*'s practical and active orientation is putting logic “in question with regard to its possibility”. “These criticisms”, Husserl continues, “lead us, from logic as theory, back to logical reason [von der Logik als Theorie zurück zur logischen Vernunft] and the new field of theory pertaining to it” (H XVII, 274), back from *logos* as fait accompli to *logos* as a thinking process that is initiated, touched and perhaps disturbed by the things themselves. If Husserl's logical reason is not pure theory, this is because it does not explain the world with the aid of prefabricated concepts but reasons *with* the phenomena, whence it draws its concept-forming capacity, the trans-transcendental possibility harkening back to the immanence of life. Phenomenological criticism is transcendental, in that it questions the very possibility of logic, but it certainly does not do so in the name of a “higher reason”. Its evidence is confined to phenomena and the fulfilled intuitions they yield. The phenomena themselves critically delineate the scope of logic, such that phenomenology emerges in the *après coup* of this ontological demarcation. Phenomenologists aspire to be the delegates on behalf of the ontological critique performed by the things themselves; their ideal is to erase themselves from the theoretical scene, leaving just enough room for reasoning, to subtract themselves—their presuppositions, projections and extraneous explanations—from their analyses, to turn into vanishing mediators between *logos* and phenomena as much as between the critiques that each term in this relation launches against (and for) the other. We ought to understand phenomenological description in this precise critical sense: as a de-inscription or an ex-scription, which

brackets whatever oversteps the givenness of phenomena, at once revealing and eradicating the superimpositions of theoretical construction onto the things themselves.

The vitality of logical reasoning is also contingent upon the existence of a robust—if malleable—conceptual apparatus, capable of imposing a pragmatic limit on phenomenological critique without betraying its mission. Having to negotiate a middle course between the critique of ossified concepts and the necessity of conceptuality, which cannot be divorced from actually existing concept-formations, phenomenological investigations thus proceed in a “zigzag fashion”: “If a type of thought requires prior clarification, we should not make uncritical use of its terms or concepts in that clarification itself. But one should not expect that one should only be required to analyze such concepts critically, when the actual interconnection of one’s logical material [*der sachliche Zusammenhang der logischen Materien*] has led up to them” (H XIX/1, 22). Explicit critique has its relevant context, its appropriate time and place. It surfaces when and where a mode of thinking and the conceptual ensemble pertaining to it predicate themselves on a series of presuppositions yet to be clarified. If, on the contrary, the concepts proceed directly from “logical material”, explicit critique becomes superfluous, since ontological criticism has already silently fulfilled its function. In *der sachliche Zusammenhang*, translated as “the actual interconnection” of the material at hand, we detect a resonance of the things themselves, *Sachen selbst*, that circumscribe, order and connect (in a word, criticise) emergent conceptualities. With this procedural remark, Husserl determines the epistemic scope of phenomenological criticism, completely beholden to its ontological source. A critique of conceptual *logos* with recourse to phenomena is mediated by the self-criticism of *logos*, since the “actual interconnection” (Hegel would say, the inner relation) of concepts makes itself known strictly within “logical material”.

Epistemological criticism would have been incomplete were it not to take into account the significations of *logos* as “judgement” and “thinking as judgement”. The uniquely phenomenological critique of judgement, which does not bear much resemblance to its Kantian counterpart, demands the reduction of predications to pre-predicative assessments operative in everyday experience. Phenomenological critique broadens the limits of judgement to encompass experience as such and as a whole, including the manifold of fulfilled intuitions nonthematically compared and contrasted to the empty intentions that have anticipated them. Acts of pre-predicative judgement are identical to “practically . . . evaluative” acts of experience that procure an “objective self-evidence of individual objects” (EU 52). The common thread running through pre-predicative judgements and experience is this very (quasi-juridical) notion of evidence: “Predicative includes pre-predicative evidence. . . . Evidence is, in an *extremely broad sense*, an ‘*experiencing*’ of something that is and is thus

[*eine Erfahrung von Seiendem und So-Seiendem*]” (H I, 52). The experiencing of something *as* something (not to be conflated with the empiricist notion of experience!) is already a judgement (Heidegger will call it a “preinterpretation”), which is built into the acts of perception without being, as yet, articulated in a formal predicative fashion.²⁶ The sole delimitation of *logos* conceived in these terms is the field of possible evidences, or the ground of experience as such. And so, given the virtual identity between experience and judgement, a critique of *logos* through phenomena removes the object of criticism from its cognitive base and gifts it with an existential-ontological interpretation.

In addition to judgements *equated* to experience, there are, according to Husserl, judgements *immediately grounded* in experience. The latter, pre-predicative judgements are thoroughly practical, in that they orient human actions by way of verifying their relative success. “Truth and falsity”, Husserl notes, “criticism and critical comparison [*Kritik und kritische Adäquation*] with evident data, are an everyday theme, playing their incessant part even in prescientific life. For this everyday life, with its changing and relative purposes, relative evidences and truths suffice” (H I, 52). It would be perhaps more accurate to say that the pre-predicative critique of judgements grounded in experience is pragmatic, as the more or less deliberate comparison with “evident data” attests—for instance, an unarticulated expectation concerning the sharpness of a knife will be either confirmed or denied (its truth-status thereby established) in the course of actually using it to cook a dinner. The phenomena themselves (e.g., a sharp knife) outline the critical scope of pre-predicative judgement insofar as it is or is not proven practically adequate to the matters it judges.²⁷

The imprecision of critical-pragmatic adequation (and, by extension, of the truth it announces) is a part of prescientific life, full of “relative evidences”.²⁸ Just as *doxic* merelessness served the purpose of criticising the shaky epistemic foundations of the sciences, so the inexactitude of pre-predicative judgements receives a positive appraisal in contrast to the judgements predicated upon them. This train of argumentation, extending as far back as *Logical Investigations*, is integral to phenomenology, with its critique of perfect and exact knowledge, which becomes a priority once epistemology is uprooted from ontological grounds. Intuitional “fulfillment is often imperfect” (H XIX/1, 62), which means that an absolute coincidence between empty intentions and fulfilled intuitions is symptomatic of an excessive idealisation that has covered over both existence and the things themselves. On the other hand, everything that resists the objective determinations of measurability is close to the phenomena and to the *how* of their givenness, since they are inherently inexact, never given under neutral conditions and in full transparency, if only due to their adumbrated nature. A judging *logos* satisfied with relative evidence is content with the phenomena themselves and with the ways

they are (always imperfectly) given to it; it is a *logos* that does not push the limits of the given as it is given, does not determine the absolute and necessary truth or falsity of givenness, does not extract from phenomena the kernel of their universality.

Pre-predicative judgement names a deep fissure within the multifaceted edifice of *logos*. Not yet formalised, it is a judgement without *logos* in the sense of speech and, therefore, considered from the epistemological perspective, a judgement without judgement, a *logos* without *logos*. While they are attentive to the splitting of *logos* into a multiplicity of elements that are not always compatible with one another, pre-predicative assessments warrant a situation in which the things themselves put into practice a primary division (*Ur-teil*), make an initial cut in the fabric of the lifeworld and draw the first differentiation based, for instance, on practical effectiveness. Rather than belonging to the sphere of epistemology, pre-predicative judgements are the ontological consequences of the division and differentiation of and in the things themselves; theirs, one might say, is the realm of ontological critique, which any epistemological criticism of judgement will have to presuppose as its own material *a priori*. Rather than asking “what for?” or “why?”, they *critically affirm being* in its most mundane effects and acts. Being and critique overlap in the sphere of pre-predicative experience.

At the other extreme of epistemology divorced from its ontological underpinnings reigns the uncritical ideal of objectively valid truth, free from the constitutive acts of consciousness and from the phenomena in the minutiae of their givenness. This ideal, too, spawns something like a “judgement without judgement”, though this time a judgement that is dependent on the “absolute evidence” (*absolute Evidenz*), understood as “the absolute grasping of the truth [*absolute Erfassung der Wahrheit*]” (H XVII, 283). The fetish of absolute evidence dovetails with the fiction of a *judgement without the judging subject*, oblivious to its own provenance. Formal logic, fed by such pernicious illusions, is incapable of self-critique, which is why it needs to be supplemented, from below, by a transcendental phenomenological criticism of absolute evidence and absolute truth—a critique of *logos* gathered into a self-sufficient conceptual unity, lacking an ontological centre of gravity and released from its moorings in the things themselves. So long as it obdurately insists on its superiority to and independence from any content, let alone the evidence of experience, formal logical thinking proves, once again, “how far logic still is from a proper understanding of the objects which make up its own true field of research” (H XIX/1, 98)—that is, how far it is from a critical self-understanding.

To be effective, a phenomenological critique of judgement must resist the allure of experience—in its broadest, nonempiricist signification—as a one-size-fits-all standard, a mantra that would detract from the immanent character of a given judgement: “The essential fault in empiricistic

argumentation consists of identifying or confusing the fundamental demand for a return to 'the things themselves' with the demand for legitimation of all cognition by *experience* [*Erkenntnis-begründung durch Erfahrung*]. . . . Simply to *assert* that *all* judgments admit of, indeed even demand, legitimation by experience without having previously submitted the essence of judgment to a *study* . . . that is a 'speculative construction a priori'" (H III, 42, 48). It is not enough to replace abstract judgements with those rooted in experience, if the structure of judgement is not, at the same time, carefully examined. Without a critical examination, "experience" itself deteriorates into a dishonest abstraction, which is still worse than the categories of formal logic.

The nonspeculative essence of judgement is, of course, the phenomenological coupling of the judging and the judged-about. Judgements legitimated in experience are those in which the judged-about refers to the things themselves, the matters at hand, in other words, *logos* as *wovon die Rede ist*. Going back to the things themselves is doing justice to judgements as judgements. This emblematic phenomenological adventure recapitulates the (neither empirical nor transcendental) difference and differentiation at the heart of ontological critique, where each particular type of judgement dictates, in its own manner, how it should be legitimated, and each phenomenon determines the singular way in which it should be approached. The things themselves are as distant from full presence as Derridian *différance*, from which they are not entirely different, given that pre-predicative divisions are compatible with writing, or protowriting, more so than with speech. Standing at the indeterminate confluence of phenomena and certain elements of *logos*, they are the figurations of critical difference before the enunciation of differences between difference and indifference. Indifferently incorporating whatever is spoken about—be it a being given through adumbrations or an immanently given conscious process—they demand, according to the ancient principle of justice and still more assiduously than classical empiricism, the dispensation to each of his/her (or its) own: a nonspeculative, nongeneralising study of the essence of each phenomenon and each act of consciousness. This fundamental feature of what Husserl calls "the things themselves", partaking of *logos* and phenomena but not coinciding with either, explains the interweaving of ontological critique with the self-criticism of *logos* at every step of phenomenological investigations.

A similar ambiguity plagues the word "phenomenon", which Husserl takes to mean "that which appears" as well as the "appearing". In the introductory remarks to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, he stresses, "*Phainomenon* in its proper [*eigentlich*] sense means that which appears [*das Erscheinende*], and yet it is by preference used for the appearing itself [*das Erscheinen selbst*], for the subjective phenomenon (if one may use this expression which is apt to be misunderstood in the vulgar psychological sense)" (H II, 14). Some of the most pressing tasks of transcendental phenomenol-

ogy include winnowing the adumbrated from nonadumbrated modes of givenness, separating the so-called objective and subjective sides of the phenomenon and breaking “appearance” down into the noema of that which appears and the noesis of the appearing. Nonetheless, the semantic “impurity” of *phainomenon* derails the efforts of transcendental categorisation: the second, “subjective” meaning of phenomenon persists, for example, in the theoretical attitude of reflection, when “the *cogitatio*, the appearing itself, becomes an object” (H II, 14). A part of the semantic range of *logos*—thinking, *cogitatio*—is the same as the “improper”, albeit unavoidable, meaning of phenomenon.

The circumscription of the proper sense of a word, such as “phenomenon”, presupposes a critique of *logos* at the beginning of phenomenology—namely, *logos* taken as the word for “word” and saying (or meaning to say) “speech”.²⁹ Phenomenology does not resist words as such; it fights “mere words”, those out of tune with the things themselves. The positive aim of its critique of *logos* is the becoming-flesh of the word, charged with all the Christian symbolism which is discernable in this formulation.³⁰ “We cannot rest content with ‘mere words’ [*bloßen Worten*]”, Husserl famously states, “i.e., with a merely symbolic understanding of words. . . . Meanings inspired [*belebt*] only by remote, confused, inauthentic intuitions—if by any intuitions at all—are not enough: we must go back to the ‘things themselves’” (H XIX/1, 10). The mereness of mere words is not of one piece with the mereness of *doxic* intuitions; *doxa* is knowledge in its lived fullness, in intimate proximity to the world of phenomena, whereas *bloße Worte* are words void of whatever animates the structures of their meaning, stripped to skeletal remains and attesting, in the absence of critical investment, to the poverty of sense. Mere words are the idealities that have been repeated ad infinitum to the point of becoming detached from the “stuff” they idealised. They are disembodied, errant spirits, barely inspired (literally, “enlivened”, *belebt*) by intuitions. “Remote” and “confused”, they are bereft of the breath of life that pulsates in the things themselves.

Phenomenology’s predilection, in turn, is for spirits in the flesh—or at least those enchained to the flesh—of experience, for words and *logoi* phenomenalised and embodied, directly expressing their source intuitions. When words are so inspired, they are closely attended to by another modulation of *logos*—namely, “mental/spiritual meaning” (*geistiger Sinn*). Obviously, this meaning is not *sui generis*; it points back to the structure of experience and arises from that which is, in each case, experienced in a noetic-noematic correlation. The critique of *logos* by phenomena scrupulously matches the contours of a word (and those of meaning) to fulfilled intuitions and to the things themselves that nourish them.

Whether it is good or just to drive the errant spirits that are mere words away is not the question that preoccupies us here. What is certain is that Husserl does not attribute errancy to every word nor to the sym-

bolic domain as a whole. As far as phenomenology is concerned, not all words are mere words, waiting to be supplanted by authentic intuitions that, because untranslatable into signs, border on mysticism. The counterparts of mere words are not “material objects” but words that are not only words, *logoi* that are not just *logoi* but also, at the same time, phenomena: laden with meaning, embodied, grounded, overlapping with the things themselves. Not the flesh of words but words in the flesh, “speech in its transcendental flesh”, as Derrida puts it,³¹ a full intentionality, which is perhaps what late Heidegger meant by “primal words” (*Ur-Worte*). It is this nonidealizable excess of what is more than a word in the word that delivers *logoi* to critique.

Words that are not only words fall on the side of the things themselves and, from there, criticise the sham merehood of “mere words” that are never mere enough, because they contain, in a dissimulated form, their entire genealogy, the itinerary that terminated in their conversion into vacuous abstractions. Resistance to mere words, which has been often misconstrued as phenomenology’s atavistic desire to transcend signification and, with it, the symbolic mediation of experience, is, by the same token, the *conditio sine qua non* for the critical mission of phenomenology. Quasi-dialectically denaturalising the denaturalised, the critique of semantic merehood urges us to adopt an “unnatural direction of intuition and thought [*widernatürlichen Anschauungs- und Denkrichtung*]”, whereby “instead of becoming lost in the performance of acts built intricately on one another . . . we must rather practice ‘reflection’, i.e., make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our objects” (H XIX/1, 14).

The critical intentionality of phenomenology—the directionality of *its* thought—runs contra the tendency of lived intentionality, unthematized and “lost in the performance of acts”. The reflection that converts the acts themselves into the objects of phenomenology signals a transition from one meaning of *logos* to another: from mental/spiritual act to mental/spiritual meaning. Shuttling between these significations, phenomenological critique turns the carriers of meaning (empty or “mere” words) into meant objects and, thereby, problematises any straightforward distinction between the intending and the intended.³² Reflection on the meaning of meaning, which accounts for the “unnatural” character of phenomenology, is *prima facie* hyper-founded and abstract, not the least because it seems to have been twice removed from everyday linguistic practices. But, contrary to this initial impression, the treatment of words as intended objects actually puts them in the vicinity of the things themselves. The “objectivation” of these *logoi* reveals that they are nothing in themselves, when taken in their merehood, and that a sign or a word is not imprisoned within the walls of identity but points beyond itself, towards that which is meant. This recovery of the words’ nonidentity, this

realisation that they are always more than what they are, is a lasting insight of phenomenological critique.

Take, for example, expressive signs. “To be an expression”, according to Husserl, is “a descriptive aspect of the *experienced unity* [*Erlebniseinheit*] of sign and thing signified” (H XIX/1, 46). The experienced unity need not be either perfect or exclusive of multiple meant things to which the same sign might refer. Least of all is it a placeholder for the full presence and identity of expression, since the sign loses its identity with itself the moment the unity of the signifier and the signified is experienced, and it recedes to the background of our intentionality as soon as “we turn our attention to the sign *qua* sign, e.g. to the printed word as such”. When this happens, the “word (*qua* external singular) remains intuitively present, maintains its appearance [*es erscheint noch*], but we no longer intend it, it no longer properly is the object of our ‘mental activity.’ Our interest, our intention, our thought . . . point exclusively to the thing meant in the sense-giving act” (H XIX/1, 46–47). Phenomenalised words, too, are spectral. Gathered in expressive signs, they have a body that tends, if not to disappear (the word “maintains its appearance”), then to become inconspicuous, to be transformed into a translucent screen and to give way to what is meant. A heightening of theoretical scrutiny and an increase in phenomenological attention paid to the word as such redirect our gaze *away* from this elusive object, dimmed down to illuminate the expressed sense; critical-theoretical interest in words—a properly logological interest, as Novalis is wont to define it—shows that we intend *through* them,³³ even if they are the explicit targets of our intentionality. That is why, methodologically, descriptions of the unity of the sign and the thing experienced in expression³⁴ must be moderated by the “unnatural” intentionality of phenomenology, running against that of lived experience. The disappearance of words *qua* words, their absorption into this unity, is outweighed by the phenomenological practice of “reflection”, which objectivates them only to hand them over to a critique by phenomena within the complex of expression itself.

Phenomenological critique, as it has been discussed thus far, changes the way we think about the appearing of what appears. It intimates, among other things, that the light of phenomena shines through the fault lines between the heterogeneous meanings of *logos*. In the divergence of *logos* from itself, in its difference from itself (for instance, between its senses as speech and as judgement, the conceptualising and the conceptualised, the thinking and what is thought), in its otherness to itself, its others—the phenomena—are illuminated. There is no givenness without this fecund discrepancy that makes room for the given. So, it is not givenness but critique, lodged both in *logos* at variance with itself and in the difference between *logos* and phenomena—the third, silent term in the phenomenological formula that motivates the movement of phenomenology. Instead of mending the gaps between the two, this decidedly un-

Hegelian third deepens the fault lines, refuting the deconstructive hypothesis of logocentrism: the critique of *logos* emanating from phenomena as much as from *logos* "itself" offers ample evidence of its permanent decentring, its dissemination into a plurality of senses, many of them at war with each other. On the condition of keeping the memory of that division alive, *logos* gains the right to reverse the direction of critique, which brings forth the entire transcendental-eidetic apparatus of phenomenology. Having issued from the critical impulse, the essentially divided *logos* of genetic phenomenology transcendently reconstitutes the worlds of phenomena, releasing them to the material ontologies that are singularly appropriate to them.

LOGOS: A CRITIQUE OF PHENOMENA

The incipient moment in the critique of phenomena by *logos* is the idea of the transcendental constitution of sense that, if it is not to lapse into pure idealism, must be persistently brought back to its critical beginnings. Such critique is wholly positive and affirmative, so much so that it sheds its reactive appearance and creates nothing less than the entire conceptual apparatus and the playing field of transcendental phenomenology. For Kant, too, critiques of reason had an enabling character, in that they permitted finite human thinking to thrive within self-imposed boundaries, free of worries about whatever had to remain unknowable on the hither side of its limits. In the context of Husserl's transcendental circumscription of legitimate evidence and self-evidence, however, the positivity of critique has surpassed both in its scope and in its intensity that of the Kantian project, seeing that "reason", *Vernunft*, or *ratio*, as the object of critique, is only a minor aspect of *logos*. Rather than draw formal, indifferent and inflexible boundaries that would safeguard the practice of sound philosophy, Husserlian phenomenology persistently works on the inner and outer edges of phenomena and *logos*, remapping them each time upon contact with the given. How it does so is the guiding query of this section. Let us just say, at this point, that both the method of reduction and the crowning achievement of phenomenological reasoning (namely, the intentional structure of consciousness as the consciousness of . . .) show that the principles of critique are not fixed *a priori*. Critical delimitation, differentiation and individuation are intrinsic to and proceed from the material at hand, from the things themselves and from what is enclosed in the boundaries of transcendental phenomenology *proper*. Forms of critique shape up depending on their specific contents; every consciousness undergoes a critical (and immanent) circumscription by that of which it is conscious, while reduction strives to bracket anything not given in evidence and self-evidence, hence, everything

transcendent to consciousness. The pattern of Husserl's philosophy might well be that of a critique nestled within another critique.

Kant's voice resounds most distinctly in Husserl's phenomenological critique of cognition, or *Erkenntniskritik*.³⁵ Elaborated in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, it appears to be yet another variation on the critique of *logos*. But exactly what induces *Erkenntniskritik*? Is it a critique of *logos* by phenomena and, if so, by phenomena in the objective sense of that which appears, delimiting the spectrum of possible cognitions, or by phenomena in their subjective mode—that is, cognition grasped as an object of phenomenological reflection? Is it, perhaps, a self-critique of *logos* veering towards eidetic analysis and trying to distil the essence of cognition from its critical determination? Or is it a fully developed and mature critique of the subjective phenomenon of cognition by *logos* as the *logos* of phenomenology, formed in keeping with the “idea” of phenomenology? Is it a point of transition to, or the foundation for, the critique of phenomena by *logos*?

All these are valid paths for thinking through Husserl's *Erkenntniskritik*, in which the critical core of phenomenology is exposed from every conceivable side. It is worth exploring these different avenues for the interpretation of the critique of cognition so as to glimpse the complex interplay of *logos* and phenomena—but also of the semantically supple variations of each term—in the process of their mutual delimitation, contraction and expansion. Listening to the rhythm of *Erkenntniskritik*, we will keep monitoring the pulse of phenomenology it makes audible, like a seashell that transmits the distant rumbling of the waves.

- a. Insofar as the critique of cognition circumscribes the scope of *logos* with respect to that which appears, it tackles the problem of transcendence, which is built into the adumbrated mode of givenness characteristic of phenomena. Indeed, this problem comes to “delimit [*Begrenzung geben*] the new [phenomenological] discipline in a preliminary fashion” (H II, 36) and, in so doing, stands for a critical circumscription of *Erkenntniskritik*, the critique of this critique. In response to what he persistently calls “an enigma” (*Rätsel*) in this dense text, Husserl will soon recommend setting aside everything transcendent in reduction, so as to set the parameters for his critique of cognition. What is bracketed and left out negatively determines the scope of what is included in the enigmatic “essence” of cognition, which depends for its positive formulation on a critical and self-critical delimitation. But the determination by phenomena of the boundaries within which the new discipline (the new *logos*) will flourish is necessarily preliminary, in that it barely indicates what the positive effects of this critique would be. In other words, it no more than vaguely anticipates the discovery of the postreductive, if not postcritical, essence of cognition.

- b. *Erkenntniskritik* is also a critique of *logos* by the appearing itself, by the objectivated phenomenon of cognition grasped in reflection. It is important to note that, at this stage, we have not yet reached the pure self-critique of cognition that would pave the way to the eidetic-transcendental method of phenomenology. In anticipation of reduction, Husserl detects traces of scepticism in the prescientific return to the cognitive “thing itself” that underlies all scientific and methodological conclusions about the nature of this objectivated phenomenon: “In the skeptical mood which critical reflection about cognition [*erkenntniskritische Reflexion*] necessarily begets (I mean the reflections that comes first, the one that comes before the scientific critique of cognition . . .) every science of the natural sort and every method characteristic of such a science ceases to count as something we properly possess” (H II, 24). When he invokes a fruitful critical method that begets scepticism, Husserl has in mind Descartes, who critically reflected about the phenomenon of cognition and verged on the discovery of its eidetic-transcendental essence, without, however, gaining admission into the “promised land” of phenomenology. At the very least, critical thinking about the phenomenon of thinking denaturalises the phenomenon in question and, by extension, invalidates methodological approaches modelled on the natural sciences. Thus dispossessed of scientific *logos*, we remain at the mercy of scepticism, until a science no longer “of the natural sort”, the eidetic-transcendental science of phenomenology, comes about. For Husserl, it is eidetic phenomenology alone that will sanction a scientific *Erkenntniskritik*, which, in turn, will supplant its prescientific, sceptical counterpart.³⁶
- c. The institution of phenomenological science depends, according to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, on a critical self-understanding of *logos* that, after having passed through a sceptical phase, rises to a transcendental self-critique of cognition. *Logos* criticising itself *qua logos*—this crypto-Kantian formulation triggers the development of eidetic phenomenology. In Husserl’s words, “The critique of cognition is the attempt of cognition to find a scientific understanding of itself and to establish objectively what cognition is in its essence” (H II, 29). The critique of cognition establishes itself by itself in that it objectifies (“to establish objectively”) the phenomenon of cognition no longer in keeping with its phenomenality but with its essence, *Wesen*. This is not to say that the ensuing phenomenological science is entirely idealist, autistic or sealed in itself. Quite the opposite is the case: considering that the critical essence of cognition is another name for intentionality, it will maintain an internal openness to what is, in each case, cognised in it. (Were it to suppress the self-transcendence of consciousness towards that of

which one is conscious, it would have relinquished the essence of the phenomenon at hand, no longer taking critical guidance from it.) Doubly productive of an altogether different mode of thinking and of a science that formalises it, the positive, creative movement of this critique is content exclusively with that which it gives itself and, in the first place, with the critically self-given cognition: “even if the critique of cognition must not take over any antecedent cognition it still can begin by *giving* itself cognition [*so kann sie selbst damit anfangen sich Erkenntnis zu geben*]” (H II, 33). The principle of self-giveness, alluding to the freedom of phenomenological thought, does not betoken the blind spot of phenomenology itself, its peculiar type of naïveté. This principle instead governs the sort of cognition that emerges from *Erkenntniskritik*, which, having in its negative moment parenthesised everything transcendent, is finally prepared critically to accept what it gives itself and what is itself given: the essence of cognition as the “pure seeing” of essences and a “vision”. Below, we will revisit the role and the meaning of critique in the transcendental purification of “seeing”. For now, suffice it to say that, in giving itself cognition, in supplying the critique of cognition with an essential cognition of its own, *Erkenntniskritik* furnishes itself with a self-given foundation, thereby achieving the “chief goal” (*Hauptziel*) of the critique of reason (H II, 52).

- d. Although Husserl rarely bestows the title “metaphysics” on phenomenology, he is willing to do so on the condition that this old name for the “science of being in the absolute sense” disclose its origins in the critique of cognition. “This science”, Husserl writes, “which we call *metaphysics* grows out of a ‘critique’ of natural cognition in the individual sciences. It is based on what is learned in the general critique of cognition [*allgemeinen Erkenntniskritik*] about the essence of cognition and what it is to be an object of cognition of one basic type or another, i.e., in accordance with the different fundamental correlations between cognising and being an object of cognition” (H II, 23). The “idea” of phenomenology is precisely this: a critical and self-critical metaphysics that, by means of a “general critique of cognition”, discovers the essence of the subjective phenomenon it submits to scrutiny. Or, in a stricter sense of the term, this idea is phenomenology’s *metaphysica generalis*. The correlations between the thinking and the thought, between noesis and noema, describe this very essence of cognition, while the operative terms of transcendental phenomenology crystallise thanks to a relentless self-critique of *logos*. In each case, a correlation expresses the *metaphysica specialis* of phenomenology. Projected back onto the individual subjective phenomena of thinking, general *Erkenntniskritik* is broken down into a myriad of particular critiques

relevant to the different kinds of cognition (for example, judging, perceiving, desiring), to the appropriate fundamental correlations (the judging and the judged, the perceiving and the perceived, the desiring and the desired) and to the phenomenologies (of judgement, perception, desire) that study them. The critique of these subjective phenomena consists in teasing out their essences, in keeping with the idea of phenomenology, itself a product of the general *Erkenntniskritik*.

After it is critically formulated, the idea of phenomenology, translated somewhat anachronistically into the terms of *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*, cannot be taken for granted as a sort of transcendental presupposition for all future philosophical investigations. “*The intrinsically first criticism of cognition, the one in which all others are rooted, is transcendental self-criticism on the part of phenomenological cognition itself*” (H XVII, 295). As soon as it is directed outwards and unleashed against naturalistic-scientific, psychologist and everyday modes of thinking, the critique of cognition must loop back to itself, in a reflux movement taking away the ground phenomenology has previously given itself. Crucially, phenomenological cognition is far from immune to critical questioning regarding its own essence. It would be a mistake to treat as axiomatic touchstones either the transcendental correlation between the cognising and the cognised that structures it or the repeated acts of self-giveness, through which it formalises itself. The transcendental self-criticism of phenomenology is the “ultimate criticism” (H XVII, 295) because, having surpassed both the scepticism inherent in a straightforward critical reflection and the eidetic critique of cognition, the phenomenon it “objectivates” is phenomenological thinking itself, in all its complexity. But its ultimacy is such that it does not reach an end. Nor does it replicate the Aristotelian image of a perfect circle of *theoreia*, of thought thinking itself. Instead, the self-critique of phenomenology, freely subjected to a self-given transcendental law, embarks on the difficult road of self-destitution in the midst of its own constitution, combining metaphysics and the destruction (or deconstruction) of metaphysics in a single philosophical exercise. It defies Reiner Schürmann’s neat delineation of the two phases that successively affect every philosophical epoch³⁷ and mandates a constant disappearance of that which appears in the phenomenological field of pure vision along with the parameters of this field itself.

Transcendental self-criticism signals a certain dephenomenalisation of phenomenology, its *reduction to a transcendental appearing of phenomenological cognition*. This reduction to the appearing of cognition is the exposure of phenomenology to the things themselves in the *how* of their givenness and the reconciliation of transcendental self-criticism with the critique of *logos* by phenomena. The ultimate criticism and the “intrinsically first criticism of cognition” boil down to one and the same thing: phenomeno-

logical critique *is* necessarily a self-critique of phenomenological *logos* ruptured and mediated—mediated in its being ruptured—by phenomena. Critical *metaphysica generalis*, or the “first” phenomenological philosophy, is inseparable from critical *metaphysica specialis*, the “last” meticulously detailed descriptions of particular fundamental correlations. Why? Because there is no abstract consciousness (being) in itself; the essence of consciousness *is* its primordial splitting, the fracturing of essence as such, while the being of cognition *is* its differentiation or specialisation.

But a question remains: Exactly how does phenomenological critique bear on the problems of givenness and self-givenness, central to Husserl’s thought? When phenomenologists develop a critique of givenness, they do so not because they are somehow disappointed with the given, but rather because they feel that the given is not given enough, lost as it is beneath layers of theoretical constructions and ungrounded assumptions. Phenomenology, for its part, teaches us to receive the given as it is given, to take neither more nor less than what presents itself—something human beings, who are tempted to identify with every single animate and inanimate thing, onto which they project their consciousness, seldom succeed in doing. Self-delimitation is, without a doubt, a critical operation to be carried out repeatedly, if we are to learn how to experience the world within the limits of its givenness.

More accurately stated, we must relearn how to experience the world within these limits. Self-delimitation, as much as self-transcendence, is the feature of a consciousness that is already predifferentiated according to what it is conscious of. It is thus possible to read Husserl’s formulation of noematic sense in this protocritical light: “Perception, for example, has its noema, most basically its perceptual sense, i.e., the *perceived as perceived*. . . . In every case the noematic correlate . . . is to be taken *precisely* as it inheres ‘immanently’ in the mental process of perceiving, of judging, of liking, and so forth; that is, just as it is offered to us when we *inquire purely into this mental process itself*” (H III, 203). The “as” of noema fulfils an apophantic function only secondarily, in addition to (and as a consequence of) its critical function, which ensures that we do not receive more or less than what “is offered to us”. It simply excludes, on the one hand, all other modalities of objectivated consciousness—for instance, the judged and the liked are left out of the perceived *as* perceived, even though these other noemata may be mixed with the perceived in the actual experience of perception—and, on the other hand, the adumbrated thing *simpliciter*. And the same critical delimitation broadly applies to Husserl’s intentionality thesis, proclaiming that all consciousness is a consciousness of something. The “of” in “consciousness of” plays a role analogous to the “as” of noema, in that it demarcates the boundaries of this consciousness. My consciousness of this desk is different from my consciousness of another person’s face or of a melody I am listening to. Pre-predicative judgement, coextensive with experience and responsible

for differentiating between these diverse intentionalities, is itself critical; it sifts through and separates the endless possibilities of being-conscious-of from one another. To relearn the experience of the world within the limits of its givenness, then, is to allow this judgement to do its work and to rediscover the critical potentialities inherent in noematic sense and in intentionality.

In this context, Husserl's insistence on the precision and the purity of the inquiry into the constitution of consciousness has nothing to do with the scientific standards of exactitude and measurability. It is, we might say, a part of the method, which enables phenomenological *logos* to retrace the boundaries of phenomena, and indeed those of givenness.³⁸ I would like to term this "the internal critical frame" of Husserl's enterprise, as opposed to the external frame of critique that wards off various agents of the thought-police, such as positivism or psychologism, empiricism or idealism ("we allow *no* authority to curtail our right to accept all kinds of intuition as equally valuable legitimating sources of cognition" [H III, 45]). In order to return to the given as given, it will be necessary to activate both of these critical frames, enclosing the phenomenological "principle of principles".

