

## Phenomenology Glossary

**Phenomenology:** Phenomenology is the science of phenomena: of the way things show up, appear, or are given to a subject in their conscious experience. Phenomenology tries to describe consciousness and its essential structures without using concepts and categories that come from common sense, the sciences, or ones cultural/historical surrounding. Phenomenology is guided by what is actually given rather than by what we expect to find given our theoretical commitments or common sense presuppositions. We should not let theories determine our descriptions of our lived experience; we should let experience determine our theories. This is the phenomenological ‘principle of principles’: to let originary giving intuitions be the source of all knowledge and insight.

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**Adumbration:** When I walk around a table perceiving it through different conscious experiences I am conscious of a single, identical table, of a thing that remains unchanged. While I perceive a self-identical thing as self-identical, my perceptions do not cease to vary. The manifestations through which the same appears Husserl calls *adumbrations* (or profiles or appearances). When a table is given through adumbrations it is the *table itself* that is given, not an image or sign of it. Adumbrations are not perspectives that cut us off from the table; they give the table itself. Nevertheless, the table is always and essentially given from a certain point of view, in an adumbration.

**Cogito:** Literally this translates to ‘I think’. Husserl uses this term to refer to any type of mental act or conscious experience that a subject undertakes, either actively or passively. Each cogito has two components: 1) It has a *content* or meaning which specifies the *certain manner* in which the act intends an object. So when I judge or assert ‘Napoleon was the victor of the battle of Austerlitz’, I judge Napoleon in a certain way, a way specified by my *understanding* of the content of the judgment. ‘Each *cogito*, each conscious process . . . ‘means’ something or other” (33). 2) Each Cogito, besides meaning an object, also means it in a *certain mode*: it can be a judgment, perception, memory, desire, valuation, etc. “The house perception means a house—more precisely, as this individual house—and means it in the fashion peculiar to perception; a house memory means a house in a fashion peculiar to memory, a house phantasy, in the fashion peculiar to phantasy” (33).

**Cogitatum:** The cogitatum is the *intentional object* of a cogito. The cogitatum is the object *as it is meant* by a cogito, not the object *which is meant* (i.e., the object as an existing *entity*). It refers to the object *as given*, it as a correlate of one’s subjective conscious acts, not its status as actual or not actual, or its properties as an actual material thing, etc. All intentional experiences have intentional objects, so when I perceive a hammer a hammer is the intentional object of my experience, when I imagine a unicorn, a unicorn is the intentional object, when I wish for all the money in the world and more all the money in the world and more is the intentional object of my experience. In the first case the object is a material object that exists in space and time, in the second case the object does not exist, and in the third case the object is a ‘possible object’. But if we enact the *epoché* we see that all three

experiences have an object, that there is always a cogito – cogitatum correlation internal to the experience, even when the cogitatum does not exist in physical actuality.

What then is the *metaphysical status* of the intentional object? On the one hand, the object does not enter into consciousness from the outside, for example by being caused. The intentional object is an *ideal* or descriptive feature of our conscious states, it is not a real part of our consciousness in the sense that our consciousness literally has properties analogous to that of the object. So when a horse is the bracketed intentional object of my flowing multitude of cogito, there is nothing ‘horse-like’ in my lived experience, my experience is not *literally* brown, or hosed, etc. The intentional object is rather an ‘appearing’ object, an object meant, and it is only *descriptively* immanent to the flowing consciousness of it. But this “being-in-consciousness is a *being-in of a completely unique kind*: not a being-in-consciousness as really intrinsic component part, but rather a being-in-it ‘ideally’ as something *intentional*, something appearing . . . a being-in-it as its immanent *objective sense*” (42).

**Constitution:** Husserl often says that the transcendental subject *constitutes* objects. This means at a minimum that if there were no transcendental subjects there would be no objects. But Husserl understands this as a phenomenological thesis, not an ontic thesis about the existence of physical object. On his view, the synthesis of identification enacts a *unity of consciousness* before which a unitary object can appear. To constitute an object is not to make it exist (in physical actuality), it is to make it appear as a pole of identity in one’s flowing conscious life. If consciousness did not have this synthetic form, it would not be able to experience objects because the flowing multitude of one’s conscious states would not be about a self-identical thing.

