

*A conference was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in November 2002 that was entitled "Issues Confronting the Post-European World" and that was dedicated to Jan Patočka (1907-1977). **The Organization of Phenomenological Organizations** was founded on that occasion. The following essay is published in celebration of that event.*

## Essay 44

# The Horizons of Cultural Objects

© Roberto J. Walton

Center for Philosophical Studies National

Academy of Sciences, Buenos Aires

grwalton@sinectis.com.ar

Argentine Circle for Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

ancba@uol.com.ar

### Abstract

An attempt is made to trace out different moments in Edmund Husserl's unfolding of the horizons of cultural objects. Section 1 provides an analysis in terms of a foreground of sensuous manifestation and a background of cultural meanings. Both sides display an inner horizon, and our central problem concerns the implications of the non-sensuous side. Section 2 examines this background as a horizon of ends in which partial goals are encompassed within broader systems. This suggests an encasement of various layers of horizons one in another. Section 3 looks into the stages of evidence involved in the explication of horizons, i.e., distinctness in regard to meanings and clarity in regard to subjective purposes and objective products. They can be discerned both in the appropriation and in the production of cultural objects. Once the conditions for appropriation have been made clear, section 4 considers the horizon of effects by showing how the process of taking over cultural objects is motivated. On this point Husserl's descriptions are compared with Nicolai Hartmann's theory of objectified culture. Finally, section 5 explores how both explication and effects presuppose a horizon of acquaintedness that provides means for the access to cultural objects. The essay concludes by pointing out how we work with this horizon of anticipation in order to deal with alien objects, meet a surplus in intuition, and provide a ground for the concepts of the cultural sciences. The surplus is to be met by resorting not only to horizontal determinateness, as in Jean-Luc Marion's theory of saturated phenomena, but also to indeterminateness.

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## I. Foreground and Background

In a text printed as Appendix X to *Phänomenologische Psychologie*, Husserl differentiates an orientation to things and various “subjective directions of interest” that can be disclosed in a reflective attitude. Whereas the interest in things in the straightforward direction of experience aims at an object with its thinglike content and relations, a turn to the subjective side of experience renders possible the discovery of new characters as “determinations of reflection” or “non-thinglike subjective attributes.” Sides, perspectives, and orientations are first given as sensuous characters or subjective manners of appearance that depend on our bodily movements. In addition, emotional characters emerge when we consider our feelings about the object and the correlative values such as the pleasant and the unpleasant. Finally, characters of acquaintedness, type-characters, or associative characters grow out of previous experiences of similar objects. Even if these sensuous, emotional and associative characters involve an increasing bias for subjectivity in experience, they are all correlated in a passive manner with perception, emotion, and acquaintedness.

By contrast, Husserl says, teleological or practical subjective characters spring out of an acting subjectivity that bestows purposeful significations on objects. There emerge, then, second-order subjective characters, the possibility of which is foreshadowed by the first-order characters. This means that, although all objects as such are referred back to the subjects that experience them, cultural objects contain in their objective sense the reference to a person or a community that produces them as thinglike bearers of an “end-sense” (*Zwecksinn*) or “end-idea” (*Zweckidee*), i.e., a non-sensuous spiritual meaning that has originated out of a purpose and becomes embodied in a physical thing. Hence cultural objects are said to show a two-sided corporeal-spiritual objectivity for which Husserl finds an analogy in the experience of lived bodies. Nevertheless, he also indicates a difference because the expressed spiritual content is not psychically real, but rather an intersubjectively identifiable sense.

Some remarks are of special importance regarding this kind of two-sidedness. First, both sides involve a manifold of appearances. Whereas the first series of subjective characters concerns any real object and is linked to manifoldness in perspectives, in values, and in acquaintedness, the second series concerns cultural objects alone and brings forth manners of manifestation of the end-senses. Hence the inner horizon concerns not only the material bearer that can be seen from various points of view, in different emotional settings, and with

diverse associations, but also the end-sense that can be construed in many and varied interpretations.