It follows that instead of being a stand-in for originary metaphysical presence, as deconstruction has tended to claim,³⁹ the principle of principles is, actually, an upshot of critical delimitation. According to it, "*everything originarily . . . offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there*" (H III, 51). The principle of principles is the product of a critical enunciation, the long-awaited result of the critique of givenness that culminates in the positivity of reception, accepting the given as it is given. Something else precedes the absolute beginning marked by the doubling of "principle" in Husserl's locution—namely, the critical surveying of the field in which this presence unfolds. It is in this sense that transcendental phenomenology *gives itself* cognition: not as a total idealism with its desire to construct the world from scratch, but, on the contrary, as a self-regulating orientation to what is itself given. Staying faithful to the given, it is ready to restore whatever has been eliminated from and to dispense with whatever has been superadded to the evidence of intuition. *Logos* conceived as a critique of phenomena is precisely this extreme vigilance, this tireless keeping-watch over the given in its givenness.

The vigilance of *logos* is what makes all the difference between phenomenological description and its empirical counterpart. To describe phenomenologically is to pursue the critical trajectory to its end, where it comes to fruition in positive descriptions, bearing the traces of their fashioning in and through critique. "*The method of eidetic description*", Husserl writes in *Cartesian Meditations*, "*signifies a transfer [eine Überleitung] of all empirical descriptions into a new and fundamental dimension*" (H I, 103). This transfer, much like the shift in attitude inherent in phenomeno-

logical reduction, is the effect of a specific sort of critique—in this case, the critique of “mineness” that expands the horizons of the ego to whom the world is given. A favourite concept of German philosophy, mineness or ownness, concentrated in the actual being of the ego, should not be spared criticism, lest we rescue “a little *tag-end of the world* [*ein kleines Endchen der Welt*],” which seems to be insulated from the rest and is none other than I-myself (H I, 62). Refraining from the attribution of real existence to the transcendental subject, Husserl invites us to make a “transition from my ego to an ego as such [*das ist dem Ego als einem Ego überhaupt*]” (H I, 106). The catalyst in this transition is critique, which is already ingrained in description as a de-inscription, as an unmooring from the individual ego, careful enough not to posit either a “higher” subjectivity or an ideally objective attitude. The method of free variation, whereby “I phantasy only myself as if I were otherwise” by practicing eidetic, self-given cognition (H I, 106), cannot get off the ground without the negativity of critique that culminates in positive eidetic descriptions.

Although Husserl does not spell this out explicitly, the descriptions that populate the newly discovered transcendental and eidetic fields are the postcritical consequences of phenomenology. If phenomenology is “a purely descriptive discipline [*rein deskriptive*], exploring the field of transcendently pure consciousness by pure intuition” (H III, 127),⁴⁰ this is not because it claims to be a metaphysical doctrine, unadulterated by empirical “impurities”. The nearly obsessive multiplication of the words “pure” and “purely” in this definition is attributable to the critical purification of the given distilled to its givenness, which is what phenomenology finally describes. The purity of descriptions (that do not preclude acts of interpretation) is only a prolegomenon to epistemological critique, itself circumscribed by the appearing essences intuited from the things themselves: “phenomenology must bring to pure expression, must *describe* . . . the essences that makes themselves known in intuition. . . . This sphere [of essences] we must explore in preparation for the epistemological criticism and clarification of pure logic” (H XIX/1, 6). Despite reaching a provisional terminus in these descriptions, the process of purification must carry on indefinitely so that phenomenology would retain its dynamism, uncontainable within the confines of a discipline, no matter how critical and self-critical. So long as givenness as such remains an issue, so long as the impositions of the natural attitude overshadow the field of experience, the work of delimiting the given will be unfinished.

All critique, regardless of whether it is epistemological or ontological, historical or transcendental, necessarily contends either with something given or, in its phenomenological variation, with the modes of givenness of whatever is given. In the first case, it coexists symbiotically with the materials it targets and, as a consequence, risks being identified with a reactive attitude, responding to events that invariably occur outside it. Phenomenological investigations, in turn, elaborate an active and posi-

tive notion of critique, thanks to their detachment from the actual existence of what is given: “such criticism is *creative constitution* of the objectivities intended to each in the unity of a harmonious givenness of that objectivity itself, and creation of their respective essences and eidetic concepts” (H XVII, 188). The essences are not “found” but actively constituted, refuting the attribution of Platonism to Husserl.⁴¹ While the critique of cognition gives itself cognitions of its own, the more general critique that is phenomenology itself provides itself with the objectivities of the highest level—that is to say, with eidetic concepts. It plays the role of the intending noesis in relation to these intended noemata; phenomenology *qua* critique is the architectonics of this remarkable intentionality.

Putting aside the positing of actual existence is the achievement of reduction. But is reduction synonymous with criticism? Once again we revert, in response to this question, to the idea of “judgement without judgement”, which is applicable not only to the ontological critique of *logos* by phenomena but also to *epochē* as a “*certain refraining from judgement [Urteilsenthaltung] which is compatible with the unshaken conviction of truth*” (H III, 64). For Husserl, reduction is nothing like a critical judgement (of the predicative variety) concerning reality or irreality, the existence or the nonexistence of things. More radical than that, it enacts a critique of any position-taking or positing *tout court*. The scrupulously phenomenological critical attitude, too, is not exempt from the exigencies of reduction, since this attitude must refrain from judging, taking a position or positing anything as true or false. When *epochē* touches upon “objective sciences”, it reduces, among other things, “any critical position-taking which is interested in their truth of falsity [*an ihrer Wahrheit oder Falschheit interessierten Stellungnahme*], even any position on their guiding idea of an objective knowledge of the world” (H VI, 138). While, colloquially speaking, criticism usually objects to that which is criticised, insofar as the critics assume an *a priori* oppositional stance towards the material they work upon, phenomenological critique neither posits nor opposes anything, including the belief in objectively guaranteed knowledge. The traditional critical position-taking is, Husserl would complain, immature criticism trapped in the insufficiently radical logic of *Stellungen*, themselves beholden to a purely reactive affect that has not yet risen to the heights of creative, constitutive critique. Transcendental phenomenology is not intent on gaining a secure standpoint in its approach to “reality”, subjectivity or mental processes, since such gains would already amount to a tremendous loss, according to its own rules of the game. It must commence and endure groundlessly, taking care not to convert any part of its method (including reduction and the spirit of criticism) into a new and incontestable foundation. And it is critique alone that will allow us to register the difference between phenomenological groundlessness and that of the exact natural sciences.⁴²

At times, Husserl is reluctant to call reduction *critical* because he doubts whether critique without position-taking is possible. As he categorically states in *The Crisis, epochē* “must not be meant, for example, as a critical epochē, serving the purposes of self-criticism or criticism of others, of a theoretical or a practical criticism. . . . All these involve the taking-up of positions [*Stellungnahmen*]”. A phenomenologist, on the contrary, “must, we repeat, take and have no position: he must neither concur nor refuse, nor remain in problematic suspense” (H VI, 243). To commence philosophising from any given standpoint is already to smuggle a whole host of unexamined presuppositions into one’s thinking. This is why, as phenomenologists, “we must take our start from what lies *prior* to all standpoints” (H III, 45), all the while acknowledging the irreducibility of standpoints within the experience of adumbrated phenomena. The double gesture of this simultaneous avowal and disavowal obviously conforms to the methodological zigzag of phenomenology and the “unnatural” direction of its critical reflections.

Nothing prevents us from including the critical standpoint among those possible places from which thought may proceed in violation of the phenomenological injunction. But it also behooves us at least to consider whether acts of critique can avoid taking a standpoint and, by this avoidance, live up to the high demands of phenomenology. Husserl’s own reluctance to embrace critique depends on its somewhat automatic identification with an epistemic position. Following his lead and dissatisfied with the traditional postulations of truth and falsity as attributes located in the subject, in the object or in the relation between the two, phenomenologists fall back on reduction as a part of a general, albeit implicit, critique of epistemology, which does not spare the critical attitude itself. Yet, even in these all too prevalent instances, the approach to critique through reduction is not altogether negative. The most accurate, if roundabout, way of formulating this idea would be to define reduction as the noncritical critique of critique. If it is to maintain its internal consistency, reduction must abide by this definition.

Given such serious complications, why insist—as Husserl does in parts of *The Crisis*, not to mention in his other works, such as *Cartesian Meditations*—on the necessity of critique for the project of phenomenology? Is a critique without, or prior to, position-taking—hence, a pre-epistemological, ontological critique—feasible after all? And what if we abstained from immediately passing judgement on critique itself? Would this withdrawal of judgement not begin to resemble the operations of reduction? Would it not mean that a reduction of critique frees the reduced “object” from its suffocating association with a negative epistemic position-taking?

The cut of critique is a break in the field of phenomenality, in the relentless contiguity of the given and, most importantly, in the domain of subjectivity. It is a caesura, through which givenness itself is given to

thought. In the same way that eidetic variations on the I who phantasies its being-otherwise do not generate a really existent higher Subject, so reduction, viewed as radical critique, does not transplant phenomenological thought onto a superior scientific ground. In fact, Husserl painstakingly explains that nothing changes objectively when phenomenologists practice these shifts in attitude. What the movement of reduction and eidetic variation call for is more ambitious than that: they impel *logos* towards phenomena, through the mind-boggling variety of their forms of givenness, as well as towards itself, through an equally ample semantico-ontological range. Reduction lets being and thinking be, inasmuch as it desists from passing judgements on them, and so empties conceptual space for givenness without the given, or, more precisely, without the acceptance or the rejection of the given.

To recap: Reduction is not a critique of beclouded judgement about existence but a critique devoid of judgement and, more broadly, disengaged from the operations of affirmation and negation, theoretical or practical positions or oppositions. As such, it does not constitute an act, in the phenomenological sense of the term, and, therefore, is not “*a modality of being* [Seinsmodalität] *in the widest of all senses*” (H III, 260). Reductively to “take out of action” is to take out of being; to abstain from positing is to be at a distance from ontology.⁴³ (But, to raise a Heideggerian question, is being entirely exhausted in the acts of consciousness, in which it is always already differentiated? Does the nebulous halo around the sphere of my present actionality and containing the potentially actional belong squarely to nonbeing?) Critically delimiting the being of consciousness, reduction is aligned with the logic of nonbeing without a modicum of opposition to being, which would have been yet another negative modification of the idea of positing. This is perhaps why the “*phenomenologist does not judge ontologically* when he cognises an ontological concept or principle as an index to constitutive eidetic complexes” (H III, 359), for reduction does not have a foothold in the realm of being, whence it could set forth in its pursuit of a new and secure foundation for the sciences. Phenomenological critique, precipitated by *logos* in its dealings with phenomena, is, strictly speaking, transontological.

Having temporarily dispensed with judgement, if not with being as a whole, reduction retains from critique the capacity to discern, to sift, to separate and divide that which is immanent to consciousness from that which is transcendent in relation to it. Moreover, it must discern *that* something is there—Heidegger would later say, or write, *es gibt*—before passing the torch on to intentional analysis, tasked with describing *what* there is. Kantian critique, for its part, distinguishes what human thinking can know from what remains beyond our reach. But, in comparative terms, the sum total of what Kant leaves outside critically established boundaries is much less than everything Husserl parentheses. And the outcome of reduction is the inverse of the critique of pure reason: instead

of relativising consciousness and its modes of knowing, transcendental *epochē* arrives at the absolute being of the acts of thinking *within the confines of their finitude*. Whether this absolute in finitude (or in-finitude) is ontological or merely ontic is an open question, to be addressed in the next chapter's discussion of the phenomenology of ontico-ontological difference.

Not until actually existing sciences become objects of reduction does the phenomenologist endeavour to pass judgement on them, turning them into targets of "evaluative criticism": "As applied phenomenology, of essential necessity it produces the ultimately evaluative criticism of each specifically peculiar science; and thus, in particular, it determines the ultimate sense of the 'being' of its objects and the fundamental clarification of its methods. Accordingly, it is understandable that phenomenology is, so to speak, the secret nostalgia [*geheime Sehnsucht*] of all modern philosophy" (H III, 133). Even as far as the epistemological effects of phenomenological criticism are concerned, ontological issues are paramount. The ultimate critical judgement, which judges each "dogmatic" science, bears, in addition to an epistemological, an ontological value, in that it "determines the ultimate sense of the 'being'" proper to each scientific object. This is why, as Husserl puts it in a beautiful turn of phrase, phenomenology is the "secret nostalgia of modern philosophy": it harkens back to the unity of epistemology and ontology without giving up on a powerful critical methodology that, despite its universality, is attentive to the minutiae of each bracketed doctrine and parenthesised object. The way towards transcendental phenomenology is the outcome—without a trace of finality—of phenomenological critique. Methodology and ontology, too, are inseparable from one another.

Differently put, "the" method of phenomenology is not uniform across all stages of its inquiry, even though it admits of a certain nonlinear development, in which critique is a reliable index of advances in phenomenological investigations. The overall trajectory Husserl outlines both in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and in *Cartesian Meditation* leads the phenomenologist from critique to self-critique, from the "initial", "straightforward" criticism of logic to a "criticism of *its* [phenomenology's] *mode of cognition*, the nature of its method" (H XVII, 190–91). From a critique of experience, we leap to the critique of transcendental experience (H I, 178)—that is, to phenomenology's self-delimitation and self-determination. It is only in this later phase that critique becomes productive and constitutive, as opposed to negative and reactive. In psychoanalytic terms, it rises from an unconscious practice to a fully conscious exercise, which, at the same time, loops back to the initial critique of experience that, like the unconscious itself, is never truly left behind. If the "habit of free critique grows necessarily from a previous *habitus* of naively occupied theory [*Der Habitus freier Kritik erwächst notwendig aus einem vorangegangenen Habitus naiv betätigter Theorie*]" (H XVII, 64),⁴⁴ then

its freedom of a transcendental self-relation and self-delimitation is itself stamped by its origins in the critique of experience and of that naïveté which is not a simple negation of criticism but a hallmark of its unconscious practice. (Such, for instance, is the fate of apodicticity, unquestioningly accepted at first and then interrogated with regard to its “range”, “limits” and “modes”.⁴⁵) The *logos*, invested with the right to launch a critique of phenomena as much as of itself, draws legitimacy from the very thing it criticises, even when it seems to have surpassed the sphere of experiential evidence. A result of neither improvisation nor a clear break with the past, its freedom is still a matter of habit; it carries on the *habitus* of the earlier critique, now rendered self-reflexive.

The critical constitution of phenomenology, comprising both its unconscious and its conscious modalities, is the overarching framework of the emergent discipline in its “totality”. Husserl writes, “*The whole of phenomenology* [Die ganze Phänomenologie] is nothing more than *scientific self-examination on the part of transcendental subjectivity*, an examination that at first proceeds straightforwardly and therefore with a certain naïveté of its own, but later becomes critically intent on its own logos; it is a self-examination that goes on from the fact to the essential necessity, the *primal logos* [Urlogos] from which everything else that is ‘logical’ originates” (H XVII, 280). The “whole of phenomenology” is far from being either homogeneous or hermetically sealed. Its complexity is palpable in the difference between naïve and mature criticisms; between straightforward and self-reflexive methodologies; between the facts of givenness and essential necessity as starting points for investigation; between the “primal logos” of phenomena and the self-critical logos of transcendental subjectivity. This internal fissuring of the “whole of phenomenology” notwithstanding, sense and its constitution are Husserl’s persistent concerns. When phenomenology gives itself experience, it re-creates sense by means of its constitutive criticism: “*Radical sense-investigation*, as such, is at the same time criticism for the sake of original clarification. Here original clarification means shaping the sense anew, not merely filling in a delineation that is already determinate and structurally articulated beforehand” (H XVII, 14). When, each time anew, an active practice of criticism, be it “naïve” or self-reflexive, sets the boundaries and moulds the edges of sense, it signals its refusal to operate with pre-given empty categories, such as those we find in the philosophy of Kant. Each time anew, phenomenology witnesses the birth of sense, for which it is willing to be a medium. *Logos* as a critique of phenomena is precisely this—a critical sense-formation, an original clarification that reveals, in transcendently retracing the given, the ever-shifting parameters of sense. Phenomenology shuns applications of a universally valid method to diverse areas of investigation. Consequently, it keeps reinventing itself and shatters into a myriad of phenomenologies, each of them critically outlining a distinct region of being and a unique configuration of sense.

NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), 58.
2. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 10–11.
3. Claude Romano, *Au Coeur de la Raison, la Phénoménologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 949, translation mine.
4. Romano terms this “the enlarged reason”, *raison élargie*, even though he fails to detect any critical overtones in it (cf. *Au Coeur de la Raison*, 14ff).
5. Husserl did not, as Derrida has it, follow “the compass of rationality, determining *logos* from logic”, but vice versa. See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 8.
6. For more on the relation between Kantian and Husserlian philosophies, see Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, 101ff.
7. Given that the accretion of sediments, suffocating the experience of the life-world and thinking (dominated by vacuous abstractions), is coextensive with the historical development of the intellectual tradition, a return to the phenomena themselves must be reinitiated at every stage of the tradition’s unfolding.
8. But what about description? Does it, too, forgo the injunction of critique and interrupt its rhythm? Embedded in phenomenological description, which aspires to be faithful to the appearing of phenomena as they appear, is a critique of explanation, of theories that superimpose an external framework of principles, causes and so forth on what is. In the context of such reaction to explanatory approaches, description partakes in the critique of *logos* by phenomena themselves. Taken in and of itself, however, description may be termed “degree-zero of criticism” (i.e., the most positive and immediate effect of the critical phase that has just been completed). Provided it does not deteriorate into empiricism and closes itself off to the possibility of deconstitution, deformalisation, deconstruction or self-criticism, which facilitate the resumption of the critical rhythm, description will not share the fate of the other neutralisations of phenomenological critique. I will come back to this idea below.
9. Edmund Husserl, diary entry, September 25, 1906. Cited in “Introduction” to H II, vii, translation mine.
10. The above quotations are from H VI, 73.
11. As Husserl put it in 1930, speaking of himself in the third person, “He would almost like to hope — were he allowed to grow as old as Methuselah — still to be able to become a philosopher after all” (“*Nachwort zu meinen Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*”). In *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 11 (1930): 569.
12. Suzanne Bachelard (*A Study of Husserl’s Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Lester Embree [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968]) is right to point out that Husserl’s interest in traditional logic can only be understood in the broader context of his analysis of the word *logos* (liv).
13. Translation modified.
14. The critique of “Galilean science” is only a special case of the critique of science as a species of *logos*. It is, therefore, a general, albeit historically mediated, critique: “What Husserl criticized about science was not that it used mathematical models but that, (generally) led by a false metaphysics, it generally mistook them for reality”. Patrick Heelan, “Husserl’s Later Philosophy of Natural Science”, in *Edmund Husserl: Critical Assessments by Leading Philosophers*, ed. Rudolf Bernet et al. (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 336.
15. Dieter Lohmar discusses the critical function of “lifeworld” in “The Role of Life-World in Husserl’s Critique of Idealizations”, in *Phenomenology, Interpretation, and Community*, ed. Lenore Langsdorf and Stephen H. Watson (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 17–28.

16. We may also conclude that pregiveness is a critique of the phenomenological idea of constitution, which is to say, a part of phenomenology's self-critique: "For Husserl, then, 'pregiven' came to mean . . . that there are schemes of constitution that do not follow the simple triad *ego-cogito-cogitatum*". Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 224–25.

17. For this last interpretation, see John Sallis, *Husserl and Contemporary Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983), 51.

18. On the historicity of constitution in Husserl, refer to André de Muralt's *The Idea of Phenomenology: Husserlian Exemplarism*, trans. Garry Breckon (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 234.

19. For the context of Derrida's critique of the idea of origin in Husserl, see Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 126ff.

20. In *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl is even more explicit: "this realm of *doxa* is not a domain of self-evidence of lesser rank than that of *epistēmē*, of judicative knowledge and its sedimentations, but precisely the domain of ultimate originality to which exact cognition returns for its sense" (EU 44).

21. For a positive reinterpretation of mere presence in the poetic experience of things, see Simon Critchley, *Things Merely Are: Philosophy in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 88.

22. Donn Welton likewise considers this move to be a part of Husserl's ontological critique (*The Other Husserl*, 160ff).

23. For further justification of this thesis, see Dennis Fiset's "Husserl's Programme of a *Wissenschaftslehre* in *Logical Investigations*", in *Husserl's Logical Investigations Reconsidered*, ed. Dennis Fiset (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer, 2003), 35–57.

24. "The basic forms of logic are merely the typical characters [*typischen Charaktere*] of our acts and their forms of combinations" (H XIX/1, 187).

25. And so formal logic ignores the fundamental stratum of evidences, on which it continues to draw. See R. A. Mall, *Experience and Reason: The Phenomenology of Husserl and Its Relation to Humean Philosophy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 97.

26. As J. N. Mohanty (*Edmund Husserl's the Freiburg Years, 1916–1938* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011]) puts it, "In the widest sense, even in pre-predicative experience in which the ego turns toward the object, as in perception, there is a judging, in which a being stands before us and is believed to be there" (221).

27. In a comparative study of Husserl and James, Richard Cobb-Stevens (*James and Husserl: The Foundations of Meaning* [Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 1974]) recognised the pragmatic nature of Husserlian "constitution" (118).

28. The same holds for everyday language, with its imprecisions and vagueness corresponding to the "fluctuations and vagueness of pre-scientific experience". Victor Biceaga, *The Concept of Passivity in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2010), 82.

29. A critique of *logos* heard, this time, as "speech" will have to be deferred until the analysis of Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*, where deconstruction begins by tracing the constitutive internal rupture in phenomenology.

30. On the idea of "the flesh of ideality", refer to Renaud Barabas, *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

31. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 16.

32. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

33. "An expression only refers to an objective correlate *because* it means something, it can be rightly said to signify or name the object *through* its meaning" (H XIX/1, 54).

34. For more on this unity, see Robert Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 113ff.

35. James Mensch traces a different genealogy of *Erkenntniskritik*, which, according to him, is “a continuation of the project initiated by Hume and carried forward by James”. James Richard Mensch, *Knowing and Being: A Postmodern Reversal* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996), 57.

36. As Johanna Maria Tito (*Logic in the Husserlian Context* [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990], 61) reminds us, Husserl differentiated between the negative scepticism of the ancients and the positivity of modern scepticism, striving towards truth. Obviously, the positive scepticism of modernity has much in common with the creative and enabling critique at the core of transcendental phenomenology.

37. Cf. Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), *passim*.

38. Givenness itself may be the critical boundary, determining the “beingness of beings”: “givenness marks a border, which, in one way or another, puts the beingness of beings into question”. Jean-Luc Marion, *The Reason of the Gift*, trans. Stephen Lewis (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 34.

39. On Derrida’s criticism of Husserl’s “metaphysics of presence”, see Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl*, 30ff.

40. See also another formulation of this idea within the same book: phenomenology “is concerned to be a *descriptive* eidetic doctrine of transcendently pure mental processes” (H III, 156).

41. On Husserl’s “Platonism”, see de Muralt, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 35–43; and J. N. Mohanti, *Edmund Husserl’s Theory of Meaning* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 54ff.

42. The expression “groundless theorizing in the exact sciences of nature” is drawn from Joseph Kockelmans, *Edmund Husserl’s Phenomenology* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1994), 31.

43. The same holds for the phenomenological thinking of the world, which is nothing “innerworldly”. The thought of worldhood is already an implicit reduction, an “exclusion from being” (Marion, *The Reason of the Gift*, 23).

44. My translation.

45. “We preferred to sketch in outline the tremendous wealth of problems belonging to the *first stage of phenomenology*—a stage which in its own manner is itself *still infected with a certain naïveté* (the *naïveté of apodicticity*) but contains the great and most characteristic accomplishment of phenomenology, as a refashioning of science on a higher level—instead of entering into the *further and ultimate problems of phenomenology*: those pertaining to its *self-criticism*, which aims at determining not only the *range and limits* but also the *modes of apodicticity*” (H I, 177–78).

TWO

Ontological Critique

Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Ontico-Ontological Difference

PLUS D'UNE . . . PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIE

Can there be more than one phenomenology? There are, of course, countless phenomenologies that refer to, intend and are *of* something, be it perception or religious experience, the social world or landscape and place. There are, also, those most intimately associated with certain proper names (e.g., Max Scheler or Maurice Merleau-Ponty), around which philosophical movements and professional organisations accrete. But what happens in the phenomenological approaches to particular regions of being and in the fragmentation of phenomenology into “schools of thought” does not put into question the oneness and unity of phenomenology. Revisited from the perspective of critique, this nontotalising unity comes to the foreground. In the regionalisation, compartmentalisation and disciplinary shaping of this thought, however, we witness its formalisation and an institutionalised division of intellectual labour, which reverses its critical tendency.

It was against these deleterious trends that, in 1927, Heidegger resolutely insisted on a different kind of multiplicity: “There is no such thing as *the one* phenomenology, and if there could be such a thing it would never become anything like a philosophical technique. For implicit in the essential nature of all genuine method as a path toward the disclosure of objects is a tendency to order itself always toward that which it discloses”.¹ In *the one* phenomenology, were such a thing possible, the critical impulse would be dormant. The protomethodological slogan “Back to

the things themselves!" enjoins us to take our cues and our way from the phenomena themselves, from the many that are disclosed, that direct and, indeed, delimit the movements of disclosure. If "there is no such thing as *the one* phenomenology", this is because there is not the one exemplary phenomenon that would indifferently prescribe the same method of approaching all the others, once and for all. It seems, consequently, that, when it comes to phenomenology, there *must* be more than one.

The difficulty with the unconditional endorsement of radical plurality lies in Heidegger's own writings from the 1920s, specifically *The History of the Concept of Time, Being and Time* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. His main concern in that period was to uncover the ontological bases of phenomenology and, especially, to interpret phenomenology as "the *method of ontology*".² The ontological interpretation of phenomenology ranges from reflections on intentionality as the being of consciousness³ to an investigation of how the being of entities shows itself in the self-presentation of phenomena,⁴ not to mention charging reduction with the task of transitioning from the ontic to the ontological, from the apprehension of beings to the understanding of their being.⁵ Husserl has, after all, shown how reduction exceeds the opposition of being and nonbeing, therefore overflowing the field of ontology. But what does it mean, within the parameters of Heidegger's philosophy, that phenomenology is or ought to be executed as ontology? Does the ontological principle not imply that we must practice it in the difference between beings and being and, therefore, situate it in the space or, better, the spacing of ontico-ontological difference, the caesura of all caesurae whence critique is born? Returning to our initial question, we can now conjecture that, so understood, phenomenology will be both one and more than one, irreducible to either phenomena or *logos*, to either the beings that show themselves or their being that gives itself and withdraws from their self-showing.

Already in the early twenties, Heidegger was not convinced that the phenomenology of Husserl, who was his teacher, held the ontological resources he had sought in it. This, perhaps, is the sense of the harsh remark Heidegger made in a letter to Karl Löwith on February 20, 1923: "Husserl was never a philosopher, not even for a second of his life".⁶ If to be a philosopher is to think ontologically, with respect to the being of beings, then, in Heidegger's estimation, Husserl, who had not attained to the heights of ontological thought, is not a philosopher. Unfair as the epistolary assessment may be, it explains why, at the height of the confrontation with his teacher, in a 1930–1931 course at the University of Freiburg, Heidegger turned to another phenomenology—which could well turn out to be the other of Husserl's phenomenology—that of Hegel, which he previously deemed a sworn enemy of the "authentic fundamental tendency of phenomenology": "When today the attempt is made

to connect the authentic fundamental tendency of phenomenology with the dialectic, it is as if one wanted to mix fire and water".⁷ As a reaction to the insufficiently ontological approach to the world, he resorted to the metaphysical ontology of spirit.

My twofold working hypothesis in this chapter is, thus, the following: (1) everything Heidegger notes concerning the Hegelian phenomenology of spirit (and, in particular, concerning its absolutising, absolving and absolved standpoint) is meant as a tacit rejoinder to or refutation of Husserlian phenomenology; and (2) "Husserl" and "Hegel" are, for Heidegger, incalculably more than two proper names associated with two schools of thought or currents in or of phenomenology; instead, they are the encryptions of what we might term "ontic" and "ontological" phenomenologies, respectively. The impossible, unsynthesisable, groundless position in the middle without mediations, in between the two, will permit us to survey the spacing of ontico-ontological difference—that is, critique in its most basic signification. This spacing is, as we shall discover, the nonphenomenological condition of possibility for phenomenology, which is at once singular and plural, both one and more than one. Against all odds, we are to mix dialectical fire and phenomenological water.

Whether tacit or explicit, Heidegger's rejoinders to and criticisms of Husserl are not outright dismissals. They are, more precisely, the obverse of the reproach to Hegel's philosophy, in which "everything ontic is dissolved into the ontological . . . without insight into the ground of possibility of ontology itself"⁸ and, therefore, without safeguarding the possibility—still alive in Husserl's thought—of phenomenologically reducing the ontic to the ontological. It is not enough to opt either for a reconstructive construction of the world from the standpoint of absolute knowledge or for the transcendental constitution of the object by pure consciousness. Between the two phenomenologies, suspended in the "no man's land" of ontico-ontological difference, thinking will experience unrest well in excess of the dialectical "restlessness of the negative" and the negativity of phenomenological reduction. It will undergo the turbulence of ontico-ontological critique, desperately trying to discern among the empirically indiscernibles.

The bid to think in-between the two phenomenologies is complicated, in the first instance, by Heidegger's adamant insistence that the one bears no relation to the other. "The *Phenomenology [of Spirit]*", he writes, "has nothing to do with [*hat nichts zu tun . . . mit*] a phenomenology of consciousness as currently understood in Husserl's sense. . . . A clear differentiation [*klare Scheidung*] is necessary in the interest of a real understanding of both [the Hegelian and Husserlian] phenomenologies—particularly today, when everything is called 'phenomenology'".⁹ (As an aside, we must note that negation is itself highly suspicious, if only because, according to psychoanalysts, it is one of the most potent defence

mechanisms of the ego. “This is not my mother”, in Freud’s influential essay on negation, means the exact opposite of what it proclaims: the woman in the dream *is* my mother, but it would be too traumatic for me to admit it. The same goes for the statements that concern us here—namely, “This is not phenomenology” and also “Husserl is not a philosopher”.) The need for a “clear differentiation” between the two is not a prescription for a dry scholarly comparison, much less a methodological recommendation aiming, at any rate, to advance “understanding”, a form of consciousness confined to the relatively early stages of Hegelian phenomenology. A “real understanding” of both phenomenologies signifies something else altogether—a critical rehashing of the ontico-ontological difference in and through the “clear differentiation”, replete with the undertones of *krinein*, Heidegger has just evoked. This difference and this differentiation are so intense that they preclude the possibility of a relation between the two phenomenologies that have “nothing to do with” one another. It is, then, a certain nonrelation that we are dealing with, as Husserl confirmed in a handwritten note in the margins of his copy of *Being and Time*. In the sole remark penned in the section of the book on Hegel’s conception of time, he confessed, “I am able to learn nothing here, and seriously, is there anything here to learn at all?”¹⁰

Having come to the conclusion that he has nothing to learn from Hegel, from Heidegger’s treatment of Hegel or—most likely—from both, Husserl has unfastened his own thinking from that other phenomenology, excusing himself from a dialogue with it. That no dialogue will articulate the two phenomenologies is partly attributable to the fact that they speak different conceptual languages, all the more so when the same words (e.g., “intention”) enter their vocabularies. More importantly, this noncommunication is due to the incompatible claims each lays on the *logos* (or the being) of *phenomena*, as well as on the becoming-phenomenal of *logos* as such and as a whole. Instead of producing a split within *logos*, the two phenomenologies conjure up irreconcilable *logoi* that are unable to hear, to criticise, let alone understand or learn from, each other, for instance through a Gadamerian “merging of horizons”. We should harbour no hopes for a philosophical metalanguage capable of gathering together the two *logoi* (themselves connoting a certain act of gathering) that fall on the hither side of the dialectic of the one and the many. Their grafting onto Heidegger’s ontico-ontological difference forecloses, precisely, such gathering-together. The relation between the two phenomenologies will be a “relation without relation”, similar to the ethical bond of the I and the other in the philosophy of Levinas, in which at least one of the terms—the other who stands for the embodied absolute—is absolved from the bonds of relationality. An infinity stretches between the two, the infinity to be thought.

As Heidegger clandestinely stages it, the relation or the nonrelation between the projects of Husserl and Hegel is an apposition of the relative

phenomenology of beings and the absolute phenomenology of being: a philosophy of beings without being, on the one hand, and that of being without beings, on the other. (As is often the case in his texts, Heidegger will temporarily, and perhaps parasitically, occupy each of these positions, so as to criticise the other.) A mere glance at this apposition will suffice for one to realise that it is far from a simple contrast or a neat alignment. Although Hegel, too, presents his readers with the phenomenology of “relative” consciousness, this relativity is, for Heidegger, already reconstructed from the standpoint of the absolute. The phenomenology of spirit envelops and includes that of consciousness, assuming, as Heidegger does, that Hegel begins absolutely with the absolute, which “is other and so is *not absolute*, but relative. The not-absolute *is not yet absolute*”.¹¹ Consciousness yields the most relative and the least critical kind of knowledge,¹² in which the absolute is at the furthest remove from itself and where it subsists in a negative modality of the “not absolute”, while remaining itself. But, at the same time, consciousness purified by the means of phenomenological reduction is the horizon—the absolute horizon, perhaps—of Husserl’s phenomenology. The being of consciousness is the site where the relation without relation of Husserl and Hegel will unfold.

