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ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TELEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE OF THE SCIENCES AND THE TELEOLOGY OF INTENTIONAL LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The present paper approaches the subject of teleology in Husserl's phenomenology, notably the teleological doctrine of the sciences and the teleology of intentional life. Divided in three parts, the paper explores: (1) the thesis that the sciences possess their own teleology, guided by the idea of constituting themselves as "authentic sciences"; (2) the principle of only judging in evidence, without which the sciences could not advance in their teleological march; and (3) the teleology of intuitive fulfillment in perceptive and pre-predicative experience. The paper ultimately seeks to highlight the relationship between the teleological doctrine of the sciences and the teleology of intentional life.

KEYWORDS

EDMUND HUSSERL. TELEOLOGY. SCIENCE. KNOWLEDGE. EVIDENCE. INTENTIONALITY.

RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda o tema da teleologia na fenomenologia de Husserl, notadamente, a doutrina teleológica das ciências e a teleologia da vida intencional. Dividido em três partes, o artigo explora: (1) a tese segundo a qual as ciências possuem a sua própria teleologia, guiada pela ideia de se constituir elas mesmas como "ciência autêntica"; (2) o princípio de somente julgar na evidência, sem o qual as ciências não poderiam avançar em sua marcha teleológica; e (3) a teleologia do preenchimento intuitivo na experiência perceptiva e pré-predicativa. O artigo procura por fim destacar a relação entre a doutrina teleológica das ciências e a teleologia da vida intencional.

KEYWORDS

EDMUND HUSSERL. TELEOLOGIA. CIÊNCIA. CONHECIMENTO. EVIDÊNCIA. INTENCIONALIDADE.

INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of the first part of his famous conference in Vienna titled "The Crisis of European Humanity and Philosophy", proffered in May 1935 - where Husserl presents a mature reflection on the European crisis, he asserts in a widely cited passage that Philosophy, as an "Idea" (and therefore as an "infinite task"), continually exercises its "archontic" (archontische) role throughout European humanity (Husserl, [1935] 1976, I, p. 336). This implies an endless progress, a continual movement toward an infinite pole. A brief analysis of Husserl's conception of Philosophy as the spiritual telos of European humanity leads us from the ideal of philosophical reason - "the idea of an infinite task" (Idee einer unendlichen Aufgabe) - to the sciences, which, as "particular sciences" (Sonderwissenschaften), are understood as systematic offshoots of Philosophy itself (Husserl, [1935] 1976, I, p. 321). These sciences, in turn, possess their own teleological achievements. This is what Husserl refers to as the teleological doctrine of the sciences: the idea that scientific achievements unfold in a progression guided by an "end idea" (Zweckidee), moving forwards in increasingly higher levels of perfection, and proceeding along a path that opens indefinitely under this teleological orientation. This end idea plays a decisive role, according to Husserl, in determining both the "authentic meaning of science in general" (...der echte Sinn von Wissenschaften überhaupt) (Husserl, [1929] 1981, p. 8), as well as the inner dynamic of scientific development. But what exactly does this doctrine ultimately reveal? The central hypothesis of this paper is to show that an analysis of the judicative way of thinking of the sciences points to certain teleology of intentional life. Together, these two teleologies form a unified structure which, once unfolded, reveals fundamental propaedeutic principles for the philosophy of science outlined by Husserl: the principle of judging only in evidence and the principle that pre-predicative experience constitutes the first beginning of any systematic theory of judgment. We begin with an examination of the teleological doctrine of the sciences.

1. ON THE TELEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE OF THE SCIENCES

When it comes to the teleological doctrine of the sciences, Husserl holds that the sciences, beyond their theoretical and practical capacities, are guided by a teleology of their own (Husserl, [1929] 1981). This teleology consists in a continuous striving to realize the guiding idea of becoming an "authentic science" (echte Wissenschaft), as Husserl emphasizes in Cartesian Meditations (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4). This is not, he notes, a concept derived from comparative abstraction based on existing factual sciences; rather, it is a normative claim intrinsic to the sciences themselves, one that cannot be justified merely by their cultural or historical existence. It is precisely in this claim that Husserl draws our attention to the notion of science as "idea" - the "idea of authentic science" (Idee echter Wissenschaft). This is the ideal of a science which, in full conformity with its object, would be capable of attaining truths whose validity would be universal and final - once and for all, and for everyone (Husserl, [1936] 1976). For Husserl, this is a purely ideal telos, one that remains on the horizon of all scientific activity. The idea of "authentic science" is thus characterized as a teleological idea that stands in dynamic relation to the actual efforts and achievements of science (Garulli, 1979). But how should we understand this dynamic?

