

## REVIEW ARTICLES

### Husserl as the Modern Plato? On Hopkins' Reading of Husserl

*The Philosophy of Husserl*, by Burt C. Hopkins. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010. 290 pp., pb. \$22.95, ISBN-13: 9780773538238; hb. \$95, ISBN-13: 978-0773538221.

Reviewed by Corinne Painter, Washtenaw Community College, copainter@wccnet.edu and Christian Lotz, Michigan State University, lotz@msu.edu

#### ABSTRACT

*Burt Hopkins's The Philosophy of Husserl presents a challenging and thoughtful elucidation of Husserl's phenomenology that pays special attention to important methodological aspects of Husserl's philosophy, and, thereby, to Husserl's characterization of phenomenology as a pure and transcendental philosophy. Unlike other texts that attempt to elucidate Husserl's philosophy, Hopkins carries out his project in an unusual fashion, by beginning with a consideration of the conflict between Plato and Aristotle regarding the meaning and status of the eide, and ending with a systematic critique of two of Husserl's most fierce opponents, Heidegger and Derrida. This review essay gives an overview of Hopkins's book and offers some critical remarks.*

#### Keywords

Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida, pure phenomenology, Husserl's Platonism, eidetic intuition, intentionality

During the last decades, Burt Hopkins has established himself as one of the foremost interpreters of Husserl's phenomenology, both with respect to Husserl's extensions of transcendental phenomenology during the time of Husserl's *Crisis* writings, as well as with respect to how Husserl's understanding of phenomenology differs fundamentally from Heidegger's. With *The Philosophy of Husserl*, Hopkins continues his careful scholarship, presenting his view of Husserl's phenomenology by working through important methodological aspects

of Husserl's philosophy. Hopkins thereby pays special attention to what he takes to be the overall meaning and core of Husserl's phenomenology as *a rigorous and transcendental philosophy*, and he carries out this project in an unusual fashion, namely, by beginning with a consideration of the conflict between Plato and Aristotle regarding the meaning and status of the *eide*, and ending with a systematic critique of two of Husserl's most fierce opponents, Heidegger and Derrida. These aspects of Hopkins's elucidation of Husserl's philosophy differentiate his book from other available books on Husserl's thinking, particularly since this book treats, better than most, *the problems that Husserl himself dealt with* instead of appropriating Husserl's thought in order to consider problems foreign to Husserl's own thinking. As such, the focus of this text is devoted almost entirely to the methodological issues raised in Husserl's philosophy, paying almost no attention to Husserl's more "concrete" phenomenological analyses. Given this, although the author refers (more than once) to his text as an "introduction" to Husserl's thought—ironically echoing Husserl himself, whose major publications (during his lifetime) were almost all entitled "introductions" to phenomenology—prospective readers should not expect Hopkins's book to offer a "basic introduction" to Husserl's thought, but rather, an in-depth treatment of the methodological issues about which more advanced readers of Husserl's philosophy are bound to be interested. Interestingly, the fact that today, the meaning, scope, and philosophical significance of Husserl's main ideas are still embattled and unclear, shows that Husserl was not very successful in clarifying the revolutionary structure of transcendental phenomenology, and it is this that makes Hopkins's book so important for anyone who hopes to understand Husserl's thought, particularly its foundation, in a robust manner. Moreover, with its focus on the most difficult methodological issues, including a consideration of Husserl's relationship to Ancient thought—something almost never treated by other Husserl scholars—the prospective reader should be aware that the text is written in a most rigorous fashion and that it therefore requires the highest level of attention; for, indeed, Hopkins's prose refuses to be taken as light fare, especially given its close attention to the details of Husserl's own writing. In this connection, it must be said that the thoughtfulness with which Hopkins reconstructs Husserl's claims throughout his text simply cannot be denied.