CRITIQUE AND THE ABSOLUTE

Before we consider the two phenomenological ontologies of consciousness, a word on the absolutising tendencies of Husserlian phenomenology is in order. All such tendencies point towards the practice of phenomenological reduction, through which Husserl hopes to reach the field of pure consciousness as that which is irreducible, that which survives the operations of bracketing, parenthesising, setting aside. The outcome of reduction is absolute, in the sense that it is absolutely irreducible. To simplify somewhat, reduction is the critically absolvent movement of separation from the world of the natural attitude, from positings, from everything transcendent and given through adumbrations. It suspends natural consciousness (or the natural attitude) that is equivalent to a limited ontic perspective and that “finds everywhere and always only beings, only phenomena, and judges all that meets it in accordance with the results of its findings”.¹³ The above assessment of ontic judgement is something of a caricature, considering that Husserl stressed the need to develop a self-critical phenomenology on an eidetic or transcendental foundation. For Heidegger, who ignores this layer of Husserlian thought, reduction is a deficient critique, which is why it must give way to ontological criticism, thanks to which phenomenology would finally come into its own. Taking the place of reduction, *Destruktion* could conceivably play such a role, provided we grasp *Destruktion* in terms of “a critique of

all ontology hitherto, with its roots in Greek philosophy, especially in Aristotle, whose ontology . . . lives as strongly in Kant and Hegel as in any medieval scholastic".¹⁴ Hardly reliant on a transhistorical absolute, the critique of ontology is still phenomenological, in that it seeks to gain access to "the thematic problems of the Greeks from the motives and the attitude of their way of access to the world",¹⁵ through a repetition of their experience at the closure of metaphysics. It is a historical reconstruction of the ancient Greek intentionality and worldhood, in which the "historical" entails the history of being, not of empirical beings.

Evidently, the absolutising tendencies of reduction in Husserl are rather truncated. As soon as it chooses sides, eidetically looking only in the direction of nonadumbrated reality, Husserlian *epochē* falls short of the absolute that does not stand on one side or on any side, for that matter: "Yet what is an absolute that stands on one side? What kind of absolute stands on any side at all? Whatever it is it is not absolute".¹⁶ Husserl operates little more than an inversion of the natural attitude; having arrived at the nonphenomenal, nonadumbrated being of consciousness, he takes the side of this being and looks to one side, methodically and methodologically flouting the relation between the intended as intended (noema) and beings *simpliciter*. To be sure, the bracketing of adumbrated reality dispenses with what is given relatively and incompletely, from one perspective or another, in favour of the absolute givenness of pure consciousness (and presumably a more radical, absolute critique that avoids all position-taking). But, in so doing, it takes the side of what has no sides, foregoes the difficulties of mediation and aborts the "dialogue between natural and real knowledge" and the critical "comparison between ontic/pre-ontological knowledge and ontological knowledge" that, on Heidegger's reading of Hegel, shapes consciousness *qua* consciousness.¹⁷ Ontically absolute, the field of pure consciousness is ontologically relative because of its very "purity", the purified one-sidedness, distilled and separated from the world of the natural attitude as a result of a critical overdrive.

The being of consciousness in the aftermath of phenomenological reduction is intentionality, the directedness of consciousness towards something, its being, in each case, *of* something. Intentional consciousness is relative knowledge (and, hence, relative being) as such. Inherently relational, it is circumscribed by that of which it is conscious and, thus, hinges on the intended, despite having been cut off from adumbrated reality. In this respect, it diverges from absolute knowledge that is no longer or not yet *of* something: "Is not knowledge as such a knowledge of something? This is precisely what Hegel denies and must deny when he claims that there is a knowledge which is qualitatively *not* relative, but absolute".¹⁸ Still prior to its fulfilment in intuition, in which noetic acts and their noematic targets belong together in strict *correlations*, intentionality is essentially a *relatum*. The ontic orientation of intentionality lies in

its directedness towards the perceived, the remembered, the anticipated and so forth, as opposed to the ontological trajectory of absolute knowledge that “must not remain bound but must liberate and ab-solve itself [*sich losmacht, sich ab-löst*] from what it knows and yet as so ab-solved, as absolute, [*als ab-gelöstes—absolutes*] still be a knowledge”.¹⁹ The absolutization of absolute knowledge from the known explodes noetic-noematic correlations, freeing us, finally, from the “correspondence theory of truth”—truth as *adequatio*, not of *rei et intellectus* but of the intuiting and the intuited—which casts a long shadow over the entire field of pure consciousness. The true is not the fulfilment of empty intentionality in intuition or in the ontic presence of the intended; it is, rather, the whole—that is, being or absolute knowledge itself. It is, more precisely, the whole capable of critically determining and delimiting itself, rather than being externally circumscribed by its other.

Once again, Heidegger has systematically excluded the self-critical mission of phenomenology that satisfies many of the criteria for the freedom of absolute knowledge. Additionally, he has swept under the rug the fact that the dialectical self-determining whole presents difficulties of its own. The complaint Heidegger raised several years before his first sustained engagement with Hegel against purely ontological, absolute knowledge was that such knowledge dissolved the beings themselves and ignored “the original belonging together of comportment toward beings and understanding of being”.²⁰ Covertly, Heidegger extends the same rebuke to Husserl, who, in contrast to Hegel, privileged the intentional comportment towards beings over the understanding of being. Whereas relative *phenomenology* is dedicated to the appearing of phenomena in a knowing bound to the known (the name of this bond is intentionality, “consciousness of”), absolute *phenomenology* is concerned with the phenomenal appearance of *logos* itself that gives itself form by negating and sublating its other. In this sense, “phenomenology is the *absolute self-presentation of reason (ratio—Λόγος)*, whose essence and actuality Hegel finds in *absolute spirit*”.²¹ Only in the critical difference between, rather than in the synthesis of, the two phenomenologies, in which at least as much disappears as appears, will we glimpse the “original belonging together” of the ontic and the ontological, of phenomena and of *logos*.

Assuming that *logos* now stands in the atopic place of being, Heidegger’s famous statement that “language is the house of being” is also tellingly *tautological*. *Logos* is the house of being = being is the house of being. Being dwells with (or at, or in) itself, which is to say that it is already, as always, divided against itself in this closest of proximities to itself. What reemerges here is the first division, ontological critique or judgement of *logos*, which lays the groundwork for the commerce of *logos* with itself and with phenomena. The economy of this economy is none other than phenomenology, itself differentiated into the ontic and ontological ap-

proaches that do not see eye to eye and that, in their not-seeing, unwittingly precipitate the critique that comes to pass in the place of ontico-ontological difference.

Does the charge levelled against Hegel and consistent with the overall critique of metaphysical ontology hold, above all, in Heidegger's own reading of *Phenomenology of Spirit*? In the reconstructive construction of the world from the standpoint of absolute knowledge, we—those who know absolutely—care for the truth of being and for the truth of beings, for knowing itself and for that which is known: "We have in our knowledge *two* objects, or one object twice. This is the case necessarily and throughout the entire *Phenomenology*, because *for us* the object is basically and always *knowing*, which in itself and according to its formal essence already in its turn has its object, which it brings along with it".²² So long as absolute knowledge, viewed from the vantage point of the absolute, is still more or less other to itself—so long as it is conditioned by the known—its intentionality is divided, the noematic target doubled into the knowing and the object of this knowing. Our attention is, in turn, split between the two objects or, alternatively, fissured in striving towards a double, spectral object ("one object twice"). In its critical circumscription by two objects, in this hyperdelimitation, absolute knowing is delimited, released from purely objective and subjective confines alike. Ontological critique thus promises to free the absolute from all relative and relativising confines.

Let us already call these two objects or the double object (the one counted twice) by their names: the ontological and the ontic, the being of beings understood in terms of self-consciousness or, in the later text on Hegel, "experience",²³ and the known, experienced beings as they are known and experienced. The absolute is only absolute if it embraces these two modalities without necessarily reconciling them, if, that is, it holds them together in a tension nourished by the intensity of ontico-ontological difference. Touched by the absolute, the object becomes excessive, turns into more than itself, overflows the limits of its identity, splits into two *or* becomes one and the same . . . twice (the dialectical and ontological inflections of this "or" should be distinctly audible). And being? Isn't it, too, always more *or* less itself, because we gain access to it through ontico-ontological difference, in which alone it appears and from which it withdraws (as nothing *in* being)? In light of this analogy—the *ana-logos* in which redoubling (*an-*) abounds—we can appreciate the remark that Dominique Janicaud made in passing on the Hegel-Heidegger dialogue: "The most secret proximity [of Heidegger] to Hegel . . . perhaps lies hidden in the friction with regard to phenomenology".²⁴

The dialectical splitting of the object of knowledge into the knowing and that which is known in it goes to the heart of what, for Hegel, defines the being of consciousness. In contrast to the Husserlian ontology of consciousness, encapsulated in the statement "The being of consciousness is

intentionality", Hegel's speculative definition proclaims, "The being of consciousness is self-consciousness". What in Husserl's phenomenology would have been the height of impoverished theoreticism, of a reflection on reflection that treats noetic acts as new noematic objects, is in Hegel's dialectics the figure of richness and concreteness of the absolute knowledge that fleshes itself out by determining itself. Considered from the heights of this knowledge, the ontic orientation of consciousness towards phenomena is inseparable from its ontological directedness towards itself, in a movement of re-flection that does not come about as an after-thought, already uncoupled from lived actuality, but accompanies the reconstructive construction of experience from its absolute beginning. Hence, to know absolutely means "not to be absorbed in what is known, but to transmit it *as such*, as *what is known* to where it belongs as known and from where it stems".²⁵ It means, contra Husserl, that the life of consciousness does not have to be extinguished in the presence of the intuited and that the living intentionality, the *dunamis* of striving towards . . . does not need to reach its end in the actuality of that towards which it strives.²⁶ Or, in other words, that the "critical zigzag" of phenomenology must give way to an all-absorbing tendency of the absolute.

In the Husserlian scenario in which intentionality attains fulfilment, quelling the unrest of consciousness, the being of Dasein is patently and uncritically conflated with the being of its intended targets, when in the operations of consciousness "knowing . . . forgets *itself* and is lost exclusively in the object".²⁷ When knowing forgets itself—that is, when it forgets that it is a critique woven into the fabric of experience—Dasein is automatically comprehended as something present-at-hand, while its being "lost exclusively in the object" nullifies ontico-ontological difference. The relativity of relative phenomenology signifies the determination of existence on the basis of the ontology of the present-at-hand. The absoluteness of absolute phenomenology entails, on the contrary, the positive possibility of being lost in the object—the possibility of consciousness being lost in itself as its own object and, therefore, of refinding (gathering) itself in itself without discounting this unique experience of loss. After all, the Hegelian problematic of "the being of the self" signifies, for Heidegger, *logos* and its gathering function: "One must remember that for Hegel the being of self—as well as the actuality of spirit and of the absolute in general—is primarily determined by 'consciousness' and by 'knowing,' a determination which is closely tied in with the interpretation of being in terms of Λόγος".²⁸

To be fair to Husserl's phenomenology, reduction has also shown that consciousness itself does not appear and that, moreover, what conditions the being-conscious of consciousness is its nonappearance, the nonadumbrated givenness, which sets it apart from transcendent reality and, therefore, from everything that is not-Dasein. The ontology of pure consciousness is distinct from that of the present-at-hand, whereas in dialectics the

“appearing of phenomenal knowledge is the truth of knowledge”,²⁹ not at all insulated from adumbrated reality.

Much depends, however, on the modes of objectivation or phenomenalisation that distinguish the two phenomenologies. When *logos* itself appears in relative knowledge, it does so as the sheer alienation and deadening of the subject, whose psychic life comes to an objective end in self-evidence. But when it arrives on the scene and makes its phenomenal appearance in the realm of the absolute, *logos* comes into its own and gains a new lease on life. The consciousness of consciousness and the intentionality of intentionality bear no mark of the derivative and abstract character Husserl’s phenomenology has ascribed to them; they comprise the being of the absolute, which, in its separation or absolvent absolution from everything relative, is utterly inseparable (inalienable) from us: “the absolute is from the start in and for itself with us and intends to be with us. This being-with-us (Παρουσία) is in itself already the mode in which the light of truth, the absolute itself beams [*anstrahlt*] upon us. To know the absolute is to stand in the ray [*Strahl*] of light, to give it back, to radiate [*strahlt*] it back, and thus to be itself in its essence the ray, not a mere medium through which the ray must first find its way”.³⁰ And so ontological critique strikes the bedrock of the *uncriticisable*, which is the apparent absence of separation (or of any critical distance) between “us” and the absolute, in the appearance of the absolute itself as “us”.

The being-with-us of the absolute is *its* becoming phenomenal, the becoming that is as superfluous as it is necessary in that it happens after the absolute has already become everything it is, from the critically determined beginning. The shining of the absolute upon us does not illuminate us from the outside, setting itself up as an object over and against us. It radiates from within, with reflected or refracted light (“to give it back, to radiate it back”), with the ontological luminosity of consciousness as self-consciousness. Of course, our being-with the absolute deserves a patient deconstructive analysis. If the absolute is one *with* us, then it loses its identity as the absolute and is no longer one, because it is minimally separated from us, as much as from itself by the nearness—the absolute nearness—of its presence. The separation of the absolute from itself is the very expression of ontico-ontological difference, allegedly forgotten in Hegel’s phenomenology. Be that as it may, for Hegel, the becoming-phenomenal of *logos* is the end of phenomenology, in several senses, since it undermines the conditions of possibility for a critical passage between being and beings.

The intentional ray of the transcendental ego in Husserl’s phenomenology does not shine from within, but rather emits subjective light that falls upon its objects’ noematic surfaces. When it is with us, this ray is already outside of us, coordinating the self-transcendence of consciousness as the consciousness of . . . Its trajectory is unidirectional: conscious-

ness intends something other, though not absolutely other—the transcendent. Conversely, the absolute, as Heidegger puts it, “intends to be with us” and therefore *intends us*, whenever we ourselves intend anything whatsoever. The loss of this other intentionality drastically impoverishes the phenomenological idea of constitution. It would, of course, be a gross exaggeration to claim that Husserl’s constitutive subjectivity is purely active, for, besides the passive synthesis of temporality, it draws its specific sense from what it constitutes in the hylomorphic production of meaning. But, whereas in the relative phenomenology of consciousness the constituting is, to a certain extent, ontically constituted by the constituted, in the absolute phenomenology of spirit the constituting is ontologically constituted by the absolute that intends it. In much of his own thought, Heidegger will focus on the inversion of intentionality, detectable in Hegel’s dialectics and imbued with ontological connotations. The “call of being” in *Being and Time* and, in a different sense, in “The Letter on Humanism”, as well as the call of thinking that flips around the question “What is called thinking?”, are but two prominent examples of this ontological inversion that turns us into the objects of its critique.³¹

The ontological reversibility of intentionality is the reason why, in a rare explicit criticism of “current phenomenology”, juxtaposed with the phenomenology of spirit, Heidegger writes, “It is crucial that once again we determine correctly what the genitive means in the expression ‘phenomenology of spirit.’ The genitive must not be interpreted as a *genitivus obiectivus*. Easily misled by current phenomenology, one might take this genitive to be object-related, as though here we are dealing with phenomenological investigation of spirit that is somehow distinguished from a phenomenology of nature or that of economics”.³² Spirit is not only (or at least not exclusively) the object of phenomenology but also its subject. “Phenomenology is . . . the manner in which spirit itself exists. The phenomenology of spirit is the genuine and total coming-out of spirit”.³³ There is, in other words, no semantic equivalence between the seemingly parallel expressions—“phenomenology of consciousness” and “phenomenology of spirit”—unless we understand the former as a mode of appearance of the latter.

In the contemporary phenomenology of consciousness, *logos* fades into the “study” of phenomena, even and especially when it seeks its method from the things themselves. This phenomenology is not of consciousness, in the sense of the subjective genitive, because consciousness itself does not appear or is not allowed to appear in it. Phenomenology is *not* the manner whereby consciousness itself exists. So much so that—to extrapolate from Heidegger’s conclusions—consciousness, as the object of phenomenological study, ceases to exist, loses its existential determinations and becomes indistinguishable from the domains of nature or economics. The razor-thin line of critical demarcation, traversing the genitive in “phenomenology of”, which is only superficially reminiscent of

the formula of intentionality “consciousness of”, is charged with the task of maintaining ontico-ontological difference, levelled down in Husserl’s thought. Of phenomenology, there is more than one in the one, not the least because the genitive form in “phenomenology of” is essentially equivocal.

CRITICAL DIFFERENCE: TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE

The transcendental objectification of consciousness in Husserlian phenomenology, as the phenomenology *of* consciousness but not *proper to* consciousness, exerts a profound influence on the concepts of experience and truth. The ontic truth of experience is the veracity of the present-at-hand, the fulfilment and the confirmation of empty intentionality in intuition.³⁴ The most decisive function of consciousness is a protocritique, verifying the appropriateness of the fit and the soundness of the relation between the experiencing and the experienced. This function, as we know, pivots almost entirely on judging the accuracy and measuring the degrees of proximity between the “merely” intended and the “really” intuited, in the sort of pre- or nonpredicative judgement inherent in the acts of perception and undergirding all so-called abstract judgements (EU 66). Experience, for Husserl, *is* judgement or—this amounts roughly to the same thing here—ontic critique. Although consciousness feels the ontic unrest of a vacillation between the two poles of comparison, it is insensitive to the ontological restlessness we experience when we dwell without abiding in the split between the ontic and the ontological—that is, in the spacing of the ontico-ontological difference. Any residual unrest is subject to pacification through a more stringent and exacting (but not necessarily exact!) application of the acts of comparing, weighing and judging. What is thus absent from the relative (or, according to Heidegger, naïve) phenomenology of consciousness is the experience of experience that has nothing in common with theoretical consciousness and that is the being of experience which “means *being* this distinction” (“between the ontically true and the ontological truth”).³⁵ Hence, missing from every correlation established by consciousness, however precisely one has judged the fit of its two elements, is the absolute ontological-existential truth of experience.

When in the seminars of the 1930s and 1940s Heidegger mines Hegel’s texts, he is searching for this very truth, which is so conspicuously missing from Husserlian phenomenology. Heidegger’s discovery in that same period is that truth as the truth of the absolute, if not the absolute truth, is neither pure objectivity nor subjectivity, but rather experience in the ontological-existential signification of the term: “The will of the absolute to be with us, i.e., to appear for us as phenomena, prevails as experience”.³⁶ In truth, the will of the absolute, which wills “to be with us”, absolute

knowers, accomplishes the reversal of intentionality I have already invoked, so that we are both the experiencing subjects *and* the experienced objects of this will. (Later on, Levinas will translate this targeting of the subject by the absolute into the ethical persecution of the I by the other.) From this dimensionless perspective of the absolute, the ontic experience of given phenomena—indeed, of phenomenal givenness interpreted as the self-giving of the absolute—presents itself in a new light.

Experience is not a dispassionate judging comparison of the fit between intentionality and intuition, but rather the *pathos* undergone with the object, or, more broadly, consciousness's being-transformed with the experienced, with itself and with the absolute. As a result, Heidegger suggests that we interpret "experience as denoting, both negatively and positively, *undergoing an experience with something*".³⁷ The "with" of experience, which supplants the "of" of intentionality, restores to phenomenology its existential dimension. The being-with (or *Mitdasein*) of consciousness stresses the facticity of its unfolding alongside its objects and its reflexive return to itself as self-consciousness, as well as its being in absolute proximity (*Παρουσία*) to the absolute. Much more than a critique of Dasein's objectification, this small preposition "with" draws together the positive and the negative, the ontic and the ontological, the existential and the categorial, so that ontico-ontological difference could finally take its nonplace. Only the first of the three meanings of "experience with" (the facticity of being alongside objects) is still active in the phenomenology of relative consciousness, which dilutes the rich existentiality of the "with" in the cobelonging of the experiencing and the experienced, in which intentionality is fulfilled and extinguished. Taken in a more ample sense, though, "with" is another keyword we might add to the nascent vocabulary of critical ontological phenomenology, which urges a thoroughly existential understanding of existence. It is this existential twist that distinguishes Heidegger's own approach as "phenomenologico-critical".³⁸

To experience with . . . is to suffer with . . . and to be mutually transfigured by that with which one experiences or suffers. The truth of the absolute and the absoluteness of the absolute do not preclude but—perhaps paradoxically—require a dialectical alteration. Speculative verification, which mediates between the experiencing consciousness and the experienced content, verifies and authenticates the truth of both in and through their becoming otherwise than they were. On the side of the experiencing, "consciousness *verifies* to itself what it really is", so that "in this verification" it "loses its initial truth, what it at first thought of itself",³⁹ and, on the side of the experienced, "*something is verified . . . as not being what it first seemed to be, but being truly otherwise [sondern in Wahrheit anders]*".⁴⁰ Verification takes time to be accomplished, takes time into account and, to a certain extent, *is* time. Experiencing with . . . and suffering with . . . ultimately boil down to suffering the loss of the initial

self-identity of consciousness that has changed along with that of which it was conscious—something that is unthinkable in the static determination of noetic acts, according to which the intentional aiming at . . . either hits or misses its target.

In Husserl's philosophical program, this loss would betoken the deficit of phenomenological critique, or a lapse of judgement, including a lacuna within experience itself that has not yet succeeded in bringing the experienced firmly into its grasp. The reason behind his completely negative take on the evolving truth of consciousness is the phenomenological idea of time, factored into noetic-noematic correlations. When intentionality is provisionally empty, not yet or already not fulfilled, time is only a temporary deferral of the thing's presence to intuition. Nothing fundamentally changes either in the intending or in the intended once the directedness-towards of consciousness is actualised in that towards which it has been oriented *ab initio*.

Much different is the dialectical truth of experience, which germinates in the alteration of consciousness and of its double object. The beginning is already absolute, but, in this beginning, the absolute, standing or falling furthest from itself, is other to itself, such that its otherness denotes the relativity of consciousness. In order to touch upon the truth of the absolute, verification must render this otherness truly other, *in Wahrheit anders*, without thereby negating the truth of the beginning and without repeating the mistake of ontic judgements that, in a gesture of facile criticism, dismiss the erroneousness of "what . . . first seemed to be". Even though, just as he had done in *Being and Time*, Heidegger accuses Hegel of contributing to the metaphysical neglect of the temporality of time—"the pure concept annuls time. Hegelian philosophy expresses this disappearance of time by conceiving philosophy as the science or as absolute knowledge"⁴¹—and aligns this feature of dialectics with Husserl's own insistence on the scientificity of phenomenology,⁴² the temporal character of truth in the phenomenology of the absolute contests these conclusions of the 1930–1931 lecture course.

The critique Heidegger launches against Hegelian temporality is well known: the time of the dialectic neglects and covers over the ecstatic-existential temporality of Dasein, notably when it comes to the mediated "fall" of spirit into time.⁴³ And yet the thesis that truth is an alteration, mutually undergone by the experiencing and the experienced, makes it difficult to argue that Hegel has excluded temporality from his thinking of being. If "experience" is the name for "the being of beings",⁴⁴ then the essence of the being of beings is time, the time of experience and the experience of time. The crucible of experience is the crossing of the ontic and the ontological right in the midst of the phenomenology of spirit. *Logos* is time itself, which means that the phenomena that "dissolve" in it dissolve into their innermost ontological matrix. Ontico-ontological cri-

tique calls for this, at once tense and relaxed, relation between phenomena and *logos*.

According to my double working hypothesis on the shadow of Husserl that looms over and is, at the same time, conjured away in Heidegger's readings of Hegel, the truth of sense-certainty and of perception—hence, of what has not yet been ontologically verified and, in being verified, altered—is the only kind of truth contemporary phenomenology is familiar with. In sense-certainty, conceptual weight bears down upon “certainty”, which “means the entirety of the relation, in knowing, of a knower to what is known”,⁴⁵ at the expense of sense and its data, so decisive for the practitioners of twentieth-century phenomenology.⁴⁶ The certainty of sense-certainty is a moment of noncritical repose, of consciousness delighting in the ostensible positivity of experience. In these blissful instants, it no longer or not yet questions what is known, its relation to what is known and itself. For Hegel, of course, the ostensible richness of sense-certainty is a sign that consciousness has been oversaturated, overstimulated and overpowered by the infinite, if empty, variety of what appears before it. Such consciousness forgets to think through the mode (the *how*) of knowing that ties it to the known. In a word, it betrays its critical mission. The phenomenological notion of truth as the fulfilment of empty intentionality in the presence of that towards which it has tended is but a symptom of its uncritical satisfaction.

Nevertheless, is the fulfilment of intentionality really possible at the ontic level, where the manifold of sense-certainty predominates? The answer is “no”. Sense-certainty breaks down due to its nonfulfilment: “When we generally intend the thing, we find that ‘this’ sends our intention away [*von sich wegschickt*]. It sends our intention away, not generally, but rather in a definite direction of something which has the character of a being *this*”.⁴⁷ The internal breakdown of sense-certainty signifies the pulverisation of intentionality, reflected by (not absorbed into) the intended. Positively understood, the “sending away” of our intention is intentionality's branching off in multiple directions, à la the practical and concerned dispersion of Dasein in the world. Our intention is not fulfilled in the “this” but referred to another “this” in the webs of signification, from which our world is woven. The infinite deferral of fulfilment in the presence of the intuited, the elusiveness of that which we intend, holds in store some of the most abiding implications for deconstruction that internally displaces phenomenology by radicalising its principle of critique, not so much in the thinking of being as in the critique of ontology from the standpoint of ethics (Levinas) or of what no longer pertains either to being or to nothing (Derrida). We will have quite a few opportunities for exploring this conjuncture in detail.

Aside from “hyletic phenomenology”, which at the limits of sense scrutinises sense data before the hylomorphic production of meaning,⁴⁸ Husserl's project is geared not towards the pure “this” but towards

grasping the perceived as perceived, the remembered as remembered or, more generally, noematic unities, in which sense data are already synthesised. Among noematic objects, Husserl singles out and absolutises the perceived, such that the present of perception is converted into the ground from which experience, memory and expectation arise, and in which they are ultimately confirmed and consummated. All ontic critique of consciousness is to be undertaken from the experiential present, determining both past and future horizons. But what sort of ground is this, if the place of perception (and of the present) is in the middle and if, as Heidegger reminds us, “through the mediation of perception, sense-certainty first reaches understanding and therein gets to its own ground as the true mode of consciousness”?⁴⁹ Perception is not the absolute, but rather the path towards the absolute. Conflating the means with the end, Husserl’s phenomenology foregoes mediations, erases the middle term and paints a black-and-white, either/or canvas of psychic life: either intentionality is empty, when it merely intends and represents the intended for itself, or it is full, when representations receive their corroboration in the present of perception. That perceiving is a basic hermeneutical act, whereby the perceiver nonthematically interprets (or else, nonpredicatively criticises) the perceived *X as X*—that it is the act of preunderstanding on its way to an explicit interpretation—is a key insight of *Being and Time*. This idea is indebted, in the first place, to the Hegelian placement of perception in the middle, in the transitional form of consciousness, as opposed to its exaltation to the status of the ground and the end of psychic life in Husserl. Between the two phenomenologies, there are no mediations and no middle ground, if holding them together requires, for example, mediating the same object (such as the phenomenon of perception) as, at the same time, the middle and the end.

The place of perception dovetails with the speculative concept of appearance that “must be grasped *as* appearance, as a middle” between appearing and disappearing. “It is important to remember again”, Heidegger notes, “that Hegel does not take the essence of appearing only as self-showing, as becoming manifest, as manifestation. Rather, appearing also means a *mere*-showing and vanishing. There is in appearance a moment of negativity”.⁵⁰ It is this moment of negativity (and, along with it, an immanent critique of appearance) that is absent from Husserl’s phenomenology of perception, in which phenomenal presence is synonymous with pure positivity.

When phenomena are given through adumbrations, admittedly something in their appearance, including the appearing itself, does not appear because their various spatial dimensions are occluded, if only temporarily, behind those that present themselves to sight. Yet the givenness of the noema, of the perceived as perceived, is complete and absolute, to the point of being translucent before the act of perceiving. There is no tendency towards “vanishing” in the appearing noema and, thus, there is no

need to resort to signification so as to “fill in the blanks” by interposing the sign in the place of the absent thing or parts of a thing. While, for Hegel, “to appear’ or ‘to be a phenomenon’” is “to become other in remaining self-identical [*sich-anders-werden in der Selbstgleichheit*]”,⁵¹ for Husserl, to appear is to establish a positive identity between the perceiving and the perceived in the present of intuition. But Hegel, too, is not beyond reproach: in the absoluteness of the absolute, in the identity of knowledge and will, in the becoming-rational of the actual and the becoming-actual of the rational, the otherness of phenomena is subsumed, as appearance and essence are mediated into a dialectical unity. The role of the phenomenology of the in-between, the phenomenology of ontico-ontological difference, is to maintain alive the critical promise of appearances that give themselves, even as something withdraws from their givenness. Heidegger’s own concept of truth as *aletheia*, or the giving withdrawal of being, will be best understood in the context of this phenomenology of the in-between.

A close and often quite sympathetic reconstruction of Hegel’s thinking in Heidegger’s texts and seminars of the 1930s and 1940s⁵² leaves us with the conclusion that, taken separately, the two phenomenologies are inadequate to the task of raising the entwined questions of beings and of being. This symmetrical accusation is, of course, at odds with the conclusions of the 1923 course on ontology and hermeneutics, in which Heidegger identified the saving grace of Husserl’s philosophy with the kind of critique that was capable of cutting through the “sophistries” of the dialectic play with form/content, finitude/infinity and other distinctions. “It is”, Heidegger observed then, “what the critical stance of phenomenology ultimately struggles against”.⁵³ A decade later, the “critical stance” migrated to the region caught between the thought of Husserl and that of Hegel. Neither is fully adequate to the critical mission it claimed for itself: phenomenology of spirit makes phenomena dissipate in *logos*, while phenomenology of consciousness causes *logos* to melt into phenomena. Hegel is indicted for betraying the question of beings, *die Frage nach dem Seienden*, and for triggering its sublation (*Aufhebung*),⁵⁴ not to mention the sublation of the beings themselves in being. Husserl stands accused of neglecting the question of being, bracketed or set aside in the course of phenomenological reduction that disengages pure consciousness from everything transcendent, all the while ontically relativising the being of this consciousness. Phenomenology as an ontological (that is to say, an ontico-ontological) enterprise, in the role Heidegger allotted to it in *Being and Time*, does not come about in the exclusive privileging of phenomena or of *logos*. When *logos* is absolutised, “there is no introduction to phenomenology, because there can be no introduction to phenomenology”⁵⁵; when phenomena are prioritised, there is nothing but an introduction to phenomenology, a “preliminary conception” or a *Vorbegriff*. Only in the suspended middle between the two (but are there only two?), in the

space or spacing between the absence of introduction and a relentless introduction, between *logos* and phenomena, between the one and the others, will the seeds of critique germinate.

NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, rev. ed., trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), 328.

2. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 328.

3. Martin Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience", in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Heynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 107.

4. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

5. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 21.

6. Quoted in Thomas Sheehan, "General Introduction: Husserl and Heidegger: The Making and Unmaking of a Relationship", in *Collected Works* by Edmund Husserl, trans. and ed. Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer, vol. 6, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931)* (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer, 1997), 17.

7. Martin Heidegger, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 33.

8. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 327.

9. Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 28, 40.

10. Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931)*, vol. 6 in *Collected Works* by Edmund Husserl, trans. and ed. Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer, 1997), 421.

11. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 33. This assumption was not in the background of Heidegger's thought ten years before the course of Hegel, in the 1923 seminar entitled "Ontology—the Hermeneutics of Facticity". There, Heidegger took the side of Husserlian phenomenology, accusing dialectics of a reactive work on ready-made materials and, hence, of a reliance—uncharacteristic of the absolute—on the ontic world. Martin Heidegger, *Ontology—the Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Indianapolis and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 36.

12. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 34.

13. Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience", 118.

14. Martin Heidegger, "Letter to Karl Jaspers, Freiburg, June 27, 1922", in *The Heidegger–Jaspers Correspondence (1920–1963)*, ed. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (New York: Humanity Books, 2003), 34.

15. Heidegger, "Letter to Karl Jaspers", 34.

16. Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience", 101.

17. Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience", 138.

18. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 14.

19. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 15, 21.

20. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 327.

21. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 30.

22. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 48.

23. Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience", 139.

24. Dominique Janicaud, "Heidegger–Hegel: An Impossible 'Dialogue'?", in *Endings: Questions of Memory in Hegel and Heidegger*, ed. Rebecca Comay and John McCumber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), 41.

25. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 47.

26. Emmanuel Levinas launches a parallel critique of Husserl, writing that “it is a question of descending from the entity illuminated in self-evidence toward the subject that is extinguished rather than announced in it”. *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, trans. R. Cohen and M. B. Smith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 156.
27. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 129.
28. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 136.
29. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 108.
30. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 98.
31. On “being called by Being”, see Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism”, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 245. On “what is called thinking—and what does call for it?”, see Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York and Cambridge: Harper & Row, 1968), 21.
32. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 23–24.
33. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 24.
34. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 20.
35. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 133.
36. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 143.
37. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 21.
38. Jacques Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 71, emphasis added.
39. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 22.
40. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 21, 30.
41. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 12.
42. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 11.
43. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 486.
44. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 135.
45. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.
46. “We do not learn anything about visual and auditory sensations, about the data of smell and touch (the very least that today’s phenomenologies would demand)”. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.
47. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 58, 82.
48. Cf. paragraph 85 of *Ideas I* as well as Michel Henry, *Material Phenomenology*, trans. Scott Davidson (New York: Fordham University, 2008), 7.
49. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 83.
50. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 109, 117.
51. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 75, 107.
52. In addition to the two treated here, consult texts on negativity from 1938–1939 and 1941–1942, gathered in volume 68 of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*; selections from *Being and Truth*; and courses on Hegel’s *Logic* and on logic in Aristotle and Hegel, as well as the recently published engagement with Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* in volume 86 of *Gesamtausgabe*.
53. Heidegger, *Ontology*, 37.
54. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 41, 60.
55. Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, 154.

THREE

Ethical Critique

Levinas and the Trembling of Phenomenology

SHAKEN GROUNDS: CRITIQUE AS AN EARTHQUAKE

In his iconic essay “Violence and Metaphysics”, Derrida writes that “the thought of Emmanuel Levinas can make us tremble”.¹ This deceptively simple statement demands infinite exegetical and hermeneutical attention, not only for the sake of a careful theoretical interpretation, inquiring into the meaning of trembling (or, as we would say today, an intense “somatic reaction” provoked by something as ethereal as a thinker’s thought), but also for the purpose of allowing ourselves to be more thoroughly shaken—both practically and theoretically—by placing ourselves right at the epicentre of the tremors radiating from Levinas’s philosophical oeuvre. Wishing to live up to this demand, we must be capable of experiencing the gravity of an exceptional thought, which, far from being immaterial, induces a violent response of trembling in the totality of our being, affecting us “body and soul”. More precisely, the questions that crop up along the hermeneutical lines Derrida has already anticipated are: Who or what trembles in us when we are exposed to the unsettling thought of Levinas? In what ways and across what channels are its critical reverberations transmitted to everything and everyone it touches, from the philosophical tradition it destabilises to the readers who come across it? How to decipher the effects it can have on our bodies and minds, levelling the distinction between the two? And, finally, what is the sense of ethical potentiality inherent in this modal verb (“can”) devoid of potency or power?