According to Husserl, scientific activity advances through renewed efforts, moving from one realization to the next – from less to greater perfection – via successive approximations toward ever more precise knowledge (Muralt, 1974; Gurwitsch, 1974). In *Cartesian Meditations*, he conceives of knowledge as a "permanent acquisition" (bleibender Erwerb) to which the sciences can continually return, reproducing its demonstration countless times (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4). This is a movement whereby science ensures the freedom to "reactualize" (Wieder-verwirklichung) (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4, p. 51) its insights – to revisit and reaffirm its established justifications, maintaining them as acquisitions that can be re-lived and reaffirmed whenever

necessary. Yet, despite this freedom to return to acquired knowledge, science retains a fundamental corrigibility. It is precisely this capacity for revision that propels scientific progress, as it is constantly driven by an "uninterrupted pull" that urges science forward toward ever more refined realizations. In this sense, Husserl sees the sciences as ultimately oriented toward an ideal end: the attainment of truths that are "valid once and for all, and for everyone" (ein für allemal und für jedermann gültig) (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 5, p. 53).

Thus, despite the inherent corrigibility of science, nothing prevents it from persistently striving toward this ideal end. Through continuous "scientific striving" (wissenschaftliches Streben), science preserves a clear and distinct idea of the goal it seeks and the meaning that animates its efforts (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4). For Husserl, science develops as an "infinite progress" (unendlichen Progressus), characterized by a constant pursuit of greater precision and clarity. Each realization represents a current stage in this development – a stage that is always relative, situated between earlier and future moments of greater or lesser perfection (Muralt, 1974).

In this way, the sciences exhibit a dual dynamic: on the one hand, once a certain level of achievement is reached, science may return to its acquired knowledge and repeat its justification as often as necessary; on the other hand, it also strives to go beyond itself, driven by the impulse to achieve something more perfect than what has already been attained. This constant aspiration reveals the "pretension" that science brings with it: to continually surpass itself in pursuit of higher levels of exactitude and rigor, always under the horizon of the ideal of a universally valid scientific truth. Of course, given the limitations of their theoretical and practical capacities, the sciences cannot fully realize this ideal. Their achievements are necessarily *partial*. Nevertheless, they continue to converge – despite their specialization – toward a clear and distinct idea of this ultimate end, and they experience it continuously in their practices. Indeed, is it not the love for this end idea, as Husserl suggests, that sustains the career of the scientist and the spirit of scientific inquiry itself? This ideal thus plays a

determining role in the dynamics of scientific realization, even though its full attainment lies in the infinite. It is an ideal that is never completely fulfilled, yet one that continues to move the scientific enterprise.

This allows us to distinguish two types of *telos* in the progressive unfolding of scientific realizations: a relative *telos*, always directed toward the next stage more complete than the previous in the process of achievements, and an absolute *telos*, which, though unattainable, determines the overall direction and structure of the development. Each moment achieved gives rise to a new effort whose goal is to surpass what has already been accomplished. Even without fully attaining the end idea, science maintains it as a clear and distinct ideal – experiencing it, so to speak, through an infinite "longing" (*Sehnsucht*) (Husserl, [1923/1924] 1959 b, p. 14). As we will now see, according to Husserl, this dynamic of scientific realization is grounded in the principle of judging only in evidence. Moreover, all predicative evidence, in the end, presupposes pre-predicative evidence. Let us then look more closely at this connection.

2. JUDGING ONLY IN EVIDENCE AND THE RETURN TO PRE-PREDICATIVE EXPERIENCE

Scientific thinking can be characterized, according to Husserl, as "judicative thinking" (*urteilendes Denken*) (Husserl, [1929] 1981, § 5, p. 23). Scientific hypotheses offer explanations of objects, articulated in systems of predicative relations – often structured conditionally or causally. Yet Husserl warns that the scientist seeks not merely to formulate judgments about objects, but to ground those judgments in the evidence of a "state of affairs" (*Sachverhalt*) (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, p. 51). This is the basis of Husserl's principle of "judging only in evidence" (*nur in Evidenz zu urteilen*) (Husserl, [1923/1924] 1959a, p. 18). The concept of evidence (*Evidenz, Einsicht*) plays a central role in Husserl's phenomenological project. Since the *Logical Investigations* (1901), it has been closely tied to the notion of "intuitive