The review that follows naturally cannot do complete justice to Hopkins's text, especially given its challenging attention to details of Husserl's thought which are not prudent to focus upon in a review that hopes to be accessible to a large audience. Accordingly, the review is structured as follows: for each chapter, we shall primarily elucidate what we take to be some of the main elements of the analyses Hopkins offers, complementing our elucidation occasion-

ally, with some critical questions. In any case, as a first step, it is important to note that Hopkins reconstructs Husserl's *oeuvre*—which he mainly construes as his published work—in four stages: The first stage may be characterized as a descriptive phenomenology that has access to immanent content that neither philosophical empiricism nor empirical psychology can reach. The second stage should be characterized by the attempt to describe “in methodological acts of reflection the essences immanent to pure consciousness” (4); whereas the third stage is characterized by a further reflection on the genesis of these essences in transcendental subjectivity. And finally, the fourth and last stage is characterized, Hopkins claims, by the extension of transcendental phenomenology “to include events and texts whose essential meaning is datable to an origin in actual history” (5). The book is divided into five chapters, each of which contain several sections, and each of which organically emerge out of Hopkins's four-stage view of Husserl's philosophy.

In chapter one, entitled “Plato's and Aristotle's Theory of *Eide*,” Hopkins introduces a central claim of his book by turning, in a highly unusual but brilliant fashion, to the problem of how we need to think about the *eide* in Plato and Aristotle, and he lays out the different views that these two thinkers held regarding the *eide*. Though Hopkins's move may not be immediately clear to the reader, particularly if she is not a specialist in Ancient philosophy, the importance of this background becomes more noticeable as the text progresses; for Hopkins argues that we need to turn our attention to Plato and Aristotle in order to clarify Husserl's claim that phenomenology deals with pure content and pure meanings. Moreover, Husserl's late work during the *Crisis* period as well as his turn towards history can only be clarified and justified, Hopkins argues, if we understand the *eidetic* aspect of Husserl's thinking. In this connection, he writes:

Only the consideration of this extension's relation to history, and, in concert with this, the consideration of this extension's relation to phenomenology's founding principles, holds the prospect of answering the question of the philosophical significance of Husserl's turn to history and its phenomenological significance for pure phenomenology (9).

The task, then, according to Hopkins, is to disentangle *the* single connection that holds not only Husserl's philosophy but the whole Western tradition together, namely, “the singularity of the method of philosophy and the universality of the knowledge that is its goal” (11).

Linked to the universality for which Husserl searches is the “purity-assumption” in his “pure” phenomenology, which has, according to Hopkins, three aspects: “presuppositionlessness, pure reflection, and essential intuition” (6), all of which are possible only if one can show that philosophical cognition and

genuine science are themselves possible only when philosophical knowledge of essences (*eide*) is possible in and through a “pure seeing” (7), just as is the case, ultimately, for Plato. It is clear, then, that for Hopkins, Husserl’s characterization of himself as a “so-called Platonist” (97) is at the *center* of Husserl’s philosophy, especially insofar as it is intimately connected to his view of the “consciousness of fulfillment,” that is, to “categorical intuition” (98). Accordingly, without a proper understanding of what this “Platonism” entails, in Hopkins’s view, the contemporary reader of Husserl will miss the meaning and scope of Husserl’s philosophical project. An understanding of Husserl’s “Platonism”—and “Platonism” is not being used in a pejorative way here—with respect to his understanding of the “arithmological theory of the *eide*,” is crucial. Hopkins refers to the arithmological theory as the “second pillar” of the Ancient precedent to pure phenomenology” (34), the “Socratic theory of the *eide*” being the first pillar. Recognizing this connection will permit Husserl’s readers to acknowledge that if there are “pure givens,” they will “*not* be images of originals, but rather the originals’ appearances themselves ... [which are] responsible for the appearance of any sensible or intelligible thing that appears” (58). As such, they must have a source “in something other that is completely other than the one: that is, in the multitude that, because the one is not present in it, is unlimited and therefore ‘indeterminately’ other than what is one” (59).

