

Edmund Husserl: *Einleitung in die Ethik. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1920/1924*, edited by Henning Peucker, *Husserliana XXXVII*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004, 502 pp.

Intentionality and evidence are fundamental concepts to Husserlian phenomenology but, what are their limits? Can we speak of the intentionality and evidence of our emotional lives, of the validity of our feelings? In *Ideas*, published in 1913, Husserl sustains that evidence is a matter concerning all sorts of acts, that is, not only those impinging on the sphere of belief, but also those touching on the realms of sentiment and will¹. But in *Ideas I* –caught in the frame of a phenomenology of reason– Husserl restricts himself to indicating which directions phenomenological analyses should take concerning these “parallel” spheres, as relates to doxic actions and their correlates. This limitation is far from being gratuitous, insofar as Husserl’s interest in this text is aimed at the doxic or theoretic spheres as founding strata for the axiological and practical realms. It is in his lectures on ethics that Husserl finally concerns himself with feeling and wanting. This is the case of the lessons on ethics and the theory of value published in volume XXVIII of the *Husserliana*², collecting texts of what are known as his “antebellum ethics”³. Even though the question on the intentionality of feelings is boarded by the *Logical investigations*⁴; it is never sufficiently developed there, because it is subordinated to the issue on the thetic character of life experiences in general. It is by virtue of an idea that is present both in *Hua XXVIII*, and in the volume we are here reviewing, that the emotional life finds its place in ethics: all desire depends on a valuation (*Werten*), and every valuation on a feeling (*Fühlen*).

Volume XXVIII of the *Husserliana* belongs to the first phase of the ethics. Among the complementary texts it gathers are manuscripts of the

¹ Husserl, Edmund, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*, translated by Jose Gaos, Madrid: FCE, 1993, p. 334.

² Husserl, Edmund, *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre 1908-14*, edited by Ullrich Melle, *Husserliana XXVIII*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988 (from here, *Hua XXVIII*).

³ Melle, Ullrich, “The Development of Husserl’s Ethics”, in: *Études phénoménologiques*, VII (1991), p. 115.

⁴ Cf. Husserl, Edmund, *Logical investigations*, translation by Manuel Garcia Morente and Jose Gaos, Barcelona: Altaya, 1995, tome II, “Fifth investigation”, § 15, pp. 505-511 (from here, *II*); *Logische Untersuchungen*, edited by E. Ströker, *Gesammelte Schriften* 3, Hamburg: Meiner, 1992, tome II, “V. Über intentionaler Erlebnisse und ihre Inhalte”, § 15, pp. 401-410 (from here, *LU*).

lessons on ethics of 1897 and 1902. But the main text of this volume is made up by the lectures given in Göttingen between 1908 and 1914, that is, around the time in which transcendental phenomenology of these lectures is to scientifically ground a formal ethics that refutes ethical skepticism and relativism. This founding consisted in displaying the essential correlation between the objectivity of values and the acts of feeling and wanting. Thus, Husserl presents a formal axiology and practices in the frame of a static philosophy while chasing the thread of the analogy between logics and ethics. Whereas the first should be concerned with the laws of values seen as the objective expressions of the laws of motivation, the second has the categorical imperative and rectitude of will (*die Willensrichtigkeit*) as its key concepts.

The late or postwar ethics are frequently presented as being under the influence of Fichte, whose ideal of humanity is a theme of Husserl's lectures between 1917 and 1918. The scarce extant bibliography available for this period of Husserlian ethics⁵ tends to leap⁶ towards the articles written between 1922 and 1924 for the Japanese journal *Kaizo*⁷, the central theme of which were renovation (*Erneuerung*) and the ethical life as elemental possibilities for a genuinely human life. The publication of volume XXXVII of the *Husserliana* is thus essential for whoever wishes to trace a panorama of Husserl's ethics. It comprises the 1920 lectures he repeated in

