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Things that Happen: Husserl's Theory of Judgment and the Problem of Events

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation develops a phenomenology of events through an application, and critical re-evaluation, of key concepts in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl. I argue that non-phenomenological approaches to events fail to account for the availability of 'things that happen' as intentional objects. How are they intelligible as objects of thought and experience? Why is their manner of being 'things' one in which they happen (rather than exist, for example)? I argue, moreover, that we can best address these questions through a phenomenological analysis of propositions that express what happens—propositions like 'My tooth fell out'—rather than nominal expressions like 'earthquake' and 'wedding'. With this focus in mind, I turn to Husserl's theory of judgment, which provides a framework with which to approach these propositions, and the intentional objects to which they correspond. Husserl's theory treats judgments as meaning-intentions that are directed towards states of affairs. It includes careful analyses of the 'synthetic' cognitive activity through which our pre-predicative experience is objectified, generating a new 'thing'—a state of affairs— which is thereafter available as an object of reference.

For Husserl, however, the paradigm of judgment is the copular, property-ascribing judgment '*S is p.*' I argue that judgments about what happens are unlike property-ascribing judgments, because they are grounded in a different kind of experience. The experience of 'happening' is not the experience of 'property-having'. To experience happening is rather to intuit the manifestation of force in its effects. Accordingly, the judgments through which we intend and thus objectify the experience of happening—turning it into a 'thing'—have (paradigmatically) a different structure than copular property-ascriptions. Rather than ascribe properties to objects, they assign objects to roles in a dynamic structure, in which they participate as e.g. 'agents' and 'patients' of force. I examine the notion of force mainly in a mechanical context, but argue that it can be usefully expanded to other domains of experience as well.

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Introduction

The title of this work promises a study of the ‘problem of events’ in Husserl’s philosophy. This is arguably false advertising, on two counts. The first charge would target as misleading the suggestion that events do, in fact, figure significantly in Husserl’s work. Husserl never developed a phenomenology of events, or even signaled that this might be an important project. Events are not a problem in Husserl’s philosophy. They are, however, a problem for it. In one sense, this is trivially true. Every aspect of our lived experience can, in principle, be questioned using the methods Husserl introduced, and thereby become a phenomenological problem. We will find, however, that the conceptual framework Husserl offers us is in some ways ill-suited to address this particular problem. Thus events pose a problem for Husserl’s philosophy in the stronger, more pointed sense that they force us to challenge and revise it.

The second false-advertising charge would make me the culprit of kind of bait-and-switch scam. I have advertised a discussion of events—a fashionable topic—but I plan in fact to push this concept to the side in order to focus on ‘things that happen.’ This may not strike one as terribly devious. ‘Things that happen’ are announced in my title as well, and in any case it is hardly astonishing to characterize events as things that happen. Yet my switcheroo is not a trivial one, particularly as it will motivate, as we will see, a general disinterest in those terms which are often used to provide examples of events: ‘murders,’ ‘marriages,’ ‘earthquakes,’ and the like.

This charge, then, has a bit of heft. Insofar as events can be treated, and have been treated, as a class of some kind whose members can be picked out with nouns, this study will not be about events, since it does not take its primary subject matter to be this class of things. Our subject matter is not a ready-made category of entities—entities whose nature and ontological status may be unclear, but whose availability to thought and discourse as discrete entities is taken for granted. To put it another way, I do not suggest that, as our investigative starting point, we turn our attention to things called events, in order to then ask metaphysical questions about them.

Yet if my investigation does not begin with events as a ready-made class, ripe for philosophical clarification, the term ‘event’ is hardly irrelevant to it. This relevance, however, is

perhaps best characterized as political. While my philosophical approach and concerns are firmly phenomenological, the cluster of issues I will address overlap with some work that has been done in the ‘analytic’ camp under the banner of the study of events. This study is not intended as a polemic directed against this body of work, nor as a contribution meant to fit comfortably within it. My central concern is simply to do phenomenology, deploying Husserl’s conceptual framework while also critiquing and expanding it. There will be a few points, however, at which my phenomenological considerations can be brought to bear on issues salient to the analytic tradition, and vice versa. In proposing, titularly, a study of events in the context of Husserlian phenomenology, my intention is to signal this overlap of interests. I am in this sense asking phenomenological questions, not of a ready-made class of objects called ‘events’ (the existence and nature of which, I should note, are not a matter of consensus even in the analytic tradition), yet nonetheless of a field of interest which is conventionally identified with this term.

We are off to a rather oblique start. Our subject matter, first of all, is a bit hazy. If it isn’t a ‘class’ of entities, what is it? Why is ‘things that happen’ a preferable term? Doesn’t it, too, name a class? What’s more, it is unclear why we should be interested in the philosophical contributions of an individual with no demonstrated interest in our ‘problem’—whatever it is—particularly if it may turn out that his ideas are inadequate to the task at hand. Before we can really get to work, we will need to lay down a more solid foundation. We need to clarify the real topic of investigation, and motivate a Husserlian approach to it, in particular an approach that implements Husserl’s theory of judgment.

This will be the task of Chapter 1. Only at its conclusion can the phenomenological questions that guide the rest of this work be clearly posed. Since it will take a while to get there, I suggest reading the detailed summary of this chapter that I offer below. I include summaries of the remaining chapters as well, presenting the entire argument in a highly compressed form. Since later chapters rely on phenomenological analyses (mine and Husserl’s) which are elaborated carefully and slowly in earlier ones, some parts of this overview will be less accessible to readers without some grasp of basic (and not so basic) phenomenological concepts. If the going gets tough, one should feel free to just skip ahead to the first chapter.

In Chapter 1, “Happening and Judgment,” I begin by justifying the shift from ‘events’ to ‘things that happen.’ I will argue that we are led to the latter expression by reflecting on the former, and that this shift helps us focus on the real ‘problem’ of events: their very ‘thinglyness’

and ‘happeningness.’ What we need to understand is how these happening things are coherent to us as ‘things’. How are they intelligible as objects of thought and experience? They are somehow ‘real’—things ‘really happen’. What manner of actuality is this? Why is this way of being actual the happening way, rather than, say, the existing one? I will then argue that we should address these issues by looking at propositions rather than nominal event terms. Propositions like ‘My tooth fell out’ are, paradigmatically, what we deploy to talk about ‘what happened,’ and to clarify the very meanings of nominal event terms like ‘accident’ and ‘earthquake’. Our investigation of thingliness and happeningness should target these propositions, even though it is not obvious how they are about things. We want to understand the intelligibility of what happens, and we should go about it, I argue, by investigating the propositions through which what happens is said.

Since we usually say what happens with sentences that include full-fledged verbs, I refer to such propositions as ‘verbal propositions’, to distinguish them from ‘copular’ ones (while recognizing the imperfections of these designations). I then critically evaluate two non-phenomenological frameworks for analyzing verbal propositions, namely the event semantics proposed by Donald Davidson, and the property-exemplification model developed by Jaegwon Kim and Jonathan Bennett. Both of these models make questionable assumptions which are best avoided. More importantly, they fail to inquire into the intelligibility, as cognitive objects, of the very events they propose in their explanations.

I then turn, finally, to Husserl, showing how his phenomenological approach, and his theory of judgment in particular, offers us a better methodological starting point. It gives us a conceptual framework with which to ask what we want to ask—namely, how verbal propositions are ‘about’ things that happen, and how these latter are intelligible as things. Husserl examines propositions by treating them not just as truth claims, but as ‘alleged cognitions.’ They are *judgments* made by living subjects, which means they are directed towards a confirming experience in which such a subject would find them to be true. In evidential experiences, what is merely ‘meant’ in a judgment is directly given; the ‘meaning-intention’ of a judgment finds its ‘meaning-fulfillment.’ In these fulfilling experiences, some ‘thing’ is experienced, which Husserl calls a state of affairs. A guiding question of Husserl’s theory of judgment is therefore how states of affairs are ‘given’ as objects of experience and thought. This provides us with a way to pose our own questions regarding verbal propositions and things that happen. What do ‘verbal’

judgments, as opposed to ‘copular’ judgments, intend? What do we experience when they are fulfilled? And is it in this fulfilling experience that we find the ‘thing’ that happens?

Chapter 2, “How Judgments Make Things,” takes up the question of the ‘thinglyness’ of what happens. How is it that a judgment tells us about a ‘thing that happened? Why, upon hearing a judgment like ‘My tooth fell out,’ can we then say things like “I knew that would happen’? What does the pronoun ‘that’ refer to? To approach this question, I examine an aspect of Husserl’s theory of judgment which seems to arise from a similar concern. If we make a judgment like ‘Rain has set in,’ Husserl notes, we can then say, for example, ‘That will delight the farmers.’ In the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl provides a detailed account of this transformation, which he calls the ‘nominalization’ of a judgment.

This account introduces us to the notion of a ‘state of affairs’, which for Husserl is the outcome of an act of judicative ‘synthesis’. Nominalization takes the state of affairs which is the implicit object any judging act and makes it into an explicit intentional object—it ‘names’ it. As we will see, however, the objects named in this process, as Husserl presents it, are ‘facts.’ While facts can delight farmers, they are not the things that happen. We will need to modify Husserl’s account of nominalization, employing a distinction Husserl makes in *Experience and Judgment* between the state of affairs as a knowledge-acquisition—which is a fact—and the states of affairs ‘itself’, understood as a real ‘state’ in the world. Judicative synthesis, I will argue, produces both of these intentional objects in a single stroke. An amplified theory of nominalization will give us a way to understand how judgments can yield new objects—like things that happen—that are intended as ‘actual’ things rather than ‘factual’ things.

This chapter will not look closely at acts of judgment themselves. It treats them, for the most part, as already accomplished acts, in order to see what types of referential objects become available as a result of these ‘syntheses.’ To see how far Husserl’s theory can take us, we need to dig more deeply into his account of judicative synthesis. Just what is this ‘act’ of which Husserl speaks? What is it ‘synthesizing’? How is its outcome an object-like product? Most importantly, given that Husserl’s analyses concern copular judgments of the form ‘*S is p*,’ we need to ask to what degree the details of his theory are in fact applicable to the problem of verbal judgments.

We will look carefully at Husserl’s account of judicative synthesis in Chapter 3, “Copular Judging,” guided by two crucial questions. First, what is the nature of judicative synthesis, such that it is constitutive of a new kind of objectivity? Second, how is this objectivity, despite being a

judicative product, nonetheless something that can be encountered in a judgment-confirming experience? What is it like to ‘see’ a state of affairs? To address these questions, we will use the theory of copular judgments Husserl presents in *Experience and Judgment*, and in particular his account of judgments that attribute perceptual properties to objects. Husserl’s analysis begins with an examination of what he calls ‘prepredicative’ experience. In prepredicative experience, the property determinations of objects are passively discovered without yet becoming propositionally structured knowledge. Predicative activity, in turn, takes the fruits of this experience and inscribes them, so to speak, in a syntactical structure.

In so doing, predicative activity does not simply create a sentential structure. It also makes possible a new kind of experience which is no longer prepredicative, but rather the experience of ‘something objective’. What we perceive is no longer simply passively absorbed, but rather actively encountered under the guidance of a specific judgment. We can now encounter ‘what we see’ in experience as ‘what is meant.’ In this way, states of affairs are experienceable as ‘real things’; experience is objectivized. Experience confirms that specific states of affairs are real, but it can only function as a confirmation once judicative activity has generated an intentional structure for experience to fulfill.

The question, then, is how this works in the case of verbal judgments. Husserl’s analyses give us a general framework to investigate judgments, but his actual analyses pertain to property-attributing judgments. The resulting intentional objects are ‘states of affairs’ that are understood as the ‘having’ of a property. We cannot assume that a ‘happening’ is an instance of property-having. That is, we cannot assume that the experience of ‘what happens’ is like the experience of a state affairs, and that the judicative structures that intend what happens have the same syntactical features as copular property attributions.

In Chapter 4, “Verbal Judging,” we investigate verbal judgments in their own right. We go about this just as Husserl does in the case of property attribution. We look first at the experiences in which what happens is ‘given’, in order to discover what verbal judgments must ‘intend’ if they are to be confirmable by such experiences. Although Husserl never turned his attention to judgments about happenings, there are a number of texts that are relevant to the question. We will mine his work—including a number of unpublished manuscripts—for useful observations, but much of the chapter will involve original phenomenological analyses. We begin by comparing the temporal characters of copular and verbal judgment-fulfilling

experience. In the case of the experience of what happens (‘verbal’ experience) there is always a ‘protemporal’ aspect, in which we are attentive to the ‘next’ and the ‘before’; this is missing from experiences that confirm property attribution. This temporal aspect, however, is not enough to constitute happening, for we can also experience static situations—where ‘nothing happens’—as temporal progressions. We then consider changes, asking whether it is change that makes our experience count as the experience of happening. This approach fails as well. We can experience identical changes as distinct types of happening; and we can also, it turns out, experience certain unchanging situations as happenings. There must, then, be some element of experience other than change, through which things that happen are given—through which happening shows itself as such.

Through a series of phenomenological thought-experiments, I argue that this missing element is the intuition of force. We interpret changes as different types of happening when we see these changes as driven by different forces. Unchanging situations, on the other hand, are only perceived as happenings if they are seen as a stasis brought about through competing forces, rather than simply as ‘rest.’ Happening, I propose, is experienced as the manifestation of force in its temporal effects. The identification of force, however, raises a phenomenological problem. How do we intuit force? I look at two competing answers to this question—both of which arise from Husserl’s own reflections—but leave the issue unresolved.

Having determined that the experience of happening is the experience of force manifested in effects, we ask what sort of judicative structure is needed to intend such a thing. That is, how must verbal judgments be structured, such that they would generate a meaning-intention adequate to this kind of experience? We find that, unlike copular property-attributions, which simply posit a subject determined by a predicate, verbal judgments must assign objects to specific roles as agents or patients of force. This turns out to be exactly what these judgments do—they articulate a dramatic structure in which subjects and objects function as ‘participants’ rather than determinable substrates. We conclude with a brief review of the linguistic literature on ‘thematic roles’, to see how this role-assigning function of verbal judgments might be syntactically implemented.

My conclusion, stated as tersely as possible, is therefore that happenings are intelligible as ‘things’ because our thematically structured judgments generate them as intentional objects;

and that they are things of a happening sort because of the particular kind of experience which these judgments objectivize—an experience in which force manifests itself temporally in effects.

Without further ado, then—to the happenings themselves.

1 Happening and Judgment

It is unfortunate, from a rhetorical viewpoint, that this is not a work about events after all. It would be handy to have a familiar concept to point to as the egg we intend to crack. Yet we need to move away from this comfortable scenario and towards what I am really interested in, which is a bit harder to describe, let alone name. Let's nonetheless start with what seems comfortable—this term, 'events'—and pretend for a moment that it is what we're confronting; it will lead us elsewhere soon enough.

1.1 Events are Things that Happen

We want to say something about the nature of events. First, we need to make sure we know what our subject matter is. What are we investigating? Our first instinct might be to give some examples: earthquakes, sunrises, conversations, wars—we could go on. This is an encouraging start. We appear at least to have some indication that our concept is not an empty one. Yet the fact that there are nouns that we can use to name examples of events doesn't tell us much about our subject matter. To begin investigating them, we want to know what sort of thing they are. To ask this question is not yet to demand a philosophically developed treatment, in which, say, an event turns out to be a slice of space-time,¹ or the exemplification of a property in a substance at a time,² or a certain species of states of affairs.³ Such interpretive claims are disputable attempts to coherently unpack a concept whose nature is obscure. We want something more preliminary and uncontroversial, just to get things going. Let's imagine we're describing our subject matter to someone who doesn't know the word 'event.' Isn't there something we can say to make clear what it is we are talking about?

¹ See W. V. Quine, *Word and Object*, (Cambridge: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960), 171.

² See Jaegwon Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications," in *Action Theory : Proceedings of the Winnipeg Conference on Human Action*, ed. Myles Brand and Douglas N. Walton (Dordrecht ; Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1976).

³ See Roderick Chisholm, "Events and Propositions," *Noûs* 4, no. 1 (1970): 20.

There is of course something we can say, namely that an event is something that happens. Now, our interlocutor may not know what ‘happen’ means, in which case we’re probably at an impasse. That’s much harder to imagine, however, than someone who doesn’t have a word for ‘event;’ a person could manage fairly well without such a word, but she would be in trouble if she couldn’t ask or answer the question ‘What happened?’ (or something like it). So with the definition ‘something that happens’ we seem to have identified our subject matter in an acceptable, if preliminary way, and moreover given it a bit more content. Rather than substituting one word for another, the definition offers a more informative claim about what events are: they are things that happen. In saying this, we seem to be making a typological distinction of some kind. Events are the sorts of things that happen; they are not the sorts of things that exist, like cars or melons, although they seem to be just as real. We might set off, then, to identify the differences between these things: between events and ‘spatiotemporal’ or ‘physical’ objects.⁴ We are faced, we think, with two types of things, and our first task would be to articulate how they are different, in order to bring into sharper relief what it is that events are. We might begin by cataloging, for example, the divergent ways each of these things relate to space and time. Spatiotemporal objects compete for space, while simultaneous events can occur in the same space; events can take a long time to be completed, whereas spatiotemporal objects exist completely at every instant of their history.⁵

I think pursuing this path, however, is jumping the gun. We need to interrogate more closely the very idea that ‘thing that happens’ is a definition which identifies a certain type of thing. This idea was bolstered, as we saw, by the juxtaposition of two phrases—events are ‘things that happen’ and objects are ‘things that exist.’ But what sort of contrast is this? On its surface, it would seem as if we were employing a general notion of what we call a ‘thing,’ and then distinguishing two species of thing—happening things and existing things. This interpretation should raise some red flags, however, as it appears to interpret ‘exist’ and ‘happen’ as two alternative predicates of things. We know, at least, that treating ‘exist’ as a predicate is a notoriously contentious move; surely doing the same with ‘happening’ is no less problematic. Nor is it clear how we should understand the general notion of a ‘thing’ that is at work here, such that it is specifiable into these two types. We don’t have ready-to-hand a sense of ‘thing in

⁴ See e.g. M. J. Cresswell, "Why Objects Exist but Events Occur," *Studia Logica* 45, no. 4 (1986).

⁵ For more observations of this sort, see P. M. S. Hacker, "Events and Objects in Space and Time," *Mind* XCI, no. 361 (1982).

general' such that happening things and existing things are two examples of it. So while the phrase 'things that happen' seems intelligible enough—we have no trouble, after all, offering myriad examples—it is not at all clear how it is supposed to operate as a definition of what events 'are,' since it is not clear how they are things, or what it means to say of them that they happen instead of exist.

We should also note that we are using 'things that exist' and 'things that happen' in a peculiar way. We are trying to use these phrases to identify two basic types of thing, the type that exists and the type that happens. I'll call this the 'typological' sense of these phrases.

Idiomatically, however, we do not use these expressions to identify a type, but to indicate our beliefs about the world. I'll call the idiomatic sense the 'mundane' sense. Let's look first at the mundane sense of 'things that exist.' This is more naturally understood as a phrase that picks out everything that really exists at the moment, and excludes things that no longer exist or have never existed. We may be uncomfortable with the paradoxes that supposedly ensue from speaking of 'things that don't exist,' but that is beside the point here. In whatever way we unpack the distinction between 'things that exist' and 'things that don't exist,' it is clear that, in the mundane, idiomatic sense, 'things that don't exist' does *not* mean 'things whose nature does not involve existing.' It usually means 'things which could exist but don't' (whether they never existed, or once existed but no longer do). In this sense, we assume, of whatever is excluded from the totality of existing things, that including it would not be incoherent. Bigfoot may count among the 'things that don't exist,' but it is certainly not ontological nonsense to claim that he does exist. 'Earthquakes exist,' on the other hand, does not seem coherent to me at all; but if it is coherent, earthquakes should count as things that exist in the mundane sense. If it is not coherent, then earthquakes are simply not under consideration when we speak (mundanely) of things that actually exist.

We can also identify things that don't exist but which also cannot possibly exist, like round squares or an integer between 4 and 5. In this case, of course, it is indeed ontological nonsense to claim that these objects exist. Yet they are still in a sense 'candidates' for existence. They can't exist because the classes to which they would belong—squares in one case, numbers in the other—don't admit the properties these nonsensical objects supposedly have. The classes themselves, however, pick out things which can exist. Impossible objects are excluded from

these classes they ‘would’ belong to, but are still affiliated in this way to the existence from which they are excluded. We will return to this point shortly.

‘Things that happen’ in the mundane sense seems to pick out things that happen regularly. We can also speak of ‘things that have happened,’ where we pick out what has really happened in the past, and exclude what could have happened (however improbably) but didn’t. If it is coherent to say ‘apples have happened,’ then we can count them as things that happened. If it is not, we can’t. Certainly, compared to ‘things that exist,’ our instincts here tend less towards the universal; we don’t expect ‘things that have happened,’ as an idiom, to pick out *everything* that has ever happened, but rather things that happened in a particular place and during a particular stretch time. This is interesting, but irrelevant. The point is that in normal usage, these phrases don’t identify types, but rather pick out what is (or was) actual—what actually exists or what actually happens—from what is possible.

The typological sense clearly lacks this requirement of actuality. To talk about things of the type that exist isn’t to require that they actually exist or actually happen. Everyone counts Bigfoot as something of the type that exists, even those who don’t believe he exists, and everyone counts the Annunciation as something of the type that happens, even those who don’t think it ever happened. Yet the concern with actuality we find in the mundane usage is not irrelevant to the typological usage; on the contrary, it is an essential part of it. If we say something is of the type that exists, what else do we mean but that it *could* actually exist? Bigfoot may be excluded from what exists in the mundane sense, but it is coherent to claim that he does exist; and only if this claim is coherent does Bigfoot count as something of the type that exists. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the Annunciation. Note that I am not here making the metaphysical claim that what is metaphysically possible is delimited by what we are able to conceive. Rather, the point is that what ‘counts for us’ as possible is what we can imagine existing, or happening.

Let us be clear about what it means to say the claims in question are coherent. ‘Coherent’ does here not mean ‘does not conflict with other claims we hold to be true.’ We may find that believing the Annunciation happened, or that Bigfoot exists, conflicts with other beliefs we have about the world. This does not, however, make the claims themselves incoherent. They are coherent claims, not in the sense that they cohere with other claims, but in the sense that they are not internally incoherent.

By contrast, ‘Bigfoot happened’ and ‘The Annunciation existed’ are incoherent statements. In each case, the subject and the verb just don’t seem to get along. We may be tempted here to affiliate their incoherence with that of paradoxical concepts like ‘round square.’ Yet there is an instructive difference between these incoherencies. In the case of ‘round square,’ what is at stake is the possible actuality of such a thing. Because the phrase attributes a property to an object which cannot, by definition, exhibit this property, it does not describe anything which could count as an actual thing. A round square can’t exist, but nor does it have a different way of being actual; rather, it is precisely its actuality which is ruled out. With Bigfoot and the Annunciation, on the other hand, the problem isn’t with their possible actuality. It is coherent to treat either or both of them as actual things. We just can’t say that Bigfoot actually happened, or that the Annunciation actually existed. They each have their manner of (potentially) being actual, and it is incoherent to affirm their actuality in the wrong way.

This last observation gives us further insight into the typological distinction we are considering, between things that happen and things that exist. ‘Happen’ and ‘exist’ are not simply terms that apply to actual things. They express the very being-actual of these things. Or, better: they express their way of being things. There is no way for Bigfoot to be a thing other than by existing; there is no way for the Annunciation to be a thing other than by having happened. If either of them is only imaginary, what is imagined is that it exists or happened. Indeed, for those of us who have no first-hand evidence of either thing, the best we can do is imagine them; and what we do when we imagine them is imagine them existing or happening.⁶ Thus the very intelligibility of the things we are trying to classify—their intelligibility as things which we can identify as topics of our concern—is utterly tied up with the notions we are using to classify them. The typological distinction we have been entertaining points us not to a distinction among classes of things that belong to a more general class, but to a distinction between different senses in which it is coherent to speak of ‘things’ in the first place. There is no way for us to think of a thing which, beyond its being first of all a thing, is only incidentally a

⁶The link between possibility and imagination is one Husserl himself explores in the Sixth *Logical Investigation*. I quote the following passage, although it is unlikely to be fully intelligible to a reader not yet familiar with the Husserlian terminology. “A proposition is always ‘possible’, when the concrete act of propositional meaning permits of a fulfilling identification with an objectively complete intuition of matching material. It is likewise irrelevant if this fulfilling intuition is a percept, or a pure construction of fantasy, etc.” Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols., (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2000), 2:259.

thing of the type that exists, or that happens.⁷ Rather, they are only available to us as objects of thought insofar as we can think of them existing or happening.

We can now identify the proper starting point of our investigation. Events, we said, are things that happen. In trying to clarify what this means, we noted the apparent typological contrast between ‘things that happen’ and ‘things that exist.’ We found this contrast, however, to be a distinction not between things, but between senses in which it is coherent to speak of ‘things’ at all. If we want to understand what we mean by ‘things that happen,’ we should first and foremost ask what the coherent sense of ‘thing’ *is* in this case. What we can't do is simply assume that there is a class of things that happen, and then proceed to specify some characteristics of things in this class, and some distinctions within it. Whatever the utility of this sort of philosophical enterprise, it leaves unexamined the very intelligibility of its subject matter. It looks at examples of things that have happened or could happen, without asking how we first understand the thingliness of their happening, or the happening of their thingliness. The very availability to thought of such things, and their identification as ‘things that happen,’ remains uninterrogated, let alone clarified.⁸ We need rather to look into the coherence of our subject matter, a coherence we recognize as such when we identify ‘things that happen’ as a particular way of being a thing. We want to understand what we mean when we say that things happen, so we have to investigate the sense of this claim.

Things happen—this tiny sentence is in a sense the central enigma motivating the study that lies before us. We can say it, but what do we mean? Why do these two words belong together? How are we to understand the thingly coherence which coheres insofar as it happens, and how are we to understand happening which is always the happening of a thing? Moreover, the sentence is not just intelligible, but seems to be a basic truth about the world. We assent to it not as a contingent fact which we have independently verified, but which could just as well not have obtained had the course of the world been different. Whatever the actual course of our world, it is one in which things happen. For the world to go its course is for things to happen. Yet while we know that things happen, it is not at all easy to make more explicit what we mean when we say so. One is reminded of Augustine's reflections on the question of time:

⁷ I am not ruling out that there are yet other ways of being a thing. We may want to say that numbers, for example, are ideal objects that neither exist nor happen, or that works of literature have their own peculiar type of actuality.

⁸ This is all of course equally true of ontological exercises that fail to ask analogous questions about our understanding of “things that exist,” but that's a story for another time.

What then is time? Is there any short and easy answer to that? Who can put the answer into words or even see it in his mind? Yet what commoner or more familiar word do we use in speech than time? Obviously when we use it, we know what we mean, just as when we hear another use it, we know what he means.

What *is* this time? If no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to a questioner, I do not know.⁹

We face an analogous conundrum. Things happen—nothing could be commoner, and nothing more obscure.

Edifying as it may be to find ourselves dumbstruck by the mysteries of the obvious, we'll make scant progress this way. We could linger on these two words—'thing' and "happen"—wondering about their obscure relation, and let the minutes turn to hours. To get some traction, we need to turn from the generality of this enigmatic axiom towards whatever it is that it is "talking about." That is, we need to move from the general claim *that* things happen to the specificity of *what* happens. One might think that in suggesting this shift, I am drawing us back to what we initially were calling 'events'—a class of things of some sort whose characteristics and properties we can identify and examine. This is precisely what we want to avoid, since in doing so we lose sight of the more fundamental problem, namely the very intelligibility—as 'things'—of that which happens. We need to turn our attention to the specific in a way that doesn't cover over the question of its thingyness as such.

1.2 What We Say When We Say What Happens

Fortunately, such a way presents itself if we reflect carefully about just what counts for us as examples of 'things that happen.' When we turn from claiming *that* things happen to asking *what* happens, we notice a curious transformation. We might expect this move to specificity to bring back into view the specific 'things' we were calling events. After all, we arrived at the locution 'things that happen' by looking for a definition of events. Yet we are not in fact led back to the notion of events when we ask ourselves what happens. In fact, we don't seem to be led to entities at all, but rather to propositions, i.e. to sentences that describe the world, instead of nouns that pick out things in it.

⁹ Augustine, *Confessions : Books I-Xiii*, trans. F. J. Sheed, Rev. ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1993), 219.

1.2.1 Propositions and the ‘disappearing thing’

We notice this as soon as we think about what we we're inclined say when we want to specify what it is that happens. Let's imagine a dialog in which we're being asked to do just that. It is a peculiar conversation, to be sure, but the conversational form helps highlight the incongruity between question and answer that I am trying to isolate.

Dialog A

Me: Things happen.

You: Please be more specific. What happens?

Me: Lots of things. Squirrels fall out of trees. Lovers marry. Civilizations collapse.
Clouds form. One's teeth fall out.

My natural-sounding answers to your question are on inspection quite puzzling, not because of their content but because of their form. There seems to be a grammatical disconnect between the form of the question and my answer to it. One might think that, when asked a question containing a ‘what,’ my answers would contain nouns or nominal phrases that fill in the blank. Yet that's not the case here. To see what I mean, contrast dialog A with an analogous one:

Dialog B

Me: Things exist.

You: Please be more specific. What exists?

Me: Lots of things. Bikes. Squirrels. Lovers. Civilizations. Clouds. Teeth.

In Dialog B I've answered your question with bare nouns. Whether or not we agree that all of these nouns indicate things that properly exist, they're the sort of answer we expect. I could of course have spoken more grammatically and answered with full sentences like ‘Bikes exist,’ etc. But this would only make it even clearer that there is an obvious grammatical ‘fit’ between question and answer. The answers involve a simple replacement of the ‘what’ in ‘what exists’ with a noun. The relations between my initial claim, the questioner's request for specification, and my answer are structurally transparent.

Not so in dialog A, where my answers bear no apparent trace of the question, or of the initial claim. There are nouns in my answers (‘squirrels,’ ‘clouds’), but they are not ‘what happened,’ and my answers in fact contain no nominals which could be described as ‘what happens.’ Furthermore, although my responses are complete sentences, the verb ‘happening’ does not appear in them. Instead, we have brand-new sentences with nouns, verbs and some prepositions to boot, all of them perfectly acceptable answers to the question, yet none of them

exhibiting the isomorphism evident in dialog B. They don't seem to be saying that any particular *thing* happened at all.

There is quite a mystery here—the mystery of the disappearing thing—but it is a welcome one. We were looking for a way to specify what we mean by ‘things that happen’ without losing sight of the fundamental problem of the intelligibility of such things as things. By noticing how ‘things’ in fact fall away when we specify what happens, the problem of the thingyness of what happens becomes all the more conspicuous. Why should ‘Squirrels fall out of trees’ count as an example of a thing? And what happened to ‘happening’? That word does not appear in the sentences that tell us what happens. Both of these terms have vanished, but we know we're still looking in the right place, since our examples are precisely examples of what happens. Moreover, just as ‘thing’ and ‘happen’ seem to vanish in these examples, they can just as well reappear out of them. Observe the following conversation, which proceeds in a somewhat opposite direction from those I presented above:

Dialog C

Me: My tooth fell out.

You: I told you that would happen.

Me: But then a new one grew in the next day.

You: I've never heard of such a thing happening!

Upon hearing the sentences I've here attributed to myself, we immediately are able to leap to a different structure, pulling happening things from where they don't seem to be, like rabbits from a hat. The question, then, is how this trick works. We need to look at what we understand when we understand these propositions, and try to find, in our understanding, the happening of the thing.

1.2.2 ‘Verbal’ vs. ‘copular’ propositions

But what kind of propositions are we actually interested in? We can't answer the question “What happens?” with just any sentence. We would not answer such a question, for example by saying ‘Apples are red,’ ‘My brother is tall,’ ‘Lithuanian is an ancient language,’ or ‘Love is complicated.’ Note that these latter sentences don't contain a ‘full-fledged’ verb, but rather the copula ‘is’ which somehow relates the subject to its predicate. We can begin, then, by distinguishing between ‘copular propositions’ and ‘verbal propositions,’ and focus on the latter as the type of sentence that expresses what happens.

The term ‘verbal proposition’ is admittedly less than ideal, first of all because ‘verbal’ can also mean ‘spoken.’ This should not pose a great problem for us, however, since there will be no ambiguity in the context of our investigation. There is a more serious issue, however, with this terminology. We cannot in fact delimit the kind of propositions we’re interested in by associating them with all and only verb-containing sentences. Not all sentences with verbs, first of all, express things that happen. ‘Joanie loves Chachi,’ for example, does not tell us about something that is happening, but rather, it would seem, about a state of some kind. This is also true of sentences with verbs that indicate possession, like ‘Apples have seeds,’ or ‘I possess many excellent qualities.’¹⁰

Furthermore, some copular sentences do seem tell us about things that happen. I don’t mean sentences like ‘John is sleeping.’ Here, we do have a full-fledged verb (‘sleep’), but in the progressive tense; ‘is’ is part of this tense in English. There is disagreement about whether or not copular ‘be’ and progressive ‘be’ are in fact syntactically distinct, but we certainly should avoid using the progressive as a straightforward example of a copular expression.¹¹ What I have in mind are rather sentences like ‘The airplane is in flight.’ Here is a true copular construction which also tells us about something that is happening. The ‘happening’ part seems to be contributed by the noun ‘flight.’

Despite these caveats, I suggest that we nonetheless adopt this imperfect terminology. In the following chapters, part of my aim will be to make a distinction, not between two kinds of grammatical form, but between two different kinds of ‘judicative activity,’ which I will call ‘copular’ and ‘verbal.’ What I mean by ‘judicative activity’ will be made more clear when I introduce Husserl’s theory of judgment, and will be further clarified as we progress through his analyses in later chapters. We can provisionally understand the term, however, as indicating the cognitive acts through which we—as living subjects—form propositions about the world. One basic way we do this is by making judgments which attribute properties of various sorts to subjects. We attribute properties by using a number of different sentence-forms (e.g. using the verbs ‘to have’ or ‘to possess,’) but the copular form is what we usually use. In philosophical

¹⁰ The relation between copular sentences and “have” sentences of this sort is one Husserl noted, and addressed. He interprets them as a modification of the copular form. See Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment : Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1973), 220-23.

¹¹For a review of evidence that progressive and copular ‘is’ (along with passive ‘is’) are all the same auxiliary, see Thomas Edward Payne, *Understanding English Grammar : A Linguistic Introduction*, (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For a (rather technical) argument for their syntactic and semantic distinctness, see Susan Rothstein, *Predicates and Their Subjects*, (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer, 2001), 282-335.

discourse, accordingly, it is the copular form that is generally used as a straightforward example of property attribution. Husserl's own theory of judgment, as we will see, self-consciously preserves this focus on copular sentences, centering his theory of judgment around a phenomenological analysis of copular property-attribution.

One of our central questions will be whether sentences that tell us what happens should be understood to express property attribution. I will argue against this view, by showing how judgments that say what happens involve a different way of relating their subjects to what is being said about them. These differences pertain to the structure of our cognitions about objects, not to the grammar of sentences. At the same time, we should not consider it a mere coincidence that what happens is usually expressed with sentences that contain full-fledged verbs rather than copular 'be'. The isomorphism between judicative activity and grammatical expression is not perfect, but I think it is significant. Copular constructions, in general, are well-suited to express property-attribution, while verbal constructions, as I will argue in Chapter 4, are well-suited to express what happens. While we can sometimes express happenings with copular forms, or property attribution with verbal forms (or use these forms for other functions altogether), their particular fitness to these two different functions is a matter of interest to us. If we are to go to maintain that judgments about what happens have a fundamentally different structure than property attribution, seeing how these distinctions correspond to syntactical ones at least makes this idea more plausible.

Thus I want to indicate, in naming the two kinds of judicative activity I want to compare, that their distinct cognitive characters are relevant to the distinct sentential forms which typically express them. Since we haven't yet uncovered the distinctions that matter, we don't have terms which refer to them which we could use to name our judgments. 'Copular' and 'verbal' are not ideal designations, but I don't have a better way of naming these judgments without simply making up words, or attributing to them characteristics which I have not yet demonstrated they possess.

Before moving on I should also note that copular judgments need not be property-attributing. In sentences of the form '*S* is *p*,' where *S* is a subject and *p* a predicate, *p* does not have to be an adjective that indicates a property possessed by the subject. It can be a prepositional phrase, for example, as in 'My watch is on my wrist.' It can also be a noun phrase used to assign the subject to a class, as in 'My watch is a timepiece.' Copular phrases can also be

equative: ‘My watch is your watch.’¹² These other forms will not be of much concern to us. Our interest is only in copular property-attributions, because we will want to determine whether verbal propositions can be interpreted as they are. In Chapter 3 we will briefly revisit other copular forms, when we consider whether Husserl’s analyses of them are of use to us. (They are not.) On the other hand, in Chapter 4 we will see that some basic phenomenological features of property-attributing copular judgments apply to these other copular forms as well.

What I propose we do, then, is investigate the purported happening of things by focusing on those propositions—the so-called “verbal” ones—that make no reference to things or to happening, but which nonetheless are what we expect to hear when we want to know what happens. What I mean by ‘investigate’ is of course unclear; I still need to motivate and clarify the phenomenological approach that will be employed in the following chapters. First, however, I need to provide more justification for the shift of focus I am recommending, away from nominal event expressions and in favor of verbal propositions. Nominal expressions, after all, can be used to specify what happens. Indeed, just a few paragraphs ago I was trafficking in examples like earthquakes, shouting matches, and the Annunciation. Instead of Dialog A, I could have constructed the following:

Dialog A'

Me: Things happen.

You: Please be more specific. What happens?

Me: Lots of things. Earthquakes. Accidents. Sunrises. (Or: Earthquakes happen. Accidents happen. Sunrises happen.)

Dialog A' appears to exhibit all the qualities of B; the structure of the question is preserved in the answer, with a noun in the latter replacing the ‘what’ in the former. Why, then, should our focus be on verbal propositions, if nominal examples provide us with a question-answer structure which is more grammatically transparent? If we're interested in the thingyness of what happens, why ignore examples where there seem to be ‘things,’ in favor of examples where there aren't any?

¹² It is a matter of linguistic debate whether equative “be” is predicative. Indeed, there may be other copular clauses which are not predicative, such as ‘specificational’ clauses (‘The mayor of New York is Michael Bloomberg’) and ‘identificational’ clauses (‘That is Sylvia’). An influential taxonomy of copular clauses is offered in Francis Roger Higgins, *The Pseudo-Cleft Construction in English*, (New York: Garland Pub., 1979). For a summary of this taxonomy, and of various proposals to unify or distinguish some or all of its types, see Line Mikkelsen, “Copular Clauses,” in *Semantics : An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*, ed. Klaus von Heusinger, Claudia Maienborn, and Paul Portner (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011).

1.2.3 Why we can ignore event nominals

So far, the motivation I've offered for focusing on verbal propositions is one we could characterize as merely strategic. Let's review it: The absence of explicit reference to 'things' in verbal propositions makes conspicuous the problem of the thingyness of what happens, and this is precisely what we want to get a grip on. If we were instead to take our subject matter to be 'events' which are named by nouns, we would be starting off where this thingyness seems already to have been established in language; we might risk losing sight of it as a problem. We might, furthermore, be tempted to treat events as ontological primitives of a sort, and try to analyze verbal propositions as covertly signifying these entities without naming them outright. (This is the approach taken by Davidson, which we will review in the next section.) Even if this turned out to be a helpful theory in some way, we would have failed to clarify the distinct manner in which such entities are coherent in the sense of being 'things we can think about.' Yet insofar as the motivation here is just to avoid the premature reification of events, it is a bit weak. Why not have a little faith in ourselves, trusting that we can look at nominal examples of things that happen without forgetting that the sense of their thingyness needs to be clarified?

We can, however, make a more principled case for treating verbal propositions as our proper subject matter. First, we can note that verbal propositions are not just one of two ways in which we can express what happens, but rather the paradigmatic form in which we do so. When we ask someone 'what happened,' what we expect—and more importantly, what we receive—is for the most part a verbal proposition, or several. If someone notices I have a broken toe, and wants to know what happened, we'll give answers like 'A bowling ball fell on it,' or 'I stubbed it on a table leg.' We are highly unlikely to say something like 'The fall of a bowling ball on it happened,' or 'A stubbing of it on a table leg happened.' Generally speaking, answering the question 'what happened?' with event nominals produces disappointing results. Compare the following sets of answers, for example, where, in the right column I have given both gerundial and non-gerundial nominal forms; neither is what a normal speaker would say:

What happened?

Sentential answers

The ball bounced up the stairs.

I twisted my ankle.

I found my keys.

Curious odors drifted out the window.

Nominal answers

A bouncing/bounce of the ball up the stairs.

A twisting/twist of my ankle by me.

A finding/discovery of keys by me.

A drifting/drift of curious odors out the window.

Of course, there are various cases in which nominal expressions provide passable answers to the question: ‘An earthquake,’ or, ‘A car crash,’ for example. Yet these can only get us so far; as soon as we’re asked for more detail, we revert to verbal propositions. If someone wants to hear more about the car crash, for example, I’ll give answers of this sort: ‘We were crossing an intersection when another car ran a red light. It didn’t hit us very hard, but our rear fender was dented and we were jerked around a bit.’ It is hard to imagine using event nominals to say much of this.

Furthermore, when we want to explain the very meaning of our nominal event terms, we turn to verbal propositions. If we want to explain what an earthquake is, for example, we say things like, ‘An earthquake is when the ground trembles and shakes, sometimes so hard that buildings fall down and bridges collapse.’ If we want to explain what a sunrise is, we say things like, ‘It’s when the sun starts to peek up over the horizon.’ (Indeed, these nouns—earthquake, sunrise—are themselves very much like compacted sentences, with a subject and verb.) The same applies to proper event names like ‘the Annunciation;’ to explain what this word refers to, we have to tell a story, and this story will primarily if not exclusively consist of verbal propositions. It is a distinguishing feature of event nominals that we can best explain their meaning with a construction like, ‘*x* is when *S*,’ where *x* is an event nominal and *S* is a verbal proposition. This is not true of other nominals. We don’t offer ‘A car is when *S*’ as an explanation of what a car is. Event nominals are unique in this way, and this suggests that our real quarry is not these nominal expressions, but rather the verbal propositions which best articulate their meaning.

A similar point is made by Jonathan Bennett, who employs this primacy of verbal propositions to argue that events are ‘supervenient entities.’ For Bennett they are supervenient

because ‘all the truths about them are logically entailed by and *explained* or *made true* by truths that do not involve the event concept.’ He fleshes this out as follows:

Our grasp of the idea that a run occurred yesterday comes from our grasp of the idea that something ran yesterday; our grasp of the idea there is a picnic in the park comes from our grasp of the idea that people are sitting around eating and conversing in the park. Someone could have a linguistic/conceptual upbringing that made him competent in talking about how things behave and where they are when, but stopped short of equipping him to use the event concept; nobody could have an upbringing that started at the other end and stopped in the same place. Or so I confidently believe, though I don't know how to defend my opinion.¹³

The best defense Bennett can summon is that it seems strange to run these explanations in the opposite direction. It sounds odd, for example, to say that our idea of a picnic is the basis for the idea of people in the park sitting around eating and talking.¹⁴ Even if, as Bennett admits, this oddness does not force us to accept his supervenience claim, we can at least agree that that we paradigmatically turn to verbal propositions when we want to explain what an event nominal means, and that we rarely, if ever, do the opposite.

Verbal propositions, then, are not just the forms that we employ most commonly to explain what happens. They constitute the ground floor of our ability to express the happening of things. In other words, to say that something specific happened is paradigmatically to utter a proposition of this sort. So if our goal is to understand how it is coherent to speak of things happening, if it is to clarify the intelligibility of such things as things, these propositions need to stand at the center of our investigation—not just for strategic reasons, but because they are the way in which what happens is spoken of. They are thus our natural target.

1.2.4 When happening is not an event

To justify a focus on verbal propositions instead of event nominals, however, is not yet to argue that the ultimate theme of the investigation should be things that happen, rather than events. For even if one agrees that we should be looking at propositions, one might still think that we are doing so in order to understand what events are. Yet while I am confident that the ideas I will present here are relevant to the question of events, I am not in fact offering a study of events, but rather of things that happen. This claim requires a justification of its own, at least as a courtesy to

¹³ Jonathan Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1988), 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

the reader, who may be annoyed by my stubborn use of ‘a thing that happens’ or ‘a happening,’ where the ‘an event’ would seem to do just fine. (I may occasionally use ‘event,’ when this term seems like a good enough fit; the reader should not attribute ontological significance to it when it appears.)

To put it somewhat crudely: while events are things that happen, it is not obvious that everything that happens is an event. Somewhat more precisely stated: propositions which express what happens do not necessarily describe events. Imagine you are hiking alone in the forest, when a friend calls you on your cell phone. You tell him you are having a delightful time, and, playfully, he asks ‘What’s happening right now?’ You answer:

■ A bird just flew from one tree to another.

■ Now the bird is building its nest.

■ The wind is rustling the leaves.

All three propositions tell us what is happening (or what just happened). Do they all correspond to events? The first sentence clearly does—a bird’s flying successfully from one tree to another is surely an uncontroversial example of what we would call an event. Case (2) is a bit harder to adjudicate. The bird hasn’t built a nest yet; it’s just working on it. What would the event be in this case? Is it the entire nest-building event, understood as not yet complete? Or is the work of the bird, understood as a goal-directed activity? These are problems raised by the progressive tense in general, and there are semantic accounts which interpret the progressive in terms of events. For example, we could interpret the bird’s activity as an event which is a ‘stage’ of a larger event.¹⁵ At the same time, there is something about the bird’s ongoing activity that doesn’t seem event-like. Events, we tend to think, have beginnings and endings. We may be able to isolate discrete events as we watch the bird—it picks up a stick, it places it back down, etc. But our judgment that it is *building* seems to indicate something other than an aggregation of events, a kind of creative unfolding that is hard to see as a ‘unit.’ These are foggy, inconclusive doubts, but doubts nonetheless.

The third case, however, is more clear-cut. It seems quite wrong to interpret ‘The wind is rustling the leaves’ as expressing an event. Something is happening, to be sure. We see and hear

¹⁵Fred Landman, "The Progressive," *Natural Language Semantics* 1, no. 1 (1992). For an alternative account structured around time intervals rather than events, see David R. Dowty, *Word Meaning and Montague Grammar: The Semantics of Verbs and Times in Generative Semantics and in Montague's Ptq*, (Dordrecht ; Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1979).

it happening. Yet to call this an event seems like a misapplication of the term. We seem rather to be describing a global feature of our environment, a dynamic intermingling of elements that does not present itself as a coherent temporal object. Forces are at work, and we can sense their manifestation, but there is no compelling reason to call this an event. While temporally locatable—it is happening *now*—this happening lacks the discreteness of beginning and ending we associate with the event concept.

These are my intuitions, in any case, and they are shared by the few people I have asked. They serve at least to suggest that the notion of ‘thing that happens’ is more universally applicable than the concept of an event, and thus more basic. Events happen, but happening appears to be something intelligible on its own terms, apart from events. It is this intelligibility—the intelligibility of what happens—that I want to investigate, by investigating the propositions through which what happens is said.

1.3 Investigating Propositions: Two Non-Phenomenological Approaches

Our goal, then is to understand how it is that verbal propositions express things that happen. This is a two-part goal. Our question concerns both (1) the ‘thinglyness’ of what happens, and (2) the ‘happeningness’ of these things. That is, we need to (1) develop an account of verbal propositions which shows how they provide us with things which we can refer to—how they give us some kind of object, as we have seen them do. We also want to (2) understand why these things are happening things. Happening is not, as we have seen, a property of these things. It is rather their very way of being a thing; for such a thing to ‘be’ is for it to happen. We need to see, then, whether we can develop an account of verbal propositions which illuminates the happening-nature of these things.

Both of these issues can be addressed through a phenomenological approach that builds on Husserl’s theory of judgment. Before introducing this approach, let us consider two other frameworks for thinking about verbal propositions, taken from more recent work on events in the ‘analytic’ tradition. There is in fact a vast body of literature on events, concerning a multitude of issues in metaphysics, ontology, and the philosophy of language. I isolate these two frameworks—the event-quantification model proposed by Donald Davidson, and the property-exemplification model adopted by Jonathan Bennett and Jaegwon Kim—because they, more explicitly than others, consider events insofar as they have some kind of relation to propositional

structures. I will not attempt a comprehensive review and critique of them. We can identify, however, some reasons to doubt their basic presumptions, and to look for a different approach.

1.3.1 Davidsonian event semantics

Davidson's approach directly addresses one of our two central concerns. He was also interested, as are we, with the way in which certain propositions appear to give us 'things' to talk about, without actually naming those things. His original focus was not on propositions which express things that happen, but on 'action sentences,' in which there is 'something' that is done by an agent. His solution, however, can be applied to any sentence which seems to correspond to an event, as we will see.

Davidson's model

The model Davidson proposes for interpreting action sentences is not motivated exclusively by a concern with the objects they seem to yield. However, we will focus first on this concern as we introduce his model, so that we can see how Davidson's proposal functions as an answer to it. Davidson begins his seminal essay, "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," by pointing out the mystery of another disappearing thing—not the thing that happens, but the thing that is done:

Strange goings on! Jones did it slowly, deliberately, in the bathroom, with a knife, at midnight. What he did was butter a piece of toast. We are too familiar with the language of action to notice at first an anomaly: the 'it' of 'Jones did it slowly, deliberately...' seems to refer to some entity, presumably to an action, that is then characterized in a number of ways.¹⁶

He goes on to wonder how we might represent the logical form of this sentence, substituting bound variables for the pronouns, and turning the adverbs (*slowly*, *deliberately*) and the preposition (*in the kitchen*) into a conjunction of free-standing sentences:

Asked for the logical form of this sentence, we might volunteer something like, 'There is an action x such that Jones did x slowly and Jones did x deliberately and Jones did x in the bathroom...' and so on. But then we need an appropriate singular term to substitute for ' x '. In fact we know Jones buttered a piece of toast. And allowing a little slack, we can substitute for ' x ' and get 'Jones buttered a piece of toast slowly and Jones buttered a piece of toast deliberately and Jones

¹⁶ Donald Davidson, "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2001), 105.

battered a piece of toast in the bathroom...’ and so on. The trouble is that we have nothing here we would ordinarily recognize as a singular term.¹⁷

Davidson’s initial concern, then, arises from the fact that, while we seem free to use a pronoun which stands in for ‘something,’ we don’t have at our disposal singular terms with which to replace them. Rather, when try to replace the pronoun, we end up inserting a complex verb phrase, ‘battered a piece of toast.’ We have already witnessed analogous behavior with things that happen: when we are asked to replace, for example, the ‘it’ in ‘It happened yesterday,’ we don’t (typically) use singular term, but rather utter a complete sentence, like ‘My tooth fell out.’

His solution—which, again, is motivated by additional factors which we have yet to address—is to suggest that action sentences do, in fact, make reference to things, but that they do so covertly. He proposes that these sentences have a ‘logical form’ which is not evident in their overt grammatical structure. There are two key, novel aspects to the logical form he proposes. The first is that it treats verbs as predicates with an additional ‘event’ argument. Normally, he claims, we would treat a verb like ‘kicked’ as a two-place predicate, taking one argument which corresponds to the kicker, and another corresponding to the kicked thing or person. Thus ‘Shem kicked Shaun’ would be represented as in (4):

■ Kicked(Shem, Shaun).

Davidson proposes instead that the verb in fact assigns an additional argument, corresponding to the event of kicking. He also argues—and this is the second novel aspect of his proposal—that action sentences are instances of existential quantification, where the quantified variable is the event argument of the verb. Thus Davidson renders ‘Shem kicked Shaun’ as in (5), where x is the event variable:

■ $\exists x$ (Kicked(Shem, Shaun, x))

Davidson’s rough English translation of this proposition is “There is an event x such that x is a kicking of Shaun by Shem.”¹⁸ This, he argues, is what we are really proposing when we say ‘Shem kicked Shaun.’¹⁹ (Davidson uses x as the variable in this passage, but e has become the conventional notation for event variables; I will use e in subsequent examples.)

¹⁷ "Causal Relations," in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 154.

¹⁸ "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," 118.

¹⁹ Davidson’s proposal does not represent the tense of action sentences, an omission which he explicitly recognizes. See *ibid.*, 123.