The “thought of Emmanuel Levinas can make us tremble”, above all, because it awakens in us the very attitude it describes—namely, a visceral

self-critique as the critique of the self: the nonindifference of ethical existence turned, in a heteronomous and unwilling fashion, towards the (non-phenomenal) other, who prompts me to speak—to offer an interminable *apologia*, which is not at all different from my life—and who inspires my *logos*. Formally, Levinasian ethics can stimulate this awakening because it occupies the place of the other, the Hebraic stranger, the destitute outsider vis-à-vis the Hellenistic ontological tradition it shakes up.² But it is an other who or that insinuates itself *intus et in cute*³—“inside and under the skin” of the same—inhabits the tradition and makes it quake from within, in the manner of the movements of the earth’s mantle that presses upon and sporadically displaces the outer crust. The other elicits a pre-ontological critique of phenomenology without offering any solid evidence, since the intentionality driving the ethical relation to alterity is unfulfillable. But this critique is not entirely privative, either; in the writings of Levinas, ethical experience implies the overabundance of sense, in which nonfulfilment instigates me to further action for the good of the other and intentionality is inverted, so that I am made sense of by the other, who functions in a way similar to the Hegelian/Heideggerian absolute. We tremble because we are no longer in full control of ourselves and, by the same token, because, without having chosen it, we are turned to the other, for the sake of whom (and often despite ourselves) we act, think and live.

Deconstructing a series of oppositions between causes and effects, the originary and the derivative, inside and outside, ethical thought (irreducible to a formula and uncontainable by any conceptual moulds) quivers in its nonidentity with itself and in the nonadequation to the other towards whom it orients itself. It is this quivering that sends the critical shockwaves, rattling the foundations of the onto-metaphysical tradition. An intimate witness to these tremors is phenomenology, in which the desire to reground human knowledge, action and existence on new and secure foundations coincides with a persistent emphasis on the literal ground, the earth, to which even the most abstract geometrical and mathematical conceptions are beholden. The thinking-of-the-other will not compete with phenomenology for the dubious title of the true ground for existence, or for the claim of having discovered a more fundamental ontology. If ethics, in the Levinasian rendition, emerges as *prima philosophia*, more ancient than ontology itself, it is not because the relation to the other is somehow more basic or more critically potent, but, rather, because this relation both accompanies, as their underside, and dismantles all ontological and logical operations that obfuscate it.

The fate of the subject, too, is sealed by the seismic event of ethical thought. Tremors neurologically connote uncontrollable and unintentional behaviour that, commencing on the periphery of the nervous system, puts in question the authority of the brain as the sovereign and central command structure governing the body. Transcendental constitu-

tive subjectivity is powerless when confronted with such unintentional and unintended experience, which reveals the constituted nature of constitutive subjectivity and eludes even the formations of passive synthesis. Or, alternatively, tremors may be associated with the destitute condition of someone whose basic needs have not been met—someone who shivers of cold, hunger or fear, having been reduced to bodily materiality, a naked piece of existence. Still more passive than the passive synthesis of time, the abjection of the shivering and trembling body shakes the indifferent façade of autonomous subjectivity, portending its own finitude and death. Ethical-phenomenological critique is not cognitive; rather, it is visceral.

Both Hegel and Heidegger respectively have drawn our attention to this passivity of being shaken in the slave's apprehension of its mortality and in the anxiety experienced in the face of being-towards-death. On the heels of their reflections on finitude, Levinas interpolates the other in the structural place of death and posits the diachronic constitution of time in a relation to alterity. To have time is to be related to the other and, therefore, to be shaken—in Levinas's words, "obsessed"—by the ethical demand that, not unlike the relation to one's own death in Heidegger, individualises the I by means of a relentless critique of its autonomy. Such critique is, itself, creative: it invests the I with the obsessive responsibility for the other and with a meaningful subjectivity. This investiture is nevertheless traumatic, since the obsession with the other turns into the paradigm of a nonintentional experience, which, outside our conscious reach, produces seismic waves and aftershocks within consciousness. The ethical ungrounding of phenomenology does not portend the dissolution of psychic life but, on the contrary, its resuscitation and critical reinvigoration (reanimation) thanks to the other who shocks, shakes it up and animates it in the first place. The ensuing earthquakes, dislocations and disturbances do little to demolish the phenomenological edifice naming, instead and in different ways, the immanent ethical critique of phenomenology.

In Husserl's phenomenology, "ground" performs a double function, which roughly corresponds to the lived and conceptual senses of the term. *Philosophical grounding* connotes apodicticity, or, in Descartes's words, "absolute indubitability", gained as a result of a careful phenomenological reduction. The apodictic ground merges with the entire transcendental sphere of pure consciousness, for "only if my experience of my transcendental self is apodictic can it serve as ground and basis for apodictic judgments" (H I, 61). The theoretical thrust of *Cartesian Meditations* confirms the earlier formulations in *Ideas I*, in which the "aim is to ground phenomenology in this purity [of mental processes]" (H III, 129) that persist, after their reduction, in the "pure immanence" of psychic life (H III, 204). Consistent with modern philosophy's Cartesian and Kantian varieties, certain fragments of subjectivity—the pure immanence of con-

sciousness, intentionality and so on—form the cornerstone in the edifice of transcendental phenomenology under construction in these works. It remains to be seen whether the subject divorced from the premodern solidity of substance (though not, in the same stroke, idealised or dematerialised) is really in a position to fashion out of itself a secure onto-epistemic foundation, rather than effectuate a break in the totalising and totalised order of “objective being”, and whether the elements deemed apodictic are absolutely free of all historical and empirical contingencies. Much will depend on the possibility—or the impossibility—of grounding the entire edifice of phenomenology on something not only as ungrounded but also as explosively critical, disruptive and destabilising as the substance-free subject of sensibility at the heart of Levinasian ethics.

Now, *the ground of philosophy* is said to lie in the preconceptual and prescientific realm of the lifeworld, *Lebenswelt*. But the multiplicity of lifeworlds is ultimately gathered into the objective unity of the earth—“our earth”, Husserl emphasises in *Experience and Judgment*—as the support for nothing less than the “human community capable of mutual understanding”.⁴ Even such ideal and abstract objects of understanding as geometrical figures boast concrete origins in the substantiality of the earth and the concrete squares, circles or triangles engraved on its surface.⁵ Within the framework of Husserl’s phenomenology, the literal ground, the earth, with its fertility shrouded in millennia-old mythologies, gives birth to human thinking and communication as effectively as it spawns the first nomological regime of politics according to Carl Schmitt’s *The Nomos of the Earth*.⁶ So, in taking up the second sense of “ground”, we should not be duped by its literalness and concreteness, precisely because these conceal a thoroughly mythologised figure of the firm, fertile, infinitely bountiful earth as the objective spring of human thinking and communal life. An ethical earthquake, which, as we shall see, is going to rattle this time-honoured order, will be a harbinger of a more radical enlightenment, a critique that demythologises the substantial ground for speech, thought and action—in a word, *logos*.

Whether implicitly, in acts of everyday living, or explicitly, in philosophical discourse, we trust the firmness of the literal ground solely as a consequence of a profound repression of the possibility of earthquakes that reveal just how unstable the ground is and how, underneath the veneer of permanence, it is always ready to cave in. In its Greek inception, ontology was still in touch with this possibility. Plato’s *Theaetetus*, for instance, contains references to the unhinged foundation of wonder—“for wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder” (155d)—that puts the philosopher at a (not yet formally critical) distance from everything given, and, first and foremost, from being. Fusing this attitude with the Heideggerian proposal to think of being as a verb, Levinas wants to recapture it for the sake of ethics. At the apex of ontology, he insists, being must be thought in its verbal and active sense,

“as the nonrestlessness of identity, as the act of its rest, an apparent contradiction in terms, which the Greeks did not hesitate to think as *pure act* and which is probably thinkable where one can be astonished about the earth beneath one’s feet and the celestial vault with fixed stars over one’s head”.⁷

The paradox of “the act of . . . rest”, of a pure act not exhausted in the repose of identity, is thinkable provided that we are no longer enveloped by it—provided, that is, that the ground beneath our feet loses the quality of an unquestioned foundation, from which we are barely separate, and, having stopped to perform its function, becomes an issue or a problem. Our astonishment about the earthly support makes the security of that about which we are astonished evaporate. It is enough to experience the sense of awe about the fixity of the natural order, in which the wonderer is included, to be expelled to the hither side of this very order, to lose one’s footing in it. Wonder is the symptom of disquietude and, affectively, of what Levinas in his philosophical diaries (not coincidentally compiled during the time he spent in captivity in a German labour camp) calls *la fatigue de la position*, “the tiredness of the position”,⁸ which is attributable to the impatience of the subject swathed in pure immanence. Ontology and, by extension, philosophy itself may be understood as inquiries into the meaning of being from the depth of impatience with being’s totalising immanence. For ontological research to be viable, philosophers must have forfeited a substantial footing in being, without, by default, surrendering themselves to nihilism. To gain the right to philosophy, philosophers must be akin to earthquake survivors, divested of their homes, possessions and, above all, the sense of security, belonging and inclusion. We may surmise, at this early stage in our argument, that this predicament, describing the precritical provenance of critique, bears a close resemblance to the ethical adventure, which points beyond both being and nothingness.

The equation of being to the stability of the earth in Levinas begs the question of the specific relation binding these two terms that do not fit a neat distinction between the literalness and the metaphoricality of the ground. Is it an analogy or a metonymy? A structural approximation or a conceptual interrelation? Let us examine each of these alternatives, one by one.

First, on the assumption that being and the earth are analogous, we could reduce both to foundations for life and existence, keeping in mind that “‘foundation’ is . . . a term from architecture, a term made for a world that one inhabits; for a world that is *before* all that it supports, an astronomic world of perception, an immobile world; rest *par excellence*; the Same *par excellence*”.⁹ The analogy of being and the immobile “astronomic world of perception” is drawn on the foundation of “foundation” each of them instantiates, but even this common denominator falls short of the root of the matter. A much more original and, at the same time, devastat-

ing conclusion of this *reductio ad ipsum* is that both represent “the Same *par excellence*”, which is the foundation of the foundation: an older, presumably more stable and more encompassing ground, the rationality of which—Levinas claims—is “more ancient than the rationality of the solid earth ‘under the sun,’ that is, of positivity”.¹⁰ What commenced as a merely formal analogy has now paved the way to a full-fledged reduction (which reverts to Plato’s *Timaeus*)¹¹ of being and the earth to sameness. Cultivating an immanent critique of all geo-onto-phenomenological foundationalisms that are defeated on their own grounds, Levinas points out that these dominant paradigms appear to have overlooked a more fundamental stratum of sameness and to have mistaken the founded elements, analogous amongst themselves, for their common founding source. The ethical extension of this full-fledged reduction exposes a deeper foundation—the same—founded upon the unfounded and destabilising “basis” of otherness.

Second, and picking up the metonymic thread, the earth is a part of being, but it is a special part that stands for the whole taken in its substantial, or substantive, sense. “The essence of being”, Levinas writes, “understood as exposition, refers . . . to its position as a being, to a consolidation on an unshakeable terrain which is the earth beneath the vault of the sky, that is, to the *positivity* of the here and now, to the positivity of presence. The positivity of presence is the resting of the identical”.¹² Substantiality denotes much more than purely objective being, metonymically represented by the earth’s “unshakeable” solidity; it also involves the subjective self-positing in a place, which Levinas consistently associates with the logic of ontology that consistently deflects ethical desire by wishing to occupy—indeed, to usurp—one’s “spot under the sun”. Being is this usurpation, wholly dependent on the earth as a substantial condition of possibility, the condition *par excellence*,¹³ for all positing and, hence, all exclusionary acts that banish the other from the positivity of presence. This is why thinking “otherwise than being” demands that the subject be deposed and transposed onto the nonsite, *non-lieu* or “meanwhile or contra-tempo time” of the ethical relation “on the hither side of being and of nothingness”.¹⁴ Ethics as a critique of ontology is (akin to Husserl’s reduction) a critique of positing that, rather than culminating in the nihilism of placelessness, inaugurates a different, non-appropriative conviviality.

Third, the structural approximation of being and the earth in the philosophy of Levinas has to do with their displacement as sources of meaning in Heidegger’s ontology and Husserl’s phenomenology, respectively. Both are reduced to a deposed subjectivity, on the one hand, and an ethical relation to alterity, on the other. On the side of the earth, which is supposed to provide stable support for all position-taking, the experience of astonishment with stability itself shakes up the wondering subjects, forcing them to question the prefabricated structures of meaning they

had hitherto taken for granted. On the side of being, a search for the essence of ontology churns up an ethical predestination for phenomena and *logos* alike, shown and said to and for the other. The “source” of meaning is in the critical questioning of its meaningfulness, in its wrenching from the positivity of being and the earth and, therefore, in its being shaken. But the quintessentially Heideggerian problematic of questioning undergoes a sea change in the hands of Levinas, who proceeds to reduce it to alterity as well, in that it is always the other who puts us and our thinking in question, accuses us and turns us into the objects of critique. The infinite ethical *epochē* oriented towards and by the other both mirrors and complements the ontological reduction (of being and the earth) to the same.

Although the shakenness of meaning and the disturbance of the I by the other are decisive ruptures with the substantiality and concreteness of sense drawn from the earth, they are not merely subjective conditions: “In the philosophy that is handed down to us, the meaning that does not refer to what is established in the positivity of the solid earth beneath the celestial vault passes for something purely subjective, for the dream of an unhappy consciousness”.¹⁵ A break with “the positivity of the solid earth” is indicative of the disruption of ontology by the ethical relation to the other. Just as the earth’s crust overlays its unstable mantle, the pressure of which may trigger earthquakes at the most sensitive points of the outer layer, and just as substantial meaning sprouting from the earth trembles in response to the questioning and informally critical impulse that, ultimately, emanates from alterity, so, too, being is shaken by the other—the abyss extending “underneath” fundamental ontology.¹⁶ An address I offer to the other is an exception from the purview of hermeneutic ontology, because the other is impermeable to any interpretative overtures, to the order of intentionality, to knowledge or understanding. “The person with whom I am in relation, I call being”, notes Levinas, “but in calling him *being*, I call upon him. I do not just think that he is, I speak to him. . . . The relation to the other is therefore not ontology”.¹⁷ The one who motivates my meaning-making and meaning-bestowal (which is to say, the other to whom I speak and who calls upon me) is, itself, meaningless: not absurd but, like death in Heidegger’s philosophy and, much earlier, Plato’s Sun, exempt from the hermeneutical exigencies applicable to everything else in the field of ontology. Ethical-phenomenological critique of ontology ensues from the experience of this dense meaningfulness.

Fourth, the conceptual interrelation of being and the earth is in danger of collapsing if we recall that, due to its singularity, neither of the two terms is, strictly speaking, a concept. As Derrida concludes, commenting on Husserl’s *Origin of Geometry*, “if an objective science of earthly things is possible, an objective science of the earth itself, the ground and foundation of these objects, is as radically impossible as that of transcendental

subjectivity".¹⁸ The same, of course, stands for being as such: while the objective (regional) sciences of beings are, assuredly, possible, it is a grave mistake—made, for instance, by Hegel—to demand an objective science of being, which only at the price of thematisation becomes a concept.¹⁹ How, then, are we to treat the "conceptual interrelation between being and the earth", given that their sheer singularity and resistance to objectification subtracts them from the regime of conceptuality?

Similar to the reduction of all foundations to sameness, conceptuality bespeaks, at a more basic level, the totality of which both being and the earth are but two instantiations:

- The totality of being is "panoramic existing",²⁰ a universality embraced from the bird's-eye view perspective that denies its perspectivalism (the illusion of objectivity) as much as from the onto-phenomenological standpoint of the world as a totality-of-significations, the environment or worldhood.
- The totality of the earth "in the astronomical system" is "the unshakeable terrain . . . an empirical fact, but one underlying everything; a founding fact in the act of its rest, and the founder of the very concept of foundation".²¹

It is true that, in considering being and the earth as totalities, Levinas indulges in a series of misinterpretations. Most blatantly, he misrepresents Heidegger's position, according to which ecstatic, temporal and finite being is fully gathered, totalised and identified only in the moment of Dasein's death (hence, outside the sphere of existence). He also seems to sideline Husserl's distinction between the idea of the earth as a spherical object and its phenomenological apprehension in a synthesis of "singular experiences bound to each other"²²—that is to say, in the most extraconceptual way imaginable. But it is these creative misinterpretations that have allowed the French philosopher to establish a conceptual interrelation between being and the earth through the concept of totality, if not the concept of the concept. And it is this totalisation of being and the earth that will justify the ascription of substantiality, immanence and full presence to them, transforming them into the products of geo-onto-metaphysics.

Outside the purview of metaphysics, however, any "unshakeable terrain" is but an illusion. The earth is not one, quite irrespective of the Husserlian suggestion that it is available for us only in a synthetic unity of loosely bound singular experiences. It is not one, above all, because it is not one with itself: because its rest is provisory not only from the abstractly scientific Copernican perspective of orbital rotation but also as a result of the dormant possibilities of earthquakes attesting to its disquietude, its temporal and spatial nonidentity with itself in a divergence between its active inner nucleus and solid outer crust. Earthquakes are the spatial irruptions of the difference and conflict between the heteroge-

neous ages and temporalities of the earth that attest, in the most devastating way imaginable, to the limits to its totalisation and domestication. The earth, close to the epicentre of the tremors, denies us the possibility of dwelling; it is anything but a familiar and supportive habitat, a world in which everything is immediately available for our use, ready-to-hand. There, it sheds all metaphysical features ascribed to it, including the immanence of human existence in the terrestrial fold, the substantiality of firm ground under our feet and the foundation, which, instead of being fully self-present, overlays what does not coincide with it—the molten past always ready to become the solid future. What rattles the earth radiates from its ownmost core. As in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, a potent critique of conceptuality hails from the subsoil of the concept, and the ethical perturbation of the I stems from the other within me.

The last point is worth accentuating. The relation to the other prevents being from achieving unity and identity with itself, to the extent that being's abyssal "foundation" shakes up the ontology it sustains, renders being unrecognisable and (in a certain sense) uninhabitable, introduces a tear into the immanence of existence and inflects life with ethical unrest. Although the I, in its aspiration to the other, starts out from what Levinas terms a "dwelling", a familiar and inhabitable world redoubled by the enclosure of psychic interiority, the sense of a secure habitation is shattered by the ethical earthquake that throws the subject into the groundless middle between itself and the other, whom it will never reach. The other, exempt from the constraints of both substance and subject, does not come to me from the outside, but inhabits the dwelling I call my own and submits my possessive individuality to merciless critique. The sense of my life, of phenomena and *logos*, derives from this ethical disturbance.

SHAKEN SUBJECTS: CRITICAL DISLOCATIONS

With nothing underlying, as a support or as a foundation, the ethical approach and the subjectivity born in its midst, sub-stance (literally, that which is posited "underneath") is deprived of its transcendental function that used to ensure the triviality and ephemeral nature of change, movement and time. But it is questionable whether, divested of its significance, substance recedes from the philosophical scene. In the terms favoured by traditional philosophy, the trembling of substantial being would be translatable into the rise of subjectivity (hence, a certain nonphenomenality) *within* the folds of substance, which is unable to contain what is thus introduced into it. So, isn't the modern invention of the subject still completely enthralled with the logic of substance it has supposedly overcome? In spite of the contention that "within being there occurs something like a *dislocation*, in the form of the subjectivity of the humanity of

the subject",²³ the modern subject abides in the "tranquility of repose in his positivity and his position: a substantiality of substance guaranteed to the I".²⁴

The *dislocation* within being is the ground-shift away from being's objective determination. It results in a valorisation of subjectivity and a critical discrediting of the metaphysical notion of truth shackled to the panoptic knowledge of God or to the disincarnated laws of formal logic. In the second half of Levinas's account, however, the subject *is* still substance, in the nondialectical, nonmediated, nonsublated sense of the copula. At issue here is the form or the figuration of subjectivity and its limited capacity to hold onto the negative, devastating, destabilising potential its breakthrough had initially signalled. As soon as the subject posits itself as the new ontological ground, as it does in different ways in the Kantian and Husserlian transcendentalisms; as soon as its form is identified and consolidated once and for all, if only as the capacity for infinite determinability; as soon as its self-positing recovers the foundations for being, in which it finds respite—the subject disowns the critique that it is (or is supposed to be) and slides back into substance.

Conversely, the ethical desubstantialisation of the subject implies nothing less than the demystification of its existence. Levinasian ethics is a critique of metaphysics because the finite subject freed from the constraints of substance does not draw support from the structures of meaning outside the world here-below. It is not an isolated shard of abstract spirit, for instance, but a living-breathing existent ordained by the other, *for whom* and *through whom* it exists (I *am* only to the extent that I am "the-one-for-the-other").²⁵ If the subject continues to rest in the fullness of its self-identity, it will not attain its subjectivity and will give up on both critique and existence conceived in the existential, nonsubstantive sense of the term. To gauge this permanent self-interruption of the "exilic" subject, whose figuration depends on its being shaken and on the shakeness of substantive being as such, will require a patient, quasi-phenomenological description of its ethical experience.

Substantialist ontology is, nonetheless, so engrained in Western thought that it has withstood even the most vigorous theoretical critiques of existentialism: "The denunciation of substantialism, the reduction of substances to relations and the setting aside of man from among things . . . have not shaken the logical and grammatical priority of the substantive".²⁶ In particular, we have not yet learnt to hear the question "who?" in a way that does not carry with it a heavy burden of objective qualities, diluting "whoness" in "whatness". This is why relational ontology, in which every being is reduced to a node in a network of ties to other beings that are situated on the same plane of immanence, and the presumably de-alienating act of "setting aside of man from among things" have failed to shake off and shake up the "priority of the substantive". So long as the quiddity of substance resonates in the subjective

“who”, an objectively fixed ground stays firmly entrenched beneath our feet and the critical-existential project is aborted halfway.

Somewhat paradoxically, Levinas will show that, enervating subjectivity, the imperialism of substance has crept into the depiction of consciousness by Husserl, who converted its self-transcendence in intentionality (the fact that every time it is conscious *of something*) into an immanent field opened by the phenomenological *epochē*. But the immanence of pure consciousness, revealed thanks to a series of reductions and meant to secure the basis for all further phenomenological investigations, is still shaken by what or whom it is incapable of enveloping: alterity, trauma, the event. The modern philosophical earthquake, unsettling the dogmatically consolidated ontological foundations, will strike at the kernel of the subject’s conscious modality, so that one would finally be able to “break the presence and immanence of which philosophy is the emphatic accomplishment”.²⁷ While “immanence and consciousness, as gathering the manifestation of manifestation, are not shaken by the phenomenological interpretation of affective states”,²⁸ the withdrawal of manifestation and the nonexperience of the other, eluding the clutches of representation, make the subjective onto-epistemological ground tremble. What *Totality and Infinity* defines as “the breach of totality”²⁹ is the place where intentionality runs aground due to a nonconsummation of either phenomena or *logos* in the “experience” of the other. Consciousness is powerless to gather (*legein*) this nonmanifestation (or nonphenomenon) in the sphere of immanence, and the hermetically sealed noetic-noematic correlation comes undone. The breach of totality is, therefore, the name Levinas gives to the critique of phenomenology.

If, as Heidegger’s reading of Husserl suggests, intentionality is the being of consciousness, and if, moreover, intentionality is unfulfilled or incomplete unless the noematic object is present to the noetic grasp, then this incompleteness signals a fissuring—and a critique—of phenomenological ontology. The acts of representing, perceiving and remembering, as well as the hoping, the fearing and the feeling oriented towards alterity, do not get the desired confirmation in the represented, the perceived, the hoped for and so on, because the other is not a phenomenon and does not present any evidence before our intuition. When the noetic-noematic correlation crumbles—not the least because the “noema” of alterity is not self-present and does not coincide with itself—the age-old philosophical ideal of *adequatio*, of which this correlation is the most recent example, vanishes into the thin air of idealism where it belongs, while alterity, never given to intentional grasp, induces one of the most devastating earthquakes in the history of metaphysics.

“Trembling”, writes Levinas, “is when the foundations of the world are rocked, when the identity of things, ideas and beings is abruptly alienated, when A is no longer A, when B is no longer B”.³⁰ (We would do well to remember how Levinas’s thought, too, has made us tremble,

rocking the foundations of *our* world and revealing the nonidentity of the ethical subject—A is not A, neither in the dialectical nor in the formal logical senses of the equation—who finds itself on the way to, and in an interminable relation with, the other.) The positing of “things, ideas and beings”—that is to say, of phenomena and *logos*—on the same plane of what is shaken when the identity at the foundations of the world is unhinged erases the distinction between the ontic and the ontological, between the categorial and the existential, between the tremors of the earth and those of being. Ethical critique, targeting identity and the principle of noncontradiction, levels and equalises the very terms Husserl and Heidegger struggled to distinguish from one another by means of their respective critical apparatuses. Both phenomenality and *logos* are reduced to the shaken products of this ethical-phenomenological critique. The vibrations of the body (affecting the entire nervous system), of thought and even of inanimate beings are the manifold effects of the same event: the collapse of identity, which has now become world-defining.

In order to illustrate the erasure of the differences between “things, ideas and beings”, consider the dispensation of the “subjective” structure of intentionality back to the “objectivity” of the earth: “Intentionality, as an identification of the identical *qua* stable . . . is a spirituality accorded to the ends, to beings, to their position on solid ground. It is a spirituality accorded to the founding firmness of the earth, to the foundation as *essence*”.³¹ The ethical earthquake is an occasion for reimagining “spirituality” (a word Levinas uses sparingly, at least in his philosophical writings) decoupled from the logic of ends, beings and positions without, at the same time, being suspended in midair, unencumbered with the weight of existence, the materiality of need and the exigency of critique. Between pure immanence and transcendence, materialism and idealism, we might conceive of an unstable spirituality, bordering on what Derrida calls “spectrality” and disturbing to those who seek the solid ground of essence. Germinating in the disturbances of spirit, it belongs to a shaken, trembling I, obsessed with the injunction of the other. Such spirituality befits a subject that is jolted out of its complacency more by the infinity of the ethical approach than by the realisation of its own impending death, and that is exiled from historical ontology by the sense of injustice that rattles the foundations of its world.

Be they socio-political or personal, disturbances usher in a pathological state of an intense turbulence and tumult that threaten the order and organisation of the collective or individual body. Most often, they are viewed as exceptional events, temporary maladjustments and divergences from the norm of self-identity. But what if the reign of identity is itself pathological? This hypothesis drives the critical theory of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who deem indefensible only that happiness, contentment or satisfaction which is experienced in a world whose foundations are out of joint, unjust and disturbed. Less explicitly, the

same premise underlies the philosophy of Levinas, in which it is possible to rest in the fullness of achievement solely as a result of an unethical and in some sense uncritical illusion (heedless of the call of the other) of having done enough for those who are suffering. To cling to the stability of identity (not to mention self-identity) in a world that has gone awry is to resist, if futilely, one's being disturbed, disquieted and shaken by the state of this world. Such imperviousness is most disturbing, from the ethical point of view. This is not to say that the disquietude of longing and desire, whereby the subject does not coincide with itself, are absent from the thinking of identity; rather, they are treated as "a simple decrease of repose, of response and possession . . . insufficient thoughts of the identical, indigent modes of knowledge".³² Longing and desire, in the ontological scheme of things, are the temporary deviations from substantial identity. But when I experience the kind of desire that, despite its positivity, can never be satisfied, and when my sense of self is derived from this desire for the other, which Levinas somewhat precipitously terms "metaphysical",³³ the role of identity in subject-formation is diminished, if not dispensed with altogether. The I is not merely disturbed or suddenly shaken; it is this disturbance and this trembling. Not superadded to a preexisting subject, shakiness is the stuff of which subjectivity is made. A critique of identity is therefore constitutive of ethical subjectivity.

In Levinas's early works of the 1940s, most notably in *Existence and Existents*, the constitutive disturbance of subjectivity comes to the fore in the psychological or, better yet, psychopathological word "obsession". Without lending itself to conscious representation, obsession with the other tangentially touches the margins of consciousness and makes the entire psychic sphere vibrate, while also preventing the subject from ever discovering what or who stands behind these disturbing, "anarchic" effects.³⁴ Obsession is the name of ethico-existential critique and self-critique devoid of identifiable phenomena as much as, at least initially, of *logos*. It does not fit neatly into the confines of intentionality because it is not a psychic act aiming at anything, whether itself or an exteriority, but something that happens to us—the obsessed ones—in the state of absolute passivity: "Is not obsession a relationship with the outside, prior to the act that would open up the outside? Obsession is a total passivity, more passive still than the passivity of things".³⁵ The obsessive inversion of intentionality that, like reduction, is incapable of positing anything, turns the I into the target of the other. I might vaguely experience it as a nagging disturbance, around which my consciousness is organised (that is to say, disorganised). But, in any case, I would never master the obsessive effects lacking an identifiable, representable or recognisable cause and would not be capable of gathering myself into a self-transparent ego or a purely active subject. However irksome, obsession is the sign of "affective turbulence"³⁶ and of a psychosomatic critique brewing below

the surface of identity and stability. So much so that existence itself could be thought of as the reverberations of this absolute unrest at the heart of the I, shaken by the other.

Throughout his writings, Levinas refashions the Heideggerian being-towards-death into the ethical being-towards-the-other.³⁷ At the limit of phenomenology, where evidence is absent, he transposes the productive disturbance of the subject by the realisation of its finitude onto its disruption by alterity. The obsessive tumult I experience in the face of the other is stamped with the premonition of mortality. Levinas's own quasi-obsession with the question of death in relation to ethics has deep roots in the history of modern philosophy. Before Heidegger, Hegel had already invoked the shakenness of the subject-in-the-making by the anticipation of death. The consciousness of the slave engaged in a life-and-death struggle "has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience, it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being [*in sich selbst erzittert*], and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations".³⁸ The "whole being" of the subject is impregnated by the transformative negativity of death in a visceral critique of immediate existence. Shaking and trembling are the symptoms of consciousness awakening to itself as a possible nonbeing.

In phenomenological terms, death cannot be a noematic object, identifiable as "that which is feared"; the noesis of fearing is, more or less, free-floating and so pervasive as to envelop the being of the one who fears in its totality. The trembling of consciousness that is about to attain to self-consciousness, painfully aware of its finitude and of the body *for which* one is afraid, shakes the very foundations of ontology. Fear releases the slave to the kind of absolute negativity that is necessary for individuation and the formation of subjectivity. As the disruptive power of negativity within the subject, shakenness is an exception to the routine of a purely conscious existence devoid of self-consciousness, as much as a founding event that persists in the sublated shape of language, culture, religion and so on in all the subsequent stages of the dialectic. It infects phenomena with its negativity and, by the same stroke, gives birth to a new *logos* of subjectivity.

A critique of the everyday is the common denominator of Heidegger's "authentic existence", achievable through a resolute and nonevasive being-towards-death, and Hegel's description of the rise of self-consciousness in a slave who is shaken by a fear of impending demise. Instead of connoting an ordinary ideal, Heideggerian authenticity signals an irreparable disturbance that individualises Dasein. In *Being and Time*, the entire being of Dasein is perturbed by its confrontation with the ineluctable possibility of its nonbeing, or death, turning this event into the foundation for "fundamental ontology". In the state of lucid and fearless

anxiety, which is the experiential corollary to being-towards-death, phenomena and their phenomenality recede to the unnoticed background of concern. The world, in its multiples senses, melts away, just as it does in the course of the Hegelian life-and-death struggle, leaving Dasein face-to-face with its futural self—that is, with nothing more than the worldhood of the world and the possibility of its nonbeing. Levinas's main complaint against this notion of finitude is that it excludes alterity from the event of death, which is specified as Dasein's "ownmost" and "nonrelational".³⁹ Though still dependent upon Dasein's relation to its own future, the shaking of being stems from a strictly solipsistic source, which is the key to the essential irresponsibility (and transcendental egoism) of ontology.

Levinas admits that the suffering, which presages our mortality, makes us tremble in a wholly nonidealised way by reducing us to a crying and sobbing body. Still, the fearful shaking of a body in pain is a disturbance that is profoundly unethical—indeed, egoistic and autistic: "Where suffering attains its purity, where there is no longer anything between us and it, the supreme responsibility . . . turns into supreme irresponsibility, into infancy. Sobbing is this, and precisely through this it announces death. To die is to return to this state of irresponsibility, to be the infantile shaking of sobbing".⁴⁰ Infancy and its helplessness are, to be sure, evocative of the passivity that interrupts the workings of intentionality, albeit not the passivity required for receiving the call of the other, but one that accompanies the suffering subject's mourning for itself. Infancy (or, as Kant calls it, "immaturity", *Unmündigkeit*) is the inability or the refusal to grow up, in which ethical maturation means neither the elevation of reason at the expense of the body nor the repression of suffering. But Levinas's critique of this condition is decidedly non-Kantian—even anti-Kantian. Immature is the idealist illusion of subjective autonomy—of being a master of phenomena as much as of *logos*—and the materialist resignation in the face of death. Humanity's ethical coming of age, however, transpires in the fusion of heteronomy and autonomy, in which phenomena, *logos* and the possibility of acting are first given meaning by the other.