⁵ It must be noted that, despite specialists' generally agreeing in dividing Husserlian ethics into two parts, Peucker—in his introduction to the present volume—speaks of a new development in ethics occurring in the 30's. This refers to the group of ethical-metaphysical manuscripts E III 1-11. In his book *Praxis und Theoria. Husserls transzendentalphänomenologische Rekonstruktion des Lebens* (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 1997, pp. 125-130), Hans Reiner Sepp broadly speaks of two phases to his ethics. But in the article "Mundo de la vida y ética en Husserl" (in: San Martín, Javier (ed.), *Sobre el concepto de mundo de la vida. Actas de la II Semana española de fenomenología*, Madrid: UNED, 1993, pp. 76-77), he refers to this very group of manuscripts as a third phase in Husserlian ethics, marked by numerous developments that are not systematically unified. In his own words: "Husserl barely speaks of 'ethics' anymore, referring only to the 'ethical' and the conditions of an ethical (individual or community) life, while also and frequently incurring an 'ethical-religious' spin, with a metaphysical perspective. This is a sign that the ethical question had not in the least lost relevance to the late Husserl: rather, it had finally found its place in a teleological-metaphysic frame that encompasses it".

⁶ An exception to this, written in Spanish, is the article by Javier San Martín, "Ética, antropología y filosofía de la historia. Las Lecciones de Husserl de *Introducción a la ética* del Semestre de verano de 1920", in: *Isegoría*, 5 (1992), pp. 43-77.

⁷ Published in: Husserl, Edmund, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, edited by Thomas Nenon and Hans Reiner Sepp, *Husserliana XXXVII*, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988; *Renovación del hombre y de la cultura*, translation by Agustín Serrano de Haro and with an introduction by Guillermo Hoyos, Barcelona: Anthropos, 2002.

Freiburg in 1924. Without severing ties to his pre-war ethics, these lectures show how the static grounding of validity leads to the genetic founding of the field of ethics, and how, as a consequence of this, the concepts of person and history take on an importance they did not yet have at the time of the Gottingen lectures.

The course corresponds to manuscript F I 28 and has ten chapters, as well as a series of complementary texts, among which a digression on the distinction between nature and spirit –and their corresponding sciences–is worthy of notice⁸. The first chapter, dedicated to the determination of ethics, is clearly distinguished from the ones following it by its conceptual and systematic content. From the second to the ninth chapter, Husserl will assume a historic-critical strategy in pursuing the history of ethics and drawing the necessary materials for a founding of philosophical ethics from it. The procedure will be rather like the *zigzag* which will be finally revisited in, say, the *Crisis*. The lectures conclude with a chapter proposing an ethics of the best possible life that is closely related to the notions on self-renovation presented in the articles for *Kaizo*.

The first chapter is a systematic determination of ethics insofar as they make up a universal theory of rules (*universale Kunstlehre*). Husserl is guided by the idea that, just as logic is conceived as being the theory of the rules of thought and prescribes scientifically founded norms for the judgment of truth or falsehood, ethics can be conceived as the theory of the rules of rational desire and action; with their universal nature spanning logic itself, since scientific judgment is but a particular mode of human activity in general (p. 4). In the measure they are universal, ethics cannot be reduced to the establishment of the formal laws of practical consequence and contradiction: rather, they inquire on the legitimacy and rectitude of the ends of our will, through the norms of preference and actions, finally asking whether every human being is subject to the demands posed by a universal duty that, as an ultimate end, directs the whole of life. Husserl ends his first paragraph by establishing the feasibility of a practical and normative discipline as a point of departure: starting from what is respectively due (*das Gesollte*) in each case, and “following what is typical to the practical situations possible, affords us with practical prescriptions on how to lead our lives in accordance to them, drawing us as close as possible to the notion of a good ethical life and to how we may enact its possibility” (p.

⁸ We shall not concern ourselves with the complementary texts, but will remit to them when it is pertinent. On the sense and purpose of the digression, cf. San Martín, J., “Ética, antropología y filosofía de la historia. Las *Lecciones* de Husserl de *Introducción a la ética* del Semestre de verano de 1920”.

7). The second paragraph completes this characterization of ethics by introducing three ideas, namely: a) that ethical judgments verse on the person as the substrate for the habitualities of wanting, desiring, valuing; b) that ethics do not coincide with moral philosophy, as this would imply that duty –the absolute demand of practical reason– would be restricted to loving one’s neighbor as an ultimate end; c) that in the measure that our own ethical judgments refer not just to individuals but also to the community, ethics are not only individual, but also social.