**Eidetic:** Phenomenology is an eidetic science, meaning that it is concerned with isolating ‘essences’ of consciousness or essential structure which make it possible for the world to be manifest to a subject in their conscious experience. Phenomenology is not concerned with your or my factual life and experience, but the essential structures that experiences must share to be intelligible or have sense.

**Epoche:** This is the main methodological device of phenomenology, which allows it to access what is given. To enact the *epoche* is to ‘suspend’ or ‘put out of play’ the *natural attitude*, our naive assurance that the world and its objects exist. It is accordingly a modification in our attitude toward the world: instead of positing that the world exists, or that it does not exist, one is to abstain from *taking a position* on such questions. Instead of taking the world as something that is (or is not), we regard it as ‘only something that claims being’.

The point of this modification is to focus exclusively on the phenomenological given, i.e., on things just as they appear in conscious experience. In enacting the epoche we don’t parenthesize the transcendent spatial temporal world and only focus on ‘inner’ representations, rather in the epoche we continue to explore the spatio-temporal world, but now in a new and different manner, i.e., explore it as a world that is meant and given in our subjective acts. So when we apprehend ourselves in phenomenological reflection, we

apprehend ourselves apprehending the world as it is meant by our mental acts. So the *epoche* therefore entails a change of attitude to reality, not the exclusion of reality. In this way the world is still something for me, but only as the pure correlate of my subjective acts, as something that is given.

**Bracketing:** Suspending, setting aside our biases, everyday understandings, theories, beliefs, habitual modes of thought, and judgments. To bracket the world is to enact the *epoche*.

**The Reduction:** The *epoche* is part of a larger movement called the phenomenological or transcendental reduction. Here one reduces one's descriptions to what is immanent to the *transcendental ego* and its acts leaving aside all descriptions and explanations that come from everyday life, the positive sciences, and our historical/cultural surrounding.

**Evidence:** Evidence is "an experiencing of something that is, and is thus: it is precisely a mental seeing of something" (12). To understand what Husserl means by evidence, think about the difference between 1) thinking about your car, 2) reading about your car, 3) imagining your car, 4) remembering your car, and 5) seeing your car.

In 1 and 2, the car is given to you *emptily*, you are merely thinking or reading about it. There is no intuitive fulfillment in which something is present to you.

In 3 and 4, your absent thinking about your car is *intuitively fulfilled*, the car is in some sense present in imagination and memory.

But it is only in 5 that the car comes to full presence. When we think of the car that is absent and then see it the car becomes present to one bodily, it is right there. Our empty *meaning intention* is here fulfilled by a perceptual act that gives the object meant bodily and in the flesh. Perception is the paradigm of a self-giving intuition, one in which we can see into the matter themselves with self-evident insight. In the demonstrative fulfillments of perception, the emptily intended and the originally intuited coincide. This bringing into coincidence, the intended being experienced in the intuited as itself and self-same, is an act of *identification*. Here, self-sameness is experienced and we obtain insight into the matter itself. The act of obtaining insight through this identifying fulfillment is *evidence* and this is the origin of *truth*. However, where there is the possibility of identification there is also the possibility of frustration, of one's meaning intention not being fulfilled.

**Adequate Evidence:** Husserl introduces the notion of *adequate* evidence to refer to any mental act in which there are no unfulfilled parts (see Meaning Intention and Meaning Fulfillment). Here an object is not merely self-given, but completely given. *No physical thing* can be given in such a manner, for the perception or imagination or thought of a physical thing is always perspectival, we perceive it from a certain angle or think of it in a certain manner, and these ways imply other perspectives and other ways of thinking of the object (other meaning intentions of the object) that are unfulfilled. But even if no physical object can be given adequately, it provides us with an ideal for our scientific strivings, even when we are dealing with non-physical objects, mathematical objects for example.

