Philosophy of Consciousness

Topic 6
Heidegger’s Critique of Husserl
Introduction

• *History of the Concept of Time* is a lecture series Heidegger delivered in 1925 at Marburg University
  • These lectures *precede* Husserl’s Cartesian Meditations which are based on lectures delivered in Paris in 1929

• The *Concept of Time* lectures formed the basis of Heidegger’s most famous work *Being and Time*

• In the part of the lecture series we are considering Heidegger is looking at the phenomenology of Husserl
  • This is where Heidegger begins to *explicitly break* from Husserl and to engage in his own line of enquiry
  • This line of enquiry centres on the meaning or sense of being – the so-called *question of being*
Part One

Heidegger’s Re-statement of Husserl’s Phenomenology
Re-Examining the Natural Attitude

• Heidegger recognises that the ‘natural attitude’ is the original ‘thematic field of phenomenology’

• Phenomenology is ‘the analytic description of intentionality in its apriori’ where intentionality is taken as the fundamental structure of lived experiences

• This fundamental structure is first given in the ‘natural attitude’ and it is discovered by means of reflection from within a phenomenological reduction

• However, Heidegger wants to enquire into the natural attitude itself as it presents itself from within itself, rather than on the basis of a reduction
  • He asks ‘How am I given in the natural attitude in Husserl's description?’
I am "a real object like others in the natural world," that is, like houses, tables, trees, mountains. Human beings thus occur realiter in the world, among them I myself. I perform acts (cogitationes). These acts belong to the "human subject," hence are "occurrences of the same natural reality." The totality of such a continuity of lived experiences in the human or animal subject can be called an individual stream of lived experiences. The experiences are themselves ‘real occurrences in the world’ ‘in animal beings’ [p. 96]
Reflection and Immanence

We shall persist in this natural attitude [...] and direct our gaze upon the experiential continuity, and in fact upon our own as it takes its course realiter. This self-directedness toward our own experiential continuity is a new act which is called reflection. In such acts of reflection we find something objective which itself has the character of acts, of lived experiences, of modes of consciousness of something. [...] When we live in acts of reflection, we ourselves are directed toward acts. The peculiar feature of reflection is already evident here, namely, that the object of the reflection, acts, belongs to the same sphere of being as the contemplation of the object. [...] The object, the contemplated, and the contemplation are really included in one another. The object and the way of apprehending it belong to the same stream of experience. This real inclusion of the apprehended object in the apprehension itself, in the unity of the same reality, is called immanence [p. 96].
Transcendent Perceptions

The state of affairs in so-called transcendent perceptions, the perceptions of things, is obviously totally different. The perception of the chair as thing does not as lived experience really contain the chair within itself, in such a way that as a thing it would, so to speak, swim in and with the stream of experience. [...] A lived experience can "only be joined with lived experiences into a whole whose total essence comprises the particular essences of these experiences and is founded in them." The wholeness of consciousness, the wholeness of the stream of experience is such that it can only be founded in lived experiences as such. [...] This wholeness of the stream of experience as a self-contained totality excludes every thing, that is, every real object, beginning with the entire material world. Over against the region of lived experiences, the material world is alien, other. This is apparent in any analysis of a simple perception [p. 97].
The Absolute Gulf

At the same time, however, [...] the stream of experience understood as a real occurrence is conjoined with the real world, with the bodies. For example, it is attached to a concrete unity in the unity of psychophysical animal things. Consciousness, as a name for the experiential totality, is therefore involved in the real structure in a double manner [p. 97].

This consciousness as a component part of the animal unity is [...] also separated from it by an absolute gulf, as every perception of a thing shows in the distinction of immanence and transcendence. [...] How can it still be said that consciousness has its 'own essence,' an essence particular to it? That it is a self-contained continuity? How is the drawing out and highlighting of consciousness as an independent region of lived experiences, as an independent region of being, still at all possible? [p. 98]

[Answer: by means of phenomenological reduction]
The Transcendental Reduction

Thus, when in reflection I am directed toward a particular experience, toward a particular act such as that of perceiving a thing, I am thematically focused upon the perception and not upon the perceived. I can of course make the perception itself the theme such that the perceived, what the perception perceives, its object, is itself co-apprehended, but in such a way that I do not *live directly* in the perception, say, of the chair, but rather *live thematically* in the apprehension of the perceptual act and of what is perceived in it. This way of considering the act and its object is not a transcendent apprehension of the thing itself. In considering reflection in this way, I to some extent do "not go along with" the concrete perception, to put it in the vernacular. I do not really live in the perception of the chair but in the attitude of the immanent reflective apprehension of perceiving the chair, not in the thesis of the material world but in the thematic positing of the act apprehending the perception and of its object as it is there in the act. This "not going along with" the thesis of the material world and of every transcendent world is called *epochē*, refraining [p. 99].
The Eidetic Reduction

When I reduce the concrete experiential continuity of my life in this way, [...] I still have the same concrete experiential continuity. [...] But now I do not have it in such a way that I am engrossed in the world, following the natural direction of the acts themselves. Now I have the acts themselves present in their full structure. Even after this so-called transcendental reduction, the reduced field is the field of a unique singularity, that of my stream of consciousness.

