No. 18

<The difference between concrete and universal essences (species). The grasping of the concrete essence as presupposition for the grasping of the universal essence.[[1]](#footnote-1) The constitution of the species in the comparing>[[2]](#footnote-2)

Essence and species. Ideation of the essence and ideating abstraction resulting in the “universal object”, the species.

We may say of every individual being (temporal being), whether it is something immanent (sound), whether something transeunt (thing, person), that it has an essence (content). If we understand the perceived as such so that it does not depend on existence or non-existence, and not on whether it is perceived or phantasied, then the essence of the thing is not already given by that, but the appearance as such is essentially given, in which the essence of the physical thing comes to givenness one-sidedly. If I objectivate the meant thing developing on all sides, and if I incrementally objectivate it as completely determined, then an essence of the physical thing comes to givenness extended over the temporal essence towards ever new sides. If an apprehension is conceivable, determined in such a way that I did not only have such a one-sided givenness, but could tell what the thing would look like from all sides and for all spatial points as standpoints of the grasping, and this for a somehow limited extent of time?

We may indeed get an “idea” of that, we may indeed say within the “idea”: Every unity of a physical thing is determined for every point of time of its temporal duration, that is, in such a way that the manifoldness of appearances belonging to it is completely determined. But is the thing something without motivation? And are not any positings implied in this existence? And would we not have an assumed existence thus within the “idea” as well? And how about the getting-an-“idea”-about-something and having-an-evidence-of-such-an-endless-option-(an [213] option including endlessly many options)? There are thus still many secrets.

If we therefore first consider quite different immanent individual objects (in order to then regard how we can transfer the seen to transcendent and especially the existential objectivities), then we have a non-individual but concrete essence for every temporal this-there that may of course be repeated at pleasure, and which is the same in the repetition, with the same temporal shape (and temporal orientation in relation to Now, Prior, etc.). The “ideation”, the seeing of an essence designates here: I see this object, but I only pay attention to the content, that, which is impervious against “perception” and “fantasy” or memory. Every object of that kind has a content that is a complete concretum and not an individual (is not an actual or alleged existence in the time). In the concrete content (in the concrete essence) all kinds of pieces of content may be brought out, separated. The object’s pieces of content have their correspondents in pieces of content of the concrete essence. The essence’s “Piece of content” is everything that is to be gained from the concrete essence through selection, everything we find in a simple way as a piece in the concretum, take out of it and may identify as contained in it.

But thereby we do not gain any sorts and genuses. The typical of man for example (if we may use things), of the ape, of the animals, etc., is nothing in the concrete ape, etc., to be brought out as a part, likewise the typical of a kind of sound, also the shape of a sound for example on different levels, etc. I need to have several men, several animals, several shapes of sound, etc., before the eye, and [I] can then derive the type from them, the so to say concretely universal thing, as some common thing. The universal is an *ens similitudinis*. Multiple objects, or rather, multiple concrete essences can be “equal” or “similar”. We can have two objectivations and find “the same” in them, these may be objectivations of the same content, the same essence. These two intuitions coincide in synthetic identification. But two intuitions may “coincide” in another way, namely, they may be almost equal, they can be more or less equal to one another. This synthetic unity, or [214] rather, unification allows for gradual nuances (continuously), and distances belong to it. We view gradually nuanced similarities and distances of similarity therein.

An *ens similitudinis* is given as the unitary thing in such a synthesis of similarity. On the basis, or rather: in the same we can either form the categorical objectivity “similarity between a and b” (likewise as in the strict identification: identity between a and b), or we can single out the one in the transition, the universal (we then do not mean a and not b and not the relation between them), and the universal only comes to proper givenness as the one of the community, not related though to the contingent a or b, but simply as the A. Therefore the grasping of the universal objects (universal essences) already presupposes the grasping of concrete essences. Clearer: Concrete essences need to be singled out, in order to visually abstract a universal essence from them. Concrete essences do not need the “comparing”, they arrive at original givenness through singling out, but not through viewing together some separate thing and visually abstracting and meaning out of some universal thing. Concrete essences are no species. Species are universalities and as such they are communities, presupposing <a> multiplicity of separate things.