If we interpret action sentences this way, we have an apparent solution to the thing-problem. Action sentences yield things to which we can refer pronominally, because they in fact propose the existence of precisely these things. Our confusion arises only because surface grammar occludes what is actually being said. Furthermore, we can easily widen Davidson's analysis to address sentences that do not involve action (i.e. where agency is not involved), but do involve something happening. Davidson himself heads down this road in a later essay, suggesting that we interpret a sentence like 'Jack fell down' as $\exists e$ (Fell(Jack, e)), which translates roughly as, "There is an event e such that e is a falling down of Jack."²⁰ The inheritors of Davidson's model have developed it in this direction, applying the event-variable analysis to any sentence that seems to correspond to an event (and even to those expressing states).²¹ Thus a Davidsonian model would solve our problem regarding things that happen as well. Certain propositions 'yield' things that happen because they are in fact, covertly, asserting the existence of events.²²

Problems with the Davidsonian Model

Davidson's solution is a tidy one, indeed. I think, however, that we have good reason to be suspicious of it. In Chapter 2, we will be pursuing a different approach to the puzzling emergence of thing-like objects out of verbal propositions. Rather than associating these objects, as Davidson does, with subsentential elements, we will, following Husserl, propose that they are generated through a cognitive operation on propositional structures themselves. Thus it is important that we criticize Davidson's model in some detail, in order to discard it as a more plausible alternative to our own.

We can raise doubts about Davidson's model without even questioning what is arguably its most iffy-feeling part, namely the hidden presence of event variables and quantificational structure in sentences that don't overtly display either of these features. It is not, after all, in

²⁰ Ibid., 154.

²¹ See Terence Parsons, *Events in the Semantics of English: A Study in Subatomic Semantics*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990). For a concise and instructive application of the Davidsonian model to linguistic semantics, see Richard K. Larson and Gabriel Segal, *Knowledge of Meaning: An Introduction to Semantic Theory*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 474-84.

²² We might raise the concern that, with action sentences, there are in fact two things which we can refer to. If Shem kicked Shaun, then we can speak of "what happened," and of "what Shem did." These seem to be two different things. A possible response, however, would be to argue that such sentences do in fact involve two events: Shem's causing the kicking, and the kicking itself. We could render this as $\exists x \exists y$ (Caused(Shem, y , x) \wedge Kicked(Shem, Shaun, y)). This is not an approach I recommend, however, as will become clear in the next section.

principle impossible, or even implausible, that some sentences are best analyzed using logical structures that are not isomorphic to their surface grammar. Davidson would certainly not be the first to posit covert existential quantification; Russell's quantificational analysis of definite descriptions, for example, does the same. The idea that verbal propositions do so, and even that they contain variables that don't correspond to any term in the surface grammar, should not be ruled out simply because it seems a bit odd. Rather, the problems with Davidson's proposal are rooted in the assumptions and motives that led him to formulate it in the first place.

Davidson's Pronominal Evidence

We can begin with the idea, discussed in the passages above, that the pronoun in 'Jones did it' is a stand-in for a singular term that picks out an entity of some kind. This assumption motivates the articulation of a logical form containing expressions that also pick out the appropriate object. In Davidson's model, this work is done by the existentially quantified event variable.²³ A statement like 'Jones buttered the toast, and he did it with a knife' is thus easy to interpret, since the pronoun is simply associated with a recurrence of this variable in the logical form. We could render it as ' $\exists e(\text{Buttered}(\text{Jones}, \text{toast}, e) \wedge \text{With-a-knife}(e))$ '.²⁴ (This rendering obviously glosses over additional structure, for example within the prepositional phrase.)

It is not at all self-evident, however, that we should adopt Davidson's assumptions regarding pronouns. We can respond to the data he observes in a rather different way, using it to call into question our very predisposition treat pronouns as stand-ins for singular terms. Perhaps pronouns do not, in fact, always serve this function. Indeed, there are other contexts in which pronouns (and question words, which also serve as stand-ins) clearly are not substitutes for nominals. If I ask, for example, 'What did Hanna say?' I don't expect a name or other nominal phrase as an answer, but either a proposition ('She said she was stuck in traffic') or a quotation ('She said 'Ouch)'). I can also, of course, use 'it' in these contexts: 'She said it yesterday.' We have, moreover, other words that stand in for non-nominal expressions, like prepositional phrases. ('The TV is on the roof.' 'How did it end up *there*?') If we have placeholders for

²³ A variable is of course not itself a singular term that picks out a particular object. Existential quantification, and quantification in general, does not refer to objects, but rather claims that there is an object which would make the sentence true. Nonetheless, these variables correspond to singular terms, insofar as we substitute a singular term for them in a non-quantified sentence.

²⁴ See Davidson, "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," 119.

various types of sentence constituents, not all of which pick out objects in the usual sense, why should we assume that the pronouns in Davidson's example do this?

We will pursue this line of thought extensively in Chapter 2, with respect to pronouns that (appear to) refer to things that happen. We can give a quick sketch here, however, of how we might approach the linguistic data Davidson observes—where the pronouns appear to refer to actions— without interpreting the pronouns as he does. Davidson's basic, unproblematic observation is that (6) and (7) can be interpreted, in an appropriate discursive situation, as semantically equivalent. (I have bracketed the verb phrase (VP) in each sentence, in order to isolate the sentence constituents which can be freely interchanged. I also adopt the convention of labeling discrete structural elements of sentences with subscript abbreviations at the beginning of the bracketed phrase.)

■ Jones [_{VP} buttered the toast]

■ Jones [_{VP} did it]

Now, before considering whether 'it' in (7) refers to some entity, we can simply note that [_{VP} did it] functions as a stand-in for [_{VP} buttered the toast]. In fact, in some contexts it is not even necessary to supply such a stand-in. Sentences (8) and (9), for example, have no difference in meaning:

■ We thought Jones had [_{VP} buttered the toast], but he hadn't [_{VP} done it].

■ We thought Jones had [_{VP} buttered the toast], but he hadn't.

In both of these sentences, we have 'missing content' at the end, namely [_{VP} buttered the toast]. It is elided in (9), and replaced with [_{VP} done it] in (8). Upon reading or hearing either sentence, we fill in the content it lacks. This suggests that the phrase [_{VP} done it] is basically an empty structure, no more meaningful than elision, that needs to be filled in by the content of the VP.

We could thus interpret the 'do it' construction as a 'pro-form.' Pro-forms are just expressions that stand in for sentential constituents of different kinds. Pronouns are pro-forms; there are also pro-adjectives, as in 'Make my hair blond like Frank's, but less *so*.' Now, let's imagine that English had a pro-verb, 'ditt' which we used instead of 'do it.' In such a language, we might abbreviate full sentences by substituting pro-verbs for verb phrases:

Jones [_{VP} buttered the toast], and he [_{VP} *ditted*] in the bathroom.

You should [_{VP} butter the toast], and you should [_{VP} *ditt*] with a knife.

Jones and Mary [_{VP} butter the toast], and they usually [_{VP} *ditt*] at midnight.

Yet this is not how we speak. If we want to treat ‘do it’ as a pro-form, we need something that accounts for its internal structure, where there is a verb ‘do’ that has a syntactic object, ‘it’.

Such an account is suggested by the linguist Thomas Stroik.²⁵ To understand the proposal, we need to expand our notion the verb phrases a bit. Stroik adopts a widely accepted syntactical model for verb phrases for which a phrase like ‘buttered the toast’ contains more structure than is immediately apparent. There is, to begin with, the VP, consisting of a verb (V) and a noun phrase (NP). We can represent this as:

[_{VP} [V] [NP]]

The representation of the verb phrase in Davidson’s example would accordingly be:

[_{VP} [_V buttered] [_{NP} the toast]]

This structure, however, is nested within a larger structure, in which it is preceded by a syntactical element labeled *v* or ‘little *v*’. The resulting structure is a *vP*:

[_{vP} *v* [_{VP}]]

We would therefore render ‘Jones buttered the toast’ as:

Jones [_{vP} *v* [_{VP} [_V buttered] [_{NP} the toast]]]

The many advantages of assuming such a structure, and the linguistic evidence for it, are beyond the scope of our concerns.²⁶ Note, however, that *v*, under some proposals, can sometimes function as a ‘causative operator.’ It is, in this model, a light verb which is not usually expressed in English,²⁷ but which can contribute the sense of agency to the verb phrase as a whole.²⁸ Thus in a sentence like ‘I love Lucy,’ there would be no causative operator, because there is no agency involved in the sense of the verb ‘love.’ A sentence like ‘Lucy rolled down the hill’ may or may

²⁵ Thomas Stroik, "On the Light Verb Hypothesis," *Linguistic Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (2001). Stroik notes that the idea that ‘do so’ is a pro-form is a widely held assumption. See his fn.5 for citations. For an expansion of Stroik’s proposal, see Bill Haddican, "The Structural Deficiency of Verbal Pro-Forms," *ibid.* 38, no. 3 (2007).

²⁶ The “little *v*” analysis builds on an analysis of double-object constructions (e.g. “John sent Mary a letter”) proposed in Richard K. Larson, "On the Double Object Construction," *ibid.* 19(1988). Larson does not here propose little *v*, but rather an empty syntactical position into which the verb in the nested VP moves for structural reasons. This allows him to argue that “John sent Mary a letter” is a syntactical transformation of something closer to “John [Mary [sent a letter]].” For a discussion of the ‘little-*v*’ analysis, see e.g. Noam Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 315 ff.

²⁷ For a discussion of causative constructions that proposes a causative operator, see Mark C. Baker, *Incorporation : A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 147-229. As part of his argument, Baker examines data from the Chichewa language of Malawi, which has an overtly expressed causal morpheme.

²⁸ See Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program*, 315. For a proposal that there are different functions of little-*v*, including indicating causativity, see Angelika Kratzer, "Severing the External Argument from Its Verb," in *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, ed. Johan Rooryck and Laurie Zaring (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1996).

not contain a causative operator; its presence or absence would correspond to our agentive or non-agentive readings of this sentence, both of which are available.

It is not essential to the analysis of ‘do it’ that we treat v as a causative operator. Indeed, the proposal we will look at does not make reference to this potential function of v . I mention it to indicate one way in which it has been suggested that v has a semantic function, and because this suggestion does seem to fit with the linguistic phenomenon we are investigating, namely action sentences.

Adopting the vP model of verb phrase structure, Stroik argues that the phrase ‘do it’ (as well as ‘do so,’ to which he applies the same analysis) is not a VP.²⁹ That is, it is not contained within the VP structure as in (10). Rather, ‘do’ occupies the position of v , while ‘it’ occurs in VP, as in (11).

■ [vP v [VP do it]]
■ [vP do [VP it]]

On this analysis, ‘do’ is a ‘helping verb’ or ‘light verb,’ rather than a ‘main verb.’ That is, it is not the ‘do’ of ‘I did my homework’ or ‘I did the dishes,’ but rather has here a merely functional role. Basically, ‘do’ appears in the position of v because there is no longer a main verb expressed in VP, as the content of VP has been replaced by ‘it’. There must be a verb in the sentence, so ‘do’ is inserted to serve this function.³⁰ As evidence of this structure, wherein ‘do’ and ‘it’ occupy different syntactical levels, Stroik notes that, in questions, ‘do’ also appears at the end of the sentence, as in (12):

■ What will Jones do?

This is easy to explain, Stroik notes, if we assume that ‘what’ corresponds to the VP, which moves out of its vP context to the front of the sentence; since the sentence lacks a main verb, ‘do’ appears as a helping verb, occupying the little- v position.

²⁹ Stroik does not simply presume this framework, but rather argues that its ability to account for the behavior of the ‘do it’ pro-form provides independent justification for it. "On the Light Verb Hypothesis," 362.

³⁰ It is actually a great deal more complicated than this. Stroik’s analysis presumes the ‘feature-checking’ framework for analyzing phrase structure. In this case, v has a [VForm] feature which needs to be ‘checked’ by some other syntactical element in the sentence, usually the main verb. To check this feature on v , the main verb actually moves from its position in VP and ‘affixes’ to v . Since there is no longer a VP verb in the pro-form, ‘do’ must feature-check v .

We can thus explain Davidson's pronominal evidence without recourse to action-referring pronouns. Rather, we have a complex pro-form which simply replaces the verb phrase with empty structure:

■ Jones [_{VP} V [_{VP} buttered the toast]]
■ He [_{VP} did [_{VP} it]]

This proposal of course depends on a particular syntactical framework which I am not in a position to defend. It shows us, however, that there are plausible avenues of explanation which do not require us to assume entity-referring pronouns.

I should note, however, that Davidson does provide an example of pronominal reference to actions which does not fit into the pro-form analysis. What I have in mind is this exchange, which he mentions in passing:³¹

■ Jones did it with a knife.
■ Please tell me more about it.

Davidson suggests that the 'it' in (16) also refers, as in (15), to 'what Jones did.'³² I suggest a different interpretation. We can interpret (15) using Stroik's pro-form analysis. But what about (16)? This second 'it' is obviously not a part the pro-form 'do it'. However, I think that Davidson is wrong to suggest it refers to an action. A more intuitive interpretation is that the pronoun refers to the totality of what is expressed in (15), rather than to Jones' action. That is, what the speaker is curious about is 'what happened' overall. I might respond to (16) with (17):

■ It was disturbing.

I think it is clear that in such a conversation the 'it' we are talking about is not some 'action' which, incidentally, was done by Jones and with a knife, but rather something that corresponds to the entirety of sentence (15), which expresses 'something that happened.'

In the next chapter we'll look more carefully at this type of pronoun, but our approach will be somewhat different. While we will look to sentential structure to explain its function, we cannot in this case suggest that the pronoun is 'merely' a pro-form structure that replaces

³¹ Davidson also offers this example ("The Logical Form of Action Sentences," 106.) :

- (i) I crossed the Channel in fifteen hours.
- (ii) Good grief, that was slow.

Again, the suggestion is that the "that" in (v) refers to the action of crossing the Channel. I would suggest it refers to the length of time—as in "Fifteen hours! That's slow!"

³²Ibid., 108.

sentential content. There is indeed a ‘thing’ to which such pronouns refer—the thing that happened. This thing, however, is not something indicated by some covert term in the sentence. Rather, these ‘objectivities’ are the outcome of judicative process itself.

Without getting into the details of this proposal, for which we have not yet acquired the requisite phenomenological framework, we can note the difference between this kind of pronoun and the merely formal kind. Since the *it* of ‘do it’ replaces a VP—assuming Stroik’s analysis is correct—it does not direct us to any object, since that is not what verb phrases do. Consequently, it cannot be coindexed with other pronouns that are the subjects or objects of other sentences. It cannot, for example, be coindexed with the subject of ‘It was disturbing.’ Even when this sentence immediately follows the ‘Jones did it with a knife,’ we do not, I contend, interpret the pronouns as coreferential, because the *pro*-form pronoun is not actually referential at all. We see the same behavior in (18):

■ Jones did it with a knife. I know, because I saw it. It was very annoying.

For something to be disturbing, or annoying, or to be ‘seen,’ it has to be some kind of ‘thing.’ We will see in Chapter 2 that this ‘thing’ is still not an object in the usual sense; and that the ‘thing’ referred to by the pronoun is a judicative product, not a pre-given entity. It is still, however, more than mere form.

Actions under Different Descriptions

Pronominal data is not the only driver behind Davidson’s proposal. As a further justification, he argues that his model accords with our intuition that there are different ways to describe the same action:

I am writing my name. I am writing my name on a piece of paper. I am writing my name on a piece of paper with the intention of writing a cheque. I am writing a cheque. I am paying my gambling debt. It is hard to imagine how we can have a coherent theory of action unless we are allowed to say that each of these sentences is made true by the same action.³³

I am not certain what would count, for Davidson, as a coherent theory of action. It is clear, however, that his model allows us to say that the ‘same action’ makes all of these sentences true. The same action, for example, could provide the value for *e* in both (19) and (20):

³³ Ibid., 110.

█ $\exists e$ (Write(I, my name, e))

█ $\exists e$ (Pay(I, debt, e))

In (19), I am positing the existence of an event that can be described as a writing of my name by me; in (20), I am positing an event that can be described as a paying of my debt by me.

Although these are different characterizations, one event could fit the bill in both cases.

We might disagree with Davidson's intuition that (19) and (20) could be made true by the same event. Following a line of argument pursued by Judith Jarvis Thomson, for example, we could argue that our debt is not in fact paid when we sign our name, but only after the check is handed over, or perhaps when it is cashed.³⁴ However, this is not a criticism I want to pursue here, although I am sympathetic to it. Rather, we need to look critically at Davidson's larger point—namely that our ability to identify one event under different descriptions serves as evidence for the logical form he proposes. Even if we agree with his claims about event identities, it is not obvious that we need a logical form that accommodates them. To illustrate this doubt, let us choose two sentences which are easier to accept as descriptions of the same action: 'I am writing my name' and 'I am signing a check.' What does it mean to take these as different descriptions of a single action?

Davidson's idea seems to be that the action 'itself' is a minimal affair, to which we then give descriptions which add contextual layers to it. The minimal action in this case might simply involve the movements of my hand and the transfer of ink from the pen to the paper, as well as my intent to move my hand in this particular way. Besides this minimal event, however, there is also the context in which it is occurring. My description of the action may change depending on the larger context I have in view, which can include my motives, the consequences of my action, the expectations of others, etc. In the case of 'I am signing a cheque,' I am adding socioeconomic context by identifying the paper as more than 'just' paper. It is a check, the signing of which signifies something according to the rules of our society. Redescription, Davidson argues, "may supply the motive ('I was getting my revenge'), place the action in the context of a rule ('I am castling'), give the outcome ('I killed him'), or provide evaluation ('I did the right thing')."³⁵

³⁴ Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Time of a Killing," *The Journal of Philosophy* 68, no. 5 (1971). Cf. Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications." Kim goes so far as to distinguish "Sebastian's leisurely stroll" from "Sebastian's stroll" (pp.167-171).

³⁵ Davidson, "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," 110.

Now, it is true that, given an action sentence, we can ‘drill down,’ so to speak, until we find a minimal activity for which that sentence is just one possible description. Moreover, our everyday concerns often do lead us to focus on the simple actions for which we generally offer more context-providing descriptions. For example, a friend might have seen me, through a window, writing in my diary; he thought, however, that I was writing him a check for money I owe him. We may later laugh about how he interpreted what he saw—me writing—as something it wasn’t, situating it in the wrong context. These moments, however, involve a shift of focus, where we pay attention to what is uncontroversial about the action, distinguishing this from the interpretive context we have imposed on it. Usually, we are not focused in this way. Rather, we naively interpret what we are seeing as we are disposed to interpret it, not stopping to observe that we are wrapping presumed contexts around a more basic kernel. Treating actions as objects of description and redescription is something we do, but not something we always do.

Davidson’s model, however, builds this stance towards actions into the very logical form of our propositions. His model suggests that when I formulate a sentence like ‘I paid my debt,’ I am positing the existence of an action (or event) which can be described in a particular way. While the positing of actions as substrates of description is a cognitive competence we clearly possess, representing it at the level of logical form is an overreach. It confuses something we are able to do—focusing on actions and events as objects of description—with something we necessarily do anytime we utter an action sentence. We simply don’t need an account of action sentences that involves the positing of describable events. To the contrary, such an account seems to attribute cognitive attitudes to these propositions which they do not in fact display.

Adverbial Modification

Davidson’s proposal has a third motivation, the last one we will consider. His model, he argues, solves a problem that arises regarding adverbial modification.³⁶ Note that (21) entails (22) and (23):

- Jones buttered the toast in the bathroom with a knife at midnight.
- Jones buttered the toast at midnight.
- Jones buttered the toast.

³⁶ Davidson gives credit to Kenny for first raising this issue. See Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*, (London,: Routledge & K. Paul, 1963).

Davidson points out that we need to analyze these sentences in such a way that their entailment relations follow as a matter of logical form. A standard first-order logical analysis fails to do so, however, insofar as it treats the verb as a predicate with variable polyadicity. That is, we would treat ‘Buttered’ as a five-place relational predicate in (24), a three-place predicate in (25), and a two-place predicate in (26).

■ Buttered(Jones, toast, bathroom, knife, midnight)

■ Buttered(Jones, toast, midnight)

■ Buttered(Jones, toast)

The problem with this, Davidson argues, is that it gives us a different predicate in each sentence. We thereby ‘obliterate the logical relations between these sentences.’³⁷

Davidson’s proposed form, on the other hand, preserves the desired entailments. It assigns to verbs an invariant argument structure, and then treats adverbs as predicates modifying the event variable in conjoined sentences:

■ $\exists e$ (Buttered(Jones, toast, e) \wedge In-the-Bathroom(e) \wedge With-a-knife(e) \wedge At-Midnight(e))

■ $\exists e$ (Buttered(Jones, toast, e) \wedge At-Midnight(e))

■ $\exists e$ (Buttered(Jones, toast, e))

The entailment relations hold as a matter of logical form, since we can get from the more complex sentences to the simpler ones by dropping conjuncts. In other words, it is unproblematic to hold that (30) entails (31):

■ There is an event such that it was a buttering of the toast by Jones, and this event occurred at midnight.

■ There is an event such that it was a buttering of the toast by Jones.

This is, again, a very tidy solution to a problem. The problem only arises, however, under the assumption that we must use first-order logic to analyze adverbial modification. The sentences of first-order logic can only use predicates with singular terms as their arguments; there are no higher-order operators that can modify predicates. As has been pointed out by critics of Davidson’s proposal, we need not assume the constraints of first-order logic to tackle the

³⁷ Davidson, "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," 107.

problem of adverbial modification.³⁸ Terence Parsons, for example, develops an analysis using predicate modifiers which modify formulas of first order logic. Thus while the sentence ‘*x* drives’ is notated by Parsons as Dx , as in first-order logic, we can use a predicate modifier to express ‘*x* drives slowly’ as $S(Dx)$.³⁹

Parson’s approach has the advantage that it allows us to represent what Parsons calls “reiterated modification,” in which an adverbially modified sentence is itself adverbially modified. His example is ‘*x* painstakingly wrote illegibly.’ This is interpreted as the claim that *x* took pains to write illegibly (not simply that *x* wrote both painstakingly and illegibly). It is not clear how Davidson’s model—or any first-order model—could represent nested adverbials of this sort. Predicate modification deals with it handily, analyzing the sentence above as $P(I(W(x)))$.⁴⁰

My intent is not to defend the predicate modifier model as the ‘true’ logical form of adverbial modification. I am not, in fact, convinced that the search for logical form is of great philosophical significance,⁴¹ and am even less convinced, as will become clear in Chapter 4, that verbs themselves are well-served by treating them uncritically as predicates. To the degree, however, that one might be interested in developing a logical form that captures something of the structure of action and event sentences, the adherence to first-order logic appears an unnecessary restriction. The problem of variable polyadicity is thus an artificial problem, generated by these constraints. The necessity of introducing hidden quantification to solve this ‘problem’ should be

³⁸ See e.g. W.V. Quine, “Events and Reification”, in *Actions and Events : Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, ed. Ernest LePore and Brian P. McLaughlin (Oxford Oxfordshire ; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1985). See also Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, 165-87., P. M. S. Hacker, “Events, Ontology and Grammar,” *Philosophy* 57, no. 222 (1982).

³⁹ Terence Parsons, “Some Problems Concerning the Logic of Grammatical Modifiers,” *Synthese* 21, no. 3/4 (1970): 325.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁴¹ I am generally sympathetic to the skeptical stance, expressed by Hacker, towards the project of formalizing natural languages: “Even if, in some millennial logico-semantic paradise, a calculus were devised which mapped ‘every difference and connection legitimately considered the business of a theory of meaning’ on to canonical notation, what would that show about our understanding of our native tongue? Such a calculus has not yet been invented; we do not know it, either explicitly or tacitly. Our understanding of our native language and our grasp of its logical articulations cannot be described, let alone explained, in terms of an as yet unvented formal notation of equivalent logical powers. If it were invented, there is no guarantee that it would be intelligible to the average speaker of our language. *A fortiori*, there could be no grounds for attributing to a speaker knowledge of the rules of such a projected calculus as part of an explanation of his mastery of the entailments of event recording and event referring sentences.” (Hacker, “Events, Ontology and Grammar,” 486. The passage he quotes is from Davidson, “The Logical Form of Action Sentences,” 123.)

seen as evidence against imposing these constraints, rather than evidence for the presence of quantification.

What would we gain by adopting Davidsonian semantics?

We cannot, then, comfortably accept Davidson's model as an answer to the thing-problem presented by verbal propositions. It is not the only possible response to the data, and requires us to make dubious assumptions about our normal cognitive attitudes towards actions, and about the type of formal grammar we can deploy to represent natural language. Even if we were to accept the model, however, it would not help us make headway regarding our original concerns.

In Section 1.1, we identified the theme of our investigation—things that happen—and raised questions regarding the very intelligibility of this category as a category of thing. What we want to understand is how things that happen are thingly to begin with, and how their way of being thingly is of a happening sort. We don't really understand either of these words yet—'thing' or 'happen.' Of course, we do understand them in the untrivial sense that we can use them in conversation—we can say that 'something happened,' then go on to say what that was, usually without confusing anyone. We are unable to articulate, however, the thingyness of what happens, or the happeningness of these things. We turned to propositions because this seemed to be where these things 'originate'; we are able to extract happening things from certain propositions which don't appear to mention them.

Adopting Davidson's model would only show us that verbal propositions do not in fact provide an inroad to our problem after all. If such propositions make existential claims about events, then they have little to tell us about the thingly nature of the events they are about, since this nature is presumed when we quantify over events. Assuming it is even coherent to say that an event 'exists,' saying so must be founded on our ability to recognize events in the world, and to refer to them as an 'it,' 'this,' 'that,' or 'what.' To serve as a truth-maker, an event must be identifiable as such. Davidsonian event semantics thus presumes the intelligibility of events as things. This is not in itself a mark against the semantics. We need not demand of a logical analysis that it also investigate the intelligibility of its basic components. We, however, do want to pursue this question, so an analysis that takes events for granted is of no use to us.

Nor is there much to gain, for our purposes, from Davidson's attempts to defend his treatment of events as constituting a "fundamental ontological category."⁴² His defenses concern the fitness of an ontology including events for a variety of explanatory purposes: making sense of causal relations, for example,⁴³ or of our claims about things that recur.⁴⁴ The disputed question is whether we should count events as basic 'things' along with the other objects of the world. This is not yet an inquiry into the availability of these things as intelligible, describable objects. To ask the latter question is to inquire into the very appearance of events—or rather things that happen—in our experience and in our thoughts. Asking that sort of question is the task of phenomenology.

We have yet to introduce this approach, but it is worth noting that a similar point has been made by the phenomenologist Claude Romano. Criticizing authors like Davidson who are engaged in a "logico-semantic" debate about events, he writes:

[T]he crucial point for them is the question of whether events can be considered "entities" in their own right, on which a quantification can be performed and which would consequently belong to the minimal "ontology" that is needed by a coherent semantics—to what Russell terms "the fundamental furniture of the world." Thus it is in a completely naïve manner that the logico-semantic debate is engaged with the question of whether events should be admitted to the status of "entities" listed in an "ontology," for in this debate both these latter notions remain entirely indeterminate. Further insights: that events do not have the same status as beings at all (or at least, as a logician's "entities," which belong to a formal ontology), that the mode of phenomenality of events differs entirely from that of beings... all this is apparent only to a *phenomenology* that, beginning from "things" as they give themselves, enquires into the mode of appearing of events as such.⁴⁵

Romano's disparaging remarks are perhaps a bit over-the-top; we need not agree, for example, that a semantic approach has nothing of value to say about the 'status as beings' of events. Moreover, we will not, in the current study, follow Romano in targeting 'events' as a ready-made category open to phenomenological inquiry.⁴⁶ We will be looking, instead, at things that happen insofar as these are expressed in judgments of a certain kind. Nonetheless, Romano's comments do neatly articulate the basic concerns that will orient our phenomenological approach. We are

⁴²"The Individuation of Events," 180.

⁴³ See "Causal Relations."

⁴⁴ See "Events as Particulars."

⁴⁵ Claude Romano, *Event and World*, trans. Shane Mackinlay, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 24.

⁴⁶ Moreover, Romano's focus is not on events in the general sense of "anything that happens," but on those events of which we ourselves are the subjects, and particularly crisis of the "existential" sort. He relegates mundane, impersonal events to a category of what he labels "innerworldly facts." *Ibid.*, 23 ff.

not asking about the pros and cons of including things that happen in a basic ontology, nor are we examining these supposed things in order to identify the specific predicates that apply to them, through which they are characterized and distinguished. Rather, we want to understand their ‘mode of appearing,’ i.e. the way in which they are given to us as objects of thought and experience. This requires a phenomenological approach.

1.3.2 Bennett and Kim: Events as property exemplification

Before turning to Husserl and the theory of judgment which will guide our analyses, we need to consider the ‘property exemplification’ approach to events, since it, like Davidson’s model, considers events in their relation to propositional structures. Jonathan Bennett and Jaegwon Kim are its two principle defendants. While it is a matter of debate to what degree their views are in conflict with Davidson’s—Kim considers the models potentially compatible,⁴⁷ whereas Bennett rejects the Davidsonian approach⁴⁸—neither requires the other. We can therefore treat the property exemplification model as an alternative conception. Our examination of it will, however, be briefer than our critique of Davidsons’ proposal, both because it is somewhat less problematic, and because the central problem with it will be more fully addressed in Chapter 4.

Verbs as Predicates

In the context of our interests, the crucial feature of the property exemplification (hereafter ‘PE’) account is how it interprets verbal propositions. In the PE theory, the verbs in verbal propositions are predicates which name properties, and they are predicates in the traditional sense (unlike Davidson’s predicates have hidden event arguments). It is important to note, however, that, unlike Davidson’s theory, the PE theory is not primarily a semantic theory about sentences describing events, but rather a metaphysical theory about the nature of events themselves. While Davidson offers a semantic analysis which leads him to make ontological and metaphysical recommendations, Kim and Bennett propose a metaphysics of events which in turn motivates a suitable semantics.⁴⁹

The basic premise of a PE event metaphysics is, as one would expect, that an event is the exemplification of a property. Kim and Bennett differ somewhat in their conception of what

⁴⁷ Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications," 164-67.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, 165-87.

⁴⁹ On this point, see Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications," 163-64.

property exemplification involves. For Kim, the relevant properties are exemplified by substances at a time. The simplest cases will involve just one object. In such cases, the following “existence condition” would hold:

Event $[x, P, t]$ exists just in case the substance x has the property P at time t .⁵⁰

Thus the event of Socrates drinking hemlock is the exemplification, by Socrates, of the property of drinking hemlock at time t , and would be rendered $[\text{Socrates, drinks hemlock, } t]$.⁵¹ More complex events might involve multiple objects, exemplifying one polyadic property.

Accordingly:

Event $[x_1, \dots, x_n, P^n, t]$ exists just in case the n -tuple of substances (x_1, \dots, x_n) have the n -adic property P at time t .⁵²

Thus the event of Brutus stabbing Caesar is represented as $[(\text{Brutus, Caesar}), \text{stabs, } t]$.⁵³ Bennett adopts a similar model, but calls exemplification “instantiation,” and drops the requirement that properties be instantiated by a substance. They are rather, he proposes, instantiated in a spatiotemporal “zone,” which “will often be delimited by a substance and a time, but perhaps not always.”⁵⁴ (He may have in mind events like ‘flashes,’ which occur in a spatiotemporal zone, but are not the property of an object.) Bennett also suggests the term ‘trope,’ as a shorthand for ‘property instance.’⁵⁵

In the PE account, then, events have a structure which is proposition-like. “Events,” Kim writes, “turn out to be complexes of objects and properties, and also time points and segments, and they have something like a propositional structure; the event that consists in the exemplification of property P by an object x at time t bears a structural similarity to the sentence “ x has P at t .”⁵⁶ Accordingly, he argues that his notation for expressing events, can be thought of “linguistically... as the gerundive nominalization of the sentences ‘ (x_n) has P at t .’” Thus $[\text{Socrates, drinks hemlock, } t]$ can be read, Kim suggests, as “Socrates’ drinking hemlock at t .”⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Ibid., 160.

⁵¹ “Causation, Nomic Subsumption, and the Concept of Event,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 70, no. 8 (1973): 223. Kim’s notation is slightly different in this earlier paper; I have modified it throughout this section to match the version presented in “Events as Property Exemplifications.”

⁵² “Causation, Nomic Subsumption, and the Concept of Event,” 223. Notation updated as in fn.51.

⁵³ Ibid., 224.

⁵⁴ Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, 88.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 90. See also “What Events Are,” in *Events*, ed. Roberto Casati and Achille C. Varzi (Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt.: Dartmouth, 1996), 140.

⁵⁶ Kim, “Causation, Nomic Subsumption, and the Concept of Event,” 222.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Notice, however, that “Socrates’ drinking hemlock” is not, “linguistically” speaking, a gerundial modification of (32), as Kim’s analysis suggests, but rather of (33):

■ Socrates has the property of drinking hemlock

■ Socrates drinks hemlock

Implicit in Kim’s analysis, then, is the idea that verbal propositions like (33) are really just another way of saying (32). The verb phrase ‘drinks hemlock’ indicates a property that Socrates ‘has.’ Verb phrases, then, are predicates that name properties exemplified by subjects. He allows that an event may not be constituted by any arbitrary property; we need to determine which property instantiations count as events. (He suggests, however, that this is the job of a scientific theory.)⁵⁸ At the same time, he is willing to accept a wide range of property exemplifications into the event category, including unchanging ‘states.’⁵⁹

Bennett, we should note, is critical of Kim’s habit of using gerundial phrases to signify events.⁶⁰ He thinks this can lead to confusion because, while gerundials can sometimes be used to name events, they are more likely to operate as what Bennett calls “imperfect” nominals, naming facts rather than events. These contrast with “perfect” nominals which do name events. Compare, for example, (34) and (35):⁶¹

■ Quisling’s betrayal of Norway

■ Quisling’s betraying Norway

Bennett identifies a number of grammatical discrepancies between the ‘perfect’ nominal in (34) and the ‘imperfect’ gerundial nominal in (35). The perfect nominal can be pluralized, for example, whereas the imperfect nominal cannot. More important are the semantic differences. If we say ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway surprised us,’ this can mean a number of things; we may have been surprised that he betrayed Norway, but we may also have been surprised that he did so at a certain time, or in a certain way. On the other hand, ‘Quisling’s betraying Norway surprised us’ lacks this flexibility. It can only mean we were surprised that he did so.⁶² To mean something else, with an imperfect nominal, we must actually say something else, such as ‘Quisling’s betraying Norway in April surprised us.’

⁵⁸ “Events as Property Exemplifications,” 162.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 159-60.

⁶⁰ See Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, 73-87. For a more concise treatment, see “What Events Are,” 140-44.

⁶¹ The examples are Bennett’s. See *Events and Their Names*, 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5-6. Bennett notes that we can get a perfect nominal out of the gerund “betraying,” but that it (predictably) displays a different syntax: “Quisling’s betraying of Norway.”

Imperfect nominals are ‘fine grained’ in this way, Bennett argues, because they name facts. The fact that Quisling betrayed Norway in April is different from the fact that he betrayed Norway. Perfect nominals are not fine-grained, because they name events, which can be described in various ways. ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway in April’ can name the same event as ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway.’

One might think that, in distinguishing events from facts, Bennett is distancing himself from the PE model. The event named by ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway in April’ cannot, on Bennett’s account, be Quisling’s exemplification of the property expressed by ‘betraying Norway in April.’ If it were, it would be a different event than the one named by ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway,’ which involves slightly different (less specific) property. Bennett maintains, however, that we can treat these as names for the same event, while also holding on to the PE model.

His solution is rather inventive. He proposes that events really are facts, but that event nominals like ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway’ do not express these facts. Rather, they express a ‘smaller’ fact which is included in the global fact which the event actually is. ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway’ names an event, and this event is a fact, namely the fact that Quisling instantiated some property P. The phrase ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway’ however, does not express this fact, because ‘betrayal of Norway’ does not name the property P which constitutes the event. Rather, it names a less complex property P*, which is included in P.⁶³ Thus ‘Quisling’s betrayal’ could also name this same event, as could ‘Quisling’s betrayal of Norway in April,’ ‘Quisling’s coup d’état,’ or ‘Quisling’s collaboration with the Nazis.’ All of these expressions, Bennett would argue, name facts which are included in some more complex fact P, which, while perhaps indeterminable in its entirety, is vaguely understood to constitute the event under consideration.

Thus while Bennett departs somewhat from Kim’s simpler analysis, Bennett still sees events as proposition-like structures. The property P that constitutes an event may never be expressly named by a predicate, but it is nonetheless a property which a substance (or zone) ‘has.’ The basic structure of an event is, for Bennett as for Kim, the substance-property relation.

Adopting the PE model entails, accordingly, treating verbs as predicates that attribute properties to objects or zones. The attributed properties either constitute the event itself (Kim) or

⁶³ See *ibid.*, 128-34.

name some facet of the event (Bennett). Either way, a verbal proposition, with a subject and a verb, is interpreted as the attribution of a property, named by the verb, to a substrate. Verbal propositions are, in the PE account, structurally identical to copular constructions which also attribute properties to objects.

Problems with the PE model

A PE approach to verbal propositions is, in the main, less problematic than the Davidsonian approach. The former does not, like the latter, propose a logical structure for verbal propositions that is radically different from their surface appearance. Nor does it entail that, when we assert propositions of this kind, we are covertly making existential claims about events—that we constantly think of them as entities we can subsume under different descriptions. Bennett himself finds this idea particularly implausible. Davidson’s theory, he complains, “when understood as a psychological and not merely a logical theory, [implies] that ordinary speakers and thinkers are quantifying over events much of the time—it treats an enormous amount of what we say as covertly asserting that there are events of various kinds—and that is a point in its disfavor.”⁶⁴

The PE approach instead takes verbal propositions to be straightforwardly predicative structures. They are about ‘things’ called events, not because they surreptitiously mention events, but because events themselves are proposition-like structures. A verbal proposition says of an object or zone that it has a certain property, while an event is an object or zone’s ‘having’ this property. As we will see in the following chapters, Husserl’s analysis of predication paints a similar picture: predicative judgments attribute properties to objects, and thereby express ‘states of affairs’ which are the having, by objects, of these properties. Husserl does provide us with something the PE model does not—namely, an account of how states of affairs attain the status of cognitive objects in their own right. Bennett and Kim seem to take for granted that such entities as ‘property exemplifications’ are cognitively available to us. In principle, however, the PE approach is compatible with Husserl’s account of predication, pending phenomenological enrichment.

The main problem with the PE model is that it presumes, uncritically, that the subject-verb relation corresponds to the substrate-property relation. Just as a copular proposition like ‘Socrates was smart’ says that the substrate ‘Socrates’ had the property named by the adjective

⁶⁴ Ibid., 173.

‘smart,’ a verbal proposition like ‘Socrates spoke’ says, according to the PE view, that the substrate ‘Socrates’ had the property named by the verb ‘spoke.’ We would of course have to explain why certain property-havings constitute things that happen, while others don’t. We would do this, however, by identifying the ‘right’ kinds of properties—causal properties, perhaps⁶⁵—or by suggesting that it is not just property-havings that count, but property-changes, where objects move from having one property to having another.⁶⁶ This would in no way alter the basic picture, in which a verb assigns a property (or properties) to a subject, and in which happening is a type of property-having.

We are not yet in a position to critically evaluate this picture. What I can do here, however, is briefly clarify why—and in what sense—I think we should treat the function of verbs as an open question. We first need to disentangle the question of whether verbs express properties from the relatively uncontroversial claim that they are ‘predicates’ in the broadest sense of this term. In the sense introduced by Aristotle, a sentential predicate is the word or phrase that tells us what the sentence is affirming (or denying) regarding the subject. A sentence is ‘about’ a subject, and the predicate tells us what is being said about it.⁶⁷ If we understand predicates this way, we can of course include verbs, unproblematically, in the predicate category. To say ‘John ran’ or ‘the apple fell’ is to say something about John and about the ball; what we are saying about them is what is expressed by the verb. Indeed, ‘predicate’ can be understood to refer to everything in a sentence excluding the subject nominal. Thus in a more complex sentence like ‘John gave his mother a bowl made in Belgium,’ we can isolate ‘gave his mother a bowl made in Belgium’ as the predicate. We can similarly identify the predicates in ‘John is an astronaut of the highest rank’ or ‘John is under the tarp that was strung up by his assistants.’

Verbal propositions, then, are indeed ‘predicative’ in the sense that they say something about their subject. But this tells us very little. It is not self-evident that sentential ‘aboutness’ always involves the attribution of a property to a sentential subject.⁶⁸ It is not even obviously the case that all propositions are best interpreted as saying something ‘about’ their sentential subject. If I say, for example, ‘I finished the homework,’ is this sentence about me, or about my homework? How it is interpreted will depend on the context—on whether, for example, I was

⁶⁵ For a brief discussion see Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications," 162.

⁶⁶ See below, chapter 4, section 4.1.3 for a discussion of this view.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, "De Interpretatione," in *Categories and De Interpretatione* (Oxford,: Clarendon Press, 1963), 17a8-26.

⁶⁸ For a helpful overview of approaches to “aboutness” in the philosophy of language, see Rothstein, *Predicates and Their Subjects*, 1-18.

asked about myself, or about the homework. Does it attribute a property to a subject in each case? Does my homework have the property that I finished it? This sounds odd enough to require further justification, if we are going to talk this way. Now, we can posit that ‘finish’ is a dyadic predicate that takes two arguments, and thus that it is said ‘about’ both arguments. All this means, however, is that what we are saying pertains to both me and the homework. We can’t yet say that ‘finishing’ is a property both me and my homework have, or that we somehow have together, until we determine what we mean by ‘having a property.’

We can of course stipulate that the substrate-property relation is just the ‘aboutness’ relation; whenever I say anything about something, I am attributing a property to that something. This would, however, be imprudent. We certainly want to be able to consider the many ways we can say things about things, and we may find it useful to make a distinction between property attribution and other kinds of ‘aboutness.’ Our intuitions, at least, suggest we should think in this direction. For while ‘Socrates was smart’ does, intuitively, name a property Socrates had, our intuitions are less clear when it comes to ‘Socrates spoke,’ or even ‘Socrates was a man.’ We may ultimately decide that these are all cases of property attribution, but we should treat this as a hypothesis to be confirmed, rather than a theory we are ready to deploy.

I suggest, however, that we instead adopt the hypothesis that copular propositions generally ascribe properties to objects, but that verbal judgments—while predicative in the more general sense—generally do not. To confirm this hypothesis, we will need to specify what is essential to the subject-property relation, and see whether it is lacking in verbal propositions. This task will be taken up in Chapter 4. I should note here, however, that I will not be using the term ‘predicative’ in the broad sense I have just outlined above. Since we will be relying heavily on Husserl’s theory of judgment, I will follow him in using the term to refer more narrowly to copular judgments of the form ‘*S is p.*’

1.4 The Phenomenological Approach: Some Basic Concepts

While the Davidsonian and the PE view of verbal propositions are widely divergent in both their starting points and conclusions, they do have something crucial in common. Or rather, there is something they both lack. Both approaches assign meanings to verbal propositions—whether quantificational, or property-attributive—without inquiring into the cognitive activity through

which these propositions are asserted and confirmed. They treat propositions as isolated structures that ‘describe’ reality, and thus whose truth or falsity depends on the state of this reality, to which they may or may not correspond. In Davidson’s model, a verbal proposition claims the existence of an event that matches a description; it is true if such an event actually exists.⁶⁹ In the PE model, a verbal proposition claims that a certain property belongs to a certain substrate; it is true if that substrate does, indeed, possess that property.⁷⁰ In each case, the thinking, living subject who is doing the asserting and confirming is, on the whole, left out of the picture. Sentences and reality are correlated in abstraction from the cognitive activities in which propositions are formed, reality is encountered, and the former are found to be confirmed by the latter.

The risks of ignoring the living subject are most evident, as we saw, in Davidson’s model. It proposes a logical form in order to solve semantic problems without considering whether this form is true to our own experience of proposition-making. It thereby suggests that our ‘action’ judgments universally involve a certain kind of thinking about actions, when it seems we should rather treat this kind of thinking as a special case. Yet while Bennett himself identifies this problem, as we saw, his own positive proposals are not significantly informed by reflections on our cognitive activities (at least not explicitly), and these are absent from Kim’s analyses as well. In particular, the PE approach assumes a property-attribution model of verbal propositions without asking whether this model accords with our cognitive experience. Moreover, just as Davidson does not illuminate the manner in which events are available to us as objects of experience and thought, the PE approach leaves unexamined the intelligibility of property exemplifications as discrete objects of reference. Both approaches, in sum, presume activities of proposition-formation and object-recognition that remain unexamined, let alone confirmed.

⁶⁹ This is of course of a piece with the truth-functional approach to natural language semantics which Davidson himself developed, building on Tarskian truth semantics. This approach proposes that we know what a sentence means when we know the conditions under which it is true. See for example Donald Davidson, "Truth and Meaning," *Synthese* 17, no. 3 (1967).

⁷⁰ Since Kim and Bennett are focused on events as such (understood as property exemplifications), rather than on verbal propositions, it is hard to find passages where they are directly addressing the truth conditions of such propositions. However, it is quite clear that Bennett, at least, adopts the truth-functional approach to sentence meaning. We see this, for example, when he characterizes sentences that contain event names in them, like “the quarrel.” A sentence like “We had a quarrel last night” is true, for Bennett, if a quarrel existed, and it was last night. He formalizes these truth conditions as follows, where [N] is an event name (e.g. “quarrel”) and “F” is a property of the event: “Now, for ‘[N] is F’ to be true, [N] must exist, and it must be F.” Bennett, *Events and Their Names*, 126. I take Kim to assume a similar stance, but I have no comparable passage to point to.

To fill this methodological void, we turn to phenomenology. In particular, we look to Husserl's career-long efforts to articulate a phenomenological account of our proposition-making and -confirming activities. These activities are considered by Husserl under the banner of his theory of 'judgment.' With this term—'judgment'—Husserl means to include not just the sentential structures through which judgments are expressed, but more fundamentally the very acts of judging in which we grasp some feature of the world as being a certain way, and express our belief in propositional form. The semantic models we have examined so far take for granted that we can formulate sentential structures which express features of our world. For Husserl, this cognitive activity becomes an object of philosophical inquiry. His aim is to catch judgment 'in the act,' so to speak, in order to thereby illuminate the true nature of judgments as possible accomplishments of a living consciousness. For this task, every aspect of our judicative experience is in principle relevant.

The details of Husserl's analyses will unfold gradually over the course of the following chapters. Here I'd like to just indicate the basic, distinguishing features of the phenomenological approach to judgment. I will not attempt a general introduction to Husserlian phenomenology. This would be tedious both to readers already familiar with Husserl's philosophy, and to those without an interest in his larger project. Thus, for example, I will not rehearse the nature of 'phenomenological reduction,' or the distinction between 'noesis' and 'noema.' We will look at some basic phenomenological concepts, but only insofar as they are directly pertinent to Husserl's theory of judgment as I will be articulating it in later chapters.

1.4.1 Copular judgments and the 'genealogy of logic'

It should first be noted that Husserl situates his theory of judgment within the project of elucidating a "genealogy of logic."⁷¹ The basic components of logical theorizing—concepts like 'subject,' 'predicate,' 'judgment,' and 'truth'—have been deployed by logicians, Husserl argues, without clarity regarding the original "sources" of these concepts. The same is to be said for the ideal laws of pure logic, governing entailment and contradiction. The validity of these laws is, of course, without question for Husserl. What is missing from the logical tradition is an

⁷¹ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 11.

investigation into the origin of these abstract laws in the concrete experience of judging.⁷² The task of phenomenology, Husserl argues—insofar as it pertains to logic—is “to bring the Ideas of logic, the logical concepts and laws, to epistemological clarity and definiteness.”⁷³ These concepts are abstractions, and it is the job of phenomenology to trace these abstractions back to their roots in cognition, which is always the activity of a living subject.

Part of this project—a considerable part of it, in fact—involves clarifying the sense of the subject-predicate relation in the basic copular judgment, *S is p*. This judgment form, Husserl indicates, “stands at the center of formal logic as it has developed historically.”⁷⁴ The judgment as a ‘unit,’ and the copular relation of subject and predicate, are both taken as a given by the logical tradition. Neither the unity of the judgment, however, nor the true nature of the subject-predicate relation surfaces as a theme of investigation.⁷⁵ Husserl’s theory of judgment is thus, at its core, an attempt to articulate the essential nature of the copular judgment—to show, through a phenomenological analysis, what a copular judgment ‘does.’

We can already see, then, that Husserl’s analyses will be of limited use to us if it turns out (as it will) that copular judgments are of an essentially different kind than the judgments we use to express what happens. Husserl himself notes that the applicability of the copular form to these latter types of judgment remains, as far as he is concerned, an undecided question:

Since Aristotle, it has been held as certain that the basic schema of judgment is the *copulative* judgment, which is reducible to the basic form *S is p*. Every judgment having another composition, e.g. the form of a verbal proposition, can according to this interpretation, be transformed without alteration of its logical sense into the form of the copulative bond; for example, ‘The man walks’ [*der Mensch geht*] is logically equivalent to ‘The man is walking’ [*der Mensch ist gehend*]... Thus, we require an exact understanding of what is involved in this copulative bond, of the nature and origin of the copulative predicative judgment, before we can take a position regarding the question of whether in fact this convertibility is justified and whether the difference between the judgments is merely one of a difference of linguistic form, which does not refer to a difference of the logical achievement of sense.⁷⁶

⁷² See for example *Urteilstheorie : Vorlesung 1905*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 64. “[I]n diesen Erlebnissen, die der Phänomenologe auch in sich finden kann und findet, muss dann das phänomenologische Wesen des Urteils gesucht und bestimmt werden.” See also *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, (The Hague, : Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 46.

⁷³ *Logical Investigations*, 1:168.

⁷⁴ *Experience and Judgment*, 11.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 15. Note that “Der Mensch ist gehend” is not strictly equivalent to “The man is walking.” The German “gehend” functions as an adjective, meaning roughly “in the state of walking.” The German construction is thus

Husserl never, to my knowledge, returns to this question in any of his published works, nor have I uncovered any manuscripts which address it. It is a testament to his judiciousness, however, that he does not simply assume that these judgment forms are necessarily equivalent, leaving open the possibility that the verbal form is a distinct one.

The present work is, to a large degree, an attempt to follow through with Husserl's suggestion. We will consider, in Chapter 3, just 'what is involved' in copular judgments, in order to then assess, in Chapter 4, whether something similar is involved in verbal judgments. There we will see that there are, indeed, significant differences between the two forms. We can reach this conclusion only by engaging in the kind of analyses Husserl proposed, elucidating the nature of our judicative activity rather than accepting, uncritically, the logical forms handed down by the tradition.

1.4.2 Evidence as 'truth condition'

A judgment, as I have indicated, is for Husserl more than just a sentence. It is considered as a sentence, according to Husserl, by the naïve "logician," i.e. a typical practitioner of logic in the traditional sense. This logician takes for granted that there are sentences, and is primarily concerned with articulating the laws governing sentence structure and the validity of argument-forms, what Husserl calls "analytic logic," "consequence logic," or the "logic of non-contradiction."⁷⁷ The logician can only undertake this work, however, because she already understands—before thinking as a logician—the essential function of sentences as units of knowledge. "Cognition," Husserl declares, "with its 'logical' procedures, has always already done its work whenever we reflect logically; we have already passed judgments, formed concepts, drawn conclusions, which henceforth form part of our store of knowledge and as such are at our disposal.... The judgments whose form [the logician] examines appear as alleged cognitions."⁷⁸ The logician can study the forms of valid arguments only because she already understands that sentences themselves 'aspire,' so to speak, to this validity.

clearly a copular construction, with copular "is" linking a predicate to a subject. The English construction, on the other hand, is in the progressive tense. See above, Chapter 1, fn.11. German does not have a progressive verb tense. For a technical discussion of progressive constructions in German, see Michael Barrie and Bettina Spreng, "Noun Incorporation and the Progressive in German," *Lingua* 119, no. 2 (2009).

⁷⁷ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 291.

⁷⁸ *Experience and Judgment*, 16.

We understand any arbitrary, well-formed sentence as a potential truth claim. Its intelligibility as such, however, is not just a function of its well-formedness. More fundamentally, such a sentence appears as an ‘alleged cognition’; it is a claim that we, as cognizing subjects, could in principle assert believably. Sentences don’t say things; we say things with sentences. And we don’t just say things—we say what we have found to be true. Sentences express knowledge, or at least what we believe to be knowledge. We can of course lie, or tell stories, but in so doing we exploit the essential function of sentences as expressive of truth.

All of this, according to Husserl, is presumed by the traditional ‘logician,’ who is not interested in truth-telling as such but in the types of sentence forms and syllogisms.⁷⁹ Yet this need not be the last word on the scope of logical inquiry. Rather than restrict ourselves to the articulation of valid judgment- and argument-forms, we can make validity itself—i.e. the truth-expressing potential of judgments—a philosophical concern in its own right. We do so not simply out of curiosity, but because logic itself invites such an expansion, insofar as validity is its main currency. We want to understand more than just the conditions governing well-formedness and logical entailment. Beyond these conditions, or rather beneath them, are the conditions governing the validity of judgments themselves. Any arbitrary judgment has the status of an alleged cognition—of alleged knowledge—and this means that there are conditions under which it would count for us as an actual cognition, i.e. as knowledge. Husserl invites us to investigate these conditions.