In §§3-5, Husserl takes some distance from Brentano by striving to show in what sense the concept of a theory of rules (*Kunstlehre*) is adequate for the establishment of ethics. This discussion has the *Prolegomena* of the LI at its backdrop. It may surprise us to find that, having dissociated pure logic from logic as a theory of rules in the *Prolegomena*, Husserl serves himself of the latter to determine the nature of ethics. However, two senses of the concept of a theory of rules are at stake here, and they can already be gleaned in the *Prolegomena*⁹. In one of these, a theory of rules is a system of practical prescriptions, but to the extent that every practical enunciation can be theoretically oriented, we may render praxis as a theoretic theme. When the practical approach stops being the determining one and the theoretic approach comes to the fore, theories of rules may develop into scientific disciplines. Husserl reserves the term *Technologie* for this second sense of the term. Thus, a scientific notion of ethics is maintained by suppressing the error of tradition –incurred both by ethics and logic– by considering them as disciplines determined by practical interest, and founded in psychology on the basis of empirical enunciations. As in the *Prolegomena* before, Husserl makes a quick sketch of the refutation of logical psychologism to underscore that this critique is also valid for ethical psychologism so that –analogously to the case of doxic actions– it can be said that “a well-directed act of will and its good intent (for example, the truth of will) is not good because I, this contingent man, have causally come into being in this psychophysical nexus of nature, it is good because of what resides in it in terms of its ideal content...” (p. 31). Even if they were determined by a practical interest, these disciplines require a prior theoretic foundation, provided by pure logic in one case and by pure ethics in the other, insofar as they involve a “fundamental *a priori* discipline of reason in valuing and wanting generally” (p. 32).

⁹ “Every artform [*Kunstlehre*] evidently implies a normative discipline, but not a practical one...Conversely, every normative discipline in which the fundamental valuation is turned into the focus of the corresponding end develops into an art” (LI, tome I, §15, p. 64; LU, tome I, *Gesammelte Schriften* 2, p. 59).

From chapter two, the previous refutation will be transferred to the history of ethics. Husserl detects a struggle in ethics to become a strict science, and claims its birth as such in the opposition posed by Socrates to the skepticism of the sophists. Husserl finds in Socrates, and in the idea of Platonic knowledge, an effort towards the intuitive fulfillment of the essence of the ethical values, albeit without ethics reaching the form of a systematic science (§ 7). This will be menaced by ancient hedonism, which, in failing to distinguish between *de facto* and *de iuris*, blurs the “normal” –our practical inclination towards pleasure– with the normative, taking the sense of good and the duty of the facts of experience as such (§ 8). This keeps it from seeing that through ethical concepts we deal with normative ideas remitting to possible subjects which judge, value and want, implying a noetic the concepts of which convey a just or unjust wanting and acting from an ethical stance (p. 44). The motives present in ancient hedonism will reappear in the history of modern ethics, which Husserl characterizes on the basis of the opposition between empiricism and ethical rationalism, § 9 of which will bring the second chapter to a close.

The third lecture thus retakes the hedonistic motives found in the philosophy of Hobbes, pointing out their repercussion in egotistic and altruistic utilitarianism. This presentation has the purpose of showing how ethics and Hobbes’ theory of the State have the value of a theoretical experiment. If we strip it clean of its empirical attire–and with it, of the one-sidedness implied in the idea of an essentially egotistic man –the notion of a personal subject in general and a pure theory of the State emerges (p. 58). Husserl refers to “pure”, in this case, as an idealization such as that which operates in geometry. To this extent, he refers to it as to mathematics of sociality, the value of which consists in being a first draft of a pure and *a priori* consideration of the essence of man as an actor, communicated to his equals from the vantage of practical *a priori* possibilities and in rational forms of action and community life.

Chapter four and five concern themselves with hedonism. The first is a criticism to hedonism insofar as it is a form of ethical skepticism, a critique which gives Husserl the chance to outline the elemental structure of aspiration. This analysis is completed in the fifth chapter, which is dedicated to the different forms of modern hedonism. Both lessons set the course for the theme of the spiritual being as the realm of motivation, which will be boarded in the sixth chapter.

The analysis of aspiration is targeted at showing that, through essential necessity, every aspiration –and all forms of desire, generally– is en-

dowed with *a priori* intentionality, invested with the notion of fulfillment of the value. Hedonists do not distinguish between the mention of the value and its fulfillment, and thus confuse valuation with the value, and the act of loving with what is lovable, pleasure with what triggers it, and so forth: they confuse subjective and objective aspects. Pleasure, Husserl clarifies, pertains to the sentient subject (*fühlendes Subjekt*) and it is through that sentiment that he becomes aware of the value as a moment of the thing. In other words, hedonism fails to distinguish between the temporal and the ideal. It is true that the real values, the good, are –like feeling and valuing– temporal; however, in one case they involve real time, and in another, the time of the conscience (p. 73). Ideal values such as the beauty of a work of art are supratemporal and must be distinguished from the sentiments evoked by being given a valuable object. Hedonism is correct in claiming aspiration is fulfilled in a pleasure, but it is not directed at pleasure, or at the joy that is brought on by reaching the desired end: it is directed at the value, lest a return to the infinite should be accepted (p. 90).