To further illustrate the complicated nature of Husserl’s relationship to Ancient thought about the *eide*, Hopkins goes on to discuss what he refers to as the “third pillar of the Ancient precedent to pure phenomenology” (60), namely, Aristotle’s refutation of Plato’s so-called “theory” of the *eide*. Since this review is not meant, however, to be a discussion of Plato and Aristotle, suffice it to say that while Hopkins does an extremely careful job of illuminating the disagreement between the two thinkers regarding their theories of the *eide* (see, especially, p. 66 and following), it is not clear why, in a book claiming to be an introduction to Husserl’s thought, he employs *both* the Platonic and the Aristotelian views in his account of Husserl’s “Platonism,” especially since their disagreement regarding how the *eide* are to be characterized, let alone known, is a complicated issue that continues to occupy Ancient scholars for whom this issue has not been entirely settled. However, this is precisely what Hopkins appears to do, inasmuch as he not only repeatedly refers to Husserl’s own characterization of his thought as Platonic (in the good sense), but also discusses the “philosophical proximity” of Husserl’s and Aristotle’s notions of the nature of *phantasma*, as well as their agreement on the way in which *eidetic* intuition depends on *phantasmata* (see pp. 120–121), which is anti-Platonic. Having said this, Hopkins does finally acknowledge a disagreement between Aristo-

tle and Husserl regarding exactly how *phantasmata* and images are related to *eide* (121), claiming that ultimately, “Plato’s precedence for Husserl’s account of both the *seeing* and the *being seen* of the ‘manner of being’ proper to the *eidos* comes into view” (121). This highlights the twofold nature of *eidetic* intuition, which Plato advances but Aristotle rejects, in claiming that seeing an *eidos* does not require one to, as Hopkins recounts it, “prescind from sense perception, as [according to Aristotle] the *intelligible eidos* is to be found ... nowhere else than in the sensible *eidos*” (122). This leads Hopkins to surmise, finally, that “Plato’s account of the *being seen* of the *eide* sets the precedent for Husserl’s lasting conviction that transcendental phenomenology is a foundational science and that this foundation is secured by the *being seen* of the *eide* as they appear to eidetic intuition” (123). Though we agree that this is the correct way to view Husserl’s relationship to Plato and Aristotle, we think it would have been helpful if the discussion of Husserl’s relationship to the dispute between Plato and Aristotle on the nature of the *eide* had been more streamlined, as this would likely make this part of his text accessible to a broader audience.

In any event, whatever one might want to think about this issue, going back to Plato’s and Aristotle’s dispute over the meaning of the *eide* is also necessary, Hopkins claims, because it allows one to understand better his rejection of “psychologism” or “empirical introspection” as a proper way to explain the ground of experience and knowledge, given its inability to account for its own meanings; to put this more simply, understanding the dispute between Plato and Aristotle allows one to understand the distinction between “phenomenological reflection” and “inner perception” or “introspection.” An understanding of this Ancient dispute makes possible the acknowledgement that just as Plato, in contradistinction from Aristotle, thought that *eidetic* insights cannot be grounded in (to use phenomenological terminology) “lived experience” alone, so also did Husserl. In the end, Hopkins’s discussion of Plato and Aristotle turns out to be an illuminating exercise for the task of bringing purity and history together; however, given that Husserl himself seems to locate his own discussion of the *eide* within this Ancient dispute, Hopkins’s claim that a reconstruction of Plato’s and Aristotle’s battle over the status of essences is *necessary* for *all* philosophies of purity (16), remains obscure in our view, especially if one takes Hopkins by his own word that Husserl’s Platonism is based on the claim that ideal objects can *be given* in acts of intuition (98, 100). In this connection, one might ask, for example, whether Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel are subject to this history, too.

In chapter two, “From Descriptive Psychology to Transcendentally Pure Phenomenology,” Hopkins reconstructs Husserl’s “Platonism” (89) in the context of his claim that the content of mathematics and logic is independent from think-

