No. 21

Epoché and reflection

(End of November 1931)

<§ 1.> „Pregivenness“ <and> „givenness“

To judge straightforwardly – to judge in a way presupposing a pregivenness. To judge with prejudices. Traditions are pregiven, judgments of other ones, the other ones themselves are pregiven, but world as such is pregiven, it is the universe of pregivenness. All pregiven things are pregiven in the world. Theories, which are taken over, are theories in the world and theories related to the world, whereby experience is presupposed as straightforwardly accepted – the experienced as being and not being: Judgments of reflection also enter on the basis of reflective experiences; but the reflections are always only fundamentally sound in pregivennesses and eventually as world of experience in the world of nature.

Pregivenness and givenness. Pregivenness is the being-accepted-in-advance from tradition in the widest sense. This also includes apperception, and eventually apperception experiencing in a sensuously way, by which that, which is there as a background of perception not paid attention to in the surrounding world, already has its form of acquaintedness in any case of the current perception, and its acceptance of being as here and there, or by which every active experience rests on some affection already including the anticipation of a worldly being and of the being in an open-endless world. Looking is looking at something, which is already prior to the looking within the field of consciousness, and in this case already in the unitary field of perception, there being in the whole area of being ones there, in respective configurative way of givenness a unity of being, which has been seen but not paid attention to yet, not yet grasped, not yet going into it in the way of looking at and in actively considering it.

Something being there for me simply has – for me – a different mode of the conscious being-for-me, of the being-in-the-background (field of perception, possibly field of memory, etc.), and [303] thereby being actively-occupied-with, this itself in different modes. We say something draws my attention, an object in the room, in which I am; I may think of something quite different, it suddenly forces itself on me – it, which is already there, and which needs to be conscious as being there, in order to draw my attention, in order to be conscious in the new mode of the paying attention to and being occupied with it at that in such and such a way. Whatever comes to givenness for me, i.e., that, which comes to current grasping for me, enters current occupation and is then, is that on the basis of some “affection”, and as something affecting it is already conscious to me in the counter mode: conscious in any mode of being, as something present in the literal sense or a similar sense, e.g. in order to take a case far from all sensuousness, as a differential equation or as the capacity of warmth, etc., coming to my mind, now coming to me in the right moment. The belief in being, taken most widely the positional mode of being, does not only enter by my turning towards it, grasping and judging; Only that enters by my judging, which is not activation of a pregivenness, that, which productively creates the judging as the new judgment.

All givenness has its horizon of affection, its horizon of actual affection, including that effecting an advertence, and on top of that their horizons of possible affection, which neither are not nothing, and subjectively function along as presupposition of the current givenness.

<§ 2.> Pregivenness and epoché

Thus pregivenness and givenness is a fundamental conceptual pair for the clarification of epoché; that, which it performs, or which it is supposed to perform, is the most radical and most universal taking out of the play of each and every fore-meanings or all traditions – all prejudices – in a conceivably widest sense. The basis here is the exhibition that the world of experience as constantly being there for us, is a universal prejudice, a proper universality of prejudices; just that this expression unfortunately makes it seem as if existence or non-existence of the world were supposed to be critically judged [304], similarly to what we necessarily find so often for the common *idola* of tradition.

This then becomes the further question resulting from here: How can something remain at all after the epoché, denying every judgment of “tradition”, of pregivenness, in order to judge, and to judge in grounded truth, that is, on the basis of experience eventually, of the self-giving of that, which needs to be judged? And that, which [holds true] for the judging, holds true for every further life; how is a life in epoché thus possible? With regard to (transcendental) experience in the epoché – how is it possible without affection, or what kind of affection is that, if it is necessary (transcendental affection)?

To remember: epoché is the abstention from certain ways, something accepted-by-me, e.g. <to> take over for me something being as nature, as surrounding world, as German people, etc., and thus any of the traditions accepted by me, e.g. if I believe in God, and this on the basis of religious education and ecclesiastic tradition, the being-accepted-by-me of divine being. To let the belief drop, eradicate convictions I have, this is not in my power, but the epoché – that is, which needs to be paid keen attention to, the one in question here, the willingly universal epoché, once and for all taken in the (habitual) will: at the universe of tradition, the tradition being accepted by me, making up my universal ground of belief.