**Apodictic Evidence:** Something apodictic is not only evident, but is something that cannot be conceived, in reflection after the fact, to not be. “An apodictic evidence . . . is not merely certainly of the affairs or affairs-complexes (states of affairs) evident in it; rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being at the same time the absolute unimaginableness (inconceivability) of their non-being, and thus excluding in advance every doubt as ‘objectless’, empty” (16). Husserl thinks that we should set aside any knowledge, for example, our knowledge of existence of the world, that is not *apodictic*. However, as the *Cartesian Meditations* go on, we find out that much transcendental sphere that is described by phenomenology is not apodictic. So it is unclear how this standard, after getting us to bracket the world to enact the epoche, does any work.

**Horizon:** Because each adumbration never gives the whole object, but only a profile of it, each adumbration is inscribed in an ‘infinite’ series of other possible adumbrations. It is inscribed in an infinite series of potential profiles or appearances because the intentional object transcends the flow of conscious experiences of it—so there is always more to the object than is present to you, strictly speaking. You see the surface of the table, you don’t see its underside or the edge of the table top that faces away from you, yet these *absent* sides of the table are still somehow experienced. You don’t typically imagine these absent sides, nor do you infer them theoretically. So how are they experienced? Husserl’s idea is that the meanings internal to one’s various *cogito* ‘mean beyond themselves’, implicate or co-intend background or absent aspects of the scene. While in a perception of a material object these meanings (or meaning-intentions) are partially fulfilled by the presence of sense-perceptual features, they are also partly unfulfilled. So the meaning-intentions involved in our *cogito* not only intend what is present they also intend what is absent, which they anticipate. The anticipated features that are co-intended along with the present features of the object are its ‘horizon’.

Objects have two types of horizons: 1) An object’s *inner horizon* is its absent sides, those that are emptily meant in one’s experience. 2) An object’s *outer horizon* comprises elements that are not part of the object intended, but which are essentially implicated in the perception of it. Every material object is located in space, and when we perceive it we perceive it against a background of other spatially located objects and relations. This horizontal background is not our focus, but it is still present in the perception. The outer horizon extends beyond what is co-perceived along with the object of our focus to include the receding spatial world that is in no way present. It extends all the way out to encompass a ‘world horizon’, the spatial horizon of all of our possible doings.

**Hume’s Problem:** For Husserl, the identity of a perceived object (bracketed or not) cannot depend upon the identity of the acts (the *cogito*’s) about that object. If the identity of the object depended on the identity of the acts about it, it would be impossible to experience the same object more than once, for every time one had—in the flowing multitude of acts that make the stream of experience—a new *cogito* there would be a new perception and so a new object. So the question is: how can one perceive a self-identical object through the flowing multitude of one’s conscious experiences of it?

**Synthesis of Identification:** Husserl does not face Hume's problem because the 'primal form' belonging to consciousness is a synthesis of the one and the many: the unity of the object is given irreducibly in a diversity of experiences of it, and the diversity of ones' experiences, if they are to be part of a coherent unfolding of experience, refer to a unity, an object pole. In the synthesis of identification different cogito or conscious states are related to one another such that, despite their differences, one is conscious in them of a self-identical object. So every intended objects (cogitatum or noema) is given thorough a synthesis of a flowing manifold of conscious states.

**Introspection:** This is the method that empirical psychology uses to access the nature and character of one inner states. In introspection one makes descriptive reports about the *empirical ego*, one's psycho-physical state at a given moment, and not the *transcendental ego*. Phenomenology's descriptions of the transcendental ego and its acts does not proceed by introspection, but by the *epoche* and the reduction.

**Intentionality:** Intentionality is the property of mental acts such that they are *of or about* something, an object or state of affairs. When you judge you judge something, when you think you think about something, when perceive you perceive something, when you imagine you imagine something, when your desire you desire something, when you wish you wish for something, when you value you value something, when you love you love something, etc. All of these types of mental acts are intentional, they have a *content* that makes then about something, the *intentional object*.

**Judgment:** In making a judgment like 'the car *is* red' one characterizes an object (the car) as containing a property (red) by predicating a singular term ('car') with a predicate or general term ('red'). Judgments are active mental acts of the Ego: subjects put together concepts or terms to assert or say something about something that they are focused on and attentive to. Judgment is active in another way: in judging or asserting that the car is red, one *takes a stand* on the fact that the car *is* red, one endorses it.