This is the first apprehension that shows itself. But do we not, like we do universally thus here as well, distinguish between unity and identification (or rather some identical grasped in synthetic identification)? There is a continuous consciousness of unity, namely as a consciousness of continuous coincidence, in which a unity is conscious. There are also continuous coincidences of similarity, that is, on different steps. A consciousness of similarity presupposes a consciousness of difference[[3]](#footnote-3), discrete consciousness of similarity [presupposes] a discrete consciousness of difference-(not-identity), constant consciousness of similarity [presupposes] a constant consciousness of difference that is not always a consciousness of alteration, but still a consciousness of change, so to say a constant consciousness of separation. [215] I can grasp the universal thing, the species red, by my constantly looking allover this red object. I thereby constantly fix my gaze at different pieces or spots of the plane, I have a consciousness of separation (I have a constantly different thing in view), and have some constantly identical thing as a unity in the constant equality or similarity in the ever again other, although not discretely separated thing.

What is the difference between equality, resulting in a universal essence, and equality, resulting in a concrete <essence>? If I twice objectivate the same object, then I have the consciousness of the identical (I mean this same), and if it is the same according to the content as well (that is, without being changed), then I say: Simply this content is the same, it has not changed.[[4]](#footnote-4) And I can grasp the content on both sides. But I can grasp the content without such discrete comparing. If I for once take into view the content in its continuous identity, i.e., in such a way, as I simply grasp it in a constantly unitary way, as the continuous-unitary in its duration, well, then I have it fully and completely. But if I grasp a universal thing, then I necessarily need to have given otherness, continuously or discretely. And the similarity resulting there, is already similarity with regard to the universal. The different spots of color or pieces of color of the unitary paper plane, which I grasp in going through, that is, in constant separation, are simply different, and this difference is the presupposition for the constitution of an equality on a higher step; this equality is that of the color. It is a constant consciousness of equality, and it is called consciousness of equality with relation to the different. But it is consciousness of unity, grasping something unitary and identifiable, insofar as I do not pay attention to the different, but simply to the one in constant equality, and that is the common thing: the red of the paper.

And paying attention to the concrete and separated, and again to the universal, I can then say with evidence: The concrete “has” the color, and that concrete thing has the same color. But the color is not a moment that needs to be separated, it is not a [216] piece, piece of content of the concrete content, it is only something in this abstraction as something to be singled out as an *ens similitudinis* (unity in the equality).

But again I need to be more concise. The identity is contrasted by the difference, the unity by the being different. This holds true for all sorts and steps of unities and kinds of being different. The paper is of the same color everywhere, of the same kind of red. It is of the same “red” everywhere. But if I look at that other paper, in which the colors are partly shaded, in which they discretely change in part, then the differentness emerges in a constant transition from something “similar” to something similar or from something similar to something discretely dissimilar (but which again belongs to the larger circle of the similar). The different universalities (so to say: dis-universalities, non-universalities) are singled out, this color and that color or this constant change of color. And at the same time we can thereby pay attention to a new community, one of a higher step, already presupposing those non-universalities, those “differences”, as separated ones, as singled out ones, <like for example> the universal thing color as such in contrast to this or that color, or perhaps red as such first (but not a red as such) in contrast to this or that difference of red. I can then take red as such and blue as such, and I then have the universal thing color as such in contrast to this difference of the sort (this results, when I have merely differences of red, not because some universal thing, red as such, not reaching into blue, constitutes itself). But it is a question, if I have a spot red and a spot blue in advance. Does color here grow as such in a direct way and not mediated through the sorts red and blue?

And thus it may proceed stepwise, whereby it is the question, whether the series of steps is a firm one. But that much is certain, that apriori laws are present here, dictating to the constitution. I cannot gain red as such on the basis of a spot of red (unless in the running through its partial small spots), and [I can] not [gain] on this basis alone colors as such, sensuous quality as such, etc.