To do this—to investigate the conditions under which judgments count as knowledge—is not to specify objective ‘truth conditions,’ as conceived by the models discussed above. For Davidson and the like, truth conditions are facts which decide the truth or falsity of sentences. ‘Socrates is wise’ is a true sentence if and only if Socrates is, in fact, wise.⁸⁰ Husserl is not asking ‘What does the world have to be like for sentence *S* to be true?’ His question is, rather, ‘What is it like for me to affirm *S*?’ The ‘conditions’ he has in mind are subjective ones. There are judgments I take to be true, others I take to be false, others I am unsure about. In each case,

⁷⁹ See e.g. *Urteilstheorie*, 14. “Wenn nun gleichwohl auch in der reinen Logik von Urteilen und somit von Urteilstheorien gesprochen werden kann, so liegt dies daran, dass der im Wesentlichen von Bolzano eingeführte Begriff des logischen ‘Satzes’ in der Regel nicht klar geschieden wird von dem Begriff des Urteils und dass der Terminus Urteil in der philosophischen Literatur auch verwendet wird, wo in Wahrheit nicht von den psychischen Erlebnissen, sondern jenen idealen Einheiten die Rede ist.”

⁸⁰ See e.g. Davidson, “Truth and Meaning.”

the judgment ‘appears’ to me in a certain way—as true, false, or uncertain. But what is it to ‘see’ a judgment as true? Husserl expresses this question in terms of ‘evidence,’ understood as the experience in which a judgment is confirmed: “Here the act of judgment *qua* subjective activity comes into question, and with it the subjective processes in which formations, as they appear, manifest themselves, sometimes as evident, sometimes as not evident.”⁸¹

We must not here think of ‘evidence’ in the deductive sense, for which evidence is whatever gives us ‘reasons’ to believe something to be true. For example, I might find that a bag of rice in my cupboard has a hole in it, and take this as evidence that there is a mouse in my apartment. My observation lends support to a belief. It does not, however, directly confirm it. The true confirmation of the judgment, ‘There is a mouse in my apartment’ is the observation of a mouse in my apartment. It is then that my judgment becomes not just plausible, but true. When Husserl speaks of ‘evident’ judgments he primarily means this kind of direct confirmation, in which what we observe is precisely what the judgment claims.⁸² To stress this stronger sense of ‘evidence,’ the translators of *Experience and Judgment* render “Evidenz” as “self-evidence.”

The experience of such self-evidence is not restricted to the confirmation of judgments. To directly perceive an object, for example, without making a judgment about it, is for it to be “self-evidently given.”⁸³ Self-evidence is simply the experience in which something is ‘given’ as itself, as opposed to being ‘merely’ imagined, remembered, or linguistically indicated:

To speak of self-evidence, of self-evident givenness, then, here signifies nothing other than *self-givenness*, the way in which an object in its givenness can be characterized relative to consciousness as “itself-there,” “there in the flesh,” in contrast to its mere presentification, the empty, merely indicative idea of it. For example, an object of external perception is given as self-evident, as “it itself,” precisely in *actual* perception, in contrast to the simple presentification of it in memory or imagination, etc.⁸⁴

Self-evident judgments, in fact, require the self-evidence of the objects with which they are concerned.⁸⁵ To see that the mouse is in my apartment, I need to see the mouse. (This is true, Husserl argues, not just of judgments concerning perceptual objects, but of any judgment

⁸¹ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 17.

⁸² Husserl does allow that judgments affirmed through deduction also have a kind of “evidence,” but he calls these “mediate” judgments, as opposed to “immediate” ones. See *ibid.*, 24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

whatever, including those regarding ideal objects and even the judgments of “the logician himself,” regarding truths of logic.⁸⁶)

Thus the philosophical elucidation of the self-evidence of judgments ultimately requires, if it is to be complete, the elucidation of the self-evidence of their objects. The givenness of objects is not, however, simply a prerequisite for the possibility of evident judging, as if judgments needed a supply of pre-given objects in order to then go about their judicative business. The very possibility of judgment, rather, must be prefigured in the way objects are given. Objects must be given to us in such a way that they yield to judgments:

If thought, insofar as it is an activity of judgment, really leads to its goal—to *knowledge* (i.e., if the judgments are to be *self-evident* judgments)—then it is not sufficient that, in some way, some objects or other are given in advance and that the act of judgment is directed toward them, thereby merely satisfying rules and principles which are prescribed with respect to their *form* by logic. Rather the success of the cognitive performance also makes demands on the modes of pre-givenness of the objects themselves, relative to their *content*. On their part, these objects must also be so pre-given that their givenness itself makes knowledge, i.e. self-evident judgment, possible.⁸⁷

In other words, for our judgments to be self-evident ones, it is not enough that the objects which they are about be evident as well. Our experience of these objects must be such that it can serve as a confirmation of the judgment. The objects must show themselves to be just as the judgments say they are. For the claim ‘a mouse is in my apartment’ to count as knowledge I possess, it is not enough that I see a mouse while in my apartment. I must see *that* the mouse is in my apartment. To know that the mouse is white, I must not only see the mouse, and see whiteness, but *see* that the mouse is white. Objects are not just given, they are given—or can be given—as judicatively determined. Using the language of the PE model, we could say that objects are given as ‘property-exemplifying.’

Thus the question of evidence—of how judgments can be valid—becomes the question of how we can ‘see’ judicative structures in the world. This is arguably the central question of Husserl’s theory of judgment. We will look at his answer to it in Chapter 3, basing our discussion on Husserl’s mature analyses in *Experience and Judgment*. The question first arose, however, in the *Logical Investigations*. It is here that Husserl introduces the term ‘categorical intuition,’ which in this early text refers to this judicative ‘seeing’ through which judgments can

⁸⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 19.

be made evident. I will be avoiding this term, for the most part, as Husserl himself leaves it aside in later work, and because I don't find it particularly helpful. However, it is in the discussion of categorical intuition that Husserl frames the question of evidence using his notions of 'intention' and 'fulfillment.' These will be key concepts as we move forward, so it is worth looking briefly at the *Logical Investigations* in order to familiarize ourselves with them.

1.4.3 Meaning-intentions and meaning-fulfillments

Husserl deploys the paired concepts 'intention' and 'fulfillment' in virtually every sphere of his wide-ranging phenomenological investigations. In each, they have a slightly different meaning, while still maintaining their basic, interdependent sense, in which intentions are satisfied by fulfillments. Generally speaking an intention is a mental 'act' which "points to corresponding fulfillments."⁸⁸ This 'act' is not to be understood as an 'activity,' but rather as the achievement of a kind of mental directedness. Thus, for example, Husserl can say that when one hears a familiar melody, "it stirs up definite intentions which find their fulfilment [sic] in the melody's gradual unfolding."⁸⁹ This does not mean that an intention is (always) a conscious anticipation of something about to arrive. If, for example, I see a patterned rug that is partly covered by furniture, "we feel," Husserl writes, "as if the lines and coloured shapes go on 'in the sense' of what we see—but we expect nothing."⁹⁰ We can still, however, characterize my grasp of the continuing pattern as a sort of tacit anticipation of what I would see if the view were clear. That I do have this intention is evident, for if the furniture were removed and I saw that the hidden pattern was, in fact, a different one, I would be surprised.

All of perception is, in fact, a mix of fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions. I see an object only from one side, but intend an entire object. "Only in this way," Husserl writes, "can we understand how consciousness reaches out beyond what it actually experiences. It can so to say mean beyond itself, and its meaning can be fulfilled."⁹¹ Here 'meaning' is used in a loose sense; Husserl does not have in mind our expressive abilities, but rather our ability to imbue our immediate perceptions with intentions that anticipate what is 'missing'. That back side of an object is 'meant' in perception, without being seen.

⁸⁸ *Logical Investigations*, 2:102.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:210.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:211.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Beyond the sphere of perception, there are many other instances of the intention/fulfillment relation which are not yet ‘meaningful’ in the linguistic sense:

We have only to think of the opposition between wishful intention and wish-fulfillment, between voluntary intention and execution, of the fulfillment of hopes and fears, the resolution of doubts, the confirmation of surmises, etc., to be clear that essentially the same opposition is to be found in very different classes of intentional experiences: the opposition between significant [i.e. signifying] intention and fulfillment of meaning is merely a special case of it.⁹²

We cannot here evaluate whether it is ultimately coherent to group all of these aspects of lived experience under one roof.⁹³ We can see, however, how Husserl tries to display the basic intention/fulfillment relation as a dynamic one—intentions are ‘empty,’ i.e. lacking fulfillment, and are then fulfilled by a new ‘act’ in which the missing content appears.⁹⁴ How, then, does this dynamic work in the linguistic sphere? What are meaning-intentions and meaning-fulfillments?

What distinguishes this intention/fulfillment relation is that fulfillment has, in this case, the character of a ‘recognition’ or ‘identity.’ To fulfill a meaning intention is to recognize (or identify) what is directly intuited to be the ‘same’ as what is meant in an expression. Husserl uses these words—‘recognition’ and ‘identity’—more or less interchangeably, but also indicates that they have a slightly different connotation. He uses ‘recognition’ to characterize the fulfilling experience in what he calls a ‘static’ situation. In this case, intention does not precede fulfillment; rather, the two arise together in an “intentional unity.”⁹⁵ For example, I see a red object, and use the word ‘red’ to describe it. “[T]he name ‘red,’” writes Husserl, “calls the object red,” and this is equivalent to saying that “the red object is recognized (known) as red, and called ‘red’ as a result of this recognition.”⁹⁶ In contrast to this, we can imagine a dynamic situation, in which something is first signified ‘emptily,’ before being fulfilled:

There we have a first state of mere thought (of pure conception as mere signification), a meaning intention wholly unsatisfied, to which a second stage of more or less adequate fulfillment is added, where thoughts repose as if satisfied at the sight of their object, which presents itself, *in virtue of* this consciousness of

⁹² Ibid., 2:210.

⁹³We can note, however, that Husserl does appear to indicate that the notion of “fulfillment” is originally understood emotionally (e.g. as the fulfillment of a desire), and that his extension of this term “beyond the sphere of emotional intentionality” is a “mere analogy.” Ibid., 2:217.

⁹⁴ Intentions can, of course, also be ‘disappointed’ to greater or lesser degrees.

⁹⁵ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:203.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

unity, as what is thought of in this thought, what it refers to, as the more or less perfectly attained goal of thinking.⁹⁷

This is what Husserl calls an “experience of identity” or “act of identification.”⁹⁸

An act of identification, however, is really just the same as an act of recognition, for in the static situation of recognition we still have a ‘unity’ of two acts—the act in which ‘red’ is meant, and the act in which red is intuited and recognized as such. The term ‘identity’ emphasizes, more than recognition, that there are two acts at play. To speak of identification is not, Husserl stresses, to imply a kind of comparison, some kind of “cogitatively mediated reflection.” Rather, identity “is there from the start as experience, as unexpressed, unconceptualized experience.”⁹⁹ It is the experience in which what is intuited is intuited as what is meant. Husserl sometimes calls this a ‘synthesis’ of intention and fulfillment, but to avoid confusion I will stay away from this term (except when quoting Husserl), since ‘synthesis’ has a completely different meaning for Husserl in the context of predication, as we will see later.

As a meaning-intention, ‘red’ does not, of course, intend some particular object, or even some particular color-quality, but rather corresponds to a broad range of possible intuitions. “To the word ‘red,’ e.g., corresponds the possibility of both knowing as, and calling ‘red’, all red objects that might be given in possible intuitions.”¹⁰⁰ When we use a proper name, on the other hand, our meaning-intention does correspond to the intuition of a particular person or thing. It, too, however, has a kind of “generality,” in that it can be fulfilled by a variety of different intuitions of the one same thing.¹⁰¹

Both kinds of meaning-intention, along with their corresponding fulfillments are examples what Husserl calls “objectifying acts.” Objectifying acts are those acts “whose syntheses of fulfillment have a character of identification.”¹⁰² The term simply names the class of experiences we have been describing, in which something is intuited as being the same as what is meant by an expression. These differ from, say, the intention/fulfillment relation in an unfolding melody. In this case, there is no expressed ‘meaning’ with which the anticipated notes are identified. An act of identification is also lacking in the fulfillment particular to wishes. A wish will of course involve a meaning-intention (the content of the wish), which is then fulfilled in an

⁹⁷ Ibid., 2:207.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2:204.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 2:205.

¹⁰² Ibid., 2:218.

identifying act (when the meant thing is intuited). Yet the “self-satisfaction of the specific-wish quality,” Husserl says “is a peculiar act-character of a different kind.” This is an emotional fulfillment, and it involves no identification. It is therefore not an objectifying act, even though it is “founded” on one.¹⁰³

Now, the ‘meanings’ we have discussed so far are those expressed by individual words; ‘red,’ for example, or a proper name. There are of course other words to consider—general nouns like ‘inkpot,’ demonstratives, etc. More important, however, is the question of complete statements. Words are not generally used in isolation, but appear as parts of judgments. These, too, have meanings which can be fulfilled or unfulfilled. “I *see* that the paper is white,” Husserl observes, “and express just this by saying: ‘This paper is white.’”¹⁰⁴ Statements, moreover, count as more than just one among many kinds of meaningful expressions. They are, as we have seen, the ‘store’ of knowledge. Judging is “an activity which is at the service of the striving for knowledge.”¹⁰⁵ The fulfillment of judicative intentions, then, is not just the identification of meaning and intuition; it is the ‘evidence’ through which the world is confirmed to be this way as opposed to that. “Knowledge,” Husserl writes, “always has the character of a fulfillment and an identification.”¹⁰⁶ To know that “this paper is white” is for this meaning-intention to have been fulfilled for me; I have seen precisely what it states.

As clear as it may be that our judicative meaning-intentions are fulfillable, it is not immediately obvious how they are to be fulfilled. What they intend cannot be ‘seen’ in the strictly perceptual sense. “I can see a colour,” Husserl notes, “but not *being*-coloured. I can feel smoothness, but not *being*-smooth. I can hear a sound, but not that something *is* sounding.”¹⁰⁷ I perceive an object, and I perceive smoothness, but their copulative connection is not something I perceive: “[A] meaning like that of the word ‘being’ can find no possible *objective* correlate, and so no possible fulfillment in the acts of such perception.”¹⁰⁸ Yet the copular structure, or rather what is meant by it, is in some way intuitable, since there is clearly a distinction to be made between judgments that are fulfilled and those that are not.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 2:217.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 2:272.

¹⁰⁵ *Experience and Judgment*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ *Logical Investigations*, 2:275.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2:277.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2:279.

There is, in other words, a categorial intuition, i.e. an intuition which fulfills judicatively structured meaning-intentions. “[T]here must,” as Husserl puts it, “at least be an act which renders identical services to the categorial elements of meaning that merely sensuous perception renders to the material elements.”¹⁰⁹ What categorial intuition ‘sees’ is an object’s being predicatively determined—its exemplification of a property— which Husserl calls a “state of affairs.” It sees, to borrow Sokolowski’s phrase, an “object inflected with syntax.”¹¹⁰ States of affairs are the true ‘objects’ of judicative acts; they are the intentional objects of complete judgments. Just as a sensible object is intuited in sense-perception, so is the state of affairs “perceived” in “the ‘becoming aware’ in which it is (more or less adequately) given.”¹¹¹

(As we will see in Chapter 3, however, the givenness of states of affairs, as elucidated in *Experience and Judgment*, is no passive matter. Compared to perception, which is “active” only in a limited sense—e.g. in the sense that I have perceptual interests which steer my attention—the fulfillments which “give” states of affairs, Husserl will argue, require a productive activity on the part of the cognizing subject. For this reason at least, I find the term ‘categorial intuition’ unhelpful, as it is hard to hear ‘intuition’ and interpret it as anything but receptive. I will refer instead to ‘judicative fulfillments,’ and the ‘experience’ or ‘givenness’ of a state of affairs, as these expressions will help us avoid, I think, an overly passive interpretation.)

The question of ‘evidence’ and the validity of judgments thus becomes, in the phenomenological framework, the problem of judicative fulfillment, in which the very structures that are expressed in judgments are given in experience. These are the “conditions” of truth—namely, the givenness of states of affairs.¹¹² How are predicative objectivities ‘given’? How do we ‘see’ the being-determined of a subject by a predicate?¹¹³ Husserl attempted to address these

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 2:280.

¹¹⁰ Robert Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things*, (Evanston, Ill.,: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 31.

¹¹¹ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:279.

¹¹² Rudolf Bernet also notes the distance between Husserl’s view and the idea that truth conditions are determined by the state of the world. As he puts it, “‘verification’ in the sense of the comparison of lingual assertions with the ‘actual’ constitution of the thing as it is ‘in itself’ cannot count for [Husserl] as a criterion of truth. Truth rather concerns the agreement among various intentional acts and their intentional objects. The phenomenological analysis of truth is especially dedicated to formulating the ideal conditions for the possibility of this agreement.” Rudolf Bernet, “Perception, Categorial Intuition and Truth in Husserl’s Sixth ‘Logical Investigation’,” in *The Collegium Phaenomenologicum : The First Ten Years* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 39-40.

¹¹³ See Husserl, *Urteilstheorie*, 74. “Wie steht das phänomenologische Datum, oder psychologisch gefasst, wie steht das psychisches Erlebnis des Bedeutens, des Vorstellens, des urteilenden Aussagens zu jenen idealen und objektiven Einheiten? Wie ist die Beziehung der Vorstellung auf den Gegenstand zu verstehen, die Beziehung des Urteils zum objektiven Sachverhalt? Wie kann der subjective Akt die Sachen treffen?”

questions in the *Logical Investigations*, but eventually repudiated his early approach. It will not concern us here, as it is indeed flawed, and therefore not worth (for our purposes) the effort we would expend in reconstructing it.¹¹⁴ Husserl's analyses in *Experience and Judgment* are much more careful and coherent; we will rely on these instead when we return to the question of judicative fulfillment.

We can at least begin to see, however, how we can use Husserl's framework to address our own questions regarding verbal judgments. These judgments, we have found, give us 'things' to which we can refer. We want to understand what manner of being these things are, and how it is that they become available to us as identifiable features of our world. We can now pose our questions in a phenomenological mode: What do verbal judgments intend? What objectivity do we experience when a verbal judgment is fulfilled? How is this objectivity 'given'? And is this the 'thing' that happens?

We can only answer these questions by looking carefully at judicative experience itself, in which propositions are formed, claimed, and confirmed. We do this without presupposing the availability of objects like 'events,' 'property exemplifications,' or 'states of affairs'—if they are given, we must account for their givenness. And we do so without presupposing that verbal judgments are property-attributing. This is something we can only evaluate once we have taken a look at the intention/fulfillment dynamic in both judgment forms, to see what is involved in them. This is strenuous work, but it will bear fruit.

¹¹⁴ See Husserl's foreword to the second edition of Investigation VI; *Logical Investigations*, 178. "...I do not approve of much that I then wrote, e.g. the doctrine of categorial representation." Husserl's problematic analyses, in which he ultimately argues that the "representing content" through which categorial intuition is possible is a "reflective" content, occur primarily at *ibid.*, 298-304. For an excellent discussion of the flaws in this analysis, see Dieter Lohmar, *Erfahrung und Kategoriales Denken : Hume, Kant und Husserl U ber Vorpra dikative Erfahrung und Pra dikative Erkenntnis*, (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 189-200.

2 How Judgments Make Things

In this chapter, we will see how Husserl's model can help us address the puzzle concerning pronominal reference which we observed in Chapter 1. How is it that, upon making a statement like 'I stubbed my toe,' we can then say something like 'I knew that would happen?' What is this pronoun referring to, if anything? Husserl poses a similar question, and answers it with an analysis of what he calls 'nominalization,' in which a judgment can itself become a term within another judgment. His theory will prove useful, but only with some important modifications.

We will not yet dig very deeply into the nature of judicative activity itself. Rather, we will for the most part be looking at judgments insofar as they have already been accomplished, and seeing how this accomplishment yields objects of reference. Along the way, however, we will acquire a general picture of the activity Husserl takes to be constitutive of judgments, namely the 'synthesis' in which a subject and predicate attain a special kind of relation. This synthetic activity yields a 'state of affairs,' which then can become, through nominalization, an object of reference. Examining the details of copular synthesis will be our task in Chapter 3, which will prepare us to inquire, in Chapter 4, into the judgment-forming activity peculiar to verbal judgments.

2.1 A Brief Recap

First, let us review our progress so far. In the last chapter, I presented the case for a phenomenological approach to events, arguing for a series of shifts away from what might be considered a more intuitive approach. First, I considered the seemingly obvious definition of events as 'things that happen,' and found this expression to operate in a curious ontological register. As a typological category it points us not to a class of entities within a broader range of entities whose intelligibility has already been secured, but rather to a fundamental mode of that very intelligibility, that is, to the very coherence of these things *as* things. It is with this thingyness that our investigation should be concerned, if it is to examine the true fundamentals of its subject matter.

Second, I argued that the linguistic focus of such an investigation is most properly verbal propositions that express ‘things that happen,’ rather than nominal expressions. Verbal propositions are the paradigmatic form through which our knowledge of what happens is expressed, and have the advantage, for our purposes, of avoiding a reification of events; verbal propositions in fact make the thingliness of what happens particularly conspicuous, since, with respect to grammatical form at least, this supposed ‘thing’ (the ‘what’ or the ‘that’) seems to vanish in verbal propositions, or to appear out of them without obvious origin. We also saw, by looking at examples of verbal propositions, that not all of them express events, bolstering the idea that it is happening, rather than events, with which we are interested.

After considering two non-phenomenological models for analyzing verbal propositions, we turned to Husserl’s theory of judgment. A phenomenological approach to propositions, we saw, does not take them exclusively, or even primarily, to be sentences with a certain grammatical and logical form, but rather to be the expressions of judgments. As judgments, propositions point us to an evidential experience through which they can be taken as valid. A discussion of the core concepts in Husserl’s approach clarified the task ahead: namely to articulate, or at least begin to articulate, the nature of the evidential experiences that fulfill verbal judgment intentions, and to see how these experiences constitute the appearance of *things*—the things that happen. Put more simply, we hope to clarify the thingliness of what happens through a phenomenological investigation of what is intended in verbal judgments.

2.2 States of Affairs and Nominalization

We are looking for the appearance of a ‘thing’ in the context of verbal judgments. Husserl’s theory of judgment offers just that— with respect to copular judgments. The key concept Husserl introduces in his analyses is that of a state of affairs (*Sachverhalt*). A state of affairs is, for Husserl, the intentional correlate of a judgment. It is the ‘thing’ that corresponds to the judgment-intention, and as such appears to be an analog to the things we are looking for—the things that happen. Moreover, Husserl’s early analyses in the *Logical Investigations* are to a large degree motivated by linguistic considerations which resemble our own. For example, Husserl is concerned with the pronominal reference that occurs in the second of the following sentences, which we will examine in more detail below:

■ Rain has set in. That will delight the farmers.

What, he asks, is ‘that’ referring to?¹ This question seems to parallel those we raised in Chapter 1, where we wondered how such pronominal reference could occur after verbal judgments with no obvious referent within them.

This apparent parallelism will turn out to be less than perfect, but it will nonetheless set us on the path to more fruitful insights. It is in Husserl’s analysis of the pronominal reference we see in (1)—a phenomenon he labels “nominalization” in the *Logical Investigations*—that we first catch sight of his notion of predicative synthesis; it is this notion of synthesis that we will want to deploy, in modified form, for our own purposes. The predicative synthesis is the “act” which, for Husserl, underlies all predicative judgments. (Recall that we are using this term in the narrow, copular sense.) It is, in a nutshell, the assignation of a determination (predicate) to a substrate (subject). This synthesis creates a new unity, the unity of a state of affairs. We only intend this state of affairs *as* such a unity, however, when we ‘nominalize’ it, that is, intend it as a singular objectivity. Thus the ‘that’ in (1) refers, not to an object that is somehow ‘hidden’ within the original judgment, ‘Rain has set in,’ but rather to the unity expressed by the entire judgment itself. Before nominalization, the predicative synthesis, while enacted and thus lived through, is not really an ‘object’ at all, although it can always potentially become one.

This process of nominalization will be outlined in detail in the first section of this chapter, through an exegesis of Husserl’s analyses in the *Logical Investigations*. When we attempt to apply Husserl’s analysis to our own problematic—the thingliness of what happens—we will encounter difficulties. The outcome of nominalization, we will see, is a fact; facts in turn, are different from the things that happen. In order to nonetheless make use of Husserl’s notion of predicative synthesis, we will have to turn in the second section to his more nuanced analyses in *Experience and Judgment*. There, with a bit of textual reconstruction, we find a distinction between, on the one hand, states of affairs as facts and, on the other, the states of affairs ‘themselves’—real, experienceable objectivities. The latter, we will see, are the result of the very same predicative syntheses that result in facts; facts and states of affairs are just aspects of one synthetic activity. Thus, just as it is only on the basis of predicative syntheses that we can refer (through nominalization) to facts, it is only on this same basis that we can refer to states of affairs themselves as real objectivities.

¹ Husserl treats the sentence “Regen ist eingetreten” as a copular, property-attributing judgment. I will call this interpretation into question below.

With this insight, we will have found a way to approach the thingliness of what happens, one that preserves the basic insight gleaned from Husserl's notion of nominalization; namely, that this thingliness is not something separate from, or hidden within, verbal judgments, but is rather the very unity achieved through such judicative acts. The question that will remain, however, is whether we can analyze verbal judgments as instances of predicative syntheses, which for Husserl always means a copular synthesis.

2.2.1 States of affairs as the intentional correlates of judgments

As I have indicated, a central feature of Husserl's analysis of judgments is the notion of the 'state of affairs,' which for Husserl is the intentional correlate of a judgment. As we will soon see, the state of affairs is the object of a judgment in a somewhat 'primitive' manner; only when it is nominalized does it become a full-blown intentional object. Nonetheless, it still holds true that for Husserl, when we make an actual judgment—or even when we simply understand a proposition without affirming or denying it—we are intentionally directed to a state of affairs. It has often been observed that this distinguishes Husserl's analysis of propositions from that of Frege, for whom the reference of propositions is not a state of affairs, but rather a truth value.² However, it cannot be assumed, without further argument, that Frege and Husserl were proposing alternate positions within an otherwise equivalent framework; we would have to demonstrate, for example, that Husserl's notion of 'intentional object' corresponds to Frege's notion of 'reference,' a conclusion that is far from obvious.

More importantly, even if we were to argue that, for Husserl, the proper reference of a proposition is a state of affairs, it is by no means the case that he therefore ignores the correlation of sentences to their truth values. To the contrary, it is precisely through an analysis of the relationship between judgments and states of affairs that Husserl attempts to clarify the very notion of propositional truth. It is in the interplay of judicative intention its fulfillment through the experience of a state of affairs that the concept of truth, for Husserl, has its phenomenological basis. Indeed, in the complexity of the intention/fulfillment dynamic Husserl finds a complexity of possible meanings of the very term 'truth.'

We see this clearly in §39 of the Sixth Investigation, where he discusses the notion of truth in relation to the notion of self-evidence. Although his comments here are meant to apply to

² Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," *The Philosophical Review* 57, no. 3 (1948).

intentions in general, he repeatedly refers to judgments as the exemplary case. He begins by defining self-evidence in the “epistemologically pregnant sense,” as “*the act of [the] most perfect synthesis³ of fulfillment*, which gives to an intention, e.g. the intention of judgement [sic] the absolute fullness of content, the fullness of the object itself.”⁴ In self-evidence, the object that is ‘meant’ in the judgment is given intuitively, and moreover given just as it is meant. This is the ‘identification’ we encountered in Chapter 1—the identification of what is given with what is meant. This identity, he says at first, is what we call “*being in the sense of truth, or simply truth.*” Yet he immediately adds that one could just as easily “award this term to another concept of the many that are rooted in the said phenomenological situation”—rooted that is, in the act in which an intention is fulfilled.⁵

Husserl goes on to enumerate the various notions of truth that can be extracted from this phenomenological ‘situation.’ First among them is the one just described—truth as identity, as “*the full agreement of what is meant with what is given as such.*”⁶ He calls this a “state of affairs,” which is a bit confusing. He does not mean the state of affairs which is the correlate of a judgment; rather he means the state of affairs which corresponds to the identity of meant and given. That is, he is describing the fact that what is given is identical with what is meant, the state of affairs of agreement itself. Truth in this first interpretation is thus the agreement of intention and fulfillment.

Husserl then proposes that ‘truth’ can refer to the “Idea of absolute adequation as such.” Here the focus is no longer on particular acts of identification, but on the necessary formal structure, the “ideal essence,” of self-evidence, i.e. of the coinciding of intention and fulfillment. It is truth as the essential form of self-evident judging, where this latter is thought of as a total act encompassing both intention and fulfillment. Next, by focusing on the fulfilling act, we can extract a third sense of ‘truth,’ namely ‘fullness itself’— the experience of fulfillment in particular. This is truth conceived as a specific kind of validating experience. Finally, focusing now on the intending act, ‘truth’ can mean “*the rightness of our intention* (and especially that of our judgment), its adequacy to its true object...”⁷ This sense of truth, Husserl argues, is at play

³ This “synthesis” of intention and fulfillment is not to be confused with the predicative synthesis which will be discussed later.

⁴ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:263.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 2:264.

⁷ Ibid.

when we speak of the ideal possibility that a proposition admits of adequate fulfillment; in other words, that a proposition may be evidently true.⁸

It is this last notion of truth—truth as the ‘rightness’ of an intention (particularly of a judgment)—that applies to the judgment “in the logical sense of the proposition.” As such it accords with the idea of a ‘truth value’ that could be assigned to a proposition, its positive or negative ‘evaluation.’ Yet this idea, as we have just seen, is merely one of a number of possible notions, each of which results from focusing our attention on a particular structural moment within the total dynamic of self-evident judging (or on this structure as a totality). Thus to call states of affairs, as Husserl often does, the ‘objective correlate’ of a judgment is not to decide against an understanding of propositions in which they are correlated with truth values. It is rather to choose to regard judgments, not with respect to their possible correctness (a point of view which nevertheless remains possible), but with respect to what is intended in them.

More generally, we must remember that for Husserl, the philosophical goal in an investigation of judgments is to bring to clarity the entire phenomenological situation in which various concepts—judgment, state of affairs, truth, adequation, etc.—receive their sense and validity. So as we turn now to the role of states of affairs in his analyses, we do this while keeping this global interest in mind. Specifically, it is important that we always consider states of affairs as Husserl does: as the objects of judicative intentions. To examine states of affairs phenomenologically is to examine the nature of the judicative intentionality which is directed towards them.

2.2.2 Nominalization: States of affairs as objects of reference

The concept of a state of affairs receives its first direct analysis in the *Logical Investigations* in the context of a discussion of the syntactical phenomenon Husserl calls “nominalization.” In this grammatical operation, in which a proposition itself serves as the subject of a proposition, Husserl sees a linguistic indicator of an underlying *intentional* operation, one in which states of affairs attain the status of intentional objects in a “pregnant” sense.

Husserl’s discussion of nominalization occupies most of Chapter 4 of the Fifth Investigation. The chapter is titled “Study of founding presentations with special regard to the

⁸ Ibid. For more detailed accounts of Husserl’s four notions of truth, with which the present account agrees, see Lohmar, *Erfahrung und Kategoriales Denken*, 162-65.

theory of judgment,” and follows a complex discussion of “presentations” in Chapter 3. In this previous chapter, Husserl considers and ultimately rejects the claim, attributed to Brentano, that “each intentional experience... is either a presentation or based upon underlying presentations.”⁹ On this view, an affirmative judgment is formed by ‘adding’ an affirmation to a mere ‘presentation.’ This latter is not itself a judgment, but rather a neutral intention of mere propositional content. It is important that we understand Husserl’s critique of this view, because it informs his discussion of nominalization. Nominalization also involves a non-judicative attitude towards propositional content, but in a very different sense than is suggested by the model he rejects.¹⁰

‘Mere’ presentations vs. judgments

Husserl offers us a more precise characterization of the view he intends to rebut. The question is whether judicative meaning-intentions (acts), as well as wishes, hopes etc., themselves contain presentational acts which provide them with their content. In Husserl’s words:

[T]his remarkable proposition means that in each act the intentional object is *presented in an act of presentation*, and that, whenever we have no case of ‘mere’ presentation, we have a case of presentations so peculiarly and intimately inwoven with one or more further acts or rather, act-characters, that the presented objects become the object judged about, wished for, hope for etc.¹¹

We have, on the one hand, an intention in which a particular content is entertained without thereby being affirmed, wished for, etc.; and on the other hand actual affirmations of this content, wishes regarding it, etc.. I can, for example, simply understand the claim, ‘The sky is blue,’ without thereby judging or wishing that this be the case. Or instead, I can indeed so judge or wish; the proposition that in the first case was merely entertained is now positively affirmed. Husserl of course acknowledges the existence and phenomenological significance of such a distinction. His quibble is with the idea that the latter acts—and in particular affirmative judgments—are achieved by tacking a further act on to the mere presentational one, such that the mere presentation is somehow nested within the new act.

⁹Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:129.

¹⁰ Husserl revisits his critique of Brentano’s views in his 1905 lectures on the theory of judgment. See *Urteilslehre*, 91-121.

¹¹ *Logical Investigations*, 2:129.

Husserl's first line of argument against this view is not strictly speaking a phenomenological one, but concerns rather the problems it raises for a taxonomy of intention-types.¹² I pass over this in order to examine his phenomenological argument. Husserl begins this argument with a discussion of perceptual experience; I will focus, however, on his subsequent discussion pertaining to judgments, both because it is more relevant to our concerns and because it is the more clear and compelling of the two. He presents the problem as follows:

What plays the part of object to judgement and opinion we call the *state of affairs judged*: we distinguish this in reflex knowledge from the *judging* itself, the *act* in which this or that appears thus or thus, just as in the case of perception we distinguish the perceived object from the perception as act. Following this analogy, we must ask ourselves whether what constitutes the *matter* of our judgement, what *makes it the judgement of a given state of affairs, lies in an underlying act of presentation*. That state of affairs will then be first presented through this presentation, and, thus presented, will become the target of a new act, or rather act-quality, of judgemental positing which is built upon this presentation.¹³

Again, in rejecting this schema Husserl does not deny that it is possible to 'merely' intend a state of affairs—as when I simply understand the claim, 'The earth's mass is about 1/1,325,000 of the sun's mass' without thereby assenting to or rejecting it.¹⁴ Nor does he deny that such a mere presentation can then be followed by an act of assent in which the proposition is affirmed, in such a way that the new act appears to 'accrue' to the old one. While acknowledging this, however, he tries to show these facts "in a somewhat different light."¹⁵

Husserl does so by providing a careful phenomenological description of the very act of assenting to a proposition. He asks us to imagine a situation in which someone else has uttered a proposition in the hopes that we will assent to it. We do not immediately agree to it, but rather

¹² Here is a rough summary of the argument: In the language of the *Investigations*, all intentions have, as abstract 'moments,' both a matter (which distinguishes different intentions in terms of their content) and a quality (which distinguishes them in terms of their intentional mode). If that is the case, however, 'mere' presentations—on the view under consideration—present a difficulty. If there is a matter/quality distinction in these mere presentations, then such presentations are themselves formed by combining a content with an act-quality particular to mere presentations; but then it is unclear why other intentions need a presentation as their content. In Husserl's words, "Why should not the same combinatory form do the same for other acts, and in the case e.g., of the Judgement, make out of Judgement-Quality and Content, the whole entitled "Judgement with a given Content?" Ibid., 2:135. On the other hand, if there is *not* a matter-quality distinction for presentations, then presentations entail an "unacceptable exception" to the taxonomy of intention experiences. The genus of intentional modalities loses its uniformity. There is then little sense in speaking of presentations as a species of "Intentional Quality" alongside judging, wishing, etc. Ibid., 2:134.

¹³ Ibid., 2:139.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2:140.

¹⁵ Ibid.

ponder and consider it for some period of time, during which the proposition is merely entertained. Our attitude is one of “brooding suspension and questioning.” We then, for one reason or another, assent to the claim; the judgment is now our own opinion.

Husserl makes two observations about this process. First, he points out that the ‘brooding’ attitude present before assent is in no way part of the judgment that results from this assent.¹⁶ This observation is meant to count against the idea that the judgment contains the (prior) mere presentation as a component part: mere presentation involves a ‘brooding’ attitude, and this attitude is absent from judgment, therefore judgments do not contain mere presentations. Yet for the argument to be valid, Husserl would have to show that a questioning attitude is necessarily part of a mere presentation. He does not do this, nor does this seem particularly plausible. Clearly one can ‘merely’ understand a proposition without for a moment worrying whether or not it is true. Nor does one have to have been considering its truth in order to eventually assent to it. Assent can result, not from a purposeful deliberation, but from sheer happenstance; I hear a judgment that I neither reject nor accept, but later happen to discover it is true. We can, however, soften Husserl’s characterization of mere presentations, and thereby retain his essential point. We can say, I would suggest, that in the mere entertaining of any coherent proposition, we are aware of both its decidability and of its undecidedness. That is, we are aware that it is conceivably true while also being aware that we do not know whether it is true; and this is the case whether or not we are actively trying to make a decision on the matter. Thus we can agree with Husserl that the intentionality directed at a mere presentation has a quality—that of undecidedness—which disappears once we actively assent to the proposition.

Husserl’s second point pertains to the act of assent itself. The shift from mere presentation to assertive judgment is not, Husserl argues, a mere “sequence.” There is rather a “transitional experience” that mediates between these two: “The pondering and question ‘intention’ is fulfilled in the assenting decision, and in this fulfilling unit of *response* (which has the phenomenological character of a moment of union) the two acts are not merely successive but mutually related in the most intimate unity. The answer *fits* the question: the decision says ‘It is so’, just so, in fact as it was previously pondered over as being.”¹⁷ The key idea is that of

¹⁶ Ibid., 2:141.

¹⁷ Ibid.

fulfillment, which Husserl here describes as the “resolution of a kind of tension.”¹⁸ A mere presentation has the quality of undecidedness. With this comes an implicit question—is it so or not so—whether or not one is actively pursuing it. The answer to this question is experienced as the fulfillment of one of these open possibilities. It is on the basis of such a fulfilling experience that we assent to the proposition (or else reject it), and thus come into possession of a judgment proper, a proposition that we ourselves hold to be true.

This analysis once again undermines the idea that judgments are obtained by simply adding something—assent—to a mere presentation. First of all, it shows that assent is not an ‘addition’ at all, just as the fulfillment of a wish is not “the addition of a new act-quality to the original wish”¹⁹ Assent is rather the result of an experience of fulfillment, a fulfillment that resolves the tensions that characterize the mere presentation. It is the closing of an open question, so to speak, and as such it entails the transformation of an intentional attitude, rather than the accretion of one attitude ‘on top of’ another. Secondly, assent is not even an intrinsic part a judgment. A judgment has the character of an assent only in the context of a tension-resolving fulfillment.²⁰ Assent is a feature of a specific kind of epistemic occurrence, one in which we discover the validity of a previously undecided claim. It is only insofar as we are deciding that a judgment is true that a judgment is one to which we ‘assent.’ Many if not most of the propositions we assert are asserted spontaneously, in response to our direct observation or to first-hand reports. They are not preceded by a phase of mere presentation, and thus do not constitute an ‘assent’ to something previously considered neutrally.

Husserl compares the distinction between judgment and presentation to the distinction between a memory regarding an object and the “mere imagination” of the same object (in a counterfactual circumstance). In each case, what we have are “different modes of intentional reference to one and the same object.”²¹ The way a judgment concerns its object—a state of affairs—is just as direct as that of a mere presentation. The latter is not a more original intentionality which the judgment merely inherits and supplements with an affirmative attitude. Thus a phenomenological analysis of judgments must not treat states of affairs as objects whose

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2:142.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 2:144.

intentional character must first be considered independently of judgments, as their free-standing ‘content.’ Rather, states of affairs are to be treated as the very objects of judicative intentions.

This brings us to the material Husserl discusses in the following chapter. Before this point, Husserl had named states of affairs as the objects of judgments, without however examining in any detail their phenomenological status. This type of analysis begins in earnest in Chapter 4, although it is not the thematic concern of the chapter. As I indicated above, in this chapter Husserl offers and defends an alternative interpretation of the claim which he has just rejected—viz. that all intentional experiences are either presentations or are founded in presentations. Nonetheless, in the course of presenting this new interpretation—and in particular in his discussion of nominalization, which plays an important role in his analysis—Husserl’s approach to states of affairs begins to surface in its basic details. In particular, it is in this chapter that we are first granted a discussion of the two-step process whereby states of affairs are (1) constituted ‘primitively’ in a synthetic act before they (2) become available to acts of direct reference. As we will see, these two stages of intentionality find linguistic expression in what Husserl refers to as (1) assertions (i.e. judgments) and (2) names, respectively.

Assertions vs. Names

Husserl introduces the notion of the ‘name’ to help bring a new, phenomenologically coherent sense to the claim that mere presentations of judgments can themselves be ‘contained’ in them. Having rejected the idea that a ‘mere presentation’ gives a judgment its content (to which assent is added to form an affirmative judgment), Husserl now suggests that “we can employ the term [‘presentation’] to cover acts in which something becomes objective to us in a certain narrower sense of the word....”²² The narrower sense Husserl has in mind is that, rather than providing the content of a full judgment, a presentation provides the content of a “name,” which can form part of a judgment. Husserl’s use of the term ‘name’ encompasses more than just proper names and even singular nouns, but any nominal expression of any degree of complexity. A presentation, as we will see, is simply the intention of any objectivity, and among these objectivities he includes judgment-like structures—states of affairs—that are ‘named’ by subsentential clauses. We make judgments *about* these objectivities when their ‘names’ appear as the subject matter of our judgments.

²² Ibid., 2:148.

While this redefinition of ‘presentation’ thoroughly changes its meaning (relative to its use in the rejected claim), the lexical shift is by no means a non sequitur. He has, to be sure, abandoned the distinction between assertive judgments and mere presentations to which assent has yet to be added. His new formulation, however, presents an alternative to this pair, through the distinction between assertions and names. Clausal names, as we will see, share the content of judgments, but lack their assertive quality. Yet rather than being a proto-judgment to which an assent must be added, these ‘nominalized’ judgments are, so to speak, ossified judgments whose assertive quality has been withdrawn.

In arguing his case, Husserl uses linguistic data as an inroad to phenomenological observations. He argues that names, (i.e. nominal expressions), while not themselves sentences, can contain clauses with a sentential structure. The most conspicuous cases are those in which the grammatical subject of a judgment is itself a clause, as in (2).

■ That the Reichstag has been opened will please the populace.²³

‘The Reichstag has been opened’ could itself be a proposition, but here it appears within the clause that functions as the grammatical subject. Husserl also considers cases where noun modifiers have propositional structure. Compare (3) and (4):²⁴

■ The postman wore black

■ The postman hurrying by wore black.

The subject of (4) is a complex nominal with its own subject and verb (‘postman’ / ‘hurry by’), but it also functions as the subject of the entire proposition in the same way that ‘postman’ is the subject of (3). In such cases the grammatical subject is not a judgment, but Husserl argues that “the ‘original’ judgement is in some sense logically implicit...”²⁵ That is, in uttering (4) we refer implicitly to the judgment, ‘The postman is hurrying by,’ whether or not this judgment was in fact previously expressed.

Husserl calls the nominal subjects in (2)-(4) ‘names.’ What Husserl means by ‘name’ is really the broad class of expressions that function as subjects and direct or indirect objects in

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 2:150.

²⁵ Ibid., 2:153. Husserl further clarifies: “We must here stress that talk of ‘origin’ and ‘modification’ are not to be understood in an empirical-psychological, biological sense, but as expressing a peculiar relation of essence grounded in the phenomenological content of the experiences. It is part and parcel of the essential content of the nominal, attributive presentation that its intention ‘refers back’ to the corresponding judgement, and that it intrinsically presents itself as a ‘modification’ of this judgement.”

sentences. Now, by including clauses in this broad class, Husserl lumps together syntactical categories which should arguably remain distinct—viz. clausal and nominal expressions. In the next section, I will argue that this move is phenomenologically unsound. Here, I would like to note that there is also good linguistic evidence for maintaining a distinction between clausal and nominal expressions.

DPs and CPs

We begin with nominal expressions. Modern linguistic theory analyzes nominal expressions as ‘determiner phrases’ or DPs. Below are some sentences with the DPs indicated in brackets. (In some of them, the complex subject DPs contain the pronoun ‘I’, which is itself a DP, but I have ignored this for the sake of simplicity.)

[_{DP} I] ate [_{DP} an apple].

[_{DP} The apple] was delicious.

[_{DP} The apple that I ate] was red.

[_{DP} Some red apples I have eaten] haven’t satisfied [_{DP} my appetite].

We could also include Husserl’s examples from (3) and (4):

[_{DP} The postman] wore black.

[_{DP} The postman hurrying by] wore black.

These are called determiner phrases because they are headed by determiners like *the*, *some*, or *my*. (This is not the case for the pronoun ‘I’; it has been suggested that pronouns are in fact themselves determiners, as evidenced in constructions like ‘We philosophers are an odd bunch.’²⁶) Within the DP there is of course more internal structure, mainly the structure of the contained noun phrase (NP). However, it is only the fully-formed DP, with its determiner, that constitutes the syntactical unit which plays the grammatical role of subject, object, etc.

Clausal expressions are labeled CPs, where the ‘C’ stands for ‘complementizer.’ This terminology derives from the analysis of clausal complements, such as the following:

I decided [_{CP} that swimming was out of the question].

²⁶ See Anna Cardinaletti and Michal Starke, "The Typology of Structural Deficiency: A Case Study of the Three Grammatical Cases," in *Clitics in the Languages of Europe*, ed. Henk C. van Riemsdijk (Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999). In the case of proper names, which lack an overt determiner, a ‘null’ determiner has been hypothesized. Evidence for this analysis is provided by languages which do in fact allow a determiner before proper names. See Giuseppe Longobardi, "Reference and Proper Names: A Theory of N-Movement in Syntax and Logical Form," *Linguistic Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1994).

Jane wondered [_{CP} if she would ever grow taller].

The police officer asked [_{CP} whether she could enter].

The words introducing these clausal complements—*that, if, whether*—are called complementizers. CPs can also, however, appear in subject position, as in Husserl's example and others like it:

[_{CP} That the Reichstag has been opened] will please the populace.

[_{CP} That I am still alive] is a testament to my doctor's dedication.

[_{CP} That Maria left Arnold] was no surprise.

So much for terminology. The crucial point I now want to make is that subject DPs and subject CPs exhibit different syntactical behavior.

Note first that, while DPs can appear within subject CPs, CPs themselves cannot appear within subject CPs:²⁷

[_{CP}That [_{DP} the answer] is obvious] upset Hermes.

*[_{CP}That [_{CP} that the world is round] is obvious] upset Hermes.

*[_{CP}That [_{CP} whether the world is round] is unknown] upset Hermes.

Another disparity arises with respect to a syntactical operation called Subject Auxiliary Inversion (SAI). In normal English propositions, the subject precedes all auxiliary verbs; in interrogatives with DP subjects, the first auxiliary moves to the beginning of the sentence:

The movie will upset Jason.

Will the movie upset Jason?

He has proved your theory.

Has he proved your theory?

This movement is not possible when the subject is a CP:

That Medea killed her children will upset Jason.

*Will that Medea killed her children upset Jason?

That we arrived back at our starting point has proved your theory.

*Has that we arrived back at our starting point proved your theory?

Finally so-called 'extraposition,' where subject CPs appear at the end of the sentence, is not possible with DPs:²⁸

²⁷ Much of this discussion, and some of the examples, are adapted from David Adger, *Core Syntax : A Minimalist Approach*, (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 297-302.

It will upset Jason [_{CP} that Medea killed her children].

*It will upset Jason [_{DP} the movie].

Such data motivates the idea that DPs and CPs are not just structurally different (in that CPs have a sentence-like structure headed by a complementizer) but that they occupy different syntactical positions in fully-formed sentences. The details of this hypothesis are beyond our concern.²⁹ I reference this data simply to signal that we must not necessarily assume that the clausal subjects (CPs) that Husserl calls ‘names’ are grammatical subjects in the same way as the more common, nominal ‘names’ (DPs). In the following section, we will see that treating CPs as analogous to ‘names’ is phenomenologically questionable as well.

Nominal vs. Assertive Acts

Husserl’s interpretation of CPs as ‘names’ does not, however, rely exclusively on his rudimentary understanding of surface grammatical structure. It is based also on a phenomenological analysis which we need to consider on its own merits. For Husserl, CPs that operate as grammatical subjects (or objects) are ‘names’ because of the intentionality underlying such expressions. CPs and DPs have in common that they are both indicators of a particular kind of mental act, viz. a ‘nominal act.’ Nominal acts are acts which “grasp their objects in a single ‘snatch’, or in a single ‘ray of meaning’.”³⁰ They are analogous, says Husserl, to perceptual (or imaginative) acts that are directed at an object; it is essential to such acts that they grasp the object *as* a unitary thing, and not, for example, as the series of profiles that we perceive when we view the object from different perspectives. I experience an apple, not a series of perspectives on the apple. Nominal acts are also directed to their objects as unities. The simplest cases would be those expressed by singular DPs, like ‘Adam Smith,’ ‘the apple,’ ‘happiness,’ etc. We would need some more analysis to account for how plural DPs (e.g. ‘the apples’) are also expressions of nominal acts that are directed at *unities* of a conjunctive sort. I will pass over this problem, however, to address the more pressing issue of CPs. If they are also based on nominal acts, what unitary thing do they express?

Let’s look again at Husserl’s example, repeated below:

■ That the Reichstag has been opened will please the populace.

²⁸ For an overview of extraposition, and an analysis of its structure, see Edwin Williams, “Predication,” *Linguistic Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (1980): 220-29.

²⁹ See e.g. Adger *op. cit.* and Williams *op. cit.*

³⁰ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:148.

Husserl is quick to point out that, although the grammatical subject of such a sentence has the structure of a judgment, this does not mean that the sentence is *about* a judgment. We can of course express propositions that are themselves about judgments; we can speak of ‘this judgment’ or ‘your judgment’ and predicate something of it (that it was faulty, for example).³¹ In (2), however, what will supposedly be pleasing is not the judgment that the Reichstag has been opened, but the state of affairs expressed by the nominal clause. In Husserl’s words: “If I say, e.g., ‘That *S* is *P* is delightful’ I do not think that my judgment is delightful... What is delightful, is rather that such and such is the case, the objective state of affairs, the fact.”³² Let us temporarily pass over Husserl’s equation of states of affairs with facts; it will soon prove to be of considerable significance. What matters for the moment is how Husserl identifies states of affairs as the intentional objects of nominal acts, which intend them in a “single ‘mental ray’”—even though, Husserl tells us, “a state of affairs is of course no thing.”³³

Recall that states of affairs were also identified as the intentional objects of judgments: “What plays the part of object to judgement and opinion,” Husserl stipulates, “we call the *state of affairs judged*.”³⁴ The intentional object of a nominalized judgment is thus the same as the intentional object of an asserted judgment. What, then, is the difference between an assertive (i.e. judging) act and a nominalized judgment? As Husserl puts the question, “What is the difference between such *naming* and the independent *assertion of the state of affairs*...?”³⁵ To bring this difference to light, Husserl presents us with a pair of sentences which might be uttered in sequence, in order to “study an undeniable contrast”³⁶:

■ Rain has at last set in.

■ That will delight the farmers.

Note that the second sentence does not expressly repeat the judgment of the first sentence; the subject (‘that’) does not have an explicit clausal structure. Husserl argues, however, that the ‘that’ in (7) pronominally refers to the state of affairs expressed in (6). In other words, (7) has the same meaning as (8):

■ That rain will set in will delight the farmers.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 2:139.

³⁵ Ibid., 2:155.

³⁶ Ibid.

Sentence (7) therefore presents another example of a nominalized judgment, in so far as it contains a ‘name’ (in this case a pronoun) whose content corresponds to a complete assertion, namely (6). Yet while Husserl accepts that “the state of affairs in both cases is the same”—that is, in the case of both the assertive judgment and the nominalized judgment—he insists that “it is our object in quite a different manner.” Thus the “undeniable contrast.”

This difference—which Husserl calls a “difference of intentional essence”³⁷—is explained in terms of a distinction between many-rayed (*mehrstrahlig*) intentions and single-rayed (*einstrahlig*) intentions, which correspond to judgments and to names, respectively. The details of this distinction are of interest to us for two reasons. First, Husserl’s description of many-rayed intentions introduces, in a bare-bones fashion at least, the notion of *synthesis* which lies at the heart of his analysis of the copular judgments. Second, Husserl’s articulation of the transformation of many-rayed judging intentions into single-rayed nominal intentions provides us with an account of how states of affairs become intentional objects that can be referred to as ‘things’—in other words, it is essentially an account of the genesis of their ‘thingliness.’ Since our goal is to provide an account of the thingliness of what happens, Husserl’s account, it would seem, might offer us a useful template.