When he appeals to us to assume responsibility for the other, Levinas is tacitly conjuring up a new enlightenment, more critical and self-critical than that of Kant, the enlightenment of those who are shaken by the call, the need and the plight of the other. Even if they were formative for Levinas's idea of metaphysical desire for the other, the orientation towards death and the "infantile shaking" it triggers are obstacles on the path to the noncognitive awakening which "shakes up the 'dogmatic slumber' that sleeps at the bottom of all consciousness".⁴¹ Critique is, in the first and in the last instances, a critique of consciousness (hence, of intentionality) by and for the sake of the other. The awareness of death is, certainly, a commencement of this awakening, as Hegel and Heidegger argued and as Levinas, in part, conceded when he wrote that the associa-

tion of death with transcendence “would shake up the foundations of our logic”.⁴² And yet it cannot complete the work of the new enlightenment on its own because, having disturbed the simple opposition of being and nothingness, it fails to turn the I towards the other, or to rid the I of its fear of alterity.

CRITIQUE FOR THE OTHER

Fear of the other is a salient element of the mythological worldview that has survived, in a sublimated form, in enlightenment rationality. According to Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, modern science has inherited from myth its terror before the otherness of nature, which it has tried to tame and dominate by processing all qualitatively differentiated experiences through the analytical machinery of instrumental rationality. Levinasian ethics is a much-needed supplement to the Frankfurt School project, equally concerned with a nondomineering approach to alterity.⁴³ In effect, Levinas puts forth a positive alternative to critical theory, without giving up on a visceral ethico-existential critical impulse.

Neither Levinas nor Adorno and Horkheimer will advocate a more heroic, fearless stance than that of myth, be it ancient or contemporary. To eliminate fear altogether, to describe ethics, in a playful allusion to Kierkegaard, as a “fearless trembling”, would be merely to deny, disavow and repress its destabilising force of negativity. Instead of overcoming this affect, mature humanity will ethically translate its fear of the other into the fear *for* the other, without recourse or reflux to the self. “But then what of fear for the other?” Levinas asks in a 1982 interview. “Obviously that fear could be interpreted as fear for self, on the pretext that in fearing for the other I may be afraid of being in the same situation as the other. But that is not what fear for the other really is”.⁴⁴

Already in *Being and Time* Heidegger admitted that my fear for the other does not take the other’s fear away from him.⁴⁵ But, we might retort with Levinas, it does indicate that the ethical enlightenment is well on its way and that, against all odds, in the finitude of existential temporality, time has been gained for something other than my narcissistic dispersion in the world of concern, on the one hand, and the anticipation of death, on the other. “Time has been gained”—the homogeneity of space has been temporalised—in order to come to the assistance of the other who is not a part of my world and who shakes up this world, causing an ethical obsession—that is to say, an incessant noncognitive self-critique. In this caesura of temporality, in this critical aperture, both phenomena and *logos*, now imbued with ethical significance, are dispensed back to the ethical subject. Along with their more obvious functions and connotations, they obliquely point towards the other.

Fear for the other does not have a paralysing effect on the one who is afraid. As Levinas puts it in *Totality and Infinity*, “the presence of the face coming from beyond the world, but committing me to human fraternity, does not overwhelm me as a numinous essence arousing fear and trembling. To be in a relationship while absolving oneself from this relation is to speak”.⁴⁶ Speech, or *logos*, offered to the other concentrates in itself the time that has been won over from death. This gain does not give the speaking subject license to procrastinate but, on the contrary, stamps ethical action with a greater, if not the greatest, urgency. The fear and trembling sensed in the encounter with the “nouminous essence” (of God, for instance) render the overwhelmed subject mute, whereas fear for the other solicits speech acts that are themselves shaken, in that they are motivated by the other and come to me from the other, despite being spoken by me. The origins of self-critique and of the critique of the self lie elsewhere than in the criticised self, though ultimately it is this hetero-affected subject that carries out all such acts.

There are, then, two kinds of trembling in Levinas’s philosophy. First, the trembling inspired by the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* that reduces the awe-filled subject to silence, given that no words will be adequate for describing the ineffable. Second, the “supreme trembling” felt when “through my mouth there perhaps speaks another, an unknown person . . . someone I cannot get to coincide with myself”.⁴⁷ Shaken and disturbed, the *logos* that bears the hallmark of this supreme trembling escapes the sovereign control of intentionality, as well as the regime of representation and truth. The speaker’s identity is fissured in an existential crisis conducive to critique; the speaker is no longer one—least of all with herself—and is no longer present before herself, for instance, in the phenomenological ideal of hearing-oneself-speak. When I hear myself speak, I listen to the other who speaks “through my mouth” in an ethical substitution undermining the foundations of formal logic. My repose in myself is, from the outset, disturbed by the other who inhabits my innermost subjectivity and compels my voice, my body, my psyche to tremble, making them no longer wholly “mine”. But exactly what does the other say through me, in this paradoxical relation of substitution of the unique and irreplaceable?

Animating everything said by the other, who speaks through me, is the saying—a nonthematic, nonformal and, in fact, deformalising critique of the said, which tirelessly raises the demand for justice.⁴⁸ Once again, two kinds of trembling, two nearly antithetical disturbances, announce themselves in Levinas’s text, now in connection to this unwavering demand. First, the “ethical meaning of creation” is traceable to Psalms 82:5, “where injustice is said to shake ‘all the foundations of the Earth’”,⁴⁹ and, second, the interruption of ontology by the face of the other carries with it the demand for a better society, so that “the modern world is even more shaken by this [demand]—shaken to the very depths of its religious sen-

sibilities—than by the denunciation of ideologies”.⁵⁰ In order to experience the latter disturbance, which shakes up the hegemonic order of modernity in its totality, it is necessary first to register the tremors of injustice that rock the foundations of the earth. Two displacements are, therefore, at stake in this juxtaposition: the “bad” unhinging or undoing of creation and of being itself by injustice and the “good” disruption—the displacement of the displacement—of the unjust world by the call for justice. Viewed in this light, the ethical task, parallel to the new enlightenment (with its critical plea to awaken to the other right in the midst of the “dogmatic” vigilance of consciousness), is to shake up the world already shaken by the uncreating force of injustice. Rather than dialectically bring the wretched state of the world to the consciousness and, especially, to the self-consciousness of its inhabitants, the double event of shakiness happens, as it were, by contagion, when the shock waves of historico-ontological violence travel through us, and when the shaken foundations of the earth throw subjective sensibilities into disarray.

Across the two folds of the event, we tremble with the victims of injustice. This trembling-with, however, is asymmetrical. The suffering—which is not a psychic *act*—of the other is a first-order passivity, while my psyche is doubly passive, in that it is persecuted by the suffering of the other and assumes, without having chosen it, the burden of responsibility for ameliorating it. My trembling with the other inside myself breaks the prison of incarnation—“enchainment to the body”, as the young Levinas expresses it⁵¹—thanks to the uncanny and viscerally critical inspiration of the other’s suffering. This traumatic inspiration gives momentum to Levinasian phenomenology as a whole.

“Trembling-with” fuses Heideggerian *Mitsein* (being-with) and Levinasian ethical substitution. As in Heidegger, “with” is not a *posteriori* attached to the “trembling” elicited by the world’s undoing through acts of injustice but is part and parcel of the ethical disturbance itself. And, as in Levinas, “with” does not mean that the one and the other stand side-by-side in a common world they inhabit but involves the substitution of the obsessed I for the other, who now breathes inside me, preventing the closure of my identity. The victims of injustice, with whom we tremble, tremble in us. Above all, they tremble in our voices, filling our speech, our *logos*, with the gravity of responsibility, in our bodies shaking with indignation and in our thinking that—note the precise geological metaphor—“thunders in its crater”, *tonne en son cratère*, according to the French version of *L’Internationale*, or that “boils” on the pile of mounting injustices, in keeping with the anthem’s Russian rendition. Far from being a sympathetic response to the suffering of the other, or a mere projective identification of the I with the other, trembling-with is the subjectivity of the I minus an identity, a refuge place or an escape route from the other. The subjects so conceived fear *for* the other *with* the other and, however improbable this may sound, take the other’s fear away, assum-

ing it for themselves in a relation of substitution. Trembling-with becomes the prototype of a “non-useless suffering”, the “suffering inspired by the suffering of the other”,⁵² bypassing the mediations of consciousness, including its affective, emotional dimension.

The highest step in the ethical critique, which ungrounds phenomenology, is the “shiver of incarnation”—that is to say, a shaking up and an awakening of corporeality, invested with the function of being for the other: “This [exposure to the other] is . . . the recurrence of awakening, which one can describe as the shiver of incarnation, through which *giving* takes on meaning, as the original dative of the *for the other*, in which the subject becomes heart and sensitiveness and hands that give”.⁵³ In trembling-with, one shivers in oneself for the other, with ethical tremors penetrating one’s feelings (the heart), actions (the hands) and flesh as a whole (sensitiveness). The dative “for the other” is not a fundamental reason for one’s feelings and actions. Ethics and the critique it inspires do not supply motivations that could be easily integrated in the web of cause-effect relations. They *are* the motivations, so long as we capture this word in the etymological sense of *motivous* as being stirred, moved, agitated. If, as Derrida affirms, the ethical thought of Levinas makes us tremble, it is because we tremble with it, agitated by the earthquakes, the displacements and the critical disturbances of ontology that it motivates.

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 82.

2. Cf. Robert Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 156ff.

3. Cf. the epigraph to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*.

4. I quote in full: “All these different remembered environing worlds are *pieces of one and the same objective world*. This world is, in the most comprehensive sense, as the *life-world* for a human community capable of mutual understanding, *our earth*, which includes within itself all these different environing worlds with their modifications of their pasts” (EU 189).

5. Hence, Derrida writes apropos of Husserl’s theory of geometry, “Geometry is, in effect, the science of what is absolutely objective—i.e., spatiality—in the objects that the earth, *our common place*, can indefinitely furnish as our common ground with other men”. Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 83.

6. Schmitt’s method is clandestinely phenomenological, provided that the abstract legal and political concepts harken back further than theological discourse, all the way to the tangible divisions, walls, fences and boundaries drawn or erected on the body of the earth.

7. Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 43.

8. Emmanuel Levinas, *Oeuvres: Carnets de Captivité et Autre Inédits*, vol 1. (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2009), 124.

9. Levinas, *Of God*, 88.

10. *Ibid.*, 49.

11. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 34b–37c.
12. Levinas, *Of God*, 101.
13. Levinas, *Oeuvres*, 245.
14. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 109.
15. Levinas, *Of God*, 119.
16. I qualify alterity as “abyssal” given its double effect of unhinging the ontological foundation, revealed to be founded on something other than itself, and supplying a different basis, itself unfounded and ungrounded in being, the basis on which all immanent and transcendent grounds constitute themselves and which, in so doing, they forget.
17. Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: The Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. M. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 7.
18. Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin*, 83.
19. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962), 363.
20. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 292.
21. Levinas, *Of God*, 44.
22. Edmund Husserl, “Fundamental Investigations on the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature”, in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Marvin Farber (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968), 308. Husserl’s argument clearly loses its validity in the age of satellites and space travel, when the earth, observed from space, becomes visible as a unitary spherical object.
23. Levinas, *Of God*, 8–9.
24. Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 190.
25. Cf. Levinas on “substitution” in *Otherwise than Being*, 113–18 and passim. For example, “to be oneself, otherwise than being, to be dis-interested, is to bear the wretchedness and bankruptcy of the other, and even the responsibility that the other can have for me. To be oneself, the state of being a hostage, is always to have one degree of responsibility more, the responsibility for the responsibility of the other” (117).
26. Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 45.
27. Levinas, *Of God*, 62.
28. *Ibid.*, 61.
29. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 35–40.
30. Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 254.
31. Levinas, *Of God*, 104.
32. *Ibid.*, 50.
33. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33–35, passim.
34. Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 87; see also Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), passim. For Levinas, obsession is “anarchic” in the technical sense of lacking an *arkhé*, a clear beginning or an identifiable cause orchestrating its dispersed effects.
35. Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 87.
36. Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 146.
37. Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990). See especially part 3 of the book, where Levinas claims that the other and death come to us from the same region of transcendence (68–79).
38. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 117.
39. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 294.
40. Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 72.

41. Levinas, *Of God*, 63.
42. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 274.
43. For a sustained treatment of this surprising supplementarity, consult Asher Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill: History and Subjectivity in Levinas and the Frankfurt School* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008).
44. Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 117.
45. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 181.
46. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 215.
47. Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 254.
48. The “saying”, for Levinas, is the irreducible source of the “said” and “a signification that has to be distinguished from that borne by words in the said”. “This signification to the other”, Levinas continues, “occurs in proximity. . . . This saying has to be reached in its existence antecedent to the said, or else the said has to be reduced to it. . . . Saying signifies otherwise than as an apparitor presenting essence and entities”. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 46.
49. Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford and Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), 232.
50. *Ibid.*, 242.
51. For the political-ideological usages of incarnation, taken as this enchainment to the body, refer to Emmanuel Levinas, “Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism”, trans. Seán Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1990): 63–71.
52. Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 100.
53. Levinas, *Of God*, 73.

FOUR

Political Critique

Arendt and the Crisis of Beginnings

CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY AS ACTION, OR ARENDT WITH AND AGAINST HUSSERL

Since the political thought of Hannah Arendt contains a unique mixture of Kantian critical sensibilities and Heideggerian phenomenology, it is particularly appropriate to consider its significance for the project of critical phenomenology. Relying primarily on Arendt's theses regarding natality and beginnings, in this chapter I will argue that she provides a corrective, à la Heidegger or Levinas, to Husserlian philosophy and elaborates a critical political phenomenology of her own. The kernel of this positive construction is the largely implicit notion of the event—the capacity to begin anew—relevant to topics as disparate as revolution, violence or totalitarianism. The event comes to pass in the doubling (and, potentially, in an indefinite multiplication) of beginnings, representing dispersed individual and collective intentionalities. In and of itself, the emphasis on beginnings already carries out a critique of unified origins that would, in a linear fashion, anticipate conclusions and closures militating against the phenomena of human existence. Subverting the desire for stability without launching us into a world of pure randomness, beginnings signal a permanent crisis of continuity consistent with radical democratic politics, with existential dispersion and a nonidealised view of action. This crisis, in turn, becomes propitious to critique, which appears to be “hardwired” into Arendt's thought. Her political phenomenology of the event is flanked by two extremes, the two fronts on which the phenomenologist battles: violence as the refusal of speech (*logos*) and totalitarianism as the demise of publicness and difference (phenomenal-

ity). Violence and totalitarianism, in their diverse guises and combinations, will demarcate the external limits of phenomenology, beyond which it cannot extend its grasp.

The conceptual framework of *The Human Condition*—arguably Arendt’s most original achievement—helps shed light on phenomenology itself, viewed under the lens of the tripartite distinction between labour, work and action. Phenomenological *labour* is endless, due to its imbrication with the inexhaustible variety of the lifeworld and with the nonformal exigencies of givenness. In this, it reflects physical “labor, caught in the cyclical movement of the body’s life process, [which] has neither beginning nor end”,¹ and the materiality of phenomenological practice that draws on what is given (to perception, for instance) to make sense of its givenness. There is no glimmer of freedom in its reactive attitude, incapable of questioning the *how*, as opposed to the *what*, of givenness.

Phenomenology, conceived as *work*, is precisely this “fabrication” of sense marked by “a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end”,² which corresponds to the culmination of empty intentionality in fulfilled intuitions. It carries out the detective work, so to speak, of establishing connections between the merely intended and the givenness of what was intended, drawing up definite correlations between these aspects of the phenomenological *nous*. Teleological through and through, it contains a heavy dose of ideality, having extracted the acts of consciousness from their temporal horizons, severed connections among them and transplanted noetic and noematic correlates onto transcendental grounds. The absolutising of intentionality would have conferred a greater degree of freedom on the philosophical enterprise, were it not directly responsible for transcendental idealism, which is often forgetful of the very materiality unearthed in the course of phenomenological labours.

Phenomenology as *action* has a variety of beginnings but no definite end, because it incessantly and critically undermines, deidealises and deformalises itself. Shadowing the possibilities of the ultimately nonaccomplishable, though still finite, human existence, phenomenology *qua* action is intrinsically critical and self-critical, which is why its legacy to us is a ruptured series of introductions, a discipline in crisis, freely thriving on incomplete beginnings and drastic self-revisions. There is no shame in being forever a novice, as far as phenomenological investigations are concerned, for, assuming this posture over and over again, we remain alert to the exigencies of existence and practically embody the critical injunction to strive to the things themselves. Read in the context of *The Human Condition*, this last instantiation of phenomenology would be consonant with the political principle of a self-disrupting multiplicity, the condition of human plurality and natality, and the *locus essendi* of critical political phenomenology.

Each of the three perspectives presupposes a distinct notion of truth. The first is still beholden to the veracity of the natural attitude, neither suspending the actuality of the given nor contemplating its possibilities. The true is what there is in the “now” of perception, in whatever stands out from the horizon of potentially perceivable things and falls into the spotlight of my sense-bestowing gaze. The truth of phenomenological work pivots on the traditional idea of *adequatio*—not of *rei et intellectus* (the thing and intellect) but of the cognising intention and its cognised object, as well as of intentionality and lived experience as such. It operates an *epochē* in the transcendental field of pure phenomenology and, as a result, no longer depends on the actuality of the given. Now phenomenology as action adheres to the existential conception of truth, which it finds in itself—that is to say, in its possibilities, including those of dismantling and recommencing its own way of thinking. If to act is to begin, and if, further, the beginning “is not the beginning of something out of something but of somebody, who is a beginner himself”,³ then the truth of action lies in the beginners themselves, in their self-critical and “highly self-destructive”⁴ practice of phenomenology and of thinking in general. Far from subjectivism and solipsism, this figure of truth invests the actors with the power to mould their thought in the image of existence, according to which and regardless of our biological age, we are all beginners.

The truth ingrained in beginnings marshals a series of political implications.⁵ Although Arendt famously claimed that she was not a philosopher—let alone a phenomenologist—but a political theorist, she inaugurated one of the few political phenomenologies deserving of the name. The accent she placed on our physical beginnings, natality (or, in technical terms, thrownness), was meant as an Augustinian-inspired⁶ counterweight to the prominence of projection in Heidegger’s philosophy. But exactly how does the event of beginning function in Arendtian thought?

Upon a closer look, this event always strikes twice. Only one sense of “beginning” is identical to the fact of natality—namely, the first beginning that necessarily implies the “supreme event” of our appearance within the world, from which we disappear in the event of our death.⁷ Such appearing is not an act, regardless of all its phenomenological overtones, because it lies absolutely outside the sphere of our conscious control, in what Levinas used to call “the immemorial past”, simultaneously disturbing and escaping the subject’s sphere of representation. It would be futile to apprehend such a beginning directly, which is why, supported by language and action, we must start again, begin *after* beginning, with an unavoidable delay. Rather than a straightforward actualisation of the merely potential first beginning (Arendt regards natality as “the *capacity* of beginning something anew, that is, of acting”⁸), the second beginning is a response to the first, from a temporal and conceptual distance to it. Moreover, it is a response that can never respond enough to the unrepresentable condition it addresses. Any worthwhile human pro-

ject will, henceforth, be mediated through a dialogue between the two beginnings, shorn of the delusion that it can gain full mastery over the “human condition” encapsulated in natality.

On the most obvious interpretative surface, the second beginning is equivalent to political action, the institution of *polis* as “the organisation of people as it arises out of acting and speaking together” and, therefore, as “the space of appearance”.⁹ The condition for the appearing of what appears in this space is speech, *logos*, just as in classical phenomenology phenomena can only appear thanks to being spoken about (I see what I speak of). The uniqueness of this *logos* lies in its compatibility with contention, critique, disagreement and nonviolent clashes of ideas, all of which confirm its initial fracturing into a multiplicity of more or less disparate beginnings. Even within one human being *logos* is irreparably split against itself;¹⁰ the inner monologue, whereby, in solitude, I speak to myself, is already a dialogue across the minimal distance between this I and myself, constituting the “primary condition of thought”.¹¹ A variation on the Husserlian construction of the subject who hears itself speak, political *logos* holds together, without synthesising them, many beginnings both within and outside myself. Indeed, it represents a watershed for the idea of appearance and a point of transition from a merely physical-biological coming of the newborn into the world to one’s public and almost theatrical appearance on the political scene in the second beginning. The physicality of the newly born human body is, of course, already public, as is any adumbrated phenomenon accessible from a variety of viewpoints, seeing that it is already caught up in the web of expectations and *logoi* of others—parents, family, state authorities and so on. But the publicness of natality is insufficient to eliminate the difference between the two beginnings: being born is being made to appear in the world, while acting is making one’s appearance and, thus, to a certain extent, politically making the world into a “space of appearance”.¹²

Not only is the political coming-into-being rife with allusions to phenomenology, but also, and more significantly, Husserl’s phenomenological project parades, on this reading, its undeniably political meaning. Phenomenology, much like modern thought in general, is intent on making a new beginning, such that the “reconstituting of the world by consciousness” it calls for “would amount to a second creation in the sense that through this reconstitution the world would lose its contingent character, which is to say its character of reality, and it would no longer appear to man as a world given, but as one created by him”.¹³ The world re-created on the basis of transcendental consciousness would be self-given, and that is how Husserl’s *Ideas* assumes an essentially political meaning as the philosophical instantiation of the second beginning (“a second creation”), which Arendt normally associates with action and the realm of politics. The role of critique here is to preserve the awareness of the first beginning and the challenge it poses before all human illusions

of full mastery and control over the given. Whether Husserl lives up to this challenge remains to be seen.

The response of Arendt to the question of phenomenological givenness is markedly ambivalent. Husserl's "arrogant modesty" lies in his "transforming . . . alien Being into consciousness" by turning the human being into "the creator of the world and of himself" (arrogance) whilst trying "to comfort us about the very point in which all of modern philosophy can take no comfort whatsoever, namely, that man is forced to affirm a Being that he did not create and that is alien to his very nature" (modesty).¹⁴ The essential incompleteness of this transformation instigates the unending activity of reduction, bracketing, desedimentation. Self-givenness does not and cannot succeed in fully eradicating the problem of givenness, unless it uncritically covers it over. The materiality of phenomenological labour puts the brakes on the ideality of its work in the maturity of its action. Unforgivably naïve is the thought that the first beginning could be "transformed" into the second without leaving behind an obstinate remainder, or, in Freudian terms, that unconscious material could be entirely elevated to the stratum of conscious representations. The second beginning—be it political, phenomenological or both—must be placed within its proper fragile limits, delineated by the edges of the first beginning, on the one hand, and by the sudden collapse of *logos* in philosophical speechless wonder, violence or totalitarianism on the other. The work of this delimitation will comprise the bulk of critical political phenomenology.

The above outline is not the sole corrective Arendt addresses to Husserlian phenomenology. Her general, and somewhat masked, rejoinders are in the vein of Heidegger's existential preoccupations with the forever-incomplete course of human life. From a critical perspective, they aspire to liberate human existence from the constraints of teleology and to uproot it from a transcendental ground, which is alien to it. Understood through this lens, Arendt's writings on the problem of freedom boil down to the thesis that political experience is without evidence, because the intentionality that underpins it necessarily lacks fulfilment. This, perhaps, is the weightiest reason behind the opposition of political thought to the fetish of instrumentality, an attitude oriented exclusively towards the accomplishment of a predetermined end.¹⁵ When it comes to action, it would be tragic to aspire "to the same fulfilment of intention that is the sign of mastership in . . . intercourse with natural, material things".¹⁶ There is no fulfilment of social or political intentionality, because there is no such unified intentionality in the first place aside from a patchwork of new beginnings or, at best, loosely bound common projects. Hence, politics *proper* excludes the attitude of mastery, which presumably remains intact in our dealings with the material universe.

Furthermore, the categories of political phenomenology cannot legitimately "apply" those of individual existence to public life. *Body politic* is

not analogous to a great person, such as the Leviathan, with a coherent experience of its own. It is in this context that Arendt mocks Plato's lament in *The Laws* to the effect that sense organs (eyes, ears, hands) are "by nature private" and are not synthesisable into, for instance, the eye of the *polis*.¹⁷ Our biological bodies divide us as much as they bring us together. There is no such thing as collective experience, wherein the intentionality of all would attain fulfilment. (We can call this "the axiom of political facticity": the predication of politics on irreducible human plurality.) As a consequence of this positive and eventful nonaccomplishment, a space of freedom is left over, in which the ideal teleologies of phenomenology no longer work and, moreover, in which the *work of phenomenology* is simply inapplicable.

The unpredictability of action, which forges a new beginning¹⁸ and renders the temporality of intentionality infinite right within the world of human finitude, is a form of political experience without evidence. Thus, Arendt stays faithful to the alternative phenomenological tradition of Heidegger, who demonstrated that the intentionality of being-towards-death had no end, notwithstanding its attachment to the sphere of mortality and finitude. And she reaches conclusions formally analogous to those of Levinas, who substituted the figure of the other for death. Death, the other and action (as opposed to the product of work) are not given in the manner of phenomenological evidence and, therefore, do not figure in a full or fulfilled experience. The critique of Husserlian phenomenology becomes interchangeable with a critique of sovereignty—that is, of a subjectivity fully in control of itself or of its world and transcendently insured against unpredictable empirical accidents and deviations from the chosen course of action. The thought of beginning, which is also the beginning of thought, denies the thinker all such assurances insofar as it maintains the qualitative distinction between the three modalities of time (the past, the present and the future) that do not amount to variations on the present.¹⁹ The temporalising event of what happens between "birth" and "will"—that is, between the two beginnings—supplants the perceptual foundations of phenomenology.

Along with the foundationalism of the present, Arendt purges from her political theory the idea of foundations as such. When Husserl distinguished the founded from the founding layers of thought and experience, he consented to the kind of dehistoricisation of phenomenology that some deemed to be liberating. Whereas Hegelian- and Marxist-leaning critical theorists deplore this feature of phenomenology, Arendt welcomes the return to the things themselves in all their materiality as a break with the speculative view of human history.²⁰ But the break comes with a hefty price tag: the idea of foundation has covered over the much more unruly and unpredictable capacity to begin. Or, to put it differently, foundation is an event that impedes all future events.

Were Husserl to indulge in a healthy dose of historical speculation, as Arendt herself did, he would have discovered that “foundation” was a Roman invention, which put the discrete act of beginning in the service of permanence, continuity and, finally, authority.²¹ An expression of freedom (to begin and to persevere within the beginning) for the Roman spirit,²² a foundation admits of no ruptures and forbids new beginnings. All it undersigns is a continuous derivation of history as the unfolding of the foundation on its own turf, in what, to the founders and everyone who is loyal to them, appears in the guise of the unending glorious present. A critique of foundationalism targets those political arrangements that, having had radical beginnings, fell victim to the pathos of endurance and cut human action short, blocking the possibility of a new beginning²³ (e.g., the French and Russian revolutions that deteriorated into reigns of terror). Less obviously, this critique strikes at the phenomenological “principle of principles”, or the primacy of presentive intuition that constrains the free play of eidetic possibilities. Beginnings, in their turn, are the foundations of foundation, which they unfound and unground, rupturing the ideal continuity of the tradition and revitalising the capacity to being anew.²⁴

A glance at Arendt’s eventful biography is enough to make us realise that her near-romanticising attachment to beginnings is a part of the survivor’s response to a catastrophe, after which she was forced to start again in the absence of foundations, hopelessly shattered in the course of the war. Survival is perhaps nothing but the capacity and the willingness to start afresh, after what appears to be the end of the world. In this sense, existence, too, is survival, in that the activation of its possibilities is in excess of the merely biological life, symbolised by natality. Unlike the foundation that idolises and aspires to immortalise a single and singularly accomplished event, the beginning anticipates an infinite multiplicity of events coextensive with the plurality of human existence and dotted with the rifts and clefts of crises. Thus, survival is already an act of resistance to totalitarianism, which spreads resignation in the face of the catastrophe and urges everyone in its grip to live without beginning anew, or, in other words, to live without existing.

When Arendt notes how “Rome’s sanctification of foundation [was] a unique event”,²⁵ she relates this both to the source of Roman political authority and to the thought-event, whereby it definitively enshrined Greece as the cradle of philosophical tradition. A philosophy and a politics that seek to furnish foundations for themselves are self-sanctifying, whereas the critique of foundations, an unyielding antifoundationalism in theory and political practice, has a profaning function.²⁶ The doubling of the beginning in natality, which remains unavailable for conscious appropriation, and in action makes an important contribution to this critique. On the one hand, the sheer multiplication of “grounds” is peculiarly abyssal, as deconstruction has persistently demonstrated. On the other

hand, neither the unrepresentable past of natality nor the unpredictable future of action is in a position to ground politics and thought, let alone to reconstruct the world with transcendental certainty. To make a beginning means significantly more than to act; it is, above all, to *be* a beginning, to be suspended in the abyss between past and future, as the title of one of Arendt's book intimates, and, therefore, to be free.²⁷ Existential grounds ought to be strictly distinguished from substantive ones, so that ontological self-grounding, "being" a beginning, would come into its own through a rigorous critique of foundationalism. As far as the subjects who are and who make new beginnings are concerned, existence is a perpetual crisis. It does not sanctify itself, but rather desacralises itself, enacting an ongoing critique of its own possibilities.

PHENOMENOLOGY'S LOGOS AS A CRITIQUE OF VIOLENCE AND THE QUESTION OF NATALITY

Her correctives to the thought of Husserl aside, Arendt discovers in her predecessor's texts a wealth of critical resources for the understanding of politics, given that, on her watch, phenomenology is restyled into a critique of violence and of totalitarianism. Both phenomena and *logos* are crucial for the success of this critique. *Logos*, understood in terms of speech, which acknowledges human plurality and marks the beginning of politics, opposes mute acts of violence. Phenomena, with their multiple modes of givenness and interpretation, contest a single perspective authorised by totalitarianism. If violence and totalitarianism jointly result in the destruction of the world—or of the world's very worldhood—this is because they raze the conditions of possibility for speech, for phenomenality and for making new beginnings. To be more precise, they make the world worldless and eventless, foil the passage from the first beginning of natality to the other beginning in action and deny phenomenology a rightful place of its own.

In the Arendtian universe, speech must assert itself against an overwhelming background of mute violence.²⁸ The speakers bring into being a shared world, an ontological *res publica* that flourishes between them. At any moment, however, waves of unspeakable violence may flood the islands of speech. Similar to theories of social contract that are mindful of the possibility that the "mortal" political state is subject to dissolution and a return to the state of nature, Arendt's political thought attends to the danger of leaving the space of appearance and falling back into a mute confrontation. What is at stake in this potential deterioration is not so much the collective organisation of the state as the phenomenological world, impoverished by violence, such as that of torture, which negates speech. "Only sheer violence is mute",²⁹ and, therefore, it does not afford us access to phenomena, let alone to a world shared with others. Phe-

nomenology, as the speaking out of phenomena, is, by virtue of its methodology, on the other side of the barricades in the fight against everything that frustrates the self-presentation and givenness of being. The *logos* of phenomenology is synonymous with the critique of violence, allied, in its essentially Greek provenance, with the *polis*, which Arendt honours as “the most talkative of bodies politic”.³⁰ In phenomenological terms, it was the most world-creating political entity, even though it bears responsibility for the death of Socrates, for reasons Arendt deems hardly accidental.

For the Greeks, “thought and action were considered to be coeval and coequal, of the same rank and the same kind; and this originally meant . . . that most political action, in so far as it remains outside the sphere of violence, is indeed transacted in words”.³¹ The first beginning in human natality holds the promise of speech,³² but that promise will not be made good until we proceed to the second beginning in action. The precariousness of beginning—thus, its eventfulness—has to do with the uncertainty that the transition from natality to action will really come to pass and, if it does happen, that mute violence will not despoil action and speech alike. The strength of *logos* is also its weakness: weaving its web out of itself, without reliance on any externally imposed foundations, it has nothing to fall back on but itself and, therefore, no effective defence against violence. Existence and speech are ontically and, above all, ontologically vulnerable.

But the Greek beginning is likewise ominously divided against itself, thrust into an originary crisis. The opposing sides in this division are politics and philosophy. The philosophical enterprise begins (and ends) in the state of “speechless wonder”, which “cannot be related in words because it is too general for words”,³³ and, in this, it contravenes the constitution of the *polis*. Thanks to their vocation, philosophers are excluded from the political space of appearance. Instead of acting in the world in which they appeared through biological birth, philosophers reinvent natality as such and, born again into the world of ideas, initially lose both vision and everyday speech. They are the existential negation of everything that makes the *polis* what it is, which is why, to defend itself, the *polis* eliminates the model philosopher, Socrates. So strikingly does speechless wonder resemble, at the conceptual level, the apolitical muteness of violence that it is mistaken for the total annihilation of *logos*.³⁴

Although philosophical wonder defies the dogmatism of unquestioned opinions,³⁵ its temporary suspension of *logos* runs the risk of emasculating the critical impulse, among other things. Phenomenology, for its part, does not flirt with wonder bordering on mysticism, misguided attacks on the notion of eidetic intuitions notwithstanding. Its “ideas” do not reside in the otherworldly realm above phenomena but are extracted from the phenomena themselves. Phenomenology is a philosophy that exceeds its origin and scope—the philosophy of plural, po-

tentially infinite, modes of accessing phenomena included in the things themselves. It is a political philosophy, not inasmuch as its content and themes touch upon politics but inasmuch as its enabling factors are the same as those that facilitate the political workings of human pluralities.

A further, more nuanced dividing line cuts across the thought of Socrates and Plato, as Arendt argues in *The Promise of Politics*. Succinctly put, according to her reconstruction of that fateful moment of ancient thought, Socrates, not Plato, was a purely political philosopher who recognised that “there were as many different *logoi* as there are men”³⁶; who was, by the same token, much more attentive to the phenomena and to the endless varieties of *doxa* that grant us access to phenomena³⁷; and who never had enough of speaking to others. Since action irrupts there where multiple, dispersed beginnings are not gathered into the One, *logos*, too, is originally splintered into many competing *logoi* operating under the guise of *doxic* knowledges. With this train of argumentation, presumably inspired by Socrates, Arendt outlines not only the political consequences but also the inherently political meaning of Husserl’s *doxic* critique of *epistēmē* and the attendant vindication of everyday “mere-ness”. If politics does not warrant *the* philosophical distinction between being and appearance³⁸—this, by the way, would not be a symptom of the failure of critique but, to the contrary, a sign of the honing of critical thinking that uncovers the metaphysical machinations of hypostatizing something or someone separated from the world here-below—and if, moreover, in the public realm, “appearance . . . constitutes reality”,³⁹ then phenomenology is the most suitable place for political thought and action.