fulfillment" - that is, the moment when what is intended meaningfully also becomes intuitively present, producing a synthesis between signifying and intuitive acts. Husserl distinguishes between two types of intentional acts: those that are merely signifying, and those that are intuitive. These correspond to two distinct functions: on the one hand, the symbolic function (symbolischen Funktion) of intentionality, and on the other, its cognitive function (Erkenntnisfunktion). The symbolic function pertains to acts that merely intend meaning; the cognitive function becomes operative only when these signifying acts are fulfilled by corresponding intuitive presentations – when what is meant is not just intended but actually given to consciousness (Husserl, [1901] 1913a, 1968, §§ 9-10; Levinas, 1963). In this sense, the evidence of an object's presence – when what is intended meaningfully is also apprehended intuitively constitutes the presence of the object to consciousness as itself, or in Husserl's terms, "grasped itself" (Selbsterfaßten) and "seen itself" (Selbstgesehenen) (Husserl, ([1929] 1981), § 59, p. 141). This is why, in §16, Chapter 3 of the Sixth Investigation, Husserl writes: "We equated fulfillment with knowledge (in the narrower sense)" ("Wir hatten Erfüllung mit Erkennung (im engeren Sinn) gleichgesetzt") (Husserl, [1901] 1913b / 1968, §16, p. 65).

Moreover, the evidence of a predicatively expressed state of affairs (*Denksachverhalt*), formed in a judicative act, presupposes a pre-predicative evidence of the object in its effective givenness (*wirkliche Selbstgebung*). In other words, the principle of judging only in evidence rests upon evidences that are prior to any predication. In §84 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929) – almost thirty years after the *Logical Investigations* – Husserl refers to this structure as a "hierarchy of evidences" (*Stufenfolge der Evidenzen*) (Husserl, [1929] 1981, § 84, 182).

In the famous Chapter 6 of the Sixth Logical Investigation, Husserl asserts that when we express an object of sensible perception in judicative terms, we can identify a "surplus in meaning" (Überschuss in der Bedeutung) that does not find, in the simple act of perception, an objective correlate capable of

fulfilling it intuitively. Within the judicative sphere, the judgment expresses a new meaning of the previously perceived thing, now allowing us to think its "state of affairs" (Sachverhalt). The mere attribution of being (in the predicative sense) to the sensibly perceived thing compels us – due to the very limits of sensible apprehension – to shift into the judicative sphere, wherein the terms of the propositional relation can be connected by objective categorial forms. Thus, we are able to think of a "state" of the thing perceived that could not be given as such in sensible perception. However, this does not prevent judgments from being grounded on acts of sensible perception, since in a simple way (in schlichter Weise), sensible perception becomes a "foundational act of new acts" (Grundakt von neuen Akten) and therefore does not require other acts that constitute other objects (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, Chapiter 6). Therefore, even though complex acts add a new meaning to the perceived thing, they are still founded on sensitive perception.

This theme reappears in §84 of Formal and Transcendental Logic, a work in which Husserl attempts to articulate a hierarchical structure of judgments and of evidences. If we move toward the most basic level in a series of judgments, we will inevitably find judgments of experience (judgments about individual things) which includes the sensible intuition of the terms related in the proposition and bringing us back to the domain of pre-predicative experience. Accordingly, despite their differences, Chapter 6 of the Sixth Investigation and §84 of Formal and Transcendental Logic seem to converge on a common point: one cannot specify predicative evidence without considering its distinction from the evidence of the object in sensible apprehension. However, this distinction does not prevent predicative evidence from being grounded in sensible perception, as evidenced by judgments of experience (Erfahrungsurteile), in wich terms of the relationship includes fulfillment in sensible intuition itself. This helps clarify a key thesis from §4 of the Cartesian Meditations: "All predicative evidence includes pre-predicative evidence" (Prädikative Evidenz schließt vorprädikative ein)

(Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4, p. 52). That is to say, when we trace the genesis of meaning in judgments, we find that any judgment ultimately includes something that is originally seen (in the sphere of sensibility) and then expressed predicatively – initially in basic judgments of experience.