But this is equal to the epoché <of> the universe of the world being accepted by me <from> experience. Thereby all ideal sciences, all idealities being for me are uprooted, insofar as I am able to convince myself through sense investigation that they presuppose, and themselves like formal logic and ontology, let alone any other ontology (also an “existential” one), already presuppose world being or more closely, that I for example as a logician speak of something as a subject of predicates, eventually something real in most extreme generality, but simply mean some real worldly thing; whether now this something then may be particularized as a merely possible one, but not existing in the de facto world, it already presupposes de facto world. Also non-existence keeps itself in the horizon of the pregiven world.

[305] But how about this thought now that the epoché also could be characterized from the sides of reflection as universal epoché with regard to each and every judgment, which are not reflective judgments, and thus with regard to each and every acceptance, which is not reflective?

Right before, straightforwardly judging meant judging on the basis of tradition; because I am always in tradition, I always have world already as a universe carrying all traditions, having them made worldly within itself, and being itself tradition through and through. The epoché is universal epoché, as a universal one putting out of action the universe of all straight acceptances. Accordingly a new life, especially a new experiencing, judging, scientific life, shall still be possible and [shall] be brought into play within this epoché.

To judge straightforwardly now was called judging in a non-reflective way, to deny the universe of straight judgments to me (and of straight acceptances as such), i.e. <to> only wish to judge reflectively and to not accept any other judging. Now I already have enough reflective judgments in naturalness, they ever again come into action. But through the exclusion of the straight – non-reflective – judgments now, all reflective ones of naturalness (prior to this epoché) have changed their character; because there are acceptances in all of them, even if non-active ones, which otherwise I am free to activate and to utilize for the use in life, which is now denied to me completely. This again though relates to all reflecting life, and thus a purely reflecting one shall grow, in which all straight acceptances are parenthesized, namely as such ones, which, activated were non-reflective.

I first of all understand reflection as experience, as a judgment, as evaluation, etc., directed towards myself, towards my personal being (my character features, my habitualities of any kind), towards my mental livings; my acts as my acts and <directed> towards all that being the What of the acts, with which I am occupied, as well as towards all subjective modes, which, as subjective ones, of any kind whatsoever, are all reflective. Thus any statement of the form *Ego cogito – cogitata*, in respective closer determination, every I-see-and-hear, I-have-a-close-and-a-distant-appearance-of-a-house, etc., is reflective. I thus only want [306] to judge me and the mine, directed towards me and the mine, being occupied with that – in a peculiar way, that is, as it seems, solipsistically. But it is a peculiar kind of solipsism; because although nothing changes and may change in the world belief, etc., still this universal theme now says “I and mine, as the way it is mine” that I only want to judge, etc. in a reflective way, and that I thereby may not perform any judgment on the world, resulting in something, which is not Ego, except it is something posited, believed by me, etc.

<§ 3. Reflection and determinations of reflection of the world objects>[[1]](#footnote-1)

To reflect is bending oneself back towards the subjective from any ont<ic> contents of the being accepted by me as being, essentially belonging to the experienced and otherwise conscious as such. Reflective judgments thus are respectively the judgments on the Ego having consciousness, on the noetic-noematic of the experiencing, that is, also on all qualities being proper to an experiential object in subjective regard.

The world is always accepted, nay, it is always perceived and otherwise experienced. I, the experiencing one, I as such in my life am constantly in the world belief. I cannot change anything in that. But what I can do is to reflectively turn each single experience and the total experience. And I may, in my willing to judge, follow the general purpose for a science from pure and consequently performed reflection. I may be guided by the will to exclusively treat reflective experience as a theoretical experience, <to> utilize it for scientific judgment purposes, that is, to establish a universe of exclusively reflective judgments. A universal science shall become as a science of “pure” subjectivity, a science, keeping clear its sphere of judgment, more concisely: the sphere of its judging final intentions [307] of all theoretical experiences, which are not reflective as grounding, or of all final judgments, which are not reflective, or rather, the final verification of which does not need any reflective experience.