Plato must have recognised the danger of speechless wonder and, upon recognising it, mitigated it through fastidiously crafted analogies, mediations and reflections of eidetic light with the help of a method he called “dialectic”. The claim that he “proposed to prolong indefinitely the speechless wonder which is at the beginning and end of philosophy”⁴⁰ is a crude exaggeration. After all, if visible things, or everyday phenomena, are themselves the pale reflections and signs of ideas, from which they are not altogether divorced, then *doxic* knowledge and colloquial *logoi* also cannot be easily dismissed in favour of speechless wonder’s “truth”. And this is not to mention that prolonging indefinitely the condition that defines the beginning and the end of philosophy would have prevented Plato from making the leap to the second beginning: from ideal natality—rebirth from existence in the cave into the world of Ideas—to ideal action, laying the grounds for a philosophical community.

Throughout her writings, Arendt charges *logos* with a task analogous to that of the sovereign in Schmittian political philosophy: it must act as the *kath’echon*, or the restrainer, deferring the apocalyptic collapse of the instituted order and the disintegration of the world in violence.⁴¹ In Schmitt’s view, ultimately conservative, sovereign violence is an accept-

able measure meant to forestall such world-dissolution. Arendt, however, advocates the renaissance of action that, through speech, would be ready to make a fresh start and re-create the world. That is why she opposes power to violence: "Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities".⁴² A reformulation of Husserl's critique of mere words, *bloße Worte*, this statement envisions critically amplified *logoi* that are still in touch with the phenomena they do not veil but "disclose". To phenomenological critique, therefore, belongs the non-violent power to resist violence.

The phenomenological genealogy of Arendt's thought undermines, in the first instance, its liberal appropriation for the purpose of defending contemporary parliamentary democracies.⁴³ Against such misreading, we ought to be reminded of how liberal parliamentarism spawns words that are empty and that veil intentions, instead of disclosing the realities of the economic unevenness they perpetuate. They are thoroughly divorced from action, and it is no secret that they would not have been allotted the space of utterance were they potent enough to inaugurate a new beginning. Precluding the achievement of our appearance, they throw us back onto the nakedness of our first beginning—the fragility and precariousness of natality—cut off from the second, world-creating commencement of action. In the interrupted dialogue of the two beginnings, natality thus remains without an answer, in a silence already heavy with violence.⁴⁴

The axiom that "violence, as distinguished from power, is mute; violence begins where speech ends"⁴⁵ draws a critical limit, internal to phenomenology itself, and therefore relevant to the difficult relation of phenomena and *logos*. A mute phenomenon is *ipso facto* not a phenomenon. Nothing can be made to appear, nothing will present itself, if it is silently forced to give itself to sight or is made available for manipulation. Wordless (and worldless) violence targets, besides a vast majority of humans who are denied a meaningful voice on the political stage, other living beings, be they animals or plants. The instrumentalising character of violence⁴⁶ denies these beings their space of appearance and robs them of their phenomenality. It would certainly be absurd to expect animals and plants to speak in human voices, but does this absurdity imply that mute violence is the destiny of our approach to them? If so, then these living beings have not yet properly appeared or cannot appear at all. And yet, is it so far-fetched to imagine a kind of human speech that would not be indifferent to them and that would treat them *as though* they were partners in a conversation of the living? Would it be out of the question to account for their unique possibilities and ways of expression, spatial and otherwise, outlining the contours of their "speech" without speaking? To

act *with* plants and animals, rather than to labour or work *on* them? Couldn't *their* natality (like mortality, which is no less authentic than ours) appeal to our finitude and indicate a path towards a qualitatively new beginning, an open-ended action of instituting the broadest *res publica* yet?⁴⁷ Arendt precludes this possibility, insofar as she, largely in contempt of her own way of thinking, subsumes natality under the sway of the human relation to death, or, more precisely, under the knowledge that our beginning is the beginning of the end.⁴⁸ But, assuming that natality has nothing to do with the sombre thought of mortality, its "joyful" finitude could underwrite a critical undermining of anthropocentrism. Walter Benjamin's thesis on human language as a modulation of the language of things, heralding the redemption of nature, would then spell out the secret meaning of the Arendtian phenomenology of nonviolence.

The prologue to *The Human Condition* rehashes yet another Husserlian critique of *logos*, this time directed against the formalised and mathematised natural sciences that, having come into contact with existing cultural attitudes, urge us to "adopt a way of life in which speech is no longer meaningful".⁴⁹ Arendt's criticism of modern scientific *logos* carries Husserl's thoughts on the subject to their most radical conclusions. The primary effects of the digitalised "world where speech has lost its power" are the growing worldlessness and disempowerment of all those who rotate in its orbit.⁵⁰ The crisis of the sciences is, at bottom, a political crisis, in that it robs us of our capacity to act, to make a new beginning, to respond to the problem of natality and, finally, to be free. Without *meaningful* speech, the world is not a world; politics, inebriated with raw force, is drained of power; phenomena cease to appear or to give themselves as what they are. Pure violence reigns in the ideal reconstruction of things as the material expressions of mathematical formulae and codes, while the search for meaning is replaced with the postulation of objective truths that are supposedly independent of the spoken *logos*. Intellectual work yields objective research outcomes (for instance, decoding still another segment of an organism's DNA sequence) that leave no breathing space for the nonactualisable, essentially incomplete thinking indistinguishable from action. The quest for meaning, which used to be "at the same time prompted and frustrated by our inability to originate meaning",⁵¹ becomes, in and of itself, meaningless.

PHENOMENOLOGY'S PHENOMENA AS A CRITIQUE OF TOTALITARIANISM AND THE PROBLEM OF REVOLUTION

Logos is not alone in bearing the brunt of political violence. In a different way, phenomenality falls victim to the onslaught of totalitarianism. Incomprehensible to those who put their trust in the "objective approach" to reality and its facts—the approach independent of the political condi-

tion under which we access (or fail to access) phenomena—the decline of phenomenality under totalitarianism has to do with the dismissal of perspectival knowledge and the subsequent dissolving of dispersed beginnings into a single standpoint. Rather than “new beginnings that had never before appeared and been seen in the world”,⁵² the subjects of totalitarianism are interchangeable, and, in keeping with this dark political ideal, so are their perspectives on the world. Phenomena continue to be given through adumbrations, as befits the extended spatial entities, which we can access from a virtual infinity of perspectives. But if the scattering of beginnings, characteristic of human plurality, is welded into one, then the wealth of adumbrations will no longer matter and will undergo a *de facto* ontological contraction under the pressure of political circumstances.⁵³

Once again, phenomenology emerges as a champion of antitotalitarian thought and action, using the criteria postulated by Arendt herself. A method attentive to the distinct modes of givenness of what appears, including the multiple adumbrations of phenomena, it accommodates, without much effort, a critique of totalitarianism. “We know from experience”, writes Arendt in *The Promise of Politics*, “that no one can adequately grasp the objective world in its full reality all on his own, because the world always shows and reveals itself to him from only one perspective, which corresponds to his standpoint in the world and is determined by it”.⁵⁴ An ensemble of adumbrations is made possible thanks to a free sharing of the world in and through speech,⁵⁵ which is the action that effectively gives us the world in its ontological richness. And where action is incapacitated, nothing is really given. Taken together, these two ideas flesh out the sense of phenomenology as the cobelonging of adumbrated phenomena and *logos* that amplifies their dimensions in the space of appearance in which what is spoken about coappears with the speakers themselves. Phenomenology thus precipitates an increase of being, admitting infinite modes of givenness, perspectival adumbrations and a plurality of speakers into its midst.

Not so in the case of totalitarianism. There, as in the fantasy of a purely scientific grasp of *what is*, *logos* falls silent, and the task of beginning is forsaken. A dialogue between the two beginnings—between natality and action—is broken off because the distance between and within the speakers, who can no longer even be alone with themselves, is erased, as they are gathered into a unified whole. As these and other rifts disappear, so does the space of appearance as such, which is why totalitarianism arrests the “development of experience”⁵⁶ and hinders the coming of the event. Its rule is not only violence but also nongiveness, the absolute withdrawal of the world. Nothing could be less consistent with phenomenology than that.⁵⁷ The crisis of beginnings, which is felt in their factual dispersion and in the uncertain transition from natality to action, is thrown into a much greater crisis of distances crossed, rifts mended and

the evaporating power of critique, of distinguishing, discerning or judging, in the archaic sense of the Greek *krinein*. Breaking with the vicious cycle of the crisis of/in crisis, the promise of politics that keeps these in-between spaces ajar (and that, through them, traffics the entire world) is the promise of phenomenology, which contributes, if only inadvertently, to a critique of totalitarianism.

It is worth noting that the critical model lurking in the background of Arendt's thought has much in common with the classical Enlightenment insistence on the enlargement of the public sphere. Advocated by Kant, the public use of reason was a duty predicated not on formal-epistemological but on political-ontological grounds. Indeed, this duty was the obverse of the Kantian proscription of secrecy—for instance, in the essay "Perpetual Peace"—that shrouded the capriciousness of absolutist rule, itself associated with a numinous will, or, broadly speaking, a source of power that was withdrawn from the world. (Political theology ensured the illicit inclusion of secretive political authority in the list of metaphysical problems, such as freedom and the nature of God, outside the limits of reason.) The publicness of power, its phenomenality—if not utter transparency, the hope and the normative ideal of the Enlightenment—guards against this blatant assault on reason.

Are we to infer from this that Arendt's political criticisms are of one piece with those of the Enlightenment? Such an interpretation would be at odds with the existentially vibrant space of appearance, in which political subjects are coming to light, without attaining anything like full transparency. In contrast to the uniformity of Enlightenment rationality, they appear in the refracted medium of multiple *logoi*, corresponding to the plurality of *doxic* modes of accessing the world. Phenomenology is a critique of pure appearance as much as it is a shunning of absolute non-appearance. The ground of the political extends between these two idealities of pure presence and pure absence.⁵⁸

When Arendt contends that "the greatest that man can achieve is his own appearance",⁵⁹ she does not violate the simple political phenomenological principle of an essentially partial, incomplete appearance, provided that the achievement she invokes is of the order of possibility and, as such, belongs to experience without fulfilment, presence or representation. The achievement of one's appearance, existentially understood, suffers the most under totalitarian regimes that bring to naught the phenomenality of power along with meaningful speech and action. In the secrecy of monarchical absolutism and court intrigues, one at least knew where power had withdrawn to, whereas totalitarianism thrives on a constant displacement of power, so that even its withdrawal and non-appearance are withdrawn and unapparent. The self-dissimulation of totalitarian power is not equivalent to Heidegger's ontological and eventful "giving" withdrawal, which, in keeping with the principles of phenomenology, still left something behind—for instance, traces of being and the

world as such. Totalitarian nonphenomenality is purely negative and, as a result, its "consistent arbitrariness" robs human beings of the capacity to act.⁶⁰ Besides withholding its own appearance, the elusive seat of totalitarian power annihilates the space of appearance, halts the process of human self-phenomenalisation in the second beginning and, thereby, undercuts the very possibility of possibility. While violence wipes out the world-creating effects of *logos*, totalitarianism dispenses with political *phenomena*, properly so called.

Methodologically, the non-self-giveness of totalitarianism poses a seemingly irresolvable problem before phenomenological investigations. If one is supposed to follow the things themselves, if political thought at its best discloses the articulations of the political phenomena themselves and "remains bound to what appears in the domain of human affairs",⁶¹ then one soon discovers that, when it comes to totalitarianism, there is nothing to follow because "the phenomenon, which we try—and must try—to understand has deprived us of our traditional tools of understanding".⁶² Its self-encryption makes it particularly immune to critique, because the "object" to be criticised is too amorphous to be placed within the limits of either *logos* or appearance. But this crisis of *logos* and understanding, which, in the course of tackling totalitarianism, finds itself bereft of anything "given", is, in its turn, productive of a more discerning critique and a thoroughgoing self-critique: "what is frightening in the rise of totalitarianism is not that it is something new, but that it has brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment".⁶³ The nongiveness of totalitarian "phenomena" shifts the spotlight onto the subjects of understanding, who have nothing to fall back on, save a critique of their own method. It reveals the Gordian knot tying together the understanding of totalitarianism's origins and the understanding of this very understanding. A search for fresh political-philosophical beginnings in the self-critique of the subjects of knowledge becomes unavoidable: "Even though we have lost the yardsticks by which to measure . . . a being whose essence is beginning may have enough of origin within himself to understand without preconceived categories".⁶⁴ In other words, the point is to bring the "origins within ourselves" into contact with the origins of the withdrawn political phenomenon in a short circuit of the event, in which the promise (and the end) of the crisis would signal the beginning of critique.

Direct resistance to totalitarianism is unlikely to achieve its objectives, because one cannot act if one does not know where and how to make a start and because what we resist keeps veiling itself and relocating elsewhere.⁶⁵ The "permanent instability" of totalitarian movements⁶⁶ that eschew a rule-bound delegation of authority is meant to uphold their vitality in a parody of existence, both negating political action and emulating its nonactualisable, existential potential. In an illusion of constant self-reduction to the *terminus ad quem*, the numinous will of the leader,

any visible power structure may be miraculously endowed with this supreme authority and, just as suddenly, be divested of it. Actual institutions are epiphenomenal, as opposed to the true source of political life—notably, this will, which engulfs and negates action, speech and human multiplicities as such. A flurry of unexpected changes, attributable to an arbitrary noumenal entity, sets in motion a totalitarian obstruction of everything that is conducive to the event of politics, so much so that the totalitarian leader perverts Plato's insight in *The Laws*, to the effect that "only the beginning (*archē*) is entitled to rule (*archein*)",⁶⁷ into "only the ruler is entitled to begin". The beginning no longer legitimates rulership, but the ruler determines every new beginning, "isolated against others by his force",⁶⁸ devoid of *logos* or speech. "Isolated" by its own force, which is not converted into power by means of political phenomenality and *logos*, totalitarian leadership erodes the continuity that is needed for the relation of leading and following to take root. Its permanent crisis fills every lacuna that was still hospitable to the emergence of critique, or to critique *as* the onto-phenomenological emergence of a vital political order.

To a certain extent, the legacy of the totalitarian destruction of political speech and phenomena is still with us. In 1954, at a lecture delivered at the American Political Science Association's conference, when Arendt stated that "under present circumstances, true action, namely, the beginning of something new, seems possible only in revolutions",⁶⁹ she obliquely invited her audience to rethink the meaning of revolution. No longer connoting an overthrow of the entire existing order, the new sense of the word is at once more humble and more ambitious than its classical counterpart. It is more humble because the withdrawal and nongiveness of totalitarian phenomena give the lie to the search for the locus of "real power" that, when struck, would lead to the domino effect of the system's collapse. In fact, power is largely absent from a world governed by speechless violence and deprived of its worldhood. Revolutionary action must strive, instead, to stimulate a proliferation of new beginnings, the exceptional spaces of appearance that will punctuate and rupture the seamlessness of the whole. But it is also more ambitious because it is not placated when one regime simply replaces another. Oriented by existential possibilities, such action invites an abiding critique of violence and totalitarianism in all their guises. Creating new spaces of appearance, it reassembles, time and again, *logos* and phenomena, without proclaiming their final identity in the stillness of an apolitical tautology.

Political phenomenological critique is creative of a new terrain of thought and, above all, action, in the same manner that Husserlian critique was productive of the entire fields of transcendental consciousness and eidetic phenomenology.⁷⁰ The literally constitutional, constitution-making role of revolutions is analogous to the objectivation of sensations or the constitution of objectivity in the acts of consciousness. The sense of

the world, including the political pluriverse, is inseparable from who we are and what we do: if revolutions recall us to beginnings, then they bring us back to ourselves, to the beginnings that we *are*,⁷¹ reactivating the conditions of possibility for our very subjectivity, not to mention for living and acting together. Every revolution is a revolutionising of the subject, and every subject a potential revolution in the making between the two beginnings of natality and action.⁷² A new calendar and the linguistic innovations characteristic of postrevolutionary periods are only the surface manifestations of this critical *and* world-creating potential.

Considered through the prism of constitutive political subjectivity, revolution is an essentially modern event, the event of modernity as such, and, by the same token, the event of or in phenomenology. Rather than appeal to the obscure mystery of political beginnings, an act of revolutionary foundation finally occurs “in broad daylight to be witnessed by all”.⁷³ Its sheer phenomenality is consistent with the modern emphasis on publicness and transparency, despite the fact that the revolutionary tradition itself often cloaks in myth the groundbreaking events it strings together in a coherent narrative. Unless it happens “in broad daylight”, revolution will not have enough resources to launch a critique of authoritarian political foundations that are withdrawn from sight and from understanding. Hence, for Arendt, a totalitarian (or even a conservative) revolution would be a contradiction in terms, lumping together, unmediated, the withdrawal and the exhibition of power. Whether the political foundation is coming to appearance is a critical test, conducted under the aegis of phenomenology, for the revolutionary nature of the founding event.

To put it differently, in revolutions, there is no place for a noumenal, metaphysical will which would determine, from a hidden standpoint above or behind the world here-below, the momentous events surrounding a new beginning. Much in the same way that phenomenology refutes the existence of things-in-themselves as the transcendental cause of phenomena, Arendt’s theory of revolutions denies the orchestration of extraordinary political occurrences by the nonapparent absolute, immune to critical scrutiny and immanently historical analysis alike. “It is futile”, she writes in *On Revolution*, “to search for an absolute to break the vicious circle in which all beginning is inevitably caught, because this ‘absolute’ lies in the very act of beginning itself”.⁷⁴ The eventful transcendence of revolutionary beginnings takes place within historical immanence; the constitution of meaning and objectivity happens in the flux of psychic life. The inclusion of the absolute “in the very act of beginning” does not set this act apart from whatever might ensue in its trail, but rather denudes its own conditions of possibility, akin to that modernist artwork which presents, as its content, the materials from which it is made. More pertinently, the injunction to begin with the absolute reiterates Heidegger’s reading of Hegel, discussed in chapter 2. As we shall see, however,

Arendt's phenomenological stress on the absolute is drastically different from the Hegelian *Geist*, according to which revolution is the negative moment of reason's awakening in history.

The revelatory role of revolutionary action, exhibiting the beginning in the light of phenomenality, challenges the prevailing take on the violent origination of the political. For Arendt's phenomenological theory to work, the making-appear of demythologised revolutionary beginnings must coincide with the putting into words (performance in *logoi*) of the new political order. In legends, including early modern conjectures on the state of nature, "no beginning could be made without using violence, without violating", and it is in a transgression of this unspoken law that the first sentence of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word", had the air of salvation.⁷⁵ The *logos* of *muthos*, which still teetered on the verge of speechless wonder, was hospitable to a violent negation of speech.

We cannot afford to gloss over the phenomenological premises of the complaint Arendt voices against mythical beginnings. Displaying the beginning without excessive obscurity means letting it be and appear in the medium of *logos*, as it does in the declaration, "We, the people . . ." It implies a conversion of the beginning into a phenomenon. And yet the violent residuum does not fade altogether, for at least two reasons. First, a complete phenomenalisation of the beginning absorbs the active-existential ontology of the beginners themselves. Demystified, they are given to sight—but *whose* sight? Do revolutionary subjects make a spectacle of themselves for themselves? Or for each other? And where does this unequivocal exhibition stand with respect to the forever incomplete coming-to-appearance that governs our lives, notably at the political level? Second, in its modern instantiation, revolutionary violence does not evaporate; rather, it is sublimated into the symbolic sphere.⁷⁶ Violence keeps agape the rift between political phenomena and *logos*, not to mention within the *logos* it infiltrates. The problem is how to convert its deadening, worldless hiatus into world-giving critique.

One hint for a solution has to do with Arendt's description of the realm of violence as pervaded with unpredictability.⁷⁷ Revolutionary events, too, are arbitrary, insofar as the beginnings are not determined by anything outside themselves, and it is this arbitrariness that foments the irruptions of historical violence. Nevertheless, "what saves the act of beginning from its own arbitrariness is that it carries its own principle within itself, or, to be more precise, that beginning and principle, *principium* and principle, are not only related to each other, but are coeval. The absolute from which the beginning is to derive its own validity . . . makes its appearance in the world".⁷⁸

Anchoring political phenomenological critique is the principle of the beginning, immanent to the beginning itself, against which its "appearance in the world" (that is to say, phenomenality) is to be measured. This appearance of the absolute in the world is emphatically un-Hegelian be-

cause, rather than rehashing the ideal teleology of *Geist* in actuality, the principle and the beginning occur conjointly, or, as stated by Arendt, coevally. We would do well to discern the traces of *logos* in the principle that phenomenalisises itself not *après coup*, but rather in and from a concrete beginning. Does the patently phenomenological emphasis on the coeval self-presentation of a novel political *logos* and phenomena in a revolution abort halfway the project of critique that was about to produce a different order of things? Not quite. In order to maintain together the *principium* and the principle, in order to ensure their coeval appearing, a tradition emanating from and carrying forth the revolutionary beginning is indispensable. Otherwise, without a modicum of continuity and institutionalisation, nothing at all will appear, leaving this beginning unregistered, nongiven, withdrawn and letting violence erupt in its place. The event must be suspended between mechanistic predictability, on the one hand, and pure arbitrariness, on the other, in which the “between” neither symbolises a middle ground nor appeals to moderation.

No doubt, the revolutionary tradition will be in need of a constant desedimentation, seeking to reactivate our capacity to begin. Its critique, incessantly converting arbitrariness into the ephemeral principle of freedom, is at the heart of the political relation between *logos* and phenomena: “As such, the principle inspires the deeds that are to follow and remains apparent as long as the action lasts”.⁷⁹ The principle is to the deeds what *logos* is to phenomena. In this correlation, the conditional clause “as long as action lasts” is crucial, precisely because actions do not last forever but extend over a relatively short stretch of time. The critical aspect of revolutionary political phenomenology depends, first, on a temporal delimitation and, second (and more obviously), on a radical putting into question of a previous regime. Like everything finite, the phenomenal appearance of the revolutionary principle contains the seeds of its own destruction, which also make it possible. It is circumscribed by its duration—that is, by the deeds and words (*logoi*) that follow the beginning both in fidelity and in a strict succession, which never really departs from what has begun until the end of that beginning. To institutionalise the beginning is to violate the temporality of the political “things themselves”; to accept its finitude is to acquiesce to the periodic “death” of the political as a condition of its renewal. The drama of Arendt’s political phenomenology is that it is but a periphrasis of Samuel Beckett’s famous words: “we must begin, we cannot begin, we will begin”.

NOTES

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 144.
2. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 143.
3. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 177.

4. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1, *Thinking* (New York and London: Harvest Books, 1978), 56.

5. Anne O'Byrne recognises the phenomenological underpinnings of natality, all the while classifying them with a *historical*, rather than *political*, phenomenology (*Natality and Finitude* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010], 90).

6. It is questionable to what extent Arendt projected her own ideas regarding human beginnings onto Augustinian thought. Cf. Stephen Kampowski, *Arendt, Augustine, and the New Beginning: The Action Theory and Moral Thought of Hannah Arendt in the Light of her Dissertation on St. Augustine* (Cambridge and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 47.

7. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 97.

8. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 9, emphasis added.

9. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 198.

10. Julia Kristeva's take is directly opposed to the critical phenomenological reading of Arendt. Kristeva ignores the fracturing of *logos* even at the heart of the "self" and, instead, attributes to it a unifying function, so that the Arendtian *Selbst* "welds together the phenomenon and the logos". *Hannah Arendt*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 173.

11. Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 24–25.

12. The difference between the two beginnings—roughly, the material and the ideal—goes a long way to assuage the worries of Adriana Cavarero, for whom "Arendt does not highlight the concept of birth as a coming from the mother's womb, but accepts the Greek meaning of birth as a coming from nothing". *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Re-Writing of Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Polity, 1995), 6.

13. Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York and London: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 165.

14. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 166, 167.

15. On the violence of instrumentality in Arendt, see James Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 63ff.

16. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 58.

17. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 61.

18. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 58–59.

19. This is probably what Elisabeth Young-Bruehl means when she writes, "For Arendt, temporality, far from having to be overcome for man to be, is the source of possibility for action, in which his being is intensified". *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 495.

20. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 166.

21. According to Arendt's analysis in *On Revolution*, the Roman senate incarnated the authority of the ancestors who founded the city of Rome. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 193.

22. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1978), 167.

23. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 85.

24. It is, therefore, inaccurate to claim, as Kampowski does, that foundation is "a paradigm of a new beginning". Cf. Kampowski, *Arendt, Augustine, and the New Beginning*, 151ff.

25. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 54.

26. On Arendt's antifoundationalism, see Serena Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 36ff.

27. Arendt constructs this argumentative chain in *Between Past and Future*, 167. Cf. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 322.

28. Cf. the chapter on Arendt in Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology*, as well as Dana Villa, "Introduction: The Development of Arendt's Political Thought", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2001), who concludes that Arendt's "fears concerning the way this carefully built up world might be swamped by the forces of cultural barbarism" (5).

29. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 26. This is also the key point of Elaine Scarry's influential *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

30. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 26.

31. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 26.

32. Noam Chomsky's "universal grammar" attests to this fact.

33. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 33.

34. On Arendt's suspicion of excessive "speechless wonder", see Mary-Jane Rubenstein, *Strange Wonder: The Closure of Metaphysics and the Opening of Awe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 20ff.

35. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 36.

36. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 19.

37. *Doxa* designates, for Arendt, the way in which the world opens up for us (*The Promise of Politics*, 23), the way things look or appear from a certain position in the world (*The Promise of Politics*, 29) and, hence, something of *eidōs*—not only the "Idea" but also the look or the image of things.

38. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 88.

39. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 50.

40. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 36.

41. On the question of sovereignty in Arendt and Schmitt, consult Charles Barbour, "Exception and Event: Schmitt, Arendt, and Badiou", in *After Sovereignty: On the Question of Political Beginnings*, ed. Charles Barbour and George Pavlich (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 83–96.

42. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 200.

43. See, for example, Margie Lloyd, "In Tocqueville's Shadow: Hannah Arendt's Liberal Republicanism", *Review of Politics* 57 (Winter 1995): 31–58.

44. Two brief quotations from Hannah Arendt, "On Violence" (in *Crises of the Republic* [New York and London: Harcourt Brace, 1972]), are in order here. (1) "To act is the human answer to the condition of natality" (179); (2) "glorifications of violence are caused by severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world" (180).

45. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 308.

46. Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology*, 53.

47. This is in line with the suggestion made by Michel Serres in his recent *Temps des Crises* (Paris: Le Pommier, 2009).

48. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2, *Willing* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace, 1978), 109.

49. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 4.

50. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 4.

51. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 313.

52. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 59.

53. This is what Jacques Rancière will later have in mind when he introduces the term "aesthetic regime" into his political philosophy.

54. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 128.

55. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 129.

56. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1964), 409.

57. Hence, it is questionable whether one can talk about Arendt's "phenomenology of totalitarianism", as Seyla Benhabib does, even allowing for the negative modification of phenomenological concepts in totalitarian "worldlessness" and "loneliness". Cf. Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Oxford and Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 69.

58. The "invisible visibility" of the political resonates with the insights of the early Schmitt, especially in his *Roman Catholicism and the Political Form* (1923). Derrida names this in-between notion "trace".

59. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 208.
60. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 433.
61. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 9.
62. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 310.
63. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 318.
64. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 321.
65. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 398ff.
66. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 391.
67. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 224.
68. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 189.
69. Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 437. For a background analysis of Arendt's thinking of revolution, refer to Albrecht Wellmer, "Arendt on Revolution", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 220–44.
70. Of course, Arendt did not subscribe to Husserl's transcendental method *in toto*. But neither did she swap transcendental philosophy for an uncritical "naturalisation of thought". Her rejection of speechless wonder does not automatically entail a dismissal of exceptional and quasi-miraculous events such as revolution and, indeed, thinking itself. It is, therefore, blatantly wrong to assert that in a "reverse normalization of Husserl's hyperbolic stance, Arendt has naturalised philosophising itself. Philosophy is natural to us, like breathing". Max Deutscher, *Judgment after Arendt* (Hampshire, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 15.
71. "Beginning is not the same as the beginning of the world; it is not the beginning of something but of somebody, who is a beginner himself" (Arendt, *Human Condition*, 177).
72. On the association of between modern subjectivity and revolution, including in the political theory of Arendt, refer to Artemy Magun, *La Révolution Négative: Déconstruction du Sujet Politique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009).
73. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 197. The coming to light of political phenomenality is not a passage between "the noumenal and the phenomenal worlds", into which Anthony Cascardi ("Communication and Transformation: Aesthetics and Politics in Kant and Arendt", in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997]) transforms it under the influence of a Kantian reading of Arendt (110). A mediation between noumena and phenomena would, strictly speaking, correspond to a reconciliation of totalitarianism and radical democracy.
74. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 196.
75. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 10.
76. This is the point of Jacques Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics" (1967) as well as, more pertinently, his essay "Declarations of Independence" (1986).
77. Arendt, "On Violence", 107.
78. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 205.
79. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 205.

FIVE

Critical Twilight

*Derrida and the Postmetaphysical Critique
of Phenomenology*

NEITHER CRITICAL NOR UNCRITICAL,
OR CRITIQUE REDUCED—TO *DIFFÉRANCE*

In a thought-provoking book, *The Honor of Thinking*, Rodolphe Gasché rejects the identification of deconstruction with critique. “The challenge of deconstruction”, he writes, “is how to distinguish between intentional objects in thought without judging and deciding; in other words, how to do justice to what requires recognition on the basis of its singularity. Deconstruction demands demarcation that proceeds without a criteriology, or that is not critical”.¹ The overtly phenomenological discourse (“intentional objects”) Gasché is still willing to attribute to deconstruction should have alerted the author of these lines to the complexity of judgment, which may well be situated at the pre-predicative or informal level and which satisfies the deconstructive call for a criteriology-free demarcation, or at least yields nonformal, existential criteria. It is beyond the scope of the present study to assess whether the purportedly noncritical recognition, demanded by Gasché “on the basis of singularity”, is at all possible. What concerns me, instead, is the outright denial of the value of critique in and for the deconstructive project.²

Staking out his position, Gasché claims that the uncompromising rejection of critique is prevalent “in a rather unambiguous and decidedly propositional manner throughout Derrida’s writings”.³ And, to support this view, he quotes two examples from “among the many possible references”: a statement from an interview included in the collection *Points* . . .

and an extract from "Letter to a Japanese Friend". Upon a very brief engagement with the implications of the first citation, Gasché delves into an analysis of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" and Derrida's exegesis of the same text. His dismissal of deconstruction's critical trajectory turns out to be but a pretext for this engagement with the Benjamin-Derrida nexus. But are things as clear-cut as they seem to be in the *Points* . . . interview and on other occasions for thinking through deconstruction's relation to critique? Why would abandoning dogmatically naïve criticism extinguish the critical impulse altogether? And what about textual criticism, understood in light of Derrida's theory of "general textuality", which is not limited to texts we find in books but extends to networks of traces, from which the world around and beyond us is woven? Can deconstruction so easily and in such a decisive, determined and determinate manner give up on critique in the name of the singular, of what is not available for judgement, of the *purely* undecidable?

In another interview in *Points* . . . Derrida indicates just how complicated the mesh of problems surrounding deconstruction's relation to critique is when he notes that the "*critical idea*, which . . . must never be renounced, has a history and presuppositions whose deconstructive analysis is also necessary".⁴ Curiously, the very things Gasché finds unacceptable, such as the twin supposition of a voluntary judgement and of decidability, belong to the uncritical presuppositions of critique rather than to the "critical idea" itself. A naïve (or better, a dogmatically inflected) critique criticises neither its suppositions nor the actual historical processes that culminated in it, which is to say that it does not, mercilessly and without end, criticise itself. Differently put, the problem arises when critique is "no longer or not yet problematic or questionable"⁵ or when it is questionable based on the unquestioned authority of the question.

As we might recall, Husserl, too, complained about this unripe criticism, which he found to be worse than the straightforwardly uncritical attitude of everyday life. A critique that does not spare itself stands opposed to critical dogmatism, which, immune to questioning, is directed exclusively towards the outside. Carefully sifting through the legacies of phenomenology, Derrida feels a sense of allegiance to its self-critical program, so long as it does not pass a final judgement on either itself or its "objects". His declaration that "deconstruction takes critique as its object"⁶ does not at all distance the subject of the sentence—that is, deconstruction—from what it thus objectifies, as Gasché seems to think.⁷ On the contrary, it amplifies the power of critique that, in the last instance (which is also its most significant commencement), treats *itself* as its own object. The active taking "as . . . object" is only justifiable when deconstruction submits itself (and its "self", if there is such a thing) to and is taken up by the judgement of the other, ceding critical agency that tends to inhere in decisions and sovereign acts of interpretation. In other

words, what Derrida welcomes is a certain critical undecidability with regard to both critique itself and its object. He thus sets a halting, self-interrupting, at times self-undermining, pace of critique and introduces an unmistakable arrhythmia into the pulse of phenomenology.

The “challenge of deconstruction” is not so much the theoretical question of how to distinguish among intentional objects without resorting to critique, as Gasché has it, but how to steer self-critique away from the task of strengthening and augmenting this very “self”, inoculated against the other.⁸ Deconstructive self-criticism is always and necessarily a critique of the sovereign self and of one-directional intentionality, irradiating from the central point of the phenomenological subject out to the objects it invests with meaning. A more radical self-critique is one in which the subject finds itself targeted (as it is by the absolute in Heidegger’s take on Hegel and by the other in Levinas) by alien intentionalities, many of them utterly indecipherable. Only in this way will philosophy lose the transcendental privilege it merely pretends to abandon along the path of its critical and self-critical adventures. Otherwise, the *paideia* of self-critique will continue to shore up the “imperialist self-confidence of philosophy”⁹ that, in a calculated *fort-da* game, misplaces and finds itself again, growing more vigorous thanks to these infinitely repeated displacements and recoveries. “To whom or to what does the critique of self revert?”¹⁰ is the question that needs to be posed over and over again, so as to stop in its tracks the cryptodialectical *relève* of expansive *logos* and to check the unwarranted preference for “to whom”—the first of the two modalities between which deconstructive thought oscillates.