Husserl confirms this view in Experience and Judgment (Erfahrung und *Urteil*), published posthumously in 1939. In §10, he states: "It is on the evidences of experience that all predicative evidences must ultimately be grounded" ("Auf die Evidenzen der Erfahrung sollen sich letztlich alle prädikativen Evidenzen gründen") (Husserl, 1939, § 10, p. 38). The hierarchy of judgments corresponds to a hierarchy of evidences. The first truths and evidences in themselves, he argues, must be individual truths and evidences ("...die an sich ersten Wahrheiten und Evidenzen müssen die individuellen sein") (HusserL, [1929] 1981, § 84, p. 182). If we follow the genetic thread of sense backing to its lowest level, we encounter judgments about individuals (Individualurteile), through which we access the evidence of individual states of affairs. Within this hierarchy, then, the most original evidential judgments are judgments of experience (Erfahrungsurteile), which are directed toward perceptual data. These judgments concern individuals that are revealed directly through experience - here understood in its primary (ersten) and most concise (prägnantesten) sense, as a "direct relation to the individual" (als direkte Beziehung auf Individuelles) (Husserl, [1929] 1981, § 84, p. 183). As Husserl puts it: "What is first in itself in a theory of evident judgments is the genetic return of predicative evidences to the non-predicative evidence that is called experience" (Husserl, [1929] 1981, § 86, p. 186). This foundational evidence underlies the lowest level of judgment from a genetic standpoint. It marks the proper beginning of any systematic theory of judgment. By situating ourselves at this point of origin, we discover that the distinction between presumed intention and its fulfillment is not exclusive to the predicative level. Rather, it presupposes pre-predicative experience. This is why Husserl insists: "all predicative evidence implies pre-predicative evidence"

(Prädikative Evidenz schließt vorprädikative ein) (Husserl, [1931/1929] 1973, § 4, p. 52).

3. ON THE TELEOLOGICAL REALIZATION OF INTENTIONAL LIFE

The teleological development of the sciences is, in Husserl's view, inseparably linked to the teleological realization inherent in intentional life. If scientific thinking operates through judgments grounded in the evidence of states of affairs, and if all predicative evidence ultimately presupposes prepredicative evidence - since the terms of a judgment of experience suppose the sensible intuition of what is judged - then we are necessarily led back to the domain of sensible intuitions, and in particular, to the lived experience of perception. For Husserl, the perceptual experience is paradigmatic among other forms of intentional life, such as imagination or recollection (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, §§ 21/37). This is why Husserl states explicitly in §59 of Formal and Transcendental Logic (1929): "The original mode of the givenness of things themselves is perception" (Der Urmodus der Selbstgebung ist die Wahrnehmung) (Husserl, [1929] 1981), § 59, p. 141). And it is precisely in perception – especially in the gradual synthesis of intuitive fulfillments - that we encounter, as we will detail further, a more originary teleology, one that is intrinsic to intentional life. Before examining this in depth, we must first consider a key insight from the First Investigation.

In §9 of Chapter 1 of the First Investigation, Husserl identifies what we might call a "double synthesis" within the process of fulfillment (*Erfüllungssynthesen*) (Husserl, [1901] 1913a, 1968, § 9). The first synthesis occurs in the fusion between the physical sign (the sensible sign, the articulated sound, etc.) and the intentional acts that confer meaning upon it – transforming the mere sound into a "sense-animated word" (*sinnbelebter Wortlaut*) (Husserl, [1901] 1913a, 1968, § 9, pp. 38/39). While the intention initially aims at the object in a merely signifying way, it may later become fulfilled (*erfüllt*) by the intuitive

evidence of the object's actual presence, thereby achieving its objective reference. This synthesis forms, as Husserl puts it, an "intimately fused unity" (*innig verschmolzene Einheit*) (Husserl, [1901] 1913a, 1968, § 10, p. 39), which analysis can later decompose into its constituent elements: sensible, signifying, and intuitive. It is precisely in the transition from the mere presumption of an object (in meaningful terms) to the intuitive evidence of its presence – without which we would not have a consciousness of evidence (*Evidenzbewusstsein*) – that we discover, in perceptual experience, a more primordial teleological layer of intentional life.

In the Sixth Investigation, Husserl emphasizes that perception involves successive degrees of intuitive fulfillment, whereby evidence becomes differentiated and the object is increasingly clarified. In §16, Chapter 3, he writes that in every fulfillment of a meaningful act, there is a becoming-intuitive that is "more or less complete" (*mehr oder minder vollkommene*) (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, § 16, p. 65). Specifically, in the perception of an object, this process unfolds as a "relation of increase" (*Steigerungsrelation*) (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, § 16, p. 66): as an act becomes fuller (*Fülle*), it brings the intended object more vividly into view, though always in stages. Each stage of fulfillment adds to the richness of the experience and confirms, with increasing clarity, the object's intended reference.

Husserl offers an example at the end of §16: the progression from a rough sketch of an object to a more precise pencil drawing, then to a clearer image, and finally to a vivid painting – culminating in the presence of the actual object itself. In the author's words: "visibly the same" (sichtlich denselben) (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, § 16, p. 66). Each level of intuitive fulfillment aspires to what Husserl, in §37, calls the "ideal of final fulfillment" (Ideal der letzten Erfüllung): the perfection of adequation (Vollkommenheit der Adäquation) between meaningful intention and intuitive fulfillment (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, § 37, pp. 116-118). Each degree is more or less perfect, and here, imperfection (Unvollkommenheit) equates to incompleteness (Unvollständigkeit).

