

Call for Papers for the Collective Volume

Title

Experience and Non-Objects: Toward the Phenomenology of Scientific or Religious Indiscernibles

Editors

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This book is dedicated to the sphere of experience in which no real, actual, or empirical object can be constituted by consciousness, but the experience is still, somehow, given. We introduce the category of non-objects as a conceptual device for analyzing things which cannot be thought of in usual formal analytic categories pertaining to the objects. Non-objects cannot be thought of as a thing of nature, as having a time determination, a sensuous-quality determination, a materiality determination, or even as a general category of empty (formal) ontology. Nevertheless, somehow consciousness obtains knowledge of non-objects, as is the case for religious experience or intuitions in quantum physics and other related areas of science. Experiences of this kind have a shared feature: what is meant by real, mental, or unreal (intentional) objects, becomes especially puzzling.

In both religious experience or intuition of quantum waveform, the sense of truth suggests a presence of objectifying intentionalities which obtain fulfillment, but what would be the transcendental correlates of such a fulfillment? How does consciousness obtain the knowledge of "non-objects"? Can intuitions of non-objects function as disruptors, suspending the lifeworld and giving us a glimpse of aspects of the physical reality which normally avoid attention? And can intentionality transcend its own limits by grasping at the "stuff" which underlies its own mode of existence?

One counts quantum physics and religion as independent provinces of meaning, but the non-objects, as they stand in both, may be a shared moment between two provinces. The category of non-objects can be applied to numbers (in Husserl's early works), to categorial intuitions (in *Logical Investigations*), to noema of pure consciousness (*Ideas 1*), to limit-phenomena of monadic consciousness (*Grenzprobleme*, HUA 42), to flesh, to the totalities and infinities which create horizons, i.e., to things that cannot be thought of as the empirically given objects, or as the objects ontologically primary in constitution of intuitions. The intuitions of non-objects can be hard to untangle from other kinds of intuitions: as Husserl said, we need to seek "profound descriptive categorizations, which will give us some insight into essentially different constitution of sensuous and categorial percepts (or intuitions in general)" (Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol.2, p.282). Hence, this interdisciplinary volume.

We emphasize that contributions will be welcome from both philosophers of science and philosophers of religion. We are especially interested in reflections from experimental scientists and theoretical physicists. All papers, however, must demonstrate some familiarity with phenomenological methods and theories in phenomenological philosophy. The papers can be a priori and a posteriori. Are those things that are non-objects indeed beyond our grasp, and does the thingness of the body limit us to know only the likes of it? Or, is there in our nature a potential to obtain knowledge which hides on the fringes of object-driven intentionality, such as a *Deus Absconditus*, or the dark matter in between the stars?

Subtopics may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

1. Non-Objects vs. Regional Ontologies, regional essences, and/or Dasein.
 - How is religious experience related to the life-world? Does it form a distinctive domain within which it plays a foundational role within a broader *Wissenschaftslehre* that might include different levels of rationality (e.g, positive and natural revelation, natural theology, confessional theology, metaphysics), as Scheler thought?
 - With reference to quantum physics” what is the relationship between the life-world and theoretical physics? Should we include here aspects of experience that make experience of objects possible as non-objects, e.g., the body, horizons, genetic factors?
2. Which normative laws of consciousness organize religious experience or in the constitution of material non-objects (e.g., subatomic particles)?
3. What kind of intuitions distinguish Planck, Bohr, Einstein, Rovelli, Diedericks, Dirac, or Feinman? Ibn ‘Arabi, Suhrawardi, Thomas Aquinas, or Adi Shakara?
4. If we begin with the phenomenologies of objects, e.g. in Pfänder, Ingarden, or Stein, what can we arrive at in the study of non-objects?
5. What rationalities are engaged in intuition of non-objects?
6. Can non-objects be interpreted in light of Husserl’s formal ontology, or in light of real ontology?
7. Can we connect non-objects with phenomenologies of life?
8. Is there material multiplicity of non-objects?
9. Can the material multiplicity of objects be reduced?
10. From the standpoint of phenomenology: Why do phenomenologists doing phenomenology of religion prefer monotheism to polytheism? And why does monotheism win over polytheism in the course of history? Does the abstraction toward being (as in Heidegger) win over the multiplicity of being (as in Husserl)?
11. Non-objects (of physics, or of theology) and intentionality

12. Can the non-objects fit into a regional or formal ontology? Is mereology applicable to non-objects?
13. Can the non-objects be defined?
14. Pfänder believed dividing judgements into a number of types in accordance with the number of categories and species has “no genuine logical value” (apud De Santis 2023, 47). Can this be interpreted as invitation for probabilistic thinking? Can this position be applied to non-objects?
15. Is there an apodictic path from a priori intuition of non-objects (e.g. a God or electron) to immediate intuition?
16. What kind of relationships are between the macro-region (world), micro-region (quantum, subatomic), and the region of divine? Can there be a unifying logos?
17. What is/are the mode(s) of being of non-objects?
18. What kind of intuition (*Evidenz*) operates in the experiences of remote viewing and other parapsychological experiences?
19. Are non-objects of religious experience or science better understandable as being included within more comprehensive finite provinces of meaning?

The volume is tentatively planned with Bloomsbury Publishing, Series Phenomenologies of Religious Experience (formerly Lexington Books, <https://sophere.org/sophere-book-series/>). Abstracts of 300 words due by March 15, 2025; Notices of acceptance will be send out by May 15. Final papers will be due October 31, 2025. Papers will be subject to peer review. Please send abstracts and papers to Olga Louchakova-Schwartz at olouch@ucdavis.edu or Michael Barber at michael.barber@slu.edu.