Derrida’s position is neither purely critical nor noncritical, in the traditional sense of these terms; if it is still meaningful to refer to criteria for evaluation, these do not lie in deconstruction *proper*. Having said that, there is something in critique (or better, in what is required for any critique, be it dogmatic or self-critical) that resonates with the nontranscendental conditions of possibility for deconstruction. Derrida never tires of pointing out the etymological connection, vital to Husserl’s phenomenological project, between “critique” and “crisis”.¹¹ The reason for Derrida’s unease with these two terms is that both of them have already covered over and formalised something else—namely, a division or a cut, a *différential* fissure that withdraws from grasp, all the while permitting everything to appear and allowing every thing provisionally to differentiate itself from all the others in the deferral of its final identity. Decision and judgement, critique and crisis, are *reduced* in Derrida’s texts to *différance*, getting at the nonsubjective and nonobjective split that underpins ontology as well as epistemology and that inspires, among other things, a general economy of criticism.¹² Reduction, of course, is not negation but a temporary bracketing and a suspension, which is why Gasché’s assessment is erroneous. Postreductive *différance* “is” discernment and critique without either judgement or decision; if criticism is “linked, as its name

indicates, to the possibility of decidability, to the κρίνειν", then *différance* names the possibility for this possibility, "a certain re-mark or re-tempering of spacing".¹³ It names, more precisely, a non- or precritical cut and, hence, a critique without critique, which is not just receptivity to phenomena and alien intentionalities but also the space or spacing in which this receptivity can take its place.

In order to appreciate the vast array of its effects, this reduction of critique to *différance* needs to be framed within the deconstructive theory of signification. The very meaningfulness of meaning and the intelligibility of sign-traces sent back to other signs and indefinitely deferring the emergence of the transcendental signified contain the seeds of critique, which can do nothing more than retrace the movement of signification.¹⁴ The boundaries between critical negation and affirmation become considerably more permeable as a consequence of this repetition: critique reaffirms everything already given in the opening of *différance*. Granted, "thematic criticism" lacks the capacity to deal with the abysmal reinscription of signs, defined as "the act of inscribing itself on itself indefinitely, mark upon mark".¹⁵ But a critique that is attuned to its *différential* heritage participates in this re-marking, albeit at the price of losing "the glint of a phenomenon",¹⁶ which is not itself given in the obsessive repetition of givenness. Such is the deconstructive critique of phenomenality that, far from negating the given, questions the obviousness and the fullness of givenness.

The other instantiation of critique, similarly indebted to *différance*, is the work of cutting (and pasting) that goes into citation, in which the critical and the noncritical are virtually indistinguishable, seeing that a certain selectivity and discernment in the choice of quotes coincides with the reaffirmation of what is quoted. Regardless of its irremediable fracturing and fragmentation, *Glas* as a whole lends itself to this reading, both formally and at the level of its content, given the various cuts, incisions, amputations and so forth peppering its pages. It would be myopic, however, to focus on a critique of books alone, because texts are not reducible to words written or printed on a page. Standing for everything given in (and withdrawn from) the structure of the trace, they cannot be classified as one kind of phenomena (or, for that matter, of *logos*) among many others. They belong in a broader field of general textuality, which bears the networks of traces that constitute the world. Thematic textual criticism is merely a special case of critique, helping us orient ourselves in the social, political, biological, cultural, economic and other texts within which our lives are inscribed.

To live is to interpret, and to be suspended in the spectral domain between life and death is to confront the uninterpretable in every act of interpretation. If, after the deconstruction of the metaphysical distinction between the signifier and the signified, phenomena themselves are shown to be signs, pointing beyond themselves to other such signs, then

différance around which signs accrete calls for interminable interpretation and critique, including the critique of the meaningfulness of meaning. Determined by the restricted sense of "text", the outlines of thematic criticism do not overlap with those of general critique, which is, at once, more concrete, because it discovers inscriptions and traces in every context of life, and more formal, because it re-marks "the very textuality of the text", revealing in the process "the limits of thematic criticism itself".¹⁷

In close proximity to *différance*, general critique is undecidable and interminable, in that it is a critique of phenomena and of *logos*, of meanings in their multiplicity and of the meaningfulness (or the being) of meaning as such. Unlike thematic criticism, "at work wherever one tries to determine a meaning through a text, to pronounce a decision upon it",¹⁸ general critique does not hypostatise a meaning, avoids positing the axiom of meaningfulness and, above all, refrains from finding "the same thing in different texts and authors"¹⁹ (this is, of course, a not-so-veiled attack on Heidegger's history of metaphysics). Whereas Husserl's reductions bracketed the acts of positing and spared the ideality of meaning, Derrida's general critique reduces what, for Husserl, was absolutely irreducible. Nor does Derrida subscribe to the calls for neutrality that usually accompany phenomenological reduction.²⁰ The way to the absolute, which would lack any sides whatsoever, is aporetic (it is a nonpassage). Hence, we must take sides and assume determinate positions within the general indeterminacy of meanings and of meaningfulness, which is another way of saying that "*the Absolute is Passage*".²¹

General critique tinges everything it touches, not to mention its own method, with undecidability. Although it is not equivalent to a metacritique, deconstruction ought to be viewed "as a *displacement* and as the displacement of a *question*, a certain system somewhere open to an undecidable resource that sets the system in motion".²² A question can undergo displacement in various ways. For instance, the value and the role of questioning may be itself questioned, or one may desist from exercising the juridico-epistemic function that is inevitably associated with raising questions. In the first case, the contradiction of putting the question into question generates enough friction to rouse the aporetic thinking of deconstruction. In the second case, in a curious radicalisation of Husserlian reduction and Heideggerian letting-beings-be, to displace the question is to follow (without narrowing, broadening or deepening it—that is the meaning of affirmation) the cut in the fabric of the things themselves, constituted as signs around *différance*.²³ It is not that, in strictly philosophical terms, deconstructive critique sacrifices critical epistemology, or the subject's right to know its object within certain limits, to ontology. Instead, it induces an ontological critique of ontology, a *hauntology* that pursues *différance* ensconced in the things "themselves". Rather than questioning the other, what remains of *logos* in deconstruction calls for,

is called by and conjures up the other. And, at the limit of phenomenology, instead of perceiving phenomena in flesh and blood, a practitioner of deconstruction deals with phantasms, the nonapparent apparitions that are the lingering shadows of phenomenality.

When Derrida interrogates the very act of questioning and detects in critical inquisitiveness an echo of the Inquisition, which puts the other to the question,²⁴ he covertly attacks Kant and, more so, Heidegger, who “never stopped identifying what is highest and best in thought [*le plus haut et le meilleur de la pensée*] with the question, with the decision, the call or guarding of the question”.²⁵ In other words, his best efforts notwithstanding, Heidegger has not succeeded in freeing himself from the (recognisably Kantian) critico-juridical notion of philosophy, insofar as he smuggled the *krinein* of critique into “decision” and the quintessentially modern tribunal of reason into the fetishism of the question. In Kant as much as in Heidegger, *logos* cannot stop inquiring, in a loud and monotonous voice, about the being of its objects, as it desperately wishes to erase the distance between itself and the world, achieving the exact opposite instead. Critical questions concerned with the possibilities of *logos* do not alter this predicament in a significant way; they draw their authority from “that sententious voice that produces or reproduces mechanically its verdicts with the tone of the most dogmatic assurance”,²⁶ right in the midst of the critique.

Seeking self-assurance, philosophy reacts in a defensive manner to the permanent instability of the crisis, which formalises *différance* in terms of catastrophe, threat and impending destruction. Critique, itself an inalienable component of this reaction, is the *pharmakon* (the remedy and the poison) of the crisis, which it, at the same time, intensifies and ameliorates. The critical bend of traditional philosophy is complicit with the threat of the crisis; even where it seems to issue from an autonomously self-legislating reason, critique is a negative reaction to the other, both threatening and threatened. This is why Derrida inquires in *Dissemination*, “Doesn’t the project of κρίνειν itself proceed precisely out of the very thing that is being threatened and put in question?”²⁷ The heteronomy of the critical project, to which he alludes in these lines, prompts us to listen to the *logos* of phenomena differently, with attention to the oft-mute crying out of that which or the one who is thus “put in question”.

By reducing the project of κρίνειν to *différance*, deconstruction returns to and reaffirms whatever or whoever has been threatened at the origins of critique. Another term that surfaces in the course of this reduction is the biologically or botanically inflected “dehiscence” — literally, splitting open, gaping or yawning, and a discharge of contents by this splitting (e.g., seedpods dehiscing at maturity) along a line or a slit.²⁸ Whereas the rift of the crisis appears to be catastrophic, that of dehiscence is enabling, if it lets beings be or spring into being, or threatening, if it is about to deteriorate into a crisis. Deconstructive *logos* observes the dehiscence of

phenomena and of phenomenality before this categorisation. It remarks the splitting of phenomena in their emergence as signs that shelter *différance* within the thing itself²⁹ and the phantasmatic division of phenomenology between the nonapparent appearing (the “how”) and that which appears (the “what”).

Dehiscence is “the very opening of the problem” that is spatial as much as it is temporal and that sets a tone different from a question.³⁰ Like the best of critiques, dehiscence is interminable in all its finitude (“the interminable *dehiscence* of the supplement”³¹). Further, it plays with the speculative ambiguity of the critical term *par excellence*—namely, “de-limitation”, setting and negating the limit. “It is in this de-limitation of criticism that we will henceforth be interested”,³² Derrida writes. With good reason, he does not specify which delimitation piques his interest: the one *proper to* criticism that determines itself by self-critically turning against itself, the one *imposed upon* criticism by the possibility of reading the fissure otherwise, as a dehiscence, or both.

BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND GRAMMATOLOGY

I have written that “deconstructive *logos* observes the dehiscence of phenomena”. Is this expression acceptable, in light of Derrida’s critique of *logos* as voice or speech in Husserlian phenomenology and, later on, of logocentrism and phallogocentrism? That deconstruction is not without a certain logic, which may seem illogical or contradictory from the perspective of classical thought, is not the issue here. The question is whether anything of the supple and plurivocal *logos* of phenomenology survives deconstruction—and, if so, what? After all, grammatology also incorporates *logos* into its composite name, ironically aping the compound form of “phenomenology”. What, then, is the relation between grammatology and phenomenology?³³

The *logos* of *grammē* (of a line) supplants or supplements that of phenomena. While phenomena are ideally given in and as presence within the framework of the production of sense, the lines of grammatological *logos* are reproductions that, in light of the logic of supplementarity, *precede* phenomenal givenness. Grammatology refrains from determining meaning, instead assisting with the opening of a question: “Of Grammatology is the title of a question [*le titre d’une question*, i.e., the book itself is a question, but a question that, in keeping with Derrida’s admission in *Positions*, displaces the question]: a question about the necessity of a science of writing, about the conditions that would make it possible, about the critical work [*le travail critique*] that would have to open its field and resolve epistemological obstacles; but it is also a question about the limits of this science”.³⁴ This Kant-inspired explication of grammatology as a critical science of writing requires a further clarification of how the *logos*

of *grammē* ends up being formulated into such charged, modern terms. What Derrida calls “science” here is no shibboleth for neutrality, but a place where two versions of scientificity clash. On the one hand, grammatology lends itself to *logocentrism* under the guise of the “metaphysics of phonetic writing”; on the other hand, it is a science of (nonphonetic) writing which, in its practice, “has constantly challenged the imperialism of *logos*”.³⁵ Aside from being “the title of a question”, paradoxically translated into (said and heard in) Greek from the Babylonian inscription that precedes the exergue to the text,³⁶ grammatology is thus also the name for the division of *logos* against itself, the *logos* that disturbs, shakes up, *solicits* from within the imperialism of *logos* as the unsayable precedent for any saying.

Grammatology, the “science of writing before speech and in speech”,³⁷ is the suppressed infrastructure of phenomenology, complicating *logos*’s communication with itself. This configuration of the two -ologies implies that the relation between a phenomenon and *grammē* is far from symmetrical: grammatology is a critique of phenomenology both “before” and “in” speech. Grammatological critique circumscribes, among other things, the roles of voice and speech—that is, of *logos* taken as *phonē*. The outlines of phenomena are supplemented by the lines of a writing, which, inverting the order of primacy and secondariness, as any supplement does, delineates their edges. The textuality of the text is, therefore, no longer opposed to “the real”,³⁸ as in the case of “idealist criticism”; rather, it occupies the structural place of being, understood as the *logos* of *grammē*. Grammatology is nothing but a general critique of general textuality, its scope broader (more inclusive, though less determinate) than that of the voice, through which phenomena announce their coming to presence.

Whereas, for Levinas, the trace of the other was at the centre of the ethical “critique of ontology”,³⁹ for Derrida, the trace of phenomena is crucial to the self-deconstructive critique of ontology, or, in a word, *hauntology*. The common feature of these critiques is that both are nonthematic, since the trace of the other and traces of phenomena exceed the confines of conscious representation and the order of intentionality, as well as the sovereignty of the subject. It is thanks to this shared characteristic that neither finds the same thing everywhere it looks (just think of Heidegger’s “forgetting of being”), even if it uses the same words—for instance, “the other” or “*différance*”, which is actually not a word. At its most vibrant, critical phenomenology, too, frees itself from the exigencies of thematisation, provided that its *logos* is remoulded each time it comes into contact with a new phenomenon. Still, to maintain this vibrancy, it would have to treat every phenomenon as other and cultivate a *logos* susceptible to *différance*.

Having eschewed thematic criticism, deconstruction welcomes a plurality of singular texts that are not entirely isolated from one another. The

bounds of singularity may at any moment be exceeded without being dissolved in empty universality: that is the logic of exemplarity and, to a certain extent, idiomaticity.⁴⁰ Plurality is the rule both in the content and in the form of deconstructive quasi-criticism, where there isn't a single critical divide, a master-rift based, for example, on a pervasive crisis of founded abstractions that have become detached from their foundations in the lifeworld. Instead, innumerable fissures and ruptures spread across the body of textuality and equip deconstruction with just as many work and play sites, in which critical thought is both disseminated and disseminating, along the lines of *différance* etched in the things "themselves".

Under the influence of deconstruction, critique loses its principle, its first cause (here, the crisis) and even its head. It neither evaluates nor judges; its discernments are less crude than that. Reliant on botanical processes and metaphors, such as dissemination or dehiscence, it is a vegetal critique that emanates not from the rupture of a crisis but from the inner splitting of the seed and of meaning, *semē*, into a nontotalisable multiplicity. Retracing the slit of dehiscence, it facilitates the blossoming or the not-blossoming of meaning, which lays bare or withholds its secret in (semantic) buds that may wither away without developing into full-fledged flowers (of rhetoric). This is precisely what sets deconstruction apart from both hermeneutics and academic, thematic criticism: writing about and around the textual thing, it resists the drive to interpretation, albeit without pretending to yield pure phenomenological descriptions. Derrida's observation apropos of French poet Francis Ponge applies to the deconstructive thinker himself: "You never know whether he names or describes, nor whether the thing he describes-names is the thing or the name, the common or proper name [*ni si ce qu'il décrit-nomme est la chose ou le nom, le commun ou le propre*]"⁴¹ Not knowing the difference between naming and description, the thing and the word, the common and the proper, is a positive effect of disseminative critique.

Describing-naming, from different angles, deconstruction's complex relation to critique, we have not yet left behind the question concerning the meaningfulness of meaning, as well as of questioning itself. Within the matrix of Husserlian phenomenology, Derrida takes the extra step of reducing the meaningfulness of meaning, which Husserl deemed irreducible to the body of the sign. The fullness of meaning gained through reduction is the accomplishment of phenomenology beholden to metaphysics and, by the same token, a symptom of its timidity, the reluctance to press on with its reductions: "Do not phenomenological necessity, the rigor and subtlety of Husserl's analysis . . . nonetheless conceal a metaphysical presupposition? Do they not harbor a dogmatic or speculative commitment which, to be sure, would not keep the phenomenological critique from being realized [*ne retiendrait pas la critique phénoménologique hors d'elle-même*]: would not keep phenomenological critique outside it-

self], would not be a residue of unperceived naïveté, but would constitute phenomenology from within, in its project of criticism and the instructive value of its own premises?"⁴²

Phenomenology is constituted, "from within", by a peculiar critique that coincides with metaphysical dogmatism, aiding with the accomplishment of its critical project. Most notably, phenomenological critique subscribes to the classical metaphysical distinction between the body and spirit (and, *mutatis mutandis*, between phenomena and *logos*), not the least in its theory of signification and in the process of reducing everything that transcends consciousness. Deconstruction, in turn, reduces signification to the body of the sign, which is already spiritual or spectral.⁴³ And, with this, it muddles the organising distinction of metaphysics—all but undisturbed by phenomenological critique—between interiority and exteriority.

On the one hand, the body of the sign is not contained in itself; in and of itself, it is outside itself in the capacity of a semantic relation, a reference to another sign or signs. On the other hand—and at the same time—it is partially locked in itself, in its materiality and idiomaticity, impermeable to the acts of meaning-bestowal. Being nothing in-itself, it is not entirely for-us. That the chain of significations does not come to an end, does not attain fulfilment and therefore does not conform to the phenomenological criteria for truth or falsity is due to the strange exemption of the sign from the field of ontology—that is to say, due to the fact that it "does not fall under the category of a thing in general (*Sache*) . . . is not a 'being' whose own being would be questioned".⁴⁴

"Is not the sign", Derrida asks in the same text, keeping both Husserl and Heidegger in mind, "something other than a being—the sole 'thing' which, not being a thing [*la seul 'chose' qui, n'étant pas une chose*], does not fall under the question 'what is?'"⁴⁵ The deconstruction of Husserl's theory of signs is a pre- or nonontological critique of the single most essential element in metaphysical ontology and of the inaugural question of philosophy.⁴⁶ A failure within the purview of onto-phenomenology, it is an opportunity for hauntological critique of being-as-presence, still unfolding in the landscape of phenomenological thought. In contrast to Husserl, who laments the ontological "emptiness" of signification and strives to overcome this condition with recourse to fulfilled intuitions, Derrida delights in the indefinite deferral of presence, arresting Husserlian intentionality on the way to its goal. Hence another paradox of deconstructive critique: the arrest of intentionality in its tending toward fulfilment in fact reenergises it, foiling its termination in the uncritical security of self-evidence.⁴⁷

LOGOS: BOTH MORE AND LESS THAN A VOICE

The critical conclusion Derrida draws from his study of Husserl is that signs are not phenomena (since they are not even beings) and that, moreover, they at once facilitate and forestall the givenness of phenomena. Absence irremediably affects phenomenal presence, even when it comes to the famous “principle of principles”. The title of Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena*, however, reveals a particular interpretation of phenomenology, in which *logos* is confined to *la voix*, the voice, or what David Allison translates as “speech”. After the critique of phenomenality as presence, a supplementary critique of the voice as *logos* will mark the second beat in this modified pulse of critical phenomenology, until, that is, the two moments collapse into one, prompting deconstruction finally to diagnose a dissipation of tension between the two poles of phenomenology and to display a straight line on the phenomenological cardiogram.

No doubt, the transcription of *logos* into voice presents a rather impoverished image of Husserlian phenomenology. But there is a strategic reason behind the stricture, into which Derrida forces phenomenological *logos*: conceived as voice, it represents pure presence and self-presence, the medium in which the phenomena and consciousness itself make their appearance. An alternative version of the title *Speech and Phenomena* would be *Self-Presence and Presence*. It is a “tenacious endeavor of phenomenology to protect the spoken word, to affirm an essential tie between *logos* and *phonē*” in light of the idea that “consciousness owes its privileged status . . . to the possibility of a living vocal medium [*la vive voix*]”.⁴⁸ Phenomenology’s metaphysical proclivity culminates in this impossible endeavour to “protect” and “affirm” the living-speaking *logos* without lapses in critical vigilance. Conversely, in its pursuit of critique rid of metaphysical overtones, deconstruction slips signs in the place of phenomena and substitutes writing for living speech, thereby drastically altering the two main facets of phenomenology. In both instances, it inaugurates a critique of consciousness, which loses its preeminence and self-transparency in the aftermath of deconstructive substitutions and supplementations.⁴⁹

In traditional phenomenology, thanks to the perfect coincidence of presence and self-presence, one sees what one says, mediating the appearance of phenomena through living speech. In phenomenology’s deconstructive elaboration, one tries to make sense of what, at bottom, cannot be said—namely, nonphonetic writing, the secret that “remains foreign to speech”, to the extent that it prevaricates regarding the logic of *logos*⁵⁰—all the while being watched over, silently observed, regarded and guarded by the textual thing itself. No longer protected within the limits of phenomenology, the voice does not coincide with itself but becomes both more and less than itself, sometimes dividing into several voices and other times growing silent, if not “voiceless”, in the medium

of writing.⁵¹ It is already not, or not yet, “the voice that keeps silence” in inner speech that, according to Husserl, generates subjectivity. Derrida’s voiceless voice is a derivative product of derivation bereft of an origin. A trace of the trace, it is a remnant of writing (repetition, reproduction, recording) in and as speech, a shadow of its own condition of possibility.

The lapse in communicative, indicative and expressive functions is reflected, on the side of phenomena, in the flight of the thing itself from our grasp⁵² and, on the side of *logos*, in the divergence of *logos* and the meaningfulness, or the being, of meaning from each other. For Derrida, this divergence is not entirely infelicitous. By decoupling voice from phenomena, the deconstructive critique of presence clears the space and the time for the event, which may come to pass in (or slip through) the cracks and fissures between the component parts of phenomenology. Deconstruction accentuates the noncorrespondence of speech and phenomena with each other and with themselves, so as to leave enough room for a happening outside the sphere of conscious mastery and pure appearance.

The tragic outcome of Husserlian thought is that, notwithstanding its express fidelity to whatever is given in the *how* of its givenness, phenomenology undercuts the chance of the event by cementing the bonds that unite voice and phenomena, not to mention their respective self-relations. “Considered from a purely phenomenological point of view”, Derrida writes, “within the reduction, the process of speech has the originality of presenting itself already as pure phenomenon, as having already suspended the natural attitude and the existential thesis of the world”.⁵³ The reduction of the natural attitude, with its attendant naïveté, spawns another dogmatism, more mendacious than the first and supported by the critical phenomenological apparatus. This other dogmatism, intrinsic to a certain kind of critique, turns the voice into the highest, the purest and the truest phenomenon, sealing tight the edifice of phenomenology. The ideal phenomenon and *logos* are tantamount to one and the same thing.

An event’s coming to pass between voice and phenomena would be superfluous because the voice, in its ideality (which is also a trait, ascribed to it in German Idealism) *and* pure phenomenality, is already everything it can be or could have been—that is, a powerful potentiality that anticipates whatever and whoever would speak or would be spoken in and through it. The entire sphere of consciousness is but a product of this self-confident voice, which is the pure phenomenon that dispenses meaningfulness to all the others. This, at any rate, is the real crisis phenomenology generates in dealing with the crisis of Western rationality: hankering for the reactivation of the impulse that animates *logos*, it deadens the very idea of experience as the in-finite passage for the event.⁵⁴ At the highest pitch of critical discourse, phenomenological critique neutralises itself by sewing shut the interstices within and between *logos* and phenomena.

It is not sufficient to decentre the present, in the shape of consciousness, through a series of critiques, including “the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics”, “the Freudian critique of self-presence” as self-transparent consciousness and “the Heideggerian destruction of metaphysics”,⁵⁵ listed with a few variations in *Writing and Difference* and, decades later, in *Specters of Marx*. No matter how heavy a blow each critique deals to human narcissism, it remains caught up in a vicious circle with the metaphysics of presence that, in a uniquely dialectical fashion, nourishes itself and grows stronger on account of these decenterings, calculated displacements and negations. The fate of phenomenological critique is no different from the rest; “in criticising classical metaphysics, phenomenology accomplishes the most profound project of metaphysics [*en critiquant la métaphysique classique, la phénoménologie accomplit le projet le plus profond de la métaphysique*]”.⁵⁶ The collusion, unwitting and therefore uncritical, of critique with its targets confounds the elements that were to be distinguished, in the first place, through the apparatus of critical judgement. Critical projects implode of their own accord, their fate yoked together with whatever they criticise.

When Derrida picks up the thread of the phenomenological critique of metaphysics from Husserl, he recommends that *logos* itself be dehumanised in a critical broadening that would surpass the amplification it received at the hands of the “father” of phenomenology. Among many others, two interrelated deconstructive alternatives to a purely human *logos* stand out.

1. It may come as a surprise to the readers of Derrida that, instead of demanding the deformalisation of *logos*, he calls for its *more intensive* formalisation by means of mathematisation, “whose progress is in absolute solidarity with the practice of a nonphonetic inscription”.⁵⁷ To be sure, critique will be responsible for checking the limits of formalisation, which has been strategically chosen to thwart the alliance of empiricism and metaphysics: “It seems to me that critical work on ‘natural’ languages by means of ‘natural’ languages [*travail critique sur les langues ‘naturelles’ au moyen des langues ‘naturelles’*], an entire internal transformation of classical notation, a systematic practice of exchanges between ‘natural’ languages and writing should prepare and accompany such formalization”.⁵⁸ Despite its supplementary and preparatory function, critique is not a mere handmaiden to the classical standard of scientificity, encapsulated in mathematical notation. The ongoing critical work must attend to every stage of the formalising translation, so as to make it aware of what, in resisting this carryover, keeps itself obdurately untranslatable and undeconstructable. (This resistance is localised, above all, in textuality and writing as such, rather than in the inaccessible thing-in-itself, or in “the real”

outside signification.) Distinct from an iteration of traditional self-critique, the horizon of “critical work on ‘natural’ languages by means of ‘natural’ languages”, of *logoi* on *logoi*, is limitless and ever-receding. The assertion that “language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique [*le langage porte en soi la nécessité de sa propre critique*]”⁵⁹ is not made in the spirit of ultra-idealism, of language immersed in itself, in its autistic self-negations or self-affirmations. (What would this “in-itself”, *en soi*, of language look like?) In addition to the material resistances it brings to bear on the operations of mathematisation, this critique phenomenalisises the linguistic medium, rendering it impassable for the sense that would have been communicated in and through it. The partially opaque body of the sign discredits every presupposition regarding the transparency of meaning in sense-bestowal. The finitude, phenomenality and facticity of language demarcate the limits of formalisation, resulting in the warning that *logos* cannot be “treated thematically, an inability which precedes every critical regression as its shadow”.⁶⁰ To sum up, then: language and the voice are never completely phenomenal and never thoroughly ideal; they are on the way to phenomenality. Prevented from exceeding its reach, no longer designating a “pure phenomenon”, *logos* returns to its proper place and becomes, at once, something more and something less than a voice.

2. *Logos* can also be extended to nonhuman animals, to other living beings, such as plants, or even to things. Theirs would be *logoi* without thematisation, without the structure of the foundational “as such”,⁶¹ and without a voice—that is, without self-coincidence in the vocal medium even where one can clearly hear vocalisation, screeching, howling and so forth. What appears to be a privation (“without”), harkening back to Heidegger’s image of the animal as “poor in the world”, is an impenetrably dense positivity on the hither side of all criticism. The foreign intentionality of creatures and of objects targets us, converts us into the objects of *their* wordless critique and into the targets of *their*, often faceless and impersonal, gazes, confirming the spectral underside of *logoi*.⁶² In contrast to the simultaneous phenomenalisation and formalisation of *logos* in (1), this amplification has to do with the becoming-*logos* of phenomena, their other-than-human expressions that are, more often than, not indecipherable from the vantage point of human intentionality. Hence, “the *phenomenon* as *phantasm*”⁶³ who/that calls out or mutely addresses me. The materialist phantasmagoria of deconstruction is predicated on the critical broadening of the concept of language to account for what Walter Benjamin used to call “language as such”, of which “the language of man” is an isolated example. But, just as we cannot stop the tendency toward

formalisation in the name of “natural” languages that are embedded in collective lifeworlds, so we cannot simply discard the other dimension of *logos*’s spectrality—the language of abstraction—in exchange for the foreign intentionalities of creatures and objects that haunt us. In keeping with the deconstructive ambiguity of the French expression *plus de . . .* the spectrality of *logos* is, at the same time, no longer (or no more) abstract and more than abstract; it is decoupled from the human voice, while tenaciously holding onto something in excess of presence as actual reality. No critique, in Derrida’s view, is capable of disentangling this knot, in which it, too, is caught.

This last point is one that Marx’s materialist critique of idealism and Husserl’s phenomenological critique of founded scientific conceptualities have, in different ways, missed. Convinced of their ability to dissipate the fog of abstract representations, both streams of philosophy stand under the banner of “predeconstructive” critical ontology, with their firm belief that they can drive the spectres away by means of a rigorous critical analysis.⁶⁴ Not only is critique shored up by fervent faith in the power of critical thinking, but it also seeks the “critical assurance as to the discernment between . . . two concepts”, the assurance that is “the price of the *krinein* of critique”.⁶⁵ In other words, it lapses into a prematurely accepted and, therefore, uncritical positivity. A linear division between the founding and the founded, the immanent and the transcendent, true and false consciousness, the real and the ideal, sacrifices one sense of critique to another, choosing the certainty of discernment over the unsettling disquietude of the critical question and, especially, of critical difference. Chasing away the spectre of abstraction that speaks through money or through scientific conceptions divorced from the lifeworld, Marx and Husserl risk driving away the “good” spectrality of communism and of noematic objects.

Deconstruction reveals the *aporia* of an uncritical divide in the midst of critique, whether it is a critique of “a subjective representation and an abstraction” (Marx),⁶⁶ or whether it is a critique of objectivity built upon “dogmatic and historically determined grounds” as a support for the “reduction of the totality of the world” (Husserl).⁶⁷ While not proposing a *critical alternative* to these cul-de-sacs, Derrida endorses what we might call “phantomatic phenomenology”, with its ethical desideratum to welcome ghosts, including the excessive abstractions of *logos* and the phantasmatic appearances of phenomena, while taking care not to renounce the legacies of radical criticism. So thoroughly does deconstruction accede to spectrality that it, itself, takes the place of a ghost haunting critical thought (if not all acts of thinking)—a role previously allotted to scepticism. And yet it is precisely this welcoming and unconditional affirmation compatible with radical critique that distinguishes it from a purely

sceptical approach.⁶⁸ Scepticism rejects everything that is given; deconstruction accepts the nongiven or the hardly given ghosts that (or who) haunt us, as we are given *to them*.

The affirmative nature of deconstructive critique has nothing in common with Descartes's breakthrough toward the certainty of the *cogito* after doubting the existence of everything, or with Husserl's discovery that the being of consciousness withstands the power of reduction. In an affirmation that precedes the question and presages the philosophical will-to-questioning, deconstruction joins the list of the nontranscendental conditions of possibility for the event, which includes "the gift, the 'yes,' the 'come,' decision, testimony, the secret, etc. And perhaps death".⁶⁹ Neither phenomenal nor noumenal, neither belonging squarely to *logos* nor falling outside its reach, these undeconstructable terms, with which deconstruction forges a bond, make phenomenology possible from the depths of "the very experience of the (impossible) possibility of the impossible".⁷⁰ Like deconstruction itself, they are not available for critical discernment, evaluation or decision-making, because any critique unquestionably presupposes them for its own negations and positings. The undeconstructable is the thematically uncriticisable underside of every critique.

The gift, the "yes", the "come!" and all the other keywords of Derrida's phantasmagoria are synonymous with that distance which separates phenomena and *logos* from each other and from themselves and which spurs the symbiotic development of phenomenology and critique. The closure of phenomenology will have been the end of critique: the "*Endstiftung* of phenomenology (phenomenology's ultimate critical legitimation: i.e., what its sense, value, and right tell us about it) . . . never directly measures up to a phenomenology".⁷¹ This failure of *Endstiftung* is not due to the gap between the discipline's unattainable normative ideal and actual phenomenological practice. It has to do, alternatively, with the essential non-self-coincidence of phenomenology as the basis for the eventful vivaciousness of its critique. So long as these distances are not bridged, phenomenology's "ultimate critical legitimation" remains forthcoming. Although the "yes" and the "come!" are addressed to the other in (1) hyperformal or (2) absolutely nonformal manners—in a *logos* that is both more and less than a voice—the intended message does not arrive at its destination, which is no longer a noematic target of my intentionality. My appeal to spectral others (for instance, the critical thinkers of the past, whose projects Husserl wishes to resuscitate in his self-critical philosophy) does not summon them, but rather denudes me before their ghostly critique. Ethically, all I can do is leave the ultimate critical legitimation of phenomenology up to them, letting the voices, or the more-and-less-than-*logoi*, of the five critical phenomenologists I engage with resonate in my text.