Thus, one must distinguish three things things at the essence of aspiration: on the one hand is the act we consider a value (*Werthalten*), with the latter being summoned in the conscience of non-reality; then there is the value per se (whether aesthetical, theoretical, relative, personal, etc.) and, finally, there is the estimation (*Wertnehmen*) performed as a conscience that feels the value is granted to it in person, quite as in perception (*Wahrnehmung*) the existent is experienced in person (*cf.* pp. 85-86). And just as in the case of perception the phenomenologist's vantage is addressed to the object of experience, in the case of real life we must return from the value to the valuation. In this sense, Husserl rebukes hedonism's lack of a return to the original sources of ethical concepts, and it is precisely this that he is signaling when claiming that “a philosophical ethic and –to the extent that it is at its foundation– a scientific theory of value, demands an *a priori* phenomenology of conscience that correlates to it, to knowledge and in this case, the conscience that feels, desires, wants in the totality of its multiple variations, wit these being always outlined *a priori*” (p. 77). So it is that, for Husserl, ethics demand a “transcendental theory of valorative reason and practical reason” (p. 91).

The different forms of hedonism share this lack of a foundation. Husserl tackles the ethical subjectivism of Stirner's egotistic hedonism (Lametrie, Helvetius, Betham) and the altruistic hedonism of Hartley and John Stuart Mill. Besides the confusion between the value and the feeling of

joy that perceives it¹⁰, Husserl reproaches Stirner's identification of the two senses of the subjectivity of feeling, since sentiment's subjectivity –insofar as it is my experience– in no way implies that it is “merely subjective”, as opposed to “objectively valid”. This erroneous identification keeps us from admitting that emotional experiences also imply principles of legitimacy and illegitimacy, which in turn feeds the prejudice that “feeling is, unto itself, something irrational” (p. 92). And if we accept such principles, then we cannot grasp them in a psychological, associative manner, as do hedonism or altruistic utilitarianism, which accounts for the mechanic and psychological emergence of disinterested benevolence through egotistic motivation.

Chapter six charges against this naturalistic and one-sided perspective on spiritual life. Husserl here denounces the mechanisms of sensualist and naturalist psychology that keep us from seeing that spirituality hails to a personal subject which, in correlation to the development of the surrounding world and in the unity of constant development, becomes the self insofar as individual personality of a superior kind (p. 105). Recalling Dilthey, Husserl opposes the “explanation” provided by the natural sciences to the “comprehension” of spiritual genesis, which consists in reconducting the spiritual to its source by displaying the motivational connections that determine it. The question for our motivations leads to the distinction between active and passive or affective spirituality¹¹. The latter serves as constant backdrop to the psychic, which proceeds through association and without the activity of the self. This primordial passivity feeds off the sphere of rational actions – including those of the emotional life– in which the self is situated. Such acts and the senses they evoke are then submerged in a secondary passivity; what is valued as means become sediment with the sense of a means, just as the ultimate end become sediment with the sense of a value unto itself. The action and the sense alike can be reactivated and questioned on their aesthetic, logical or ethical legitimacy. What interests Husserl is that the establishment of questions for the origins of our actions is *de facto* and not *de iuris*, that all ethical questions are of this same nature. We can thus delineate the essence of the correct valuation and the true value, and the decision of the will or of the true practical good. This is how Husserl insists in that the value acts of sentiment and the acts of the will both count with essential laws of legitimacy and illegitimacy –that can be intellectually founded–as regards their motiva-

¹⁰ A distinction leading to sensible feelings as materials for the unity of axiological apperception and their repercussions in a state of mind (*Stimmung*). Cf. annex III, pp. 326-327.

¹¹ Cf. Annex V: “Motivación racional y motivación pasiva. Sobre la distinción entre motivación racional y pre-racional” (1920), pp. 331-332.

tional circumstances (p. 122). For Husserl, this opens up the field for the investigation of axiology and ethics that psychological naturalism –and the struggle between the morality of sentiment and the morality of understanding– all but lost from sight.