Second, the relationship between both sides is not an external association but rather an intrinsic connection. For an articulation of manifold forms pertaining to the sensuously experienced corporeality is blended into the embodied spirituality. That is why the latter is not only “expressed” but also “impressed” in the physical body. Husserl has in mind the example of a Gothic cathedral, in which, since the corporeal articulation is not capricious, the differentiation between expressed sense and physical body is nothing but “an abstractive strata-separation.” (Hua IX, 112)

Third, when cultural objects allow for the possibility of coming back again and again in an identical way to the end-sense, both this content and its corporeality participate in the ensuing ideality.<sup>1</sup> For endless reiteration means not only that an identical piece of music can be enacted by many performances or that an identical proposition can be stated in many sentences, but also that identical sounds can be heard in manifold manifestations or that an identical sentence can be repeated again and again in many utterances. In other words, both the non-sensuous side and the sensuous side of the cultural object entail an ideal oneness through infinite manifestations. There is not only an ideal meaning but also, as Husserl says, a “spiritual bodiliness.” (Hua XVII, 25)

Fourth, the sensuously experienced corporeality maintains its first-order horizons even if we lose sight of the cultural properties. The bearer of meaning is always present in a thinglike manner, and we always have the possibility of detachment and distantiation from the expressed sense. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, I can always treat cultural objects as patterns of form and color devoid of human meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the relationship between the thinglike bearer and the unreal spiritual content can be seen, in horizontal terms, as the contrast between foreground and background. According to Nicolai Hartmann, this relationship is the “general law of objectification” that governs objectified spirit, i.e., the realm of cultural objects. Just as Husserl speaks of the two-sidedness of cultural objects, so Hartmann holds that the objectified spirit shows a double-layered stratification in which a real formation given to our sensuous perception exists as

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<sup>1</sup> On manifolds and identities in cultural objects, see Robert Sokolowski, “Gadamer’s Theory of Hermeneutics,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. L.E. Hahn (Chicago and Lasalle, IL: Open Court, 1997), p. 229 f. See also his *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 27-33.

<sup>2</sup> See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 413.

an independent object, and a cultural content always exists for the living spirit that recognizes its claims, whether individually or socially. Whereas the foreground is a real stratum in the manner of “being-in-itself,” the background is an unreal stratum in the manner of “being-for-us.” In a second step, Hartmann holds that the content itself must be disclosed as a sequence of strata, and so refers to the multi-layeredness of the background, in which again a foreground and a background can be shown.<sup>3</sup> Later I will come back to this account.

Now I turn to Husserl’s description of this stratification by taking as a starting-point §16 of *Phänomenologische Psychologie*, which offers a thoroughgoing summary of the problems involved in the analysis of cultural objects. A passage there has the virtue of linking the essential feature of cultural objects with our main theme: “Every experience of a cultural object, and so of a reality that bears in itself in the mode of expression a spiritual sense, has its manner of being endowed with open horizons, and so also its manner of uncovering a sense that is certainly expressed, but nevertheless at first only imperfectly grasped, only indicated.” (Hua IX, 113) This passage speaks of a manner of endowment with a horizon of ends and a manner of uncovering them. It follows, then, that we have at the outset two lines of inquiry. Furthermore, in a subsequent passage, Husserl confronts us with a third major problem when he refers to cultural objects as “originating from subjective doing and addressing themselves on the other hand to subjects as personal subjects, ...” (Hua IX, 118) Whereas origination leads to an analysis of the horizon of ends, which has its modes of being uncovered or explicated, addressing leads to an analysis of the horizon of effects. Explication and influence raise in turn the issue of receptivity and bring forth a shared horizon of acquaintedness that provides the adequate basis for the grasping of cultural objects and the experience of their effects by “every other subject within the understanding-community.” (Hua IX, 113) We see that Husserl’s account of the horizons of cultural objects can be summarized by saying that, to the examination of subjective characters of appearance, i.e., the inner horizon of manifold manners in which an identity is manifested, he adds a fourfold analysis in which two aspects concern mainly the objects themselves by focusing on their ends and effects and the other two concern mainly our mode of experiencing them by focusing on evidence and access. All these aspects are linked but need to be distinguished.

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<sup>3</sup> See Nicolai Hartmann, *Das Problem des geistigen Seins* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1933), pp. 425 ff., 440 ff.

## II. The Horizon of Ends

We may now examine how the background is endowed with horizons bearing in mind Husserl's view that the expressed spiritual sense can be disclosed by an appropriate intuitive understanding-in-following (*Nachverstehen*) that must take into account how the cultural object "carries in itself a purposeful signification (*Zweckbedeutung*), the what-for (*Dazu*), the being-determined and being-appropriate for something (*dazu Bestimmt- und Geeignet-sein*)." (Hua IX, 407) Consequently, as a mode of empathy, the understanding of cultural formations consists in transposing oneself into alien experiences in order to unfold active strivings, particular attitudes, the establishment of goals, manners of fulfillment of the goals, processes of designing objects and actual enjoyment of them, various individual and cultural settings, objective purposes that are independent of subjective dispositions, and the like.