Let’s return, then, to Husserl’s example—sentences (6) and (7), above, and his analysis of their relation to each other. I should first note that the choice of ‘Rain has at last set in’ as the initial judgment is an odd one, given Husserl’s stated concern with sentences of the form ‘S is P.’ ‘Rain has set in’ does not appear to have this copular form. The original German, reproduced as (9) below, does, of course, bear a surface resemblance to this form, since the verb used is *ist* (‘is’) instead of *hat* (‘has’).

■■■■ Endlich ist Regen eingetreten.

At last has rain set in

We can see the resemblance to the copular form more clearly if we simplify the German sentence, and translate *ist* as ‘is,’ rather than ‘has’:

■■■■ Regen ist eingetreten.

Rain [is] set in

³⁷ Ibid., 2:156.

However, ‘ist’ is clearly not being used as the copula, but rather as a marker of perfect tense (‘has,’ in English). Some German verbs in fact take ‘hat’ (or some conjugation of ‘haben’) in the perfect tense, but ‘eintreten’ takes ‘ist.’ Husserl appears, unfortunately, to be conflating copular and perfective ‘ist.’ His further analysis, which we will address shortly, confirms this, as it treats ‘eingetreten’ as a property that is ascribed in a copular fashion to ‘Regen.’ Husserl is thus interpreting a verbal judgment as if it were property-attributing—a move I will oppose in Chapter 4. For the sake of argument, however, let us accept that the example is indeed property-attributing; what is important to us is what Husserl has to say about these kinds of judgment in general, whether or not his example actually counts as one.

Husserl begins by discussing what is involved in making the assertion, *Rain has at last set in*. “In the straightforward assertion,” he writes, “we judge about the rain, and about its having set in: both are in a pregnant sense objective to us, *presented*.”³⁸ This claim is troubling for two reasons. The first I have just mentioned, and chosen to ignore—namely the fact that Husserl treats the “having set in” (*das Eingetretensein*) of the rain as a property of it. The second is that this supposed predicate is referred to as a ‘presentation’. In the discussion leading up to this point, Husserl associates presentations with subjects, not predicates; all of his examples, furthermore, have so far been nominal expressions, rather than adjectives or verbs. He does, however, indicate at one point that the copular form *S is p* is based on “two presentations (or two names).”³⁹ In other words, predicates are also counted as ‘names’ which refer to something “objective.” Husserl does not clarify in this text how we are to understand this, or in what sense we should distinguish between the intention of a subject and the intention of an attribute. Husserl’s later writings move away from this sort of talk, and are more explicit about the difference between substantives and adjectives, as we will see in Chapter 3. For the time being, what matters is simply the idea that the judgment incorporates two elements that are separately intended, in some way or other.

Now, as Husserl notes, these two ‘presentations’—subject and predicate—are not simply intended in sequence. A judgment involves, rather, “a peculiar ‘unity of consciousness’ that binds these together.”⁴⁰ “In this binding together,” Husserl continues, “the consciousness of the state of affairs is constituted: to execute a judgement, and to be conscious of a state of affairs, in

³⁸Ibid., 2:155.

³⁹ Ibid., 2:149.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2:155.

this synthetic positing of something as referred to something, are one and the same. A thesis is enacted, and on it a second dependent thesis is based, so that, in this basing of thesis on thesis, the synthetic unity of the state of affairs is intentionally constituted.”⁴¹

What we have here is a bare-bones articulation of the ‘synthesis’ in which judgment consists, and through which states of affairs are constituted for consciousness. All we are offered at this point is the idea that ‘something’ is ‘posited’ as ‘referred to something,’ and that this should be understood as the basing of one thesis (that is, one single-rayed intention) on another. Pending further analysis, we can simply understand Husserl to be saying that, in an act of judgment, a subject is posited, and something else is posited as an attribute of that subject. This is the ‘peculiarity’ of the unity exhibited in a judgment. The unity is not a simple plurality of elements, but a specific relatedness in which one element (named by the predicate term) is dependent on the other (named by the subject term), since the former is posited explicitly as an attribute of the latter.

An act of judgment, to put Husserl’s idea even more simply (if still a bit vaguely), is a binding together of diverse presentations in a particular, copular way. The ‘outcome’ of such a synthesis is the intention of a state of affairs. But this state of affairs is not yet intended in a ‘single-rayed’ fashion. That is, it is not yet something we grasp all at once, as a unity to which we can refer nominally or pronominally. Rather, an assertive act is what first *expresses* the state of affairs by asserting the belonging-together of subject and predicate.

Husserl calls this a ‘many-rayed’ intentionality, which I think is a bit misleading. His motivation, I think, is to highlight the idea that acts of judgment are acts of synthesis in which diverse elements are bound together. Yet I would venture that the important point is not the diversity of the elements (which is what the term ‘many-rayed’ captures), but rather the activity of synthesis which is still at play in an assertive act. What matters is that the elements are actively being bound together, not that they are diverse. After all, a CP such as ‘that the ball is red’ also involves a diversity of elements, each of which must be intended if the expression is uttered meaningfully. The difference between it and the judgment ‘The ball is red’ lies in fact that in the judgment a judicative synthesis is executed, whereas in the nominal expression this execution is presupposed.

⁴¹ Ibid., 2:156.

Husserl puts the difference as follows, with reference to his example. I quote it at length because it constitutes the crux of his argument:

One may compare the ways in which the rain ‘comes to consciousness’, the assertedness of the state of affairs, and the presentational, naming way which in our example succeeds it, and which applies to the same state of affairs: ‘That will delight the farmers’. ‘That’, as it were, points a finger to the state of affairs: it therefore means this same state of affairs. But this reference is not to the judgment itself, which has preceded it as a thus and thus qualified mental happening now passed away: it is a *new act of a new kind*, which in pointing to the state of affairs previously constituted in synthetic, many-rayed fashion, now simply confronts this state of affairs with a single-rayed thesis, and so makes it an object in a sense quite different from the way the judgement does so. The state of affairs comes more ‘primitively’ to consciousness in the judgement: the single-rayed intention towards the state of affairs presupposes the many-rayed judgemental intention, and a reference to the latter is part of its intrinsic sense. But in each many-rayed conscious approach there is rooted, in *a priori* fashion, an essential, ideal possibility of transformation into the single-rayed approach, in which a state of affairs will be pregnantly ‘objective’ or ‘presented.’⁴²

This is, finally, Husserl’s characterization of the intentional essence of ‘nominalization,’ wherein an assertion becomes a ‘name.’ To any assertion whatever there always corresponds, as a matter of essence, the possibility of referring back to its subject matter, a state of affairs, as a coherent identity. The very ‘thingliness’ of states of affairs—their availability as intentional objects, as objects of reference—is grounded by Husserl in this possibility of “backwards reference” to an executed synthesis.⁴³ This is not to say that nominal expressions of this sort must always be preceded conversationally by an explicit judgment. Rather, nominalized judgments presuppose such a judgment as part of their “intrinsic sense,” much as the expression ‘the postman hurrying by’ ‘presupposes’ the judgment, ‘The postman is hurrying by.’

Strictly speaking, then, judgments are not in Husserl’s account ‘about’ states of affairs in the sense that they refer to them, but rather in the sense that they express the judicative syntheses which make possible a consciousness of them. Conversely, states of affairs are only ‘things’ to which we can directly refer because such a reference presupposes a copular synthesis through which states of affairs would appear to consciousness in their ‘primitive’ form. We have yet to address, of course, Husserl’s specific analyses of the internal dynamics of copular syntheses, and how such syntheses produce an objectivity to which we can then refer. Before doing so,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, 2:161.

however, let us consider whether and how Husserl's notion of nominalization helps us get a preliminary handle on the problems raised in the previous chapter, pertaining to verbal judgments and the thingyness of that which happens. This attempt will initially fail since, as we will see, the states of affairs referred to nominally turn out to be 'facts,' and facts turn out to be distinct from the things that happen. We'll be led, however, to look at Husserl's later considerations of nominalization in *Experience and Judgment*, considerations which deepen and complicate the picture painted above, providing us with a dual notion of 'states of affairs' which we can use more fruitfully.

2.3 Facts vs. Things that Happen

In Chapter 1, I introduced some peculiar linguistic data that crops up when we start to talk about 'things that happen.' Such talk, I argued, usually leads us to verbal judgments in which there is no explicit 'thing,' as in this dialog:

Me: Things happen.

You: Please be more specific. What happens?

Me: Lots of things. Squirrels fall out of trees. Lovers marry. Civilizations collapse. Clouds form. One's teeth fall out.

I also discussed the reverse case, where reference to a 'thing' appears following verbal judgments that do not contain such a reference:

Me: My tooth fell out.

You: I told you that would happen.

Me: But then a new one grew in the next day.

You: I've never heard of such a thing happening!

The puzzle in both instances was to understand what it is that words like 'thing' or 'that' or 'what' refer to, since their object is clearly not any of the nouns in the corresponding propositions. Husserl's analysis of nominalization appears to give us a way to begin to answer this question. Just as copular judgments produce objectivities to which we can then refer (viz. states of affairs), verbal judgments would produce objectivities (viz. things that happen) which are also available to our reference.

Upon closer inspection, however, we see that Husserl's theory cannot be used straight out of the box to address the conundrum presented in the linguistic data above. The trouble is that my examples of reference are somewhat different from those Husserl has in mind in his analyses of nominalization. Husserl's clause-replacing pronouns are grammatical subjects in sentences

whose direct objects are humans, who in turn are emotionally affected by whatever the pronoun refers to. In ‘That will delight the farmers,’ for example, the reference of ‘that’ is supposed to be the source of delight to farmers. In my examples, on the other hand, the pronouns—while indeed grammatical subjects—appear in rather anomalous sentences where all that is being said of these nominals is that ‘they’ happen. This may not seem especially important, but a careful look reveals that these two sorts of sentences exhibit rather different behavior.

2.3.1 What delights is not what happens—or is it?

To see the discrepancy, let us pick examples of pronominal reference—in (12) and (13) below—that can both follow upon the same ‘original’ verbal judgment—in this case, (11).

- My tooth fell out
- That will delight my dentist.
- That happened yesterday.

In both (12) and (13), we have the same pronoun in subject position. However, we can’t be sure that these two pronouns are functioning in the same way. In fact, it seems that they are not.

Crucially, we can substitute a CP for ‘that’ in the first case, but not in the second:

- [_{CP} That my tooth fell out] will delight my dentist.
- * [_{CP} That my tooth fell out] happened yesterday

We can look at the incongruity in a different way if we examine these two sentence types in interrogative form, and reflect on the acceptability of clausal vs. sentential answers to each question:

- What will delight your dentist?
- That my tooth fell out.
- *My tooth fell out
- What happened yesterday?
- *That my tooth fell out
- My tooth fell out.

(16)-(18) show us that a CP an acceptable substitution for ‘that’ or ‘what’ in the sentences where ‘delight’ is the verb, but that complete sentences are *not* acceptable in this context. (19)-(21) show us that the opposite is the case when ‘happen’ is the verb.

What is going on here? Let's start by looking at the first case, that of the to-be-delighted dentist. Just what is it that will delight her? Note that her delight is in the future, whereas my tooth fell out in the past. It wasn't her watching, or otherwise experiencing, my tooth actually falling out that caused her delight. We assume she doesn't even know about it yet. She will be delighted, rather, when she learns—when she comes to know—that my tooth fell out (because, we can hypothesize, she will then conclude there is some money to be made). Yet it seems wrong to say that it she is delighted by knowing it, as if she were focused on the subjective experience of knowing something, and pleased by this experience. Rather, we are driven to say that she is delighted by a fact, the fact that my tooth fell out, because of what she can deduce from this fact regarding her financial well-being. Note that instead of (14) we could just as easily state (22) without any evident change in meaning:

█ [DP The fact that my tooth fell out] will delight my dentist.

This is of course now a sentence with a different structure—its subject is a DP rather than a CP, with all the attendant syntactic disparities we noted above. Nonetheless, it does capture the meaning of (14) rather neatly. Moreover, it seems necessary to hold that it is the fact that my tooth fell out which will delight my dentist, as opposed to the occurrence itself—particularly since her delight is set in the future, long after my tooth has fallen out. We can presume that she wasn't around when my tooth actually fell out, such that she could have taken delight in watching that—whatever that is, or was.

It turns out that the identification of CPs with facts accords exactly with Husserl's own understanding. For Husserl, the term 'state of affairs' (*Sachverhalt*) is nothing other than a 'fact' (*Tatsache*). We have already seen this proposed equivalence in a passage quoted above: "What is delightful, is rather that such and such is the case, the objective state of affairs, the fact."⁴⁴ He reaffirms this equivalence repeatedly. Referring to his own example (viz. 'That will delight the farmers. '), he has this to say:

If asked what the farmers are glad about, one replies with a 'that so-and-so' or 'about the *fact* that rain has at length fallen'. The fact, therefore, the state of affairs posited as existent, is the object of the gladness, is the subject about which we are making an assertion. The fact can be variously named. We can simply say 'this', as in the case of all other objects, we can also say 'this fact', or, more definitely, 'the fact of the set-in rain, of the setting in of the rain' etc. We can also say... 'that the rain has set in'. Our coordination shows that this clause is a name in exactly

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2:148.

the same sense as all other nominal expressions of acts... It *names* exactly as they do, and in naming *presents*; as other names name other things, properties, etc., so it names or presents a *state of affairs*, which in particular is an empirical fact.⁴⁵

More generally, he asserts: “‘That *S* is *P*’ [when functioning as a subject] means what we mean by ‘This, that *S* is *P*’, or a little more elaborately, ‘The fact, the circumstance that *S* is *P*.’”⁴⁶

If CPs express facts, this helps us begin to make sense of the unacceptability of CPs as a substitution for the pronoun in ‘That happened yesterday.’ The unacceptability, to be sure, is syntactical, not (or not merely) semantic; the most immediate problem is that the resulting phrase is ungrammatical, not (merely) nonsensical. For some reason, a CP is not acceptable in subject position when *happen* is the verb. (In fact, it is unacceptable with *most* verbs, a point I will return to shortly.) However, the syntactical incongruity we observe has a semantic parallel. Note that (23), while grammatical, is nonsensical:

█ [DP The fact that my tooth fell out] happened yesterday.

Facts, it would seem, are not the sort of things that happen.

We’ll need to investigate this matter further. For the moment, however, let us consider the obstacle we appear to have reached. If facts are not the things that happen, it would seem that Husserl’s notion of nominalization is of little use to us. Our task is to understand the thingliness of what happens; if the things that arise out of nominalization are facts, and facts are not the things that happen, then the analysis of nominalization has gotten us nowhere. I do think, however, that we can salvage some useful observations from Husserl’s analysis, while also exposing some of the limitations in Husserl’s own understanding of the phenomenon he was considering. To see how, we need to complicate the picture considerably—the picture, that is, in which *facts* and *what happens* are held strictly apart as different sorts of things.

First we can observe that, despite the syntactic evidence that the things that happen are *not* the facts that delight, we can also site linguistic evidence for their apparent identity. Observe (24):

█ My tooth fell out. *This* will delight my dentist, even though *it* happened yesterday, sooner than she thought it would.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2:155.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2:156.

On the one hand, as with our examples above, it is clear that [CP That my tooth fell out] can be substituted for *this* but not for *it*. On the other hand, it seems wrong to say that the two pronouns have a completely different referent. This intuition is strengthened if we compare (24) to a sentence sequence with a similar structure, but where *that* and *it* are clearly not co-referring:

■ My tooth fell out. *This* will delight my dentist, even though *it* was my favorite molar.

In (25) the two pronouns refer divergently, and unambiguously so. In (24), we do not have such an unambiguous divergence, but rather what at least seems like convergence. Indeed, anyone who hears and understands that sentence understands that *what happened yesterday* is *what will delight my dentist*. In other words, (26) can be answered with (27):

■ What will delight your dentist?

■ What happened yesterday will delight my dentist.

This is an acceptable answer even though we know, as we saw above, that it is the fact that my tooth fell out which will cause delight. Whatever happened yesterday didn't cause delight *by its happening*. Rather, the delight comes when my dentist learns about its having happened, i.e. when she learns a fact.

Where does this leave us? On the one hand, we were first led to say that facts are not the things that happen, suggesting that Husserl's analysis of nominalization is not suited to our sphere of concern. On the other hand, we can formulate sentences where the things that happen seem to operate as facts, suggesting that Husserl's analyses may not be completely irrelevant. We are confronted with two 'things' which appear to be in some sense different and in some sense the same. To make sense of this, we turn again to Husserl's analyses of states of affairs, in particular to the later writings in *Experience and Judgment*, where we find an analogous pairing: that of the state of affairs *as fact* and the state of affairs *itself*.

2.3.2 States of affairs as facts: Objectivities of sense

Facts first came to our attention through Husserl's analysis of nominalization, in which judgments yield a new object to which we can refer, and which he calls a 'state of affairs' or 'fact.' This reference takes the form either of bare pronouns or of richer CPs that are the subjects of new sentences. What Husserl never explicitly notes, however, is that the licitness of such CPs

is restricted only to certain types of sentences. We already saw that they are not acceptable as subjects of sentences where ‘happen’ is the verb:

■ *[CPThat my tooth fell out] happened yesterday.

This is however just one example within a more general pattern, wherein CPs can function as the subjects of sentences only when these sentences express or imply a cognitive context in which the fact at issue is apprehended. All of the following sentences, for example, are acceptable:

[CPThat my tooth fell out]...

■ ...surprised my dentist

■ ...hurt my dentist’s feelings

■ ...disgusted my dinner companions.

■ ...puzzled everyone.

Note that the sentence need not express a specific cognitive act in which someone is confronted with the fact at hand. It is enough for some cognitive context or other to be implied, as with the following sentence completions:

■ ...explains why I was in pain.

■ ...was inexplicable.

■ ...is a troubling fact.

■ ...will remain my secret.

■ ...proves my point.

All of these examples contrast with the next set of unacceptable sentences.

*[CPThat my tooth fell out]...

■ ...happened yesterday

■ ...hurt my dentist’s arm.

■ ...was loud.

■ ...caused my infection.

■ ...gave me a funny smile.

■ ...cost me a lot of money.

This behavior is unsurprising, insofar we take CPs to express facts. We understand intuitively that facts do not hurt arms, make noise, cause infections etc. Facts, rather are known (or not known), and can therefore puzzle, disgust, and trouble, or be used in arguments to prove things.

This intuition, however, complicates Husserl's analysis of CPs under the banner of 'nominalization'. This analysis, recall, is concerned with the difference between the intentionality proper to judgments, and that proper to subject CPs, the so-called 'nominalized' judgments. Husserl interprets this difference as that between judgments and names – or more accurately, between judging acts and nominal acts. We already saw how lumping together CPs and DPs (i.e. 'normal' nominals) runs counter to linguistic evidence that suggests CPs are a syntactically distinct category. We can now see how Husserl's analysis of CPs as an instance of naming obscures their phenomenological peculiarity as well.

Let's review the essentials of this analysis. Husserl insists that judgments and their nominal counterparts have, as their intentional object, the same state of affairs. In each, however, it is our object 'in a different manner.' The difference is that between a (so-called) 'many-rayed' intentionality that is engaged in the business of synthesis (specifically, a copular synthesis, since this is Husserl's concern), and a 'single-rayed' intentionality that is directed to the end product of this synthesis. In this model, what is distinctive of the intentionality of nominalized judgments is simply that their intentional object has been, so to speak, 'singularized.' The unity of diverse elements that the judgment enacts is apprehended *as* a unity, all at once.

It is now clear, however, that the intentional difference at issue runs deeper than Husserl's analyses suggest. CPs, we have seen, can only be the subjects of sentences in which there is an explicit or implicit cognitive context. This tells us something about the intentionality underlying CPs, that is, the intentionality whose object is a fact. The peculiarity of this intentionality is that it intends its object *as an intentional object*. That is, it is part of the phenomenological essence of a fact that it be intended as something which an intentional consciousness is (or could be) concerned with.

To put it more simply, a fact is intended not as something that simply *is*, but rather as something that is known, or at least knowable. This is different from, say, the intentionality whose object is an apple. Such an intentionality intends the apple without intending the apple's 'being known.' Of course, it is implicit in such an intention that the apple is known – it is an intentional object, after all, and thus is known at least by the consciousness which is regarding it. Yet it is not intended *as* an intentional object – it is not intended *as* known. If I judge, 'The apple fell off the branch,' for example, the apprehension of the apple by an intending consciousness is not at issue in the content of the judgment itself. A fact, on the other hand, wears its known-ness

on its sleeve. It is an intentional object as a matter of its own essence. Accordingly, CPs that express facts can only be the subjects of judgments which involve the apprehension of a fact by somebody or other.

This means that the transformation Husserl is concerned with is not simply a matter of intending in a ‘single-ray’ what is synthetically achieved in a judgment. Judgments themselves do not exhibit the intentional peculiarity that facts do. When I judge, ‘My tooth fell out,’ or ‘This paper is white,’ or ‘Rain has set in,’ the content of my judgment is not, in itself, something I intend *as* an intentional object in the manner described above. This way of intending is something new, and it is not adequately described merely as a shift from a judging to naming, or from a ‘many-rayed’ to a ‘single-rayed’ intentionality. It is not as if the full content of the judgment is simply gathered up and apprehended from a distance. Rather, intending a fact, as has been said, also means intending it as something which is essentially an object of knowledge.

In *Experience and Judgment*, constructed from texts written much later in Husserl’s career, Husserl is more explicitly sensitive to this special status of facts. To be sure, he remains wedded to the analysis of nominalization introduced in the *Logical Investigations*. He now describes this process “the substantivation in which the state of affairs is educed from the judgment,”⁴⁷ and explains it as follows, repeating the schema presented in the *Logical Investigations*:

[A] proposition, previously *multirayed*, and constituted in an original two-membered synthesis of determination, is now apprehended in a *single ray*.... When in an act of judgment, one links on to a past judgment, this past judgment is therefore treated exactly as any substrate that enters into a predicative judgment as a subject, namely, as the object of a simple apprehension. This implies that it must have been preconstituted as such and that this is the function of the preceding judgment.⁴⁸

At the same time, Husserl now classifies facts or states of affairs as “objectivities of the understanding,” and accordingly displays a sensitivity to their special nature as objects that are, essentially, intended *as* intentional objects. This occurs most remarkably in the complex analyses that culminate in §65, in which Husserl offers a secondary interpretation of what he calls the “irreality” of objectivities of the understanding (including states of affairs). His primary

⁴⁷ *Experience and Judgment*, 239.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

interpretation of irrealty is provided in the previous section; there it is described as a kind of “temporal form,” specifically “omnitemporality”:

We call real in a specific sense all that which, in real things in the broader sense, is, according to its sense, essentially individualized by its spatiotemporal position; but we call irreal every determination which, indeed, is founded with regard to its spatiotemporal appearance in a specifically real thing but which can appear in different realities as identical—not merely as similar.⁴⁹

The class of irreal objectivities is not limited to objectivities of the understanding (i.e. facts). It includes, for example, works of literature. *Faust*, Husserl tells us, is an irreal object insofar as it can in principle appear at any place and time and still be the ‘same’ work of art. Analogously, a fact can be expressed at any place and time and still be the ‘same’ fact. This is what Husserl means by the ‘omnitemporality’ of irreal objectivities. In §65, however, Husserl offers a complementary description of irreal objectivities, in which he characterizes them as “objectivities of sense.”⁵⁰

This concept, Husserl notes, is to be distinguished from that he calls ‘objective sense,’ which every objectivity has. To say every objectivity has an objective sense is just another way of saying, for Husserl, that every object is an intentional object, that everything that appears does so by virtue of what it is intended as being—its sense. Objective sense is the ‘intended as such.’⁵¹ This objective sense, however, is not something we attribute to the object itself as a characteristic of it. Objectivities of sense—irreal objectivities—are unique in that for them ‘sense’ is an essential characteristic. Husserl returns again to the example of *Faust*: “Thus the one identical signification of the many exemplars of *Faust* is the ideally one *Faust*.”⁵² That is, the unique and singular work *Faust* is something “signified” by all its exemplars, and thus is itself, in its essence, a “sense”:

To signify this one work, to have this sense, belongs to the many real objects in which its reproductions can be embodied. Like all objects, irreal objectivities are identical poles of a multiplicity of intentions which refer to them. But they are not simply intended in a multiplicity of apprehensions related to them in a multiple now; rather *they are themselves intended as intended contents*, as sense of.... To be an intended content (in multiple exemplars, reproductions, etc.) belongs in itself to their objective determination....⁵³ (emphasis added)

⁴⁹ Ibid., 266.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 268.

⁵¹ Ibid., 267.

⁵² Ibid., 268.

⁵³ Ibid., 268-9.

Objectivities of sense, in other words, are objectivities whose ‘meaning’ includes sense itself as a determination. They have, in Husserl’s odd formulation, “a sense of sense”[*ein Sinnes-Sinn*].⁵⁴ He adds that objectivities of the understanding—facts— “are a special case of such objectivities [of sense].”⁵⁵ He does not further clarify this inclusion. Yet we can take him to mean what we have already established: facts are intended as essentially intentional objects. They are intended as objectivities whose essential nature is to be apprehended—without which apprehension their being has no sense.

However much we may be in agreement with Husserl on this point, he still has not helped us escape the problem in his analysis of nominalization. To repeat: the unique status of CPs—namely, that they are intended as objects of knowledge and thus can only be subjects of judgments that involve their apprehension—is not captured by a description of a shift from multi-rayed intentionality (of judgments) to single-rayed intentionality (of nominalized judgments). This is because, as mentioned above, acts of judgments themselves are not characterized by this special kind of intentionality. To use Husserl’s terminology, they do not intend irrealities. Or rather, they don’t do so necessarily. I can, of course, make a judgment *about* an irreal objectivity, e.g. ‘*Faust* is a masterpiece,’ or ‘The fact that my tooth fell out will delight my dentist.’ These judgments are about irreal objectivities, but only because their subjects are irreal, not because judgments intend irreal objectivities as a matter of essence. When I make the judgments, for example, ‘My tooth fell out,’ or ‘The water froze,’ I am clearly not intending an irrealty in either of Husserl’s two interpretations of the term. I don’t, that is, intend something ‘omnitemporal,’ since my tooth fell out at a specific place and time. Nor do I intend an objectivity of sense; if I mean that the water froze, I do not thereby intend this as an intended content.

In other words, a more complete phenomenological account of the movement from judgments to facts needs to include an account of the shift from a direct engagement with the *real* (in judgments which judge about reality) to an engagement with the *irreal* (in intentions directed at facts). As it turns out, the later Husserl of *Experience and Judgment* (and *Formal and Transcendental Logic*) is in fact keyed into this very problem. He addresses it at the end of §67,

⁵⁴ “Der einem solchen Gegenstand entsprechende *gegenständliche* Sinn ist daher ein *Sinnes-Sinn*, ein Sinn zweiter Stufe. Vom Sinn als *gegenständlichem* Sinn müssen wir somit unterscheiden Sinn als *Bestimmung des Gegenstandes*.” Ibid., 268.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 269.

and more fully in §69, which is titled “The intention of the judgment as such and the true state of affairs. In what respect the state of affairs is an objectivity of sense.” Here, Husserl begins to draw a subtle but crucial distinction between states of affairs conceived of as ‘objectivities of sense’—as they have been up until this point—and states of affairs *themselves*, intended as actual things.

2.3.3 The state of affairs ‘itself’

A judgment, Husserl reminds us, produces new objectivities of sense which have “a kind of autonomy.” “They can be produced anew,” he writes, “possibly reproduced in communicative interchange, and thereby have their own way of being able to be brought to self-evidence... as intentions, without on that account their having to be capable of being fulfilled.”⁵⁶ It is such “autonomous” objectivities that can “become substrates of various judgments.”⁵⁷ It is these that he calls ‘objectivities of sense.’ This requires however, “that we pass from the original straightforward attitude, directed toward the truly existent substrate-objectivities and their determination, their state [*Sichverhalten*], to the critical attitude, in which the empty intention, the mere proposition, parts company [*sich scheidet*] from the state of affairs itself.”⁵⁸

A state of affairs as *fact*, then—as objectivity of sense—is in a sense detached from the state of affairs *itself*, precisely insofar as a fact is the nominalization of an ‘empty intention’ which is not experienced as fulfilled in an evidential experience—an evidential experience that would give the state of affairs itself.

It is quite notable that Husserl uses a new term here, *Sichverhalten*, to characterize the ‘state of affairs itself.’ Translated here as “state,” it is an invented substantive of *sich verhalten*, which primarily means ‘to behave,’ but which can be used in phrases that describe or ask ‘how things stand,’ as in ‘Wie verhält sich die Sache?’ Husserl’s word choice, in particular its reflexive form, emphasizes that in our ‘straightforward’ judging activity we are concerned with actual objects that are intended as having a being in themselves. It is *they*—what Husserl calls the “substrates”—which display their ‘state’ or ‘standing.’ Husserl first introduces the term *Sichverhalten* at the end of §67, where he identifies the “state of affairs itself” with the “complete fulfillment” of an intention:

⁵⁶ Ibid., 285.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

[T]he merely intended [*vermeinte*] state of affairs, which can be intended either as completely empty or as more or less fulfilled by intuition, is separate from the state of affairs which is completely fulfilled, completely saturated by intuition, in which the state [*Sichverhalten*] of its substrates comes to perfect intuitive givenness. The “state of affairs itself” is nothing other than *the idea of the completely fulfilled sense of the state of affairs*, of its completely fulfilled intention...⁵⁹

We can reconstruct Husserl’s analysis as a two-part process.

1. A judgment is made which determines the substrates to be in a particular ‘state’; in this judicative process, the *Sichverhalten* of the substrates appears originally. What appears is the ‘state of affairs itself.’
2. The judgment having been accomplished, it now stands on its own as an objectivity of sense with its own ‘autonomy.’ When we intend this objectivity, we intend the state of affairs as *fact*.

Of course, the first part of this process does not need to actually occur for me to intend a fact. I can speak about facts without having myself experienced the appearance of the *Sichverhalten* in question. But to take these facts as *true* facts, I must assume that such an original experience is actually possible—or was possible, in the case of facts about the past.

We are dealing, then, with two intentionalities: an original intentionality directed to the *Sichverhalten* or ‘states,’ and a secondary intentionality directed to *Tatsache* or facts. This is a departure from the framework of the *Logical Investigations*, or at least modification of it. It is no longer simply a matter of the difference between a multi-rayed ‘judging’ intentionality and a single-rayed ‘nominal’ intentionality, but rather that between an intentionality that is directed to the real (the state of affairs as *Sichverhalten*) and one that is directed to the irreal (the state of affairs as fact).

The distinction I am making here, I should note, is different from that made by Sokolowski, in his reflections on Husserl’s notion of categorial objects, between ‘facts as registered’ and ‘facts as reported.’⁶⁰ Sokolowski explicitly equates the terms ‘state of affairs’ and ‘fact’. His distinction is just the one between fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions of states of affairs. Neither of these is what I am calling a ‘fact,’ which is the state of affairs intended as an

⁵⁹ Ibid., 284.

⁶⁰ See Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things*, 32 ff.

object of knowledge. To intend a state of affairs as fact is not just to intend the state of affairs in the absence of evidence.

To emphasize the difference, and see why it matters, we can look at a brief point Husserl makes in §70 of *Experience and Judgment*. In judgments regarding perceptual objects, Husserl notes, the objects in question can never come to “perfectly adequate givenness,” since objects of perception can never be completely perceived. The corresponding state of affairs are also, accordingly, only “given in an anticipatory way.”⁶¹ Just as perception “never contains the thing itself [*das Ding selbst*]... so also *the judgment of perception never contains the state of affairs itself*, if we understand by this that which truly exists, that which the judgment ‘intends,’ that which is judged in it.”⁶² This last caveat is essential. Only the state of affairs ‘itself’ can elude adequate givenness, not the state of affairs as fact. Take, for example, my judgment, ‘This paper is white.’ The fulfillment of this judgment is the givenness of a state of affairs, in which the paper appears to me as white. I do not see the paper, however, in the totality of its coloration. I do not see all its micro-gradations of color. I could examine it under a microscope, for example, and find more detail that way; but here, too, I would never get to the end of its coloration. The total state of affairs itself is an “ideal of reason.”⁶³ My judgments of perception will therefore always be provisional. On the other hand, if I say ‘The fact that the paper is white will please the artist,’ I intend the fact in question completely. There is nothing ‘more’ to this fact than what is said.⁶⁴

The distinction between states of affairs themselves and facts will give us a crucial inroad to the problem with which we started this section, namely the puzzling relationship between the things that happen and facts. Before returning to this problem, however, a bit more needs to be said to fill out the picture I have painted thus far, as it is potentially misleading in two ways.

First, the two-part process I outlined appears to locate our directedness to actuality solely on the side of judging; it would seem that, when intending facts, we are no longer concerned with what is actual. This does not sound right, and Husserl in fact warns against this

⁶¹ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 287.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ In this sense, Husserl’s distinction between states of affairs themselves and states of as facts bears a resemblance to Bennett’s distinction between events and facts. As we saw in the previous chapter, Bennett interprets an event name such as “Quisling’s betrayal of Norway” as the expression of a fact which is part of an event, but not the total event. “Quisling’s betraying Norway,” on the other hand, names a single fact.

interpretation. We will look more closely at the generation of facts in order to see how they maintain an intentional relation to actuality despite having ‘parted ways’ with it.

Secondly, talk of the ‘appearance’ of the actual *Sichverhalten* may be taken to imply that this appearance is intuited passively—that the states of affairs themselves simply show themselves. Husserl’s analyses maintain, on the contrary, that such intuitions are possible only by virtue of a synthetic activity, one which is at the heart of every judicative accomplishment. The syntheses underlying judgments will be a central concern of Chapter 3; I will make a few general remarks here by way of introduction, with the purpose of highlighting the active (as opposed to passive) nature of judicative intentionality. With these two clarifications, we will be in a position to return to the paradox raised earlier, whereby facts both seem to be and not be the things that happen.

Factuality and Actuality

We begin with the first issue—whether and how the intention of facts still involves a concern with actuality. Husserl insists we guard against the idea that, in characterizing substantivized judgments as ‘objectivities of sense,’ he is thereby implying that we intend them merely as intentions. Rather, in the normal course of both judgment and nominalization, we are always directed to the state of affairs itself as the *telos* of our expression. In Husserl’s words:

This in no way implies that... we would be directed merely toward what is intended as such instead of toward something actual. It is always the actually existing state of affairs that we are directed toward. It is the *actual* “state” [*Sichverhalten*] of the objectivities first constituted in receptivity, and which have entered into it, which invariably makes up our final thematic goal.⁶⁵

He concludes the section with another version of this same thesis, with specific reference to nominalized judgments: “What is substantivized in the normal, ongoing course of judgment is then not the proposition enclosed within quotation marks, the judgment-intention as such, but the judgment maintained as valid, precisely the intended state of affairs itself.”⁶⁶

In other words, when we intend facts as facts, we are not intending mere meanings without any connection to actuality.⁶⁷ We intend facts as factual, i.e. as valid. More to the point,

⁶⁵ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 284.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁶⁷ This second step is not yet the intention of the judgment *as judgment*. This requires a further shift of focus. See for example *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 134-35. For discussion see Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things*, 49-52.

what interests us about facts is not that they are objectivities of sense; we are, rather, interested in the particular ‘state of affairs itself’ which they make known to us. It is in this sense that the state of affairs itself is our ‘final thematic goal.’ Nonetheless, when we refer to facts (as, e.g. what will be a cause for delight, concern, puzzlement, etc.), what we are referring to is not directly the state of affairs itself as a *Sichverhalten*, but rather the state of affairs as a knowable objectivity of sense—as bit of acquired knowledge. Facts are what is known, and we know only what is real. Yet to intend what is real as what is known is not the same as to intend it as what is actual, as reality ‘itself.’ To put it another way: What is given *itself* is the ‘state,’ not the fact. Yet the validity of a fact rests on the ideal possibility of an original intuition of the state itself (even if this possibility is a ‘past’ possibility, in the case of states of affairs that no longer obtain).

The mediator that both links and sunders the state and the fact is the act of judgment. It is in this act that a state first appears as itself, as the intentional object of the judgment. It is as a nominalized *judgment*, then, that a fact refers us back to the state itself as something available to an original evidential experience. In this sense state and fact are linked through the judgment. This act of judgment, however, creates a structural unity which abides after the original appearance has ended, and thus ‘parts ways’ with it. It is only because judgments can abide as unities apart from any original givenness that they can be nominalized and taken as facts. A judgment abides, most primordially, in retention. “[A]fter the act of judgment originally accomplished in spontaneity,” Husserl writes, “the judgment which has actually just been accomplished is still present to consciousness in the mode of the just-accomplished; it can then be retained in grasp in this intentional transformation.”⁶⁸

Even after it fades from retention, however, the judgment remains a “permanent possession” so long as it can be reactivated; it is a “sedimentation,” in Husserl’s words, or a “habituality of the ego.”⁶⁹ The temporal “modifications” of judicative acts are explored in more detail in Appendix II to *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, where he refers specifically to the “abiding unities” that arise from such acts.⁷⁰ These details need not concern us here, but the following passage bears repeating:

Without this sort of preservation in a passive continuous identification, advancing judgment-process—as a living further-forming and connecting of meant

⁶⁸ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 279.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 278-9.

⁷⁰ See *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 321.

categorialia to make the unity of continually new judgments at higher and higher levels—would not be possible. The retentionally subsiding component formations remain, with this modification, within the scope of the judger’s unitarily thematizing regard; he can reach back and seize them again, each as having its identical sense....⁷¹

Only because judgments abide as self-identical objectivities can we reuse them and refer back to them as acquisitions. Only in this way can judgments yield facts.

Husserl thus gives us a way to see how, when presented with a judgment, we can be led in two intentional directions—to the state of affairs itself intended in the judgment, and to the fact that abides independently of it—directions which, although distinct, maintain an essential relation. The judgment is ‘present’ even when the state affairs is not—even, indeed, when the state of affairs itself ‘ceases to be.’ Yet because the abiding unity of a judgment is precisely the unity of a judgment, it ultimately directs us to the state of affairs judged-about, our ‘final thematic goal.’ This thematic goal is what is ultimately ‘meant’ when we intend facts, but it is intended in the mode of its factuality, that is, *as* something which is known, or available to knowledge.

The State of Affairs Itself as ‘Spontaneous Production’

The state of affairs itself is that objectivity whose intuition fulfills the intention of a judgment. In this fulfillment, the state of affairs is given as itself. We have seen how Husserl insists on the actuality of the state of affairs itself (as *Sichverhalten*) as opposed to the factuality of the state of affairs as objectivity of sense. This actuality, however, cannot be understood along the lines of the existence of perceptual objects. Indeed, we saw earlier that Husserl maintains, in the *Logical Investigations* that “a state of affairs is of course no thing.”⁷² The distinction between perceptual objects and states of affairs is maintained and further explored in *Experience and Judgment* (and other texts from this period).⁷³ Like perceptual objects, states of affairs are given as intentional unities. Yet unlike the unity of perceptual objects, which arises from a passive, receptive synthesis of constantly changing sense data, the unity of states of affairs requires an active intervention on the part of the cognizing ego.

Husserl characterizes this activity as a “spontaneous production:”

⁷¹ Ibid., 320.

⁷² *Logical Investigations*, 2:148.

⁷³ See e.g. *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis : Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock, (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 275-90.

[T]he identical self of the state of affairs is not merely given in the intention (as the objective identical self is eventually given in the fulfilled intending of objects of receptive experience); rather, it is first of all *produced*: the state of affairs itself as sense in the fullness of self-sameness is produced in the perfectly fulfilled judicative proposition, is given in it in the manner of spontaneous production.⁷⁴

We will examine the precise nature of this ‘spontaneous production’—an ‘active synthesis’—in the next chapter. For the time being some general remarks will suffice. The activity in question is none other than the synthesis which unites a ‘subject’ with its ‘determination’ in a copular judgment. In this activity, the subject is posited as being determined in a particular way. Such a positing, if executed ‘originally’ (i.e. on the basis of intuited evidence) arises out of a prior, receptive experience. In *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl focuses primarily on a receptive experience he calls ‘explication,’ in which an object of interest—the ‘substrate’—is perceptually explored and discovered. (We will also discuss explication more thoroughly in Chapter 3.) In explication, specific features or ‘moments’ of the substrate are uncovered, and these are experienced as ‘enrichments of sense’ of the substrate; they are determinations through which the object is made known to us with more specificity and clarity. I see a sponge, for example, and upon touching it I feel moisture. The moisture becomes a ‘moment’ of the sponge, a way in which the sponge appears to me as itself. Explication is not yet, however, judgment: “[W]e have not yet... posited *S as subject* in a predicative judgment, and we have not yet determined it as having the moment *p* in the manner ‘*S is p.*’ This rather is the *achievement of a new kind of activity.*”⁷⁵

It is only through an active predicative synthesis—in which substrate is *posited* as subject, and determinative moment as predicate—that a concrete state of affairs attains to objectivity. This is the activity which would result, for example, in the judgment *The sponge is wet*. “It is only then that there is realized in a productive activity... the consciousness that *S* receives a determination *by p* in the mode ‘*S is p.*’”⁷⁶ The copular form indicates this achievement: “In the ‘is,’ the form of the synthesis between explicand and explicate is expressed in its active accomplishment, i.e., as the apprehension of the being-determined-as, and in the predication this form is a component of the total ‘state of affairs’ which attains expression.”⁷⁷ In other words, the copula expresses the form of synthesis through which the state of affairs itself—

⁷⁴ *Experience and Judgment*, 286.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

the being-determined-as—is first constituted; it is in this sense that the copular form is a ‘component’ of the state of affairs.

If the state of affairs is something ‘produced’ though a synthesis, it is not for that reason any less actual. In fact, for Husserl the state of affairs—as the intentional object produced in a predicative synthesis—is the paradigm of ‘objective’ existence. “It is only in the ‘is’ of this [copulative] connection,” he maintains, “that the positing of what ‘exists’ ‘once and for all’ is truly accomplished.... The copulative connection is that to which the objectivating consciousness in its different levels ultimately aspires, and thus objectivation in the pregnant sense attains its goal in this copulative positing of the ‘is’....”⁷⁸

States of affairs are, for Husserl, the basic structures in which—or rather as which—the world is cognized. This does not mean that we only have experience of the world insofar as we intend states of affairs; our engagement with the world is in fact originally achieved in *pre-predicative* experience. It is as states of affairs, however, that the world is ‘objectivated,’ i.e. actively posited as existing in such-and-such a way.

Thus the state of affairs ‘itself,’ as actuality, is itself the result of a judicative synthesis. It is for this reason Husserl calls it a ‘syntactic objectivity’ in *Experience and Judgment*, or a ‘categorical objectivity’ in the *Logical Investigations*. These objectivities are ‘experienced’ (in some sense which remains to be seen); only as experienced objectivities can they be the fulfillment of judging intentions. Yet their availability to consciousness as unities is dependent on a productive activity of that very consciousness. An original act of judging is what produces this state of affairs as object. Of course, an original experience of a state of affairs occurs only with judgments that are made originally, i.e. on the basis of experiential evidence. Judgments can of course be affirmatively expressed without the presence of such evidence (e.g. after some time has passed, or based on second-hand reports). Yet, as we have seen, the validity of such judgments rests on the in-principle possibility of experiencing the corresponding state of affairs. That is what it means for judgments to have states of affairs as their intentional object. We can now understand this claim as the claim that any copular judgment refers us to the possibility of an experience in which we could fulfill a particular synthesis, namely the specific copular connection expressed in the judgment.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 215.

Thus the ‘being-determined-as,’ the state of affairs *itself*, is made available as an intentional objectivity as soon as any judgment is comprehended, whether or not the fulfillment of the judgment is experienced originally. The very syntactical form of the copular judgment indicates, as Husserl puts it, a particular ‘accomplishment’ in which a determination is assigned (as predicate) to a substrate (as subject). The state of affairs itself as an objectivity is nothing other than the predicate's belonging to the subject, i.e. the subject's being-determined-as the predicate. The confirmation of such a judgment requires a direct experience through which this assignation is successfully enacted; but the state of affairs as unfulfilled intentional object is generated by virtue of the very syntactical form of the copular judgment, along with the meaning of the subject and predicate terms.

The very *being* of a state of affairs itself, then, or more precisely its availability for intentional reference, is inseparable from the act of judgment through which it attains to objectivity in the first place. Judgments for Husserl do not simply ‘refer’ to states of affairs as if the latter were independently existing objectivities that simply appear and are then described through judgments. They are themselves the outcome of judgments. Their status as actualities depends on the possibility of an experience which would ‘give’ them. Yet without a synthesis which actively posits a being-determined-as, there is no intentional object, no state of affairs. In judging, Husserl writes, the judger “is directed to something objective and, in being directed to it, he never has it otherwise than in some categorial (or, as we also say, syntactical) forms or other...”⁷⁹

The nature of the synthetic activity at the heart of copular judgments still needs to be clarified. At this stage, however, what interests us is not so much the synthesis itself but rather the duality of its outcome. In Husserl's analysis, copular synthesis at once constitutes both the state of affairs itself *and* the state of affairs as objectivity of sense. This point is made explicitly by Husserl in the second Appendix to *Formal and Transcendental Logic*:

If it is a matter of those modes of consciousness whose original form is a generating by *synthetic activity*, it turns out that... two intentionalities and givings

⁷⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 115. As Rudolf Bernet has pointed out, Husserl presents us with a framework similar to Kant's. “For Husserl, as for Kant,” he writes, “mere intuition is epistemologically irrelevant, or ‘blind,’ if it has not been subsumed under a corresponding empty intention and thereby ‘classified’. Correlatively, the empty intention is a merely ‘empty’ presumption if it lacks intuitional confirmation, differentiation, and ‘approximation’ to the intended object ‘itself’.” Yet it is only, he argues, the introduction in Husserl's phenomenology of fulfillments which give categorial acts “which is first able phenomenologically to found the strict concept of cognition, that is, the cognition of something *as* something.” Bernet, “Perception, Categorial Intuition and Truth,” 37.

of something itself are in question here; and that the activity of judging, as originally generating the judgment itself (merely *as* judgment), combines, of essential necessity, with the activity of originally shaping (of making evident) the categorical objectivity itself, the corresponding [state of affairs] itself: the [state of affairs] in the mode, experience.⁸⁰

Judicative synthesis has its feet, so to speak, in two domains—the domain of actuality and the domain of factuality. Insofar as the synthesis posits, on the basis of pre-judicative experience, the belonging of a determination to a substrate, it posits what ‘exists.’ The intentional object it generates—the state of affairs itself—can be, in principle, be experienced; it is actual. On the other hand, insofar as synthesis is the accomplishment of an active consciousness, the synthesis itself abides as an acquisition of this consciousness. It is an item of knowledge essentially—it is intended as something known. As such an ‘objectivity of sense,’ it is nominalizable as fact.

Thus although Husserl can speak of “two intentionalities and givings of something itself,” there is a single unity by virtue of which each is given, namely the unity achieved by the predicative synthesis. The two ‘modes’ of this unity are inseparable from each other, as they are simply different moments of one intentional structure. The state of affairs as actual, experienceable unity only attains this status once a predicative synthesis assigns a determination to a substrate explicitly; without a judgment, there is no state of affairs to intend. Conversely, the judgment that abides ‘independently’ of the experience of a state of affairs is nonetheless meaningful only insofar as it indicates the possibility of this experience.

We can summarize our reconstruction of Husserl’s analyses as follows:

1. There is an intentional distinction to be made between the state of affairs itself (the state/*Sichveralten*) and the state of affairs as objectivity of sense (the fact/*Tatsache*). This is the difference between, respectively, something intended as an experienceable actuality and something intended as a knowledge acquisition
2. The intention of a state of affairs as fact, however, is not the intention of a mere meaning. This intention, as much as it has ‘parted company’ with the intention of the state of affairs itself, nonetheless has the state of affairs itself as its ‘ultimate thematic goal.’ The fact attains its validity only from the assumed possibility of an experience in which the state of affairs would show itself originally.

⁸⁰ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 315. I have modified the translation slightly. Cairns translates “Sachverhalt” as “predicatively formed affairs-complex.” This is not an inaccurate rendering of what Husserl means, but I find it unnecessarily cumbersome.

3. Both the original showing of the state of affairs itself *and* the ‘detachable’ objectivity of sense are the result of one and the same synthetic activity. It is not until an active consciousness assigns a determination to a substrate that the ‘being-determined-as’ attains to objectivity (the state of affairs itself); this very synthetic accomplishment, in turn, abides as an acquisition of knowledge (the state of affairs as fact).

2.3.4 Reassessing the pronominal paradox

We are now in a position to apply Husserl’s insights regarding judgments to the paradox of pronominal reference from section 2.3.1. In applying Husserl’s analyses to this problem, we must of course remember that Husserl presumes ‘judgment’ to mean a copular judgment whose basic structure is *S is p*. The judgments that describe what happens—verbal judgments—do not self-evidently display this structure, and I will eventually argue that the intentional acts underlying them cannot be described using Husserl’s analysis of copular synthesis. Put in objective terms, states of affairs are not things that happen. This does not prevent us, however, from making fruitful use of the ideas explored in the context of states of affairs, for we can do so without yet deciding whether or not verbal judgments involve a copular synthesis. If they do, then Husserl’s analyses can obviously be applied to them. If they don’t, we can still posit that (as I will later argue) a synthesis of a different kind is at work in them. In either case, the essential aspects of Husserl’s analysis can still be deployed.

Let us first review the paradoxical linguistic data, using, for variety’s sake, a new sample sentence. Although the pronouns in (45) and (46) bear a surface resemblance, and draw their meaning from the same source sentence, (47) and (48) show divergent results when we try to substitute a CP.

■ The mirror cracked.

■ This will upset Richard.

■ This happened on Monday.

■ [CP That the mirror cracked] will upset Richard.

■ *[CP That the mirror cracked] happened on Monday.

We found this divergence coherent insofar as we took the pronoun in (45) to refer to a fact, and noted that this did not seem to be the case in (46); (49), below, while not ungrammatical, is nonetheless nonsensical.

■ *[DP The fact that the mirror cracked] happened on Monday.

Based on this data we could reasonably conclude that facts are not the sort of things that happen. At the same time, we saw that we could construct a compound sentence where both types of pronominal usage are represented, and in which the pronouns seem to have the same referent.

■ The mirror cracked. This will upset Richard, even though it happened on Monday.⁸¹

A more compact way of presenting the problem is to note that (51) is an unproblematic claim.

■ What happened on Monday will upset Richard.

In other words, the things that happen now do appear to be precisely that which upsets (delights, confuses, etc.)—which is what facts were supposed to do.

We can now make sense of this apparently conflicting data using the schema developed out of Husserl's analyses. The divergence observed in (44)-(49) between facts and things that happen is easy enough to accommodate. Facts correspond, in the Husserlian analysis, to the 'objectivities of sense' that are produced in a synthetic act. They abide as acquisitions of knowledge, and are always intended as such—as intentional objects. What will upset Richard in the examples above is such an objectivity of sense. That which happens, on the other hand, corresponds in Husserl's analysis to the state of affairs itself, which is objectified in the synthetic act. This is not an objectivity of sense, but rather an experienceable actuality. The happening itself, in Husserl's schema, would be the state of affairs "in the mode, experience." Thus a CP expressing a fact can be the subject term indicating what will upset Richard, but cannot indicate that which happens, as this latter is intended as something experienceable, rather than as knowledge.

What to do, then, with the apparent convergence of facts and things that happen in (50) and (51)? As we saw at the end of the previous section, fact and actuality are two aspects of one and the same synthesis, and are tied together inextricably through this synthesis. They are

⁸¹ It bears mentioning that Bennett's model, which distinguishes facts and events, does not offer a good way to understand the way in which we can refer to both of them as the "same" thing.

moments in the total phenomenological situation that arises out of one synthetic act. Although they have a different intentional essence, they are also in an important sense ‘the same’—the intention of both incorporates the same synthetic unity. When we intend in one of these two modes, the other is immediately available as a different facet of the same phenomenological nexus. Thus it is not surprising that we can shift from one to the other while seemingly referring to the ‘same thing.’ The pronouns in (50) in one sense have a different function, since we can substitute a CP for one but not the other, as we see in (52):

■ The mirror cracked. [CP That the mirror cracked] will upset Richard, even though *[CP that the mirror cracked] happened on Monday.

However, our intuition that the pronouns in (50) corefer is not for that reason misguided, since what happened and what will upset Richard are in another sense indeed ‘the same.’ When we speak of what upsets Richard, we intend a fact, an objectivity of sense; but this intention has the happening itself as its ultimate thematic goal. The two ‘things’—fact and happening—are part of one global synthetic situation expressed by the initial proposition.