Husserl takes care of this particular quarrel in the seventh chapter, by presenting it as the historical enactment of the opposition between ethico-empiric anthropology and the rationalist ethic, which arises as the necessary Hobbesit reaction to what is moral in man. In this dispute, the morality of sentiment seeks foundation in the ethic principles of the emotional life, whereas the morality of understanding posits as the groundwork for the objective and unconditional validity of these principles a pure reason that will, eventually, allude to the idea of God. Confronted by this opposition, phenomenology finds itself being constantly put “between the Scilla of *theologism* in which rationalism ever incurs, and the Charybdis of *anthropologism* and *biologism* in which empiricism repeatedly falls...” (p.132). In any case, if this dispute does make sense, it is because each of the parts assumes that there is a truth and a valid correction for every rational being (p.149).

Cudworth (1617-1688), a representative of the school of Cambridge, partakes of rationalist theologism since –despite portraying an accurate parallelism between mathematical and ethical legality– he fails to acknowledge the autonomy of the idealities that these entail, and deposits them in God. Simultaneously, he does not distinguish what is proper of an ethical law, namely, that besides being a theoretical enunciation enclosing a truth that is susceptible of being seen through evidence, it is a general exigency, an imperative on the acting and deciding of a subject of the will. He thus makes no distinction between the reason which judges on duty and reason itself, so that ethical reason is here reduced to being a theoretical reason passing judgment on ethical matters (p. 136); and even if we were to accept this, we should not want to succumb to intellectualism, but must rather lend some thought to the issues and origins that underlie the corresponding judgments for, when theoreticians refer to being and non-being, ethicists refer to what is dutiful and what is not (*das Gesolltes und Nicht-Gesolltes*).

Another risk in drawing too close a parallel between the mathematic and the ethical is the confusion of the laws that rule over things with normative laws or the laws of reason. This is Clarke’s (1675-1729) case, who, upon identifying reason with nature, concludes that a non-ethical action is that which contradicts the nature of things. But this is contradictory, because our action cannot counteract the laws of thingness, while it can counter normative laws –as in when we judge wrongly or act viciously–.

Hence, ethical laws do not regulate being or actions as they would a thing, rather, they express the essential connection between, say, the normative predicate “bad” and certain kinds of actions (p. 141).

In its effort to sustain the objectivity of the validity of ethical judgments, ethical rationalism fails to consider ethical truths unto themselves, which are then taken to a judicative expression –Husserl will later say that the operation of valuative and practical reason are performed before thought and consist in a pre-theoretical objectivation (*cf.* p. 185). Because of this, ethics are not –unlike logic–self-referential; ethical judgments are not judgments on other judgments: the normative laws to which they hail are not, like those of logic, laws on judicative truth, but rather, laws on emotional life and the will (p. 153). By this dependency of theoretical objectivity and the foundation of ethical concepts in pure understanding, rationalist ethics lose sight of the bond between the three functions of actions that are present when experienced morally (*cf.* 153). Because of this, Husserl will finally opt for the morality of sentiment, recognizing groundwork for phenomenological analyses in it, as based on the interlocking of the types of actions (p. 154). Convinced that “practical behaviour is, manifestly, determined by feeling”, Husserl will claim that if we were to eliminate sentiments, “then all ethical concepts, and the concepts of ends and means, good and bad, virtue and obligation; all such particular inherent concepts would cease to make sense. Man would no longer be an essence that aspires, wants, acts” (pp. 147-148).

The exposition of the morality of sentiment is taken on through Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson. Despite Husserl reproach of Shaftesbury’s (1671-1713) confusion between ethic and aesthetic judgments, he acknowledges his theory of the harmony of the affections has the merit of pointing out the need for thinking on the constitution of moral judgment and virtue. The survey he makes of this theory gives Husserl the chance of introducing a concept of the moral self, as we do not only judge the ethic character of actions, but also the person itself. It is the capacity for self-evaluation and this awareness of its aspirations to superior practical values that distinguishes the moral self. Husserl refers to it as the “*causa sui* of its own morality” (p. 163), but distinguishes between two different types of morality: one comprised by the actions through which the evidence of the determination and norms of oneself is experienced, making up the moral self, to later pass to habituality; the other, constituted by the virtuous moral acts occurring in the unreflective moral life (p. 164). Therefore, the moral person is that which –as a consequence of an instituting will– aspires habitually to good and lives the whole of his life in a unitary and habitual

teleological regulation. This will be taken up by the tenth chapter, after an exposition on the moral philosophy of Kant is performed.