As he points out the tasks of understanding, Husserl describes how particular ends refer horizontally beyond themselves to a system of ends. Stressing that practical characters of objects cannot be considered in isolation because particular purposes appear against a broader background, he writes: "... just as objects are unified in a purely thinglike manner, so objects have, as regards their practical characters, their own proper connection, a teleological formation-synthesis, and also a total signification related to teleology, which also includes pointless matters, and so on." (Hua IX, 409) It is clear, then, that uncovering and providing intuitive fulfillment for a further system of ends discloses an outer horizon that cannot be strictly separated, as happens with the sensuous foreground, from the inner horizon. Rather, we are confronted, along with the intermingling of sensuous expression and non-real sense, with a further blending of inner and outer horizons. This can be inferred from Husserl's distinction between fragmentary ends and a system of ends when he states that cultural objects are "realities that are intersubjectively identifiable in and with their sense, variedly experienceable in the manner of interpretative understanding-in-following, and eventually also experienceable in a general end-validity (*Zweckgeltung*), as fitnesses-to-an-end (*Zweckmäßigkeiten*) in the sense of a generally valid system of ends." (Hua IX, 117 f.) It is important to note that Husserl calls attention to the relationship between these end-connections and Heidegger's notion of *Bewandtnis*.

The notion of a system of ends suggests an encasement of various layers of practical horizons one in another. Beginning at the lowest level of everyday

ends linked to family life, we go through various stages of development and expansion until the ends of reason are attained. In a first level, restricted to a homeworld and its primal history, Husserl describes how a child, partaking of the historicity of a family and surrounded by end-objects and purposeful actions, learns to understand them by showing interest in the motivating goals and asking why they are worthy of attainment. Within the limited scope of this primal form of historicity, which is conceived by Husserl as the foundation for every higher historicity, particular goals emerge and are fulfilled without there being an explicit consciousness of a definite final goal besides the nearest goal of the moment. By contrast, what is distinctive about proper historicity is a community that is brought together by an explicit and common set of encompassing ends, and in which widely recognized objects play the role, as we shall see, of principles of communalization. This means that the change of subjects, insofar as they become members of the community or withdraw from it, does not depend on individual life or death but rather on a substitution of subjects that bestow validity to forms of life and cultural objects. Husserl assigns here a special role to ideal objects. Since they render possible an unlimited reiteration and so can be fully reactivated as the motivation or the basis for further productions, the horizon of effects based on them turns into a "horizon of infinite tasks." Thus, an artwork always appears within an infinite horizon of artworks in which it can sometimes be included as a fragment in partial wholes. But this does not mean that they all aim at the unity of a unique artwork posited as a goal. In a stronger sense, Husserl contends that philosophy has not only a future-horizon of infinity but also a unique teleological direction with a unitary goal, so singular formations contribute to the building of a higher level formation in which they are included (see Hua XXIX, p. 287 f.). Finally, then, the increasing scope of ends attains its maximum point in a second or rational historicity.

According to this multi-leveled analysis, a copy of Husserl's *Krisis* can be considered as a sensuous object with an inner horizon of sides, perspectives and orientations, a family souvenir in the hands of Husserl's descendants, a cultural formation belonging to the history of mankind and bearing witness to a critical situation in the twentieth century, and a decisive contribution to the rational ends of philosophy. When practical or teleological determinations accrue to a thinglike object, new end-horizons not only are encased-one-in-another with the passively given horizons, but reiterate this relationship in their own domain. We might say that the broader configuration of ends sets the tone for what it encompasses, provided we add that the narrower one affords an efficacious basis to be taken over. Neither do partial ends disappear when more

inclusive ones emerge, nor can the latter be explained away by reference to the former. And when a given level of horizonedness comes to the foreground, the others bear its stamp even if they somehow fade away into the background. Husserl outlines this problem when he speaks of the articulation of horizons as “the theme of difficult intentional structural analyses.” (Hua XV, 408)

### III. The Explication of Horizons

Having set out that understanding a cultural object implies the unfolding of a horizon of ends, we are led to the consideration of a further problem that concerns the stages of evidence involved in such explication. This will prepare the way for the analysis of the horizon of effects.