If thus a phenomenologically essential difference shows itself between concrete essences and species, then it is all the more fundamental that we differ between the existing individual [217] object, the object of the existence, and its essence. The concrete essence has an extent. Many existences can have the same essence. Every species as a genus has an extent. Many sorts can and have to stand under the same genus (genuine sorts). And thereby there is again a difference between the lowest sort and higher genus, or rather, sort, and again between lowest sort and concrete essence.

I see the pyramid colored in such and such a way, etc., within the stereoscope. This pyramid shall not be regarded as an existential object, but in itself, as the content. The pyramid, having an individual determination there in the space, is the object of existence. It appears in contradiction to the experience, that is, individually appearing and reversed. There we have existential positing and existential contradiction. Let us switch off all that. Let us merely state: this pyramid, this content with its orientation in the space that shall not be accepted as actually posited space, with its orientation in the time that shall not be accepted as “actually” posited time. If this content shall function as an object, then I simply posit it as This, that is, purely in itself, and then it is *eo ipso* the same, whether I have this intuition or another one simply of the same content. It has, as soon as it has been posited as This nothing, which could distinguish it as One in contrast to the positing of This on the basis of the other intuition, i.e. <could> posit it as another one. Thus, not the comparing constitutes the object here, although the object is in so far something universal as it may be the same in many existential objects, namely every content allows for a manifold individualization through the positing of existence.

<It is> different in the universal objects as species. These only constitute themselves in the “comparing”, that is, originally. Namely their first givenness (so to say their givenness of This, that, on the basis of which the originally grasping This may be based) presupposes a comparing. Or, as we could also say: Similarity – or equality – (that is not identity) must be conscious first, and then an identification can be built on that on a higher step: the *ens similitudinis*, the identical in the similar as such, for example the universal thing color, the species. I can pay attention to the object’s color, to the content in its extension. But I can also pay attention to the species color. There I have to single out the common thing. [218] I run over the object with my eyes for example, the form of the spots does not matter to me, I take the “common thing” out of the different ones. The common thing, that is the species, for example red, or of red and green. We there have the distance and at the same time community. Red is another species as green, but they have “color” in common. If I pay attention to the color on the basis of the single intuition of the red object, then the conceptual intention and the comparing intention already mediate.

Now, is the universal thing color not a moment at the same time? Does the comparing, rather: [Does] the consciousness of community, the visually abstracting ideation of the species not single out something that is common to A and B? I have a moment red in the full concrete idea, in another one the moment red again. That, which has each, is something different. The red is a universal thing. The different on both sides is “content”; the concrete content is another one, even if I take pieces of one and the same content. They are different, although they could be completely equal in themselves. Contents may multiply in complete coincidence. What is it that distinguishes them? <This> is the context. Only if the whole context is the same, we have full identity.

Is not generalizing abstraction so to say the instrument in order to single out from the content ever new moments, that only come to the singling out in the consciousness of community: the determinate colors in the together of the different spots of color, likewise the forms, the color as such in the already given differentness of the determinate colors, etc.? Certainly, this is not a singling out, this only exists in the contents themselves, not in the moments of genus. They are not properly parts (something to be singled out), they are nothing else but carriers for the universality. Do we not need to say: What is at hand there if we talk of <the> “moment” (moment of the genus) color? Nothing else but that there is a color, i.e., something to be actually distinguished, this red spot, which as that what it is, allows for a combination with green and not a “singling out”, but a “viewing out” of some common thing. The single thing as a carrier of the universal thing: Nothing else is at hand. *Dist<inctio> rationis*. And the single thing, <the> content, insofar as it is the carrier of some universal thing, is this through its essence [219] (content); and in how many ways ever universalities are to be seen out of it, in that many ways it is “determined”, that many characteristics does it have, does it take part in the universal thing and [does it have] something in itself, corresponding to the universal thing.

1. Compare on this also the appendix XXII (pages 219-221 German edition) – editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Possibly January or February 1918. – Editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rather: Consciousness of history, and that is a consciousness of multiplicity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The same object, there and prior, in the different phases of its duration with the same content. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)