I cannot change anything in my world belief, in the process of my world experience, unless direct it, whereby I always experience the same world, always have it in the certainty of being, only that I get so see different things of it, partly that, which is already there, partly that, which I myself (and likewise other ones) have created. And thus it is neither said that I am not performing, or rather, bring to performance any world belief at all as a radical researcher on reflection, as a phenomenologist. On the contrary, in order to bring about reflection in an originally experiencing way, I first of all need to straightforwardly experience, and I judge straightforwardly. Only that the straightforward experiencing and judging has this mere function, to be turned in reflection, so that none of these judgments has the shape or the sense of a final judgment, and in my scientific aiming that of a scientific truth in my universal purpose, a phenomenological one. I only make that scientifically thematic in the end, which has become thematic through reflection, and only that. Thus I only let that function in a verifying way and with the aiming at cognition. That, which has been done for the experiencing consciousness, is done for every evaluating and practical consciousness – and *eo ipso*, since this consciousness is experienced itself, is reflective indeed, but not pure as an experienced one -, which, performed in the natural worldliness, has accepted the world’s being.

Not only a universe of cognition shall be opened up, but afterwards also a universe of life as a whole, as one, which exclusively rests on reflective experience and reflective cognition: thus in this way that the universal theme of cognition and of life shall be the purely subjective: some universality, some totality of connections of pure reflection. The natural connection of being, connection of experience, cognition, life is that of natural worldliness. This shall totally vanish as a thematic one. Otherwise it remains as it was, in acceptance – only that this acceptance is reflectively turned and only thematic in that way.

[308] I have distinguished straight and reflective determinations of world objects.

1) If we stick to the objects themselves, their determinations are distinguished into those being their own in and for themselves, and <those,> befitting them in their being-for-us-together, in relation to other ones. Determinations though are again objects being determinable, or rather, thus and thus in their determinations. Final objects <are> absolute substrates having determinations, but not being determinations themselves. Likewise wholes of parts <are> absolute substrates, which are not parts any more, etc., final absolute objects. All those distinctions are related to the objects themselves. Objects are given as they themselves in experience, experience is grasping the self.

2) But objects have also determinations we call appearances, ways of givenness, subjective determinations as such – and subjects. The subjects as such are intentionally “related” to objects, and as that they have mental livings of the consciousness and abilities (current and possible intentionality[[2]](#footnote-2)), <to> be straightforwardly directed towards objects, towards their self, towards them in their identical and in all that, in which this identical explicates itself in its moments of identity, even identical ones. I may though, directed towards the object itself, turn my view towards its way of appearance, the subjective as such, towards the Ego and its consciousness-of, have the object of consciousness in subjective modes, etc. It is something quite different that I go over from the object to any other one, than to that he is related to, than in which it determines itself, with which it is connected, etc.

However, if I turn my thematic view to the Ego subjects and the ways of appearance, they become objects as well, and I then have the relation between the object itself and the Ego with its consciousness-of, its way of having given <something>, its way of appearance, the objective characteristics and determinations themselves and their subjective, their ways of appearance, the ways of appearance [309] as objects standing in relation to the original object, since they are appearances of it and of all determining it as it itself.

But we have something peculiar there. Object and way of appearance are first of all relative concepts, insofar as every object has its ways of appearance, and the ways of appearance, objects themselves, have again their ways of appearance, etc., iteratively. But we can always go back again and arrive at objects not being ways of appearance any more, but in this sphere of relativity irrelative, absolute objects, pure objects and pure subjects.

Absolute (mundane) objects now split into absolute objects and absolute subjects. Objects as such are objects of possible ways of consciousness of subjects and thereby of ways of appearance. But they are not therefore subjects themselves. Objects as that of the determinations, in which they are accepted ones respectively, lead back in regressive inquiry to absolute objects, not containing any subjective thing, or pure subjects.