Cultural objects may be individual or shared, and may be determined here-and-now for a singular goal or in a general way for recurring situations. Husserl adds that, though an original experience is available only for the subjects that produce them, cultural objects can be understood-in-following or empathized in a non-original manner by other subjects. Since the end-sense does not belong to the cultural object only when purposeful activity produces it, the grasping by present witnesses at the moment of production can be followed later by the recognition of an enduring sense by members of the same community of understanding that depends on the participation in common ends, and eventually by the recognition by members of other communities.

Understanding can remain restricted to the outer side of both cultural life and cultural objectivations, in which case they are handled without engaging in a reactivation and explication of the meaning-formations, i.e., without making explicit what gives cultural determinations their specific character. Husserl remarks that, if it fails to take the originary steps of production into consideration, understanding-in-following proceeds in an apperceptive manner and “can be completely external, symbolic, as a more or less empty previous indication (*Vordeutung*), without an actual understanding that is to be produced effectively step by step in a reproductive production-in-following of the originary productive steps.” (Hua XXVII, 110) To the stage of this external understanding that conceals the spiritual side of the object there follows a “properly intuitive understanding of this inwardness.” (Hua XV, 58) It is important to stress that it is not possible to reach out to cultural objects if we do not go beyond the appresentative stage, that is, if our analysis is limited to the outward expression and hence does not unfold, in different levels of evidence,

the meanings, experiences, and objective fulfillments to which these indications point. With regard to a cultural object, Husserl holds that “there belongs to it the self-evident possibility of explication, of ‘making it explicit,’ and clarifying it.” (Hua VI, 379; *Krisis*, p. 370)

The relationship between language and objects throws some light on the analysis of the processes of making distinct and clarifying. When it is performed on linguistic formations, explication amounts to overcoming vague linguistic understanding through the reactivation of the meaning of sentences. According to Husserl, as is well known, linguistic meaning can be given in an indistinct manner as when we understand a speaker vaguely. Because it is merely sketched by an act of belief grounded on associations between expressions and confused meanings, language appears as the bearer of an empty anticipating intention. It is necessary to advance from this indication to an explicit articulation of meaning, which is given to an evidence of distinctness. This kind of evidence first rules out nonsensical meanings and then goes on to set aside analytic countersenses, but says nothing about thinglike countersenses, which also entail the impossibility of the being of the object meant. In a further step, discarding all sorts of countersenses, fulfillment can be sought in order to attain evidence of clarity. When language refers to a state-of-affairs in the outer world, fulfillment by an original experience is possible. Here Husserl draws a line between clarity of anticipation and clarity of possession. Whereas the latter is the actual grasping of a state-of-affairs, the former is a prefiguration in imagination that foreshadows an object not yet given in perception.

But language only provides a general clue to guide us in an analogous examination of modes of evidence in the givenness of other cultural objects. For there are differences arising from the blending of corporeality and meaning. Let us first examine the appropriation of cultural objects. Even if the boundary between distinctness and clarity is not sharply outlined, it may be brought out in the following way if we consider again Husserl’s statement on the three stages of identifiability of an end-sense, experienceability of an end-product, and experienceability within a system of ends. What I mean is that these stages go hand in hand with distinctness, limited clarity, and full-fledged clarity.

Having in mind the blending of spiritual sense and physical bearer, evidence of distinctness aims at giving both explicitness to end-senses and definition to corporeal articulations. In contrast to the grasping of words, which can be centered on meaning without focusing on the physical side of expression, the experience of an artwork or a piece of music necessarily pays attention to the expressive substrate. For the relationship between the sense and its material

bearer is not conventional as that between meaning and expressive stuff in words. Two-sidedness means here that distinctness will always be associated with a minimal degree of clarity because some features of the material substrate must be either presented or presentified. Whereas a distinct judgment does not entail intuition of the things judged about, a distinct end-sense involves contemplation of some thinglike determinations of the bearer. In sum, a cultural object can be intended as such through a limited registration of some outstanding determinations that are sufficient to serve as justification for a distinctly marked off identity.