With a bit more effort, we can also see why (51), repeated below, is unproblematic:

■ What happened on Monday will upset Richard.

Now, with this example, there is no previous sentence explaining what happened, and we don’t need to know what happened to understand the sentence. We just know that something happened. Following Husserl’s analysis, this ‘something’ is a judicatively structured objectivity. Even if we don’t know what it is, we intend it as something judicative structured. The sentential subject ‘what happened on Monday’ prompts us to intend, in an empty fashion, the experienceable actuality of some synthetic objectivity, whatever it may be. It would seem, however, that this should not be what we are being told will upset Richard, since he was not there to experience it. Richard is upset, rather, by a fact.

Yet because we intend this ‘something’ as a synthetic, judicatively formed objectivity, we can immediately translate it into a fact. While what happens is not itself a fact, its factuality is intentionally available the moment we speak of it happening. In (51), we take advantage of this intentional availability. We understand, from the indication that something happened on Monday, that there is a corresponding fact which Richard can come to know and find upsetting. Of course, he is not upset by the fact as fact—that is, as an objectivity of sense. For Richard to be

upset by a fact is for him to have the thing that happened as his ‘thematic goal.’ He is upset that this thing actually happened.

* * *

What have we gained by making sense of this apparent paradox? Our examination of Husserl’s phenomenology of judgment, after all, was not undertaken simply in order to resolve it. The point, rather, was to see how we might use his analyses to help us understand the availability of things that happen as intentional objects to which we can refer. The paradox, and our resolution of it, serves to highlight how we can deploy Husserl’s approach in the service of verbal judgments. The convertibility of things that happen into facts became unproblematic once we took the former to be, like the latter, objectivities that result from a judicative synthesis. The thingliness of what happens, under this approach, is a function of the synthetic unity of the act of judgment itself, and not something that is separate from or hidden within this judgment. At the same time, the objectivity of what happens has to be understood differently from the objectivity of a fact; like the state of affairs itself in Husserl’s schema, the thing that happens must be understood not as an item of knowledge but as an actuality which can be experienced.

To fill in this picture, we must articulate the nature of the judicative synthesis underlying verbal judgments. To do so, we will follow the same method used in this chapter, looking to Husserl’s own analyses of predicative synthesis in order to see what, if anything, we can appropriate from them. This attempt will not prove very fruitful; I will argue that verbal propositions cannot be understood using a copular model. This will help us, however, see how we might begin to articulate a notion of synthesis appropriate to verbal judgments.

3 Copular Judging

The analyses of the previous chapter have given us only a rough scheme with which to conceive of the thingliness that arises out of judgments, whether copular or verbal. We have the suggestion of a phenomenological dynamic, wherein an objectivity arises from a certain kind of synthesis, but we need an account of this synthesis itself. We need to put some meat on this skeleton.

3.1 Two Guiding Questions

First, we need to clarify the very notion of synthesis. The synthesis at stake here is a ‘judicative’ one. We have suggested that the synthetic unity established in an act of judgment is what accords ‘thingliness’ to what happens—it is what gives us such an object of reference in the first place. We did not, however, examine in detail the notion of judicative synthesis itself. Thus our first guiding question is:

- a) What is the nature of the judicative synthesis, such that it is constitutive of a new kind of objectivity?

Husserl never answers, nor does he even pose, this question with respect to verbal judgments, since his focus is always trained steadfastly on the copular judgments constitutive of states of affairs. The very notion of judicative synthesis is, for Husserl, virtually synonymous with copular judging. For this very reason, however, we need an intimate grasp of Husserl’s analyses in the copular domain. Before we can turn to the domain of verbs, we need to understand what it even means to speak of judgment as a synthetic activity, and how this activity is constitutive of objectivities. Since it is in the copular domain that Husserl works out his ideas, this is where we need to start.

Recall, however, that we determined the objectivity of things that happen to be distinct from that of facts. The judicative synthesis yields two kinds of intentional objects, one corresponding to the ‘factual’ and the other to the ‘actual.’ Happenings are actualities which, like

the state of affairs ‘itself,’ are directly experienceable. To borrow Husserl’s formulation, they are the intentional object ‘in the mode, experience.’ Our second guiding question is therefore:

- b) How are the objectivities produced by judicative syntheses themselves experienceable?

This latter question is in a sense *the* question. Our interest, after all, is to understand how the things that happen come to count as things in the first place. As we saw in Chapter 1, asking this question—when it is understood, as it should be, as a phenomenological question—means asking into the nature of the fulfilling experiences in which such things appear as themselves. An account of how they are directly experienceable—even though they are judicative products—is thus of crucial importance to us. Once again, we can only pose this question clearly with respect to verbal judgments once we have understood how Husserl answers it for copular judgments. It is important that we understand Husserl’s complex analyses in some detail, so that we can see precisely how it can help us understand verbal judgments, and how it cannot.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to provide a reconstruction of Husserl’s notion of predicative activity, with the ultimate aim of understanding how Husserl answers questions a) and b) in the case of copular judgments. Our primary source material will be *Experience and Judgment*, where Husserl’s theory of judgment is most fully developed. After discussing the method, and methodological limitations, of this text we will look at his analysis of what he calls ‘prepredicative’ experience. We do so in particular to get a handle on his notion of ‘explication,’ which is a kind of proto-predicative perceptual exploration. While not yet a judicative fulfillment, it is very much like it, and Husserl’s description of judicative fulfillments builds from his treatment of explication. There are some problems in Husserl’s exposition which we’ll need to resolve; having done so, we’ll have acquired a clear picture of the kind of experience which, on Husserl’s analysis, paves the way for judicative activity. Crucially, we’ll see how prepredicative experience, while it is ‘active’ in a certain sense, is nonetheless predominantly ‘passive’ when compared to predication. This will prepare us to better understand just what is active about predicative activity.

We turn, then, to predicative activity, first examining Husserl’s idea that it is motivated by a ‘will to cognition.’ This material is important for two reasons. First it sets the general terms of Husserl’s analysis of judgment, insofar as it articulates what judicative activity is meant to produce: abiding judgments that are independent of, yet refer back to, intuitive experience.

Second, it gives us an opportunity to see Husserl's exclusive commitment to copular judgments—at the expense of verbal judgments—as a symptom of deeper biases pertaining to his conception of cognition in general.

We then engage directly the idea that predication is a new, more active, kind of intentional achievement. First, we take note of Husserl's claim that predicative activity involves a kind of modified repetition of explicative activity, this time with the character of being 'free' or 'willful.' Then we discuss in some detail Husserl's analyses concerning the 'positing' of subject and predicate forms that make up the judgment itself. In this difficult material, Husserl proposes that it is only through the formation of a syntactically articulated judgment that an object of experience can become an object of knowledge. This is a crucial moment in Husserl's own analysis, but it is particularly significant to us, because as it helps clarify the type intentionality that is peculiar to copular predication; in Chapter 4 we will need to distinguish this type from that belonging to verbal judgments.

Finally, we'll pull together the essential aspects of Husserl's analysis and show how it accounts for what judgments are meant to achieve: abiding knowledge-acquisitions that are detachable from experience, while at the same time referring back to experience. These sections will lead us to a central insight: states of affairs are experienceable, but only insofar as a judicative act has posited them as experienceable. We will then be in a position to answer our two guiding questions, as they pertain to copular judgments. This will provide us with a framework to use in the next chapter, where we try to do the same for verbal judgments.

3.2 The Scope and Limitations of *Experience and Judgment*

In *Experience and Judgment* (assembled by Ludwig Landgrebe, under Husserl's supervision) we find Husserl firmly committed to his later 'genetic' phenomenological approach. Judicative structures are not only submitted to a 'static' analysis, wherein they are treated as intentional objects whose experienced ('noematic') features are to be discovered along with the corresponding ('noetic') acts which intend them. Husserl is also—one might argue primarily—concerned with the genesis of predicative structures in prepredicative experience. Husserl's concern with the origins of predication in fact predates his explicit identification of genetic analysis as a phenomenological practice. We see it already in the *Logical Investigations*, where the 'categorial' acts which intend categorial objectivities are characterized as 'founded' acts;

they presuppose earlier acts from which they are built up, so to speak. In particular, section 48 of Investigation VI offers a rough overview of the genesis of predicative acts on the basis of prepredicative (“explicative,” or “articulating”) acts.¹

It is, however, in *Experience and Judgment* that the genetic analysis of predication is most thoroughly carried out. This is, after all, the stated task of the entire work: “clarifying the origin of the predicative judgment.”² What in the *Logical Investigations* is discussed in a few pages—namely, the character of prepredicative acts and their role in the genesis of judgments—is a story told over multiple chapters in *Experience and Judgment*. This chapter will therefore focus on the analyses presented in this later text, along with some material from *Formal and Transcendental Logic*.

The studies in *Experience and Judgment* are subject to certain methodological limitations, some of which Husserl makes explicit at the end of his introduction. Most conspicuously, Husserl limits himself to examining judgments that are “based on external perception.” By this he means “simple sensuous awareness” devoid of any evaluation or activity other than a mere “contemplation” of perceptual objects in which their perceptual features are discovered. He justifies this, first of all, by arguing that contemplative perception is the “most immediate and simplest experience,” and therefore corresponds to the “most elementary act of judgment.”³

Husserl admits, however, that a purely contemplative interest (as opposed e.g. to active engagement or evaluation) is not necessarily the most common attitude in everyday experience. This admission is surely offered in response to the Heideggerian critique that Husserl’s phenomenology is too disengaged from the sphere of praxis. He thus goes on to further defend the privileged position of contemplative perception in the context of a phenomenology of judgment. Insofar as such perception reveals to us the sensuous structure of the world—and nothing else—its successful accomplishment entails “the activation of the fundamental *aisthēsis*, of the passive protodoxa, that fundamental stratum which underlies every act of experience in the concrete sense of the word.” The structures of sensuous perception are operative in any experience of the concrete world, and do not vary relative to practical and evaluative interests.

¹ See Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2:286-89. For a careful analysis of this section, see Lohmar, *Erfahrung und Kategoriales Denken*, 169-73.

² Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, 64.

Whether or not I like the look of tennis balls, or know what to do with them, their purely sensuous features still display themselves with the same lawfulness. Only because sensuous objects are “objectively stable identities” can they be “confirmed and judged.”⁴

Husserl draws out two implications from the invariant lawfulness of sensuous nature. The first pertains to its fundamental role in the sciences. Perception—and judging on the basis of perception—constitute, Husserl argues, the intentional attitude which “makes possible a confirmation with the goal of objectivity, of validity ‘once and for all’ and ‘for everyone.’” Perception and perceptual judgment therefore provide the evidential basis of theoretical science, and are accordingly “the modes of prepredicative self-evidence on which the act of predicative judgment, as this is regarded by traditional logic, is based.”⁵ Insofar as Husserl’s stated aim is to make “a contribution to the genealogy of logic in general,”⁶ perceptual judgments in this sense should indeed be his central concern, as they supply the tradition with its paradigm of objective predication.

Secondly, however, Husserl also argues that, regardless of the tradition, a phenomenology of perceptual judgments should precede a phenomenology of practical and evaluative behavior—even if, in our concrete experience, it is the latter which are almost always our primary concern. This is because, Husserl argues, the pre-predicative cognitive activity involved in perceptual judgments is also integral to practical activity; purely cognitive activity is “at the disposal of” practical activity, even if, in practical activity, it is not a “goal in itself.”⁷ Of course, the prepredicative stratum will in this case be more complex, involving more than just perceptual acts. Nonetheless, insofar as practical activity is deployed on a sensuous world, we are, so to speak, ‘pre-predicating’ what we encounter in this world just as much as we do so in purely perceptual contemplation.

All of the investigations in the text that follows, then, are concerned only with judgments based on perceptual evidence alone. This limitation is further constrained to the perception of “static, immobile objects.” Neither the perception of motion nor judgments about moving things will be considered. Husserl suggests that the basic structures he will examine in the current text may turn out to be applicable to judgments about movement as well, but admits this is far from

⁴ Ibid., 65.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ Ibid., 66.

certain: “The question of knowing what modifications would result if we did take account of the perception of movement, in which case a basic structure of synthesis and explication, as well as of the predicative synthesis constructed on it, could turn out to be all-pervasive, must remain unanswered here.”⁸ Husserl does not appear ever to have returned to this question (certainly not in his published texts, nor in any unpublished notes consulted for the present work), and it will be part of my argument in the next chapter that Husserl’s phenomenological analysis for copular judgments falters when we try to apply it to the dynamic situations expressed through verbal judgments. Seeing just how it falters will help us see what kind of new account is needed for a plausible phenomenology of verbal judgments and the happenings they express.

Husserl’s self-imposed restriction to the realm of perception does not entail that he looks only at judgments that ascribe perceptual features to individual objects. This is his first focus, but he also looks at relational judgments and, eventually, universal judgments that make general claims about classes of objects. Neither of these other analyses, however, are relevant for our purposes. We want to examine the judicative syntheses which most closely resemble that which we ultimately want to clarify: the accomplishment of verbal judgments. Simple property-attributing judgments provide the best analog. That universal judgments like ‘Lemons are yellow’ are not analogous to particular verbal judgments like ‘My tooth fell out’ is obvious enough, I think, not to require clarification.⁹ But what about relational judgments?

The relational judgments Husserl examines are either comparative, bringing into relation the perceptual features of different objects (e.g. ‘This banana is greener than that one’), or else propositional, locating objects relative to other objects (e.g. ‘The banana is on the table’). They thus involve, necessarily, a relating of multiple intentional objects.¹⁰ While verbal judgments can also involve multiple objects, they needn’t, and in any case verbal judgments are not obviously ‘relational’ in the comparative/locational sense Husserl has in mind. Husserl does indicate that we can also talk about “relations of connection,” which include causal relations.¹¹ Judgments regarding these relations would indeed be of great interest to us—for here we do see something happening—but Husserl does not provide an analysis of them.

⁸ Ibid., 67.

⁹ See Part III, of *Experience and Judgment*, “The Constitution of the General Objectivities and the Forms of Judging in General.”

¹⁰ See Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 149-94 and 223-25.

¹¹ Ibid., 186.

As we saw in Chapter 1, there are also other kinds of copular constructions which are not property-attributing. The copula can be used, for example, in equative constructions, such as ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus.’ Here the copula serves essentially as an ‘equals’ sign; neither term modifies the other. Accordingly, while Husserl does briefly consider equative constructions, he does not consider them to be predicative.¹² We can also use the copula to classify individual objects, as in ‘Socrates is a human.’ These judgments are not examined as a discrete judgment-form in *Experience and Judgment*, but in any case it is clear that they are not relevant to us either.

When I refer, then, to copular judgments in the following discussion, what I have in mind are judgments in which the predicate names a property the object ‘possesses,’ in the way that objects possess perceptual properties. In lieu of a more careful analysis, we can characterize this sense of ‘having of a property’ as being ‘in a state.’ For an object to possess a perceptual property is one way for this object itself to be in a certain state. (Being magnetized would also be a property of this kind, even though it is not perceptual.) By contrast, being ‘smaller than’ or ‘on top of’ something else, or belonging to a class like ‘human,’ is not to have a property in this way. Relational properties, while they may be states, are not states of the object ‘itself.’ Classifications, on the other hand, are not ‘states’ the object is in, but rather identify an object’s type. Property-havings that are states of the object itself are the closest analog, amongst copular judgments, to what we say about objects when we say something is happening to them. Indeed, as we have seen, the property-exemplification approach to events treats them precisely as states, or at least as a cousin to them. This, then, is what we will mean by ‘copular judgment,’ and I will remind the reader occasionally that ‘copular’ implies ‘property attributing.’

3.3 Prepredicative Experience

The entirety of Part I of *Experience and Judgment* is devoted to “Predicative (Receptive) Experience,” and spans over forty sections; to examine all of its intricacies is beyond the scope of our concern. It is crucial, however, that we examine the prepredicative sphere in some detail, since Husserl’s later account of predicative activity is otherwise incomprehensible. Of particular importance is an aspect of prepredicative experience which Husserl calls “explication.” There are at least three levels of prepredicative experience in Husserl’s analysis—each more ‘active’

¹² Ibid., 235-36.

relative to the former, even though the prepredicative sphere as a whole is ‘passive’ when compared to predicative activity. Explication, however, is the act closest to judgment itself. More than simply prepredicative, explication is proto-predicative, insofar as it lays the groundwork on which the subject-predicate relation is based.¹³ Explication provides the material which eventually becomes the evidential fulfillment of a judicative intention. We must therefore be intimately familiar with explication if we are to grasp what is experienced in a judicative fulfillment.

At the same time, however, we must take the foundational role Husserl grants to explication—and to the prepredicative sphere in general—with a grain of salt. Husserl traces a path with a specific chronology, beginning in a prepredicative, exploratory mode of consciousness and ending in a well-formed judgment which is, moreover, evidentially fulfilled. Yet this chronology is not a necessary one. What Husserl is describing are judgments made on the basis of perceptual experiences that precede the judicative acts themselves. Just as often, however, we are faced with judgments for which we have no immediate evidence—judgments reported by others, for example—and which we can only confirm through subsequent experiences. These evidential experiences must also count as fulfillments of a judicative intention, even if this intention was not prompted by a prepredicative, exploratory mode of perception. The experience that fulfills a judgment need not be based on a previous explication of which it is a modified repetition.

Thus as we carefully reconstruct Husserl’s account of explication, we do so not in order to understand how judgments arise out of prepredicative experience. This is not, after all, our central concern. Our aim is rather to grasp Husserl’s notion of predicative synthesis. The notion of explication is useful in this regard for two reasons. First, it helps us clarify the sense in which predicative activity is *active*. Explication, while proto-predicative, nonetheless belongs to a sphere of activity Husserl describes as ‘passive.’ Understanding why this is the case allows us see, by way of contrast, why predication is an activity. Second, as was mentioned above, we can only understand Husserl’s account of judicative fulfillments through his account of explication.

¹³ Thomas Seeböhm uses the term “proto-kategorial” to identify the pre-predicative ‘origins’ of various judicative forms: ‘proto-Affirmation’, ‘proto-Konjunktion’, ‘proto-Konditional’ and so on. However, his ‘proto-’ level corresponds to the passive constitution of the perceptual sphere in general, not to the explicative determination of perceptual objects that will be discussed below. He calls this second level “E-kategorial”, because he borrows the term “Einbildungskraft” from Kant, in order to name prepredicative activity that apprehends discrete intentional objects. Thomas Seeböhm, “Kategoriale Anschauung,” in *Logik, Anschaulichkeit, und Transparenz*, ed. Wolfgang Orth (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1990).

Explication is for Husserl the passive version of the active experience in which a judgment is evidentially fulfilled—in which, as we will see, a state of affairs is encountered “in the mode, experience.” Explication is not itself this fulfilling experience, nor is it a necessary precursor to this experience. These two experiences, however, have the same basic structure, by virtue of which an object is perceived as ‘having’ a particular property. Husserl’s most thorough account of this structure occurs in his analyses of explication, which are presupposed in his later account of judicative experience. We must therefore proceed through explication to arrive at judicative experience, even if this sequence is not always necessary in experience itself

Before we turn to explication, however, let us look briefly at two more primitive modes of prepredicative experience. This will help bring explication into sharper relief as a proto-predicative rather than merely prepredicative mode of experience, and will also introduce some concepts which will crop up later.

3.3.1 Affection and apprehension

The ‘pre-’ of prepredicative experience does not indicate a temporal precedence; it is rather a matter phenomenological necessity. For example, predication of sensuous nature requires the pre-constitution of a “field” of spatiotemporal objects in the first place. Spatiotemporality is explicitly presumed, and left unanalyzed in *Experience and Judgment*,¹⁴ but Husserl treats in detail at least two other levels of prepredicative experience before arriving at his analysis of explication. First we find what Husserl calls “affection” (*Affektion*) in which a subject’s attention is first drawn to an object.¹⁵ Beyond this lies “apprehension” (*Erfassung*), in which the subject actively holds an object in focus. This apprehension is “the intuition which is directed toward the object ‘taken as a whole.’” Husserl describes it as “the lowest level of common, objectifying activity, the lowest level of unobstructed exercise of perceptual interest.”¹⁶ Apprehension is a particularly interesting case, because under Husserl’s analysis it displays a curious blend of activity and passivity—what Husserl calls “passivity in activity,”¹⁷ and because, on the side of activity, it introduces the notion of “retaining in grasp.” Both of these aspects of apprehension reappear, in a modified form, in explication, so their role in apprehension bears examining.

¹⁴ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 68.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 76-80.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

Apprehension is active insofar as, in it, the continuously passing temporal phases of the perceived object are ‘retained in grasp.’ To highlight the active nature of this retaining-in-grasp, Husserl contrasts it with retention, which is a purely passive aspect of all perception, and indeed of all experience. Retention is a feature of “all phenomenological data,” and refers, essentially, to the way present moments become just-past moments; they are continuously modified into “the still-having-in-consciousness of the same in the mode of the just-past (the just-having-been-now).”¹⁸ Retention is operative at every moment, regardless of whether my ego is actively grasping a particular object. Imagine, for example, that in looking around a room you happen to spot a chair, but then quickly turn your focus elsewhere. The experience of the chair has not simply vanished; it is still ‘there’ retentionally, as what you have just experienced. Indeed, you may, a few seconds later, realize that there was something odd about the chair, and turn your attention back to it. Of course, most of what resides in the ‘just-having-been-now’ does not elicit our attention; yet it still an integral part of every present moment that it is accompanied by what has just passed. Thus “the consciousness of a concrete present includes in itself a consciousness of a retentional extension of the past.”¹⁹

The merely passive ‘still-having’ that characterizes retention is different from the more active ‘retaining-in-grasp’ of apprehension. In mere retention, what is retained recedes into the ‘background of consciousness,’ whereas in apprehension “the ego is still actively directed toward it in a modified mode.”²⁰ The previous phases of the object “still remain really functional, although modified, elements in the concretion of the real act.”²¹ This is Husserl’s temporal characterization of what it is like to focus one’s attention on an object. There is now a sense that each moment in the experience of the object is a continuation of immediately previous experiences of the same object. Let’s return to the chair in the room. Imagine now that it has grabbed your attention, and that you begin to walk around it while keeping our focus on it. Each previous view of the chair remains ‘active’ as a part of my continuous experience of the chair. It

¹⁸ Ibid., 110-11.

¹⁹ Ibid., 111.

²⁰ Ibid., 109.

²¹ Ibid., 111.

is in this sense that apprehension is active: the retained phases of the object are not left to fall away; they are kept alive, so to speak, by my continual interest in a particular object.²²

At the same time, precisely because apprehension involves the passing temporal phases of an object, there is a passive aspect to it as well. Thus there pertains to apprehension what Husserl calls a “fixed, passive regularity.”²³ What he means by this, we can venture, is simply that, while the passing temporal phases are kept ‘active’ in the sense described above, they are at the same time passively experienced. This passing of phases is something other, Husserl claims, than the primordial temporal flux which underlies all experience. The flux is “only *preconstitutive*,” whereas the passivity experienced in apprehension is “truly objectivating” in that it “thematizes or cothematizes objects.”²⁴ In other words, the passivity of apprehension is one in which the passing phases are grasped *as* the phases of a continuously experienced object. The passivity “belongs to the act, not as a base but as act, a kind of *passivity in activity*.”²⁵ Through this “active-passive retaining-in-grasp,” and only this basis, a temporal object is apprehended as enduring, “as one which not only is now but which was also the same just before and will be in the next now.”²⁶

Again, apprehension is prepredicative for Husserl merely in the sense that this basic ‘level’ of objectivation—in which the object is apprehended as an enduring thing—is a presupposition of any predication in which the subject is a physical thing. At this level, however, there is as yet nothing which is analogous to the predicative synthesis. The object is apprehended as a whole, but none of its properties are individually identified. It is only in what Husserl calls explication that we encounter an activity which is prepredicative in the more robust sense of being proto-predicative.

3.3.2 Explication

Explication is the activity wherein the object is explored and its discrete determinations are discovered. These latter are not yet actively predicated of the object; this requires a further,

²² A more complete account of apprehension would also include its future-directed ‘anticipatory’ aspect. I omit it because we are considering apprehension only in passing, and because the bulk of Husserl’s account focuses on retaining-in-grasp.

²³ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 108.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

predicative act which Husserl describes in Part II of *Experience and Judgment*. Explication is a strictly perceptual experience, albeit one that lies ‘beyond’ apprehension in terms of the complexity of its involvement with the object. Whereas apprehension is merely a “fixed view” which intends the object as an enduring unity, explication pushes beyond this and enters “into the internal horizon of the object.” Our perceptual interest turns toward “singularities *in* the object.”²⁷ “For example,” Husserl writes, “what first strikes the eye is its total surface color or its shape; then a certain part of the object becomes prominent—in the case of a house, for example, the roof; finally, the particular properties of this part—its color, shape, and so on.”²⁸

It is not enough, however, to say that explication involves a passing from one property to another, since this would only constitute a series of discrete intentions, each focused on something entirely new. The peculiarity of explication is that, in it, the originally perceived object maintains a certain centrality; each new perception simply adds to our overall perceptual grasp of this object:

Through the entire process, the *S* [the object] retains the character of *theme*; and while, step by step, we gain possession of the moments, the parts, one after the other... each is nothing in itself but something of the object *S*, coming from it and in it. In the apprehension of the properties we come to know *it*, and we come to know the properties only as belonging to it.²⁹

The phenomenological task, then, is to clarify this process, wherein discrete perceptions, while in a certain sense ‘thematic’—because they are individually apprehended—are nonetheless “simply themes *in which* is realized in a coherent way the dominant interest in *S*.” We want to understand why “the transition to them is not an entering into a new object.”³⁰ There is, as Husserl puts it, a “twofold constitution of sense [*Sinngebung*]” in which “object-substrate” and “determination” are originally intuited both in their distinctness and in their unique relationship. “With this” he continues “we are at the *place of origin of the first of the so-called ‘logical categories’*,” namely the categories ‘substrate’ and ‘determination.’³¹

²⁷ Ibid., 112.

²⁸ Ibid., 113.

²⁹ Ibid., 113-14.

³⁰ Ibid., 114.

³¹ Ibid., 114-15.

Overlapping and Coincidence

The first step in Husserl's analysis is to characterize explication as "a particular mode of the synthesis of overlapping [*Überschiebung*]." By "overlapping" in general, Husserl means any instance in which the ego is at once directed to multiple things. These can be as dissimilar and unrelated as a color and a sound. All that matters is that, in moving my primary focus from one to the other, I am 'still directed' to the first: "The two are together actively taken up by the ego; the indivisible ego is in both. The succession of the rays of attention and of apprehension has become a *single double ray*."³² In this minimal sense—which does not yet give us explication—overlapping is nothing other than my ability to direct my attention to one thing while still keeping another thing in mind. Husserl does not here introduce the expression 'retaining-in-grasp,' but clearly a version of this intentional activity is at play here. It is now not a matter, as in apprehension, of retaining-in-grasp an object's previously perceived phases, but rather of previously intended objects.

Overlapping can occur, however, with the added characteristic of a *coincidence* [*Deckung*] between the intended things. If we pass, for example, from one color to another color, "there is already a synthesis of coincidence; the moments which overlap one another coincide according to likeness or similarity."³³ Here, too, a form of retaining-in-grasp must be at work. The first color must be 'kept in mind' so that the next one can be perceived *as* similar. An analogous structure is at work in what Husserl calls the "total coincidence of identity," in which an intention of an object coincides with another intention of the same object. This occurs in apprehension, of course, in which an object is continuously perceived through successive phases; but such a coincidence of identity also pertains to the 'overlapping' of my perception of an object with a simultaneous recollection of that object in a different situation.

Explication, then, represents for Husserl yet another case of overlapping and coincidence, albeit a "completely unique" one. We will soon see that there are problems with this characterization of explication, but for now let us see what Husserl is saying. Some substrate *S* and its determination α are co-intended, and thus overlap; but in what sense is there a coincidence? Husserl writes:

³² Ibid., 115.

³³ Ibid., 116.

When α is present to our consciousness as a determination, we are not simply conscious of it as being absolutely the same as S , nor are we conscious of it as something completely other. In every explicative determination of S , S is present in one of its particularities; and in the different determinations which appear in the form of explicates, it remains the same, but in conformity with the different particularities which are its properties.³⁴

This claim is not particularly enlightening. It just tells that that properties appear as properties of a substrate, which itself appears continuously as the same object through its determinations. This is really a restatement of the problem, rather than a step towards a solution, since the very possibility of this unique intentional relationship (between substrate and determination) is precisely what is in question. At least, however, we see how Husserl frames the issue as an instance of ‘coincidence’ of two intentions. For this to be possible, a certain kind of retaining-in-grasp must be at work. Accordingly, Husserl’s next step is to describe the retaining-in-grasp of explication, in contrast to the retaining-in-grasp of simple apprehension. His account is deficient in its first presentation, as we will see, but his further elaborations present a more coherent picture.

Retaining-in-grasp in explication

Husserl describes again the process of explication, as it arises out of an original, simple apprehension. We first have the object in view as a whole; we are then drawn to its discrete determinations:

We observe, for example, a copper bowl which is before us: our glance ‘runs over’ it, remains fixed for a moment on the roundness, and returns to it again, attracted by a spot which stands out, a variation from the uniform roundness. Then our glance jumps to a large shiny spot and goes on a bit farther, following the shimmering glitter: then it is struck by the bosses; the cluster is thrown into relief as a unity; we run over these bosses one by one, etc.³⁵

Each of these particularities is grasped in what Husserl calls a “partial apprehension.” The question, then, is: when we carry out a partial apprehension, “what happens during this time to the total apprehension, the apprehension of the bowl”? We have not yet let it go, we haven’t turned to a new substrate (e.g. a vase lying near the bowl); that would be a different sort of change. We are still ‘turned toward’ it. But we are no longer engaged in the original activity which first apprehended the whole as whole: “[T]he active apprehension of the whole does not

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 117.

remain in the original form which first gave it life but is a *maintaining of the activity in an intentional modification*, precisely as a still-retaining-in grasp.”³⁶

To this extent—and only to this extent—explication, Husserl says, is like simple apprehension. (It isn’t, really, but we’ll come to this in a moment.) There, too, the original activity which grasps an object is retained in grasp even as new temporal phases of the object arise; the original activity does not just recede retentionally into the background, but remains operative throughout. The difference is that, whereas in simple apprehension the intentional object retained in grasp remains unaltered in explication the intentional object is constantly taking on each newly discovered determination. “Individual graspings” of particularities of the object are “transformed... into *modifications of a total grasp*, in other words, into enrichments of its content.”³⁷

This enriching of content is expressed symbolically by Husserl as follows, with *S* standing for the thematic object (the ‘substrate,’) and α, β for explicated determinations:

After the explication of the α , the *S* becomes $S\alpha$; after the emergence of the β , $(S\alpha)\beta$, and so on. Thus α, β etc., are no longer apprehended—either primarily or secondarily; the ego is no longer directed toward them; it is directed toward the *S*, which contains them as precipitates.³⁸

Note that this symbolism is not that of first-order logic, despite surface resemblances. It does not represent semantic structures, with the symbols standing in for words, but prepredicative intentional processes, the symbols here indicating moments in this process. In explication, a thematic object *S*—an object that has attracted our interest—is perceptually explored, and accordingly yields more and more to perceptual exploration. While our attention throughout explication moves from property to property, our over-arching interest is in the object itself. Our apprehension of each property serves to fill in our intention of the object, which is present as ‘retained-in-grasp.’

We should pause, however, and ask to what degree this makes any sense. Let us recall what the analysis of explication is supposed to show us: how it is that discretely apprehended properties are not experienced as new intentional objects, but rather as determinations of a single substrate *S*. Is this puzzling relationship clarified when if we say that *S* is something both ‘retained in grasp’ and progressively enriched by each new explicate?

³⁶ Ibid., 118.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 119.

A first problem: how is the substrate something ‘retained in grasp’? This idea is not without its difficulties. Recall that when retaining-in-grasp was first introduced as a feature of simple apprehension, it was clarified by way of contrast with mere retention. Whereas retention is characterized by the receding of an intention into the background of consciousness, retaining-in-grasp involves an activity which keeps this intention operative. The past phases of the object are actively attended to, and the object is thereby intended as something enduring. Implicit here is the idea that retention and retaining-in-grasp differ only in that the latter keeps the retained intention from fading; otherwise they are the same. What is at stake in both cases is a prior intention of the object. Now, a prior intention is by necessity fixed; the past phases of our intention of an object cannot be altered without changing the very sense of the intention.

Yet if this is the case, it is hard to see how retaining-in-grasp serves to constitute the substrate of explication. In explication, each new determination of the object modifies the substrate. How, then, can the substrate correspond to the retaining-in-grasp of a prior intention? We cannot simply change the meaning of a prior intention; it is part of the lawfulness of the temporal order that what is past cannot be altered. A prior intention of an object cannot simply be ‘enriched’ upon the discovery of a new property of this object. Thus to understand the structure of explication, we cannot simply employ a modified notion of retaining-in-grasp in order to account for the thematic continuity of the substrate. Fortunately, Husserl offers a more helpful analysis in §26, where he describes explication as “elucidation of what is anticipated according to the horizon.”³⁹ We will turn to this idea in a moment.

A second concern arises with the notion of ‘enrichment.’ How are we to understand the addition of determinations to the substrate? As we have just seen, this is inconceivable if the substrate is analyzed simply as an intention retained-in-grasp, since it would not be possible to alter such an intention. Even setting this problem aside, however, it is not yet clear what ‘enrichment’ even means. In what sense can partial apprehensions be ‘added’ to a total apprehension? How does this accretion work? Husserl examines this more closely in §25, where he brings in the notion of ‘habitus.’ We will look at this idea as well.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁰ Dieter Lohmar provides a very careful and nuanced articulation of Husserl’s notion of explication (and prepredicative experience in general). In his reconstruction, however, he leaves intact, and appears to accept, Husserl’s initial presentation of explication as an “enrichment” of a substrate that is “retained in grasp.” In this regard I depart from his analysis. See Lohmar, *Erfahrung und Kategoriales Denken*, 231-36.

Explication as elucidation of a horizon

Let us first investigate the notion of the ‘horizon’ of a perceptual object. The basic insight here is that the determinations discovered in explication are not merely encountered; they are encountered as anticipated. We can see what this means with a concrete example. I see a clear green bottle lying a few yards away. I take it to be a beer bottle. I therefore anticipate that my further encounters with it will fall within a certain range of possibilities typical of beer bottles. It will have a smooth, round circumference; it will have a hard, translucent surface; it will have a paper label on one side.

These anticipations are not formulated explicitly as judgments; nor are they ‘expectations’ in the usual sense of this word, which implies some level of conscious awareness of the expectation. Rather, they implicitly structure and guide my encounter with the object as soon as I take it to be of a certain ‘type.’ Some of my anticipations are quite specific, and establish a strict standard. If, for example, the bottle turns out to be soft to the touch, my prior anticipation will have been so severely contradicted that I can no longer take this object to be a beer bottle. Others are more yielding—I may anticipate that the bottle has bottom, but if I discover it has broken off, I can continue seeing the object as a beer bottle. Besides these rather specific anticipations, there is much that is more vague and open-ended. From a distance, for example, I see that the bottle does in fact have a label attached to it. I anticipate that the label will have some design or other, with a some brand name on it. Until I actually see it, however, this anticipation remains vague.

This is what Husserl describes “as an *elucidation* and clarification, as a more precise determination of what is indeterminate in the horizon-form.”⁴¹ The horizon-form is structure of anticipation peculiar to a particular type of object. It is the range of what is anticipated as experienceable in an encounter with an object of that type. Upon an initial encounter with an object of a familiar type (or, if it is completely unfamiliar, of the type “spatial thing in general”), we have at our disposal, besides what is immediately perceived, a “frame of empty sense,” a “horizon of confusion,” “vague generality,” an “open determinateness.”⁴² All of these expressions indicate the same thing – everything about the object which is yet to be determined. It is like a field of open questions about the object. There is ‘vagueness,’ ‘confusion,’ or

⁴¹ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 124.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 125.

‘emptiness’ in so far as these questions remain unanswered; but there is a ‘frame,’ a ‘horizon,’ a ‘determinateness’ insofar as these questions already prescribe certain types of answers.

The experience of individual explicates answers these questions (or at least some of them). In the Introduction to *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl gives an elegant characterization of the horizon of an object, and its elucidation in experience:

[T]his horizon in its indeterminateness is copresent from the beginning as a realm [*Spielraum*] of possibilities, as the prescription of the path to a more precise determination, in which only experience itself decides in favor of the determinate possibility it realizes as opposed to others.⁴³

“The horizon,” Husserl later writes, “which in its unity is originally completely vague, undifferentiated, is furnished by fulfillment with the explicate which comes to light each time and clarifies it.”⁴⁴ Of course, the horizon is never completely fulfilled; an object can never be completely explicated. Moreover, with each new explicate, the horizon itself changes. The label on the bottle, for example, may have an abundance of text; now the horizon includes the yet-to-be-determined specificities of this text. Or, I discover that the bottom of the bottle is missing; I now have a clear view of the interior, which I can explore. Yet each ‘new’ horizon is essentially related to the original horizon, since each horizon follows upon, and arises from, the progressive clarification of the horizon before it. Each explicate appears as the elucidation or clarification of “what is vaguely meant by way of [the] horizon.”⁴⁵ Wherever an explicate happens to fall in the ongoing succession of explicates, it is intended as the determination of what was theretofore a ‘vague generality,’ a possibility implicit in the intended sense of the object itself.

It is because explication is such a process of elucidation that each explicate can appear as the property of the same substrate:

The *S* is ever the *S* of one and the same “apprehension”; it is always present in consciousness as the same in the unity of an objective sense but in a continuous transformation of the act of apprehension, in an ever new relation of the emptiness and fullness of the apprehension which goes forward in the process as the unfolding of *S* as it is in itself, explicating it as this.⁴⁶

In other words, as long as my perceptual interest is guided by the horizon of a particular object, individual explicates will count as aspects of this object. This gives us a more coherent interpretation of the substrate than what Husserl previously offered, where it was characterized

⁴³ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

simply as what is ‘retained in grasp.’ In that account, the substrate was constituted by the modification of prior intention, in which the object was intended as a totality; as we move on to individual explicates, this prior, total intention, while no longer original, is held in grasp. As we saw, this idea was untenable, insofar as it involved altering this prior intention to include new determinations. In the horizon/fulfillment model, on the other hand, the substrate is not simply active as what was previously apprehended; it is operative as the structure (the “*Spielraum*”) that guides explication itself, and determines how the explicates appear. They appear as the elucidation of an object that was initially intended only vaguely. It is in this way that the substrate remains ‘thematic,’ appearing in each explicate as that which is elucidated through it.

Enrichment as ‘habitus.’

This only gives us a partial picture of explication. We still need to understand how the explicates, once apprehended as elucidation of a vague horizon, persist as ‘enrichments’ of the intentional object. What Husserl describes symbolically – S becomes $S\alpha$, $(S\alpha)\beta$, etc. – has to be brought to phenomenological clarity. How are we to understand the addition of new determinations to a substrate, keeping in mind that we are still in the prepredicative sphere, before the belonging of a predicate to a subject has been explicitly posited? Husserl characterizes this accretion as the acquisition of a new ‘habitus’: “It is a *possession in the form of a habitus*, ready at any time to be awakened anew by an active association.”⁴⁷ What is he talking about?

A newly encountered object has a horizon of indeterminate anticipations. The fulfillment of this horizon does not obliterate these anticipations; it rather makes them determinate. For example: I return to where I left the bottle, and see it lying there with its label out of view. I not only anticipate that, turning it over, I will find a label; I now anticipate the specific label I saw before. My anticipation may not be explicitly noted, but if in fact find no label, I will be surprised—I may wonder if this is not in fact a different bottle. This just means that the anticipation was operative all along. In Husserl’s terminology, I now have acquired an ‘active association’ between a perception of the bottle and the label. More specifically, I anticipate a sequence of perceptions and movements which will ‘take me’ from a view where I don’t see that particular label, to one where I do.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 122.

This determinate anticipation is a sort of proto-knowledge which Husserl calls ‘habitus.’ We can think of it as a perceptual habituation: I become habituated to anticipate a specific course of experience in my encounter with this now-familiar object. This habituality can be reinforced through “repeated running through” of the explication, but it is also established even with a single fleeting encounter.⁴⁸ Habitus is thus the “precipitate” of any explication. It is the way in which a new determination is associated with the intention of an object in general. After explication, Husserl writes:

the object is pre-given with a new content of sense: it is present to consciousness with the *horizon*—an empty horizon, to be sure⁴⁹—of *acquired cognitions*: the precipitation of the active bestowal of sense, of the preceding allotment of a determination, is now a component of the sense of apprehension inherent in the perception, even if it is not really explicated anew.⁵⁰

This, then, is how we are to understand what is symbolized by S , $S\alpha$, $(S\alpha)\beta$, and so on. The progressive accretion of explicates does not involve a mere conjoining of various intentions, but a process of perceptual habituation, in which the intention of S comes to include, as anticipations, paths of experience which lead to α , β and further determinations. These determinations remain anticipations ‘prescribed’ by the sense of the object itself, although they are now determinately, rather than indeterminately, anticipated. We can of course break off our interest in the substrate (e.g. the bottle) and turn to an explicate (e.g. the label, or the particular coloring of the bottle), treating it as a new substrate to be explicated of its own accord.⁵¹ So long, however, as we are guided by the horizon of the original substrate, the explicates appear as determinations of the substrate.

The Passivity of Explication

Although Husserl characterizes the explicative act as a more active mode than mere apprehension, it nonetheless remains in the “domain of receptivity.”⁵² How are we to understand this? As in the case of apprehension, we find in Husserl’s account of explication a blend of activity and passivity. Explication is active insofar as it involves an exploration of the object, a following-through of threads of interest which lead us from one determination to another. It also

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 123.

⁴⁹ It is “empty” because it is anticipated but not perceived.

⁵⁰ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 122-23.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 129ff.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 197.

involves, as does mere apprehension, maintaining our interest fixed on the object in question. Yet, as with apprehension, it is only through the effort of interest that explication is active. Everything else about it is passive or ‘receptive.’ The indeterminate horizon of an object arises passively, without our effort or even our notice; newly discovered determinations are passively encountered as they arise; and they are passively ‘added’ to the intentional object as habitualities. None of this requires activity on our part. We supply the interest, but everything else proceeds automatically, so to speak.

Because of the passive nature of explication, its outcome—an enriched substrate—is accordingly an ‘acquisition’ only in a limited sense. The precipitate of explication is *habitus*. It serves only to condition our further perceptual (or recollective) experiences with the object. Like all prepredicative perceptual processes, it is “bound to the immediate intuition of the substrate, whether this intuition is self-giving [i.e. perceptual] or reproductive [i.e. recollective].”⁵³ Explication only gives us new rules that guide our anticipatory engagement with an object; it does not yet give us determinations of the object as new intentional objects. Husserl writes:

If it is also true that nothing in consciousness which has once been given in experience, especially in intuition, is lost, if it is true that everything remains efficacious in that it creates and develops a horizon of familiarities and known qualities, still, what is experienced has, on this account, not yet become our *possession*, which henceforth we have at our disposal, which we can come up with again at any time, and about which we can inform others.⁵⁴

It is only this second, higher-level possession that counts as knowledge. Thus: “The *interest in perception*, which guides receptive experience, is only the *forestage of the interest of cognition in the proper sense*.”⁵⁵

So while prepredicative experience is active in its way, it is cognition—i.e. predicative activity—that more properly counts as activity, since only cognition produces something new. Explication is strictly “an activity *attached* to the pre-given and receptively apprehended objectivities”; predicative knowledge, while it also involves the intention of what is pre-given, constitutes “new kinds of objectivities,” namely categorial objectivities.⁵⁶ It is in these structures that “cognition is deposited in such a way that it can become an abiding possession,” one which remains its

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 197-8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

identical self even after we are no longer intuiting the object in question, and even when it is communicated to someone else.

3.4 Predication

Yet as much as predication is distinct from explication, it is also intimately related to it. Judicative activity, when it is ‘original’—i.e. carried out in response to intuited evidence—is only possible on the basis of an explication which first discovers the determinations of the object. “[E]ach step of the predication,” writes Husserl, “presupposes a step of receptive experience and explication, for only that can be originally predicated which has been originally given in an intuition, apprehended, and explicated.”⁵⁷ Thus we cannot understand the nature of predication without understanding its relationship to explication. How does predication use what explication, in Husserl’s words, has “preconstituted.”?⁵⁸ How does it transform explicative acquisitions into cognitive ones? Do predicative products—categorical objectivities—also preserve a relationship to explicative experience, once they have been constituted? As we turn to Husserl’s analysis of predication, we do so with these questions in mind.

3.4.1 Judgments and the ‘will to cognition’

It is a signature feature of Husserl’s genetic account that the predicative judgment is understood teleologically, as the endpoint of a kind of striving. The shift from explication to predication involves, for Husserl, a change of will; predication, although not the direct aim of this will, is the intentional structure through which this will achieves its aim. Its aim is lasting knowledge. Whereas in explication we are content merely to see the object from a variety of perspectives, observing a variety of its aspects, this new will—the “will to cognition”—wishes to “hold on to the known” to make an “abiding possession” out of what was discovered in explication. Its goal is “the fixing of the result of contemplative perception ‘once and for all’.”⁵⁹

In other words, the act of cognition transforms the intuited object into the known object. In what does the known-ness of the object consist? That is, what are the phenomenological

⁵⁷ Ibid., 204.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 207.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 198-9.

characteristics of the intentionality in and through which an object appears as ‘known’? Husserl identifies two crucial features of this intentionality:

In the pregnant concept of an object as the object of knowledge it is implied that [1] the object is identical and identifiable beyond the time of its intuitive givenness, that what is once given in intuition must still be capable of being kept as an enduring possession even if the intuition is over, and what is more, [2] in structures which, through indications at first empty, can again lead to envisionment of the identical—to an envisionment whether by presentification or by renewed self-giving.⁶⁰

Restated: (1) A known object is one to which we can intentionally refer without its being intuitively given. Each time it is intended, it is intended as the same identical object. (2) To this empty (i.e. non-intuitive) intending there corresponds possible intuitive experience of confirmation, in which the object can show itself as same identical object that was meant, in the way it was meant. This intuitive experience can be either perceptual (“self-giving”) or memorial (a “presentification”). Thus knowledge, while essentially detachable from intuitive experience, at the same time always points back to it.

It is through the act of judgment that all of this is possible. Cognitive activity involves the production of new objectivities in which “cognition is deposited in such a way that it can first really become an abiding possession.” It is these objectivities which “always refer to their background [i.e. intuitive experience], yet are also capable of being detached from it and leading their own lives as judgments.”⁶¹ When expressed, they can also be transmitted to others, such that these others can also intend the object in question as the ‘same,’ and ultimately intuit it as the identical object.⁶² A judgment is the inscription of what was intuitively given into a syntactico-semantic structure, which from then on prescribes a specific experience, without requiring, for its intelligibility, that this experience actually take place.

Although this inscription is the means by which knowledge is preserved and communicated, the production of a judicative structure is not itself the goal of cognition. “The goal of this activity,” writes Husserl, “is not the *production of objects* but a *production of the knowledge of a self-given object*, therefore the possession of this object in itself as that which is permanently identifiable anew.”⁶³ Cognition aims at a “possessive apprehension

⁶⁰ Ibid., 198. Numbering added.

⁶¹ Ibid., 199.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 200.

[*Besitzergreifen*] of the true being and being-such of an object, its determinative characteristics.”⁶⁴ Our interest, the interest of cognition, is to get the world right. Yet to ‘get it’ at all—to ‘have’ it in a sense that transcends our direct experience of it—we need judgments as the repository of our acquisitions. Thus the phenomenological analysis of judgments, while it is concerned with their structure as independent objectivities, is guided always by the function of this structure as the inscription of experience, and the prescription of a possible experience of ‘the same.’ It is in this regard that Husserl criticizes ‘logicians’ for focusing exclusively on judgments as “logical structures... without the manner of their original production being investigated.”⁶⁵

3.4.2 Husserl’s object-centric bias

Before looking at Husserl’s analysis of judicative activity itself, we must take note of a critical bias in his notion of the will to cognition in general. This will is always characterized in such a way that its natural *terminus* is the predicative judgment. It is a will which strives to know objects and their properties (including relational properties). “The goal of the will,” Husserl tells us, “is the apprehension of the object in the identity of its determinations.”⁶⁶ Its endpoint, even if this is just an ideal, is “the point where the object stands before us as completely known.”⁶⁷ We should not conclude from this, however, that Husserl takes our cognitive activity to be principally theoretical, disengaged from practical interest. Husserl’s analyses may fail to give an accurate account of how judgments arise (as they usually do) within the context of practical engagement. Yet Husserl is at least aware that cognitive activity is often subservient to larger, practical goals.⁶⁸

The issue I want to raise here, then, is not the old saw that Husserl’s understanding of the being of objects is too beholden to a notion of purely theoretical cognition.⁶⁹ is rather that

⁶⁴ Ibid., 202.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 199.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 198.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 201.

⁶⁸ “The interest in cognition can be dominant of in-the-service-of. It need not always be a purely autonomous interest in the object, one that is purely theoretical; rather, the knowledge toward which this interest is directed can also be merely a means for other final ends of the ego, for practical goals and practical interests directed to them.” Ibid., 203.

⁶⁹ This critique is summarized succinctly in Bernet, “Perception, Categorical Intuition and Truth,” 42.: “In the aftermath of Heidegger, attention has been drawn to the fact that Husserl’s derivation of the determination of being of actual objects from the performance of authentic acts of thought implies a problematical, preliminary decision in

Husserl understands cognitive activity, whether considered as a practical or a theoretical activity, to be an object-centric enterprise. He presumes a consciousness whose interest is to grasp individual objects (or groups of objects) with greater and greater clarity and precision. Its goal, as we saw above, is the “true being and being-such of an object,” or, as he writes elsewhere, the “objective being and being-such of the identical self.”⁷⁰ This thing itself is “the ultimate *telos* toward which all judicative activity is directed.”⁷¹

This object-bias in Husserl extends into his understanding of the notion of the world as a totality. This notion is of course an idealization, but is nonetheless the operative notion of ‘world’ which Husserl sees it as his task to elucidate phenomenologically. This world is simply a totality of objects. We see this already in *Ideas I*: “The world is the sum-total of objects of possible experience and experiential cognition, of objects that, on the basis of actual experiences, are cognizable in correct theoretical thinking.”⁷² In *Experience and Judgment* this idea remains unchanged: the world is “the totality of existents.”⁷³ Even although he admits that this world of our experience is not the same as the “totality of nature,” all that he means with this caveat is that we must also include, in the world’s inventory, things like other humans, cultural objects, animals, and so on.⁷⁴

The picture thus painted is of a cognitive interest confronted with a world of objects, whose goal it is better to accumulate a store of knowledge (‘once and for all’) about these objects. Whether this interest is scientific or practical, what we seek to know is what these objects are like—their essential properties in the case of scientific interest, but also their accidental, situational properties when our interests are practical. It is therefore natural that Husserl identifies the copular ‘predicative judgment’ with ‘judgment’ in general. The copular judgment is precisely the form which links an object to those determinations through which it shows itself as it is, in its “being and being-such.” If we want to describe the features of an

respect of the *ontological* question. Much as in the case of lingual expression, the forms of objects and their being are but mirrorings of the determinations of corresponding acts of cognition. This relationship of representation, too, is one-sided. The being of that which objectively is, is determined with a view to the purely theoretically determined subject of cognition.”

⁷⁰ Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 203. The translators of *Experience and Judgment* have rendered *Selbst* as “identical self” in order to highlight that what is meant is not a personal self, but rather the “thing itself,” as something “identical with itself throughout its appearances.” See *ibid.* 202, fn. 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷² *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book*, trans. F Kersten, (The Hague: M. Nijhoff 1980), 6.

⁷³ *Experience and Judgment*, 137.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

object, this is the sentence form we will use.⁷⁵ Predication is the syntactic expression that corresponds to a world consisting of objects and their properties.

Thus Husserl's exclusive focus on predication cannot be seen merely as an inheritance from the logical tradition, for which (as Husserl himself notes) the predicative form has always been paradigmatic.⁷⁶ If we are to speak of an inheritance, it is of a deeper bias, one for which objects and their properties are both ontologically and epistemologically privileged. This is not the place to comment on this bias, its origins, and its further implications, but rather simply to note it. We will see that this object-oriented notion of world and cognition does not serve us well as we try to understand the nature of verbal propositions.

3.4.3 The predicative act as a new intentional achievement

The more pressing question is: how does predication achieve the aim of the will to cognition? How does it transform prepredicative experience into a *Besitzergreifen*, a “possessing apprehension”? This occurs, Husserl tells us, through the production of new, predicative objectivities. But how does this happen? “What is the new achievement which occurs,” Husserl asks, “when, on the basis of explication, we come to the predicative determination ‘S is p’?”