This singular field of my own stream of experience is then subjected to a second reduction, the eidetic reduction. The acts and their objects now are not studied as concrete individuations of my concrete being, as this stream of experience. Rather, this unity of the stream of experience is now regarded ideatively. Every moment which specifies this individual stream as individual is now suspended. What is now discerned in the concretely lived experiences is simply the structure belonging to a perception, representation, or judgment as such, regardless of whether this judging or perceiving is mine, regardless of whether it takes place in this moment either in this concrete constellation or in another. This double reduction (the transcendental and the eidetic) draws from the initially given concrete individuation of a stream of experience what is called the pure field of consciousness, that is, a field which is no longer concrete and individual but pure [p. 100].
Absolute Givenness and Being

The chair is not a lived experience or an experiential thing. Its kind of being is totally different from that of lived experience. By contrast, everything objective in what is called immanent perception is defined by the same kind of being as immanent perception itself. This implies that the object of immanent perception is absolutely given. [...] It is true that every transcendent perception apprehends what is perceived by it, the thing, in its bodily character, but there is always the possibility that what is perceived cannot be and is not. In immanent apprehension, however, lived experience is given in its absolute self. Immanent perception, the reflection upon the acts, gives entities whose existence cannot in principle be denied. It thus becomes apparent that the sphere of immanence is distinguished by its mode of givenness, which is called absolute. Combining this with our earlier considerations, we now see that the sphere of pure consciousness obtained by way of transcendental and eidetic reduction is distinguished by the character of being absolutely given. Pure consciousness is thus for Husserl the sphere of absolute being [pp. 100-101].
Back to Descartes

Already here, we can detect a kinship with Descartes. What is here elaborated at a higher level of phenomenological analysis as pure consciousness is the field which Descartes glimpsed under the heading of *res cogitans*, the entire field of *cogitationes*. The transcendent world, whose exemplary index for Husserl as well is to be found in the basic stratum of the material world of things, is what Descartes characterizes as *res extensa*.

How is it at all possible that this sphere of absolute position, pure consciousness, which is supposed to be separated from every transcendence by an absolute gulf, is at the same time united with reality in the unity of a real human being, who himself occurs as a real object in the world? How is it possible that lived experiences constitute an absolute and pure region of being and at the same time occur in the transcendence of the world? [p. 101].
Part Two

Heidegger’s Critique of Husserl’s Phenomenology
The Question of Being

Our question will be: Does this elaboration of the thematic field of phenomenology, the field of intentionality, raise the question of the being of this region, of the being of consciousness? What does being really mean here when it is said that the sphere of consciousness is a sphere and region of absolute being? What does absolute being mean here? What does being mean when we speak of the being of the transcendent world, of the reality of things? Is there somewhere in the dimension of this fundamental deliberation, in which the elaboration of the field of phenomenology is decided, in turn a clarification of the regard from which the separation of the two spheres of being is considered, namely, the sense of being, to which there is constant reference? Does phenomenology anywhere really arrive at the methodological ground enabling us to raise this question of the sense of being, which must precede any phenomenological deliberation and is implicit in it? [p. 102]
Consciousness is Immanent Being

Formally, *immanence* implies, first of all, to be in another. This property of immanence is said of the region of consciousness, of lived experience, more precisely, in reference to the apprehending acts, to the acts of reflection which in their turn are directed toward acts, toward lived experiences. [...] *Immanence is not a determination of the entity in itself with regard to its being*, but a relation of two entities within the region of lived experience or consciousness. This relation is characterized as a *real in-one-another*, but nothing is actually said about the being of this being-in-one-another, about the "immanent reality", about the entity for the whole of this region. *A relationship of being between entities, and not the being as such, is determined here*. Thus the first determination of being which Husserl gives for the region of pure consciousness, either as an originary or a non-originary determination, is not carried out [p. 103].
Consciousness is Absolute Being

The reflected experience which is the object in a reflection is originally given in itself. In contrast to the transcendent, lived experiences are there in the absolute sense. That is, they do not display themselves indirectly, symbolically, but are apprehended in themselves. They are called absolute because of this absolute givenness.