As Husserl notes in §24: "...partial fulfillment and partial emptiness can go hand in hand" ("...es kann partielle Erfüllung und partielle Entfüllung Hand in Hand gehen...") (Husserl, [1901] 1913b, 1968, § 24, p. 85). Imperfect evidence is onesided, relatively obscure, and indistinct in how the thing is given as itself (Selbstgegebenheit). While it aspires to an ideal fulfillment, experience remains marked by components of signifying intention that have not yet been fulfilled (unerfüllter Vormeinungen) by a corresponding intuition. Fulfillment, then, is achieved through a synthetic progression (synthetischer Fortgang) of concordant experiences (einstimmiger Erfahrungen), in which meaningful intentions are gradually raised to the level of actual experience (wirklichen Erfahrung) that confirms and completes them. In Lecture 28, Chapter 1 of First Philosophy (Volume II), Husserl presents this process as a trajectory: the intended goal is first "presumed" (vermeinten), then "imperfectly attained" (unvollkommenen Erzielung), and finally "perfectly realized" (wirklich vollkommene) (Husserl, [1923/1924] 1959 b, p. 9). In such a sequence of fulfillments, we are dealing with a more fundamental teleology - what Schérer calls a "teleology of realization" (Schérer, 1969, p. 282), or what Muralt describes as an "intentional tendency" (Muralt, 1974, p. 27).

Therefore, at least in regards to the initial intuitive fulfillments within the domain of perceptual experience, we can say – as shown in §16 of Chapter 3 of the Sixth Investigation – that intentional life reveals certain teleological dynamic. Each degree of intuitive fulfillment of what is meaningfully intended would be followed by more complete fulfillments, thereby confirming and enhancing the adequacy of the meaningful intention and consequently increasing the clarity over the intended object. This progressive synthesis of intuitive fulfillments would have as its aim a complete adequation in which the very presence of the intended object would finally come to evidence. We can say we here, at least in this case, a teleological realization wich goal is the plain adequation between meaningful and intuitive intentions.

Finally, in regards to an analysis of the judicative mode of thinking, which is characteristic of the sciences, we may affirm with Husserl that the sciences do not merely seek to formulate judgments about their objects in a haphazard or incidental way, but rather aim to ground such judgments in the evidence of a state of affairs. Such evidence includes in turn the evidence of the presence of the things themselves in their effective givenness. If we consider, as Husserl emphasizes, that experiential judgments presuppose the sensible intuition of the terms connected in the judgment, we are thereby led in this analysis back to pre-predicative experience. Therein, as we saw above, in the perceptive experience and in the initial intuitive fulfillments of meaningful intentions, we find a "teleological realization". We may say, then, at the very least, that the analysis of the judicative mode of scientific thinking ultimately reveals a more originary teleological layer inherent in to intentional life itself.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the discussion above, we can observe the interconnection among the following key points: 1) Philosophy, as the idea of an infinite task, assumes its archontic function in relation to European humanity, as Husserl asserts in his well-known Vienna conference; 2) The sciences arise systematically from Philosophy itself, progressing through successive realizations toward the infinite, guided by the *telos* of becoming an "authentic science"; 3) In the course of this development, the sciences adopt a judicative mode of thinking, grounding their judgments in the evidence of the state of affairs under investigation; 4) The predicative evidence on which scientific judgments rely ultimately requires pre-predicative evidence, which is rooted in sensible intuitions; 5) In the sphere of such sensible intuitions – and particularly in the lived experience of perception – we encounter a more primordial form of teleological realization.

In light of these connections, we conclude that the teleological doctrine of the sciences, through the principle of judging only in evidence and the thesis that all predicative evidence relies on pre-predicative evidence, is inseparably bound to the originary teleological realization inherent in intentional life – something Husserl emphasized as early as his *Logical Investigations*. It would thus be a mistake to regard the theme of teleology as a late development in Husserl's phenomenology, limited to his final writings (BERNET, 1994). What emerges from the relationship between the teleological doctrine of the sciences and the teleology of intentional life is a unified teleological vision at the heart of the Husserlian project – a vision which, when unfolded, reveals foundational propaedeutic principles for a phenomenological philosophy of science: the principle of judging only in evidence and the principle that experience – understood as pre-predicative – constitutes the first beginning of any systematic theory of judgment, a beginning from which Husserl never departed.

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