Husserl makes it clear that he does not consider the central achievement of predication to be the generation of a linguistic expression. He writes:

The whole layer of expression, which is certainly inseparably linked to predicative operations—all the questions concerning the connection of utterance and predicative thought, accordingly whether and to what extent all predication is tied to words, as well as the question of how the syntactical articulation of expression hangs together with the articulation of what is thought—all this must remain aside here. The predicative operations will be examined purely as they phenomenally present themselves in lived experience, apart from all these connections—namely, as subjective activities.⁷⁷

This passage is rather frustrating. It is first of all vague regarding critical issues. What does Husserl mean when he says that expression is “inseparably linked” to predicative operations? What does he mean by the “hanging together” of syntax and thought? More importantly, he appears to subvert, despite himself, the very possibility of leaving aside the expressive domain. For if it is certain that all predication is tied to words, would words not then be integral to the

⁷⁵ We also use the “has” form, which Husserl understands as applicable primarily to separable “parts” of substrates, rather than dependent properties; e.g. “The door has a red doorknob.” See *ibid.*, 220-22.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

“lived experience” in which predicative operations “present themselves”? Would they not be a part of the very “subjective activities” Husserl claims he is examining?

We will see in a moment that, promises aside, Husserl does in fact bring the expressive layer back into play. Yet while these internal inconsistencies are significant, and while a deeper examination of the role of expression in the judicative act is of unquestionable phenomenological significance, for the moment we can suspend these concerns, to try to understand what Husserl is trying to accomplish through the exclusion of expression. In the analyses that follow, Husserl’s ultimate focus is not on the lived experience of predication in the most general sense—one which might include the expressive layer—but specifically on the emergence of the distinct intentional objects ‘subject’ and ‘predicate.’ His aim is both to describe the activity through which these objectivities are constituted, and to characterize the intentional essence particular to each. Since his focus is on a new intentional attitude—and particularly on the way it differs from explication—he feels he can disregard the act of expression, however inseparable from predication it may be. It is strictly the intentionality underlying expressed judgments that he wants to uncover. What, then, is this new intentionality, and how is it achieved on the basis of explication?

Central to Husserl’s analysis is the notion of ‘coincidence’ (*Deckung*) as discussed in the context of explication. This presents us with a slight bump in the road, since this notion was linked, as we saw, to that of retaining-in-grasp, which we found to be problematic in the context of explication. On Husserl’s account, coincidences of any kind, since they involve two coinciding elements, involve a retaining-in-grasp of the first element. Yet we saw that Husserl’s employment of the concept of retaining-in-grasp was misleading in the case of explication. Husserl’s further description of explication, however, was more coherent, and we can use it to reconstruct a notion of coincidence that will be of use as we engage the analyses of predication.

To review: In explication the substrate is ‘retained’ in the sense that it remains our constant theme. Most crucially, it provides the horizon of vague anticipation which the individual explicates make more and more determinate. So long as we have a particular substrate as our theme, the explicates appear as elucidations of this substrate; they are discrete aspects of the very appearance of the substrate as itself. It is in this sense, then, that we can say that substrate and explicate ‘coincide.’ The explicate is intended as a partial determination of the substrate, and thus displays the same substrate which is intended as the total theme of interest.

The coincidence consists in this appearance of the whole through its part. As Husserl puts it, “In every explicative determination of *S*, *S* is *present* in one of its particularities; and in the different determinations which appear in the form of explicates, it remains the same, but in conformity with the different particularities which are its properties.”⁷⁸ Coincidence is “the ‘contraction’ of *S* in *p*.”⁷⁹

As we have seen, coincidence arises passively in explication. Predication occurs when this coincidence is experienced in an active mode: “An *active* intention aims at apprehending what previously was a merely *passive* coincidence.”⁸⁰ The unity of substrate and explicate, while “passively preconstituted” in explication is, as Husserl puts it, “in a sense concealed” until we turn toward this very unity “in a changed attitude.”⁸¹ This new apprehension of coincidence is not achieved simply by noting its existence, turning towards it as we would turn to some object of interest.⁸² Rather, Husserl writes, it is perceived “only by repeating the act of running-through,” that is, repeating the transition from substrate to explicate. This is not the same, however, as repeating the explication. The achievement of predication occurs only through a change of attitude towards this transition. In what does this change consist? How is a passively preconstituted coincidence apprehended actively?

Husserl’s account of this transformation is remarkably brief, given that it is arguably the most pivotal point in his genetic analysis of judgment—the point where the predicative form first arises out of prepredicative experience. The heart of this account lies in §50 (a), which comes to just seven paragraphs of text; §50 (b) supplies five more paragraphs clarifying the distinct intentional natures of subject and predicate. It is terse material, and requires a bit of elaborative interpretation. We can identify two crucial features which distinguish predicative activity from passive explication. The first concerns the ‘freedom’ with which this activity—like any activity—is carried out. This is explored in §50 (a). The second, treated primarily in §50 (b), concerns the constitution of the two distinct ‘forms’ essential to the predicative structure—

⁷⁸ Ibid., 116.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 206.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 207.

⁸¹ Ibid., 208.

⁸² Lohmar characterizes this view as the idea of a mere “Umwandlung” or “transformation” of lived experience into a cognition. “Das Erkennen wäre dann der Prozeß, in dem durch kategoriale Auffassung aus seinem solchen unbegriffenen Erlebnis ohne weitere (oder erneuere) Anschauung ein begriffener Sachverhalt ‘erdeudet’ wird.” *Erfahrung und Kategoriales Denken*, 209. He goes on to demonstrate the problems with this view, and to confirm that Husserl does not adopt it.

subject and predicate. (This is also discussed in Appendix II of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* to which we will also refer.) We will look at these two features in turn.

3.4.4 Predication as free activity

Predicative activity, as we saw, is guided in Husserl's account by the interest of cognition, which aims to retain the fruits of explication as an enduring possession. It is "the interest, proceeding from this contemplation, *in retaining* the accretion of sense arising from it, the *S* in its enrichment of sense."⁸³ An object has been explicated, and we can assume that there is some aspect of this explication—some explicate—which is of particular interest to the cognizing ego. Let's imagine that, upon touching a door, we are surprised to find that it has a soft surface. The explicate—the softness—has accreted to the substrate as *habitus*. In the passive realm, this means that, in my further experiences with the door, I will now have this softness as a determinate anticipation, before touching it. Softness now belongs to the door as a way in which the door appears as itself; but this is "in a sense concealed," because the belonging of the determination to the substrate is merely implicit in my experience. It is not yet apprehended as such. For this to happen, and for this apprehended 'belonging' to be something I retain, I must travel the road from substrate to determination as an exercise of will, as "free activity."

First, Husserl writes, "We go back to the *S*, thus identifying it with itself, which only means, however, that, in the return, it 'again' stands there as *S*."⁸⁴ We intend the door as the same door that was the theme of explication. (As we will see, it is intended in a new way which posits its status as subject, but we can set this aside for the moment.) We intend the door simply as itself, but its softness is now implicit in this intention; "we have its enrichment of sense"—e.g. softness—"as a mere protention, in connection with the retention of the transition [i.e. the explication] which has just taken place."⁸⁵ Because the softness of the door is "protended" in the intention of the door, it is available to me as an intention to which I can pass over: "The interest now betakes itself in the direction of *S* in its enrichment of sense, which presupposes that we *again* pass to *p*."⁸⁶

⁸³ *Experience and Judgment*, 206.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 206-7.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

This transition, however, is not a mere repetition of explication. It is now active—we make this transition through an act of will: “As an active ego, directed toward *S* in its accretion of sense, and in my interest focused on this accretion itself, I bring about the transition and the partial coincidence as free activity.”⁸⁷ The path that is forged through explication and preserved as *habitus* is now traversed deliberately. This is what Husserl means by the “repeated active accomplishment of the synthesis, an accomplishment which presupposes the preceding explication.”⁸⁸ What was passively synthesized as *habitus*—the belonging of explicite to explicand—is now apprehended through the active, willful deployment of this very *habitus*. In this “spontaneous” transition, the being-determined of the substrate is first explicitly apprehended as such: “the apprehending regard lives in the apprehension of its [the substrate’s] being determined by *p*.”⁸⁹

(This is perhaps a good point to remind ourselves that this ‘active transition’ need not actually follow upon a passive version of the same transition. If I have been told, for example, that a particular door is surprisingly soft, I may approach it to find out for myself. In this case, my ‘anticipation’ of a softness has not been generated by my own experience, but by my having heard someone else’s judgment.)

This new activation, Husserl writes, is a “polythetic activity,” characterized by “several rays” of intentionality, or more precisely by two.⁹⁰ In the predicative act, *S* and *p* are co-intended as constituents of the predicative relation. This brings us to the second aspect of Husserl’s analysis, regarding the way subject and predicate are constituted as such. The predicative act differs from explication not only in the sense just described, namely that the transition from substrate to determination is carried out freely. The transition is also distinct in that its two terms are explicitly posited in their intentional distinctness; they are posited *in the form of* subject and predicate, respectively.

3.4.5 Predicative formations: the positing of subject and predicate

Husserl’s discussion of predicative formations is some of the most difficult material in *Experience and Judgment*. In it, Husserl offers what we might call a phenomenology of

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁸⁹ “...der erfassende Blick lebt im Erfassen des Sichbestimmens als *p*.” Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid. See also p.209.

sentential syntax. Concepts like ‘subject’ and ‘predicate,’ or ‘substantive’ and ‘adjective’ have a grammatical sense, and we can of course examine them strictly as such—as sentence constituents which obey the specific combinatorial rules which govern sentence structure. This is not, however, how Husserl treats these concepts when he discusses predicative formation. The formation Husserl has in mind is an intentional one. What he is describing is the formation of a judicative meaning-intentions. In such an intention, there is a ‘subject,’ for example, but this understood as an object intended in a particular way—differently, say, than it would be intended if it were a relative object. Through the way objects and properties are intended, and moreover intended in relation to each other, a new intention is constituted, through which an objective state of affairs is meant. These reflections therefore address a pivotal moment in Husserl’s theory of judgment. They are also important for our purposes, as they provide a characterization of the intentional structure of property attribution, which we will want to contrast with the structure of verbal judgments.

Husserl introduces this aspect of his analysis towards the end of §50(a). Here he very quickly describes the phenomenological essence of each element of the basic predicative judgment: *S*, *p*, and the copula:

As present to consciousness, the *S* must be already explicated, but it is now posited predicatively simply as *S*, which is identical, no matter how it may be explicated. On the other hand, it pertains to its form that it is the explicand; it is posited in the form of subject, and *p* expresses the determination. In the ‘is,’ the form of the synthesis between explicand and explicate is expressed in its active accomplishment, i.e. as the apprehension of being-determined-as....⁹¹

Here we find Husserl returning to the ‘expressive layer’ which he promised to exclude from his analysis. In one sense we can see his reference to expressions as an innocent one; he is simply using the basic components of the predicative judgment to direct us to the corresponding features of predicative intentionality. At the same time, it is unclear how we should understand his notion of ‘positing’ independently of the expressions which accompany it. For example, the subject is posited “as *S*.” What are we to make of this intertwining of positing and expression?

One might object that we are reading too much into Husserl’s words—that *S* does not here denote an expression, but rather is being used just as it was in the discussion of explication, i.e. as a shorthand for the intended object. Yet the rest of the passage belies this interpretation, as the other elements—*p* and ‘is’—are treated explicitly as expressions. The implication is thus that

⁹¹ Ibid.

the subject is posited precisely insofar as it is intended as the referent of a nominal expression of some sort ('this chair,' 'Sam,' 'this,' etc.).⁹² Under such an approach, we might propose that an object can be intended as self-identical, and abstracted from its particular determinations ("no matter how it may be explicated") only when it has become the fixed referent of an expression. It would be this labeling—whether with a description, a name, a demonstrative, etc.—that achieves the singling-out of the object as a fixed identity. More generally, we would have to consider whether the predicative act can only be set in motion if both explicand and explicite are labeled in some way. Indeed, upon introspection this seems rather uncontroversial, as it is not clear how we could enact a predicative judgment without the use of words, even if they are just thought to oneself. Thus we would need to describe with more precision the way in which the synthetic production of judgments as abiding possessions—the very goal of cognitive striving—is dependent on phonetic expressions a condition of its possibility.

Husserl ignores these issues, however, setting his sights instead on the intentional forms which, he argues, underlie the more conspicuous linguistic ones. This occurs in §50(b), where he discusses the "double-constitution of forms" or "double formation" in predicative judgments. The section is best understood with reference to his more extensive comments in Appendix I to *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, so in the following few paragraphs we will be looking at both texts together.

Husserl's basic idea is that we can draw formal distinctions between subjects and predicates, and that we can do this both at a syntactic level and at the level of word-type:

[A] *double formation* is carried out in even the simplest predicative judgment. The members of a judicative proposition not only have a *syntactical formation* as subject, predicate, etc., as *functional forms* which belong to these propositions as elements of the proposition, but, underlying these, they have still another kind of formation, the *core-forms*: the subject has the core-form of substantivity; in the predicate, the determination *p* is in the core-form of adjectivity.⁹³

By "syntactical" or "functional" forms, Husserl means the forms corresponding to different syntactical positions within a judgment. At this level, we can distinguish not just between subject and predicate, but between different syntactical forms of substantives, and between different

⁹² Husserl says as much in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, in this case with reference to the positing correlated to entire propositions, viz. "the positing of a sense-content having categorial form." He writes: "Here positing [*Setzung*] is understood as doxa, as belief in being but precisely as positing being [*als Seinssetzung*]"—that is: at the same time setting down in an 'utterance', accessible always and to everyone and giving reason to expect that everyone can share the belief." *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 302.

⁹³ *Experience and Judgment*, 210.

forms of adjectives. For example, a substantive can appear as subject in a judgment, but also, in a comparative judgment, as a relative object (e.g. ‘ashtray’ in ‘The ball is bigger than the ashtray’). Similarly, an adjective can appear in predicate position (‘The ball is red’) or as a modifier, which Husserl calls an ‘attribute’ (‘The red ball...’).⁹⁴

Thus in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl distinguishes between “syntactical forms” corresponding to the different syntactical positions, and the contents of these positions, which he calls “syntactical stuffs.” The adjective ‘red’ and the substantive ‘ball’ are such syntactical stuff, which can take the forms of predicate and attribute, or subject and object, respectively.⁹⁵ These contents or stuffs, however, are not “pure stuff”: within syntactical stuff there is a further form/stuff distinction to be made. Substantives, for example, have a substantival form, regardless of where they appear syntactically; adjectives have an adjectival form. There is thus a level of form which for Husserl is non-syntactical. “These forms,” he writes, “do *not* belong to the *syntax* of the proposition itself.”⁹⁶ They are what Husserl calls “core-forms.”

Husserl uses pairs like ‘redness/red’ or ‘similarity/similar’ to highlight differences in core-form. In each pair, we see, Husserl says, the same content—the same ‘core-stuff’—appearing in two different core formations: “The essential something that *similarity* and *similar*, for example, have in common is formed, in the one case, in the category of substantivity and, in the other case, in the category of adjectival relationality.”⁹⁷ What is posited at one moment adjectivally can become a substantive. Such transformations of course entail syntactical transformations, as these two words will appear in different syntactical positions within a proposition. Yet, as Husserl stresses, “this is not merely syntactical transmutation; it is, at the same time, a transmutation of core-formations, taking place in a different stratum.”⁹⁸

This stratum is an intentional one. Core-forms are different because they involve different ways of intending the content, the ‘core-stuff.’ “Even though the designations of these core-forms,” Husserl writes, “are drawn from the mode of designation of linguistic forms, nothing more is meant by them than *difference in the manner of apprehension*.”⁹⁹ He describes the difference as follows: “[The form of substantivity] designates ‘being-for-itself,’ the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 303-04.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 308. See also *Experience and Judgment*, 210.

⁹⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 310.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

independence of an object... as contrasted to adjectivity, which is the form of ‘in something’.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, when we posit something substantively, we posit it as something existing on its own, disregarding anything else of which it may be a part or a property; to posit something adjectivally is to posit it as ‘of’ something else, pertaining to it as part or as property.¹⁰¹

In each case, we must not understand this forming of ‘stuffs’ into substantives or adjectives as an operation applied to contents that are things-in-themselves, intentionally available outside of the scope of this positing. As Husserl puts it, “This forming, of course, is not an activity that was, or could have been, executed on stuffs given in advance: That would presuppose the countersense, that one could have stuffs by themselves beforehand – as though they were concrete objects, instead of being abstract moments in significations.”¹⁰² (*FTL*, 298). We can, in the course of investigating the forms inherent in judgments, notice that ‘red’ and ‘redness,’ for example, have something in common, and in so doing isolate the “abstract moment” that is their commonality. We cannot, however, intend this abstract moment ‘itself’ as a concrete thing. We reach this only through a double abstraction—first, by ignoring the syntactical position of a word in a proposition; then by ignoring the ‘part of speech’ of the word itself. Husserl argues, however, that this abstractive exercise is useful insofar as it allows us to isolate the component forms that make up the proposition itself. It is only the entire proposition, as the copular unity of these forms, that has a “unitary relation to the meant as a whole,” that is, to a state of affairs.¹⁰³ Yet in picking apart the layers of form within propositions, Husserl writes, “we can gain insight into the manner in which, by means of the essential structures of propositions and proposition-members, their relation to something objective... [is] brought about.”¹⁰⁴

The forms—or rather formed stuffs—bring about this “relation to something objective” by actively positing what in prepredicative experience is only hidden. In explication, we had, on the one hand, the substrate which was our dominant interest, the overarching theme that determined the possible paths of explication. The substrate is now posited—it is named, and thus identified— first of all as something “for itself,” that is, as something apprehended independently of anything else to which it may be related. This is its substantival core-form. In

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Husserl in fact divides the adjectival form into two classes, viz. properties and relations. See *ibid.*, 308.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

explication the substrate may also be encountered in an analogously ‘independent’ manner—if it is the only thematic interest of our perception—but only in predication it is grasped and posited as such. Beyond its basic nature as substantive, it is also assigned the syntactical form of subject within the overall predicative structure. As such it is posited as explicand, i.e. as that which is determined by a property.

On the other hand, we have the explicate posited as such. Explication had given us a specific determination of the substrate, but only as *habitus*. This is now posited as a determination—as something ‘in something.’ This is the adjectival core-form. As syntactical predicate in the overall predicative structure, it is posited as property, or that as which a subject is being determined. This would contrast, for example, with an adjective functioning syntactically as an ‘attribute,’ as in ‘The red ball...’ Here ‘red’ is posited not as a property which is being attributed to the subject, but as one which has already been attributed to it.

Subject and predicate are, moreover, posited as related to each other through the copular form itself, which is indicated by the copular verb (in some languages; in others it may receive no outward expression, as Husserl himself notes).¹⁰⁵ Husserl writes, as was already quoted above, “In the ‘is,’ the form of the synthesis between explicand and explicate is expressed in its active accomplishment, i.e., as the apprehension of being-determined-as.”¹⁰⁶ Husserl calls this the “copulative positing of the ‘is.’” In the fully formed judgment, the ‘being-determined’ of an explicand by an explicate, discovered passively in explication, is finally posited as such, as the being-determined of a posited object by a posited predicate.

Only once this is accomplished, Husserl insists, do we have an “object of cognition” in the true sense. In explication, the “object in receptivity” was in a sense self-identical, but only as the “unity of its sensuous multiplicities,” that is, as what is experienced as ‘the same’ across variations in perceptual content. At this stage, Husserl writes, the object is “completely indeterminate from the point of view of logic,” no matter the “plenitude of intuition” which explication has uncovered.¹⁰⁷ Once an object has become the subject of a predication, however, there accrues to it a “logical sense”: “[I]t is only in the predicative judgment that an object, hitherto logically undetermined, can be invested with logical sense.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ See *Experience and Judgment*, 214, fn.15.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 234.

By logical sense Husserl means, on the one hand, the predicative determination which has been assigned to the object. Thus in the minimal judgment, “This (thing) is red” the subject has gained the ‘logical sense’ of being determined as red. Moreover, however, the subject thus becomes, for the first time, an identical ‘this’ which remains the same from one judgment to the next:

It is what is identical in the multiplicity of spontaneous identifications which determine it as the point of intersection of various judgments and, correlatively, as the identical reference point of corresponding attributes.... We here take the ‘this’ as, so to speak, the zero-point of attribution.¹⁰⁹

To be an object of cognition means, for Husserl, to be a ‘this,’ posited as being-determined in a particular way. “As the identical pole of predicative actions, the bearer of logical sense,” Husserl says, “the object has become in the true sense an *object of cognition*.”¹¹⁰ This is what Husserl means when he says that a relation to something objective is formed through the structures integral to predication. It is only when posited as the subject of a judgment—in which a predicate is also posited as belonging to the subject—that an intentional object becomes an objective ‘something’ in the first place.

With this achievement, the will to cognition attains its goal—the transformation of what is intuited into what is known. In section 3.4.1 we saw that Husserl identifies two features that are essential to the intentionality proper to objects of knowledge: (1) the detachability of such knowledge from intuitive givenness, and, despite this, (2) the ultimate directedness of this knowledge to a corresponding experience of what is known. Let’s review these features, this time noting precisely how Husserl’s phenomenology of judgment accounts for them. This review will in turn allow us, finally, to answer—for the case of predicative judgments—the two questions we posed of verbal judgments at the beginning of the chapter.

3.4.6 Predicative synthesis and the detachability of knowledge

What we’re here calling ‘detachability’ is shorthand for what Husserl, as we’ve already seen, expresses as follows:

In the pregnant concept of an object as the object of knowledge it is implied that the object is identical and identifiable beyond the time of its intuitive givenness,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

that what is once given in intuition must still be capable of being kept as an enduring possession even if the intuition is over.¹¹¹

While we had already indicated, when we first visited this passage, that it is judicative activity itself that constitutes such enduring possessions, we can now offer a more robust account. Key to this account is the material we have just covered, regarding the formation of predicative structures themselves. Two aspects of this analysis are particularly important.

On the one hand, predication, in positing a specific property of an object, at the same time posits the object as a bearer of properties (of ‘logical sense’) in general. The object is thereby expressly intended as a fixed ‘something’, an object with a ‘logical’ identity that transcends its momentary givenness to intuition. On the other hand, to posit a property of an object is to generate a new, specific copular structure, wherein a particular property is assigned to a particular subject. Once accomplished, this structure abides as having-been-accomplished. In Husserl’s words, “The judgment does not exist only in and during the active constitution, as being livingly generated in this process; rather it becomes the continuously abiding selfsame judgment, as a preserved *acquisition*...”¹¹² We examined this aspect of Husserl’s analysis in Chapter 2, where we saw that, because judgments abide in this way, they can themselves be intended as knowledge acquisitions, i.e. as facts. Yet as acquisitions, they serve as something more than just newly-available intentional objects; they are, more fundamentally, judgments which can be asserted anew, again and again.

The structured positing of predication thus achieves two things at once. It transforms the intuited object into the subject of predication, thus generating a logical object which can be intended independently of its intuitive givenness; and it generates the abiding structure through which a particular determination of this object can be kept as a possession, and re-asserted. It is in this sense that knowledge is ‘detachable.’

While Husserl’s basic account sticks to a particular narrative, in which predicative formation follows upon prepredicative experience, we have noted that this, of course, is not always the case. Someone may, for example, communicate a proposition to me without my being able, at that moment, to confirm it for myself. I nonetheless now have this judgment as a ‘possession,’ one to which I can refer back to, reassert, etc., although perhaps with less certainty. Thus what is essential to predication is not that it transforms prepredicative experience into something

¹¹¹ Ibid., 198.

¹¹² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 320.

objective, but rather that it posits a logical subject and determines it in a particular way, thus generating a new structure of a higher order.

Husserl's account of the positing of predicative forms is therefore his answer to our first guiding question:

- a) What is the nature of the judicative synthesis, such that it is constitutive of a new kind of objectivity?

By positing the substrate as a determinable 'this,' and expressly assigning a specific determination to it (by virtue of the copular form) a new structure is generated. Our interest is of course in the object itself, but as an object of cognition it is intended as having-been-determined in a particular way; it has been 'predicated of.' Thus beyond the objectivity of the object itself, there is a new objectivity which corresponds to the object-as-determined, and which is expressed by the judgment as a whole. This objectivity is not synthetic in the sense that it combines separate things into one whole. The posited determination is, after all, not something apart from the substrate, but rather a moment in the appearance of the substrate. Thus it is synthetic in the sense that is bi-thetic; substrate and determination are picked out and posited as such, while at the same time intended as belonging to the same syntactical unity.

This unity—the object-as-determined—is the state of affairs, even though it is not intended as such in the predicative act. We only intend states of affairs as such when we refer back to them, intending them as unities through nominalizing acts. As we saw in Chapter 2, this can happen in two ways. Because the judicative act is precisely a cognitive act, it is retained as a knowledge acquisition and can thus be intended as something known. This is the state of affairs as fact. On the other hand, we can intend the state of affairs itself, the actual being-determined of the object—its *Sichverhalten*. In this sense, the state of affairs is not simply something known, but something that can show itself—something that can appear to us in an evidential experience. This brings us to the second feature of knowledge—its directedness to an experience of the known—and to Husserl's answer to our second guiding question

3.4.7 The reference of predication to experience

While knowledge is a possession that outlives any particular experience, it also directs us back to experiences in which the object of this knowledge is intuited first-hand. The structures through which the object of knowledge is kept as a possession, Husserl writes, "can lead to

envisionment of the identical,” whether in memory or through direct intuition.¹¹³ It is essential to the nature of judgments that they correspond to a possible experience in which the judged-about appears as itself—the state of affairs ‘in the mode, experience.’ We briefly touched upon to this aspect of judging in Chapter 2, when we distinguished between judicative intentions that intend a state of affairs emptily, and those which are ‘fulfilled’ by the intuitive givenness of the state of affairs itself (the *Sichverhalten*). We can now clarify this distinction with greater precision.

What, then, does it mean for a judgment to refer, or correspond, to an experience which fulfills it? This may seem at first like a question with a simple answer. If judgments are formed, originally, on the basis of prepredicative experience—if they are the active apprehension of what was acquired passively—then what they direct us to is precisely that prepredicative experience from which they originated. The fulfillment of a judgment would then simply require a repetition of the prepredicative experience from which it originated. The problem with this model, however, is that simply returning to prepredicative experience does not achieve what the fulfillment of a judgment is supposed to achieve: more than just an experience, this fulfillment is the experience of ‘the state of affairs itself.’ In the prepredicative sphere, there is not yet a relationship to something objective. Thus a judgment does not in fact refer us to prepredicative experience, but rather a new objectivity which can itself be experienced. How, then, do we experience a state of affairs *as* a state of affairs?

To answer this question, we need to observe more carefully how the two distinguishing features of predicative activity, reviewed above, work together. These features are (1) the accomplishment, in a free act of will, of the coincidence of substrate and explicate, and (2) the positing of this coincidence in a predicative structure. Prepredicative, explicative coincidence, we should recall, is the experience in which the emptily anticipated horizon of a thematic object is filled in in a determinate way. It is a passive discovery, preserved passively as habitus. By contrast, predicative activity involves (1) the repeated enactment of this coincidence, this time as ‘free activity.’ Thus the act of judgment—if this judgment is original, i.e. based on intuited evidence—involves a new experience which differs in kind from prepredicative explication. The judger now willfully experiences the presence of the explicate within the horizon of the substrate; one lives in the apprehension of the being-determined-as-*p* of *S*.

¹¹³ *Experience and Judgment*, 198.

At the same time, (2) explicate and substrate are posited in their coincidence through the syntactic structure of the copular judgment itself. It is this positing, structuring act that generates judgments which can be preserved, and through which the being-determined-as-*p* of *S* can be repeatedly intended, even after the coincidence is no longer intuited. So long as it is intuited, however—so long as the coincidence of substrate and determination can be experienced willfully—the judgment is a fulfilled one.

Thus it is the willful experience of coincidence (1) that functions as the fulfillment of the judicative intention. However, it is this judicative intention itself (2) that makes this experience the experience of a state of affairs. This is a difficult but crucial point. The judicative intention creates a syntactical structure, one in which a state of affairs—the being *p* of *S*—is posited. Every predicative judgment, Husserl writes, “represents a production of sense enclosed in itself,” a two-membered unit of predicative meaning.¹¹⁴ Only then is a state of affairs constituted (or rather “preconstituted,” because, as we saw in Chapter 2, states of affairs become full-blown intentional objects only when they have been nominalized). Husserl writes:

Every closed judicative proposition thus preconstitutes in itself a new objectivity, a state of affairs. This is “what is judged” in the proposition, not only because what is judged signifies an accretion of logical sense for that “about which one judges,” the substrate of the judgment... but because what is judged is *itself* an object and, in virtue of its genesis, a *logical* object or object of the understanding.¹¹⁵

Only a judicative act can generate such an objectivity of the understanding, and we cannot experience such an object if it has not been preconstituted by such an act. This does not mean that a judicative intention contains in itself the experience of the state of affairs. On the contrary, it is part of our everyday experience that we intend states of affairs without experiencing them. Yet to experience such an object is to experience the actuality of what is posited in a judicative structure. While only experience can confirm that what is meant is actual, only predicative positing can confer upon experience the character of being the experience of a predicative objectivity. We only experience a state of affairs if experience functions as the confirmation of a judgment.

Let’s think this through with a concrete example. A friend, warning me, says ‘Your steering wheel is very hot,’ before I have laid hands on it myself. I now ‘possess’ this judgment

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 237.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 242.

myself. Through it, I intend a particular state of affairs—the being-hot-of-the-steering-wheel—but only in an empty manner. When I then turn my attention to the steering wheel, I do so while anticipating (assuming I believe my friend) a particular experience. Of course, I do not have this expectation as *habitus*, because I have not yet had the experience myself. Nonetheless, I do not encounter the steering wheel as something with a vague horizon of possible determinations; I rather engage it anticipating a very particular coincidence of substrate (steering wheel) and explicate (heat). Thus when I do have this experience of coincidence, it is as a ‘free activity.’ I have lived through the very he determination I ‘meant’ to live through, the very same one I was intending.

This is what Husserl means when he writes that predicative structures can “lead to the envisionment of the identical.” What I experience is precisely what was emptily intended—they are the ‘same.’ For an experience to have this character of ‘identity,’ there must be a judicative intention to which the experience can accord. To experience a state of affairs, then, is this: to actively accomplish the predicative determination that is merely posited in a judicative intention. This answers our second guiding question:

- b) How are the objectivities produced by judicative syntheses themselves experienceable?

The answer, as we have just seen, is that they are experienceable only as the fulfillment of what has been posited in a judicative synthesis. This fulfillment occurs through a free activity which willfully lives through the determination of the object. In an act of active, grasping anticipation, it apprehends the object and encounters, within the horizon of the object, the very determination it expects to find there. This experience is ‘of’ a state of affairs only because a judicative synthesis has posited this objectivity as something experienceable.

We can now better understand what Husserl means when he says (as we saw in Chapter 2) that the “identical self of the state of affairs” is not merely given to intuition, but is “produced,” is “given in the manner of spontaneous production.”¹¹⁶ This of course does not mean that we make it the case that a state of affairs is true. Our willful activity can be frustrated; we may not find what we thought we would find; our judgment is false. The success of our free activity does not depend on us. What does depend on us is the objectivation of our experience,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 286.

the positing of what we encounter in experience as a self-identical state of affairs that can be re-encountered as the ‘same,’ by ourselves and by others.

* * *

We can now, at last, -turn to verbal judgments and the objectivities that they produce. We now have a detailed example, in the predicative sphere, of (1) how judicative syntheses generate syntactically formed objectivities, through the positing of a subject with a specific logical sense; and (2) how this posited structure can itself be encountered as something ‘in itself,’ through the willful enactment of predicative coincidence. If we are to apply this model to the domain of verbal judgments, we’ll need to determine (1’) how the structures posited in them are syntactically formed, and how this may differ from predicative positing, and (2’) what must be experienced for these structures to be fulfilled. These difficult questions will occupy us in the following chapter.

4 Verbal Judging

Now that we have a detailed grasp of Husserl's phenomenology of copular, property-attributing judgments, we need to determine which parts of it we can use to articulate a phenomenology of verbal judgments. (Or rather, to articulate the beginning of this project; we cannot hope to offer here an exhaustive analysis of what is an enormously complex problem.) As we will soon see, judgments that tell us what happened are different from copular judgments in essential ways. This does not mean, however, that the efforts of the previous chapter were in vain. They provide us, first of all, with a general framework for what a phenomenology of judgment looks like. They also offer us specific points of comparison which will allow us to see clearly what is peculiar to verbal judgments, as opposed to predicative ones.

The general framework we have gained is the following: (1) The judicative act generates a new, synthetic structure which is consequently available as an intentional object. It provides a reference, a 'this,' a 'what,' a 'that,' etc. (2) This new object is one that can be encountered in experience, when our experience is intended as the fulfillment of the judicative intention. In other words, for experience to be the experience of such a 'thing,' it must be actively lived through as the fulfillment of the judgment. We saw how this works in the case of a property-attributing judgment. Such judgments (1) posit a subject-property relationship: a property is posited as belonging to a posited subject. (2) To fulfill this judgment, we must experience the subject, and experience the sought-after-property within the horizon delineated by the subject.

Our task now is to tell an analogous story regarding verbal judgments. We want to understand (1) what structure they posit, and (2) what experience fulfills this posited structure. I will address these issues in reverse order, looking first at the experience which fulfills verbal judgments, before turning to the structure of these judgments themselves. This is not an arbitrary decision, but rather a methodological one which mirrors Husserl's own approach. He, too, began by examining the experiences in which the subject-property relation is directly given, before articulating what is posited in an actual judgment. This order is necessary, because what is posited in the judgment is precisely the in-principle experienceability of a particular structure.

The structure itself is meaningful insofar as it prescribes the contours of a possible fulfillment. Only once we understand what is experienced in fulfilled judgments can we see what is posited in them. Accordingly, for most of this chapter we will be engaged with the experience of happening, before turning to judicative structure in its final portion.

I will follow Husserl's method in another regard, limiting my discussion—for the most part—to verbal judgments pertaining to perceptual objects. This will include living things, but only insofar as they are involved with things that happen in the physical domain. Thus while having an idea, falling in love, or graduating from college are certainly things that happen, these sorts of happenings will not be our main focus, as they introduce mental, emotional, and social dimensions which complicate the picture considerably. I think that the analyses I will offer, however, do have relevance for these sorts of happenings. Towards the end of the chapter, I will suggest how the picture I have painted regarding the physical domain can (and should) be extended to encompass happening in general.

4.1 The Temporality of Happening

As much as our approach resembles Husserl's in its contours, we find ourselves on quite different terrain as soon as we turn to our subject matter. Most conspicuous is the fact that, in investigating happening, we introduce the problem of change, and thus move beyond the boundaries Husserl explicitly sets for himself in *Experience and Judgment*. These were limited to judgments about the perceptible properties of unchanging objects. We, however, must consider change. Even if it is not the case that all happening involves change (and we will see it does not), we certainly cannot ignore it.

One might think, however, that we can address change without disrupting Husserl's basic notion of predicative synthesis—that we can, that is, incorporate change into Husserl's phenomenology of copular, property-attributing judgments. On such an account, changes of various sorts would be attributed to objects just as static properties are. Just as 'The apple is red' assigns the property of redness to the apple, 'The apple is falling' would assign the property of 'fallingness' to it, indicating a particular kind of change. The phenomenological work would consist solely in examining the way dynamic, 'verbal' properties of objects are given to consciousness. Husserl's notion of judicative synthesis—wherein a determinable subject is posited as determined by a property—would remain unaltered in its essentials.

Husserl himself, as we saw, implicitly endorses this approach in the *Logical Investigations*, insofar as he treats ‘Rain has set in’ as an example of a copular judgment; we posit the rain, together with its ‘having set in’ as a property of it. (On the other hand, we have also seen that he professes agnosticism on the question of ‘verbal propositions’ in *Experience and Judgment*.) Such an approach is also compatible with the property exemplification view of events embraced by Kim and Bennett. They, too, as we saw in Chapter 1, see ‘falling,’ ‘kissing,’ ‘killing,’ and the like as properties in a straightforward sense, even while leaving it an open question which properties constitute events. The idea is attractive in its straightforwardness. But is it tenable?

In order to evaluate this claim, we need to get a bit more phenomenological clarity on what property ascription involves. Let’s return, then, to the Husserlian analyses of copular judgments, in order to make some more general observations about their fulfilling experience. Although Husserl’s investigations were limited in the types of properties they addressed (viz., directly perceptible properties of static objects) they can guide us to observations that I think apply more generally. In particular, we will see that basic copular judgments are fulfilled by experiences with a particular type of temporal character—I will call it ‘intemporality’—which, it will turn out, distinguishes copular fulfillments from the fulfillments of verbal judgments. These latter exhibit what I will call ‘protemporality.’

To simplify the discussion, I will sometimes use ‘predicative experience’ to refer to the experiences that fulfill property-ascribing copular judgments, and ‘verbal experience’ for the fulfillments of verbal judgments; ‘judicative experience’ refers to the fulfilling experience for any judgment, whatever its type. I do this to maintain continuity with Husserl’s terminology and with the previous chapter (but also because ‘copular experience’ and ‘copular fulfillment’ sound, for reasons that can remain unspoken, a bit awkward).

4.1.1 The ‘intemporal’ character of predicative experience

The judicative acts examined by Husserl in *Experience and Judgment* generate a copular structure, in which a subject is posited as being determined by a particular property. This posited structure is the state of affairs intended; the fulfillment of the judgment is the experience wherein the state of affairs itself is given. This fulfillment is in a sense the *telos* of any judgment. The experienceability of the state of affairs is of course not expressed in the judgment itself. Rather,

Husserl's idea is that to actually make a judgment—to hold it as valid, rather than merely to understand it—is to assume the in-principle availability of an experience in which the state of affairs would be experienced as itself. This is the phenomenological account of *belief*: it is not a bare affirming of the validity of a proposition, but rather the assumption of the experiential availability of what is posited in it.

As we saw in Chapter 3, predicative experience is an active version of explication. It is a willful living-through of the 'coincidence' of subject and determination, an activity which knows, so to speak, what it is looking for. What is 'actively' experienced is only what is relevant to the judicative intention, even if—as will almost always be the case—we are passively experiencing much more than this. To take a trivial example, if we are checking to see whether it is true that, as someone has informed us, 'the basketball is dusty,' we also may experience the basketball as red. Yet so long as its redness is not something that we are, at that moment, trying to intuit, this is not something experienced 'actively.' This distinction between what is passively and what is actively experienced is crucial, as it helps us discriminate between what is actually part of the judicative experience proper, and what merely accompanies it. The example just cited is trivial because what is inessential is so in an obvious way: the ball's being red has nothing to do with its being dusty. Understanding the passive/active distinction, however, allows us to see some less trivial aspects of experience that are nonetheless 'inactive' in predicative experience, and in particular one aspect—temporal persistence—which will help us distinguish, in a clear way, copular from verbal judgments.

Let's think more carefully about the fulfillment of the judgment, 'The basketball is dusty.' What is active in this experience? I apprehend the ball, and, guided by the judgment, look for dust on its surface. As soon as I do encounter this, the judgment is fulfilled. As we have already noted, any other qualities I encounter—redness, hardness—are not relevant, and thus are not part of my active experience. These qualities, however, need not have been even passively experienced; the ball may not have been red, and it may have been deflated and soft. Some aspects of my passive experience, however, are not dispensable in this way. For example, the ball must necessarily be experienced as having a spatial extension. Although we could certainly experience this spatial extension actively, and make a corresponding judgment about it, it is not an active part of the predicative experience that fulfills the judgment, 'The basketball is dusty.'

Although the spatial extension of the ball is essential to the experience in a way its redness is not, it is no more the focus the judgment itself.

Thus we can identify those aspects of experience which always accompany predicative fulfillments of certain types (e.g. spatial extension in the case of judgments about physical objects), yet remain outside the scope of what is actively experienced in these fulfillments. It is not, however, spatial extension that is of interest to us, but rather temporal extension, i.e. persistence. It is important for us to see how persistence is *not* an active part of predicative experience, as this will help us distinguish it sharply from verbal experience.

In the case of the basketball, it is part of my experience of the ball that it persists through time. More specifically, if the judgment is to be fulfilled the particular property in question must persist throughout my experience. This persistence, however, is not what is actively attended to. What I am attentive to is whether, in my encounter with the ball, I encounter dust on its surface. That of course requires that the dust persist through my encounter with it, but this is no more actively attended to than is the ball's three-dimensionality.

Another way of putting this is to say that I am not actively attentive to the 'next' and the 'before' of my experience. This experience of course unfolds temporally, and thus has a passively temporal structure. Yet the successive stages of my experience are not anticipated in an active sense; I am not concerned with discovering what is to come, or with what has just passed. This would only be the case if my judgment were something along the lines of 'The ball is remaining dusty.' Then, of course, the persistence of this property throughout the phases of my encounter with it would be a matter of active experience. With a simple property-ascription, this is not the case. I am only concerned with my discovery of dust on the ball; this is the only 'moment' of experience that matters.

So although Husserl's analyses deal with static objects, this does not mean that, in judgments about them, their stasis is itself part of what is judicatively intended. All that is intended is the belonging of a property to an object, or, in experiential terms, the availability of a determination within the horizon of the object. That is, what is intended, in experiential terms, is that an experience of the object would yield an experience of a particular property. Thus when we say that property-attributing copular judgments constitute states of affairs themselves, these are not to be understood as the persistence of a property through time, but just the belonging of a property to an object tout court.

This is not to say that there is no temporal aspect to property attribution. Our judgments are tensed, after all. We can say not only that the ball is dusty, but that it was dusty, will be dusty, will have been dusty, etc. These temporal determinations, however, do not involve the intention of temporal persistence. They simply indicate whether the state of affairs is experientially available now, was once available, or will be available in the future. The intentional mode is still one wherein it is availability, and not persistence, that is relevant. For this reason, we can say that while such judgments do intend a temporal ‘position’ for the state of affairs, they don’t intend a temporal dimension to the state of affairs itself. I’ll call this the ‘intemporality’ of states of affairs, which is different an ‘atemporality’ which would exclude all temporal determinations, and which applies, for example, to claims about ideal objects (e.g. ‘Squares have four sides’).

We can, of course, assign a state of affairs to a particular span of time: ‘The ball was continuously dusty from 9pm until 11pm on October 23, 2012.’ Here we do seem to see the positing of persistence; and to fulfill this judgment (or to have fulfilled it, since it is now impossible to do so) would mean to be attentive to a temporal progression. Note, however, that this is only the case once we explicitly assign a temporal duration to the state of affairs. The bare judgment, without this temporal adjunct, has no such temporal dimension in its ‘default’ mode.

Now, although we have arrived at this observation by thinking about a perceptual property of an unchanging object, it applies beyond this restricted domain. Take, for example, the case of properties that are not perceptible in a straightforward sense: the sadness of a person, for example, the cost of a product, the difficulty of a maze, etc. However these properties are given to intentional consciousness—that is, whatever the nature of the experience that would fulfill a judgment concerning them—it is clear that the corresponding states of affairs are intended in the same intemporal mode as those involving perceptual properties. The judgment ‘Mary is sad,’ for example, is fulfilled by an experience (of some sort) in which my encounter with Mary yields the appearance of her sadness (through her own self-reporting, for example). It is not my concern to actively follow the continuation of this sadness from moment to moment, so long as my interest is just to validate the judgment itself. I just want to confirm that which is posited in the judgment—that sadness is a discoverable property of Mary. The same can be said for the other examples.

Nor do properties, to be intended intemporally, need to be properties of static objects. I have in mind dispositional properties, like being bouncy, or pliable, or quick-tempered, which denote, if not an actual change or activity to an object, at least the possibility of such. The ascription of dispositions to objects is a complex problem which I do not intend to clarify here.¹ However, it is clear that states of affairs involving dispositional properties are also intended in an intemporal manner. Dispositional properties can of course be posited as persisting, just as any property can be—a ball can remain bouncy (or stop being bouncy), and a person can remain quick tempered (or change her attitude). Yet when we simply ascribe such properties to objects we are not intending their persistence; we are just assigning a disposition to the object, in the present, past, or future.

The intemporality of states of affairs extends even beyond the realm of property ascriptions, including as well prepositional judgments ('The cat is on the mat'), classificatory judgments ('Socrates is a man'), and identity judgments ('The morning star is the evening star'). Again, the nature of the judicative experience that would fulfill such judgments is a complex matter which I will not broach. I do think it is self-evident, however, that these fulfillments will not involve an attention to temporal progression; they will not involve an attention to the 'next' and 'before' of the fulfilling experience.

As a general rule, then, copular judgments do not essentially involve the intemporal intentionality I have described here. The states of affairs they constitute are not intended in their temporal extension, and the fulfillment of these judgments does not involve an active attention to their temporal progression. We must bear this in mind when we compare the states of affairs intended in copular judgments to the happenings intended in verbal judgments.

4.1.2 The 'protemporal' character of verbal experience

Verbal judgment-fulfillments exhibit precisely the sort of temporality that is missing from predicative judgments. That is, judgments which can answer the question, 'What is happening?' do, as a rule, involve attention to a temporal progression. I will call this aspect of verbal experience 'protemporality.'

¹ This topic will be briefly revisited when we examine Husserl's notion of "causal properties," see below, 'Generalizing the Picture: Force and Non-Mechanical Happenings,' p.191ff.

The protemporality of verbal experience is easy enough to see when the happening at issue involves change of some sort. If I claim that something is changing—that an apple is falling, that a tree is growing, that my sister is growing angry, etc.—I am explicitly intending, in each case, a characteristic alteration, over time, of a property of the object in question (the position of an apple, the size of tree, the mood of my sister, and so on). The kind of experience that would fulfill these judgments—what I’m calling verbal experience—would, accordingly, be one in which there is an active attention to the ‘next’ and the ‘before.’ In the case of a falling apple, for example, I must follow the apple through each new phase of its temporal position, always with an awareness of where it just was, and with an anticipatory expectation of where it will be next. My sister’s growing anger would be experienced along analogous lines. As for the growing tree, we can’t experience this in the same ‘real-time’ way (without the mediation of time-lapse photography); but an experiential fulfillment of this judgment would require, in a different sense, an active attention to past phases of the tree (held in memory) and anticipations of its future phases.

One might object, however, that not all changes are extended over time. Some are ‘punctual’ or ‘instantaneous.’² For example, in the claim ‘John reached the finish line,’ or ‘The apple started to fall,’ what is happening seems to have no temporal extension whatsoever. While this is in one sense true—finishing and starting, when considered in isolation, have no measurable temporal extension—in both cases there must be a temporal progression for which we are identifying the beginning or the end. For example, there is indeed no temporal extension involved in reaching a finish line, if this is considered ‘on its own.’ But we cannot in truth intend such a termination in isolation; we can only speak of ‘arriving’ insofar as we intend a progressive approach to which it is the conclusion. The corresponding argument can obviously be made for ‘beginning.’ Somewhat differently, the claim ‘The star disappeared from view,’ involves a punctual happening; and here we cannot speak of the termination or initiation of a process. Still, temporal extension is of course relevant here. For something to disappear, it must have been

² The various temporal structures indicated by verbs are considered in linguistic semantics under the heading of “aspect.” Zeno Vendler introduced a widely-accepted classification for aspect, according to which verbs denote either (a) states as in “John knows Sally” or “Sally loves John;” (b) atelic activities with no implied goal as in “Ralph drove his car” or “The carcass decomposed;” (c) achievements with punctual goals as in “Miranda finished the book;” and (d) accomplishments with gradually achieved goals as in “Sarah is building a house.” See Zeno Vendler, *Linguistics in Philosophy*, (Ithaca, N.Y.,: Cornell University Press, 1967), 97-121. Aspectual distinctions comprise an area ripe for phenomenological analysis. However, aside from the brief considerations in the paragraph above, it is a problem I will leave for future work.

previously visible. Accordingly, the fulfillments of such judgments cannot not be carried out without the active experience of a progression, involving an attention to the ‘before’ and ‘next.’

Change, then, provides a straightforward demonstration of the protemporality of verbal experience, whereby temporal extension is actively grasped. We must not make the mistake, however, of identifying protemporality with the perception of change. Not everything that happens, it turns out, involves change. This may seem like an odd claim, but upon reflection we can see that it is confirmed by our intuitions. Imagine, for example, that you walk into your friend’s home and find him hovering, motionless, three feet above the floor. Nothing is changing, but certainly something is happening. My friend, namely, is hovering in mid-air. To take a more realistic example, we can imagine a weightlifter holding a barbell above his head. He may be quite still, but this does not mean that nothing is happening. If we were asked, ‘What is happening,’ we could answer, quite naturally, ‘Someone is holding a barbell above his head.’

The case of changeless happening raises an important question. What does it have in common with change, such that both are considered ‘things that happen’? We’ll return to this question shortly; indeed, the case of changeless happening will be of crucial significance as we try to deepen our understanding of happening in general. For now, let us just note what is relevant to the issue at hand, namely the temporality involved in verbal experience. Even in these cases where no change is involved, it is still evident that a temporal progression is part of what is intended. My friend is maintaining his position above the ground; the weightlifter is keeping the weight aloft. In both cases, the fulfillment of a judicative intention involves a continuous attention to the ‘before’ and the ‘next.’ We must confirm, in validating such judgments, that what has been the case continues to be so; and this contrasts with predicative experience where an attention to temporal extension is not relevant.

4.1.3 Avoiding the ‘states vs. changes’ mistake

As a rule, then, verbal judgments are fulfilled by experiences in which temporal progression is actively experienced, while predicative judgments are not. This should indicate to us that, as we try to develop a phenomenology of verbal judgments, we cannot simply import the model of property ascription that corresponds to the copular judgment. The objectivities intended in judgments of the form *S is p* are essentially intemporal; the having of a property is not something necessarily intended in its temporal extension. This means: the fulfilling experience is not one in

which the ‘next’ and ‘before’ are active components of the experience. Happenings are necessarily protemporal, as a matter of essence. We therefore have a strong reason to identify two distinct basic types.

This phenomenological distinction permits us, as we draw out the contrasts between copular and verbal judgments, to avoid a subtle but crucial mistake. The mistake would be to distinguish these two types of judgments by correlating them, respectively, with unchanging states and with change. On this view, a copular judgment would correspond to the persistence (unchange), over a span of time, of a particular property of an object, while a verbal judgment would correspond to the change, over a span of time, with respect to a certain property of an object. (We ignore for the time being the problem, raised in the previous section, of ‘changeless happening.’) Thus ‘The apple was moldy’ would indicate that, between two points in time, the apple had mold on it at every moment, while ‘The apple fell from the counter’ would indicate that, between two points in time, the apple was in a sequence of different positions at every moment. In fact, both sentences would assign a sequence of properties to the object; the copular sentence would just assign a sequence in which one and the same property is repeated at each moment.

Such a model would thus allow us to argue that copular and verbal judgments are not, in fact, so different after all. We could, it would seem, assimilate verbs into a property ascription model. The only difference would be that verbal judgments ascribe a succession of different properties to an object over time, whereas property ascriptions ascribe just a single property. Verbs like ‘falling’ or ‘breaking’ or ‘running’ or ‘dying’ are different from predicates like ‘moldy,’ ‘intact,’ ‘sitting’ or ‘alive,’ but only insofar as the former assign property successions, while the latter assign property persistence.

This view becomes untenable once we have seen that copular property-attributions do not, as a rule, actively ascribe property persistence to objects. They are intemporal; the persistence of the property is not intended in them, and is not attended to in their fulfillment. Copular judgments posit only the availability of a particular determination within the horizon delimited by the object (including the ‘outer horizon’ in which its relational properties appear). To intend the persistence of the property requires a further intentional act, fulfilled by a protemporal experience, in which the ‘next’ and the ‘before’ are attended to actively. Copular property ascription—claiming that *S* is *p*—is intemporal a matter of essence. Thus if verbal

judgments exhibit a different kind of intentionality, in which temporal progression is explicitly intended, we cannot simply interpret them as a special class of property ascription. They are rather judgments of an essentially different kind.

Keeping this distinction in view allows us to see one way in which the property exemplification model, which attempts to conceive of events from within a copular paradigm, ultimately serves to occlude essential aspects of its very subject matter. Kim and Bennett, as we saw in Chapter 1, characterize events as exemplifications by substances of properties at a time. Kim offers the notation $[x, P, t]$. This proposal—Kim's, at least—is meant to be broad enough to include both events (which in Kim's view involve change) and states (which do not). Within the larger context of Kim's concerns this may seem at first unobjectionable. Part of his goal is to formalize identity conditions for those 'entities' which are subsumed under causal laws;³ and indeed, we can just as easily ask 'Why is the earth spherical?' as we can 'What caused the apple to fall?' He thus suggests that we not make much of a fuss about the distinction between (so-called) states and (so-called) events. Accordingly, 'falling' is a property just as 'spherical' is: both can be exemplified by an object at a time (or time segment). They are both properties that objects can 'have.'