If the lived experiences are called absolute in this sense, this characteristic of being – absolute - once again implies a determination of the region of lived experiences with reference to its being apprehended. This determination is still based upon the first determination. This determination - absolutely given - does not refer to the mutual regional pertinence of the apprehended and the apprehending but now to the relation of a lived experience as an object for another lived experience. [...] Once again, the entity in itself does not become a theme [p. 104].
Consciousness Constitutes Being

The character 'absolute' is now attributed to consciousness to the extent that it is regarded in its potential function as an object-constituting consciousness. And in this sense consciousness is that sort of being which for its part is not constituted once again in another consciousness but which, in constituting itself, itself constitutes every possible reality. Absolute being accordingly means not being dependent upon another specifically in regard to constitution; it is the first, that which must already be there in order that what is presumed can be at all.

Consciousness in this sense of the absolute means the priority of subjectivity over every objectivity. This third determination - absolute being - once again does not determine the entity itself in its being but rather sets the region of consciousness within the order of constitution and assigns to it in this order a formal role of being earlier than anything objective [p. 105].
Consciousness is called pure consciousness to the extent that it, as this region, is no longer regarded in its concrete individuation and its tie to a living being. [...] At issue is [...] the intentional structure as such, [...] the ideal essential being of consciousness itself, the apriori of lived experiences in the sense of the generic universal which in each case defines a class of lived experience or its structural contexture. [...] This being is pure because it is defined as *ideal*, that is, not *real* being.

This character of being, consciousness as pure, shows especially clearly that what matters here is not the ontological characters of the intentional but the determination of the being of intentionality, not the determination of the being of the entity which has the structure intentionality, but the determination of the being of the structure itself as intrinsically detached [p. 106].
The Matters Themselves

The determinations of being are not derived by considering the intentional *in its very being*, but to the extent that it is placed under scrutiny as *apprehended, given, constituting* and *ideating* taken as an essence. It is from such perspectives, which in the first instance are *alien to consciousness*, that these determinations of being are derived. Husserl’s primary question is simply *not concerned* with the character of the *being of consciousness*. Rather, he is guided by the following concern: *How can consciousness become the possible object of an absolute science?* [...] This idea [...] is not simply invented; it is the idea which has occupied modern philosophy ever since *Descartes*. The elaboration of pure consciousness as the thematic field of phenomenology is *not derived phenomenologically by going back to the matters themselves* but by going back to a *traditional idea of philosophy*. [pp. 106-107].
Being for Husserl

• For Husserl, the question of being is answered from the perspective of the phenomenological reduction:

... the whole spatio-temporal world, which includes the human being and the human ego as subordinate individual realities, {is} in accord with its own sense mere intentional being {being manifesting itself in acts}, thus a being which has the mere secondary and relative sense of a being for a consciousness .... It is a being which consciousness posits in its experiences, a being which in principle can be intuited and defined merely as the identical element of harmoniously motivated experiential manifolds - over and above this, however, it is nothing [p. 112].

Here we see consciousness as that which bestows being (actuality) meaning there would be no transcendent being as such if there were no consciousness that intended such being...
The Being of the Intentional

• For Heidegger, the realm of consciousness as a realm of being has been pre-delineated as something separate from the transcendent (material) world by means of the phenomenological reductions – and he thinks that, on that basis, the being of the intentional has been overlooked

• This being of the intentional, for Heidegger, is an individuated being-in-the-world, not the being of a transcendental ego that intends a world without itself actually being ‘in it’

• Heidegger thinks that to find Husserl’s notion of the being of the intentional you have to go back to Husserl’s notion of the natural attitude where where ‘man is given as a living being, as a zoological object’ [p. 112], as something objectified in the world, like a chair

• Heidegger calls this objectification a “being on hand as a thing to which comportments are perhaps added as 'appendages' but are not really relevant for determining the character of the being of this entity and do not constitute its way of being” [p. 113].
The Lifeworld

- However, the situation in 1925 is that Husserl had not given much thought to the being of the intentional as it appears in immediate (unreduced) experience.
- Partly as a result of Heidegger’s criticisms and as a natural progression in his own philosophising, Husserl later developed the idea of the lifeworld as the pre-given shared world of experience.
- That means (to a certain extent) the criticisms that Heidegger made concerning the simplistic objectification of the human mode of being in the world expressed in Husserl’s concept of the natural attitude do not apply to Husserl’s later philosophy.
- Nevertheless, Heidegger’s idea of the being of the intentional diverges radically from Husserl’s transcendental idealism, as we shall see next week...