Having settled the dispute between the morality of sentiment and that of understanding in the XVIIIth century, Husserl dedicates his eighth chapter to Hume, whose general problem is that skepticism, in ethics, comes as a result for the causal explanation denying sentiment of reason. By reducing sentiments to sensible qualities understood as psychic facts, Hume fails to consider motivation and the intentionality of sentiment. Before this position, Husserl sustains that all feeling states something and harbours a correct or incorrect appraisal, a valuation which bestows a convenient or inconvenient value on the object (p. 181). Besides, although Hume takes care of the relationship between the different kinds of acts, he explains the emergence of the relation between sentiment and the object of representation –a correlate to the acts of knowledge– from the vantage of an association he interprets as a psychical attraction, thus reducing it to the contingency of psychic facts. If we were to free ourselves from this empiricist bent and consider the fiction of a pure self that feels and values, Husserl says, certain axiological and practical laws would become evident: for example, a subject that has the certainty that something joyful does not exist is rationally motivated to suppress his joy and it would be perverse, and irrational to his feelings, to be glad instead of sad, just as it would be contrary for practical reason to aspire to a means without knowing whether it refers to some eventual end (pp. 182-183).

Like Shaftesbury, Hume confuses ethics and aesthetics, and makes of the first an aesthetic of character and actions. Having exposed the Humean distinction between the different types of sentiment, Husserl explains that for Hume the realm of the ethical is that of the beautiful broadly, since he bestows an ethical character onto disinterested feelings of pleasure. Hume thinks that for the generation of such sentiments, the imagination is enough. But when it comes to ethical judgments, we value the good by basing ourselves on the belief in reality, something that does not occur in aesthetic judgment, in which the belief in the existence of beauty is at never in question. So it is that Hume fails to see that knowledge, in all of its modalities of belief, presents itself as the support for sentiment and the valuations of the good, nor can he tell that the latter is the support for the acts of the will. As we shall see, the connection between wanting and valuing is an essential characteristic for Husserl and because of it, he shall object to Kant's reducing it, on account of a sentiment of respect before the moral law, a "merely anthropological connection" (p. 211).

The survey of Kantian morality begins with a presentation of the first seven paragraphs of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, after which Husserl questions the Kantian conception of pure will and opposes to it the idea of a phenomenology of will that asks for the specific in its validity and for how it comes to be authorized. Phenomenological ethics can thus be understood as “a logic of the will” (p. 213). The only justification that can be demanded of such a science is intuitive evidence. However, rather than taking the intuitive method already signaled by Hume, Kant posits a transcendental deduction of the obligations from pure reason, without considering that a subject of the will is, *a priori*, a subject that feels and values. Acts of the will are stated in our valuations; hence, *a* self that wants is unconceivable without the motivation given by a valuation, that is, without a feeling (p. 215). We want in terms of what we feel and value. The problem is that, for Kant, every object is an object of nature, empirical and contingent. This identification leads him to dismiss all the formations of the cultural world –the realms of valuing, wanting and possible praxis– as “mere” nature” (p. 219). The result of the dualism between sensibility –the field of irrational facticity– and *a priori* reason works to the exclusion of ideal objectivities as practical objects. In the face of this, and with the purpose of making the realm of phenomenological ethics more clear, Husserl posits the concept of effective ideal realities (*idealen Wirklichkeiten*) and distinguishes between *Realisierung* and *Verwirklichung* (cf. pp. 216-218) thus revisiting the idea of the “spiritualized objects” that appears in *Ideas II*.

The critique of the Kantian exclusion of the sentiments as determinations of the will insists on two points. First, there is the distinction between passive sensible feeling –to which correction or incorrection cannot be adjudicated– and the valorative actions of sentiment. The first have a transcendental function in the second: for example, they partake in the constitution of the beauty of a body insofar as it comprises a unity amongst the multiplicity of feelings. Secondly, and by resting on the comparison between active sentiments and perception, Husserl insists in that the former also presuppose the ability to experience their own evidence. If Kant does not accept the possibility of speaking in terms of validity and the fulfillment of sentiment, it is because he shares the sensualist bias that reduces it to being a psycho-physical fact of human nature (p. 227). He is thus far from seeing that this distinction between mention and fulfillment also stages an appearance in the phenomenon of preference, and that this is valid for the three spheres of action. In theoretical preference, we address the probable as a correlation to the belief in the possibility of being; the preference in

sentiment portrays one of the values as the best; finally, in the case of the will, preference submits a will that has been valued as the best, and eventually translates it into duty.