The problem with this model, however, is precisely that it treats verbs as designators for properties objects possess. To see them this way is to shoehorn them into a copular relation which is not in fact applicable to them. We still have more to discover about the nature of verbal judgments. Already, however, we have seen that property-having is something intended intemporally, whereas happening is not. The fact that Kim's model includes a temporal variable does not remedy this problem. As we saw, copular judgments are not atemporal—the states of affairs they denote are temporally locatable; so, of course, are things that happen. To apply a temporal index in both cases is therefore unproblematic. The distinct issue with things that happen is that they are intended protemporally. What happens does not just hold at a time, it must take place over time (or be the initiation or culmination of something that does).

In phenomenological terms, this means that copular syntheses and verbal syntheses generate fundamentally different intentional structures. Verbal judgments do not generate structures in which a property is intended as 'belonging,' intemporally, to an object. Rather, they generate structures in which objects participate in a temporal unfolding. Only through their

³ Kim, "Causation, Nomic Subsumption, and the Concept of Event."

participation in this unfolding can we say of them that something has happened to them. This is of course to say something ‘about’ the objects, as was stressed above, and in this more general sense verbal judgments do ‘predicate something’ of objects. Verbal and copular judgments do have this much, at least, in common. This commonality, however, exists at a level of generality in which the true, distinct natures of copular and verbal judgments remains obscured.

4.2 Verbal Experience

At this point we have only discussed verbal experience in a superficial way, in order to distinguish its temporal aspect from that of predicative experience. We need a more detailed picture. What is the nature of the type of experience which fulfills verbal judgments? What are its general features? In other words, what does it mean to experience something as happening—to experience happening? This question is not explicitly posed in Husserl’s writings. Since he does not identify verbal judgments as a distinct judgment form, the question of the fulfilling experience of such a judgment does not arise. Nonetheless, we can find in his work some attempts to grapple with issues that are relevant to our question.

We have already identified one aspect of verbal experience—namely, that it involves an attention to temporal progression. We’ll begin this section by looking in a bit more detail at this aspect of verbal experience, borrowing analyses from Husserl’s well-known essay on time-consciousness. It will quickly become apparent, however, that while this is a necessary feature of verbal experience, it is hardly sufficient, since it does not serve to distinguish happening from mere persistence. This might be taken to suggest that the distinguishing feature of verbal experience is the apprehension of change. We have already seen, of course, that not all happening involves change, and so we will clearly have to look elsewhere if we hope to discover what is essential to happening as such. Nonetheless, it is precisely by thinking carefully about change that we can discover what it shares in common with changeless happening. For this section, Husserl’s discussion of change in *Thing and Space* and the second book of *Ideas* will be instructive, as they in fact point us to the commonality we are looking for—namely the involvement of ‘force.’ We will examine this idea in great detail, presenting the argument that verbal experience involves, fundamentally, an experience of force through its effects. As we will see, however, force, presents serious challenges to phenomenological reflection, problems which

frustrated Husserl himself. We cannot hope to resolve these problems here; we will merely attempt to bring the problems themselves to clarity, and suggest directions for further thought.

More generally, the material covered in this section cannot be taken as a thorough, definitive account of verbal experience in all its varieties and richness. That task, insofar as it is even possible, could fill a book, or three. As a general account, however, it will give us enough material to suggest a characterization of what happening essentially is, and to start thinking about the kind of judicative structure that is required to adequately express it in propositional form.

4.2.1 Temporal progression

Verbal experience, as we have seen, is distinct from predicative experience insofar as it necessarily involves an active attention to temporal progression. This involves a change in attitude towards the object being experienced. The object is not simply, as in predicative experience, encountered as something with an internal horizon of discoverable determinations (or an external horizon of discoverable relations), but rather as something with past phases and phases yet-to-come. While temporal intentions are implicit in the apprehension of any real object whatsoever—since they all appear to us within a temporal flux—it is not always the case that we encounter an object with an active interest in its temporal phases. Husserl draws this distinction, in his early time-consciousness essay,⁴ using the example of a tone: “When a tone sounds, my objectivating apprehension can make the tone itself, which endures and fades away, into an object and yet not make the duration of the tone or the tone in its duration into an object. The latter—the tone in its duration—is a temporal object.”⁵

We should pause here to remark that Husserl’s notion of a ‘temporal object’ is overly broad, to the point of incoherence. He does give a concise definition: “objects that are not only unities in time but that also contain temporal extension in themselves.”⁶ Yet over the course of the essay he gives examples which are hard to group into one coherent category. Even in a single sentence, for example, he claims that in addition to tones, melodies are also temporal objects,

⁴ Husserl went on to write further, and think more carefully, about time-consciousness in later works that were not published in his lifetime. I will not consider these here, as the question of time is not, as we will see, decisive for the question of verbal experience. We can get more or less what we need from the earlier work. See however fn.17, below.

⁵ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John B. Brough, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 24.

⁶ Ibid.

along with “any change whatsoever, but also...any persistence without change.”⁷ Yet while a tone—his first example—has a sensuous continuity, the unity of a melody across time is one of a quite different sort, involving harmonic and rhythmic relations, among other things; indeed the very objective status of a melody poses a host of questions and problems. Worse still is the inclusion of change and persistence, which don’t seem to be temporal objects at all, but rather things we might say about temporal objects. Later in the text he refers to “a flight of birds or a troop of cavalry at the gallop and the like.”⁸ This is vexing as well. Is the flight the temporal object? Or is it the flock of birds, in their temporal extension? Is it the galloping, or the troop?

Rather than try to sort out these problems, we can just focus first on the notion of a temporal object Husserl develops using the example of a tone. A tone, he tells us, need not be apprehended in its temporal duration; but it can be, and to do so involves a particular kind of apprehension. Husserl is not here treating the experience of a tone as the fulfillment of a judgment about it, yet it is easy enough to see how we might use Husserl’s distinction in a judicative context. On the one hand, we can make copular judgments that ascribe properties to the tone—that it is high-pitched or abrasive, for example. The fulfillments of such judgments involve what we have been calling intemporal experience; in this experience, the tone itself is not apprehended as a temporal object. On the other hand, we can make verbal judgments about the tone—that it is rising in pitch, that it is fading, etc. To fulfill such judgments, we must apprehend the tone as something temporally extended.

How is a temporal object apprehended as such? This question of course can lead us—as it does in Husserl’s essay—to consider the very nature of time-consciousness itself. Let us avoid these treacherous waters, sticking to some basic observations. These will be familiar to anyone who has read Husserl’s writings on time, but they are worth reviewing briefly. First, it is important to remember that our interest is in the temporal character of objects as they are experienced, rather than in the constitution of an ‘objective’ time within which empirical objects are taken to exist. That is, we are interested in the temporality of objects as they appear, rather than of objects insofar as they are considered as mind-independent entities with real temporal locations. These two considerations—subjective time and objective time—are of course phenomenologically intertwined. For our concerns however—namely, the phenomenological

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 71.

characterization of verbal experience—what matters is the experience of objects as temporal appearances.

Thus it should not bother us that Husserl, for most of his essay, limits his analyses to what he calls “immanent” temporal objects, rather than empirical, “transcendent” temporal objects. His field of interest is our direct, sensory experience of objects, rather than the ‘real’ intentional objects we intend as transcending this experience: not a tone, for example, as something being produced by an instrument and existing in objective time, but the tone considered “purely as hyletic datum.”⁹ Husserl’s identification of pure sense data as his subject matter is a bit misleading. The visual sensations that ensue as I cast my eyes about my office may constitute a temporal sequence of some sort, but this does not appear to be what Husserl has in mind when he speaks of immanent temporal objects. Rather, what he seems to mean—and what, in any case, we can productively take him to mean—are the sensation-sequences that pertain to the experience of a particular perceptual object.

Again, then: how is a temporal object apprehended as such? Or, restated in light of what has just been said: what is the manner of immanent appearance of a temporal object? As with any object that is directly experienced, it must be immediately present in a ‘now’; there must be some phase of the object I am currently perceiving. Each present moment, however, immediately becomes a past one; it “passes over into retention,” in Husserl’s terminology, while a new now “continuously relieves” the one that has passed into retention.¹⁰ To each presently perceived phase of the object there belongs a continuous series of retentions of what was previously perceived; and with each new now, the “comet’s tail” of retentions is itself modified, expanding as its beginning-point fades further from the present moment. (Our talk of ‘each’ new now must of course be understood as an idealization, since the experience is not of discrete, separate moments but rather of a continuity.)

This much, however, is already true of my experience of any object that appears in time, regardless of whether I am apprehending it in its temporal extension. It is part of my experience of any such object that each new present phase is not experienced as the appearance of a new object, but rather as the continued presence of the same object that was just present. To

⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., 31.

experience an object *as* a temporal object must involve something more than just the mere retention of previous phases. What is this extra something?

Husserl provides us, in this text at least, with only a partial answer to this question. The best he offers is an insistence that, for a temporal object to be apprehended as such, its past phases must not only be retained (as is the case in all experience), but must in a certain sense be ‘perceived’ together with the present phase. Strictly speaking, of course, the only phase that can be perceived is the present one.¹¹ Yet in another sense we would say that we perceive temporally extended objects as wholes. We can, after all, draw a distinction between a temporal object that is currently being perceived, and one that is merely remembered. Husserl argues, therefore, that we need a different, wider notion of perception that can accommodate the perception of temporal objects, a notion which does not limit perception to what is seen at the now-point. The wider concept of perception is “the act that places something before our eyes as the thing itself, the act that *originally constitutes* the object.”¹² Within this wider concept, we can talk about the “perception” of the past, as opposed to recollection of it. This perception of the past occurs through retention, which he also calls “primary memory.” In primary memory, the past (more specifically, the just-past) is “constituted presentatively, not re-presentatively.”¹³ It is directly perceived, rather than recollected.

Following this line of thought, the experience of a temporal object would appear to be one in which the past is actively perceived together with the present. As Husserl puts it: “an act claiming to give a temporal object itself must contain in itself ‘apprehensions of the now,’ ‘apprehensions of the past,’ and so on; specifically, as originally constituting apprehensions.”¹⁴ In this mode of perception, the perceiver “still ‘holds on to’ the elapsed tones themselves in consciousness and progressively brings about the unity of the consciousness that is related to the unitary temporal object.”¹⁵

This answer is only partial because it does not help us understand how the present and past form a progressive unity. We can say that the just-past is ‘perceived’ along with the present, but this is not yet to say that they are experienced as a single, ongoing temporal progression. Husserl does appear to identify this as a crucial aspect in the experience of temporal objects.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, 40.

¹² *Ibid.*, 43.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 40. In this case, Husserl has in mind a melody.

With reference to a melody, for example, he writes that it “appears as present as long as it still sounds, as long as tones belonging to it and meant in *one* nexus of apprehension still sound.”¹⁶ Yet how are we to understand this “one nexus,” in which present and past are experiences as part of an ongoing whole? Again, we are at risk here of wandering off into the thicket of problems presented by time-consciousness itself. We can focus our question, however, by thinking of it as analogous to one we raised in the previous chapter, regarding explication. There, the question was how individual, newly discovered determinations are experienced *as* determinations of an object of interest, rather than simply as new, unrelated experiences. We can pose a similar question in the current context: how are new phases of an object experienced *as* new phases in an ongoing temporal progression?

Recall how Husserl addressed the question concerning explication. The key lay in thinking about explicative encounters with an object as the elucidation of horizon. When first encountered, an object has a ‘vague generality,’ an ‘open determinateness,’ which is subsequently filled-in or ‘elucidated’ with more and more determinate explicates. Explicates are experienced as determinations of the object precisely because they appear within the context of this horizon. The horizon guides my perceptual interest to ask ‘questions’, so to speak, that particular explicates then answer. Husserl thus grounds the special unity of substrate and predicate in a particular sort of expectant attention, namely an attention which expects what is indeterminate about an object to be made determinate.

We can approach the unity of the temporal phases of a temporal object in the same way. For an object to be experienced as a temporal object—for it to be experienced ‘in its duration’—each now must be experienced as the continuation of what preceded it. This in turn requires a different kind of expectant attention. What is expected are not, as in explication, new explicates that fill in the vague horizon of the object, but rather new phases of the object itself. This means that, as we are experiencing the object in its ‘now,’ we are expectantly attentive to what is just to come. Each fresh now is thus experienced not only as new, but as the new moment that was awaited. So while the past phases are ‘held on to’ as what was previously present, the present itself is experienced as the continuation of the past.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Husserl’s similar resolution of this issue in his later work, see Rudolf Bernet, “Husserl’s New Phenomenology of Time Consciousness in the Bernau Manuscripts,” in *On Time: New Contributions to the Husserlian Phenomenology of Time*, ed. Dieter Lohmar and Ichiro Yamaguchi (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 12-13.

It is important to emphasize how this is different from the simple apprehension of an object, which of course unfolds temporally, but is not protemporal in the sense we have articulated. When I apprehend an object, each new moment is of course a continuation of previous phases. Furthermore, this continuation is in a sense ‘expected’; if a chair I am looking at were suddenly to disappear, I would be quite surprised. However, this expectation is a passive one relative to the active expectation involved in the apprehension of temporal progression. In the latter case, the new phases are not just passively encountered, but actively expected. Thus we must be careful not to simply call this active expectation ‘protention,’ without further specifying it as a distinct, active form of protention.¹⁸ (Husserl does, in the text under consideration, casually refer to the protentional aspect of the experience of temporal objects, but without clarifying this important distinction regarding its active and passive forms.¹⁹)

These observations give us a way to understand the particular unity of present and past in the experience of a temporal object. Each now is experienced as the fulfillment of an active protention, and thus as the continuation of a previous now. With the experience of the new now, however, there is a new protention, which in turn is immediately fulfilled. Each new now, we can say, both fulfills a previous expectation, and serves as the basis for a new one. Each is experienced not as the end-point of a series, but the leading edge of an ongoing process of protentions and fulfillments. The now is ‘united’ with the past of the temporal object because, in it, we actively experience both the fulfillment of just-past protentions, and the continued expectation of new nows. The object is thus experienced as progressing in time, rather than simply experienced as an object.

We now have at least a basic phenomenological grasp of the experiences through which we encounter objects in their temporal extension, as is required for the fulfillment of verbal judgments. We do need to make a small correction, however, to the account we have presented thus far. Up until now, we have been speaking as if what is fulfilled in each new now is the expectation of a new phase of the object. We should rather say, however, that what we expect are new phases of the object with respect to specific properties. In tracking the progress of an object, we are not necessarily attentive to all its properties. If we follow a tone as it rises in pitch, for

¹⁸ It is also important to distinguish the protention which intends yet-to-arrive phases of an object from the protention involved in explication, which intends as-yet undetermined explicates of the object.

¹⁹ “Every process that constitutes its object originally is animated by protentions that emptily constitute what is coming as coming, that catch it and bring it toward fulfillment.” Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* 54.

example, we may not be attentive to its volume; if we follow an apple as it falls to the ground, we may not be attentive to its shape. Indeed, it is empirically impossible to track all of an object's properties at once. Thus when we speak of the experience that gives objects in their temporal extension, what we really mean is the experience of the temporal progression of a specific property (or a few) that is of interest to us in a given experience

This specification in turn tempts us to understand verbal experience itself in precisely these terms, namely as the experience of a property-sequence. The problem, with this conception, however, is that it includes any property-sequence whatsoever, even those in which the property remains unchanged over time. While we have seen that there are some cases of changeless happening (which we will return to in the next section), property persistence is for the most part not judged as something that happens. Let's imagine, for example, that someone points to an egg resting in a nest, and predicts that it is about to start trembling and cracking open. As we observe it, we experience just the kind of attentive expectation we have been describing. With each now, we await the next now; and the retained (just-past) nows extend into an ever-growing sequence of phases, constituting an extent during which the egg has remained uncracked. Yet we would not say of this temporal extent that something is happening in it (with respect to the egg). To the contrary, it would be normal for us to proclaim, with disappointment, that nothing is happening.

Verbal experience, then, involves more than just the experience of temporal progression. If all happening involved change, the problem would be relatively easy to resolve. We could characterize verbal experience not just as the experience of a temporal progression, but one in which a specific property (or properties) of an object changes in a specific way over the temporal extent. If there is changeless happening, however, then identifying certain temporal experiences as the experience of change does not yet tell us why they are experiences in which something happens. There must be something else, shared by both experiences, which gives them their common character.

4.2.2 Change and changeless happening

If it is not change as such that characterizes verbal experience—if there is something else going on—then conceiving of happening as change must fail even in cases where change is in fact involved. There must be a phenomenological residuum, so to speak, which an account of change

leaves unexamined. Let's begin, then, by trying to analyze 'changeful' happenings strictly in terms of change, to identify the point where such an account falters.

The commonsense view of change

Change is of course itself a philosophical bugbear, a classic site of paradox and aporia. We are here sidestepping, however, the deeper questions about the nature and possibility of change, and simply accepting what I take to be the commonsense view of it. On this view, an object changes if a property it possesses at one moment is replaced by a different property at a later moment. By 'different property,' I mean a difference within the spectrum of a particular property type: a change from one color to another, from one position in space to another, from one mood to another, etc. This notion of change is helpfully described by Lawrence Lombard in terms of what he calls a "quality space." The properties within a quality space are contraries; to have one of them at a certain time is to not have any of the others. An object, for example, cannot be in two positions at the same time (supposed quantum properties aside), or be shaped in two different ways; therefore position and shape comprise distinct quality spaces. By contrast, an object can both be on top of my head and hat-shaped, so these two properties do not belong to the same quality space. It is also the case that losing one property within a quality space means gaining another; if an object stops being hat-shaped, it must take on another form.²⁰ A change in an object is thus formalized by Lombard as follows, where x is an object, t , is a time, and $[P_0, P_1, \dots, P_n, \dots]$ is the set of properties that comprise a quality space:

A change in $x \dots$ consists in x 's moving from having [property] P_i at [time] t to its having P_k at t' .²¹

A change, as so defined, is in fact what Lombard calls an 'event.'²²

We find the same conception of change in Husserl's early considerations of the topic, such as are found in his "Dingvorlesung." These formed part of a 1907 lecture course, and have been published in English as *Thing and Space*. The lectures are concerned with the perception of physical objects, and are limited, for the most part, to analyses of static objects. Towards the end of these lectures, however, Husserl turns his attention to changing objects, considering both

²⁰ See Lawrence Brian Lombard, *Events : A Metaphysical Study*, (London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 113ff.

²¹ "Events," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 3 (1979): 438. For a more detailed formulation see also *Events : A Metaphysical Study*, 168.

²² Kim takes a more minimal approach, specifying that a change occurs when an object gains or loses any property. See Kim, "Events as Property Exemplifications," 159.

qualitative changes (such as changes in color) and movement through space. His approach here is of course different from Lombard's, since he is engaged in a phenomenology of perception, rather than a 'metaphysical' study of events. His aim is not to articulate definitions and identity criteria for events, but rather to disclose the structures of experience through which objects appear as changing. Thus, for example, Husserl's discussion of motion is informed by his earlier considerations regarding the role of the perceiver's kinaesthetic experiences in the perception of the spatial form and location of objects.

Nonetheless, his understanding of what counts as change is functionally identical to Lombard's. Let's look first at his discussion of qualitative change. Husserl uses color as his example. An object's particular color property is understood, in his phenomenological analysis, to correspond to an ordered "manifold" of color perceptions. A cube perceived as having a certain red hue will appear differently under different lighting conditions, from different angles, at different distances, and even at different points on its surface. All of these possibilities together comprise the color manifold of the object. So long as this range of possibilities remains constant, the cube is perceived as having a single color, regardless of changes in the way it appears. A change in the actual color of the cube occurs as soon as the manifold that was previously available is replaced by another one. Where previously, for example, the movements of my eyes would call forth a specific sequence of color appearances (as I look at different points on the cube) corresponding to a specific hue, in the new phase the old manifold is disrupted: "With the eye-movement, there constantly appears, from one phase to the next, an image that is colored differently than was to be expected in the sense of the stationary manifold."²³

If the change were to suddenly stop, then we would return to a color-manifold appropriate to an unchanging object. Thus to every phase in a change there corresponds a manifold appropriate to that particular color. Of course, if the object is constantly changing, there is never time to experience the manifold in its variety. As soon as we move our eyes, for example, or step around the object, we are not greeted with the color-appearance expected from the manifold to which the previous color-appearance belongs, but rather a different one, which would be expected in a different manifold. So in continuous change, where the temporal duration of each phase approaches the "null-point"—i.e. is infinitesimally short—the manifold "persists

²³ Edmund Husserl, *Thing and Space : Lectures of 1907*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz, (Dordrecht Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 229.

as a possible manifold.”²⁴ That is, to each phase of the object there corresponds a system of possible experiences of that object under different conditions, even though few of these possible experiences can be actualized in practice.

Husserl’s description of movement proceeds along similar lines. A stationary object of a certain form presents itself to my vision as a manifold of appearances that are correlated to specific kinaesthetic experiences. If I move my eyes, for example, the object will no longer be in the center of my field of vision; if I walk around the object, the shape of its profile will shift in determinate and repeatable ways. A change of location is perceived when the manifold available at one moment is no longer available in the next. The object may no longer be in the center of my field of vision, even though I have not moved my eyes; to return it to the center, I have to move my eyes, or turn my head, etc. If it rotates, its perceived profile may also change in shape; to return to the profile I first had in view, I now have to move my body so that I am viewing it from the former perspective. “Every series of appearances of this kind,” Husserl writes, “exclusively consists in appearances such as they pertain to the stationary thing in any given location and also such as every continuous nexus of appearances pertains to the system of possible nexuses of appearances in the case of the stationary thing.”²⁵

While there are complexities in Husserl’s analyses which we have not addressed, we can see how his approach constitutes a phenomenological version of the conception of change we find in Lombard. While for Lombard change described as a replacement of one property by another within the same quality-space, for Husserl change involves the replacement of one manifold of possible appearances—which is constitutive of a property—by another of the same type. Thus we can understand Husserl’s account as another version of the commonsense view. It describes the appearance, for a perceiving subject, of a sequence of relevantly different properties attributed to the same object.

What happens when things change?

The question, then, is whether this account of the experience of change suffices to characterize verbal experience in which change is involved. That is, when we experience change, is the experience of change enough to tell us what is happening? Some simple thought experiments can demonstrate how change on its own fails to give us the whole picture. First, imagine a car, which

²⁴ Ibid., 231.

²⁵ Ibid., 239.

you perceive moving in a straight line across your field of vision. You see it only for a second or two – it appears from behind one building, let's say, and disappears behind another. The car is too far away for you to see inside it, or to hear it any noises coming from it. Now, we can describe the motion you have perceived as a continuous change in location, from point A to point B. Does the experience of this change exhaust what you would see as happening in this case?

To see that it does not, let's construct two different scenarios. In the first, you (the perceiver) reasonably assume that the car is being driven; the motor is on, and someone's foot is on the gas. You would judge, in this case, that the car is being driven from point A to point B. In the second scenario, you learn that the car was parked on a steep hill, out of view, when its parking brake failed. It started to roll down the hill, picking up speed, and you know it is about zip across your field of vision, from point A and towards B. When you see this, the spatial change you experience is the same as in the first scenario.²⁶ Yet you would no longer judge that the car is being driven, but rather that it is rolling from A to B. Regarding the same change—movement from A to B—you would say that two quite different things are happening in each case.

The change itself then, underdetermines what you see as happening. But what constitutes the relevant difference between, in these examples, between the two movements? In the former case, you take the car to be moving under its 'own' impulse.²⁷ In the latter case, you take the car to be moving solely because of its momentum. It would appear, then, that what distinguishes a driven car from a rolling car has something to do with the way force is involved in the movement. It matters whether the force is coming from within the car, or is rather somehow imposed on it.

In introducing the notion of 'force,' I should be clear that I do not have in mind a concept that would fit into a scientific theory. You don't need to understand anything sophisticated about how motors transfer energy to wheels to experience the car as being driven. In fact, you don't need to even know that cars have motors; you just have to know that cars can 'move themselves' without an outside impetus. Nor, in the second case, need you have any scientific knowledge

²⁶The car will in fact be slowly decelerating, but you don't have enough time to notice this deceleration, and you might not even grasp that that it is necessary due to friction.

²⁷I'm ignoring the role of the "driver" here, as I don't think it is relevant in identifying the key difference between these two cases. We could imagine, for example, that there is in fact no one in the car, and the gas pedal has been taped down.

regarding momentum (or gravity), any less than you need such an understanding to know that throwing a ball will project it through the air.

In fact, our grasp of these forces in experience seems to be independent of anything we might call a real ‘understanding’ of them. To make this point clearer, let’s look at a somewhat more fanciful example. Imagine that you are watching a magician’s performance, and are exposed to a series of illusions, in two stages.

A gold coin rests in the magician’s left palm. As she stares at it with exaggerated concentration, it rises up into the air. She now points at the coin with her right hand, and starts moving her finger in tight circles and figure-eights; the coin follows along, apparently linked to her finger by an invisible beam. Slowly, she moves her finger so that it is pointing down to the table in front her; the coin, accordingly, moves down until it is resting flat on the table.

The magician then turns around for another prop. The coin however, pops up behind her, and goes through the same set of mid-air acrobatics, but this time ‘unbeknownst’ to the magician. (Of course, we know it is all part of the act.) The audience laughs, but just as the magician turns around with suspicion, the coin falls quickly back to where it was resting on the table; it seems to want to avoid being discovered. The magician looks puzzled.

Our sense of what is happening with the coin thus goes through two distinct stages, even though, in both of them, the movement we perceive is the same—a coin flying about through the air, in repetitive patterns. In the first stage, the coin appears to move because of some invisible force the magician is exerting. It is as if she were lifting it with her mind, or with some force akin to magnetism. In the second, it appears to have a magical force of its own: it can fly of its own accord, somehow.

In these two experiences, however, the different forces at work remain completely mysterious to us. Indeed, we don’t really believe that they exist. Both cases defy not just the laws of physics, but our own everyday understanding of how things work. Yet they are somehow intelligible, at least to the degree that they are distinct. They are distinct because force operates differently in each case. These forces are somehow operative within our experience, such that we can distinguish between the two very distinct stages of the trick. We ‘see,’ in the first case, a force that the magician is somehow ‘exerting’ to move the coin around, and we ‘see’ in the second case, a force exerted by the coin itself. It is not enough to offer, as an explanation for the difference, that in the first case the coin’s motions are accompanied by the magician’s correlated gestures, while in the second case these are absent. We could imagine the performance proceeding in such a way, for example, that we ‘realize’ that the magician had in fact never been

in control; the coin was always just playing along, moving of its own accord, fooling the magician into thinking she was in control. She now repeats her previous actions, but the joke is on her; we now see the coin as self-propelled, even as the magician enacts her hocus-pocus.

This example also helps bring to view an important but elusive phenomenological point regarding the involvement of force in our experience. The two ways of seeing the coin's movement really are *different ways of seeing*, where 'seeing' is not understood to be a purely ocular activity, but an evidential experience in which something is directly intuited. The forces we take to be operating on the coin are integral to the experience itself. It is not as if our experience is in both cases the same, and we submit it to differing interpretations that are extrinsic to our experience. We rather experience the same movement in two different ways. Indeed, this is why the trick is effective, even when we know it is a trick. We can't help but experience the movements as if these different forces were really operative. To stop intuiting the operativity of these forces, we need to intuit different forces altogether. We might, for example, catch a stray glint of light and realize that there are thin wires suspending and moving the coin. The illusion is now ruined; we experience the movements in a new way, which just means that the origin and direction of the forces at work is intuited differently.

This is true in the case of the moving car as well. The difference between perceiving the car as self-propelled versus momentum-propelled is a difference within our experience itself. We are not simply perceiving a motion, then linking this experience with specific assumptions about the car and its history, in order to draw conclusions about the nature of its motion—conclusions which would only have the status of a belief (e.g. 'I believe that the car is moving under the impulse of on-board power'). The distinction pertains to our experience; it is something we intuit directly. This is not, of course, to say that we cannot be mistaken; our examples show precisely that we can be mistaken, taking one sort of happening for another. Our mistake, however, is best conceived as a misperception, rather than a faulty conclusion.

Our examples thus far have presented change as motion. Force appears to be crucial in determining what is actually 'happening' in instances of locational change, but is this the case with other aspects of physical change? In most cases, it is easy to assert that it is. Changes in form, for example, present unproblematic cases. Objects shatter, deflate, break, melt, etc. Tracing the work of forces in these happenings is an interesting and complex task, but I think it self-evident that these sorts of happenings involve a grasp of forces that interact and compete with

objects, which for their part exhibit more or less resistance. There are some cases, however, that present greater challenges. Do we perceive color changes in terms of force? If the sky darkens, or if a chemical solution quickly changes color when another substance is introduced, do we experience forces at work? This is something we need to address, but I will postpone this discussion for now. Husserl addresses the question of color change directly, and it will be helpful to look at it with the aid of his analyses.

There is another problem which we are avoiding for the moment, a more essential one. To say that we intuit forces raises the question of how to we should account for this intuition phenomenologically. As we will see, this is a fraught question, one which troubled Husserl, and which we will only be able to broach and address in a preliminary way. Let's suspend this question, however, to look at the case of changeless happening. Recall that we were looking for something common to change and changeless happening. We hoped to find it by discovering what is overlooked if we approach changeful happenings strictly in terms of the changes they involve. The 'remainder,' we have seen, is force; and force turns out to be just the common element we need to bring change-involving and changeless happenings under one roof.

What happens when nothing is changing?

As we have seen, simple persistence—an egg remaining uncracked—is not something we judge to be happening. Yet there are cases where we would say something is happening, even if nothing is changing. A friend hovers in mid-air, a weightlifter holds a barbell above his head: these are things of the sort that happen. Such examples suggest to us that happening cannot be reduced to change. We are now in a position, having introduced the notion of force, to understand why changeless happenings are happenings.

Our hovering friend, with his apparently magical feat, presents a case similar to the magician's coin. He is not moving, of course, so it is not a question of what is moving him. What would strike us as notable in this situation is that he is not falling. An object in mid-air without supports of any kind should fall to the ground, like everything else does. There is generally a pull downwards on things, the resistance of which requires the exertion of force. For our friend to be hovering is therefore for him to resist this force, somehow, with another force. We may think he is sitting on a large, hidden magnet, which is repelled by another magnet in the ground. Or we may think he has some kind of magical power. We will accordingly perceive these two situations

differently, intuiting different forces at work in them. The more commonplace case of the weightlifter presents a similar situation, except that here the force at work is not mysterious. We see that his muscular efforts are keeping the barbell aloft; we know what this involves.

The intuition of force, then, appears to be what gives these experiences their happening character. Yet isn't it true that force is always at work, even when we wouldn't judge that something is happening? Imagine a barbell resting on the ground. Isn't it (speaking in unscientific terms) being 'held down' by a downward force, which is in turn 'counteracted' by the ground? Why are we not inclined to say, when we see a barbell immobile on the ground, that something is happening?

While it is true that, upon reflection, we can think about the forces at work in such a situation, it seems wrong to say that we intuit them (as we do in the case of the weightlifter). I must admit that I find it difficult to put into words why this is so. As a start, I would first suggest that a barbell on the ground is something we experience as being at rest, in a way that a barbell held over someone's head is not. The lifter may be holding the weight perfectly still, but we still see that the situation is relatively unstable. We see, so to speak, that the barbell 'wants' to go down, but that some other force is keeping it from doing so. In contrast, an object on the ground does not appear to be engaged in this kind of struggle. I think this has to do with the special status of the ground as a feature of our environment. On the one hand, the ground is not something we can easily experience as exerting an upward force, if we can do so at all. We seem rather to experience it as a kind of locus of absolute rest. The ground doesn't 'do' anything. If a glass falls to the floor and smashes to pieces, for example, we do not say that the ground smashed the object, but that the object smashed against the ground. On the other hand, we also experience the ground's surface as the limit of gravity's effects; objects will move downwards until they hit the ground. When they reach this point, it is as if they have reached their destination. An object on the ground is thus experienced as no longer headed downwards, nor pushed upwards.

This is also true regarding anything seen as an extension of the ground; a shelf on a wall, for example, or even a rope hanging from the ceiling. Thus a barbell sitting on a shelf, or hanging from a rope, is also experienced as being at rest. Nothing is happening in these situations, because we don't see their stasis as the result of forces. We see a stasis of rest, rather than a stasis of opposing forces. If, however, we modify these situations a bit, so that they seem

less stable, I think we are more inclined to say something is happening in them. Let's replace the rope, for example, with a fine thread; we expect the weight of the barbell to snap the thread at any minute. Now we begin to 'see' the pull of the barbell, and the resistance of the thread. The judgment 'The barbell is hanging (tenuously) by a thread' starts to sound—to my ears, at least—like it describes something that is happening.

My aim here is not to identify the conditions under which force becomes intuitable in an unchanging situation, but rather to show that it is only when we do intuit force in such a situation that we would judge something to be happening. A picture is beginning to emerge, in which situations are intuited as happenings so long as they are intuited as the locus of active forces. This picture helps us see what is 'happening' in both changing and changeless situations. It also, we should note, accords with our suggestion, in Chapter 1, that the notion of 'happening' is more basic than that of an 'event.' We can intuit active forces around us—those involved when wind rustles leaves, for example—and thereby intuit happening. Judgments about such things thus tell us about 'things happening,' without our having to interpret such judgments as claims about events.

We still have work to do before we can start to think about how these happenings, understood as loci of active forces, are expressed through judicative structures. But we can, I think, glimpse the faint contours of what such structures would need, minimally, to do. Judgments say things 'about' their subjects (and direct or indirect objects, in some cases). What would they need say about the objects involved in happenings? These objects are involved with forces, in different ways—they can produce them, transmit them, be effected by them, etc. Thus we might expect the structures posited in verbal judgments to assign objects to different positions within nexuses of forces. Whereas predicative judgments posit objects as bearers of properties, verbal judgments should posit objects as the sources and subjects of force.

For now we must leave this idea on the backburner, in order to look more carefully at force itself as a phenomenological concern. We are still trying to clarify the nature of verbal experience; we have found that it involves the intuition of forces (at least so far as physical happenings are concerned). What does it mean to intuit a force? We can't 'see' forces in the usual sense. We don't see gravity, we can only see its effects. How is force experienced as a real feature of the world?

4.2.3 Force

The question of force is of great phenomenological interest in its own right, as it concerns the intelligibility of a fundamental and pervasive feature of the lived world. The moment we describe anything as ‘weak’ or ‘powerful’—the wind, a machine, a person, a structure, etc.—we are indicating a grasp of forces. Any attempt to develop a phenomenological account of the constituted world must at some point confront our capacity to see the world as imbued with forces. Husserl tried to address the problem, but his attempts, we will see, serve more as an illustration of an enigma than as a solution. Nor will we get to the bottom of the matter here. My more modest aim in this section is simply to bring the problem itself to phenomenological clarity, and indicate, briefly but I hope promisingly, the direction of a possible solution.

Husserl’s early reflections on force

Husserl appears to have begun thinking about force shortly after he presented his *Dingvorlesung* of 1907. In notes written around 1910—as published as Appendix II to *Thing and Space*—he offers some brief reflections on the “causal properties” of objects, which were not examined in the *Dingvorlesung*.²⁸ In those lectures, objects were considered as (1) unities that persist through duration, (2) structures that occupy positions in space, and (3) structures that are “filled” with perceptual properties.²⁹ As we saw, he also considers changes in the qualitative and spatial properties of these objects. Absent from these analyses, however is a fourth “stratum,” namely that of causal properties. “A completely new stratum stands out,” Husserl writes, “when we attend to a new class of inner constitutive properties of the thing, the properties designated by the words ‘ability’ [*Vermögens*], ‘power’ [*Kraft*] (character of effecting and suffering) [*des Wirkens und Leidens*], and ‘disposition.’ These are the causal properties.”³⁰ The observations that follow in Husserl’s notes are sketchy and exploratory. They are helpful, however, as they present, in

²⁸ The chronology of Husserl’s writings on this issue is somewhat confusing. Many of the ideas discussed in the above mentioned 1910 Appendix are also explored in manuscripts dated 1907-1909 (*D 13 XXII*, “Natur Ontology.”). Yet these supposedly earlier texts offer a more assured and detailed version of what, in the 1910 notes, appear as a set of speculative questions. Moreover, the “Phantom und Ding” manuscripts (*D 13 XXIII-XXV*), dated 1910, also offer a more robust account. (This is less problematic, as they may have been the immediate outcome of his comments on the *Dingvorlesung*). I cannot resolve these seeming discrepancies. Thus although I will treat the material from the *D* manuscripts as the further development of the issues raised in Appendix II, my occasional identification of these texts as “later work” should be read, by those with a concern for historiographical matters, with some suspicion.

²⁹ *Things and Space*, 297-8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 299.

succinct form, the kernel of an analysis that Husserl developed more carefully in the following years.

Causal properties, Husserl claims at the outset, have a “secondary character,” in the sense that their givenness depends on the givenness of perceptual properties. Although causal properties are properties of perceptual objects, they do not “fill” the object in the way that, for example, the color of an object spreads out over its visible surface. Indeed, it is through perceptual properties that objects are given to us as spatially extended in the first place. Causal properties can only be attributed to objects that are already given as spatially extended. “A thing,” Husserl writes, “would first have to be something, before it can have the ability to do something.”³¹ Sensuous things “in a certain sense are the bearers of the causality.”³²

At the same time, Husserl insists that we can ‘see’ causality: “We ‘see’ that the stone is shattering the window.” This cannot be reduced to what I perceive sensuously. What we ‘see’ is not just the movement of the stone, or the dispersal of the glass. It is not even the weight of the stone, when weight is conceived as sensuous property, for this is “actually given to us when we lift the stone or catch it in mid-air.” What we see is that the weighty stone “in its movement effects something and accomplishes the effect.”³³

It is, in turn, through this seeing of an object as *effective* that its causal properties are given. A causal property is “the general capacity or power to accomplish such effects.”³⁴ Husserl thus interprets the ‘power’ of an object—and this is a crucial move which we will have to critically examine—as a disposition to have certain effects under certain conditions. “We could say,” he writes, “that we attribute a capacity, a power (better: a real property) to a thing in the sense that it is of such a kind that, if it appears (or changes) in nexuses of such and such circumstances, together with these or those things, then, in contiguous temporal succession, this or that enters into this nexus.”³⁵ To the degree that I understand an object, under specific conditions, to be capable of a specific range of effects, I see it as having causal properties. I don’t just ‘think’ this; my understanding in a sense “encroaches” on the object itself, giving me an

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 300.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

immediate consciousness of its powers. “In this way I see the power of a man in his bulging muscles... I see the power of the hammer, even if it not being swung, etc.”³⁶

These reflections lead Husserl to a new line of questioning, which will prove decisive for his further work. Until now, he had been examining material things and their properties without considering their causal ‘stratum.’ But is it not the case, he asks, that the very meaning of “material thing” is inseparable from that of causality? Doesn’t a thing count as a substance “exclusively insofar as it is the bearer of a causality?”³⁷ He contrasts a material thing with what he calls a “phantom”—i.e. a sensuous unity which has no power over other things. The phantom is a notion which Husserl will develop in other writings into a hypothesized non-thing, which he uses in thought experiments to better determine the phenomenological characteristics of material reality. In this text he seems to be referring simply to apparitions like rainbows and sunbeams. Such a phantom, he says, is “not yet a thing.”

He goes a step further, however, and points out that even the properties of phantoms are dependent on their circumstances. Their color may be perceived as dependent on changes in the atmosphere, for example. “Ultimately,” he asks, “does not everything, every Objective determination of a thing, every determination of an Objective feature of a thing, lead back to causality?”³⁸ If this is the case—if every determination of a thing must be understood as causally dependent on its circumstances—then it is difficult to speak of lower ‘strata’ of objects where there are non-causal properties. Husserl wonders: “How can I do justice to all this and to the ‘stratification’ from which I abstractively departed earlier?”³⁹ In his later writings, as we will see, these tentative questions are replaced by a more confident thesis: physical materiality is only given to consciousness when appearances are taken as linked causally to their surroundings.

In these brief notes we can see the early outlines of Husserl’s general approach to the question of force. The intuition of force (“Kraft,” which is translated above as “power”) is for Husserl the intuition of causal effectiveness; it is the intuition of an ‘ability’ on the part of the object to produce certain effects under certain conditions. This is a view that I think needs to be called into question. First, however, let’s see how Husserl develops the idea in subsequent texts, in order to better identify and articulate its basic flaw.

³⁶ Ibid., 301.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

Force and Materiality in *Ideas II* and other texts

There are a number of unpublished manuscripts, dating from the 1910s and '20s, in which we find Husserl meditating on the nexus of issues raised in his notes on the *Dingvorlesung*: force, causality, materiality, etc. These include, most notably, *D 13 XXI* ("Natur Ontology," from 1907-09), *D 13 XXIII-XXV*, ("Phantom und Ding," from 1910), and the material on causality in *A VII 14* ("Transzendental Aesthetik," written during 1920-26).⁴⁰ Most of the key ideas developed in these texts also appear in *Ideas II*. In this work, however, the concept of force is hardly mentioned—at least not in the context of material nature—so we will need to look at the manuscripts to see how force fits into Husserl's phenomenology of material reality.

Materiality and causal dependence

In *Ideas II*, Husserl is fully wedded to the idea, entertained in the *Dingvorlesung* notes, that the givenness of material reality depends on the givenness of causal interactions between things. In §15, "The essence of materiality (substance)," he mounts a demonstration of this claim. Husserl frames his task as an inquiry into the "meaning" of *res* in *res extensa*:

The physical or material thing is *res extensa*. We have already exposed the sense of its 'essential attribute,' *extensio*. Well, now, what makes up the concept of this *res*, what is meant by extended *reality*, by *reality at all*? One also speaks of extended *substance*. But just what, we now ask, is meant by this substantiality, considered in the fullest possible universality?⁴¹

To ask about the 'meaning' of material reality is of course not to seek speculative metaphysical truths, but rather to inquire into the way reality appears to us as such in our experience.⁴²

Specifically, finding the 'essence' of the real means identifying those phenomenological features of perceptual objects which grant them their status as real objects. To find this essence, Husserl engages in a stepwise process of eidetic variation. We begin by imagining minimal perceptual objects called "phantoms," which do not count as real objects; we then gradually add features to these phantoms until we reach, in our imagination, something that would count—if it were actually perceived—as a real object.

⁴⁰ Regarding this chronology, see above, fn. 28.

⁴¹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 36-37.

⁴² "If we would touch on the thing itself, then it is required of us, assuming we wanted to grasp the essence of the thing and determine it conceptually, that we not be content with vague locutions and traditional philosophical preconceptions but instead draw from the very source of clear givenness." *Ibid.*, 37.

He begins by asking us to imagine an object that remains absolutely unchanged. We also disregard the “nexus” in which it is situated, i.e. its surrounding environment. In the case of such an object, he says, we would see a “spatial body,” but have no way of distinguishing it from an “empty phantom.” (As an example of a phantom, he mentions an image seen through a stereoscope, which provides an illusion of depth; today he might have suggested a hologram.) We might be able to describe the object as red, as smooth in surface, etc., but would not be able to assert with confidence that it was real. Crucially, there are a number of properties we could not possibly ascribe to it: “[Q]uestions of whether it is heavy or light, elastic, magnetic, etc. do not make any sense, or, better, do not find any support within the perceptual sense.”⁴³ An unmoving object cannot possibly be perceived as elastic, because elasticity implies the possibility of being bent or stretched into a different shape. This means that the givenness of a spatially extended object is not yet the givenness of a material thing, since it cannot yet exhibit “material determinations.”⁴⁴ In everyday life we of course encounter unmoving objects, and we encounter them as real things with material determinations, not as phantoms. To do so, however, is to apprehend something over and beyond their unchanging sensuous form.

Next, Husserl considers objects perceived as moving, or changing their shape.⁴⁵ Now, we might think that we can attribute to such objects the determinations that were previously excluded; they can display elasticity, for example, by moving about in certain ways. Husserl points out, however, that a (hypothesized) phantom object could also change its shape or position, and do so in ways typical of elasticity. Imagine a hologram that is animated to ‘move’ in just the way an elastic object moves. We would not say of such a moving phantom that it is elastic. And yet, as far as its perceived changes are concerned, it is just like a real elastic object. There must be something else, then, through which the real presents itself as real, something that is not yet contained in the idea of a moving, extended perceptual object.

Husserl at this point also rejects the idea that the reality of the real is given through the coordination of different senses which perceive the same property, as when I both tactually and visually notice that an object is round, or has a rough surface.⁴⁶ This claim is harder to accept, as it is difficult to imagine touching something and not being convinced of its reality. Indeed, in an

⁴³ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 41-44.

earlier manuscript, Husserl himself finds the idea a bit questionable, or at least extreme, wondering whether there could be such a thing as a “tactile phantom,” and whether we should call a phantom that is both visual and tactile an “Überphantom.”⁴⁷ We should at least note that Husserl draws a distinction between perceiving something tactile like smoothness or roughness, and perceiving the pressure or resistance of an object, as these require not just touch but muscular exertion.⁴⁸ Only the purely tactile properties, he seems to be saying, could be properties of a phantom. Pressure and resistance “cannot properly be seen,” and belong in fact to the sphere of causal interactions between bodies, which have not yet been introduced at this point in our progress towards materiality.

Yet it is difficult to disentangle these two modes of perception; how would we touch the surface of a phantom if this surface does not arrest the forward motion of our hand?⁴⁹ Perhaps we can imagine a hologram that approaches us; as it appears to brush against our skin, we are somehow electrically stimulated, by another mechanism, in a way that gives the sensation of roughness. Perhaps then we could speak of a phantom that “looks and feels” rough, even though it is clear that it is not real. Yet if we understood what was happening—and thus perceived the object as a phantom—we would not in fact perceive the tactual roughness as a feature that ‘belongs’ to the phantom, as we do its visual features.

The problem here is that the experience of touch, unlike that of vision, involves the consciousness that two bodies are in contact, namely my body and the object. This is precisely what is still excluded from the phantom realm. The involvement of our body—in particular our bodily exertions—in the apprehension of materiality is in fact an important issue, one to which we will return, as it will indicate a way to approach force that differs from Husserl’s central paradigm. We still have to articulate this paradigm, however. We can do this without worrying about the possibility of a tactile phantom, as it does not figure significantly in Husserl’s account.

Returning to the visual field then, we have not yet identified what distinguishes real objects from phantoms. An extended object—*res extensa*—has a form and color; it can change

⁴⁷ “Gibt es auch ein rein taktuelles Phantom? Und was wäre das volle sensuelle ‘Ding’ ohne jede Kausalität? Ein Überphantom?” *Ms. D 13 XXIII* (1910), “Phantom und Ding,” 2a.

⁴⁸ *Ideas II*, 42.

⁴⁹ Indeed, in a later manuscript Husserl suggests that we cannot properly account for the givenness of physical surfaces from within the sphere of sensory perception: “In der primordialen Sphäre hätte ich ohne diese mit Kraftaufwendung fungierenden Kinästhesen zwar schon sich bewegende Dinge, schon Dreidimensionalität, schon krumme Flächen, aber nicht Dinge konstituiert mit den vollgeschlossenen Oberflaechen.” *Ms. D 12 II* (c. 1931), “Problem Der Kinästhesese,” 10.

in various ways, and we can walk around it, seeing it from different angles. Yet all of this can be true of a phantom as well. What is missing from phantoms is a relation to their surroundings, what Husserl calls “circumstances” (*Umstände*). “Reality in the proper sense,” he writes, “here called ‘materiality,’ does not lie in the mere sensuous schema and could not be attributed to the perceived, if something like a relation to ‘circumstances’ did not apply to the perceived and had no sense for it; rather it lies precisely in this relation and in the corresponding mode of apprehension.”⁵⁰

What is this “relation to circumstances” that material things exhibit, while phantoms do not? The changes in the real thing, Husserl argues, can always be related to changes in other objects in its environment: “A continuous change in the circumstances entails a continuous alteration of the [sensuous] schema; and, likewise, continuous non-change, invariability in the behavior of the appearances which are functioning as circumstances, entails, in the same span of time, continuous non-change of the schema dependent on them.”⁵¹ To demonstrate his point, Husserl first uses an example pertaining to the color properties of an object, but his second example is more clear. (We will return to color in a moment.) A steel spring is struck; it moves in a particular way, such that we judge it to be elastic. It is struck harder, from a different angle, and it moves accordingly. If it is not struck, it remains still. There is a correlation between the movement of the spring and the movement of something else—the object that is striking it (or not striking it).⁵²

For a correlation to be seen as such—rather than as a collection of arbitrary, unrelated changes—it needs to be seen as one that holds reliably: “Under similar circumstances, similar consequences: so with similar changes of circumstances, similar modes of oscillation.”⁵³ Only if certain changes in appearances occur with, are preceded by, or follow certain other appearances *as a rule* can we speak of a ‘correlation’ between objects and their circumstances. Once we intuit such correlations, Husserl claims, we are intuiting material objects. “It is precisely in this way that every ‘Objective,’ ‘real’ property of the phenomenal thing is constituted... [Real properties]

⁵⁰ *Ideas II*, 44.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

are, throughout, unities with respect to manifolds of schematic regulations in relation to corresponding circumstances.”⁵⁴

The reliable correlation of consequences with circumstances is supposedly what is missing from the phantom. However, this is not completely true, as we can see in the case of apparent color changes. Let’s look first at the relation of color to circumstances in the case of a real object. If the lighting in a room changes, the perceived color of an object in the room will change; if the sun goes behind a cloud, for example, my blue rug will appear a darker blue. Through this change, however, the rug is still perceived as having the same objective color. This objective color, in fact, is perceived as objective precisely because it exhibits regularities with respect to its circumstances.⁵⁵ How does this compare to the behavior of a phantom? Imagine a ray of sun that we see shining through the window; it illuminates the dust in the room, and appears as an extended object. If I turn on a light in the room, the sunbeam will appear less vibrant. This change, however, is perceived as a change in the color of the beam ‘itself.’ There is no objective color which appears differently under different conditions; there is only the changing apparent color. Still, we cannot say that this changing color has no relation to its circumstances. To the contrary, it is completely dependent on them.

Husserl ignores the dependence of phantoms on circumstances in *Ideas II*, but he does take note of it in his “Phantom und Ding” manuscript of 1910. Phantoms can of course, he notes, be “produced” by real things (indeed, while an ‘unproduced’ phantom is imaginable, an actual encounter with such a thing would be rather uncanny); and they are susceptible to change as a result to changes in their circumstances. What is not possible, however, is for them to have an effect on other things. Phantoms can “in a certain sense be ‘effects,’ [*Wirkung*] but not causes [*Ursache*].” They can be affected only “in a certain sense” because they have no nature of their own—they are pure effect. Their changing appearance is not experienced as a change in an underlying thing. They do not ‘suffer’ change. If the curtain in the window moves a bit, deforming the sunbeam, we do not perceive the beam as offering any resistance—it has no such power. Thus the deformation is not seen as something the sunbeam is ‘undergoing,’ as would be the case if we saw a real object similarly deformed.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁶ The full passage runs as follows: “Zwar der Phantom (hier der ‘pure Schein’) kann in gewisser Weise ‘Wirkung’ sein, obshon nicht Ursache. Beachte den Unterschied. Das Phantom als purer Schein kann erzeugt, kann geschaffen

A material object, therefore, departs from a phantom insofar as it can affect and be effected by objects in reciprocal fashion. Husserl calls such relations “causal dependencies.” In the context of Husserl’s analysis, however, the word ‘causal’ does not add anything meaningful to the notion of ‘dependence.’ Causal dependency is nothing other than the reciprocal, lawful relation of appearances to one another. It is the dependence of properties, and changes in properties, on their circumstances, and vice versa—wherein all the participating objects are “schemas of appearances,” i.e. structured manifolds of possible sensuous experience. Thus he defines the “causal apprehension of the schema” as the apprehension of a system of possible perceptual correlations; if certain kinds of perceptions occur, certain other perceptions should in principle be experienceable as well. Causal apprehensions are “directions for possible series of perceptions in functional relation to the series of perceptible circumstances.”⁵⁷ A real object is one that is understood to reside in a nexus (*Zusammenhang*) of possible correlative changes in appearance. If I see an apple on the ground, for example, I grasp its materiality to the degree that I grasp how it will change if a large rock falls on it; and this means understanding how the apple-appearance will change in correlation with the appearance of a large rock descending swiftly downward upon it.⁵⁸

If the only difference between material reality and ‘phantom reality’ is a systematic correlation of appearances, material reality itself can be conceived as a system of lawfully coordinated phantoms. This is how Husserl presents the idea in the “Natur Ontology” manuscript.⁵⁹

werden durch das Reales, aber es kann nicht ‘leiden’, so wenig wie es ‘tun’ kann (nicht animistisch verstanden). Es kann sich verändern und in seinen Veränderungen bestimmt sein durch dingliche Vorgänge; Änderungen des Scheins können die Folge sein von realen Veränderungen, aber nicht die Wirkung in dem Sinne, wie ein reales Ding Einwirkung erfährt von einem anderen, wobei es ‘leidet’ und ‘reagiert’; alle wirkliche Kausalität hängt am spezifisch Dinglichen, und das ist bei Aussending nicht sein Phantom, sondern Schwere, Elastizität etc.; ein Phantom hat keine Schwere, bricht nicht, wird nicht zerdrückt etc.” *Ms. D 13 XXIII, 2a.*

⁵⁷ *Ideas II, 47.*

⁵⁸ Husserl’s notion of causality is in this sense similar to Hume’s. However, for a critical discussion of Hume’s theory of causality see *Ms. D 13 XXIII, 14a-b.* Husserl criticizes Hume for claiming that causality is not part of the “essence” of the thing, tracing Hume’s “error” to his failure to distinguish between “impressions (ideas)” and “objects.” “Zu beachten der Grundfehler Humes, dass er nicht unterscheidet zwischen Impression (Inhalt) und Gegenstand; die kausale Relation gehört zu Dingen, die Farbenrelation zu Farben; und Farbe ist ein Immanentes, eine Idee, die für Hume sich nicht konstituiert, jedenfalls immanent gegeben; Ding ist aber nicht immanent gegeben und sich in unendlichen Prozess konstituierend, immer neue Bestimmtheiten offenlassend.”