After evidence of distinctness attains identification, evidence of clarity overcomes the incompleteness of its account by affording an experience not only of more material determinations but also of subjective purposes and aims. Increasing clarity concerns both aspects. It is in the case of objects not produced by me that clarification follows patterns unmistakably different to those of the linguistic reference to a state-of-affairs in the outer world. As alien experiences do not lend themselves to be given in an original experience, we are confined to presentification. In making the distinction between anticipation and actual possession, we see that it turns out to be the contrast between levels in the range and depth of fulfillment in imagination. This also means that possession amounts to an original experience of features of the material bearer alone. It is plain that the understanding-in-following of a cultural objects implies, instead of the previous image or prefiguration considered in the case of the fulfillment of linguistic meaning, an after-image in the sense that with the help of imagination we transpose ourselves into the motivations and active strivings that underlie their production. In turn, this after-image is the prefiguration or anticipation of a broader system into which the first disclosed ends must be fitted. Full-fledged clarity is attained through a further development of imagination that amounts to the insertion of singular ends in connections linked to the life-ends of persons or the shared long-term ends of a community. It is the experience of the fitness of the product to a system of ends.

On the other hand, production of cultural objects follows more closely the pattern of the reference of language to the outer world. The stage of identifiability can be seen as the stage in which projected end-senses and their corresponding intended expressions are articulated through the evidence of distinctness. Husserl illustrates this point with the project of shoes as objects whose purpose is protection for feet. The scheme for making them can show sensefulness (*Sinnhaftigkeit*), i.e., make sense as a potential product even if it implies sense-contradictoriness (*Sinnwidrigkeit*). Nevertheless, if some of its

components make it self-contradictory, say the employment of vulnerable raw material or the lack of required capabilities by the shoemaker, the project cannot be realized. In a second stage, then, the intended product must be anticipated through a coherent plan that excludes contradiction with respect to this inner horizon. Here we have an evidence of the possible ways in which the project can be realized. It is the anticipation of the inner possibility of the product through a previous image. This amounts to evidence of clarity as anticipation. Furthermore, even if it is coherent as a project, the intended product cannot attain actuality if the end-sense has factual presuppositions that come in conflict with an external horizon of other ends, say a lack of adequate raw materials in the surrounding world that renders the whole project pointless. Husserl writes: "The work as such has its truth or actuality when it is fit-to-an-end, when it realizes its end in fact." (Hua XXIX, 282) While truth in the case of language amounts to the givenness of a state-of-affairs that corresponds to a senseful linguistic intention, actuality amounts to a product that fulfills the project because it encounters no obstacles in its realization.

#### IV. The Horizon of Effects

With this synopsis of Husserl's views on the evidence of cultural objects in hand, we are in a position to consider the subsequent "horizon of effects" (Wirkungshorizont) or "effective horizon" (wirksamer Horizont) (Hua XIV, 94; XV, 412). Although it does not itself entail the production of effects, understanding-in-following renders possible a motivation by the spiritual content of a cultural object. In other words, there are two sorts of reactivation: the end-sense can be merely understood historically in an improper reactivation, or it can be taken over as one's own in a proper reactivation, in which case we are aware of being acted upon by its agency. It follows that the horizon of effects is not something extraneous to the horizon of ends. If we focus on origination, we refer to the latter; and if we focus on influence, we refer to the former.

Through its sensuous corporeality, cultural objects obtain not only a temporal duration and a spatial attachment but also "have effects inside the communal spirituality, they are ... ready in the sensuous figure to be understood-in-following, to motivate a new end-positing, new work-creations, just as they, inversely, from the very outset, in precisely this way at their production, happen to be socially motivated." (Hua XXVII, p. 110) It is in this sense that the thoughts of others are in me as thoughts that I have received, that have influence

on me, and of which I have appropriated myself. As a result of understanding-in-following, I may pursue what is indicated by linguistic expressions, starting from the stage of an empty grasping, going through stages of more or less distinct understanding, and arriving at a clear comprehension that I owe to other subjects and is nevertheless mine. Husserl holds that their intentions are fulfilled by my taking over, and adds that whoever communicates with me, directly or through other subjects or cultural objects, has “an effect ‘within me,’ in my ego.” (Hua XIV, 222) The fulfillment of intentions of others occurs in the different levels of encasement mentioned before. It can be found in the narrow sphere of the homeworld when descendants carry out the will of parents, or in the continuation of a tradition by the reactivation of acquisitions or goals produced by the forefathers. And it appears in the broader scope of the universal historicity of a scientific discipline that poses tasks to all rational subjects.