Objects thus have objective determinations in purely objective connections, and they have determinations from reflection on their subjective ways of givenness; these are mine or belong to somebody else, and eventually to all, according to possibility, who are given these objects, and simply ask in a reflective way on their or their comrades’ ways of givenness of these objects and all their objective facts, connections, relations, etc. The world, as that making sense to us (which properly speaking is a tautology), is a universe of objects in correlation to us as subjects, in which it has its sense respectively, changing in the ways of consciousness according to subjective modes, etc. But with regard to the world only nature is a pure object world. But this advances farther!

The physical bodies also belong to the objects. Thus purely psychic subjects remain as pure subjects, as objects having conscious objects in these and those ways, in ways of doing and suffering, in ways of imagination, thinking, etc., also in ways of the already-being-acquainted-with-them, having-a-position-on-them, also without being currently directed towards the objects. (This should have been mentioned above as well [310].)[[3]](#footnote-3) The distinction between object and subject – pure objects, pure subjects, or rather, something purely subjective – is in this absolute form still relative insofar as objects make only sense to us as objects from their having-us-conscious and ability-to-have-us-conscious, from our acquaintance with them, etc.

<§ 4.> Repeated starting

Reflecting judgments – how is this defined?

I judge, judge something subjective. Therein the will: to judge on something subjective exclusively. Contrary to that: to judge something “objective”, nature; to judge something subjective on the other hand, existing in the world though. That is, to start from the world in the question on something subjective and non-subjective. Then encompass infinity with the demand: to finally judge nothing else than something subjective, without ever passing an objective final judgment. More concisely: a universe of truth was put into practice as a totality, thus a connected unity of truth, in which no truth is admitted without being subjective.[[4]](#footnote-4)

May I say: Something subjective is present in the world, the totality of truth for the world contains as a layer a totality of truth for something “purely” subjective? – Then this sentence (if it was some truth) would no more belong to the universe of absolute and purely subjective truths.

Likewise: If I speak of me and of us, having thematic this universe and exhibiting it in a researching way, then we and all truths related to us belong to it. But as soon as we are judged thereby as psychophysical subjects, as psychically entangled with natural bodies [311], that is, as men, my statement is no longer permissible. Posited, purely subjective judging as such is possible, and I soon convince myself of that, then I, standing in the “epoché”, in the universally subjective attitude, am no longer accepted by me (judgeable, positable) as a man, as little as simply the world as world.

Appendix XVII:

Natural attitude and attitude of the epoché. To judge straightforwardly, pregivenness and givenness

(24th November 1931)

Epochè. – What is that, to put the general thesis of the world out of action, out of performance? What is that, to perform no judgment on something worldly in the natural way, in the way it was performed prior to phenomenology by everyone in life and science? What is that, to judge “straightforwardly”, to experience straightforwardly, to straightforwardly mean something in which modes as such, and to straightforwardly perform all other acts of life, as I have, as we have, as all men at all times have done, in one word: in such a way that they, whether now living in an active or passive way, live into the world, the always existing one for them, always and in all givenness already “pregiven” one? What is that as well, this pregivenness and givenness on the basis of pregivenness?

All these questions are formulations of the same question basically: What is that, existence, life in natural attitude, and what is existence, life in the attitude of epoché in contrast to that?

1. 25th November <19>31. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Compare the following page <= p. 309, 4 – 310,5>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Compare the previous page <= p. 308, 1-309,3>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Here we need to remark: Wherever we speak of judgments in a normal way, willing to judge is already meant in a special sense. If I say straightforwardly „I want to judge“, then what is meant is „I have my aiming at a judgment (a predicative sentence as a rule), which will remain my conviction in final acceptance“. It shall be a final conviction from a grounding creating final acceptance in scientific connections. The same is said by: I search for true judgments, truths, here: intersubjectively accepted ones. If I say:„This is my judgment“, then this implies the attained acceptance’s mode of will. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)