NOTES

1. Rudolph Gasché, *The Honor of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 21.
2. Much more nuanced is the position of Robert Bernasconi, who observes that only “if critique is taken in its ordinary sense of negative external criticism, then deconstruction and critique are not the same”. “The Crisis of Critique and the Awakening of Politicization in Levinas and Derrida”, in *The Politics of Deconstruction: Jacques Derrida and the Other of Philosophy*, ed. Martin McQuillan (London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007), 81.
3. Gasché, *The Honor of Thinking*, 21.
4. Jacques Derrida, *Points . . . Interviews, 1974–1994*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 357.
5. Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 11.
6. Derrida, *Points*, 54.
7. Gasché, *The Honor of Thinking*, 21–22.
8. Hence, one should be cautious in attributing to deconstruction the familiar traits of self-critique, as Bernasconi does in “The Crisis of Critique”, 84.
9. Jacques Derrida, *Who’s Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, trans. Jan Plug (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 101.
10. Cf. Derrida, *On the Name*, 13.
11. For instance, in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Vol. II*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), Derrida triangulates decision, crisis and critique with the help of the Greek verb *krinein* and confirms that “deconstruction is neither an *analysis* nor a *critique*. . . . Nor is it a critique in the general or in a Kantian sense. The instance of *krinein* or *krisis* (decision, choice, judgement, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential ‘themes’ or ‘objects’ of deconstruction” (4). And in *Who’s Afraid of Philosophy?* he says that “[p]hilosophy would have always been the experience of its own crisis; it would have always been lived by questioning itself about its own resources, its own possibility, in the *critical* instance of judging and deciding [*krinein*] on its own meaning”, repeating ad nauseum “its own tradition as the teaching of its own crisis and as the *paideia* of self-critique in general” (100–101).
12. For the “constitutive” role of *différance*, see Derrida, *Positions*, 9. On *différance* as “impure difference”, refer to Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 156.
13. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 236–37.
14. This movement of repetition is, for Paola Marrati, indispensable to the idea of crisis (and thus of critique) not only as something that “threaten[s] history, but also as what render[s] it possible”. *Genesis and Trace: Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, 43).
15. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 265.
16. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 265.
17. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 246.
18. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 245.
19. Derrida, *Points*, 313.
20. For instance, Derrida, *Positions*, 46: “I have attempted not to formalize this motivic regime of the surplus (and the) lack in the neutrality of a critical discourse (I have said why an exhaustive formalization in the classical sense is impossible)”.
21. Cf. Marrati, *Genesis and Trace*, 43ff, for a discussion of this statement in *Introduction to Husserl’s Origin of Geometry*.
22. Derrida, *Positions*, 3.

23. Cf. Michael Marder, *The Event of the Thing: Derrida's Post-Deconstructive Realism* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2009), for an explication of the deconstructive notion of the thing.

24. For the inversion of this image, see Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Michael Naas and Pascale-Anne Brault (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 9ff.

25. Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 9, 20.

26. Derrida, *On the Name*, 67.

27. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 245.

28. Dehisce: to burst or split open along a line or a slit, as do the ripe capsules or pods of some plants. *The American Heritage Dictionary*, ed. Margery S. Berube et al. (Boston, New York and London: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 376.

29. "Différance, which (is) nothing, is (in) the thing itself. It is (given) in the thing itself. It (is) in the thing itself. It, *différance*, the thing (itself) [*La différence, qui n'(est) rien, est (dans) la chose même. Elle est (donnée) dans la chose même. Elle (est) la chose même. Elle, la différence, la chose (même)*]." Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40/59.

30. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 182. On J. Hillis Miller's reading (*For Derrida* [New York: Fordham University Press, 2009]), dehiscence is indeed an opening, though not for a problem but for the advent of the other (46).

31. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 220.

32. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 245. Likewise, Aristotle's texts include the limitation and its opposite; delimitation is governed by the same set of concepts as limitation (Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 61).

33. For more on this relation, see Michael Syrotinski, "From Etymology (*Etumos Logos*) to Translation via Badiou and Paulhan", in *Reading Derrida's Of Grammatology*, ed. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (New York and London: Continuum, 2011), 23–27.

34. Derrida, *Positions*, 13, 22. Or again: "There is no simple answer to the question whether grammatology is a 'science.' In a word, I would say that it *inscribes* and *delimits* Science; it must freely and rigorously make the norms of science function in its own writing; once again, it *marks* and at the same time *loosens* the limit which closes classical scientificity" (36). In other words, grammatology is the critical respiration of *logos*, its narrowing and broadening, in which the pulse of phenomenology also partakes.

35. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri C. Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

36. "The one who will shine in the science of writing will shine like the sun. A scribe" (quoted in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 3).

37. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 51.

38. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 32–33.

39. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 70.

40. On deconstructive exemplarity, cf. Irene Harvey, *Labyrinths of Exemplarity: At the Limits of Deconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York, 2002).

41. Jacques Derrida, *Signéponge/Signsponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 118, 119.

42. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 4–5. References to phenomenological critique are numerous on these initial pages of the introduction to *Speech and Phenomena*. "In other words", Derrida writes, "we shall not be asking whether such and such metaphysical heritage has been able, here or there, to restrict the vigilance of the phenomenologist, but whether the phenomenological form of this vigilance is not already controlled by metaphysics itself. In the few lines just touched upon, distrust of metaphysical presuppositions is already presented as the condition for an authentic 'theory of knowledge,' as if the project of a theory of knowledge, even when it has freed itself by the 'critique'

of such and such speculative system, did not belong at the outset to the history of metaphysics". And again: "our intention is to begin to confirm that the recourse to phenomenological critique is metaphysics itself, restored to its original purity in its historical achievement" (5). See also Bernasconi, "The Crisis of Critique", 82, on the complicity of critique and what it criticises in the history of metaphysics.

43. Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl*, 171.

44. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 25, 26.

45. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 25, 26. Hence, the concept of sign, in and of itself, as a critique of metaphysics, which is nonetheless entwined with its "object": "the metaphysics of presence is shaken with the help of the concept of *sign*". But "the concept of sign cannot in itself surpass the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. The concept of sign, in each of its aspects, has been determined by this opposition throughout the totality of its history" (Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 281).

46. Rudolph Bernet ("Derrida and His Master's Voice", in *Derrida and Phenomenology*, ed. William McKenna and J. Claude Evans [Dodrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer, 1995]) has correctly observed that Derrida's discussion of the nature of signification in Husserl is a pretext for delving into much broader issues of ontology and phenomenology (3ff).

47. The same may be noted concerning the deconstructive arrest of Hegelian dialectics, permitting it to maintain its restlessness, on the verge of synthesis.

48. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 15. Does Derrida indulge in thematic criticism when he accuses Heidegger, too, of "uncritical" phonologism? "Doubtless, there is a certain Heideggerian phonologism, a noncritical privilege accorded in his works, as in the West in general, to the voice, to a determined 'expressive substance'" (Derrida, *Positions*, 10).

49. What is no longer ensured here is the "proximity of consciousness to its object". The privilege of consciousness is lost along with "pure expression", "the transparency of the signifier—the phenomenological voice—close enough to signified sense and to the consciousness that intends it to mean that its function is no longer one of indication" (Marrati, *Genesis and Trace*, 66).

50. Derrida, *On the Name*, 27.

51. Derrida, *On the Name*, 35.

52. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 104.

53. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 78.

54. Here Derrida is in total agreement with Heidegger, though for completely different reasons.

55. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 280. See also Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 97–98. Here, with the inclusion of Copernicus and Darwin, the critiques lose somewhat their metaphysical tinge, even though the basic point remains unchanged.

56. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 166, 249.

57. Derrida, *Positions*, 34.

58. Derrida, *Positions*, 34–35, 47. On the complicity of empiricism and metaphysics, see Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 152.

59. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 284, 416.

60. Derrida, *Introduction to Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 70n65.

61. Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills and Marie-Louis Mallet (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 142.

62. In *Specters of Marx*, the ghostly thing represents this excess on the obverse side of intentionality: "Here is—or rather there is, over there [Voici—ou voilà, là-bas], an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, 'this thing', but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [*quelque chose, entre quelque chose et quelqu'un, quelque ou quelconque, quelque chose, cette chose-ci, 'this thing', cette chose pourtant et non une autre, cette chose qui nous regarde*], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology,

psychoanalysis as much as philosophy. . . . Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing [*Cette Chose qui n'est pas une chose*], this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there [*Cette Chose nous regarde cependant et nous voit ne pas la voir même quand elle est là*]” (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 6, 26).

63. Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 25.

64. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 170, 47.

65. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 124.

66. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 171.

67. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 60.

68. Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 35. See also Derrida, *Points*, 357, on “the (non-positive) affirmation . . . presupposed by every critique and every negativity”. If John Llewelyn (*Margins of Religion: Between Kierkegaard and Derrida* [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009]) is correct, and hauntology really is “the absolute responsibility that comes with the coming into existence” (399), then it would make for the Derridian version of what Husserl used to call “responsible critique”.

69. Derrida, *On the Name*, 43.

70. Derrida, *On the Name*, 43.

71. Derrida, *Introduction to Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 141.

Epilogue

An Affirmative Critique

Our habitual associations with “critique” include a negation of political or religious authorities, an attack on an economic order, a disagreement with a philosophical argument or, at the extreme, a rejection of historical ontology *in toto*. In everyday discourse, the critical attitude refers to the reactive stance of the critics, who must deface, dismantle or disassemble the materials they comment upon. Already in Kant, however, *Kritik* carried a slew of positive and enabling connotations, as it freed human reason to flourish within its proper confines. Even more so, critique has been affirmative in phenomenology, in which it has exceeded all conventional epistemological and ontological moulds.

As we have seen, Husserl’s respect for the givenness of what is given and how it is given survives the most relentless of reductions. Pre-predicative judgements operate with the first, nonthematic division within the field of givenness; coincide with experience as a whole; and activate phenomenological critique, which retraces their outlines. Heidegger does everything in his power to affirm the difference between being and beings, implicitly equating the most “complete” phenomenology with the thinking that unfolds in this critical fissure. Levinas’s unconditional acceptance of the other underlies his critique of ontology and autonomous subjectivity. In Arendt’s works, a life-affirming finitude of new beginnings drives the twin critiques of violence and totalitarianism. And before raising any question, Derrida has deconstruction utter its “yes” to the ghostly, the spectral, the undeconstructable and—last but not least—the legacies of critique.

If we are to believe the thesis of the “enlightenment to come”, which Derrida advances in *Rogues*, the process of actively inheriting elements from the critical tradition is still under way, especially since this inheritance itself means “a critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation”.¹ A seemingly hyper- or metacritical attitude does not magnify the morsels of negativity scattered around this tradition, but, on the contrary, buttresses the new positivity of a “filtering reaffirmation”. Indeed, a metacritical evaluation of critique is implausible because the critical project is far from finished, which is why it can still claim for itself the title “critical”.² Fragments of Kant’s *Critiques*, for instance, reemerge in the architecture of *Phenomena—Critique—Logos*, the first two chapters of which roughly par-

allel the critique of pure reason, while the third chapter echoes the critique of practical reason. Just as the phenomenological tradition repeats preontological, nonthematic, pre-predicative judgements, without simply re-presenting them, so we, the postcritical inheritors of this tradition, must tread what seems to be the already-traversed terrain of critique. Analogous to Plato's legacy in Western philosophy and to "the enlightenment to come", the future of critique (and of phenomenology as a whole) is rushing towards us from its past.

In the same vein, critical phenomenology cannot be confined to the works of, among others, Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, Arendt and Derrida, since, at best, it is reliant on *our* "critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation" of the phenomenological tradition. What it reaffirms is the multiplicity and scatter of phenomena, modes of intentionality, beginnings or *différance*, but also the gathering of discursive articulation, being or ethical injunction. At once analytic and synthetic, it reinvents, each time anew, the nontautological relation of phenomena and *logos*. From the teleological standpoint of well-rounded systems of thought, it will be immersed in a perpetual crisis, which is but the symptom of its critical vitality. Above all, critical phenomenology avows this essential incompleteness and finitude that approximate the temporality of existence.

Succinctly put, critical phenomenology emancipates itself from metaphysical thought when it says "yes" to time. It overcomes metaphysics when it turns its attention to a future that is not another extension of the present—that is to say, when Husserl accentuates the possible, along with the faculty of imagination, at the expense of perceptual actuality; when Heidegger pinpoints the potential for individuation in the impossible possibility of death; when Levinas conceives of fecundity as a set of possibilities expropriated by the other; when Arendt insists on unaccomplishable action; and when Derrida differentiates between *futur* and *a-venir*, emphasising the aporetic "experience of the (impossible) possibility of the impossible". Nor does it neglect the past of passive synthesis in Husserl, the unrepresentable thrownness in Heidegger, the immemorial trace of the other in Levinas, natality in Arendt and the spectres in Derrida. Phenomenology declines the task of the "critical restoration of the metaphysics of presence"³ to the extent that it affirms temporal finitude, from which neither phenomena nor *logos* nor anything in-between the two are exempt. Instead of a "critical restoration" of metaphysics, it contributes to a critical affirmation of existence. Its critical aspect has to do with the translation of *krinein* into a temporal, rather than spatial, fissure; its affirmative moment expresses a return of, and a recommitment to, what has passed away, without gathering the past and the present under the aegis of *logos*. Absent the critical impulse, the temporality of phenomenology would have borne uncanny resemblance to the eternal recurrence, which was Nietzsche's signature method of putting together phenomena and *logos*. Devoid of affirmation, it would have lapsed into the

Hegelian unhappy consciousness, which is merely divided against itself and remains dissatisfied with the fact of its nonfulfilment. Time is the hinge, both separating and correlating phenomena and *logos* in the unfinished project of critical phenomenology. The “yes” to finitude, resounding within this broken articulation, is the unique gift of Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, Arendt and Derrida to the rest of the philosophical tradition—a legacy that we must still learn to inherit.

NOTES

1. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 90, 92.
2. In the same vein, the deconstruction of the history of critique cannot be “‘simply’ critical” (Derrida, *Paper Machine*, 139).
3. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 49.

Index

- Abbau* (destruction), 5, 21
absolute evidence (*absolute Evidenz*), 29
absolute indubitability, 73
absolute knowledge, 58
absolutism, monarchical, 106
abstraction, 25
abstract judgements, 62
action, critical phenomenology as, 93–100
actual interconnection, 27
adequatio, 81, 95
Adorno, Theodor, 82, 86
affair complex. *See Sachverhalt*
affective turbulence, 83
aletheia, 67
Allison, David, 125
American Political Science Association, 108
ana-logos, 58
anamnesis, 2–3
Anglo-American analytic philosophy, 1
animals, 128
anthropocentrism, 104
antifoundationalism, 99
antitotalitarianism, 105
apodicticity, 73
apologia, 72
apophainesthai ta phainomena, 10
aporia, 129
appearance, 106, 109
archē (beginning), 3
Arendt, Hannah, 93–94, 95, 102, 105;
beginnings and, 99, 112n6;
Enlightenment and, 106;
foundations and, 6, 98–99;
Heidegger and, 97, 98; human
plurality and, 3; Husserl and, 97,
98–99; natality and, 7, 95, 104; Plato
and, 98; revolution and, 108,
109–110; survival and, 99; violence
and, 100–101, 102–103, 110. *See also*
specific works
Aristotle, 19, 24
authentic existence, 84
The Basic Problems of Phenomenology
(Heidegger), 52
Beckett, Samuel, 111
beginnings, 3, 7, 98, 110; Arendt and,
99, 112n6; doubling of, 93; natality
and, 95, 101, 104; speech and, 101;
totalitarianism and, 105; truth and,
95
Begriffsbildung. *See* concept-formation
Being and Time (Heidegger), 10, 66, 67,
84, 86; call of being in, 61; radical
plurality and, 52; temporality of
time and, 64
being-with. *See Mitsein*
Benhabib, Seyla, 113n57
Benjamin, Walter, 104, 115, 128
Bernasconi, Robert, 131n2
Bernet, Rudolph, 133n46
bloße Worte, 31, 103
body politic, 97–98
Brentano, Franz, 1, 5
la brissure, 13
call of being, 61
Cartesian Meditations (Husserl), 40, 43,
45, 73
Cavarero, Adriana, 112n12
Au Coeur de la Raison, la Phénoménologie
(Romano), 11
cognition. *See Erkenntniskritik*
cognitive science, 1, 2
concept-formation (*Begriffsbildung*), 25,
26
conceptuality, 27, 78, 79

- consciousness, 6, 17, 34–35, 44, 61, 126;
 being of, 58–59; dogmatism and, 85,
 88; Husserl on, 40, 81; immanence,
 14; intentionality and, 52, 56, 58–59,
 81; perception and, 66; primordial
 splitting of, 39; pure, 5, 55, 56, 59, 73,
 81; relative, 63, 64; self-
 consciousness, 58, 60, 84; self-
 delimitation and, 39;
 transcendental, 14, 108;
 transcendental objectification of, 62
- constant critique. *See in einer
 beständigen Kritik*
- constitutive subjectivity, 5;
 transcendental, 72–73
- continuity, 93
- contraction, 13
- Copernicus, 78
- correspondence theory of truth, 57
- The Crisis* (Husserl), 5, 6, 17, 20, 43;
 constant critique and, 16; *epochē*
 and, 43; lifeworld and, 21
- critical anamnesis, 3
- critical delimitation, 40
- critical dislocations, 79–86
- critical-pragmatic adequation, 28
- “Critique of Violence” (Benjamin), 116
- Critiques* (Kant), 135
- current phenomenology, 61
- Dasein, 3, 64, 78, 84–85; intentionality
 and, 59; objectification of, 63;
 temporality and, 14
- death, 73, 84–85, 95, 98
- de Beauvoir, Simone, 3
- deconstruction, 5, 115–116, 124, 126,
 129–130; *différance* and, 3, 7, 117–118,
 119, 120; logocentrism and, 34;
 plurality and, 122–123; self-criticism
 and, 117; signification and, 124;
 thematic criticism and, 123
- deformalisation, 127
- déformation professionnelle*, 12
- degree-zero of criticism, 47n8
- dehiscence, 120–121, 123
- dephenomenalisation, 38
- Derrida, Jacques, 13, 119, 120, 126, 127,
 130, 135; deconstruction and, 7, 116,
 117, 123; deformalisation and, 127;
 dehiscence and, 121; *différance* and,
 3, 30; earth and, 77; foundationalism
 and, 6, 12; Gasché and, 115–116;
 general textuality and, 116;
 geometry and, 89n5; grammatology
 and, 121; hauntology and, 122;
 Husserl and, 123, 124, 125; Kant
 and, 120; science and, 122;
 spectrality and, 82; trembling and,
 71. *See also specific works*
- Descartes, René, 36, 73, 130
- descriptions, 40–41, 47n8
- destruction. *See Abbau*
- Destruktion*, 55
- desubstantialisation, 80
- development, of experience, 105
- Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and
 Horkheimer), 86
- dialectics, 102, 133n47
- différance*, 117–119, 120, 122, 123, 136;
 deconstruction and, 3, 7, 117–118,
 119, 120; Derrida and, 3, 30
- dislocations, critical, 79–86
- dogmatism, 15, 101, 116, 124, 126;
 consciousness and, 85, 88; of
 sciences, 19, 23–24, 45
- double object, 58
- doxa*, 22–23, 31, 113n37
- dwelling, 79
- earth, 7, 72, 77, 78, 88; being and, 75–78;
 lifeworlds and, 74; objectivity of, 82;
 stability of, 75; totality of, 78
- earthquakes, 7, 72, 74, 75, 77, 78–79
- eidetic phenomenology, 13–14
- Endstiftung*, 130
- enlarged reason, 47n4
- Enlightenment, 106
- epistēmē*, 22–23, 102
- epistemological criticism, 27–28
- epochē*, 42–43, 45, 56, 77, 81, 95
- Erkenntniskritik* (cognition), 35–38,
 49n35
- ethical critique: critical dislocations,
 79–86; critique as earthquake, 71–79;
 other and, 86–89
- ethical desubstantialisation, 80
- ethical maturation, 85
- ethical substitution, 88

- evaluative criticism, 45
 evidence, 27–28; absolute, 29; relative, 28
Existence and Existents (Levinas), 83
 existentialism, 80
 existential temporality, 86
 experience, 27–28, 58; development of, 105; truth and, 62–68
Experience and Judgment (Husserl), 21, 22, 74
 expressive signs, 33

la fatigue de la position (the tiredness of the position), 75
 fear, 84, 86, 87
 Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 5
 filtering reaffirmation, 135
Formal and Transcendental Logic (Husserl), 17, 26, 45
 formal logic, 24, 29
 foundationalism, 6, 12, 76, 100
 foundations, 75–76, 98–99
 Frankfurt School, 79, 86
 freedom, 97
 French Revolution, 99
 Freud, Sigmund, 54, 97, 127
 fundamental ontology, 5–6, 72, 84

 Galilean science, 47n14
 Gasché, Rodolphe, 115–116, 117
Geist, 110, 111
geistige Akt (mental act), 26
geistige Sinn (mental meaning), 26, 31
 general textuality, 116
genitivus objectivus, 61
 geometry, 89n5
 geo-onto-metaphysics, 78
 German Idealism, 5, 126
Geschichtlichkeit (historicity), 22
 givenness, 9, 12, 29, 40, 49n38, 66, 94, 126, 135; delimitation of, 14; pregivenness, 20–21, 22, 48n16; self-givenness, 38, 39
Glas, 118
 grammatology, 121–124
grammē, 121–122
die Grenzen, 24
 grounding, 73–74

habitus, of thinking, 14
 hauntology, 119, 122, 124
 Hegel, G. W. F., 5, 11, 58, 60; being of consciousness and, 58–59; death and, 84; experience and, 58; Heidegger and, 52–53, 54–55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 64–65, 67, 117; Husserl and, 5, 6, 54, 59; inner relation and, 27; perception and, 66; phenomenology of spirit and, 6, 55; self-consciousness and, 84; sense-certainty and, 65; temporality of time and, 64. *See also specific works*
 Heidegger, Martin, 3, 6, 10, 13, 84, 135; Arendt and, 97, 98; authentic existence and, 84; death and, 73, 84; Derrida and, 120, 124; fear and, 86; foundations and, 5–6; Hegel and, 52–53, 54–55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 64–65, 67, 117; Husserl and, 52–53, 54–55, 57, 67, 82; Levinas and, 6, 78, 84; multiplicity and, 51; plurality and, 52; preinterpretation and, 28; primal words and, 32; Sartre and, 1; on science, 20. *See also specific works*
 higher reason, 26
 historicity. *See Geschichtlichkeit*
The History of the Concept of Time (Heidegger), 52
The Honor of Thinking (Gasché), 115
 Horkheimer, Max, 82, 86
The Human Condition (Arendt), 94, 104
 human language, 104
 human plurality, 3, 94
 Husserl, Edmund, 1, 2, 6, 9, 14, 15, 22; abstraction and, 25; Arendt and, 97, 98–99; cognition and, 35–38; on consciousness, 40, 81; constant critique and, 16; Derrida and, 123, 124, 125; earth and, 78; *epistēmē* and, 22, 102; *Erkenntniskritik* and, 35; on expressive signs, 33; geometry and, 89n5; givenness and, 39, 135; ground and, 73–74; Hegel and, 5, 6, 54, 59; Heidegger and, 52–53, 54–55, 57, 67, 82; idealisations and, 21; intentionality and, 3, 59; internal critical frame and, 40; on judgements, 28, 62; Kant and, 19, 44;

- Levinas and, 69n26; logic and, 26;
 logos and, 17–19, 20, 104; material
 ontologies and, 14; metaphysics
 and, 12, 37, 127; phenomenon and,
 30; reduction and, 36, 42, 43, 52, 56,
 59, 119; sciences and, 5, 19, 20;
 transcendental method of, 114n70.
See also specific works
- hyletic phenomenology, 65
- idealism, 5, 126, 129
The Idea of Phenomenology (Husserl), 30,
 35, 36
Ideas I (Husserl), 14, 15, 19, 23, 73, 96
 identity, 75, 82, 88; self-identity, 82–83
 idiomatcity, 123
 immaturity. *See Unmündigkeit*
 immemorial past, 95
in einer beständigen Kritik (constant
 critique), 16
 infancy, 85
 inner relation, 27
 instrumental rationality, 86
 intentionality, 1, 12, 36, 39, 63, 82, 87;
 consciousness and, 52, 56, 58–59, 81;
 empty, 18; fulfilment and, 59, 65;
 Husserl and, 3, 59; obsession and, 83
 intentional objects, 115
 internal critical frame, 40
L'Internationale, 88
 intuition, 63
 invisible visibility, 113n58
- Janicaud, Dominique, 58
 judgements, 27–28, 29–30, 44; abstract,
 62; nonspeculative essence of, 30;
 pre-predicative, 3, 28, 29, 39–40
- Kant, Immanuel, 4, 5, 15, 80, 85, 106,
 135; Derrida and, 120; Husserl and,
 19, 44; neo-Kantianism, 5; reason
 and, 13, 34; subjectivity and, 73–74.
See also specific works
Kant and Phenomenology (Rockmore), 5
kath'echon (restrainer), 102
khôra, 4
 Kierkegaard, Søren, 86
krinein, 10, 12, 106, 120, 131n11, 136
 Kristeva, Julia, 112n10
- labour, phenomenological, 94, 97
 language, 104, 128–129
The Laws (Plato), 98, 108
Lebenswelt (lifeworld), 74
legen, 11, 81
 legends, 110
Letter on Humanism (Heidegger), 1, 61
 “Letter to a Japanese Friend” (Derrida),
 116
- Levinas, Emmanuel, 3, 6–7, 54, 71–72,
 81, 87, 122; death and, 73, 98;
 dwelling and, 79; earth and, 75,
 76–77; fear and, 86, 87;
 foundationalism and, 76; Heidegger
 and, 6, 78, 84; Husserl and, 69n26;
 immemorial past and, 95;
 metaphysics and, 80, 83;
 misinterpretations by, 78; obsession
 and, 83–84; signification and, 91n48;
 spirituality and, 82; suffering and,
 85. *See also specific works*
- liberal parliamentarism, 103
 lifeworld. *See Lebenswelt*
locus essendi, 94
 logical capacity, 18
 logical concept-formation, 25
Logical Investigations (Husserl), 6, 9, 15,
 28
 logical means, 18
 logical products, 18
 logocentrism, 34, 121, 122
 loneliness, 113n57
 Löwith, Karl, 52
- Marrati, Paola, 131n14
 Marx, Karl, 5, 98, 129
 materiality, 14, 98
 material ontologies, 14
 mathematization, 127, 128
 meaningful speech, 104
 meaning-making, 21
 Mensch, James, 49n35
 mental act. *See geistige Akt*
 mental meaning. *See geistige Sinn*
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 3, 51
metaphysica generalis, 37, 39
metaphysica specialis, 37, 39
 metaphysics, 78, 124, 133n45; Husserl
 and, 12, 37, 127; Levinas and, 80, 83;

- ontology, 58; temporality of time and, 64
- mineness, 41
- Mitdasein*, 63
- Mitsein* (being-with), 88
- monarchical absolutism, 106
- Moran, Dermot, 5
- music, 15
- mutatis mutandis*, 124
- muthos*, 110
- mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, 87
- natality, 93, 94, 96, 99–100; Arendt and, 7, 95, 104; beginnings and, 95, 101, 104; speech and, 101; violence and, 100–104
- natural attitude, 17
- naturalism, 2
- negative self-relation, 13
- negativity, 5, 69n52, 86; appearance and, 66; of death, 84; fear and, 84; of reduction, 53
- neo-Kantianism, 5
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 16, 127, 136
- The Nomos of the Earth* (Schmitt), 74
- noncontradiction, 82
- nonphonetic writing, 125
- norm of reasoning. *See Vernunftnorm*
- nouninuous essence, 87
- objectivation, 60
- objective sciences, 42, 77–78
- objectivity, 31
- obsession, 83–84
- O’Byrne, Anne, 112n5
- Of Grammatology* (Derrida), 13
- On Revolution* (Arendt), 109, 112n21
- ontological phenomenology, 51–55; critique and absolute, 55–62; truth and experience, 62–68
- ontology, 4–5, 56, 74–75; of consciousness, 58, 59; ethics and, 76, 77; fundamental, 5–6, 72, 84; material, 14; metaphysical, 58; method of, 52; relational, 80; substantialist, 80
- orbital rotation, 78
- originary division. *See Ur-teil*
- Origin of Geometry* (Husserl), 77
- panoramic existing, 78
- parliamentarism, 103
- Passive and Active Syntheses* (Husserl), 21
- passive synthesis, 73
- pathos*, 63
- perception, 66
- “Perpetual Peace” (Kant), 106
- perspectivalism, 78
- phallogocentrism, 121
- phantasmagoria, 128, 130
- phantomatic phenomenology, 129
- pharmakon*, 1, 120
- phenomenalised words, 31, 33
- phenomenological labour, 94, 97
- Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel), 58
- philia*, 11
- philosophical epochs, 38
- philosophical grounding, 73–74
- philosophical instantiation, 96
- Philosophy of Right* (Hegel), 11
- phonē*, 122, 125
- Plato, 76, 102, 108, 136; Arendt and, 98; rediscovery of, 24; wonder and, 74. *See also specific works*
- Platonism, 42
- plurality: deconstruction and, 122–123; human, 3, 94; radical, 52
- Points . . .* (Derrida), 115–116
- polemos*, 9
- polis*, 96, 101
- political phenomenology: action and, 93–100; revolution and, 104–111; totalitarianism and, 104–111
- political speech, 108
- political theology, 106
- Ponge, Francis, 123
- Positions* (Derrida), 121
- positivity, 7, 66, 77; of filtering reaffirmation, 135; mereness and, 23; of presence, 76
- power, 103, 106, 109
- pragmata*, 25
- pregivenness, 20–21, 22, 48n16
- pregnant meaning, 18
- preinterpretation, 28
- preliminary concept. *See Vorbegriff*
- pre-predicative judgement, 3, 28, 29, 39–40

- primal words. *See Ur-Worte*
 primary condition of thought, 96
 principle of principles, 40, 99, 125
 productive tautology, 12
Prolegomena (Husserl), 24
The Promise of Politics (Arendt), 102, 105
 protowriting, 30
 Psalms 82:5, 87
 psychology, 20, 40
 pure consciousness, 5, 55, 56, 59, 73, 81
 pure immanence, 73, 75
 pure phenomenology, 95
- ratio*, 11
 rationality, 126; instrumental, 86
 reason, 13, 19, 27, 34; enlarged, 47n4;
 higher, 26; public use of, 106;
 Vernunftnorm, 18, 24
 reduction, 42, 44, 55, 73, 117; Husserl
 and, 36, 42, 43, 52, 56, 59, 119;
 negativity of, 53; self-reduction, 107
rei et intellectus, 57, 95
 relational ontology, 80
 relative consciousness, 63, 64
 relative evidences, 28
 relative phenomenology, 57
 responsible critique. *See verantwortliche
 Kritik*
 restrainer. *See kath'echon*
 retrogression. *See Rückgang*
 revolution, 104–111
 rhythm, 14–15
 Rockmore, Tom, 5
Rogues (Derrida), 135
 Romano, Claude, 11, 47n4
Rückgang (retrogression), 21
 Russian Revolution, 99
- der sachliche Zusammenhang*, 27
Sachverhalt (affair complex), 18
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1, 3
 Scheler, Max, 51
 Schmitt, Carl, 74, 89n6, 102, 113n58
 Scholastic philosophy, 1
 schools of thought, 51
 Schürmann, Reiner, 38
 science, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 104; cognitive,
 1, 2; Derrida and, 122; dogmatism
 of, 19, 23–24, 45; Galilean, 47n14;
 grammatology and, 121–122;
 Husserl and, 5, 19, 20; objective, 42,
 77–78; old inheritance of, 22
 secrecy, 106
 self-consciousness, 58, 60, 84
 self-criticism, 5, 9, 10, 17;
 deconstructive, 117; *epochē* and, 43;
 transcendental, 38–39
 self-delimitation, 39
 self-giveness, 38, 39
 self-identity, 82–83
 self-reduction, 107
 semantic merelessness, 32
semē, 123
 sense-certainty, 65
 signification, 118, 124, 133n46
 Socrates, 101, 102
 solipsism, 95
sophia, 11
 sovereignty, 98
Specters of Marx (Derrida), 127, 133n62
 spectrality, 82
 spectral object, 58
 speculative verification, 63
 speech, 6, 48n29, 87, 100, 102, 103, 122,
 125; Husserl and, 17; judgement
 and, 29; meaningful, 104; natality
 and, 101; political, 108
Speech and Phenomena (Derrida), 125
 speechless wonder, 97, 101, 102, 110
 spirituality, 82
Stellungen, 42
 subjectivity, 42, 43, 81, 109;
 constitutive, 5; Kant and, 73–74; of
 phenomena, 31; transcendental
 constitutive, 72–73
 substantialist ontology, 80
 substantiality, 78
 suffering, 85, 88
 supreme trembling, 87
 survival, 99
- temporality, 112n19; Dasein and, 14;
 existential, 86; of time, 64
 textuality, 123; general, 116
Theaetetus (Plato), 74
 thematic criticism, 118, 119
 thematisation, 78
 theology, political, 106

- theoreia*, 38
 theory of revolutions, 109
 thinking as judgement (*urteilende Denke*), 18
 thrownness, 95
Timaeus (Plato), 76
 time, temporality of, 64
 the tiredness of the position. *See la fatigue de la position*
 totalitarianism, 7, 93–94, 99, 100, 104–111; antitotalitarianism, 105; beginnings and, 105; loneliness, 113n57; resistance to, 107; worldlessness, 113n57
 totality: breach of, 81; of earth, 78
Totality and Infinity (Levinas), 81, 87
 transcendental consciousness, 14, 108
 transcendental constitutive subjectivity, 72–73
 transcendental ego, 60
 transcendental phenomenology, 5, 6, 30–31, 34, 42
 transcendental self-criticism, 38–39
 truth: beginnings and, 95; correspondence theory of, 57; experience and, 62–68
 universality, 123
Unmündigkeit (immaturity), 85
Ur-teil (originary division), 3, 29
urteilende Denke. *See* thinking as judgement
Ur-Worte (primal words), 32
verantwortliche Kritik (responsible critique), 16, 17
 verification, speculative, 63
Vernunftnorm (norm of reasoning), 18, 24
 violence, 7, 94, 100–104
 “Violence and Metaphysics” (Derrida), 71
Vorbegriff (preliminary concept), 10, 67
 Western rationality, 13, 126
 wonder, 74–75; speechless, 97, 101, 102, 110
 worldlessness, 113n57
 writing, 30; nonphonetic, 125
Writing and Difference (Derrida), 127
 Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth, 112n19

About the Author

Michael Marder is IKERBASQUE Research Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU), Vitoria-Gasteiz, in Northern Spain. A specialist in phenomenology, political philosophy and environmental thought, he is the author of *The Event of the Thing: Derrida's Post-Deconstructive Realism* (2009); *Groundless Existence: The Political Ontology of Carl Schmitt* (2010); *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (2013); and *The Philosopher's Plant: An Intellectual Herbarium* (2014).