The appropriation of goals concerns both the forms of life regulated by them and the objectified products that embody them. Either way, whether a communal will is established, or an influence is conveyed by cultural objects alone, there emerges a “connection of effects.” On the one hand, I can operate through the will of others in the sense that the goal of my will is present in the goal of their will. In other words, I can achieve my aims through their actions by establishing bonds within a communal will. On the other hand, it is the cultural object produced by me that motivates cultural accomplishments in other subjects. In this case, Husserl refers to a community of effects with no encompassing communal will. My work of art or instrument is imitated by others so that a pattern of cultural efficacy is maintained and can be subsequently improved: “My spiritual effect propagates itself, without my purpose, in unknown persons and surroundings, which likewise do not need to know anything about me.” (Hua XIV, 195)

A central feature of Husserl’s analysis of culture is its mainly twofold direction because it affords an account of subjects that produce culture and of cultural objects produced by this living context as an “objective spirit.” (Hua IV, 239, 244) Nevertheless, the subjective side divides into first-order individuals and the second-order subject governed by a communal will with shared goals. This differentiation is equivalent to, or at least consistent with an important distinction brought out by Hartmann. The author of *Das Problem des geistigen Seins* has made important contributions to the description of the horizon of effects and the correlation between cultural objects and subjective performances by introducing a slightly different terminology that is tied to a threefold direction of analysis. According to this presentation of the cultural world, the living

spirit—both as subjective or personal spirit and as social or objective spirit—objectifies itself in products or cultural objects that outlast it and make up the objectified spirit. Whereas the notion of objectified spirit overlaps with Husserl’s conception of objective spirit as the realm of cultural products, just as the notion of personal spirit coincides with that of individual subject, Hartmann’s objective spirit involves a style of life that recalls Husserl’s conception of higher-order personalities sharing social habitualities and common goals. In this connection it should also be noted that Husserl characterizes “common spirit” as an “objectiveness (Objektivität) of a higher order,” and remarks that persons themselves are for each other also cultural objects (see Hua IV, 243, 379 n.).

Hartmann’s analysis sheds light on the nature of the “being-for-us” of cultural objects. He stresses that a “demand” or “request” originates in the sensuous formation and is permanently posed to the living spirit as a “counterpart” or “countermember” (Gegenglied) that must provide an answer. This means that its persistence is referred to a “counterperformance” (Gegenleistung) of the living spirit that, as a third participant, reactivates the spiritual content, and so bestows a historical being on it. In this process, the living spirit feels itself overpowered by the cultural object and so compelled to achieve a reenactment of its sense. Since this “being referred” to the living spirit is essential to the cultural object, its preservation is not only tied to the contingent conservation of the material bearer. For both reasons, the exteriority and separation of the cultural object does not amount to an absolute independence. This is not to say that the autonomy of the cultural object vanishes, but it is to insist that it is able to react on the living spirit and exert power in the historical present only by virtue of the enduring possibility of recognition by the living spirit. On Hartmann’s account, then, the mode of being of the objectified spirit entails a “tripartite membership” (Dreigliedrigkeit) that includes the contributions of the thinglike bearer, the meaning attached to it, and the recognizing living spirit. In other words, objectified spirit not only presupposes the living spirit that has created it and from which it separates itself through the attachment to a sensuous carrier, but also remains referred to the living spirit “for” which it has a meaning.<sup>4</sup> This is what Husserl says when he refers to “a sequence of historical transformations according to which an originary work with its originary sense passes over to a multiplicity not of actual but of immanent works, a multiplicity that shows in itself a particular type of unification, namely as a multiplicity of interpretations of the same thing that conflict with each other.” (Hua IX, 117)

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<sup>4</sup> See Hartmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 421-428.

If the living spirit is unable to lay hold of the contents belonging to the background, the objectified spirit withdraws from the scene and so brings forth historical discontinuity. However, as long as the sustaining real formation continues to exist, cultural objects offer themselves permanently to recognition through their demand. This means that they disappear for a time until they can be understood again. They only have historical existence by virtue of the correlation between the two sustaining members of the “tripartite membership,” i.e., the real formation from which the demand proceeds and the living spirit that adapts itself in order to answer the call. It is plain from this that the demand posed to the living spirit draws a distinction between understanding and non-understanding persons and ages. For Hartmann, and with him Husserl, the vanishing and return of cultural objects in the scene of history is linked to changes in the living spirit, whose adaptation can be grounded either on the survival of cultural objects when they remains as a formative factor within a tradition, or, in the case that the tradition has died out and there must be a true return or rebirth, on an expansion of the understanding-horizons. Let us turn now in this direction.

