



HARRY P. REEDER

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE  
OF HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY

second edition

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## PATHWAYS IN PHENOMENOLOGY

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FOR THE FIRST EDITION

In acknowledging my debt to those who helped to make this book possible I am in a somewhat embarrassing position. These chapters were written over a span of something like eight years, at a number of universities. I have presented earlier versions of most of the chapters as lectures at annual meetings of the Canadian Philosophical Association, and at department colloquia and philosophy club meetings at the following universities: The University of Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier University, The University of Alberta, The University of Waterloo, Brock University, and The University of Texas at Arlington. Through these many lecture-discussions I have gained a great deal of insight into the problems of introducing others to phenomenological theory and method. Thus I owe my thanks to more persons than can be named at this time and I must limit my expression of gratitude to those individuals who made outstanding contributions to the development of this text. My greatest debt is to José Huertas-Jourda, who introduced me to phenomenology by a careful theory-and-practice approach. To him I owe not only my general appreciation of the interrelation of theory and practice in phenomenology, but also many of the examples I use in this text. I thank my colleagues at the Universities of Guelph and Alberta for their encouragement in responding to my lectures, and for enabling me to teach graduate and undergraduate courses in phenomenology. Laurent Godbout and Lenore Langsdorf also deserve my gratitude for their insightful comments on earlier versions of many of these chapters. Thanks also to Susan McDonald, who proofread the manuscript, and to Ken Comer

whose unflagging computing efforts helped in the indexing of this work. The preparation of this book for publication was made possible by an Organized Research Fund grant from the University of Texas at Arlington. I wish to thank UTA, and especially Bob Perkins, Dean of the Graduate School, who was most helpful in the process of applying for and administering the grant. Finally, my students—to whom this book is dedicated—provided me with inspiration, questions, challenges, and detailed feedback. Without them this project would not have been possible. If I name a few of these students, whose criticism and advice was especially helpful, I hope that the many unnamed students will not see this as a slight to their contributions: Gregory Melenbacher, Brett Jackson, Ian McMackon, and Martin Bradshaw.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The central aim of this book is to introduce the reader to the theory and practice of phenomenology. In order to focus upon the method for producing phenomenological descriptions, the text will focus upon the works of Edmund Husserl. There are several good reasons for doing so: (1) Husserl was the “founding father” of phenomenology. (2) Husserl developed the phenomenological method, which was the source of phenomenology as a school of thought. (3) Husserl’s works provide the most clear and sustained discussions of the method. (4) The proper assessment of any phenomenological text requires an understanding of the method which produced it. (5) Even those phenomenologists who disagree with or make changes to Husserl’s method retain *some* of Husserl’s theory and practice—they build upon his work without fully explaining the parts they accept, but rather focus upon their points of difference, so that it is difficult (if not impossible) fully to appreciate phenomenology’s aim and method without recourse to Husserl’s work. And finally, (6) Husserl’s style of writing is extremely opaque to the beginner (especially beginners with little or no background in philosophy).

In explaining Husserl’s methodology, the text will draw on many of his published writings, from the *Logical Investigations* of 1900/1901 to *Experience and Judgment* of 1938 (published posthumously). While advanced scholars have noted some subtle changes in the progression of Husserl’s thought, each one of his works provides yet another introduction to his *method*, which

remained substantially uniform throughout his phenomenological writings.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, for the purpose of this introduction to his thought, his works will be treated “as one piece,” leaving the finer points of textual interpretation to the reader who has first acquired a firm grasp of the phenomenological method.

The use of frequent quotations from Husserl’s works is intended to familiarize the reader with Husserl’s terminology and modes of expression, so that the reader may then turn to Husserl’s often difficult texts and understand them. Some reference must be made to the history of philosophy, in order to appreciate the thrust and scope of the project of phenomenology, but these discussions have been kept to a minimum, utilizing only brief, non-technical discussions which should be understandable by those untrained in philosophy. The use of a dictionary or encyclopedia of philosophy will aid those unfamiliar with philosophical terms and issues. It is especially to be recommended that such readers consult those tools on the following terms: metaphysics, realism, idealism, rationalism, empiricism, essence, Descartes.