ing acts. The first step towards a pure phenomenology is possible because, in his consideration of the nature of acts, Husserl begins to differentiate between the acts themselves, the content of these acts, and the objects of these acts (92). As Hopkins rightly argues, the independent status of the intentional object leads Husserl to reconsider descriptive psychology. Unfortunately, however, Hopkins does not discuss extensively the crucial role of the *noema* in Husserl's switch from *The Logical Investigations* to the *Ideas*, which would require a discussion of the importance of the lectures on meaning constitution given by Husserl in 1908 (*Husserliana*, vol. 26). Instead, Hopkins moves on to the core of Husserl's "pure" phenomenology, whereupon he focuses on giving an explanation of more contentious issues, such as the possibility of pure reflection, categorial intuition, immanent objects, the self-constitution of the transcendental ego, and intersubjectivity. In this vein, Hopkins argues that we can make sense of Husserl's assumption of "original givens" only if we understand the concept of a "pure phenomenology's methodically reflective regard" (100). According to Hopkins, this reflective "regard" has two main features: on the one hand, the reflection is *immanent*, but on the other hand, it does not require the presupposition of a pre-reflective lived experience or self-consciousness. The reason for this, according to Hopkins, is that the self-presentation of this experience to the reflective regard is retentive consciousness (141). From this he concludes that there is no pre-reflective consciousness, especially as this pre-reflective consciousness would be unable to appear (141).

From a more critical point of view, though, one might ask the following questions: first, one might ask why there is not *always* a reflective consciousness, if the regard would indeed be an *immanent* feature of every act. How, in other words, can the reflective regard be both immanent and artificial (executed by an ego in *certain* situations)? Second, if the reflective regard is immanent, that is, temporally identical with the act, how, then, can "phenomenological cognition" even take place *within* this, as Hopkins claims (141)? Indeed, what is meant by "cognition" and "cognitive interest" here (145)? Moreover, how can a "regard" executed in the lived presence be *interested* in anything, since this presupposes values, themes, practical intentionality, and so forth? And what is the nature of this "regard"? One should expect from a phenomenologist to hear more about such crucial concepts. Additionally, one might also ask how the reflective regard and abstraction are related to each other. For example, how does the phenomenologist know about the *hyle*, which, according to Hopkins and Husserl, are components of every perceptive act? Don't we need to reconstruct (perhaps regressively) the lived experience in order to know anything at all about *unqualified* sensational "data"? For—as one might claim with Heidegger—the data as such do *not* present themselves to the immanent regard, and if this is the

case, how can we know of them, if not through what Hopkins himself calls “speculations” (145), or, alternatively, through some sort of hermeneutic procedure? At which point, in other words, do interpretative, communicative, and linguistic components come into play? Finally, *if* the beginning point of pure phenomenology is based on an absolute self-presentation within a pure reflection, why did Husserl often seem to change his basic views about even the most fundamental structures of consciousness, such as time, recollection, and otherness? Why, to put it in Heidegger’s words, do we need to *wrest* with the phenomena if they present themselves *without, before, or independent from* any articulation, as Hopkins seems to assume?

In Chapter Three, “From the Phenomenology of Transcendental Consciousness to that of Monadological Intersubjectivity,” Hopkins briefly discusses the issue of transcendental intersubjectivity, which, according to the author, is not problematic. Here, Hopkins focuses on the *Cartesian Meditations* and its introduction of intersubjectivity through the threat of solipsism, by explicating Husserl’s notions of the monad, transcendence, and the self-constitution of the transcendental ego. Hopkins’s explanations of the Leibnizian background in Husserl (145) are quite helpful, especially as this is absent in many discussions of Husserl’s thought on these matters. The most interesting part of his analysis in this portion of the text, in our view, is his discussion of Husserl’s concept of “immanent transcendence.” Hopkins here claims that Husserl tries to show “how the transcendental Ego can constitute a meaning and being (and non-being) that, *qua* this meaning and being, transcends the meaning and being of the subjectivity that is its constitutive source—*while nevertheless being inseparable from this source’s subjectivity*” (159, emphasis his). Husserl’s strategy to overcome the problem of solipsism is twofold: on the one hand, Husserl shows that the meaning of objectivity includes references to subjectivity (161); while on the other hand, he demonstrates that there is an “immanent transcendency” that is constituted by the Ego, but does not belong to it (161). However, while Hopkins mentions sensuous data, the ego pole and transcendent objects in this part of his analysis, he does not consider that the very first “immanent transcendency” is the difference between the lived present and the *being* of the past. For if it is true that “what holds for the internal time consciousness of single lived-experiences also holds for the whole stream of lived experience,” as Hopkins maintains (135), one might want to ask both (1) how the wholeness of this stream is constituted as *one*, without inclusion of a beginning and an end of this stream, as well as (2) about the implications of otherness.