## V. The Horizon of Acquaintedness

Above I said that Husserl develops a fourfold analysis of the horizons of cultural objects. We have now discussed three aspects—namely, the horizon of ends, the explication of horizons, and the horizon of effects. The fourth aspect brings us back, as the second does, to our possibilities of experience. For cultural objects can only bring about a desired effect when such means of understanding as we have allow them to be experienced in the various degrees of evidence that have been spelled out. Husserl mentions a “horizon of the understanding subject” (Hua XXIX, 286) or horizon of acquaintedness that mediates intuitions and motivations, and emerges from personal upbringing and membership in a cultural community. Insofar as it is due to passive sedimentation within our understanding-community, the horizon of acquaintedness comes close to the associative characters that were mentioned among the first-order subjective characters, and are passively given in the experience of material things. Thus it differs from the horizon of ends that more fully serves as an example of second-order subjective characters. Nevertheless, the horizon of acquaintedness is also tied to an active capacity, of which three basic features deserve mention: variation in order to come to terms with alien objects, multiplication as a means

to deal with overly abundant objects, and laying of foundations for the purpose of developing cultural concepts.

In Husserl's view, the understanding of objects belonging to an alienworld is achieved by appealing to an analogy with cultural objects and behaviors in our homeworld. It follows that our familiar types play a mediating role by working on the ability to register similarities in non-typical objects. For they always provide a minimal "core of acquaintedness" (Hua XV, 432) that enables us, even if we are dealing with very unfamiliar objects, to attempt the necessary transposition into their end-sense. Husserl notes that we can understand the product of a Chinese artist as a painted image, but the specific sense of the work of art, which is correlative to the artistic purpose, may first escape us. Nevertheless, due to the high level of generality in which our typicality is brought into play, analogies predelineate possible lines for a more precise knowledge, which, going through a permanent process of variation and correction, can advance to further determinations or determination otherwise. Husserl poses the problem of "how far and to what extent I can take over their experiential validities (those of others) in understanding-in-following, and so move forward to a synthesis of their homeworld and mine." (Hua XV, 233 f.) The answer is that this taking over is achieved through the attainment of a higher-order homeworld that encompasses the lower-order worlds.<sup>5</sup>

A further problem arises when the intuition of cultural objects outweighs our expectations. Jean-Luc Marion has stressed the shortcomings of horizons of acquaintedness in the anticipation of cultural objects conceived as saturated phenomena, i.e., phenomena that show a surplus of intuition and hence exceed the bounds outlined for them.<sup>6</sup> He suggests that a painting affords a key example of saturated phenomena because our anticipating horizons always fall short of what can be seen. For example, the objects in a Cubist painting surpass the foreseeable sum total of their parts. In this way, what we see includes not only their actual sides, perspectives, and orientations, but also the appearances that emerge, in an open-ended possibility of combination, when we bring the profilings of each object into a relation with those of the others. Take again Marion's description of J.M.W. Turner's painting "Venice with the Salute,"

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<sup>5</sup> This horizontal synthesis (see Hua XV, 226, 632) foreshadows the hermeneutical notion of a fusion of horizons in which the projection of a horizon into the past springs out of the horizon of the present, which in turn is made up by presuppositions inherited from the past. A statement of Hans-Georg Gadamer is highly significant: "It seems to me that a clear line leads directly from the concepts of passive synthesis and anonymous intentionality to the hermeneutical experience." ("Reflections on my Philosophical Journey," in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, p. 50)

<sup>6</sup> See Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant donné. Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), pp. 251-325.

which does not allow us to distinguish the dome of the Venetian church because a sparkling of light fills up the picture with its intense whiteness. Since silhouettes fade away into a vague shadow under the overflow of light, no horizon of anticipated visibility can be maintained. Another type of saturated phenomena is to be found in decisive historical events because they cannot be grasped completely from particular viewpoints such as those of politics, diplomacy, economics, or ideology.

According to Marion, this does not mean that we have to set horizons of acquaintance aside. The point is rather that we must appeal to horizons in a way that releases us from a restricted standpoint. Saturated phenomena become the theme of an infinite hermeneutics because they constrain us to look at them again and again from different points of view. If one is confined to a limited number of horizons of anticipations, one will not be able to meet saturation. It must be observed that Marion focuses his attention on determinateness and overlooks horizontal indeterminateness. This means that he does not show why we are in principle unable to anticipate the surplus of intuition even in perceiving common phenomena. Hence it should be added that horizonedness contains the internal resources to account for the surplus of intuition not only through the summing up and complementation of horizons of anticipations but above all through its essential openness to an infinity of possible experience. It is precisely this side of horizonedness that renders possible the manifoldness and compatibility of horizons of determinate anticipations, and explains why the task of projecting new anticipating horizons is posed. So the initial theme of identities in manifolds turns up again, but this time not as manifold appearances of an identical object but rather as a multiplication and diversification of horizons that allows us to meet the surplus of intuition.