Because this work is intended to lead the novice into the intricacies of phenomenological reflexion, some formulations are of a preliminary nature, and must be refined as the investigation proceeds. Husserl himself noted that terminology may not be “fixed” at the early stages of phenomenological investigation, but rather must be gradually refined as greater levels of clarity are attained: “Such a limitation [that is, an exact formulation in words] does not lie at the beginning of analyses of the sort which we are carrying on here, but is a late result of great labors.”<sup>2</sup> Thus in a sense this text is meant to be outstripped, passed beyond.

Husserl’s gradual refinement of terminology leads to some intricate problems for the interpreter, and should be noted. Hus-

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<sup>1</sup>The one exception to this is his famous shift from *static* to *genetic* phenomenological description, which will be discussed in various chapters, below.

<sup>2</sup> Id., §34.

serl often uses the same term in several different (and often metaphorical) senses in the course of a book, relying upon the context to keep the various senses clear and distinct. Due to this contextual significance of Husserl's use of language, the interpreter of his works must look at the surrounding discussions, and especially at the level of phenomenological reduction of a passage, before deciding upon the meaning of an expression.

To facilitate the understanding of a complex method, the present work uses repetition (in different words) of important points. Thus many topics are presented first in a "preliminary overview" and then analyzed more precisely. This system of explication applies both to the relation of Chapter 1 to the subsequent chapters, and to the relation of introductory and concluding sections of each chapter to the rest of the relevant chapter. Key notions are discussed in many different chapters and in many different contexts.

Finally, the reader should note at the outset that the theory and the practice of phenomenology are inextricably intertwined. The reader must *practice* the example exercises in order to become clear about the meaning of a phenomenological text—and this requirement applies all the more to an introductory text in this field. Therefore this book must not merely be read. It must be studied to the point where the reader achieves some understanding of the method—but then the reader must lay the book aside and try, repeatedly, to perform the exercises and descriptions for him- or herself. Like playing a musical instrument, phenomenology requires both study and practice.



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

For the second edition, I have made very few changes to the original eight chapters—all to improve clarity of expression. References have been added to the page numbers in the Dermot Moran (2001) edition of the *Logical Investigations* (in parentheses), in addition to the references to the original English edition (1970); the quotes are from the Moran edition. Furthermore, I have added an “Appendix 2008,” entitled “Phenomenology, Transcendental *and* Hermeneutic,” and a few new footnotes, which reflect my own researches into Husserl’s phenomenology and its implications for hermeneutics and the philosophy of language.<sup>1</sup>

This new Appendix seeks to find a partial *rapprochement* between some of the criticisms of Husserl’s phenomenology, especially from those who have come to be identified as “hermeneutic phenomenologists,” and the more “orthodox” followers of Husserl (I consider myself one of them) who usually refer to themselves as “transcendental phenomenologists.” In my view, some of the criticisms by hermeneutic phenomenologists are helpful developments and refinements of Husserl’s original insights, rather than refutations or rejections of the method of phenomenological reduction and description. In this spirit, the Appendix deals more directly with Husserl’s many comments on the role of language and interpretation in phenomenological method, and seeks, in the spirit of Husserl’s view of phenom-

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, one of the elements of phenomenological evidence that Husserl gradually discloses as his published work progresses is his expanding understanding of the temporal elements of consciousness and its objects, which he explains in part by his shift from static constitution to genetic constitution. I will discuss some of these issues, and how they led to hermeneutic phenomenology, in Appendix 2008: Phenomenology, Transcendental *and* Hermeneutic, below.

enology as an infinite task, to expand upon these comments to suggest the possibility, and the need, of what might be called a “transcendental-hermeneutic phenomenology.”

Much has happened in the phenomenological world since the publication of the first edition of this work. Phenomenology has become a more unified world movement, thanks to the Internet, many international conferences, and the growth of new nexuses of connection, such as El Círculo Latinoamericano de Fenomenología (CLAFEN, The Latin American Phenomenology Circle) and the Organization of Phenomenological Organizations (OPO). I have had many productive and helpful discussions with phenomenological philosophers from Europe, China, Japan, Korea, and Latin America. I anticipate that the future of phenomenology lies, perhaps, in Latin America and Asia—but only time and history will tell.

I wish to thank Betsy Behnke for her very thorough and efficient job of editing the text for publication; she added references to the new edition of the *Logical Investigations* and to a new translation of *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* which were not available at the time of the publication of the first edition of the present work. Valerie Hodges was kind enough to volunteer to re-type the entire typescript, and was also so diligent and competent as to reproduce the original text for revision with astounding speed and accuracy.