Chapter Four, “From a Mondadological Intersubjectivity to the Historical *a priori* Constitutive of all Meaning,” is probably the most crucial step in Hop-

kins's reconstruction of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, since it is here that the author impressively connects his explanations of the "purity" of Husserl's philosophy with his turn towards history. According to Hopkins, in his later work, Husserl solves the tension and opposition "between the contingency of history and the universality of knowledge" (175). To see this, though, it is crucial, according to Hopkins, for us to understand that Husserl's problem is not the opposition of empirical history and the apriority of essences; rather, as he argues, the issue is the "essential connection that makes impossible the generally accepted opposition between epistemology and history" (177). Thus, what is at stake in Husserl's later thought, in other words, is the "combination of transcendental subjectivity, as the constitutive source of all meaning, and its intentional accomplishments, [which is] a combination that yields the interweaving of the original production and 'sedimentation' of meaning" (178). Husserl's work in and around the *Crisis*, accordingly, is "motivated by his continued interest in the problem of accounting for evidence that discloses the origin of ideal meaning formations that are *non-factual* and therefore, in precisely this sense, rational" (177, emphasis his). Hopkins's reconstruction of this stage of Husserl's philosophy is very thorough and enlightening, and thus it is certainly recommended to every reader of Husserl's later texts.

Having said this, one wonders, though, whether Hopkins's reconstruction proceeds too quickly at times. For example, the "necessary" steps for an "ideal objectivity capable of being handed on" (195) are, according to the author, the production of original evidence, the embodiment of this evidence in speech, as well as its embodiment in written words. Though Hopkins makes a reference to the "seduction emanating from the spoken and written word" (196), one might expect him to discuss these issues in more depth, given that any claim about the "embodiment" of meaning in words has remained controversial in philosophy throughout the twentieth century. For instance, the sharp difference that Hopkins makes between the mental and inner recollective activity of the "intrasubjective" original evidence and the "intersubjective" embodiment of that evidence in words (199, 252) is, to say the least, not transparent, as his treatment does not explain the initial transcendence of and difference between retention and recollection. For one could argue that the act of recollection as one that presupposes forgetfulness already implies the *externalization* of the original evidence in memory and technology, which is to say, in words or other material signs. We could not recollect, in other words, if our past would not *already* be externalized (the problem of which goes back to the constitution of the immanent transcendence of the past). However, Hopkins differentiates two forms of forgetfulness without adequately explaining them: on the one hand,

he assumes that retentional consciousness magically passes over into forgetfulness, and, on the other hand, he interprets sedimentation as a form of forgetfulness (213). The former form of forgetfulness, though, is much more crucial than Hopkins's discussion suggests, as it requires us to acknowledge that the recollection of the original evidence is *prior* to the original evidence itself (as this gets forgotten), and therefore that it is based on an unsurpassable difference that Derrida noted and discussed.

If it weren't already clear that Hopkins's view of Husserl stands in stark contrast to Heidegger's and Derrida's take on Husserl's philosophy, his last claim makes this transparently obvious. And indeed, in the fifth and last chapter of his book, "The Unwarranted Historical Presuppositions Guiding the Fundamental Ontological and Deconstructive Criticisms of Transcendental Philosophy," Hopkins presents a forceful discussion of what he takes to be Heidegger's and Derrida's respective failures to properly understand Husserl's project, particularly its connection to Greek ontology as we find it in Plato and Aristotle. Due, however, to space issues as well as interest, in what follows, we only briefly touch upon the Derrida critique, while focusing more closely on the Heidegger section. So, first, with respect to Derrida, according to Hopkins, Derrida confuses the "intrasubjective" nature of ideal objectivity with the "intersubjective" sedimentation and establishment of its tradition. In this connection, for instance, "the ideal being of the number," writes Hopkins, "used to count two chickens is 'two,' no matter what empirical language its being two is expressed in" (250). Hence, Derrida confuses two separate origins with one another, namely, the origin of *ideality* and the origin of *tradition*. In addition, Hopkins accuses Derrida of a self-performative contradiction: "Indeed, Derrida's very notion of the 'alterity' of the origin is suspect precisely because his very claim regarding its inaccessibility presupposes that *his* thought has sufficient access to ideality's origin to be able to rule out certain things about it" (252, emphasis his). Given these charges, though perhaps other parts of Hopkins's critique of Derrida could be responded to successfully, this part of his critique, at the very least, should be carefully studied by Derrida defenders.