We still have to consider the issues raised by the laying of foundations for the concepts of the cultural sciences. At this point we encounter a new mode of relationship between identities and manifolds. Instead of accounting for the intuitive surplus of a cultural object by resorting to manifold horizons, we are confronted with the problem of accounting for the manifoldness of cultural objects by resorting to horizontal identities. Recall that, in the appendixes XII-XIV of *Ideas II*, Husserl provides, in regard to cultural sciences, an overview of different levels of clarification, which stem from intuition, run through concepts, and make their way to laws of motivation. As the foregoing analysis has shown, cultural objects are given, prior to any cultural science, in intuitions that provide us with an experience both of the objective products and of the motivations and performances that bring them forth. Cultural sciences are rooted in this intuitive

ground. However, what is distinctive of them are the two following levels that concern morphological and explanatory scientific understanding.

For Husserl, the second level of clarification has to do with descriptions that are set out in scientific statements with the help of descriptive concepts based on the typical structure of the world. It is a matter of type-concepts grounded on horizons of acquaintedness. In contrast to intuitive understanding reflected in individual descriptions, the new stage involves scientific understanding linked to morphological descriptions. Three areas of research fall within the projected morphology: (a) a description of the typical forms of individual persons and of their associations; (b) an account of the typical forms of the objectified spiritual world such as language, art, religion, and the like; and c) a study of the typical forms of development both of individual persons and their associations. The grounds for this second task lie, then, in the horizons of anticipation that are linked to typical acquaintedness, and its outcome is the possibility of dealing with manifold cultural phenomena in terms of “empirical-morphological identities (merely typical).” (Hua XXXII, 250)

Finally, cultural sciences develop into eidetic doctrines of the cultural world. Scientific understanding turns then into an explanatory understanding that resorts to essential laws of motivation. Empirical descriptions based on empirical intuitions give way to a priori descriptions based on essences and bringing the essential forms of personalities into a correlation with the essential forms of the surrounding world and its development. Now, if the a priori description of correlations and motivations makes an explanatory understanding possible, descriptive understanding must not be opposed to explanation in the sense of Wilhelm Dilthey’s interpretation of the contrast between the methods of cultural and natural sciences. Rather, an a priori description of motivations provides an explanation. It should be noted that, since we must turn back to the effects of cultural objects in order to set forth laws of motivation, the grounds for the third and final scientific task also lie in a horizontal feature or dimension. Furthermore, the outcome of this level of clarification is the disclosure of eidetic identities that set necessary boundaries for manifold cultural phenomena.

Husserl also treats these issues in his lectures of 1927 on *Natur und Geist* and in the related manuscripts. According to the Heidelberg school of Neo-Kantianism, the classification of sciences must be undertaken on the basis of the difference in methods. With this orientation, Heinrich Rickert makes a distinction between a generalizing method that dominates extensive infinity in the natural sciences by resorting to concepts and laws, and an individualizing method that towers over intensive infinity in the cultural sciences by referring it

to values as principles of selection. Husserl stresses as particularly prominent this attempt to overcome the infinite multiplicity of the world. But he advances two main objections: a methodological contrast must not be laid under the objective contrast between nature and spirit, and explanatory understanding in cultural sciences proceeds with general concepts even when it is interested in individual structures or developments. He then goes on to work out an alternative approach that should trace back the concepts of cultural sciences to their foundations in the pregiven world, and this presents him with the problem of disclosing the structurizing function of typicality, i.e., determinateness in horizonedness. For typicality works as a principle of selection and overcoming of infinity. Husserl draws attention to this problem in the 1927 lectures when he mentions the signification of associative induction. Infinite horizons, so he says, turn out at once to be horizons of acquaintedness and anticipation, and these patterns of determinateness hold sway over open indeterminateness and hence contribute to the overcoming of infinite multiplicity. Husserl claims that phenomenology “brings the structural typicality of this surrounding world to strict and always re-examinable concepts and on this basis gains systematically the set of fundamental concepts that must contribute to all possible sciences, ....” (Hua XXXII, 241)

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