Professor Germán Vargas Guillén provided insightful comments on the first eight chapters, and has been working with me closely on the themes of the Appendix in our own on-going joint research:<sup>1</sup> to him, also, I owe my heartfelt thanks. I am also grateful for the invitation to spend a year as an Invited Professor at La Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, in Bogotá, Colombia,

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<sup>1</sup> This joint research has already borne fruit, in the form of Harry P. Reeder, *Lenguaje: Dimensiones lingüísticas y extralingüísticas del sentido*. (Bogotá: San Pablo—Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 2007), and Germán Vargas Guillén and Harry P. Reeder, *Ser y sentido: Teoría y práctica de una fenomenología trascendental-hermenéutica* (Bogotá: Editorial San Pablo, 2009).

which has enabled me to work very closely with Professor Vargas, and with some very good doctoral students. My thanks go to various administrators of UPN: Rector Dr. Oscar Armando Ibarra Russi, Professor Eliska Krausova, Director of the Office for Inter-institutional Affairs, and Professor Margie N. Jessup, Coordinator of the Interinstitutional Doctorate in Education. My thanks also go to my own university, The University of Texas at Arlington, for a Faculty Development Leave grant for my research in Colombia, and for their support in establishing more formal ties between that university and UPN. At UTA I wish to thank especially Michael Moore, Senior Vice Provost, Philip Cohen, Dean of Graduate Studies, Beth Wright, Dean of Liberal Arts, Denny Bradshaw, Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Humanities, Charles Nussbaum, Acting Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Humanities, Judy Young, Executive Director of International Education, Celia Stigall, Secretary, Department of Philosophy and Humanities, Cindy Wilder, Executive Assistant to the Dean of Liberal Arts, and Satu Birch, Assistant Director, International Student and Scholar Services.

I would also like to thank those scholars who continued to use the first edition in their classes in photocopy format, with my permission, after it went out of print, and who encouraged me to seek a venue for a second edition. These scholars also have stressed the *practice* of phenomenology, rather than merely the *theory* of phenomenology. Husserl himself always held that these two aspects of phenomenology are inseparable from each other. In this sense, phenomenological writing has an essentially performative element,<sup>1</sup> not unlike Descartes' *Meditations*.<sup>2</sup> Alas, this

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Husserl, "Author's Preface to the English Edition," to be found in the 1931 W. R. Boyce Gibson translation of that work (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 5–22, but also published in German (in a slightly altered version) in 1930, now available in a new translation (see Epilogue). See also 1913 Intro.

<sup>2</sup> Harry P. Reeder, "Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference and Performance," *EIDOS: The Canadian Graduate Journal of Philosophy* 1 (1978), 30–49.

was difficult, for in North America Husserl's thought is largely thought of now as "the past," and in need of "correction" by the thought of Heidegger, Derrida, Habermas, and others. Many continue to find Husserl's "transcendental turn" a baffling metaphysical idealism, instead of a careful and methodologically controlled attention to lived evidence. In my humble opinion, these later thinkers' philosophies would not have been possible without a rather thorough grounding in the founder's thought, and at least the tacit use of some form of Husserl's method; there remains a need for close and patient work with Husserl's texts and method. In "schools" of phenomenology, the founding work of the phenomenological movement, Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, is often not read completely and carefully; one result of this is the proliferation of debates about whether or not there *is* a "phenomenological method." Thus I am grateful to Zeta Books for this opportunity to produce a second edition. The passages used for text-and-commentary in Chapter 8, §45, appear with the kind permission of Springer Publication Company and Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group.

I dedicate this second edition to José Huertas-Jourda, my mentor in phenomenology, who passed away in 2007. From José I learned that Husserl's phenomenology is grounded not only in scholarly research, but also in patient practice of the method of phenomenological reduction and description. It is to José that I owe my view that the theory and the practice of the phenomenological method are indeed inseparable, and that there is a remarkable unity to the span of Husserl's works from 1900 until his death in 1938.

Bogotá, Colombia, April, 2008

## ABBREVIATIONS

For convenience in the references, the titles of works by Husserl which are used most frequently are abbreviated to the following designations:

- C:** *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).
- CM:** *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).
- EJ:** *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe, tr. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973).
- Epilogue:** “Epilogue” [to the *Ideas*]. In *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book, Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, tr. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 405–30.
- FTL:** *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).
- Id.:** *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book, General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, tr. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).
- IP:** *The Idea of Phenomenology*, tr. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).