Turning, now, to Hopkins's refutation of Heidegger's critique of Husserl, we should start by noting that he begins this part of his critical dialogue by pointing out that Heidegger characterizes his critique as "immanent" insofar as it is based, according to him (that is, Heidegger), on showing how "Husserl's formulation of phenomenology falls short of its stated intention" (216). Heidegger's critique, as is well known by most Heidegger and Husserl scholars, challenges both Husserl's understanding of intentionality as the most basic phenomenon of phenomenology, as well as his claim that phenomenological reflection (or any

reflection for that matter) can, as Hopkins formulates it, “encounter the *source* of the meaning of Being that is *presupposed* by the mode of access to phenomena made possible by this method” (216, emphasis his). According to Heidegger, a main problem with Husserl’s understanding of intentionality is that consciousness cannot generate or be the original source of immanent being, of absolute being in the sense of absolute givenness, of absolute being in the sense of the *a priori* in constitution, nor of pure being, as Husserl claims, since these phenomena *presuppose* the intentional in its very being rather than *uncover* it (216); it is for this reason that Heidegger claims, as Hopkins reminds us,

that the “*question of the Being of this region, of the Being of Consciousness,*” together with the “*question of the meaning of Being*” that guides Husserl’s elaboration of the correlation between the absolute being of consciousness and the transcendent being of the world, remain unasked in Husserl’s phenomenology. (217, emphasis his)

It is no doubt clear that Heidegger’s critique of Husserl on this point is only possible because he takes Husserl to be Cartesian, insofar as he thinks Husserl, like Descartes, identifies consciousness and its intentional objectivizing and subjectivizing structures with some sort of reflecting regard or subject (see pp. 217–218), though, to be sure, in a more sophisticated manner than Descartes does. Connected to this is Heidegger’s claim that the transcendental reduction – or, more generally, Husserl’s reflective and eidetic method – only gives the methodically reflected upon phenomenon—i.e., the *eidōs*—and that it cannot show the “existential way to be” of lived experience, which is exhibited by *Dasein* (219) as the *pre-reflective* source of the meaning of Being, according to Heidegger. All of this leads to the consequence that intentionality, while certainly being *one* existential mode of being for *Dasein* (221), is not the only mode of being, nor even the most primordial, given that intentional acts presuppose their own conditions of possibility, which illustrates that there is something yet more original that allows for its “discovery.” As Hopkins writes, according to Heidegger, this comes at a “high price,” since it ultimately means that Husserl cannot uncover “the ground upon which alone the question of the Being of the intentional could be raised” (220). For Heidegger, this ground, not incidentally, is *not* that which has been assumed in Western philosophy since the Greeks, namely, that the meaning of being is “presence.”

Although there is more to Hopkins’s reconstruction of Heidegger’s criticism of Husserl included in his text, it is appropriate to move onto a discussion of his defense of Husserl against Heidegger’s challenges. One of the foundations of Hopkins’s defense of Husserl is his claim that Heidegger does not understand “the general distinction between the manner of being of the *eide* in Plato’s and

