

# Preface

What follows is the culmination of my work on Husserl to date. I first became interested in Husserl around 1991, when I was an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, attending Hubert Dreyfus' well-known lectures on Heidegger. Dreyfus would pace back and forth after a student's question, genuinely thinking about it, sometimes saying things like "Well, maybe you're right, and I've been wrong all these years." I took full advantage of Dreyfus' open attitude toward discussion, pressing my doubts about Heidegger in office hours. Dreyfus would patiently entertain my questions, identify errors in my reasoning, and think through the issues on their own terms. At one point he said, "you sound like a Husserlian." It turned out he was right. I went on to study Husserl with David Woodruff Smith at UC Irvine, who introduced me to Husserl's texts, and to a formal, analytic way of reading them.

Since those early days, my larger goal has been to connect phenomenology with the cognitive sciences. But somewhere along the way, I became independently interested in Husserl-interpretation. After years of reading the primary and secondary literature, I came to believe that a certain core aspect of Husserl's theory, an analysis of "world constitution," of the way we develop our sense of reality over time, had not been articulated as clearly as it could be. Moreover, Husserl presents his account of world constitution in many different ways over the course of his career. In a sense, Husserl's corpus is redundant, and at least one aspect of it—a kind of unifying thread—can be compressed into a smaller, more usable format.

In addition to delineating a relatively compact formal theory of world constitution in Husserl, this work also applies several methods to Husserl-interpretation that have not often been used in that context, including computer analysis of texts, and explicit formalization using dynamical systems theory.

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