Sometimes Husserl calls judgments, thoughts, or linguistic assertions *predicative experiences* because in these acts we predicate something of something. There are also *pre-predicative* experiences, for example, perceptions, where we do not actively predicate or take a stand on something. Rather before the predicating activity of the Ego, we have already experienced the state of affairs that is present to us. So, for example, when we walk by a grey wall, but are thinking of how to pay our rent, we *see* the grey wall but we don't make a judgment about it. It is not the focus of our attention, nor is it the subject matter of an active act of the ego.

**Life-world (lebenswelt):** The take for granted world that we live in and experience. The life-world is bracketed as part of the Epoché.

**Meaning Intention and Meaning Fulfillment:** These are terms that come from Husserl's first book *The Logical Investigations* (LI). He mostly drops this terminology but it sometimes pops up in the *Cartesian Meditations*. In LI he posited that *all* intentional mental acts have two sides, an *act-matter* and an *act-quality*. The act-quality specifies the *type* of act it is, a judgment, perception, imagining, etc. The act-matter involves the meaning intentions or the *content* of the act. The meaning intention of an act is about an object *in a certain manner*, and the manner is specified by the meaning intention or content. So when I have the thought 'Napoleon was the victor of the battle of Austerlitz' I don't have a 'bare thought' of Napoleon, I think of him in a certain way, a way specified by the meaning intention involved in my thought. Meaning intentions intend an object emptily, meaning that in having them an object is not intuitively presented. But meaning intentions can be fulfilled by intuitions, for example, when one imagines Napoleon, or sees a picture of him. Here the meaning intention is partially fulfilled, partly not. All meaning intentions involved in the perception of physical objects are always partly fulfilled partly unfulfilled.

**Mental Act:** Mental act is the most generic terms that Husserl uses to describe mental happenings. Mental acts can be *active*, like judging, thinking, and willing (acts that a subject or Ego *does*), or they can be *passive* like perceiving (which is something that happens *to* a subject).

**Noesis and Noema:** These are technical terms that correspond to Cogito and Cogitatum. Mental acts or conscious experiences are noesis, while intentional objects are noema. If we describe the intentional object in its mode of being meant we engage in *noematic* analysis. If we focus on the subjective side of our conscious life, on the cogito and its modes, we undertake a *noetic* analysis.

**Science:** *Science* has two meanings: 1) According to the first meaning a science is an interconnected set of propositions the truth of which is grounded on a basic proposition or propositions that cannot be false. Here the paradigm of science is Euclidian geometry and mathematics generally. Starting from self-evident axioms, from immediate judgments based in immediate intuitions, science derives, by careful steps of reasoning, conclusions. This is the paradigm of science that comes from the ancients and which Descartes and Husserl accept as the basic meaning of science. Here science is *philosophy* or *metaphysics*, which provides an integrated, total, and grounded picture of how things hang together. 2) According to the second meaning, science is *empirical science*. On this meaning, science is a careful and controlled method in which we formulate hypothesis, confirm them by gathering evidence through empirical observation and experiment, and make inductive inferences from that to conclusions about how things are overall (which we formulate as natural laws). Each science has its own object domain, matter, life, etc., and it's not concerned with providing truths outside of its area.

**Idea of Science:** Phenomenology is a science, indeed the paramount science, because it is motivated by the ideal of a *fully justified knowledge*, an ideal that the positive sciences fail to live up to since they fail to reflect on their metaphysical and epistemological

presuppositions. They are dogmatic vis-a-vis their essential assumptions, not interested in tracing back, with full self-evidence, concepts to their ground. But we can discover what the 'idea of science' is by looking at the practices of the actual sciences.

