

Jocelyn Benoist (Université Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne / University of Chicago):

“Husserl and Wittgenstein on Intention and Fulfillment”

Abstract:

In contrast to Russell (*The Analysis of Mind*), Husserl and Wittgenstein both endorse a positive understanding of the concept of intentionality, as an internal relation of the mind to its object. In contrast to Brentano, both acknowledge an internal relation between intentionality and the logical possibility of its ‘fulfilment’ as well. Thus, we are going to try and make a comparison between Wittgenstein’s and Husserl’s respectively positive accounts of the basic relation between intentionality and fulfilment.

Beyond the internal logical link that both authors recognize between intentionality and fulfilment, a divergence will however appear as to the very notion of what fulfilment is. According to Husserl, ‘fulfilment’ is a synthesis on its own, required so that it becomes possible to see any piece of given *as* fulfilling any intention (more or less correctly, since fulfilment is a normative concept for Husserl as for Wittgenstein as well). On the other hand, in Wittgenstein’s view, there seems to be no room for such an additional ‘act’, as, in some sense, the synthesis has been always already done, ‘in language’ (see *Philosophical Grammar*, I, §95). As there is not the gap between intention and reality that the Husserlian framework of analysis seems to presuppose, closing that gap should not be such a big issue either.

Is it, however, possible to save any sense for the Husserlian model of a fulfilling **act**? Although we shall buy the basic principle of Wittgenstein’s ‘grammatical’ criticism, which allows to see the ‘problem of fulfilment’, as it is to be found in Husserl’s phenomenology, as a whole as a kind of non-issue, we shall try to consider whether there are no specific experiences, as to which that notion of a specific ‘synthesis of fulfilment’ might still make sense.

Basic Reading List:

- Husserl, Edmund: *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J.N. Findlay, London, Routledge, 1970, First Part (*Prolegomena to Pure Logic*), ch.VIII, §§49-51 (**vol.1, p. 115-122**); Second Part, Vth *Logical Investigation*: §§10-14 (**vol.2, p.95-106**), and ‘Appendix to §11 and §20’ (**vol.2, p.125-127**); VIth *Logical Investigation*, §§6-10 (**vol.2, p.201-211**) and §16 (**vol.2, p.226-228**).

- Russell, Bertrand: *The Analysis of Mind*, London : G. Allen & Unwin / New York : Humanities Press, 1978 : **Lecture I**.

- Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. by Rush Rhees, trans. by Anthony Kenny, Oxford, Blackwell, 1974: Part I, **Chapters VII-VIII**.

- Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Philosophical Remarks*, ed. by Rush Rhees, trans. by Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White, 1975: **Chapter III**.

Further Suggested Readings:

- Descombes, Vincent: *Proust: philosophy of the novel*, translated by Catherine Chance Macksey, Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1992.

- McDowell, John: "Intentionality and interiority in Wittgenstein," reprinted in McDowell, John: *Mind, Value and Reality*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1998, p.297-321.

- McDowell, John: "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge," reprinted as chapter 17 of John McDowell *Meaning, Knowledge, & Reality*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1998.