Aristotle's respective philosophies, nor, more precisely, does he address, let alone clarify, the distinction between the Socratic and arithmological accounts of the *eide* in Plato's thought" (223). While there are many elements of Hopkins's elucidation of this critique (see, especially pp. 224–231), so as not to recount the earlier discussion of the dispute between Plato and Aristotle on the nature of the *eide* and how they are accessed, suffice it to say that according to Hopkins, amongst other things, Heidegger wrongly links Husserl's understanding of categorial intuition with Greek ontology in general, and more specifically, with Aristotle's claim "about the impossibility of the soul thinking without the showing to it beforehand of something" (225). This, elucidation is joined with the fact that according to Heidegger, Husserl's concept of intentionality is connected, first, to a rediscovery of "Plato's fundamental insight that ... *logos* is *logos tinos*" (224), as well as, second, to Plato's unfortunate misunderstanding of *genos* instead of to Aristotle's proper understanding of this; this inspires Hopkins to call into question Heidegger's claims regarding the connection between Husserl's understanding of categorial intuition and intentionality and Aristotle's ontological claims. For, whereas Husserl conceives of categorial intuition as an ideating abstraction, Aristotle rejects this (as was earlier discussed), especially since, for him, the only thing that appears are *phantasmata*, and it is through them that the *eide* may be seen (226). Clearly, this is not Husserl's view, despite the fact that Heidegger seems to think it is. Furthermore, although Heidegger is "on target" (227), as Hopkins writes, in his understanding of most of the details of Husserl's understanding of intentionality, including its relation to Plato's thought, Heidegger's claim that Husserl "rediscovered Plato's insight into the *logos tinos* is a claim that cannot withstand critical scrutiny" (226). For, a proper understanding of Husserl's view of empty versus filled intentions, as well as of his view of images and their connection to image consciousness, shows that they are markedly distinct from Plato's view of the being of images (see, especially, pp. 227–229); as such, Heidegger's position on this matter is rendered untenable, according to Hopkins. Aside from but connected to these criticisms, Hopkins also argues that since

Heidegger's ontico-ontological critique of Husserl's concept of intentionality appeals to its historical precedence in the limits of Greek ontology, it is methodically limited by its presupposition that Plato's Socratic mythological account of seeing *eide* is Plato's definitive account of their manner of being. (231)

Accordingly, this Heideggerian thesis must also be rejected, in Hopkins' view.

In the final part of his defense of Husserl against Heidegger, Hopkins makes an unusual move in his decision to forego examining whether Husserl's reflective and eidetic phenomenological method can disclose what Heidegger thinks

is the proper matter for phenomenology, namely, the meaning of being. He sets out instead to “examine the phenomenological method that Heidegger proposes is necessary in order to advance phenomenology beyond the limits posed by Husserl’s method” (233). Hopkins sees this as an important project, since it permits us to “examine Heidegger’s critical methodical claims” (233) without necessarily presupposing what he does regarding what the main project of phenomenology should be. Here, Hopkins focuses upon the meaning and importance Heidegger gives to interpretation, or, more specifically, to the “phenomenological self-showing of Dasein as an entity together with the meaning of Being that properly belongs to this entity” (233), which Heidegger comes to characterize as “fundamental ontology.” As Hopkins points out, Heidegger’s real concern is not with the Being of entities, but with “the phenomenon of the Being of entities” (234), which, if understood properly (see pp. 234–235), leads one to acknowledge, amongst other things, that “the entity that asks the question has priority over all other entities” (235), according to Heidegger. This then makes clear that it is really the “structure” of the self-showing of Dasein that is of concern to Heidegger and not just its self-showing, which, because of its “initial unavailability,” must be phenomenologically described via interpretation (236). In response to this, after elucidating Heidegger’s attempt to defend his position, and in disagreement with Heidegger’s many proponents, Hopkins maintains that Heidegger’s position must be rejected, since it cannot account, ultimately, for that which is

- (i) the source of the “sight” that presumably guides the *phenomenological* interpretation that makes manifest the phenomenal structure of interpretation;
- (ii) precisely how this “sight” brings about the “thematization” of the existential structures Heidegger credits it with thematizing; and
- (iii) the structural character of the most fundamental distinction governing his account of interpretation, namely, that between understanding and meaning. (240, emphasis his)

Moreover, Hopkins claims that Heidegger’s limited scope with respect to his theory of interpretation leaves him with nothing to contribute regarding “precisely *how* these structures of the interpretive understanding of the world show themselves *interpretatively* to the ‘interpretation’ characteristic of the phenomenological method that manifests them” (241, emphasis his). Put simply, Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology presupposes eidetic intuition. Finally, although Hopkins acknowledges that Heidegger himself characterizes “ontological investigation as only ‘a possible mode of interpretation,’ namely, an ‘interpretation [*Auslegung*] as Interpretation’ [*Interpretation*]” (241, emphasis his), he artfully points out that this admission will not help him in the end, given that his “formulation of fundamental ontology is guided by the *mere-*

ological presupposition that to the Being of entities there belongs a meaning to Being overall” (245), which is something that Heidegger wants to reject.