The scientist or philosopher does not just judge but *grounds* his judgments, tries to make them evident in such a way that he can return to the judgment at any time and repeat the act of grounding. But if the goal is to ground one's judgments, one needs one's grounds to themselves be grounded. This leads to the need for a chain of propositions grounded on other propositions that are themselves grounded. But for this chain to truly be grounded we need a proposition that is grounded without itself having to be grounded. Our *mediate judgments*, those grounded on other judgments, need themselves to be grounded in an *immediate judgment*, one that is absolutely grounded or self-grounded. The "idea of a science grounded on an absolute foundation, and absolutely justified, is non other than the idea that constantly furnishes guidance in all sciences in their striving toward universality" (11). Both mediate and immediate judgments are grounded when they are *evident*. (See evidence).

**States of Affairs (affair states):** States of affairs are what judgments or other types of mental acts *are about*, it is the object of mental acts. So the judgment 'the car is red' is about a state of affairs in which there is a red car.

**Temporal Synthesis:** The synthesis of identification is a temporal synthesis. Since the appearing of a self-identical meant object occurs through a flux of flowing adumbrations, a flux that is temporally extended, the phenomenology of perception is a phenomenology of time.

Intentional objects are given temporally, i.e., we can regard *it* as before or after etc. But this object can exist in time only because *consciousness itself* is synthesized temporally. Take a melody (bracketed). This is a temporal object because it takes time to unfold, one note following another. To be aware of this object requires that my experience be extended temporally to match the object's duration. But this is not enough for awareness of this object. For if the prior note to the one I am now hearing drops off completely, then I would not experience the present note as following on from the previous one, and there would be no awareness of the object as extended time. *A succession of experiences does not lead to a consciousness of succession*. For Husserl each perceptual phase has an intentional reference to an extended section of the temporal object. We must hold in grasp the prior moment. In the now the past must be co-represented as past. Based upon this we can experience the slippage of time.

Husserl gives the name *retention* to this 'holding in grasp' of the past in the now. Retention is not memory, for memory is a regaining of the past as something over and done with. Retention is rather an appreciation of the present as slipping into the past continuously thereby giving us the basis for our sense of the past in the first place. Every present moment also contains a *protention* whereby we have a sense of an immanent future phase of experience in which the now will be maintained the now to come. This is not an expectation but a

living forward to the new now. All our experience have a *temporal horizon*, and that leads back into the past and one that leads forward into the future.

**Transcendence:** The intentional object, in having different characteristic than the conscious experiences of them, transcends our conscious experiences. Here, we uncover a sense of 'transcendence' *within* the sphere of pure consciousness: something transcendent is immanent to consciousness. Phenomenology is interested in *this* type of immanent transcendence, not in ontic transcendence, i.e., the transcendence that applies to independent physical things that stand over against our subjectivity.

**Transcendental philosophy:** This is a term that originally comes from Kant. A transcendental philosophy is a philosophy that is concerned with the conditions of possibility for experience, i.e., for things to show up to or appear to a subject, rather than the nature of the transcendent things that show up. Phenomenology is a type of transcendental philosophy because it is also interested in the conditions of possibility for things to appear to a subject, but these conditions are best identified through enacting the *epoche*. In doing so one opens up a sphere of *transcendental* self-experience in which a *new realm of being* comes to light. This realm is not accessed through *introspection* and our making empirical reports about our own current mental states, for example, 'I am now thinking of a blue whale'. Here we make a report about ourselves as a psycho-physical object, an 'objective subjectivity that is part of the world'. This is how *empirical psychology* thinks of our subjectivity. Phenomenology, in contrast, is a science of "absolute subjectivity, whose thematic object exists whether or not the world exists" (30). In other words, it is not interested in what is now going on with you as an empirical subject, but in the necessary modes of manifestation or appearance that structure the sphere of subjectivity.

**Universal Form of Thought:** For Husserl the universal form of thought is: ego – cogito – cognitatum. I (ego) have a thought of a certain type with a certain meaning (cogito) of a certain intentional object (cogitatum). If we enact the epoche we get: ego – cogito – (cogitatum). Here, we put the intentional object in parentheses and just consider it as how it is meant in our experience of it. In other words, we just consider it as a correlate of our subjective mental acts of it, and we do not consider it using physical or metaphysical vocabularies, vocabularies that are infected by the natural attitude.