What is best in every case can then be legitimated or, on the contrary, shown to be worse. The consequence of excluding valorative actions of sentiment from the sphere of essential motivation is the hypostasis of a pure reason understood as a capacity exempt from any determination that may come from practical situations. The categorical imperative only says: act rationally! (p. 234). Towards the end of the second chapter (p. 47), Husserl already signals that a formal ethics does not exclude, but demands, a material ethic. We cannot want concretely without taking into account the materiality of the will and of the circumstances that compel us. "*The demand for expending with material contents*" Husserl claims, "*is a nonsensical one in the spheres of will and thought alike*" (p. 235).

Now then, none of these critiques should stop us from underlining Kant's merit in having posited a morality of obligation based on the phenomenon of self-determination. Thus, the Kantian notion of duty leads Husserl to that of rational self-configuration: man is distinguished by the ability to self-configure from rational goals perceived as duties. This serves him as a bridge to the last chapter, which starts by stating the distinction between the axiologic and the ethic dispositions. The first is an ontological attitude, addressing the genres and species of values. In it, persons are only considered as goods among other goods (p. 245). A question on value, say, on my value as a human being, is not an ethical question such as: what should I do? or, am I a moral human being? Neither a theory of value nor a theory of goods constitutes an ethic (*ibid.*).

What is proper of an ethical attitude is that, in it, we are motivated by the certainty of the normative natures of willing and acting which, because of this, come to lose that distinctive feature of ingenuity that is typical to the natural attitude: contrarily, in the ethical attitude, "we live in the will to think, to value, to wanting with evidence and, in agreement with this, to keeping original convictions and acquisitions stemming from authentic reason in sight" (p. 248). This will is not enough, however. The scientist, for example, in his will to universal truth, adheres to a certain normativity, but does not inquire for the norm itself, nor does he ask himself if his will is good. Despite this, the example of a vocational scientific life helps Husserl demonstrate that an ethical life is that which follows a universal, normative regulation. This is not just a quantitative, but a qualitative, matter. The artist does not aspire just to the beautiful: he strives for the highest beauty

he can reach. Recalling the formal practice of *Hua XXVIII*¹², Husserl sustains that: “In every sphere, the best is the enemy of the good and absorbs all lesser goods into itself” (p. 251).

Husserl broadens this will to the best that he finds in the vocational scientist or artist to man in general. He thus posits the universal calling to be a fulfilled, authentic and true man. To achieve this, I must decide to live the whole of my life “in such a way that it is my best possible life: with best possible standing for the best that I can do. This is the dutiful, the absolutely dutiful life, for me” (p. 252). It is worth noting that, in the measure in which what is due, that is, the truth of the will, is never valid unto itself, “my best” will be determined by the past and present horizons delineating my future life. It will not concern the best possible life of any person, but that of a particular individual and his particular history. It is “my best” and “my due, as an individual” (p. 253). Husserl posits an individual categorical imperative: “Do, from this point onwards and without hesitating, your very best, your very best forever, and pursue it in the knowledge of what is just according to norm, and want it through the conscious will of it” (*ibid.*). The best, which depends on our valuations, is not thus chosen or performed ingenuously; it is the result of an ethical life which makes the categorical imperative a habitual guide¹³.

We shall finish with two observations. Firstly, we shall reinforce the need for an ethic materiality since all wanting, including that which relates to the categorical imperative, is possible only on account of its particular motivation and through the values which, insofar as they are also motives, are bestowed onto particular situations. Next, Husserl points out that the moral personality is an idea we fringe to a higher or lesser degree (p. 246), and which we may thus understand as a regulative notion. Thus, the static groundwork for the validity of axiological and practical laws that worried Husserl during the pre-war epoch becomes, in *Hua XXXVII*, a genetic foundation for ethics understood not only in terms of the history of ethics, but also as the constitution or the genesis of the moral person, from the teleological perspective that is typical of the late Husserl.

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(Translated from Spanish by Monica Belevan)

¹² Cf. *Hua XXVIII*, p. 136.

¹³ Cf. Annex XII, pp. 339-342.