In the minds of these reviewers, the thoughtful and challenging critique of Heidegger’s refutation of Husserl’s understanding of phenomenology that Hopkins offers in his last chapter must be seriously considered; for, in the end, it may be the case that Heidegger—as he himself seems to acknowledge—cannot break free from the “hermeneutic circle”—meant in a bad way—which would render his claims inadequately defended (though still possibly true).

Before offering our final set of closing remarks, we have two general criticisms of the text we feel compelled to mention. The first concerns how Hopkins offers criticisms of other authors who, in his view, hold positions that should be rejected, despite the fact that he does not appropriately refer to the authors or texts that he has in mind (for just a few examples, see pp. 97, 140, 144, 157, 174, 178, 210, 260). Such critiques remain empty, in our view, as long as the academic reader has no chance to decide for herself whether these attacks are appropriate or whether the positions Hopkins criticizes are reasonably defended. The second criticism concerns Hopkins’s failure to engage with available literature on Husserl. For, besides his critical confrontation with Heidegger and Derrida, he almost never appeals—at least not explicitly (note the criticism just advanced)—to other work, though one would expect this in such a text. The methodological focus of this book is likely the main reason for this; however, we do not believe this excuses Hopkins’s decision to forego engaging with other scholars, since there are other worthwhile texts on Husserl’s phenomenology—which include discussions of his methodology—that could prove to be valuable sources of support and debate for Hopkins’s book.

Nevertheless, overall, Hopkins has written a remarkable book; for his text reminds any serious reader of Husserl’s philosophy of its rigorous goals, procedures, and eidetic insights. Hopkins’s discussions make clear that we fail to understand Husserl if we suppress the pure, eidetic and transcendental foundation and aim of his thought. Still, Hopkins avoids critical discussion of what, in these reviewers’ minds, Husserl conceived as the *concrete* task of the phenomenologist, namely, treating the issues themselves by describing them in all their “phenomenologically concrete glory” (so to speak). Thus, paradoxically, the undeniable strength of this book is therefore also its weakness. For by focusing on the foundations of transcendental phenomenology, Hopkins does not consider in a sustained manner what belongs to what we would refer to as the more “concrete phenomenological results” of Husserl’s thinking, which include affectivity, sensuousness, and intersubjectivity, as well as the more “concrete structures” of consciousness, such as willing, feeling, remembering, imagina-

tion, and the like. Moreover, no space is given to Husserl's analyses of ethics or religion. Finally, given that in recent years genetic phenomenology in the sphere of passivity and sedimentation has received much attention, Hopkins's reconstruction of sedimentation and ideality should have included a discussion of Husserl's concept of memory, especially since without the constitution of memory (beyond retention), repetition, tradition, and, consequently, ideality, as Hopkins understands it, would not be possible. Relatedly, because Hopkins limits his treatment of Husserl to questions of "pure phenomenology," he remains silent about the teleological and anthropological dimensions of Husserl's thought, including Husserl's analyses of instincts, drives, and striving, as these may have lead him to engage in an "impure" inquiry into sedimentation, tradition, and history. In our view, an author of Hopkins's quality and acclaim, who possesses such a deep knowledge of Husserl, could have discussed these matters, given that *both* the "pure transcendental" structure of phenomenological philosophy *and* the "impure concrete" phenomenological analyses of Husserl are important. Having said this, given that there are many books available that focus on the concrete phenomena mentioned, the methodological focus of Hopkins's book is not without merit, and in these reviewers' opinion, the book is most definitely worth reading, particularly for Husserl scholars.