⁵⁹ I am here translating “Zusammenhang” and “zummanhängen” as “correlation” and “to be correlated.” In the translation of *Ideas II* the noun is translated (in the context of this discussion) with both “nexus” and “connection,” while the verb is rendered as “to be connected.”

[T]he manifold appearances [*Mannigfaltigkeiten*] of one phantom are correlated with those of other phantoms, and their correlation is a correlation of apprehensions [*Auffassungszusammenhang*]; the new apprehension, which establishes a unity, is the apprehension of the thing. More precisely, changing phantom-manifolds depend on and are correlated with the changing manifolds of other phantoms, and the thing is thereby constituted as an identity, namely as the identity of such changing manifolds, insofar as it they are dependent on other changing manifolds.⁶⁰

Material reality—with respect to its givenness in experience—is just like phantom non-reality, except that its changes are expected to take place, and do in fact take place, with a “causal style.”⁶¹ Naturally, Husserl does not claim that, in our everyday experience, we grasp causal dependencies with the “full rigor” of the natural sciences. However, the scientific conception of absolute causal dependencies is grounded in our intuitive apprehension, to which Husserl assigns the slogan, “similar circumstances, similar consequences.”⁶²

There remains the question, of course, of how the experiencing subject comes to apprehend appearances in this way—how one acquires an implicit grasp, operative throughout our experience, of a system of dependencies that, Husserl argues, constitute causal relations.⁶³ We need not concern ourselves, however, with the genesis of causal apprehensions; we are only interested in these apprehensions themselves, insofar as they may illuminate our developing notion of verbal experience. This experience, as we have seen, involves the intuition of forces. Our question then, is not how we come to apprehend appearances as dependent on each other, but whether these dependencies are constitutive of our intuition of forces.

Force as effectiveness

The word “Kraft” appears only once in the sections on material reality in *Ideas II* (where it is translated as “power”). Husserl is discussing the notion that a chemical process could be initiated in a substance by conditions external to that substance, but then continue after “the external processes have ceased exercising their power.” It is clear from the rest of the passage that he

⁶⁰ “...die Mannigfaltigkeiten eines Phantoms hängen mit Mannigfaltigkeiten anderer Phantome zusammen, und der Zusammenhang ist Auffassungszusammenhang; die neue Auffassung, die Einheit herstellt, ist die Dingauffassung. Änderungsmannigfaltigkeiten von Phantomen, genauer gesprochen, hängen ab und zusammen mit Änderungsmannigfaltigkeiten anderer Phantome, und dabei erst konstituiert sich das Ding als ein identisches, nämlich als das Identische von solchen Änderungsmannigfaltigkeiten, sofern sie von anderen solchen Änderungsmannigfaltigkeiten abhängig sind.” *Ms. D 13 XXI* (1907-09), “Natur Ontology,” 161.

⁶¹ See *Ms. A VII 14* (1920-26), “Transzendente Aesthetik,” 27a.

⁶² *Ideas II*, 52.

⁶³ Husserl considers this in his manuscript notes, offering a genetic account based on accumulated habitualities of perception. See e.g. Husserl. *Ms. A VII 14*.

understands this term within the context of the appearance-correlations he has been discussing up until now. “Yet here, too,” he writes, “nothing occurs ‘of its own accord.’ Whatever occurs does so as the consequence of prior external processes and by virtue of the full lawfulness of causality, which holds sway throughout both the external and the internal.”⁶⁴ Something has ‘power’ if it elicits changes in other things. Husserl reaffirms this idea at a much later point in the text, where he is comparing the objects of the natural and human sciences. “The appearing thing,” he tells us, referring to physical objects, “is a unity of spatio-temporal causality. One could say it is what it brings about in space. States here are states of force.”⁶⁵ Again, the force of an object is determined by what it can bring about (or, we should add, what can be brought about in it).

This understanding of force—force as the eliciting of effects—is reaffirmed in several of Husserl’s manuscript notes, where we find more frequent mentions of *Kraft* in his reflections on materiality and causality. The most explicit expression of this idea (to my knowledge) occurs in notes from 1916, to which Husserl gave the heading “Cause and Effect” (“Ursache und Wirkung”). He uses “cause” here to refer to an object or circumstance which can produce effects. The force produced by this cause is defined as a system of possible effects:

A cause has its effective force [*wirkende Kraft*], which means: the change of a cause is a potentiality for a spatiotemporally ordered system of possible effects. A cause that is in a specific state of change (state of movement) fills space, in a sense—and a determinate system of spatial paths—with possible effects. From amongst these possible effects, the appropriate one must appear when a corresponding thing E (effect) is in a [particular] portion of space, or appears in this path. If the object that appears has its own movement, or is in another state of change, then the effect which results will distinguish itself precisely according to the force of E.^{66,67}

⁶⁴ *Ideas II*, 55-56.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁶⁶ I have altered the text slightly in translation, as the original formulation is grammatically rather torturous: “Ursache hat seine wirkende Kraft, das sagt, die Veränerung von Urssache ist eine Potenzialität für ein nach Raum und Zeit geordnetes System von möglichen Wirkungen, wonach also Ursache in diesem Veränderungszustand (Bewegungszustand) gewissermässen den Raum und ein bestimmtes System von Raumrichtungen ausfüllt mit möglichen Wirkungen, von deren jeder die entsprechende auftreten müsste, wenn ein betreffendes Ding W (Wirkung) da wäre; und tritt eine mit seiner eigenen Bewegung oder in anderer Veränderung begriffene auf, so tritt die Wirkung ein, die sich differenziert je nach den Kräften eben von W.” *Ms. D 13 XX* (1916), “Ursache und Wirkung,” 1.

⁶⁷ Another example: “So erst konstituiert sich die identische Substanz in einen Sinne (das endgültige Ding: objektiver Koerper real erfüllt) mit dem wechselnden, aber zeitlich fest bestimmten Koerper und der wechselnden Fülle, aber auch zeitlich fest bestimmten Fülle der Realität. Die reale Fülle ist prinzipiell nicht phaenomenal, sie ist Materie, Kraft etc., d.h. das Einheit in der Kausalität der Substanzen Ermoglichende.” *Ms. D 13 XXI*, 126.

In short, forces are the systematic tendencies of objects to necessitate, in certain circumstances, changes in other objects, and to condition the changes that can be produced on themselves. We intuit forces insofar as we take the changes we perceive to be necessitated and conditioned in this way—when we see changes as effects: “The seen ‘force’ that a thing exerts, the seen achievement, effect, its doing-something-to-something else, etc., this is not something ‘sensuous,’ but it is something immediately intuitable.”⁶⁸

Is this account of force adequate to our experience of it? Is the intuition of force reducible to the intuition of the effects objects have on other objects? Is force, to put the question more precisely, something that we grasp by virtue of our apprehension of lawful correlations of appearances in motion? Let’s think about this with the help of a simple example. We see a wrecking ball smash through a wall. We might then remark that the wall broke because it was ‘hit with a great force.’ This is a natural, everyday judgment; we need no knowledge of physics to make or assent to it. If we take Husserl’s proposal literally, how would we describe the intuition which allows us to judge a force to be at work in this situation?

A moving wrecking ball, we could propose, is an appearance which we encounter with the anticipation that it will work certain kinds of effects on other appearances that lie in its path. Compared to other moving objects, its effects are ‘greater,’ in the sense that appearances which we would otherwise expect to maintain their coherence will, in the path of a wrecking ball, break apart. The obstructing appearance will separate into smaller appearances, which will in turn move in anticipated ways, away from the wrecking ball and towards the ground. The ‘great force’ we see is just the actualization of what we anticipate—the eliciting of certain spatial displacements in the appearances that lie in the path of the ball’s own spatial displacement, when its displacement is of the right speed, and the obstructions are of the right kind. Since these conditions are met, the wall is appropriately displaced, and we diligently intuit a great force.

Does this story feel right? I use the word ‘feel’ quite deliberately here, for reasons that I hope will become apparent. I think it should not feel right, and I think there we can identify just *where* it doesn’t. Something is lacking in the story right at the point of impact. If we try to describe the situation strictly in terms of what we perceive spatially, we can say that the wrecking ball moves towards the wall until it is contiguous with it, at which point it stops or

⁶⁸ “Die gesehene ‘Kraft’ die ein Ding ausübt, die gesehene Leistung, Wirkung, das Einem-anderen-etwas-antun etc., das ist nichts ‘Sinnliches’ aber unmittelbar Anschauliches.” *Ms. D 13 XXIII*, 29a.

slows down considerably. This is not, however, all that we experience, nor is it all that we said. We said that the wrecking ball *hit* the wall—this is what it did with great force. There is a way in which we experience the impact *as an impact*, without of course experiencing it ourselves. There is some ‘oomph’ there, and this is absent in the Husserlian reconstruction. Whether one thinks the idea of ‘causal oomph’ is naïve and pre-Humean is beside the point; we are precisely trying to determine how forces are given in naïve experience, not what metaphysical claims we can make about causation.

Husserl does of course use words like ‘impact’ when he wants to describe the way real objects interact with each other. “To know a thing,” he writes, “means to know from experience how it behaves under pressure and impact, in being bent and broken, when heated and when cooled, etc., i.e., to know its behavior in the nexus of its causalities.”⁶⁹ “Things” he writes elsewhere, “push against other things, exert force on other things, offer resistance against them.”⁷⁰ Pressure, impact, pushing, breaking—these are just the words to use if we want to convey the way real objects are unlike phantoms. They are unlike phantoms because they are ‘in touch with’ each other. They pierce, attract, rip, scrape, crush, graze and pinch each other. We see these things happen; they are *what* we see happen, with more or less force.

Yet while Husserl claims that we do intuit these happenings, his phenomenological account does not actually give us a way to understand our intuition of them. All we are left with in his model are regularities of change and motion, bound to the law of “similar circumstance, similar consequences.” Appearances are correlated, but they are not in touch with each other, and thus we have no way to understand how something like an ‘impact’ is given in experience. Husserl’s system of coordinated phantoms remains, in the end, a system of phantoms. It is like a detailed holographic ‘world’ in which things exhibit causal behavior. So long as we are not fooled by such an illusion, we do not intuit the objects involved as really being in contact with each other. If we are fooled by such a phantom-world, it is because we see in it something which is not given in it—something not given merely in the lawful coordination of its appearances.

This is true, at least, so long as we remain in the realm of visual appearances. As we noted above, it is hard to imagine that an appearance that we can touch could be perceived as a phantom. As soon as we feel our body touching another, we cannot avoid experiencing this as

⁶⁹ *Ideas II*, 48.

⁷⁰ “Dinge stoßen auch andere, üben auf andere Kräfte, setzen sich Widerstand entgegen.” *Ms. A VII 14*, 27a.

contact with a real body. This leads us to a crucial observation, one which will suggest a different way to think about the intuition of force. Physical contact is something we see occurring between objects around us, but is also something we experience with our own body. Impact, pressure, friction, etc. are, for our body, not just spatial displacements but bodily sensations. Husserl was, of course, keenly aware—famously so—of the ‘dual’ nature of our body (*Leib*) as both spatial object and locus of sensation.⁷¹ What, however, can our bodily experience tell us about the intuition forces?

Force as effort

Husserl does in fact discuss force in the context of bodily experience, and it is telling to see how, when it is a question of our own body, “Kraft” takes on a completely different meaning for Husserl. It is no longer considered as the disposition to elicit effects, but as the sensation of exertion and resistance. For example, Husserl describes the kinaesthetic (i.e. proprioceptive) sensations of movement and rest in terms of increases and decreases of exertion:

[W]e must distinguish between kinaesthetic rest and kinaesthetic movement. Kinaesthetic rest is the state of passivity, the null with respect to striving. Kinaesthetic movement is a progressive striving [*Strebensverlauf*], and it is precisely its null which is rest. In progressive striving we see a continuity of effort [*Anspannung*], an increased straining [*Spannungssteigerung*], “continuing” effort, and eventually the mode of decreasing effort, a lessening of force [*Kraft*], of energy...⁷²

In *Ideas II*, we find similar reflections regarding free versus hindered activity:

In experience, the “I can” is distinct from the “I cannot” according to their phenomenological characters. There is a resistanceless doing of things, i.e., a consciousness of an ability that meets no resistance, a doing that has its “against which,” and a corresponding consciousness of an ability to overcome the resistance. There is (always speaking phenomenologically) a gradient in the resistance and the power [*Kraft*] of overcoming it, a continuum in “active power” versus the “inertia” of the resistance. The resistance can become insurmountable; in that case we come up against the “it won’t budge,” “I cannot,” “I do not have the power.”⁷³

⁷¹ See *Ideas II*, 151-69.

⁷² “... wir müssen unterscheiden kinästhetische Ruhe und kinästhetische Bewegung; kinästhetische Ruhe ist der Stand der Passivität, des Null hinsichtlich des Strebens. Kinästhetische Bewegung ist ein Strebensverlauf, und eben dessen Null ist die Ruhe. Im Strebensverlauf haben wir Kontinuität der Anspannung, eine Spannungssteigerung, “forgesetzte” Anspannung, eventuell auch den Modus der nachlassenden Anspannung, einer Minderung der Kraft, der Energie...” *Ms. D 12 I* (1931), “Assoziative Passivität Des Ich und Ichaktivität in Der Untersten Stufe: Kinästhesie in Der Praktischen und Nicht Praktischen Funktion,” 19.

⁷³ *Ideas II*, 271.

Immediately following this passage, Husserl makes a surprising claim regarding material nature, one which subverts the framework we have thus far attributed to him: “Obviously, connected to this is the transferred apprehension [*übertragene Auffassung*] of action and counter-action outside the sphere of my doings and my abilities. After all, things are ‘active’ in relation to one another, have ‘powers and counterpowers’ in relation to one another, resist one another, and perhaps the resistance one thing exercises is insurmountable, the other ‘cannot surmount it.’”⁷⁴ In this passing thought, which Husserl does not develop here, power is not understood as a disposition to elicit change, but rather by analogy to our own experience of exertion and resistance. My body has a “genuine apperception of resistance” regarding its own efforts, which it of course cannot have for the efforts and resistances pertaining to external objects.⁷⁵ Yet Husserl appears to be suggesting that what we can experience directly with our own bodies is somehow also intuited, in a modified, indirect fashion, when we observe the interactions of inanimate objects.

To see objects as colliding, compressing, or pulling at each other would thus be to see them as exerting and succumbing to the ‘same’ forces to which we have immediate access when we are bumped, squeezed, or dragged. We can’t feel these forces when they are at work outside us, nor do we believe that the objects feel them. Yet we can intuit them at work in objects because we have direct knowledge of them through our bodies. We know, so to speak, what would be like for us to undergo what the objects are ‘undergoing.’

This idea may seem like an odd, even outlandish notion at first brush.⁷⁶ It amounts to claiming that there is something akin to empathy in our perception of material objects. I think,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ It is not, however, a new idea; an analog, at least, is to be found in Schopenhauer’s notion of the world as “will.” See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, 2 vols., (New York, : Dover Publications, 1966). Our body, he argues (as does Husserl) has a double aspect—we know it as an appearance or “representation,” but also as “will,” where “will” means both “action and movement following on motives” and “its suffering through outside impressions.” Only as will do I know my body to be something other than mere appearance, something “in itself.” (ibid., 103.) In order to grant other objects a status beyond mere appearance, I must ascribe to it something like “will”:

We shall judge all objects which are not our own body, and therefore are given to our consciousness not in the double way, but only as representations, according to the analogy of this body. We shall therefore assume that as, on the one hand, they are representation, just like our body, and are in this respect homogeneous with it, so on the other hand, if we set aside their existence as the subject’s representation, what still remains over must be, according to its inner nature, the same as what in ourselves we call *will*. For what other kind of existence or reality could we attribute to the rest of the material world? From what source could we take the elements out of which we construct a world? (ibid., 105.)

however, that there is something to be said for it. Isn't it the case, for example, that when we see something falling, we do not just take it to be behaving in the typical 'style' of physical objects (which predictably move downwards when unsupported), but rather see it as subject to the same downward pull which we feel constantly, and to which we can also succumb? If we imagine an elephant balancing on a tiny, rickety stool, do we not see the 'strain' of the stool under an enormous weight, a strain whose nature we know from having supported heavy things ourselves? How else can we account for our experience of impacts as *impacts*, and not as idiosyncratic spatial displacements?

Husserl never pursues this idea in earnest, but there is one remarkable document in which he does give it some sustained attention. In the manuscript titled "Ursache und Wirkung," Husserl inserted some notes, dated 1918, with an indication that they were written on the occasion of reading "Fräulein Gote's excerpts." The ideas in these notes may very well be Gote's, or Husserl's musings on them. The first few pages concern the "intelligibility of the mechanical," ("Verständlichkeit des Mechanischen,")—that is, of moving substances interacting causally.⁷⁷ Rather than beginning with interactions among inanimate objects, however, the discussion turns immediately to *Leib*, that is, to one's own body. Moving one's body involves interacting with the pull exerted downwards (by gravity); we must overcome it with "positive Kraft" to move our hand up, but we can also simply let our hand fall, which requires no effort.⁷⁸ He then begins to describe interactions between one's body and inanimate objects. If I place my hand on a table, I feel a pressure ("Drück"). If I then lay an object on top of my hand, and then more and more objects, I will feel increasing pressure; and with each increase in pressure, a greater effort ("Anstrengung des Hebens, Kraft") is required should I want to lift my hand.⁷⁹ Husserl continues this way, discussing, for example, the way pressure and effort are involved in the experience of pushing or hitting something.

He then, finally, turns to objects insofar as they are interacting with each other, rather than with one's own body. They, too, pressure, push, and bump each other. They behave like

This is not the place to examine Schopenhauer's philosophy, disentangling, first of all, its epistemological from its metaphysical content. It is important to recognize, however, that he was not making the implausible claim that inanimate objects act volitionally. (See *ibid.*). Rather, what is attributed to the material world is *force*, which he understands as a species belonging to a genus to which our own will also belongs, and which we can only intuit in a less distinct manner than our own will. (See *ibid.*, 111.)

⁷⁷ *Ms. D 13 XX*, 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

mechanical bodies, Husserl writes, but they attain the sense of “having force,” because “something like corporeality [*Leiblichkeit*] is felt in them, force in the sense of the forceful efforts [*Anstrengungskräfte*], which I, as a corporeal subject, must exercise to lift, push, or hit.”⁸⁰ The forces I perceive are more originally known through my own body; my body is a substrate of forces which “originally have meaning only for it, and for other things only through their pushing-resting-pulling-relations to it”(ibid.).⁸¹ Thus, he continues:

[T]hings are apperceived in their relation to each other, as if they were body-analogues [*Leibesanaloga*], and in such a way that conditions and forces are placed in them [*ihnen eingelegt werden*], forces which are, as it were, measured precisely through the bodily forces that would be required for us to overpower [these objects'] movements, bring them to rest, or modify the speeds or accelerations of their movements in any way.⁸²

The intelligibility of mechanical nature, in other words, is originally based on apperceptions that originate in the body [*leibentsprungenen Apperzeptionen*], although of course this connection has been “eliminated” from the physical sciences.⁸³

Even in this text, however, Husserl expresses ambivalence about this idea. Can't pure mechanical corporeality, he asks, be constituted without relation to bodily corporeality? Shouldn't the concept of force that is rooted in the bodily sphere be limited to the “subjective” sphere, particularly that of the body (but also perhaps that of thought, emotion, etc.)?⁸⁴ At the same time, he observes that the concepts we do in fact use to talk about mechanical nature—power [*Vermögen*], force, resistance, pressure, etc.—all seem to originate in the subjective sphere.⁸⁵ Isn't this more than just a coincidence?

⁸⁰ “...sie drücken und stoßen sich gleichsam, schieben sich, benehmen sich als mechanische Körper, aber sie erhalten Kräfte dadurch, dass ihnen so etwas wie Leiblichkeit angefühlt wird, und Kräfte in dem Sinne der Anstrengungskräfte, die ich als Leibsubjekt üben muss, um zu heben, drücken, stoßen.” Ibid., 5.

⁸¹ “...Kräfte, die ursprünglich nur für ihn Bedeutung haben und für andere Dinge nur durch ihren Druck-Ruh-Zug-Beziehungen zu ihm.” Ibid.

⁸² “Dann aber werden Dinge im Verhalten zu einander so apperzipiert, als ob sie Leibesanaloga wären, und zugleich so, dass ihnen Zustände und Kräfte eingelegt werden, die gleichsam gemessen werden, eben durch unsere Leibeskräfte, die nötig sind, um ihre Bewegungen zu überwinden, sie zur Ruhe zu bringen oder in beliebiger Weise ihre Bewegungsgeschwindigkeiten oder Beschleunigungen zu modifizieren.” Ibid.

⁸³ “Elimination dieser ursprünglicher Apperzeption und Rückbeziehung auf Leiblichkeit durch die Mechanik als reine Physik. Diese Elimination ist, wie es mir scheint, eine vollkommene.” Ibid., 6.

⁸⁴ “Aber könnte sich materielle und zwar rein mechanische Körperlichkeit nicht konstituieren ohne Beziehung auf Leiblichkeit, und könnte nicht der aus der Leiblichkeitssphäre stammende Kraftbegriff ganz entwertet werden, um dann seine Rolle ausschliesslich zu spielen in der ‘subjektiven Sphäre’, und speziell der Leibessphäre?” Ibid.

⁸⁵ “...dass alle Begriffe von Mechanischem aus Subjektivem entsprungene Begriffe von Vermögen, Kraft, Widerstand, Druck, etc.” Ibid., 7.

It is unclear why Husserl did not pursue this line of thought further—whether he rejected it or simply never got around to reconsidering it. It is unfortunate that he did not, as his brief foray down this road is suggestive and compelling. There are clearly strong motives, I think, to look for our intuition of force elsewhere than in the apprehension of causal regularities in appearances. These only give us, as we have seen an ordered world of phantoms with no materiality, and thus nothing we could intuit as ‘real force.’ Yet we must also admit that the alternate approach, whereby force is somehow empathically projected into objects, is a bit mysterious. What could it mean for forces to be ‘felt into’ perceptual bodies? Can we articulate this operation in such a way that we are not merely positing it? We must leave these questions for another time, and leave the problem—namely, how to give a phenomenological account for the intuition of force—unresolved. Husserl’s own contradictory attempts to address it, however, help us to see more clearly the contours of the problem, and to appreciate that the high stakes involved: the very possibility of a phenomenology of material reality.

Generalizing the Picture: Force and Non-Mechanical Happenings

While we have raised questions we could not put to rest, we have also gained a more intimate understanding of the way forces are at work in our apprehension of what happens. Whichever phenomenological account one finds more plausible—force as the ability to effect change, or force as an analogue of bodily exertion and resistance—it is hopefully clear by now that our intuition of real mechanical happenings involves, necessarily, a grasp of forces at work. Without such a grasp, we would be intuiting mere phantoms, about which we could not say that they were falling, flying, being driven, breaking, etc.

How far can we extend this insight? Do all happenings involve force? This seems implausible, when we consider, first of all, spatiotemporal happenings such as color changes, which do not self-evidently involve something we intuit as force, or happenings that are not ‘physical’ (or more than just physical) like getting married or giving a gift. I think, however, that we can use the understanding we have gained of forceful interactions to shed light on seemingly ‘forceless’ cases.

We have already seen how Husserl uses color changes to distinguish between phantoms and real things. A phantom such as a sunbeam can change color as a result of its circumstances, but it has no ‘objective’ color property that it preserves through the changes in its appearance. A

real object, on the other hand, can look different under different lighting conditions without us thereby intuiting a change in its color. In each case, however, the change in appearance is seen as an effect produced by something other than the phantom or object—there is a light source that is itself changing, being obstructed, moving, etc. On the other hand, we can perceive objects (but not phantoms) as changing their objective color. A liquid may change color when—perhaps unbeknownst to us—another a chemical is added to it; a chameleon changes its colors on its own. Here there is no external source producing a color effect, but an alteration of the object’s surface color itself.

Are there ‘forces’ at work in these various experiences? Arguably, when we intuit a light source illuminating an object, or producing a sunbeam, there is something we might call force at work here. Light sources have, phenomenologically speaking of course, a kind of ‘power’. They can be ‘weak’ or ‘strong.’ The light they emit ‘hits’ objects and ‘bounces’ off of them. Thus light itself has a kind of force (which, however, would be hard to interpret as a ‘bodily analogy,’ insofar as we are not ourselves light sources). Changes in apparent color are in this sense involved in a nexus of ‘forces,’ if we expand this notion to include the way we understand light as a directional power.

What about objects that actually change color? While I admit it is hard to see here what would count as the intuition of a force, it does appear that we have at least a primal intuition that the change is something the objects are ‘doing.’ In the case of an animal this is not hard to see. Yet even in the case of a liquid, there is a sense the change is something it is ‘doing on its own.’ The change is precisely *not* something we attribute to an outside source; we intuit the source of change to be in the thing itself, even if we cannot identify that source. There is something ‘at work,’ even if we have no idea what that might be. The wonder we experience upon seeing such an experiment for the first time has something to do, I think, with the uncanny feeling that, for that moment, the liquid has come alive, that it has a will of its own.

One’s intuitions may differ about these cases. At the very least, however, we can see how, among color changes, we can distinguish between those which have their impetus in light sources outside the thing, and those which have their impetus in the thing itself. Somewhere in each case there is an activity, or quasi-activity to be found—an object changing its own color, a light source being obstructed, etc. ‘Force’ or ‘power’ may not be quite the words to use to characterize such activity, but nor do they seem completely off the mark.

What, then, of happenings that transcend purely physical descriptions? I witness, for example, one person giving a gift to another. Is it helpful to think of this in terms of ‘intuited’ forces? Perhaps this is not so preposterous an idea as it may seem. If I witness a gift-giving—and, crucially, see it as such—I am not simply seeing person *A* put object *X* in person *B*’s hands. This would not, after all, be sufficient for seeing *X* as a gift. *A* may just be lending *X* to *B*, or showing it to her. Nor, to witness a gift-giving, need such a physical transfer happen at all. *A* could just put *X* on the table and say, ‘This is my gift to you.’ What makes the happening a gift-giving is, in part at least, a transfer of ownership. *A* can only give away *X* if it is his to begin with; and he only gives it to *B* if, at that moment, *X* now belongs to her. There is a transfer of ‘power’ over the object, so to speak (without a reciprocal transfer of power in the other direction, as in the case of an exchange). The transfer itself, moreover, must be a ‘free’ act of will on the part of the giver (and perhaps of the recipient as well). If I compel (‘force’) *A*, at gunpoint, to give *X* to *B*, something quite different from gift-giving has happened.

The point here is not to argue that we should understand such social configurations and interactions like ownership, volition, and compulsion by strict analogy to physical forces. There is a certain similarity, however, between what, in these different domains, is intuited without being sensuously perceived. I can’t ‘see’ the pull of gravity on a barbell, nor can I ‘see’ the ownership relation between a person and a possession. I can’t ‘see’ the force with which a wrecking ball hits a wall, nor can I ‘see’ the volition of a gift-giver. I must, however, intuit that these powers are operative in the corresponding situations if I am to grasp them in a particular way. These intuited powers are the ‘drivers,’ so to speak of what happens.

Husserl himself notes this parallelism when he observes the different senses in which we speak of our own abilities. “In this regard,” he writes, “a distinction is to be made between a *physical* ‘I can’ (the bodily and the one mediated by the Body) and the *spiritual*.”⁸⁶ I am free (usually) to move my body as I wish. But I also have a host of ‘spiritual’ abilities:

I can draw conclusions, compare, distinguish, connect, count, calculate; also I can evaluate and weigh values, etc.—all this in the normal way as a ‘mature man.’ On the other hand, I do have *my peculiarities*, my way of moving, of doing things, my individual evaluations, my own way of preferring, my temptations, and my power [*Kraft*] of conquering certain kinds of temptations, against which I am invulnerable. The next person is different, he has different pet motives, other

⁸⁶ Husserl, *Ideas II*, 266.

temptations are dangerous for him, he has other spheres in which he exercises his individual powers of action [*Tatkräfte*], etc...⁸⁷(*ibid*).

We are driven by instincts and temptations which exercise their powers, and we can counter these powers with efforts of our own. Our powers of reasoning can wax and wane. These powers are, like bodily forces, originally given to ourselves, as we exert and resist them. Yet we can also see them ‘at work’ in other people: “I put myself in the place of the other subject, and by empathy I grasp what motivates him and how strongly it does so, with what power [*Kraft*]. And I learn to understand inwardly how he behaves, and how he would behave, under the influence of such and such motives, determining him with such and such force, i.e., I grasp what he is capable of and what is beyond him.”⁸⁸

Insofar as we apprehend the behavior of others in a particular way, grasping what is happening to them and what they are doing, we must intuit their powers, drives, attractions, emotions, commitments and goals. These are not immediately accessible to us, but must be nonetheless seen—through empathy, on Husserl’s analysis—for our experience of them to cohere meaningfully.

We would have to do much more work to examine the manner of givenness of happenings in this ‘spiritual’ realm. We can see, however, that here, too, these happenings involve, or at least can involve, subjects which are engaged in, and in part constituted by, a nexus of ‘forces’ which interact and compete with each other. As with mechanical interactions, and even color changes, what we experience as happening will depend on what kinds of forces are experienced as active, where they are seen to originate, and what they are seen to be effecting.

Further expansions of the concept are surely necessary. What forces, for example, do we take to be at work when we understand that a nation has elected a president? This will have to involve more than just the ‘will’ of the voters (and the elected person). There is the law to consider—can we speak of the force of law, and its involvement in such a situation? What about the ‘power’ the new president now has? This seems relevant as well. I will admit, however, that I don’t have a firm grasp of what forces are and aren’t included in this case, or in the countless other difficult cases that can be presented. I do not have a taxonomy of forces to offer, or a method for identifying which forces are operative, phenomenologically, in our experience of this or that happening.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 287.

I do think, however, that we need to consider force, or something like it, to grasp what is phenomenologically essential and distinct about happening—to grasp the happeningness of things that happen. In the realm of mechanical happening, the indispensability of force in a phenomenological account is quite clear. Our intuition of force is what allows us to see identical changes as different happenings, and to discriminate between stasis that is happening and stasis that is not. Whatever realm of happening we want to consider, we will need some way to account for analogous distinctions.

We are now in a position to propose a general characterization of verbal experience. It is, first of all, protemporal: it must involve an attention to the ‘next’ and ‘before.’ We no longer need to identify protemporality, however, as a discrete feature of verbal experience, as we can now see it as an aspect of the intuition of force. We see force ‘at work’ in the manifestation of its effects. This can only happen in the protemporal experience of change or stasis; force cannot be intuited intemporally, as it requires a temporal unfolding to show itself at work. We can of course intemporally experience the property of an object—a dent on a car, for example—and deduce that it was the result of some happening, involving some force. Yet this is not itself the intuition of force, nor the intuition of happening.

Verbal experience, then, is the intuition of force in its effects. Changes and stases do not, on their own, constitute happening; these must be seen as the manifestation or ‘expression’ of forces. Even when the forces remain altogether mysterious, or transcend self-evidently physical causality, we can still, at the very least, locate their origins and directional orientations. We grasp which objects exert forces, and which suffer the effects of forces passively. So characterized, verbal experience has two essential features:

Manifestation of force in effects: Changes and stases are experienced as the effects of forces.

Distribution of force: We discriminate the source and direction of force among the objects involved; force is (seen as) exerted by and/or imposed on objects.

These two features, while distinguishable, are of course inseparable in experience; changes and stases must be the changes and stases of something. We should, of course, be loose about what we mean by ‘object.’ This can include amorphous physical entities like ‘the air’, cultural entities like universities, subjective things like ‘my feelings’, etc. The agents and patients of forces are just whatever we can apprehend as exerting or being effected by them.

4.3 The Structure of Verbal Judgments

Thinking about the objects of happening helps us as we transition, now, to a consideration of the structure of verbal judgments. Judgments, after all, are ‘about’ their subjects. They say something about something.

We have characterized the experience of happening as the intuition of force, manifested in effects and discriminated in terms of source, direction, recipient, etc. It is only through judicative activity, however, that what is experienced becomes an objectivity, an identifiable ‘thing.’ Judicative acts yield intentional structures which can then be fulfilled; in these fulfilling acts we take our experiences as experiences of the very thing meant in judgment. The ‘thing’ that happens is a judicatively structured object of experience. But what is the intentional structure of verbal judgments? What do they say about their subjects? How do they inscribe verbal experience in sentential form?

4.3.1 What do verbal judgments intend?

We can approach these questions by first recalling how Husserl answers it in the case of copular judgments, with his account of ‘predicative formations.’ Copular judging involves, first of all, the positing its subject as a determinable substrate. It is posited as ‘that which is determined by a property.’ At the same time, it posits the determination of this substrate—the predicate—as ‘that by which a subject is being determined.’ Copular judgments thereby posit the being-determined of a subject by a property—a state of affairs, or what Bennett and Kim would call a property exemplification. This positing is not simply the generation of a structure—although it is also that—but moreover the prescription of a possible fulfilling experience, in which an explicate would be discovered within the horizon delineated by the object. In this experience, the being-determined of the object in a particular way is originally given. We see the state of affairs ‘itself’, as the very objectivity intended in the judgment.

Now that we have a grasp of the nature of verbal experience, we can see what verbal judgments—verbal judicative intentions— must posit in order to generate an intentional structure directed towards happenings, rather than property exemplifications. In verbal experience, objects are given as exerting or being affected by forces, which elicit or prevent changes in themselves or in the environment. What matters to us is not what these objects are like, but what they are

doing or undergoing. Verbal judgments, we would expect, should accordingly posit objects, not as determinable substrates, but as ‘agents’ and ‘patients’, where these terms are not interpreted as necessarily implying will or consciousness. Objects should be posited as able to exert force to elicit (or resist) effects, and/or as susceptible to forces which effect them. They should be intended as ‘doers’ and ‘do-ees’. Along with this, verbal judgments should also intend the particular manner of effecting and being effected at work in each case.

In other words, verbal judgments should assign objects to discrete roles in a tiny one-sentence ‘drama,’ while at the same time telling us how this drama unfolds. This does not mean, however, that this drama—the happening—would itself be posited as an element in the judgment (as per Davidson). The verbal judgment would rather be the very structural formation of this drama, just as the copular judgment is the formation of a state of affairs.

Expressed verbal judgments—sentences—should accordingly communicate this intentional structure, where the objects are assigned discrete roles in a dramatic nexus. This is of course just what verbal sentences do. Take, for example, the sentence ‘The rock shattered the glass.’ We immediately know, upon hearing this sentence, that we are to consider the rock as the active participant, and the glass as the passive one. We also know what effects were produced on the patient through the activity of the agent—we know what the ‘drama’ is. We don’t know exactly how this happened, of course. Perhaps the rock was thrown, or perhaps it fell. We do know, however, what it would mean to have ‘seen this thing happen’. We would have to have seen a certain change in the glass—consistent with what we mean by ‘shattering’— as the rock’s ‘doing’, i.e. as an effect elicited by the rock.

There are many ways of doing and being effected. Different sentences will naturally express different happenings, and these may vary greatly in their basic structure, assigning different kinds of roles. For example, (54) and (55) the roles are more or less identical, even though what happens is slightly different. In both, the rock is the doer and the glass suffers the effects of the doing.

■ The rock shattered the glass.

■ The rock cracked the glass.

In (56) and (57), on the other hand, we see different structures, with different roles:

■ The rock fell.

■ Paul sent Agnes the rock.

In (56), there is no doer—the rock is the patient here, succumbing to a downward force. In (57) we do have an agent (who is now, we should add, a volitional actor), and something effected by this agent (the rock) but also a recipient.

In these sentences, it is clear that the verb that is responsible for ‘telling us’ what structure is in play. The verb determines the participant roles that are needed in the judgment. Note what happens if we try to formulate sentences with ‘missing’ or ‘extra’ roles:

■ *Paul sent

■ *The rock fell the glass

We can explain this much, however, simply by characterizing ‘sent’ and ‘fell’ as predicates of varying adicity. We could say that ‘sent’ is a three-place predicate, while ‘fell’ is a one-place predicate, and that (58) and (59) are simply missing arguments.

Adicity alone, however, does not explain the specific role-assignment that different arguments receive. To represent ‘Paul sent Agnes the rock’ as $\text{Sent}(\text{Paul}, \text{Agnes}, \text{rock})$ tells us nothing about the specific roles each of these arguments are playing. More generally, we see again how unhelpful it is to characterize verbal judgments and property exemplifications. Saying that Paul, Agnes and the rock together exemplify the property ‘send’ tells us nothing about the dynamically structured relations between these three elements. One might respond by saying that it is through these very structural relations that x , y , and z exemplify this property. It is exemplified when (roughly speaking) x performs an action which causes y to receive z . Yet if this is what it means to exemplify the property, why should we identify ‘send’ as a property in the first place? The property concept adds nothing to our theoretical understanding of sentences that use this verb, serving rather to obscure structure.

Instead of treating verbs as property-attributing predicates, we can see them as words that indicate the basic dramatic structure and content of the happenings verbal judgments express. (We can of course still call them ‘predicates’ if we want to, so long as we don’t understand this to involve property-attribution.) By ‘content’ I mean that which is different in ‘The rock shattered the glass’ and ‘The rock cracked the glass’. What differs here—in terms of our previous analyses—is the particular ‘effect’ through which the force of the rock is manifested. The roles are the same in each case. Verbs, however also give us structure. They tell us which dramatic roles need to be filled by other constituents of the judgment.

In their function as content providers, verbs are in a sense analogous to property-ascribing copular predicates. These predicates give us the content of our property-ascriptions. They tell us how the subject is being determined; they tell us the way objects *are*. Verbs give us a different kind of content; they tell us the way objects are behaving. In their role-assigning function, however, verbs are unlike copular predicates. These latter do not assign a role to the subject, which is fixed, in the copular structure, as the subject of predication

4.3.2 Thematic roles

The role-designating function of verbs has been studied extensively by linguists, under the heading of ‘thematic roles’ or ‘theta roles,’ often abbreviated ‘ θ -roles.’ The basic idea is what we have already noticed—that part of our understanding of verbs involves an understanding of the roles that accompany them. It is an open question, however, how the assignation of θ -roles is actually implemented. There is no consensus, for example, about which basic θ -roles to recognize. Some approaches argue for a rich inventory of roles. These would include roles like Agent, Patient (sometimes called Theme), Goal (e.g. ‘...to Agnes’), Instrument (e.g. ‘...with a knife’), Location, Direction, and Possessor.⁸⁹ These categories can be further subdivided: we may, for example, want to distinguish among kinds of agents (e.g. volitional and non-volitional ones).⁹⁰ Another model assumes just two ‘proto-roles’—Agent and Patient—which are not discrete categories but rather “cluster concepts” to which objects can belong in varying degrees. Thus for example the proto-role ‘Agent’ may include volitional involvement, causation, sentience, and movement as potential features (among others, perhaps); but sentential constituents ‘filling’ the agent role could have any combination of these.⁹¹

There is also disagreement about whether θ -role assignation is a syntactic or semantic operation. The technical details of such proposals are beyond the scope of this work, but I can indicate the basic contours of two approaches. Some theories, for example, take θ -role assignation to be a function of the conceptual structures we associate with specific verbs, together with rules (also contributed by the verb) specifying which syntactical positions will fill

⁸⁹ This is the minimal sent of roles assumed in Baker, *Incorporation : A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing*, 37.

⁹⁰ See D. A. Cruse, "Some Thoughts on Agentivity," *Journal of Linguistics* 9, no. 1 (1973): 18-21. Cruse in fact offers a four-part division of agentivity.

⁹¹ See David Dowty, "Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection," *Language* 67, no. 3 (1991): 571ff.

which role. Thus, for example, the verb ‘eat’ would have a conceptual structure requiring an agent that eats and something that is eaten; it would also carry a rule which says that the sentential subject will fill the former role, and the direct object will fill the latter.⁹² Other proposals see θ -role selection to be determined by sentential structure. Rather than having verbs specify the syntactical positions that correspond to its θ -roles, general θ -role categories are uniformly associated with specific syntactical positions.⁹³

Let’s take a closer look at an issue that arises if one adopts the latter proposal, as it helps clarify the kinds of challenges thematic categories present to traditional views regarding propositional structures. One basic assumption of a syntactically-driven theory would be that agents always appear in the ‘subject’ position, while patients appear in the ‘direct object’ position.⁹⁴ However, this does not seem to always be the case. As we saw, the subject in ‘The rock broke the glass’ is agentive, while the subject in ‘The rock fell’ is not. ‘Fell’ is an example of a so-called ‘unaccusative’ verb, i.e. a verb whose grammatical subject is not an agent but rather a patient.

We can, however, preserve the idea that θ -roles correspond to fixed syntactical positions by suggesting that the subject of unaccusative sentences has in fact ‘moved’ to the front of the sentence from its original position.⁹⁵ Note that some transitive verbs can be used as unaccusatives:

 [] The rock broke the glass.

 [] The glass broke.

The idea would be that just as (60) has the structure seen in (62), (61) has this same structure, but with no noun in the ‘subject’ position, as in (63):

 [] [The rock [broke [the glass]]]

 [] [-- [broke [the glass]]]

⁹² This is a crude paraphrase of the proposal by Ray Jackendoff, "The Status of Thematic Relations in Linguistic Theory," *Linguistic Inquiry* 18, no. 3 (1987). Cf. Dowty, "Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection."

⁹³ This is the so-called "Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis" or "UTAH," suggested by Baker, *Incorporation : A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing*, 46. For an introductory discussion, see Adger, *Core Syntax : A Minimalist Approach*, 136ff.

⁹⁴ ‘Subject’ and ‘object’ are of course not technical terms. In syntactical theory the relevant positions are identified in terms of a much more refined model of sentence structure. I use these terms here for the sake of simplicity.

⁹⁵ See Baker, *Incorporation : A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing*, 46 and the citations therein.

To satisfy the requirement (in English) that declarative sentences be headed by nominal phrases, ‘glass’ moves up to the empty position. We could then suggest the same for ‘The rock fell,’ except that in this case ‘fell’ never assigns an agent role.

█ [-- [fell [the rock]]]

I am not suggesting that this proposed analysis is correct, or that the syntactical approach to θ -roles in general is the right one. My point is rather to show one way in which the problem of thematicity requires us to rethink what we mean by the ‘subject’ of our judgments. When it comes to verbal judgments, we cannot simply identify the subject as the grammatical subject that is ‘determined’ by a predicate. Part of what a verbal judgment does is posit the subject (and other objects) as participants of specific types. Copular judgments do not appear to do this. A copular subject does not have any role to play, as there is nothing going on. It is not a ‘participant.’ Accordingly, copular ‘be’ is generally not thought to assign thematic roles.⁹⁶

This doesn’t mean that copular subjects can’t tell us something about what activities their subjects are capable of, or what effects they are susceptible to. If we say ‘Charles is a good dancer,’ for example, we obviously understand our ‘subject’ to be a volitional agent. ‘Charles’, however, does not occupy a structural ‘agent’ role in such a sentence. Phenomenologically speaking, he is not posited as an agent exerting force in a certain way. There is nothing happening in this judgment, so there is nothing for him to do. Some copular judgments, as we noted in Chapter 1, can of course tell us about things that are happening: ‘The plane is in flight’, for example, or ‘John is in a crisis.’ These are special cases, however, in which the copular predicates themselves specify types of happenings with idiomatic prepositional phrases that contain event-naming nominals.

Thematic relations, on the other hand, may not always be of a happening sort. We noted this in Chapter 1, when we observed that not all verbal judgments express happenings. In ‘Mary loves John’, for example, or ‘Mary knows John,’ there are two discrete roles (perhaps something like ‘experiencer’ and ‘theme’ or ‘target’), and yet nothing that happens. We are inclined to call these ‘states.’ Note that in neither case do we find anything that we could call—even figuratively—the manifestation of a force. We might call ‘love’ a kind of force; it does move us

⁹⁶ I know of one proposal which does suggest that ‘be’ specifies thematic roles, namely ‘Theme’ and ‘Property.’ The author explicitly identifies these roles as ‘non-participant’ roles. Elizabeth Löbel, “Copular Verbs and Argument Structure: Participant Vs. Non-Participant Roles,” *Theoretical Linguistics* 26(2000). Löbel’s article includes a good summary of other approaches to copular syntax which do not involve thematic roles.

to do things. Yet in ‘Mary loves John’ there is no indication of its manifestation in effects. ‘Mary is feeling love pangs’, on the other hand, does give us this (even though the manifestation is only available to Mary).

Yet while thematic structure is not necessarily deployed to express happening, it is easy to see why happening is almost always expressed through it. If happening involves the manifestation of force, expressing this requires that we identify its sources, its vehicles, its victims, and so on. We need to express not just what or who was involved, but also how. To do so we need sentences that are in a sense templates for dramatic structure. This is not a function the copular form provides.

The detailed working-out of the varieties of verbal structure—its role-types, its forms of agentivity, its aspectual varieties, etc.—is interesting work which I will not engage here any further. I would suggest, however, that phenomenologists interested in this topic, and in the phenomenology of judgment in general, would do well to familiarize themselves with the semantic and syntactic literature. It does not, I think, address more fundamental phenomenological questions—regarding, for example, what is involved in intending a subject ‘as agent’ or ‘as patient’. Semantic and syntactic considerations, do, however, point us to crucial distinctions regarding judicative acts which we need to address if we want to refine and expand the phenomenology of judgment, which is in the end a phenomenology of knowledge and truth.

4.4 Final Remarks

In Chapter 1, I presented the ‘problem of events’ as the problem of the intelligibility of ‘things that happen’. Our goal was to determine how these things are cognitively available to us as ‘things’, and to understand why their way of being things is the ‘happening’ way. Let’s review our answers to these questions. The ‘things’ in question are, on my interpretation, judicatively structured things. To this extent, the Husserlian model resembles the property-exemplification approach to events. It goes further, however, by inquiring, first of all, into the givenness of these synthetic objectivities. Such ‘things’ are available to us as objects of reference by virtue of judgment-forming acts which generate new intentional objects. Through the judgment, we are directed back towards a possible experience which would fulfill it. To have this experience would be to see the ‘same thing’ that is meant through the judicative intention—it would be to see the ‘thing that happened’ itself. Experience is what ‘gives’ the thing itself, but it can only

give such a thing if we approach experience in a judicative mode. Without the judgment, there is no happening thing to intend.

This much, however, is true for any judicative ‘thing,’ not just things that happen. Thingliness is, so far, just a function of the coherence of judicative structures in general. To understand the happeningness of things that happen, we had to look at the very experience which fulfills judicative intentions. Our central discovery was that, for an experience to count as the experience of happening, we must intuit the manifestation of force in its (temporally progressing) effects. It is only by including force in an account of verbal experience that we can understand how identical changes are experienced as different happenings, and how changeless situations can count as happening at all. This is quite clear, at least, in the domain of mechanical nature. An expanded notion of force, however, also appears to be necessary to account for happeningness in other spheres. There, too, happening cannot be reduced to change; we need to grasp what is driving the effects we witness.

With this key observation in hand, we turned back to verbal judgments, to see how they need to be structured in order to intend the experience of happening. Force is distributed differentially among objects. They are paradigmatically, its agents and patients. Verbal judgments must therefore intend objects as occupying distinct roles in a dramatic nexus. The verbal sentences normally used to express these dramas thus have more structure than copular sentences. They assign what linguists have called ‘thematic roles.’ While there are competing theories regarding role-assignment, the fact of role assignment is unavoidable.

In a nutshell then: we know things happen because our thematically structured propositions can be fulfilled by experiences in which force manifests itself temporally in effects.

There are loose ends, of course. Among the most conspicuous is the question of event nominals like ‘wedding’ and ‘earthquake’ and ‘betrayal’, which we pushed to the side at the very beginning of the investigation. This move was justified by the primacy of propositions in our talk about what happens. Ultimately, however, our use of these terms stands in need of phenomenological analysis. How do we intend these things? Our understanding of them seems to be derived from our understanding of judgments which clarify their meaning—this was Bennett’s ‘supervenience’ claim. At the same time, there seems to be something markedly ‘entity-like’ about these terms. Their objects seem to stand on their own as discrete items in our inventory of real-world things. We don’t seem to need a judicative synthesis to intend them.

Does this mean that we intend them differently? Is there some intentional surplus that comes along with nominal event terms? And how does it come about? Might we want to trace some sort of cultural process of reification, wherein certain especially significant types of happening are designated with nouns of their own? These are important questions, about which I unfortunately have nothing to say at this point.

We also need much more clarity regarding the notion of force. While I am convinced it is pivotal to a phenomenological understanding happening, it is not evident how we are to tie together our various applications of this term. Perhaps there is a better term to use—‘power’ is another candidate—but we would still need a conceptual framework that unifies its senses within and beyond the sphere of mechanical nature. The project is of course a worthwhile one its own right; we do use the word ‘force’ in widely divergent everyday contexts, and it would be interesting to examine why we are so comfortable doing so. It is essential, however, for the further development the phenomenology of happening I have proposed here. Part of this work will involve thinking more carefully about the two phenomenological approaches to force I outlined above: on the one hand force as the disposition to produce effects, intuited through the anticipation of the lawful regulated change; and on the other hand force as effort, intuited through some kind of empathy. If one finds the latter path more promising, as I do, the first task is then to examine the different ways in which we experience force ‘genuinely,’ i.e. personally, and identify what it is they share in common.

An issue that did not come up explicitly, but that is no less pressing, is the question of causal relations between happenings. Causal explanations are one of the principal contexts in which we talk about what happens. What does it mean for one event to cause another—phenomenologically speaking, that is? Husserl, as we have seen, essentially takes a Humean stance, interpreting causality in terms of the regularity of systems of appearance. This was then used to account for the intuition of force in terms of dispositions. If we take the alternative approach to force, can we develop a different phenomenology of causality, one in which force is an essential ingredient of causal apprehension, rather than an outcome of it?

The question of causal explanation raises a larger, more amorphous phenomenological issue. What prompts us to be interested in happenings to begin with? What brings them into focus out of the background of our lived experience? Causal explanation is one crucial way happenings are talked about—perhaps the primary way. But why are we so concerned with

causal explanations? Perhaps our engagement with causes and effects can be grounded, as James Woodward has suggested, in our practical interest in manipulating the environment to our advantage.⁹⁷ If happening comes into focus for us because we are interested in causal explanation, and if we're interested in the latter mainly as a means of manipulation, this suggests a path to a genetic account of our cognitive grasp of happening as a feature of our world. It arises, we might propose, out of our situatedness in a life-world whose horizon is not that of open determinability—as Husserl's notions of 'world' and the 'will to cognition' would have it—but of manipulability.

This is speculative, to be sure. My aims in this study have been less far-reaching, but I hope its findings and proposals are productive of further thought, regarding both its immediate concerns—happening and the phenomenology of judgment— and the avenues available for phenomenological research in general. Questions abound, our tasks multiply. Conclusions become new problems, and the work continues.

⁹⁷ “On this way of looking at matters, our interest in causal relationships and explanation initially grows out of a highly practical interest human beings have in manipulation and control; it is then extended to contexts in which manipulation is no longer a practical possibility.” James Woodward, *Making Things Happen : A Theory of Causal Explanation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10.

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